United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Wallowa-Whitman National Forest | La Grande Ranger District
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Fence Reconstruction within the Upper Grande Ronde Watershed Project
Project # 216-8205-14355
Project Completion Report

Approved
3/9/2018

1) Final Project Summary

The *Fence Reconstruction within the Upper Grande Ronde Watershed Project* was completed in 2017. This project resulted in more secure livestock and elk fencing to protect recovering riparian areas within the Upper Grande Ronde. Much of the area has had recent restorative action including riparian planting. Many of the fences were over 20 years old and were in varying stages of deterioration. Pods were in need of heavy maintenance to better protect planting investments made during restoration activities.

3/9/18

2) Project Description

a) Background

The *Fence Reconstruction with the Upper Grande Ronde Watershed Project* was designed to provide more reliable protection to streambanks and riparian shrubs within the Upper Grande Ronde and Meadow Creek watersheds. The projects objective was to reconstruct existing fences and riparian planting pods to improve protection to previously planted and native streamside shrubs and hydrophilic stream vegetation. The streams within the areas protected by riparian fences include spawning, rearing and migratory habitat for spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead and bull trout.

Fences were installed in the locations described in the application to provide more positive control of livestock and in the case of the McCoy Creek elk fence, all ungulates.

The existing fences have been maintained by the USFS and grazing permittes for many years, however over time, the fenceline right-of-way (ROW) becomes narrowed and filled with young conifers, tree ties are lost due to tree mortality, rock jacks rot, wire which had been spliced multiple times need to be replaced and t-posts reset due to wildlife crossing and soil movement.

Pods installed around planted deciduous seedlings require maintenance multiple times each year in areas with large elk herds or livestock grazing. Ungulates lean over the pod wire (48" woven wire fence) to reach the planted stock. Pods are used to protect planted seedlings until they can withstand ungulate browse, usually >60 inches in height.

b) Work Completed

Crews worked during the summer clearing fence line ROW, reconstructing rock jacks, replacing heavily spliced wire, replacing missing posts and re-setting pods around planted shrubs.

The reconstructed fences allow for more reliable protection to 21 miles of riparian areas from seasonal impacts to stream banks and shrub herbivory by livestock in addition to reducing sedimentation into the streams, protecting fish habitat and water quality.

The reconstructed pods allow for more reliable protection to 9.5 miles of stream by protecting planted shrubs from livestock and wild ungulate browsing.

The fences reconstructed were previously installed between the 1980's to 2010's with pods installed following instream restoration projects completed from 2009-2016.

Maintenance will continue to be completed on the fences by the USFS and grazing permittees. Pod maintenance will continue as time and funding allows.

c) Project Changes

There were no changes to the original proposal.

d) Summary of Outreach Activities

There were no outreach activities proposed for this project.

e) Lessons Learned

No new lessons learned from this project.

f) Recommendations

Maintenance that includes regular clearing of fence line ROW for riparian fencing greatly improves effectiveness of fences by reducing fence crowding by livestock as well as reducing jump overs due to narrow trails along fences. Often maintenance is considered complete after the wire has been fixed and reattached to the posts. Clearing ROW is labor and time intensive and is often neglected or completed at a reduced level. Providing funding for this type of labor greatly increases effectiveness of riparian fences.

3) Additional Monitoring Requirements.
None.

4) Project Compliance with Oregon Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Guide.
See Attached.

5) Color Photographs

View of reconstructed water gap on Burnt Corral Creek.

View of cleared fence line.

View of pods protecting planted deciduous shrubs along Grande Ronde River.

View of pods protecting planted deciduous shrubs along Chicken Creek.

6) OWRI Report

   Submitted online.

7) Final Budget

   See Attached.

8) Complete and submit the Federal Lobbying and Litigation Certificate to the Board's Project Manager with the final request for funds.

See Attached.

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