
Project Considerations

Section 5

5-1 Five-Year Plan

Section 4 of the Lower Gales Plan presented a number of projects for consideration. Completion of these projects or projects of a similar nature is considered a priority in the effort to enhance winter steelhead trout habitat in lower Gales Creek. Table 5-1 introduces these projects in a 5-year schedule. The schedule begins in fiscal year 2003 and extends through fiscal year 2007. The idea is to work on small projects with willing landowners in the beginning, in order to build trust and confidence with other landowners within the project area. After a couple of years, the more significant projects are proposed for design and construction.


5-2 Conceptual Monitoring Plan

The primary reasons for implementing a monitoring plan is to assess the progress of an enhancement project in order to determine the level of success and/or the need to modify actions to improve the project. Monitoring plans should be developed during the planning phase of a project so that they support the goals and performance criteria of the enhancement effort. It is important to start the development of monitoring plans early so that necessary resources can be allocated to collection of baseline data, pre- and post- enhancement monitoring, as well as monitoring during actual implementation. The elements of a complete monitoring plan include:

- Clear, meaningful monitoring goals that provide the basis for scientific evaluation;
- Appropriate allocation of resources for data collection, management, organization, interpretation, and analysis;
- Quality assurance procedures and peer review;
- Flexible plans that allow for changes when needed due to new conditions or information; and
- Accessible and useful monitoring information is available to all interested parties. (FISRWG, 1998)

Developing a full monitoring plan is one of the next steps in the process of implementing the Lower Gales Plan. The Lower Gales Plan identifies existing conditions in the project area, actions required to enhance the system, and a basic timeline for action. Before specific projects are designed, a monitoring plan needs to be developed that will address the overall goals of the Lower Gales Plan and identify specific monitoring needs and protocols for the different project types. The types of monitoring that will serve to measure the progress of enhancement projects include photo-monitoring to track nonnative species control and riparian plantings; vegetation monitoring for individual restoration sites; water quality monitoring for stream conditions and temperature, and macroinvertebrate monitoring to track changes in the health of the stream system.

Table 5-1: Lower Gales Creek Habitat Enhancement – 5 Year Plan

| Project Action | Fiscal Year 2003 | Fiscal Year 2004 | Fiscal Year 2005 | Fiscal Year 2006 and Fiscal Year 2007 |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <i>Planning and Monitoring</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a typical planting palette for project area. - Create a standard monitoring plan. - Consult with a Geomorphologist about stability of watershed functions and proposed projects. | | Monitor project success by following defined monitoring protocol set up for each project. | |
| <i>Conservation of Large Riparian Areas</i> | Acquire conservation easements (Project 2). This will be a multi-year project that will involve presenting landowners with attractive options for putting their land into conservation easements. It will also involve working with other non-profit conservation groups to find funding for easement purchase. | | | |
| <i>Permitting and Barrier Assessment and Remediation</i> | Consult with the COE/DSL and ODFW in FY 2002 about permit requirements, and recommendations. | Work with the City of Forest Grove to remove water pipe across Clear Creek (Project 9). | Work with landowners to plant native veg. along Roderick Creek & remove passage barrier (Project 8). | |
| <i>Increase In-stream Complexity</i> | Permit and design Project 5, located in Reach GL08. This project involves realigning the channel to increase sinuosity. | | Construct Project 5 during the in-stream work period. | Permit, design and construct Project 1 (Reach GL02), to increase in-stream complexity |
| <i>Riparian Area Enhancement</i> | Clear non-native vegetation and plant native shrubs and trees on County property (Reach GL06) in Fall 2003. | Clear non-native vegetation and plant native shrubs and trees along right bank of Reach GL10 (Project 7). | Clear non-native vegetation and plant native shrubs and trees along left bank of Reach GL02 in Fall 2005. | Clear non-native vegetation and plant native shrubs and trees along left & right bank of Reach GL07 and GL09 |
| <i>Increase In-stream Complexity</i> | Permit and design Project 3, located in Reach GL05. The purpose is to increase in-stream complexity | Construct Project 3 during the in-stream work period. | | |
| <i>Eliminate Illegal Access and Floodplain Enhancement</i> | Work with landowner to stop illegal access to creek in Reach GL09 (Project 6). | Permit and design Project 4, located in Reach GL06. This project involves enhancing the floodplain to create a backwater channel and to increase in-stream complexity. | | Construct Project 4 during the in-stream work period. |
| <i>Maintenance</i> | Water and Weed all riparian enhancement projects.  | | | |

5-3 Opportunities for Long-term Stewardship

In order to maximize the benefits of enhancement and conservation efforts, it is important to develop long term stewardship plans for project areas. Long-term stewardship can take the form of commitments from landowners, often with the assistance of agencies and conservation groups, to maintain a property or it can involve legal permanence tools like conservation easements. The following section describes some options for long-term or permanent land conservation and some incentive programs that can help landowners to plan for installation and maintenance of enhancement projects on their land.

Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are an effective management tool for streamside areas where there is a need to protect investments in enhancement projects or a need to conserve areas with good ecological integrity. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a government agency or a qualified conservation organization that permanently limits a property's uses in order to protect its conservation value. Through the easement process, landowners receive compensation for modifying or giving up portions of their development rights while the easement holder acquires the right to maintain designated restrictions on the use of the property. Conservation easements provide a number of benefits:

- They are flexible, and can be written to meet the individual needs of the landowner while protecting the property's conservation value.
- They leave ownership in the hands of the landowner, who may choose to sell the land, pass it on to heirs, or continue to live on the land.
- They are permanent, remaining in place when the land changes hands. A land trust or government agency ensures that restrictions on land use are followed.
- They can significantly lower estate taxes. Easements can provide landowners with other benefits for income and property taxes. (Land Trust Alliance)

Conservation easements may be established with federal agencies like the Natural Resources Conservation Service, state agencies, counties, or through nonprofit organizations like Three Rivers Land Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy. It is often beneficial for federal, state, and local governments to work with nonprofit organizations to establish conservation easements in partnership. Nonprofit organizations can work with public agencies to act more efficiently to take advantage of tax incentives, mobilize local knowledge and support, and set up long-term stewardship of a property. (FISRWG, 1998)

Federal and State Conservation Programs

There are federal and state programs that provide resources for landowners to conserve and enhance their land on both a short-term and long-term basis. Incentive programs provide technical assistance and funding for the installation of conservation measures and best management practices. Longer-term programs such as

the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) also provide technical assistance and funding for conservation measure, and they have a mechanism for protecting the enhanced areas by paying the landowners to set the land aside from agricultural production. The programs described below are a sample of programs available from local agencies: USDS Farm Services Agency (FSA), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), local Soil and Water Conservation Service (SWCD), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF).

Incentive programs

Environmental Quality Incentive Programs (EQIP)

Under this program, landowners develop a whole farm plan to install water quality and wildlife measures such as manure compost storage, fencing, nose pumps, pasture management, cover crops, erosion control structures, tree planting, wildlife habitat, and other practices. In return, landowners receive up to 75% of the cost to install these conservation measures. Landowners are eligible for EQIP if they have farm plans that rank high in water quality and wildlife values. Lead agencies: NRCS, SWCD.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Landowners improve near stream, instream, wetland and native plant areas to benefit fish and wildlife. In return, the landowner can receive biological advice and up to 50% cost-sharing (a one-to-one match of federal to nonfederal dollars) to install habitat measures. Private, non-federal landowners with land suitable for improving fish and wildlife habitat are eligible for this program. Lead agency: USFWS.

Riparian Tax Incentive Program

Landowners enhance streamside areas by fencing off livestock, practicing pasture management, protecting “leave strips” that are not logged or tilled, and minimizing irrigation, check dams, or stream crossings. In return, up to 100 feet next to streams is exempt from property taxes. In order to be eligible, landowners must improve or maintain their streamside property for water quality and wildlife, and property must be zoned agriculture or forestland and be located outside the urban growth boundary. Lead agency: ODFW.

Reforestation Tax Credit

Landowners plant or improve forests on unproductive land. In return, landowners may apply for a tax credit that covers 30% of eligible expenses such as site preparation, trees, planting, animal damage control, hired labor and equipment operating costs. Landowners are eligible if they have at least 5 acres of commercial forestland (this may include pasture or brushland acreage that landowners want to plant). The tax credit does not apply to Christmas trees or requirements to plant under the Forest Practices Act. Lead agency: ODF.

Long-term Conservation Programs

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Under this program, landowners develop a whole farm plan to plant trees and fence animals away from streams or to restore wetlands. In return, landowners receive 75-100% of the cost to install conservation measures and annual rental payments for 10-15 years. Landowners are eligible for this program if they have cropland or pasture that borders salmon-bearing streams or were wetlands in the past. Lead agencies: FSA, NRCS, and SWCD.

Wetland Restoration Program (WRP)

Under this program, landowners restore wetlands, streamside areas and flooded areas and adjacent uplands areas for fish and wildlife. In return, landowners receive up to 100% of the cost to install conservation measures. They may also sell a 30-year or permanent conservation easement to the government and receive from 75 to 100% of the agricultural value of the land. To be eligible for WRP, landowners must prove ownership and land must be suitable for restoring wetlands that are valuable for wildlife. Lead agencies: NRCS and local SWCD.

