Prospectus of Proposed Project Opportunity

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Opportunity Title

Bear Creek RM 3.1 - 5.2, Wallowa County, OR Restoration Project

Opportunity Lead

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Technical Contact

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Landowners

Philip and Denise Corcoran
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Phone: 541-803-0030

Darrin Stringer (Property Manager)
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Phone: 541-517-3875
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Lionel Sauvage
Address: 11601 Wilshire Blvd Ste 1960, Los Angeles CA, 90025

Contacted: No
Supportive: Initial conversations with EFM property manager Darrin Stringer and Sauvage family have indicated they are interested in a full-

scale restoration project. Will contact Corcoran's once we have Sauvage approval of concepts.
Contribution: Floodplain area placed in conservation, trees to be donated for instream structures.

River

Name: Bear Creek (Wallowa County), Little Bear Creek
Mile: RM 3.1 - 5.2
Tributary: Wallowa River

Restoration Atlas

BSR: WLL-2
Tier: Tier 1
Initial Score: 51.5
Proposed Score: 51.5

Restoration Activities

1. Protect Land and Water (Easement, Acquisition, Management)
2. Channel Reconstruction
3. Pool Development
4. Riffle Construction
5. Meander (Oxbow) Re-connect - Reconstruction
6. Spawning Gravel Cleaning and Placement
7. Levee Modification: Removal, Setback, Breach
8. Remove - Relocate Floodplain Infrastructure
9. Restoration of Floodplain Topography and Vegetation
10. Floodplain Construction
11. Perennial Side Channel
12. Secondary (non-perennial) Channel
13. Floodplain Pond - Wetland
14. Alcove
15. Hyporheic Off-Channel Habitat (Groundwater)
16. Beaver Restoration Management
17. Riparian Fencing
18. Riparian Buffer Strip, Planting
19. Thinning or removal of understory
20. Remove non-native plants
26. Boulder Placement
27. LWD Placement
31. Improve Thermal Refugia (spring reconnect, other)
34. Upland Vegetation Treatment - Management
36. Road Grading - Drainage Improvements

Species Affected

Focal: ESA-Listed Snake River Spring Chinook Salmon, Snake River Summer Steelhead, Bull Trout
Other: Lamprey, Coho, native trout, potentially reintroduced sockeye, and beaver

Description

The Sauvage property extends from RM 3.1 to RM 5.9 on Bear Creek. The creek then moves onto USFS property from RM 5.9 to RM 6.5 which is the wilderness boundary. The work being considered for this project will focus on RM 3.1 to RM 5.2. There is one small withholding near RM 4.3 in the middle of the project reach, which will not interfere with the main restoration activities. The upstream portion of the property (RM 5.2 to RM 5.65) has other landowners on each side of the river, work in this portion may be more challenging to complete due to infrastructure, but will still be considered. There is approximately 3.5 miles of Bear Creek on the Sauvage property, including adjacent floodplain as well as another 2 miles of Little Bear Creek.

The creek in the lower portion of the property has been pushed against the road prism, is at bedrock in many areas, and is disconnected from its floodplain. Most of the floodplain restoration actions will be on the lower 2 miles of the Sauvage property. Upstream it becomes more confined and steeper as it continues to the wilderness boundary, the withholding property may have some floodplain opportunities as well. Little Bear Creek is very steep with little floodplain, however utilizing overstocked understory in the riparian by adding it into the creek may provide benefits to the system. There is evidence of heavy cattle grazing in the riparian zone and around the multiple springs on the property, the landowner is agreeing to create a plan to exclude cattle from the riparian with construction of a new riparian fence that extends further than the present one that is in need of serious repair.

There are many opportunities for floodplain reactivation, plenty of old scrolls on the lower section of the property. Bear creek is currently at bedrock in several places, straight and over widened or confined in places producing a shotgun of water and sediment. The project reach lacks pools and large wood capable of slowing down the water and trapping sediment. Riparian vegetation has been suppressed by overgrazing but will most likely thrive once protected. Downstream from this reach there are several irrigation withdrawals which tend to produce incredibly low flows in Bear Creek during the summer months, so by reactivating the floodplain and protecting springs on this property it is possible to see a significant increase in flow especially during base flow conditions.

Some of the project goals include increasing salmonid spawning and rearing habitat through the following restoration actions.
1) Implement features to increase floodplain activation in the areas that are disconnected.
2) Installing large wood structures to create fish habitat and pools,

slowdown water, and retain sediment.
3) Placing channel fill and creating side channels/high flow swales to better spread-out high flows and provide juvenile salmonid habitat.
4) Riparian protection through grazing management/live stock exclusion.
5) There are a number of springs that could be protected and planted to allow more of that flow to reach Bear Creek, while also the potential of more wetland habitat and possible beaver colonization near the creek.

Objectives

The project objectives include hiring an engineering firm capable of producing a fully designed and stamped restoration project and plans to implement that will address the limiting factors within the Wallowa Atlas for this project reach. The above goals and restoration activities will be considered and evaluated by the Wallowa IT and RRT at each milestone (15%, 30%, 80%, etc.) to provide the most benefit to the project reach and the ESA-listed species that utilize it.

Major Risks

There is infrastructure to consider along the project reach. There are 2 bridges, one of which may need replaced or modified due to safety concerns. There is also a small cabin and storage shed near the middle of the project reach around RM 4.3. Below the project reach contains multiple private landowners and infrastructure such as bridges.

Permits and Consultation

ESA Section 7 USFWS: Applicable
ESA Section 7 NMFS: Applicable
COE or DSL Permit: Applicable
Cultural Resources Section 106: Applicable
DEQ 401 Water Quality Permit: Applicable

Project Schedule

Year: 2026

Monitoring: Monitoring will be done by other agencies doing work in the area, i.e. ODFW fish research doing spawning ground surveys. GRMW will also capture drone aerial imagery of activated floodplain and base flow conditions as much as time and funding allows during the next several years.

Project Relations

Multi-phase Effort: No

Preliminary Cost Estimate

Total: 150000
BPA Funding: 150000
OWEB Funding: 0

Design Funding

Design Funds Requested: Yes
Design Option: Option 2
Type of Work:
Technical project management
River and stream data acquisition (hydrology, sediment, surveying, assessment, fisheries)
Hydrology, geomorphology, or river hydraulic modeling
Stream and fisheries habitat design
Stream and fisheries habitat restoration contract - construction plan and specification development
Stream and fisheries habitat restoration construction quality assurance, management, and inspection

Specialties:
Stream restoration engineer
Fluvial geomorphologist
Suveryor
Project manager