



Colville Confederated Tribes Fish and Wildlife Department



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Restoring a Vital Area of the Methow River will help Endangered Fish Species Survive



(Nespelem, Wash. August 22, 2022) – A restoration project was recently completed this month along the Twisp River, a tributary of the Methow River, that will help to restore critical habitat for spring chinook, summer steelhead and bull trout. Fish species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The project involved flying in over several hundred logs with root wads and 3,000 small to medium sized trees that were placed in different areas of the Twisp River and Little Bridge Creek. The logs and trees were used from a local forest thinning operation.

According to the biologist in charge of the project, using a helicopter was not only efficient but had minimal impacts to the vegetation and the benefits for fish are immediate.

“The addition of wood has instantly created more niches for fish to occupy,” said Matt Young, fisheries biologist for Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife. “It is important to note that

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this treatment is not meant to be static, rather these logs and trees will kick start natural river processes that will continue to change and provide complex diverse habitat for ESA-listed and native fish species for many years to come."

Young believes these habitat improvements will help to increase the quantity and quality of instream flow to support multiple life stages of fish.

"What was concerning was limited cover and complexity of the river, and how fast the water flowed in many areas and now there are more bends and channels for fish to rear in and survive through during the summer and winter months," he said.

Overharvesting of timber in the early 1900's, development, loss of vegetation and erosion, and recent wildfires in the area caused the habitat to degrade over time.

The restoration work that is taking place in the Methow River and surrounding tributaries is not only ecologically but culturally important to the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT).

"Salmon are at the core of who we are as people and for our tribe to be able to do this restoration work in the homelands of our Methow people makes it even more meaningful," said Chairman of the CCT Jarred Erickson. "Helping to bring back these ESA-listed species as well as bringing our people back to the Methow has both a spiritual and cultural connection that is indescribable."

This work was possible thanks to the close partnership between the CCT, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and the funding agency, Bonneville Power Administration.

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