



Collaborative Partnership Provides “Road Map” for Road Remediation

- 2005-present
- Olympic National Forest
- Partners: Skokomish Watershed Action Team, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, Washington Native Plant Society, Skokomish Tribe

Project Description

The Olympic National Forest works in partnership with the Skokomish Watershed Action Team—a diverse group of stakeholders who collaborate to fund and implement road treatments that improve water quality and sedimentation problems in the upper South Fork Skokomish Watershed. The Forest also works with the Skokomish Tribe on road remediation in the upper watershed.



Skokomish Watershed Action Team field trip with Congressman Norm Dicks and staff

Action Team participants sponsor and secure grants and in-kind contributions for the road projects. From 2005-2008, five separate projects were funded through grants and in-kind services, as well as Forest Service stewardship contracts. These projects collectively resulted in 11.1 miles of active road decommissioning; 1.8 miles of decommissioning (no treatment); 1.3 miles of decommissioning with conversion to trail; and .5 mile of Level 1 closure. Treatments included removal of culverts, stream channel restoration, construction of cross ditches and swales, pullback of unstable fill-slopes, out-sloping, deep scarification, invasive plant species control treatments, seed & mulch, and planting of native species at select sites.

The Forest is currently working in partnership with the Skokomish Tribe to implement drainage upgrades, stabilization and storm-proofing treatments on five Forest Service roads. In 2008, the following treatments were completed: installation of 9 new ditch relief culverts; replacement of 2 ditch relief culverts, installation of 217 waterbars; rock armor placement at 13 ditch relief culvert inlets and/or outlets; reconditioning of 4 ditch relief culverts and 2 large culverts; and maintenance of existing drainage structures along 6.8 miles of road. Additional work is scheduled to be implemented by the end of September 2009.

In 2008, the Forest initiated planning and assessment for road decommissioning and Level 1 Closure on an additional 30 miles within the South Fork Skokomish watershed. The NEPA decision notice for this project was signed in spring 2009. Planning and assessment is currently underway for an additional 53 miles of road proposed for decommissioning, Level 1 Closure, or conversion to trail.

Benefits

- Reduced mass wasting and surface erosion in streams that support ESA-listed salmon stocks.
- Improved water quality and restoration of the natural sediment regime.
- Increased high quality forage for black-tailed deer and Roosevelt elk.
- Decreased human disturbance to the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet.
- Restored native plant species.
- Reduced future maintenance of Forest roads.

Keys to success

“In 2000 the Forest completed a Forest-wide roads analysis—one of the first in the nation. In 2003, we used that analysis to assess how to manage roads under reduced funding scenarios,” says Robin Stoddard, Forest Hydrologist. “In 2005, the Skokomish Watershed Action Team came into being after initiation of the Forest’s first collaborative stewardship project. The 2003 assessment was a key element for developing a solid Action Team plan for restoring the Upper Skokomish Watershed. Other keys to success include strong Action Team leadership by Coordinator Mike Anderson, willing partners, and effectiveness in securing funds. And all of these projects build on \$10.6 million in road-related work completed between early 1990s through 2004.” Robin Stoddard has been the Forest Hydrologist on the Olympic National Forest since 1992. Her career focus is on watershed restoration with emphasis on road remediation through collaborative partnerships. She is one of the founding members of the Action Team.

Types of agreements

- Challenge Cost Share Agreement, Collection Agreement, and Participating Agreement
- Integrated Resource Service Contract, Construction Contract, and Service Contract.

Project costs and contributions

Total project cost is roughly \$1,796,500:

- Forest Service: \$940,800. Includes \$775,000 in program funds; \$15,000 in Whole Watershed Joint Venture funds; and \$150,000 in Stewardship Conservation Credits.
- Grant funds: \$772,700. Grant sources include Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Title II funds, Washington Department of Ecology, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wolfree Inc., and U.S. EPA.
- Partner in-kind contributions: \$83,000. Includes \$8,000 in monitoring by the Washington Native Plant Society.



Estimated savings

Partners have greatly increased leveraging of Forest Service program funds and grant monies for road work. Projects have resulted in substantial decrease in deferred and annual road maintenance costs.

More information

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Brown Creek road decommissioning.
Photos by Robin Stoddard, Olympic National Forest.

The Skokomish Watershed Action Team:
Enhancing Watershed Resiliency through
Collaboration
(link to PowerPoint presentation:
<http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/roads/documents/SWAT-WR-ForestRoadsPresentation.ppt>)

Find this story and more at the Partnership Resource Center website: <http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/roads/success-stories.php>