

# UCC (Upper Corral Creek):



## Project Planner

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## Project Supporters

USDA Forest Service

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest

Palouse Ranger District

Idaho Office of Species Conservation/Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

## Project Description:

The project at Upper Corral Creek, including both Vassar and Five-Acre Meadows, began construction in 2015 to begin restoration of the riparian areas that were altered in the early 1900's to accommodate logging operations during this time. Temporary railroad spurs, or shay lines, were constructed early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to transport logs from the forest, through the meadow, and to the railways for transportation to the mills. The berms created by these shay lines crisscrossed the meadow and historic channel, and flows were inadvertently captured in borrow ditches associated with railroad embankments. This caused the historic channel to dry out and subsequently Vassar meadow and Five Acre Meadow downstream as the water began to exit the system too quickly. These borrow ditches created straight and deep channels that not only caused the meadows to dry out, but also caused extensive erosion and sedimentation, decreased water quality, and resulted in a total loss of steelhead rearing habitat. Grazing has occurred on these meadows since the 1800's and the stream was often diverted to the valley walls to dry out the meadows for the livestock. Grazing still occurs here but to a much lesser extent.

The goal of this project is to improve meadow hydrology in order to enhance migration, spawning, and rearing habitat for wild steelhead along the west fork of Upper Corral Creek which is an important tributary of the Potlatch River. Latah SWCD has been working on accomplishing the goal of improving habitat for steelhead in this area by diverting the flow back into the historic channel, creating wetland pockets in the straight, eroded channel, and planting extensive amounts of native vegetation to help restore the hydrology and habitat of these important riparian areas.

**Construction:** Between July and September 2015 much was done to achieve the goals of Latah SWCD. In the upper reach of Vassar Meadow five ditch plugs were installed, the railroad berm was removed and cut to match the existing channel, water flow was diverted to a persuasion channel following the historic channel, livestock trails, fencing, ramps and crossings were put in to manage grazing, and the existing log bridge was left in place. In the lower reach of Vassar Meadow the use of fiber rolls, fill areas, log jams, and three BDA's were placed in and around the persuasion channel to slow and spread the water flow to help restore both the hydrology and habitat of the meadow and historical channel. Downstream in the connected, Five-Acre Meadow,



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nine additional ditch plugs were installed along with more permanent and temporary fencing and a culvert was installed for the cattle crossing. Parts of the existing channel were filled with native material harvested by removal of railroad berms and new persuasion channels were excavated elsewhere.

**Revegetation:** One of the major problems with the site was the lack of woody riparian zone vegetation, probably due to dry soil conditions and a lowered water table. Invasive species had taken over much of the meadow. As part of the project much planting and revegetation was done at both Vassar and Five-Acre Meadows. A total of 3,368 square feet of native vegetation was harvested, moved and placed on site and an additional 128 sod mats were purchased and brought onto the site. A total of 2,998 native plants were planted including sedges, rushes, bulrushes, forbs, and woodies including Serviceberry, Douglas Hawthorns, Redosier Dogwoods, and Black Cottonwoods. All bare and disturbed ground was immediately covered with a mix of native seed and weed-free mulch. The Latah SWCD Crew has also returned several times to both meadows to weed invasive species over the past three years. The camas can be seen predominately throughout the meadow in the Spring now and other native plants have mostly overtaken invasive species though there are still some invasives that remain.



*Latah SWCD Crew Revegetating 2015*



*Spring 2018*

