

## Pack River Delta Restoration—Phase 2

### Featuring:

**Pack River Delta  
Restoration—  
Phase 2**

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**Contact us at:  
(208) 263-5310**

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The Pack River Delta east of Sandpoint provides important habitat for migratory birds, moose, beaver and other wildlife. It is also a critical migration corridor for Bull Trout, a federally listed threatened species.

The 1952 construction and subsequent operation of the Albeni Falls dam altered the hydrology of Lake Pend Oreille and led to the deterioration of the Pack River Delta. Lake inundation, streambank erosion, and wave erosion have caused a significant loss of wetland habitat in the delta.

In 2008, Ducks Unlimited partnered with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to implement Phase 1 of a plan to protect and restore wetland habitat in the Pack River Delta.

The project included building log vanes, root-wad roughness structures, and engineered log jams to reduce erosion and encourage natural sedimentation. These structures were installed with a combination of soil bioengineering solutions including fascines, willow bundles, and pole plantings. This was followed by a large scale revegetation effort in which volunteers planted native grasses, woody and herbaceous plants.

Overall, Phase 1 of the restoration project has worked very well and demonstrated that wildlife habitat restoration in the delta is possible.

Phase 2 of the Pack River Delta restoration project is currently in the planning and de-

sign process. Phase 2 will continue the restoration of key upland, riparian and wetland habitats and expand restoration efforts south toward the railroad trestle.

The primary focus of Phase 2 is to increase physical habitat complexity. Portions of submerged areas will be raised to restore and expand wildlife habitat lost due to inundation. Excavated areas will provide open water habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds and reduce the extent of the mudflat during low water. Additional areas will be protected from further erosion.



**Pack River Delta Restoration—Phase 2 Area Map**

Work is expected to begin late next fall, pending completion of the permitting process. Material staging would likely begin in October followed by construction in November after the lake level drops.

*"Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it."*

*~ Norman Maclean, A River Runs Through It*

## Pack River Minimum Stream Flow

*By Merritt Horsmon, IDFG*

The Pack River has been designated as critical habitat for ESA listed (threatened) Bull Trout by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Bull Trout depend on cool, clean water and use the Pack River as a migration corridor to their spawning areas. Additionally, native Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Gerrard Rainbow Trout from Lake Pend Oreille use the Pack River for spawning.



**Upper Pack River**

Because of the importance of these fisheries, the Idaho Water Resources Board created a minimum flow water right for a 22-mile portion of the Upper Pack River to its confluence with Grouse Creek. Water right 96-8717 was created in 1992 to protect the Pack River flows, and therefore the fisheries and fish habitat.

The minimum flow held by that water right from November 1 through the end of July is

129 cubic feet per second (cfs). That amount drops to 54 cfs until the end of October to account for lower summer flows and irrigation withdrawals.

USGS gauge 12392300 on the Pack River at Colburn has been consistently below 50% of this amount during the drier months for several consecutive years. On September 9, 2022, the instantaneous flow was 22.9 cfs, or only 42.4% of the minimum flow right.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game is concerned about the potential negative effects to fisheries habitat and loss of connectivity with additional water rights being approved for the lower Pack River. The 22 miles of the Pack River are consistently less than the granted minimum instream flow, while more water rights are being applied for.

Climate models for Idaho indicate increasing temperatures, decreasing snowpack, and decreasing precipitation leading to low summer stream flows increasing in frequency in the future.

Stream flow data for the Pack River near Colburn Idaho can be accessed online at: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/12392300/>.

## Conservation Resources



### Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program is a voluntary conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service that provides federal match funding to eligible projects that support forestry, wildlife, agriculture and water quality enhancements or protection. For more information contact Cindy Lewis, NRCS Soil Conservationist at 208-263-5310 ext. 102.



### Conservation Stewardship Program

The Conservation Stewardship Program offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural and forest producers take their conservation efforts to the next level. The program is designed to compensate agricultural and forest producers who agree to increase their level of conservation by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation. For more information visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/csp-conservation-stewardship-program](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/csp-conservation-stewardship-program).



### Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program protects the agricultural viability and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting nonagricultural uses which negatively affect agricultural uses and conservation values, protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring or conserving eligible grazing land, and protecting and restoring and enhancing wetlands on eligible land. For more information visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program).

## Upcoming Workshops...

#### Noxious Weed Control Workshop

Dec. 15 | Zoom | Free

Contact Doug to learn more: [dougf@uidaho.edu](mailto:dougf@uidaho.edu)

#### Heritage Orchard Conference Webinar Series

Dec. 21-April 19 | Zoom | Free

Contact Kyle Nagy at [knagy@uidaho.edu](mailto:knagy@uidaho.edu).

#### Master Gardener Course

Jan. 18-April 5 | Zoom | Free

Contact Lena Allen to learn more:  
[lallen@uidaho.edu](mailto:lallen@uidaho.edu) or 208-529-1390

#### High-Altitude Victory Gardens

March 8, 22; April 5, 19; May 10, 24 | \$45

Driggs/Zoom

Contact Jen Werlin to learn more:

[jwerlin@uidaho.edu](mailto:jwerlin@uidaho.edu) or 208-354-2961

#### Forestry Shortcourse

UI Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center

June 14-July 19 | \$38

For more info: [www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/programs](http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/programs)

If you would like to receive this publication by e-mail, please contact Sarah Garcia at [Sarah.Garcia@id.nacdn.net](mailto:Sarah.Garcia@id.nacdn.net) or call 208-263-5310 x 100. Archived newsletters are available at [www.bonnerswcd.org](http://www.bonnerswcd.org)



# Pack River Watershed Council

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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.*