Road Decommissioning Yakutat Ranger District

SE Alaska Restoration

Background

A series of logging roads were created for timber harvest in the project area in 1985, 1991, 2002, and 2004. A large portion of these roads were built as temporary structures, but due to deep incision and compaction, they permanently remain within the landscape and alter natural drainage patterns. These roads act as first order streams, diverting water from natural stream channels, increasing the rate of runoff, and affecting infiltration rates into the shallow water table. Poorly maintained or improperly closed roads are a significant long term watershed stewardship concern on the Tongass. The goal of the project was to restore the natural contour of the land by removing the old logging roads.

Outcomes

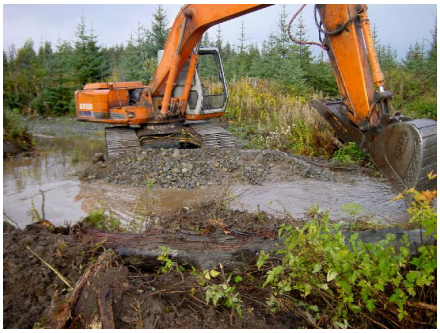
All of the roads in the West Gate area have been obliterated. Nearly 30 miles of classified and unclassified roads were obliterated in 2005 and 2007. The West Gate area is part of the much larger 5312 acre Situk River Watershed, the most important watershed in the Yakutat area.

Successes This project has successfully restored over 100 stream crossings in the West Gate area.

Timeline September 2005 and September 2007

Future Work Additional work is dependent on pending NEPA decisions.

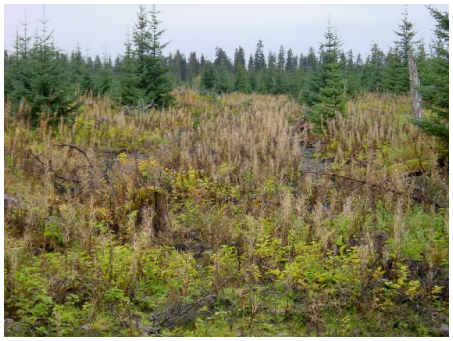
Details Project Coordinator: US Forest Service; Funding: Watershed Program Funds; Business Contractor: Pate Construction.



The excavator opens a natural stream channel.

An incised road captures water from a natural stream channel.

Freshly completed road obliteration.



Road obliteration after one year of natural revegetation.