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Restoration**

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

[www.bonnierswcd.org](http://www.bonnierswcd.org)

## Grouse Creek Road Reroute & Channel Restoration

Located in north Idaho, Grouse Creek is a primary tributary to the Pack River in the Lake Pend Oreille watershed. Grouse Creek supports important spawning and rearing habitat for native fish species including Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout.



**Grouse Creek Road #280 washed out on May 25, 2020.**

Lower Grouse Creek Road FSR#280 between North Fork Grouse Creek and Wylie Creek Trailhead has a long history of road maintenance problems. Several locations encroach upon the Grouse Creek floodplain and frequently wash out or route flood waters down the road.

The most recent flood occurred on May 25, 2020 due to heavy precipitation and mid-elevation snowmelt. The channel avulsed 1,200 feet down Grouse Creek road causing heavy damage. On May 26, 2020 the water had down-cut through the road material and 90 percent of Grouse Creek was diverted down the road.

The USFS determined that FSR#280 should be rerouted out of the floodplain in order to protect fish habitat and reduce road maintenance costs. The length of the reroute is 2.03 miles and will traverse a southeast aspect that is jointly held by Forest Service and a private timber company. Road construction is due to be completed this fall.

The road reroute has created an opportunity to restore a more natural and complex channel in Grouse Creek. The next phase of construction will create a stream channel extending from the washout area of Grouse Creek at the FSR#280 to an existing network of lateral channels in the floodplain.

The existing levee currently preventing Grouse Creek from diverting down FSR#280 will be excavated to the elevation of summer low flow. This will not directly divert the flow of Grouse Creek but allow it to naturally divert when flows increase in the winter or spring. Flood flows will naturally flow down the encouragement channel to the existing lateral floodplain channels.

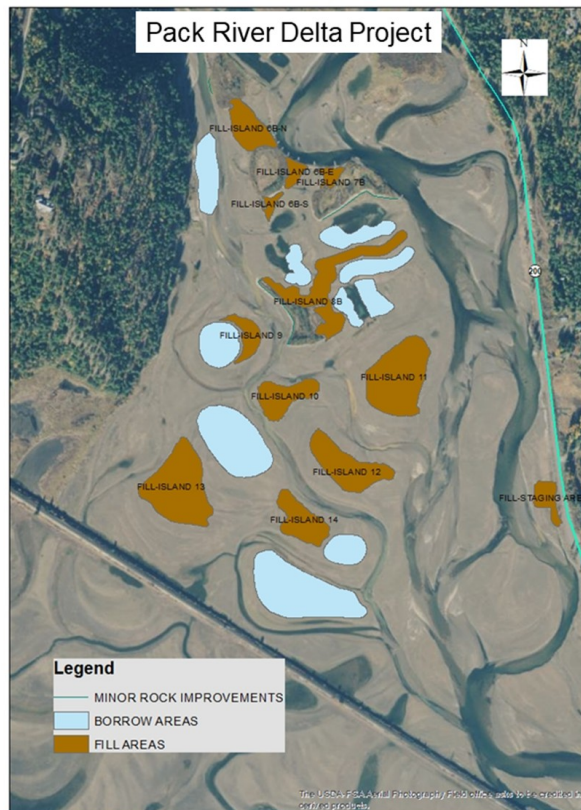
Reconnecting Grouse Creek with 2,500 feet of its floodplain will restore the channel to its historical form and hydrological function. The addition of large wood structures will further increase habitat complexity which will benefit native fish, especially Bull Trout.

## Pack River Delta Restoration—Phase II

by TJ Ross, IDFG

Idaho Fish and Game will soon begin a second phase of wildlife habitat restoration on the Pack River Delta in North Idaho.

and build eight new islands and ten borrow areas. The project will restore and improve delta habitat by stabilizing banks, creating emergent benches and islands, and planting vegetation aimed at protecting and improving wildlife habitat.



**Pack River Delta Restoration project map**

An initial restoration project occurred on the Pack River Delta during winter 2009. The project included building log vanes, root-wad roughness structures, and engineered log jams to reduce erosion of the existing islands and encourage sediment deposition to develop new islands.

The upcoming project will rebuild some of the landforms created during the 2009 project

Contractors will begin staging material on Nov. 13th. Construction work is anticipated to occur Monday through Friday during daylight hours through the winter and into early spring.

Construction for the new project will primarily be in the central and southern portion of the Pack River Delta, north of the Burlington Northern Railroad line. A temporary bridge will be installed to span a main channel of the Pack River and provide access to the construction zone.

Sportsmen can still hunt in the Pack River Delta during construction. Hunters are encouraged to be mindful and respectful of workers and heavy equipment in the area. To provide added safety to the workers on the project, yellow "Safety Zone" signs will be installed.

Although the timing of construction overlaps with waterfowl and trapping seasons, the improvement of wildlife habitat in the delta will likely benefit hunting and fishing opportunities in the future.

*"The health of our waters is the principle measure of how we live on the land."*

~ Luna Leopold

## Considering Habitat Improvement?

There are plenty of options for those who want to improve and restore fish and wildlife habitat on their property. A habitat improvement project does not need to be expensive or time consuming. It can be as simple as spreading weed-free straw and native grass seed around a disturbed patch of land.

You can dramatically improve riparian habitat and build stream bank stability by planting native willow and red osier dogwood. Cuttings can easily be taken locally and directly planted with no financial investment and a little time.

Supplies for sediment control such as straw wattles and erosion control blankets can be purchased locally and easily installed with a little consultation from the NRCS or the PRWC. See [www.panhandleSEEP.org](http://www.panhandleSEEP.org) for more erosion and sediment control resources.

More complicated projects such as stream bank stabilization can be initiated by a simple call to Cindy Lewis, NRCS District Conservationist at (208)263-5310 ext. 102. A variety of grants and cost-share options are available to help with restoration costs.

Of course the least expensive option is to protect our wetlands and native vegetation in the first place. But if we already have disturbed land, it is well worth the effort to restore any impacted area. Improving habitat not only builds ecological health and diversity, but also provides real added value to your property.



*Willow bundles sprouting on the Pack River Delta (2010)*

### Upcoming Workshops...

**Idaho Native Tree Identification Class**  
**Dec. 2 | U of I Organic Agricultural Center | \$10**  
 Contact U of I Extension Office 208-263-8511

**Heritage Orchard Conference Webinar Series**  
**Dec. 20 - Apr. 21 (monthly) | Zoom | Free**  
 Contact Kyle Nagy at [knagy@uidaho.edu](mailto:knagy@uidaho.edu)

**Pesticides, Bees and Plant-Pollinator Interactions**  
**Dec. 14 | Zoom | Free**  
 Register at [https://uidaho.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UL69B6YtS3ifqGooTEOFwA#/registration](https://uidaho.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UL69B6YtS3ifqGooTEOFwA#/registration)

**Lawns That Give More Than They Take**  
**Mar. 28 | Zoom | Free**  
 Register at [https://uidaho.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_FJYCWosIQXuzQyZGCrtOZg#/registration](https://uidaho.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FJYCWosIQXuzQyZGCrtOZg#/registration)

**Forestry Short Course**  
**June 12 – July 17 | Weds. 10am - 1pm | St. Maries, Idaho | \$38**  
 Contact U of I Extension office in Kootenai County at 208-292-2525

*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.*