

Landscape Scale Restoration Project Report



Project Name: Teton Creek Collaborative Watershed Restoration

Funding Year: 2016

Stakeholders

Forest Service Region: USDA Forest Service - R1

Sponsoring Organization: Idaho Dept. of Lands

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Participating Organizations:

Grantee: Idaho Dept. of Lands

Project Funding

Agreement(s): 16-DG-11010000-011

Project Design

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Project Purpose

The Teton Watershed in SE Idaho is a high priority landscape for habitat restoration and protection of at-risk fish and wildlife species. This initiative will restore and enhance ecological integrity and connectivity within the Teton Creek Corridor, a highly valuable riparian area threatened by development pressures. Project activities will improve riparian habitat, forest and floodplain resiliency, biodiversity, and water quality/quantity, as identified in the State Forest Action Plan.

Idaho's Forest Action Plan (FAP) identifies the Teton Watershed as a priority landscape based on the loss of forests and canopy from development, urbanization, and recreation and the benefits it provides to biodiversity and wildlife, water quality and quantity. The Teton Creek Collaborative (TC) has focused efforts in this watershed to maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of the TCC. This project builds upon their actions to reduce sediments and stream temperature, establish riparian buffer zones through afforestation, and secure water transactions to re-water the creek.

National Themes & Outcomes

Conserving and Managing Working Forest Landscapes

- High priority forest ecosystems and landscapes are identified and conserved.

Protect Forests from Threats

- Threats to forest and ecosystem health are identified, managed and reduced.

Enhance Public Benefits from Private Forests

- Water quality and quantity is protected and enhanced.
- Wildlife and fish habitat is protected, conserved, and enhanced.
- People are connected to trees and forests and are engaged in environmental stewardship activities.
- Trees and forests are managed and restored to help mitigate and adapt to changing conditions.

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Strategic Issues

This project directly aligns with FAP priorities to restore a high- functioning riparian corridor benefitting fish and wildlife population and biodiversity. It also will improve surface water quality and quantity by mitigating development impacts on forest resources through riparian restoration activities. Additionally it will develop community capacity to protect and improve critical riparian ecosystems through conservation actions on private lands.

Collaboration & Partners

This project builds on 10 years of collaborative work in the TCC. FTR led efforts of a diverse group of stakeholders (TC) including LOs, irrigators, state agencies, federal agencies, NGOs, local government to assess, restore, & improve the highly impacted sub-watershed.

FTR & TC have stabilized nearly 7,000 ft of stream for flood control, fish & wildlife habitat, water quality & community amenity at a cost of \$2.85M; assisted FEMA flood map revision; catalyzed City/County floodplain ordinance development; reduced developed lots via replat & land/easement purchase; formed the States first Flood Control District (FCD); coordinated community efforts to holistically address threats to the TCC.

This project aligns FTR & TC goals with existing inter-agency & region-wide efforts, priorities, & management plans (State & federal fish & wildlife plans, State FAP, National Fish Habitat Action Plan. Combined efforts & shared priorities of FTR, TC & these entities converged to support the action proposed in this project. FTRs established landowner/community relationships & trust will enable project success. FTR cash and in-kind contributions are \$306,450. In addition, TCC partner contributions include:

USFS, ID Depts. of Fish & Game (FG), Environmental Quality (EQ), Water Resources (WR), City of Driggs, Teton Land Trust (LT) & Flood Control District (FD) help prioritize treatments & ensure plans/priorities are coordinated at the landscape scale.

Teton Conservation District (CD) assists in developing & hosting meetings/field tours & review educational resources.

CD, FD, LT, Teton County, Driggs, & private LOs help implement riparian treatments on private riparian forestlands. LOs provide in-kind labor.

WR, Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provide legal approval & funding of water transactions.

FG, EQ, WR, USFS, CD, FD provide technical support, and monitoring.

Integrated Delivery

This project advances a forward-looking approach designed to integrate landowner and agency values. Lessons learned while working with diverse stakeholders to implement social/ community engagement, economic/ conservation incentives, and ecological/ riparian restoration strategies will be used to adapt, inform and replicate actions in other areas of the county, state, and region.

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Influence on Positive Change

This project takes a collaborative, landscape-scale approach to riparian conservation with landowner engagement in highly valued and visible headwaters, whose health and function directly affects the social, ecological, and economic health of the local community, providing a replicable example for communities and watersheds throughout the region.

Accomplishments

Deliverables

CF=conserve forests, PF=protect forests, EF=enhance forests

DELIVERABLES & OUTPUTS:

- * Management and implementation plan on the 1,200 acre riparian corridor
- * Approximately 15 riparian reforestation and afforestation planting projects on 30 acres
- * Channel/floodplain restoration treatments and riparian plantings on 800 ft channel & 670 ft stream bank
- * Restore water to priority stream reaches
- * Tailored Riparian Forest Restoration & Protection Guide distributed to 50 LOs
- * 15 TCC LOs engaged in riparian forest restoration/management activities
- * 100 copies of marketing/education materials
- * 5 educational field tours/ presentations

OUTCOMES:

* Collaborative and coordinated watershed scale planning addresses and mitigates issues across ownerships. CF, PF

* Informed LOs contribute to restoration and protection of healthy resilient riparian forests.

PF & EF

- * Improved riparian forest function and connectivity to adjacent forestlands. EF,CF
- * Sediment and temperature reduction and improved water quality. EF
- * Protection of Yellowstone Cutthroat and other native fish and wildlife species. EF,PF
- * Stream bank stabilization, property loss reduction and increased flood resilience. EF, PF
- * Increased community capacity to implement similar projects. EF
- * The TCC floodplain is resilient to impacts of development and climate change. EF

Accomplishments to Date

2016 State granted funding. MOU drafted and signed between IDL and Friends of the Teton River (FTR).

2017

Geomorphic assessment of the Teton Creek Corridor completed.

Revegetation on 650 ft. stream bank restoration project. The initial objective was to complete revegetation on 650 ft of stream bank along Teton Creek. However, thanks to successful additional fundraising efforts, we were able to substantially exceed this objective. Rather than the single project noted in the deliverables, two (non-grant funded) stream restoration construction projects with a stream bank/floodplain revegetation component were completed in the project area in late fall of 2017. Each of these projects had a (grant funded) revegetation

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treatment associated with it. The two projects (described below), restored and revegetated a total of 1,165 ft of stream bank, plus approx. 2 acres of floodplain. A total of 2,770 willow poles were cut, prepared, and planted on the two project sites.

LSR funds were specifically used on both projects for staff time and materials to cut, prepare, and plant native willow poles along the stream bank and in the restored floodplain adjacent to the channel. It should be noted that LSR funds also played a substantial role in fundraising, as they were successfully used as leverage to attract additional funds.

Riparian Forest Management Plan for the Teton Creek Corridor: 3 meetings were held in summer/fall of 2017 with key stakeholders to discuss and begin to develop the Restoration Plan and Riparian Forest Management Plan.

Signed agreements with landowners to restore at least 2 cfs of water to Teton Creek to support riparian forest health: FTR Water Policy Director Sarah Lien has been working closely with the Teton Regional Land Trust (TRLT) to develop a strategy by which to secure water for instream flow purposes in Teton Creek. The focus has been specifically on 2.16 acres of water appurtenant to the 140 acre Teton Creek Ranch (aka Green Ranch) property purchased by TRLT. The parties agree that coupling land and water outcomes is the future of conservation in the West. As such, the selected strategy seeks to meld traditional land conservation tools with this new paradigm, a first for land and water conservation in our region. In short, the strategy selected by FTR and TRLT utilizes the land trust's conservation easement "tool" as a vehicle to permanently commit water instream for the benefit of fish and wildlife, and enforce the terms of the agreement in perpetuity. When TRLT sells the Teton Creek Ranch property and encumbers it with a conservation easement, the conservation easement will include language which secures instream flow outcomes for the water. FTR and TRLT worked have developed a draft easement, which includes specific water language. The Teton Creek Ranch property is currently being advertised for sale. Once a purchaser is identified, the terms of the conservation easement and integrated water transaction will be finalized. Completion of this easement/water transaction, the first of its kind in our region, will serve as a replicable model for how permanent, significant land and water outcomes can be accomplished in the State of Idaho.

At least 15 private landowners engaged in restoration/management activities: To date, two private landowners have been engaged in restoration activities through direct treatments to properties they own. An additional 25 private landowners have been engaged in stakeholder meetings and restoration planning activities.

Treatment projects completed on at least 30 acres of riparian forest land: To date, treatments have been completed on approx. 2 acres of riparian forest land in the Teton Creek corridor.

2018

16 acres of additional riparian forest revegetation on the Teton Creek Ranch property.

2019

Project completed education and outreach events

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Deliverables in Progress

2018

To date, three private landowners have been directly engaged in restoration activities through treatments to properties they own. An additional 25 private landowners have been engaged in stakeholder meetings and restoration planning activities. The landowner engagement component of the riparian treatments objective is proceeding on schedule, with completion of this deliverable anticipated by or before August of 2019. No changes to scope or timeline are anticipated at this time.

(leverage) FTR's Community Outreach Coordinator has been working on development of the Teton Creek Riparian Forest Protection and Restoration Guide, and design and implementation of workshops and field tours to complement it.

2019

Project completed education and outreach events and is continuing to expand the above stream-channel restoration efforts through agreements with neighboring private landowners.

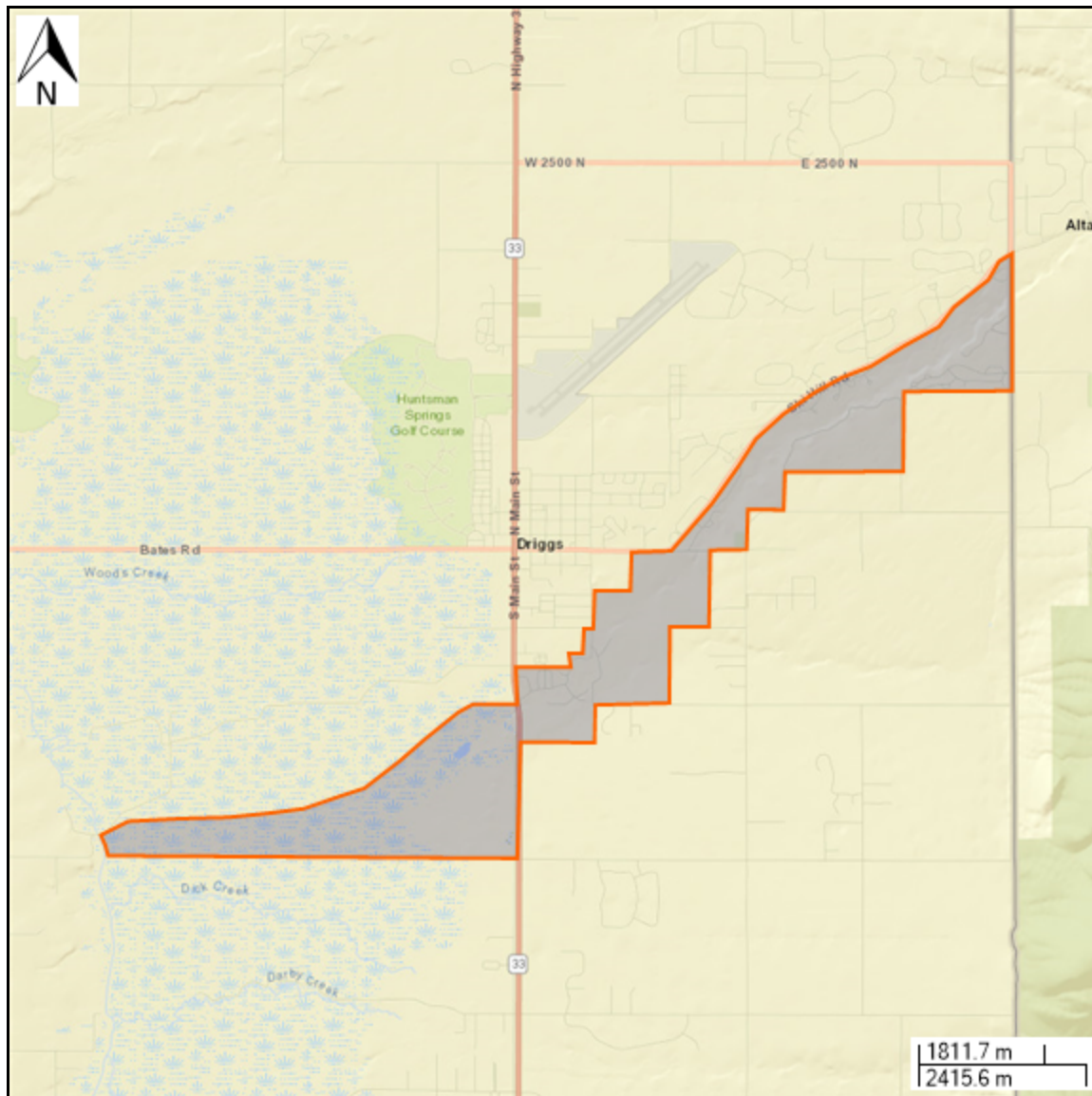
Challenges

None

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Impact Area



Information Last Updated
1/11/2021