

Restoration Project Accomplishments

Improving water quality and wildlife habitat by partnering with private landowners, collaborating with the Forest Service, and securing funding to implement on the ground restoration projects.

The Bitter Root Water Forum = Clean Water for the Bitterroot

Burnt Fork Creek: Improve water quality by enhancing riparian habitat. Partnered with a ranching family to build riparian fencing, install native plants, and create designated stream crossings and off-site watering for cattle. Efforts reduced cattle access to and impact on the stream, while improving the landowner's ability to implement rotational grazing. *This project will reduce sediment delivery to the stream, which is home to the endangered Bull Trout.*



Miller Creek: Improve the fishery by reducing stream temperatures and sediment delivery. Partnered with a rancher to install over 3,600 feet of riparian fencing to keep cattle and deer from trampling streambanks and eating new vegetation before it could get established. Planted 400+ native plants and improved natural plant recruitment to help actively revegetate the overly warm, sediment laden stream. *This project reduced sediment delivery to Miller Creek by 19 tons annually.*



East Fork Bitterroot River: Improve water quality and Westslope cutthroat trout fishery by lowering stream temperatures and reducing sediment and nutrient pollution. Worked with a fifth-generation ranch family in the headwaters of the Bitterroot to install a half mile of riparian fencing to protect the streambank and vegetation from grazing pressure. Revegetated more than 400 feet of streambank with mature willow transplants, live willow stems, and hundreds of nursery plants to actively restore riparian habitat. *Plants will provide root structures to prevent erosion and canopy to shade the overly warm stream.*



West Fork Bitterroot River: Removed a hazard to floaters and recycled 2,000 pounds of steel. Partnered with a helicopter pilot to remove an old car body that was wedged in the stream channel.

“Clean Up All Year” + “Annual River Clean Up” Day: Removes more than 2,000 pounds of trash annually through a combination of a year long reusable trash bag program and an annual, community-wide River Clean Up day in August.

Sleeping Child + Rye Creek, headwaters: Improve habitat for Bull trout and Westslope cutthroat trout and drastically reduce sediment. Restored nearly 20 miles of road in an almost 2,000-acre area in the Upper Sleeping Child and Rye Creek drainages. Recontouring these abandoned, deteriorating roads restored hydrologic function, allowing for rain and runoff to be stored in the ground instead of washing out the road surface into streams. *This project has reduced sediment loading to these streams by nine dump trucks annually.*



Rye Creek: Reduce streambank erosion to improve the fishery and reduce excessive sediment delivery to the Bitterroot River. Enhanced a riparian area using bioengineered bank stabilization, effectively rebuilding streambanks using willows and woody debris, and halting unnatural bank erosion. *Rye Creek is one of the largest sediment contributors to the Bitterroot River; this project prevents excessive sediment from reaching the Bitterroot River.*



Doran Creek: Temperature Reduction. Collected and planted 300 willows on Doran Creek, an overly warm tributary to Cameron Creek. *Part of an ongoing effort to reduce stream temperatures in the headwaters of the Bitterroot.*

Cameron Creek: Temperature Reduction. Installed 1,500 native nursery plants, 1,000 willow cuttings, 900 feet of natural stabilization material, and one-mile of riparian fencing to keep cows and wildlife out of the stream. This project actively reduced streambank erosion and sediment delivery while also improving floodplain function, reducing stream temperatures. *Cameron Creek is one of the warmest tributaries entering the temperature impaired East Fork of the Bitterroot River*



Threemile Creek: Sediment Reduction. Resurfaced a road and installed a roadside ditch for runoff, both reducing and filtering road surface erosion before it reaches Threemile Creek. *Threemile Creek is one of the highest sediment contributors to the Bitterroot River.*

East Fork: Habitat Improvement through Sediment + Temperature Reduction. In partnership with Montana Highway Department, the Water Forum planted over 5,000 feet of native plants at five different sites to recreate a healthy riparian buffer between the river and the highway. These plants provide shade to the stream and trap sediment before it reaches the river. *This is part of an ongoing effort to reduce stream temperatures in the headwaters of the Bitterroot.*