

## Bridge Creek

## Grande Ronde

This year the Bridge Creek council fixed several fish passage barriers on West Branch Bridge Creek, while at the same time installing irrigation efficiency systems. They've involved FFA students in a riparian tree planting of 1/2 mile of Mountain Creek. Working in conjunction with the Wheeler SWCD staff and engineer consultant, there is now a fish passage barrier assessment for the upper main stem Bridge Creek that identifies and prioritizes projects on that reach. Over the years, the work will continue on down Bridge Creek until it joins the John Day River. The council is continuing to open up fish passage on stretches of Bridge Creek and other important streams in the Bridge Creek Watershed and improving irrigation efficiency for landowners.



Lower Diversion along Bridge Creek

### Catherine Creek Off-Channel Rearing Habitat



Pre-project: off-channel habitat with accumulated sediment.



Post-project: sediment removed and woody debris added for cover.

The Catherine Creek off-channel rearing habitat project improved off-channel habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon and steelhead by removing 5000 cubic yards of sediment from two ponds. The ponds are connected to Catherine Creek by a ditch and a culvert and were constructed and used by the City of Union prior to the mid-1980s for their domestic water supply. Sediment has accumulated in the ponds, reducing the depth to about a foot. Components of the project included removal of sediment, wood and brush placement, and replacement of the undersized culverts at the inlet and outlet. The site is owned by the City of Union, but is managed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla under an easement purchased by the BPA.

## Harney

The Harney County Watershed Council in Burns, OR, started in 1997. The diverse membership includes all facets of the watershed. Monthly meetings provide an open forum for any issue to be discussed. The Malheur Lake Basin with a human population of 7000, is geographically made up of seven fourth field HUCs



Unhealthy juniper encroachment in the Cucamonga watershed on N Steens Mt.

(hydrologic unit code) covering over 6.3 million acres in the southeast portion of Oregon. It is a closed basin, with none of our perennial streams finding their way to the ocean. Close to eighty percent is uplands-rangeland, with an average elevation of 4200'. Steens Mountain rises to 9670'. Encroaching juniper is impacting water quality, quantity and temperature. The council, working closely with affected landowners, federal and state agencies, and the Eastern Oregon Agriculture Research Center, has made juniper management and education about the issue its priority.



Positive vegetative response and aspen regeneration following juniper treatment with a combination of cutting and burning in the Kiger watershed on Steens Mtn.

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## *Malheur*

By June 2005, the Malheur council will have finished an enormous project in cooperation with Vale Oregon Irrigation District and local landowners. This project, costing over \$800,000, has been funded primarily by Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Bureau of Reclamation. When finished, they will have installed over 37,000 feet of pipe to cover two laterals operated by the irrigation district. These previously dirt ditches will now convey water to more than 25 users in an extremely efficient manner. The water loss due to seepage will be virtually eliminated resulting in far less overall usage. Contamination from sediment, nutrients and bacteria will be effectively prevented. This is a dream realized for all parties involved.

## *Mid-John Day*



Juniper Workshop and Pulling



This year the Mid-John Day Watershed Council revitalized the council's membership with workshops, tours, newsletters and a fair display. Also, several fish passage barrier culverts were either replaced or removed on Pine Creek. The council also completed the Butte Creek Watershed Assessment.

## *North Fork John-Day*

The vast grasslands, canyons and forests of the North Fork John-Day watershed support some of the strongest native Spring Chinook and steelhead runs in the Columbia Basin and the small ranching and logging communities that are home to the people who live there. It is a diverse Council that is proud to join together in support of human and natural communities. The Council focuses on work together productively at a local level to identify and implement win-win conservation projects. Over the last 2 1/2 years, they have worked on 32 projects, including 10 irrigation diversion improvements, 11 grazing system improvement projects, five weed control projects, three channel restoration projects, one irrigation efficiency project, one road improvement project and one juniper project. Of these, 26 are on private lands, four are with grazing permittees on federal lands, and one is on County land.



Trying out a new fish screen

## *Owyhee*

The Owyhee Watershed Council initiated more than 30 on-the-ground restoration projects this biennium. The projects are meant to improve watershed health and function, while helping to maintain economic sustainability within the basin. Educational efforts, such as the Owyhee 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Day, are another point of council success. In May, 2005 the Owyhee Field Day will provide place-based and balanced watershed education to more than 500 local 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students. In the next biennium, the council also looks forward to developing and administering a small grant program in the Idaho portion of the watershed. The program, called the "Owyhee Restoration Incentive Program", will facilitate the implementation of small restoration projects focused on improving water quality through local initiative.



Youth at the Owyhee 5th Grade Field Day

# Eastern Region Watershed Councils

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## Powder Basin

In the last biennium, the Powder Basin Watershed Council initiated two Local Watershed Action Plans. The Pine Creek WAP was approved by the council in March 2003 and the draft form of the Upper Powder WAP is now being finalized. They have identified and begun a priority project identified with the Sumpter Municipal Water Diversion.



Forest Culvert Project

The council also has a Watershed and Stream Health Program in partnership with Baker County. This program is studying the feasibility of implementing the ODA Water Reservations within the Powder Basin.



Vegetation project on the Sumpter Valley Gold Dredge Tailings

## Umatilla Basin

In 2004 the Council adopted projects as a primary focus. The Council took these steps to start projects:

- formed a projects coalition team composed of major watershed players
- developed a format and structure for submitting projects to the coalition
- developed a format for evaluation of projects by the coalition team
- obtained an OWEB grant to offer technical assistance funding to those projects ranked highest
- organized a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) team to get the program rolling in Umatilla County, and to complement projects endorsed by the projects coalition team

Approximately 40 projects were submitted, 10 of which received technical assistance funding. All of the projects will continue to be shepherded by the projects coalition team. The Council will submit another grant to OWEB to get technical assistance funding for top rated projects. The Technical Assistance Grant was instrumental in generating interest to do projects. The projects currently being worked on and/or evaluated are;

- Riparian buffers (expected funding brought into Umatilla Cty. >\$1,000,000) 23 landowners, 34 miles
- Irrigation efficiency (expected funding brought into Umatilla Cty. \$350,000) 22 landowners
- Water Lease (expected funding brought into Umatilla Cty. \$100,000) 5 landowners 310 acres
- Upland wildlife ponds (expected funding brought into Umatilla Cty. \$20,000) 5 landowners 8 ponds
- Fish passage (expected funding brought into Umatilla Cty. \$50,000) 2 landowners Umatilla River

## Walla Walla

The Walla Walla Watershed Council had an innovative shallow aquifer recharge test project installed in cooperation with Hudson Bay District Improvement Company with support from OWEB and others. Preliminary results show the winter and early spring application of water to three infiltration basins is seasonally raising the surrounding shallow aquifer and enhancing flows in down-gradient springs. This aquifer restoration project will serve as a pilot for other sites that in combination will ideally stabilize and even reverse the declining aquifer trend that has been occurring for decades.

The Walla Walla watershed's biggest issue is restoring enough flows to the Walla Walla River to satisfy the needs of ESA listed fish, while still maintaining adequate irrigation water for its agriculture based economy. The Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council has helped irrigation districts and individual farmers be more efficient by bringing in over \$1.3 million dollars for piping delivery ditches and converting 84 farms to more efficient sprinkler systems. Water saved from the projects is transferred in-stream to re-water an historically dewatered reach of the river, restoring fish passage and habitat.



Hudson Bay Aquifer Re-charge Site