GRMW Project site tour for BiOp funding

Site Visit Report

Project: Bear Creek Large Wood & Floodplain Restoration

Present: GRMW staff: Jeff Oveson, Lyle Kuchenbecker; BPA: Timmie Mandish, Tracy Hauser, Kathy Fisher, Don Rose; FS: Joe Platz, Paul Boehne; ODFW: Bruce Eddy, Vance McGowan, Tim Bailey; CTUIR: Allen Childs; NMFS: Christian Jilek, Rosemary Furfey
Date of site visit: 6/15/09

Background:
Prospectus initial rating by expert panel: Medium
Species benefitted: steelhead, downstream benefits to Chinook
Habitat metric: ~ 7 miles of stream restored
Restoration activities: LWD placement, road obliteration, floodplain re-contour, riparian planting, culvert removal
Limiting Factors Addressed: Instream & floodplain habitat complexity, water quality (sediment, temperature), flow (through increased floodplain activation)
Funding: 265K prospectus/350K field

Technical Committee (TC) Comments: Support to move forward with proposal.

Bear Creek, tributary to Meadow Creek is spawning and rearing habitat for listed SR steelhead trout. The planned restoration activities will address limiting factors identified for this stream system. Designs are in the conceptual phase at this time, but in general design methods outlined in the field are supported by the TC.

Funding requested at the prospectus stage was 265K, to restore a little more than 4 miles of stream for the benefit of listed steelhead trout. The funding request has increased to 350K, to include an additional almost 3 miles of tributary watershed health restoration. The expanded work proposed during the site visit is generally supported, but the TC but would like to have some additional information.

Additional information needs:

- There is concern regarding the amount of cattle use and its potential to affect restoration benefits.
    - Please include in your proposal the current cattle management plan and explain what processes are in place to assure there will not be an increase in cattle use. It will be important to have an agreement in place that precludes an increase in cattle use.
    - If cattle use is determined to be at levels that could risk the effectiveness of restoration activities implemented, what opportunities are there to change the

management plan?
    - Cattle use should be restricted in the near term after restoration activities, please identify how long or what management actions will be in place to protect the restoration area post construction;
    - and research if there is the ability to extend the post construction rest period.

- The additional tributary activities identified during the site visit have general support however it is not clear whether watershed health benefits would be cost effective for the benefits gained.
    - In your proposal can you separate out how much additional cost will be incurred for the added watershed health tributary actions.
    - Many of the cattle management concerns surrounded the cattle use in the upper tributaries (watershed health portion of the project) and the cattle trail being in such close proximity to the stream. Please include as an option a modest cattle exclosure in order to document that benefits can be achieved with managed cattle use. Or identify why this is not an option.
- Design comments:
    - All of the project area is on FS land with little surrounding infrastructure. While it is desirable that instream structures remain stable long enough to affect the stream channel and facilitate the development of pools and cover, some movement of LWD pieces will not compromise the project. Where possible limit the number of pins in LWD structures, and use boulder ballast where possible in situations that require structure stability.
    - You indicated in the field that you will be incorporating floodplain roughness in the form of large wood and diversified profile of the floodplain. This will discourage cattle use, as well as reduce the likelihood of channel avulsion during overbank flows within the newly re-graded, active floodplain. The TC believes this is an important aspect of the project and are encouraged by it's inclusion in the design.

Please work with the GRMW to submit a project proposal.