

Background

In the Sitka Ranger District two separate fish passage improvement projects were completed in the Duffield and Fish Bay watersheds. The fisheries enhancement projects were undertaken to improve fish habitat and restore fish passage to stream habitat impacted by failing road stream crossing structures. Species expected to benefit from this work were coho, pink, and chum salmon, steelhead, sculpin and Dolly Varden char. Through the removal of dilapidated log stringer bridges and log culverts, the artificial constriction created by each of these structures was alleviated. The constriction had resulted in the re-routing of stream channels and restricted fish passage. Proper removal would re-establish fish access and restore more natural floodplain channel functions to streams in the Duffield and Fish Bay watersheds. Both projects involved the use of explosives instead of heavy equipment to remove structures.

Outcomes

- The Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) supported the project and is in the process of creating a tech tip for future projects of this nature.
- Funding concerns were met by combining the project with the Region 10 blasters recertification course, partnering with Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and by using explosives instead of heavy equipment to accomplish the same task.

Successes The removal of 52 structures within the two project areas has helped restore watersheds to their natural watershed floodplain functions.

Timeline Duffield: May 2005—June 2007; Fish Bay June 2007 (Ongoing)

Future Work Similar work will continue in the Fish Bay watershed.

Details Project Partners: US Forest Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Missoula Technology and Development Center; Funding: Fisheries and Engineering Program Funds, ADNRFunding



Before photo at Duffield site.



After a stringer log was removed



Site at Fish Bay prior to restoration work



After restoration work was completed at Fish Bay