

Racetrack Reach: Steelhead Habitat Restoration in the Potlatch River Watershed



Project Planner

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Project Supporters

Private Landowner/Access and In-Kind

Bonneville Power Administration

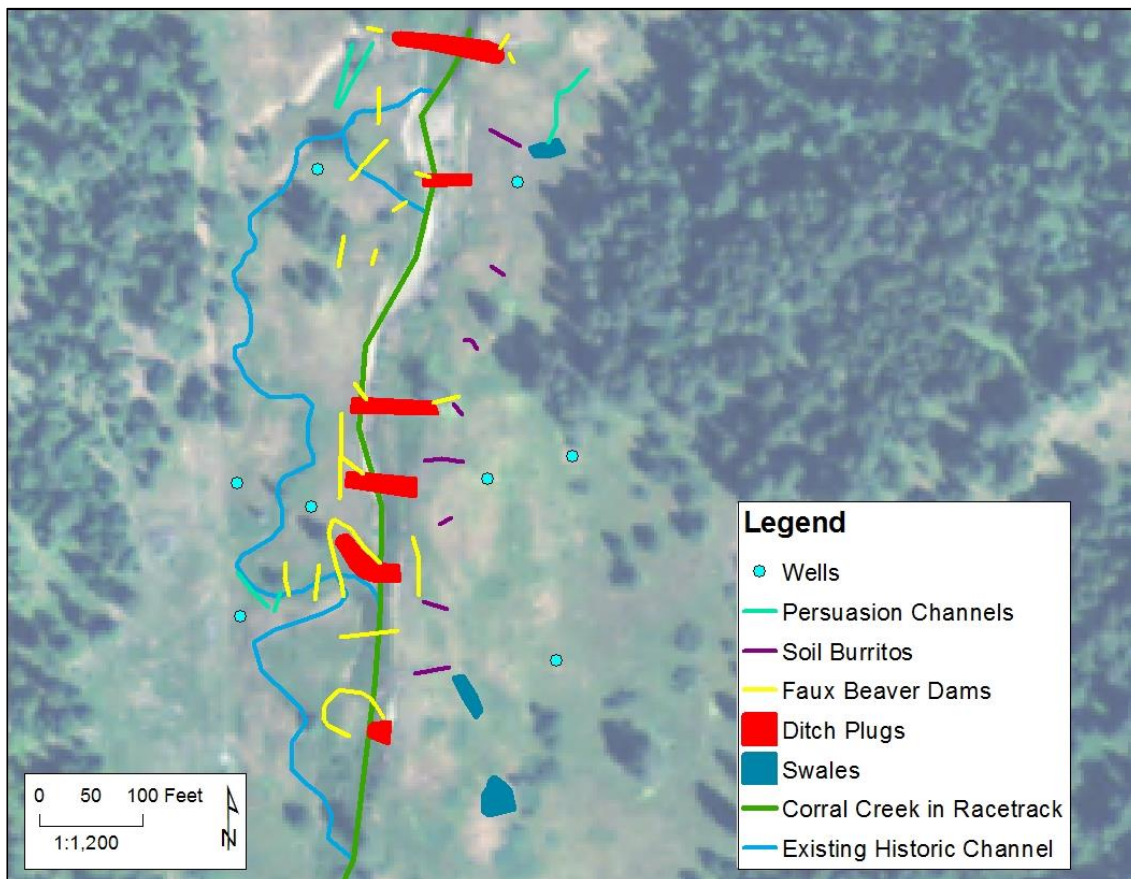
Ecotrust/National Marine Fisheries Service

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Idaho Department of Environmental Quality/EPA Clean Water Act Funding

The Racetrack Reach project began in 2007 and includes approximately 2,120 linear feet of stream and 13.7 acres of wetland meadow within the Corral Creek system. By addressing the problems of high water temperatures, high flashy stream flows, low summer base flows, lack of complexity in stream composition, and sedimentation, Latah SWCD is improving wild steelhead trout habitat in an important tributary of the Potlatch River. This will be accomplished by raising the water table, rehydrating the meadow, and re-establishing riparian vegetation.

Construction (Principal Engineer Susan Firor, Terragraphics Inc.): At the project site, the stream channel was straightened and widened in the early 1900's to accommodate construction of a horse racing track. Restoration has involved installation of diversion structures in the straightened channel, both to divert the flow out of the ditch, into the nearby sinuous, shallow historic channel, and to create wetland cells.



Latah Soil & Water Conservation District

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Revegetation: All disturbed areas were seeded with a diverse mix of native grasses and forbs and mulched with weed-free pelletized straw mulch. Salvaged wetland herbaceous sod and commercially-sourced wetland sod mats were placed on the channel plugs following construction. Cuttings were taken from nearby native woody riparian plants and planted along the plugs and connector channels as well as being woven into the faux beaver dams. Over 2,400 woody and herbaceous native plants, along with more cuttings, were planted in 2015.

Monitoring: Flow monitoring data has been collected for several years at a monitoring station a few hundred feet downstream of the project site, and will be used to detect changes in the duration of flow into the summer season. Groundwater and surface elevation monitoring, to detect changes in meadow hydrologic condition, have been in place in the Racetrack Reach Meadow since November 2011, and will continue for several years. Photo points are being used to monitor development of the historic channel and vegetation and structure changes. Vegetation surveys will monitor survival and changes in the meadow plant community.



March 2006



June 2019