Prospectus of Proposed Project Opportunity

Submitted Aug 30, 2018

Opportunity Title

Project 758110

Opportunity Lead

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Landowners

Contacted: Yes
Supportive: Yes, it is all within USFS ownership.
Contribution: All USFS personnel salary dollars will be contributed to the project. Research funding will be contributed through the USFS and associated grant opportunities.

River

Name: Meadow Creek
Mile: RM 9 - 18
Tributary: Grande Ronde River

Restoration Atlas

BSR: UGR13
Tier: Tier 2
Initial Score: 76
Proposed Score: 76

Restoration Activities

9. Restoration of Floodplain Topography and Vegetation
15. Hyporheic Off-Channel Habitat (Groundwater)
16. Beaver Restoration Management
18. Riparian Buffer Strip, Planting

Species Affected

Focal: Snake River Summer Steelhead, Snake River Spring Chinook Salmon
Other: Redband Trout

Description

Meadow Creek has had a history of disturbance related to beaver removal, splash dams, timber harvest, livestock use, and roading. In the early ~1990s, sill logs were placed in the lower 3.5 miles of the project area. However, most of these washed out in a major flow event. A livestock exclosure was constructed in the ~1980s within the upper mile of the project area and Pasture 3 was excluded in the ~1990s (~ RM 1.5 - 3.0). From 2012 - 2014, wood addition occurred in all 7.5 miles of Meadow Creek. In addition, riparian planting, livestock exclosures, wild ungulate exclosures, riparian pasture fences and upland water developments were constructed. The project is currently under research for a variety of riparian related issues, including wild ungulate/livestock riparian effects and fish populations/distribution.

Starkey Experimental Forest will be starting an 80% elk herd reduction in 2018 and is planning on achieving this goal by the spring of 2020. Due to the significant change in management, the Experimental Forest would like to conduct research on deciduous woody vegetation use on existing and newly planted riparian vegetation.

The proposal is to plant 20,000 deciduous seedlings in the spring of 2020 on 7.5 miles of Meadow Creek. The seedlings would be planted with a 3'x3' scalp and would be watered twice during the first year of planting. The primary goal is to establish deciduous vegetation adjacent to Meadow Creek. The secondary goal is to conduct research on the riparian vegetation response as a result of the elk reduction.

Objectives

* Decrease existing elk populations by 80%.
* Improve current riparian vegetation through decreased browse use.
* Increase deciduous riparian vegetation through planting.
* Improve stream shade and stream temperatures through improved riparian vegetation.
* Improve the vegetation needed to support healthy beaver populations, which would improve floodplain functionality.

Major Risks

There are no major risks to this project.

Permits and Consultation

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

Project Schedule

Year: 2020

Monitoring: Monitoring and research will be completed by the Starkey Experimental Forest. The study design will be evaluated by scientists within and outside the Experimental Forest. Information gathered will be available to the future management on USFS, other government and private lands. The 80% elk herd reduction is a unique opportunity to assess and obtain effects of elk herbivory on riparian vegetation.

Project Relations

Multi-phase Effort: No

Preliminary Cost Estimate

Total: 300000
BPA Funding: $0
OWEB Funding: 145000

Design Funding

Design Funds Requested: No