

Report for WNTI Small Grant

Project Title: Rattlesnake Creek Streambank and Riparian Restoration

Period of Performance: October 1, 2013 through August 30, 2014

Project Summary

The goals of this project were to 1) stabilize the eroding streambank along a degraded portion of Rattlesnake Creek; 2) restore native riparian species to the previously damaged site; 3) encourage sustainable recreation to prevent future damage; and 4) engage the community in watershed restoration.

The above goals were accomplished with generous funding provided by the Western Native Trout Initiative(WNTI). This project was a collaborative effort between the Lolo National Forest (LNF) and the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Group (RCWG). The LNF financially supported the majority of the stream stabilization work, wherein large boulders were placed along the degraded portion of the streambank in the rip-rap method. Following the placement of boulders, snag trees were placed and soil was bermed in and amongst the placed boulders, allowing substrate for riparian vegetation to be planted in.

With funding from WNTI, RCWG entered into a Participating Agreement with the LNF, which would allow the LNF staff to hire a vegetation consultant to complete vegetation design and purchasing. Once vegetation composition and placement was determined for the site, RCWG began outreach to recruit volunteers for a volunteer restoration day. On May 4, 2014, the RCWG and ten community volunteers gathered at the site to plant native trees and shrubs. Vegetation was strategically planted to create streamside shade, retain sediment and discourage recreational use. At the completion of the volunteer restoration day, WNTI and RCWG planted 47 shrubs and large stock trees across the project area.

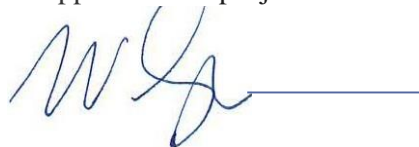
Since completion of the project, RCWG has been monitoring the project site and providing supplemental water during the drier summer months. As of August 15, 2014, the project site has seen 90% survival of planted trees and shrubs. The site is receiving recreational use exactly as designed. Previous to this project, the site was very exposed, serving as a source of sedimentation downstream. Following completion, the exposed streambank is covered in vegetation with the exception of a single path to the creek for recreational access.

By stabilizing the eroding streambank and planting native riparian trees and shrubs, we anticipate that this project will significantly reduce point source sedimentation and improve water quality along a stream that serves as highly important aquatic habitat for bull trout and Westslope cutthroat trout. We also anticipate that this project will continue to reduce future streambank erosion and riparian trampling as recreational use continues.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Group, thank you for WNTI's generous support of this project.

Sincerely,

Wes Swaffar



Rattlesnake Creek Bank Stabilization Before & After Photos

Missoula Ranger District, T 14N, R 19W, Section 35 @ 46.93066, -113.95887, below horse bridge crossing



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