

Featuring:

Wood is Good

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Contact us at:
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www.bonnierswcd.org

Wood is Good



LWD deflects flows away from the bank

to decrease water temperatures by providing shaded areas along the stream.

In the past, some streams and rivers have been cleared of LWD to keep them open for navigation or because of an outdated perception that streams with little wood were more aesthetically pleasing. But in fact, removing wood can lead to degraded fish habitat conditions with the loss of spawning gravel and pools for rearing.

Wood has always played a natural role in most river systems. Large trees, logs and root wads which fall into streams are often referred to as large woody debris (LWD). The presence of large wood in streams influences channel morphology, stability, and complexity.

Woody debris is important for healthy river ecosystems. LWD improves habitat complexity by creating deep pools and cover for fish. LWD helps create islands and new channels that provide additional habitat and refuge for juvenile fish. Wood also increases the retention of organic matter and nutrients.

Woody debris in streams helps to sort sediment by slowing flows and allowing gravels to deposit. Pockets of spawning-sized gravel are critical for many fish, especially Bull Trout. LWD can also help

Adding logs and other woody debris to rivers and streams is one of the most common methods used to improve fish habitat. Most studies have concluded that LWD placed in streams remains relatively stable, improves habitat conditions, and increases fish numbers – especially native trout.



Large woody debris jam creates complex habitat and cover for fish

Upper Pack River Habitat Assessment



Upper Pack River, lacking pool habitat

Bull Trout were once widely distributed throughout northern Idaho. But due to declining numbers, Bull Trout were listed as a Threatened Species in 1998. The Pack River and its tributaries provide important spawning and rearing habitat for Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout.

The steep topography, highly erosive soils, flashy hydrology, and rain-on-snow events in the upper Pack River, combined with human-caused factors and disturbance from fires, particularly the Sundance Fire of 1967, are contributing to degradation of healthy fish habitat.

In 2003, a channel assessment of the Pack River found that the overall amount of large woody debris and pool habitat in the upper reaches were below reference con-

ditions. The study also found areas lacking mature riparian vegetation resulting in less shade and natural large woody debris recruitment potential to the Pack River.

Last year, Idaho Department of Fish and Game in partnership with Avista and the Pack River Watershed Council, recommended that a habitat assessment be conducted in this important watershed to identify specific conservation and restoration opportunities to benefit native fish and improve watershed function.

Given that the upper Pack River and its tributaries are strongholds for Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout, it's necessary to identify specific opportunities for habitat improvements that will secure these areas as sustainable spawning and rearing streams in the future.

The habitat assessment is scheduled to begin this fall, with funding from Avista through the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement.



Mass failures in McCormick Creek

“Take care of the fish and the fishing will take care of itself.”

~ Art Neumann

Grouse Creek Habitat Enhancement

The Natural Resource Conservation Service is partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Pack River Watershed Council to implement a floodplain roughness project on lower Grouse Creek this fall.

The project will include placing 5 to 6 single large trees along several point bars in the floodplain. The structures will be partially imbedded in the point bars and planted with willow cuttings. The structures will be specifically designed and placed to recruit more wood.

The goal of the project is to increase habitat complexity for fish and wildlife. The addition of large woody debris will also function to facilitate natural re-vegetation.

Large wood increases surface roughness and creates pockets of scour and deposition of sediment. These micro-sites improve natural re-vegetation by creating areas where seedlings are closer to the water table and are protected from high flows.



Lower Grouse Creek

These treatments will also promote soil formation by trapping sediment and organic material. This will promote floodplain evolution and woody shrub establishment.

AIS Boat Stations

Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District managed three aquatic invasive species (AIS) boat inspection stations in Bonner County this year. The stations closed on Sept. 16th.

The station at Albeni Falls conducted 9,560 boat inspections, with 5 boats from mussel infested waters. The Samuels station inspected 9,650 boats and intercepted 13 boats from mussel infested waters. The Clark Fork station inspected 6,991 boats and intercepted 30 boats from infested waters.

In the state of Idaho this year, 2,423 boats from infested waters were intercepted. 42 boats were contaminated with mussels; however none of the mussels were determined to be viable.



Confirmed invasive zebra mussels locations since arriving in the Great Lakes in 1986.

~ U.S. Geological Service

Upcoming Events

Sept. 26 Gardening in the Northwest
 UI, Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center
 6:00-7:00pm, \$3

Oct. 2 Advanced Master Gardener Class
 UI, Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center
 9:00-noon, \$35
 Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Nov. 6, 13

Oct. 18 Growing Organic Workshop
 UI, Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center
 8:30am-noon, \$TBD

Nov. 16 Is a Small Farm in Your Future?
 Lone Mountain Farms, Athol, ID
 9:00-3:00pm, \$25

Dec. 3 Pesticide Workshop
 UI Extension, Bonner County
 8:30am-noon, also 1:30-5:00pm, \$5
 Contact UI Extension Office at
 208-263-8511



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“The mission of the Pack River Watershed Council is to improve water quality and riparian habitat in the Pack River watershed for people, fish, and wildlife through education, collaboration, and cooperative projects.”

Thanks to Avista Watershed Council Funding, we are able to print and distribute this newsletter.