

The Pack River
Watershed
Council
presents...

The River Ranger

Volume 1, Issue 1

March 2009

Featuring:

- ◆ Pack River Delta Restoration Project
- ◆ Native Riparian Plants

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Contact us at:
(208) 255-5545

Cooperative Project Restoring the Pack River Delta

By Kathy Cousins, IDFG Mitigation Biologist

A restoration and enhancement project currently underway in the Pack River Delta will reduce erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and increase soil stability.

The project site is approximately 10 miles east of Sandpoint, Idaho; immediately south of the Highway 200 Bridge. Cooperators include the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Avista, and Ducks Unlimited (DU). The project area is owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The 1952 construction and subsequent operation of the Albeni Falls dam altered the hydrology of Lake Pend Oreille. Streambank erosion from the altered Pack River; and, wave erosion from Lake Pend Oreille led to the loss of wetland habitats in the Pack River delta.

Ducks Unlimited was recently awarded a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant

to restore wetland habitat in the Pack River Delta. Ducks Unlimited (DU) partnered with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and others to come up with a plan to restore and protect the delta wetlands.

The solutions being implemented to reduce erosion and increase natural sedimentation on the delta include a combination of structures called log vanes, root-wad roughness structures, and engineered log jams. These are installed with a combination of soil bioengineering solutions including fascines, willow bundles, and pole plantings.

Most of the construction work utilizing heavy equipment was completed in February. Planting of soil stabilizing vegetation will begin in April.

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Checking the slope on the engineered log vane.

Native Plants

By Marie Meschke

Keeping or planting native plants in riparian areas is good biology.

Originally I was asked to write an article on using native plants near waterways. I found I could not simplify or do justice to this topic by writing one article. So, I offered to write a continuing column to see what I could cover. My knowledge on this subject relies heavily on talking to people with more knowledge than myself and then trying things to see what

works on my place. I would like to share things I have learned over the years and things I am still trying.

I live next to the Pack River and I have an ongoing, every year project to improve the land with the plants growing near the river. I will start by writing about willows and red-osier dogwood. I have plantings of both of these which are thriving over many years and many floods and many animals chewing on them.

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Cooperative Project Restoring the Pack River Delta continued...



A newly completed engineered rootwad roughness structure.

The IDFG is inviting members of the public to participate as volunteers by planting woody and herbaceous plants.

Two planting efforts are planned. The first planting effort will commence April 6th and continue through April 23rd. Students from the Sandpoint High School will be planting on the project site April 13th-16th. The second planting event will involve the planting of herbaceous plants in the first two weeks of July.

A dutch oven cooking competition sponsored by Cabelas' will occur each day that volunteers are planting. Each day a winner will be chosen by the participating volunteers. On the final day of planting during a dedication ceremony, all the winners

will be invited to compete against one another for the grand prize.

Anyone wishing to volunteer for planting or dutch oven cooking is encouraged to call the IDFG Panhandle Region Office in Coeur d'Alene, at (208) 769-1414. The project site is extremely muddy. Volunteers are encouraged to wear waterproof footwear, gloves, and coats to match the weather.

“ Keeping or planting native plants in riparian areas is good biology.”
~ Marie Meschke

Native Plants continued...

The Latin genus for willows is *Salix*. You will see this as *Salix sp.* The Latin for the redosier dogwood here in Idaho is *Cornus sericea*. Both willows and redosier dogwood grow naturally along the Pack River and other waters of North Idaho. They both soak up lots of water. They both use less water during the summer when the soil dries out. They both survive floods which cover even the tops of their branches. The redosiers do not spread into dry areas. But, some of the willows can be found away from the water.

Willows and redosier dogwood can help hold land in place during floods. The willows shade the river to help keep the water temperature from rising in the summer. The redosiers do not grow as fast or spread out as fast, but they will eventually provide a little shade. Both willows and redosiers provide shelter and nesting for birds and the birds eat redosier dogwood berries. Both plants provide browse for moose and beaver. The plants recover well from “pruning” or being eaten or cut. And both plants are easy to transplant.

The redosier dogwood grows more slowly and spreads more slowly than the willows. The willows are able to spread into drier areas, whereas the redosier

dogwood appears to stay in the wetter areas. The redosier dogwood has deep red to purple stems and in the fall the leaves turn dark red, purple, and brown. The willows have stems in many shades of green and yellow and orange. If you are stabilizing a riverbank or other wet area, you can collect a variety of willows and then mix in occasional redosier dogwoods and create stems and leaves of variegated color to give you many hues during any season of the year. (Even against our white snow.)

Both willows and redosier dogwood are common along the Pack River. When done carefully, it does not harm the existing plants to harvest branches for transplanting. Willows and redosier dogwood are planted in the fall after the plants have gone dormant or planted in the early spring. Every fall, after they have gone dormant, I help extend my stand of willows and dogwood by cutting and planting branches.

There are opportunities every year to learn how to cut and plant willow branches. You can contact the NRCS or the Pack River Watershed Council for help on planting native willows and redosier dogwood.



Redosier Dogwood
Cornus sericea

PRWC Water Quality Monitoring Program



Horiba U-10
Water Quality
Checker

The Pack River Watershed Council has recently purchased a water quality checker to initiate a monthly water quality sampling program. This program will help us build some base-line data so that any improvement in the water quality can be detected as restoration projects are imple-

mented. We are regularly monitoring for temperature, pH, conductivity, DO, turbidity, and salinity. The Water Quality Monitoring Program will be an integral part of the volunteer River Ranger Program which will seek to educate and involve local landowners in their watershed.

The PRWC is currently looking for volunteers who are interested in participating in the Water Quality Monitoring Program. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about water quality and contribute to the effort to restore the Pack River and its tributaries. Please contact the PRWC if you are interested.

Willow Planting Workshop!

The NRCS and Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts are conducting a series of willow planting workshops this spring. These workshops are available at no cost and are open to any interested landowners.

The first workshop in this two-part series will focus on successful methods of taking willow and redosier dogwood cuttings from mature stock. Appropriate techniques for storing cuttings and stimulating new root growth will also be covered. This course will be on April 4th. We will meet at the Pack River Store on Rapid Lightning Rd. at 10 am.

The second workshop will cover a variety of planting

techniques. We will discuss bank stabilization and sediment reduction potential as well as limitations of each technique. The planting dates will depend on river levels, and will be announced.

This is an excellent low-cost technique for improving bank stability, reducing stream sediment, and increasing riparian habitat. Riparian vegetation is an important factor in preventing property loss due to flood events and maintaining property value.

Contact the PRWC if you are interested @ 208-255-5545 for more details of where to meet and what to bring.

*“When one tugs
at a single thing
in nature, he finds
it attached to the
rest of the
world.”*

~ John Muir

Upcoming Opportunities...

- March 29** Water Quality Monitoring, 9 am @ Hwy 200 Bridge over the Pack River
- April 4** Willow Cutting Workshop, part 1, 10 am @ the Pack River Store
- April 7-9** Pack River Delta riparian planting, call IDFG (208-769-1414) or PRWC
- April 21-23** Pack River Delta riparian planting, call IDFG (208-769-1414) or PRWC
- TBA** Willow Planting Workshop, part 2, 10 am @ 485134 Hwy 95 N
- April 26** Water Quality Monitoring, 9 am @ Hwy 200 Bridge over the Pack River
- MAY 31** Water Quality Monitoring, 9 am @ Hwy 200 Bridge over the Pack River
- TBA** Annual Pack River Float Trip



Willow Planting Clinic, Northside Elementary, 2007.



Pack River Watershed Council

The Pack River Watershed Council

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Tri-State Water Quality Council

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Sandpoint, ID 83864
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Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District

1224 Washington Ave., Suite 101
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208-263-5310

***“The mission of the Pack River Watershed Council
is to improve water quality and riparian habitat in
the Pack River watershed for people, fish , and
wildlife through education, collaboration, and
cooperative projects.”***

For more information about the Pack River Watershed Council
contact Jessica Erickson, Watershed Coordinator @
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