

ODOT Banks Wetlands

Just outside of Klamath Falls, ODOT is banking on the future of wetlands. That's where the Agency is expanding a riverside wetlands next to Highway 140, just east of Olene.

ODOT is in the business of creating wetlands because sometimes we have to take a bit of them to either build or maintain a highway. When we do that, we also have to balance the taking by adding, and sometimes we create new wetlands in anticipation of loss of them in the future...so ODOT is banking wetlands.

Why are wetlands important? Well they provide home to special species of plants, animals and fish. And sometimes, they act as a filter to remove the "bad stuff" that sometimes gets into a river...and they provide an oxygen base for the system.



Here east of Klamath Falls, ODOT is creating about 9 new acres of wetlands at this site next to the Lost River, bringing the total to 13 acres of wetland that ODOT has in it's "bank" here.

The new acreage will replace the wetlands lost from as many as 20 new road projects in the Region. Each of those projects will take just a small amount of wetlands, but the bank here will actually provide more benefits than each

of the small ones individually. "When you create a really small wetlands" says Allison Cowie of Region 4, "it doesn't create as many functions as a large wetlands."

After the digging is done and the berm is built, workers will go back in and put in bull rush plants. They'll be protected for about a year by the berm, and when they are established, ODOT will go back and open up a channel to the river.

The bank has been in the works for about two years and when it's done it will provide benefits for many years to come.