



on the Fremont-Winema National Forests



**April 2005
Issue II**

Watershed Restorations a High Priority

In this second issue of the Fremont-Winema RAC Events newsletter, we are focusing on the ways that the Title II monies have been used in key watersheds. The job of ecosystem restoration is a huge task, larger than any one project or funding source can complete. The Fremont-Winema RAC recognized the size of this task early on, and asked the Ranger Districts to try to focus their proposals in a few watersheds, preferably in combination with other work being completed on National Forest, private and other-agency lands. In response, the Chemult Ranger District proposed a group of projects in the Jack Creek Watershed, and the Paisley Ranger District and private partners proposed projects in the Chewaucan Watershed.

We believe that we are having a real effect on the health of these watersheds, and this issue includes two articles about the ways the Title II dollars have contributed to the health and sustainability of these areas.

(see stories on pages 2 & 3)

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A Word From the Chair

The Fremont-Winema RAC had an excellent meeting March 15th in Klamath Falls. The purpose of the meeting was to update returning members and to provide orientation to new members. Bill Aney, the Designated Federal Official and Cindi Nolan presented the RAC with a power point presentation highlighting the accomplishments of the Fremont-Winema RAC over the past three years. The presentation shows how a RAC should work. The quality of projects and the efficient use of money is very impressive. Copies of the power point are available from Cindi at lnolan@fs.fed.us.

Jane O’Keeffe, one of our RAC members, is working with others to gain reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000. We appreciate all the hard work going into these efforts.

The project proposals for Fiscal year 2006 were due in April. Our RAC will be busy reviewing the proposals until June when we will cast our votes for the next round of funding.

Bill Duke, Chair

Putting Local People to Work at Ecosystem Restoration

The Chewaucan Watershed

The Chewaucan River begins on the Paisley Ranger District, and flows through National Forest, BLM, and private ground on it's way to Abert Lake. This is a Great Basin watershed, and has no connection to the ocean, but the water flows into Abert Lake and evaporates.

The river supports a population of native redband trout throughout their lifecycle. Large adult fish spend the winter towards the bottom of the watershed, in the Chewaucan Marsh, and migrate upstream each year to spawn in the cool, clear waters near the headwaters. Road culverts, irrigation ditches and weirs have created barriers to this seasonal movement, fragmenting and isolating the wintering, spawning, and rearing habits.

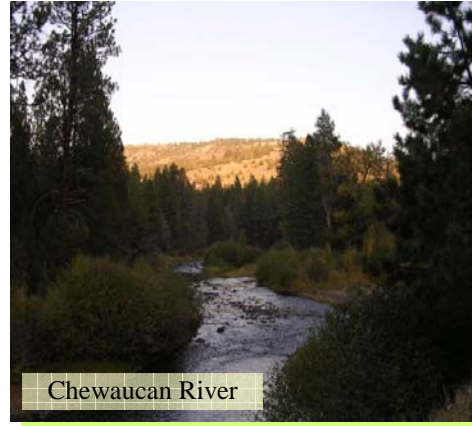
A century of land management, including fire suppression, grazing, and timber management, has allowed pine and juniper stands to develop to the point that the watershed is vulnerable to large, destructive fires. In addition, the aspen stands, willows, and springs have faded away.

The Upper Chewaucan Watershed Council, including private land owners and the Paisley Ranger District, has taken the restoration of this watershed seriously. Nearly \$1.5 million in Title II dollars have been added to

fund from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Private land owners, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and National Forest regular appropriations to complete projects to improve Chewaucan watershed condition. In the fall of 2004, for example, five different contractors were at work in the watershed simultaneously, cutting juniper and small pines from springs, aspen stands, meadows, and uplands, totaling more than 3400 acres of treatment. Grants from OWEB and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation have recently been awarded to the Watershed Council members to continue this work on private land.

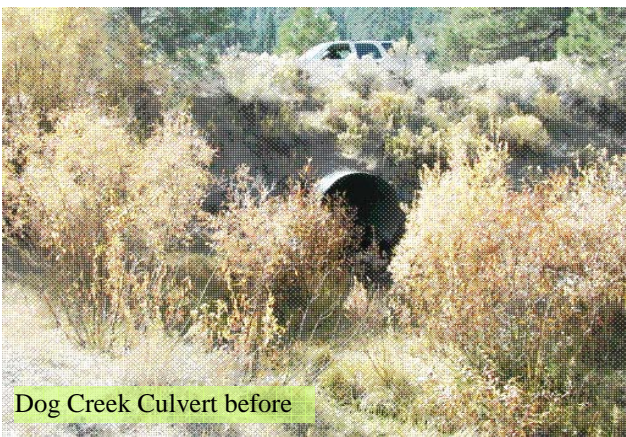
Title II dollars are also being used to remove fish barriers. Contractors replaced four culverts with fish-friendly designs in 2004, and Title II dollars are being used for the design and replacement of a large weir downstream on private land. Two other weirs on the ZX ranch land are being replaced or retrofitted to allow fish passage, thereby removing all barriers to fish movement throughout the entire Chewaucan watershed.

We are hopeful that this watershed-wide approach to restoration will result in healthier forests, streams,

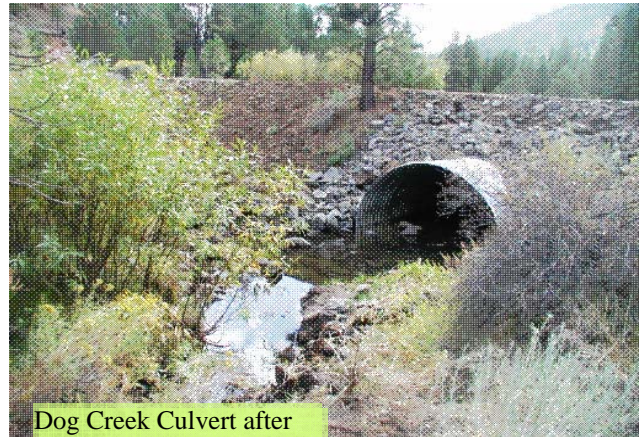


Chewaucan River

and fish and wildlife populations. A unique monitoring effort, using local high school and college students under the tutelage of a professional ecologist, is attempting to measure and publicly demonstrate the effects of watershed restoration work in the watershed. This project is also funded by Title II dollars, and has so far resulted in the establishment of over 400 permanent transects and photo points, development of a publicly-available website, and training 12 students in the practice of natural resource monitoring.



Dog Creek Culvert before



Dog Creek Culvert after



Jack Creek Watershed Restoration

Jack Creek is in the heart of the Chemult district. Water flows through the pumice-based soils, rising and diving below the surface, giving no indication of the sub-surface life below. Does it flow north to the Deschutes River? Or does it flow south to the Klamath River? The deep Mazama pumice and ash deposits mask the underlying bedrock that controls the subsurface water flow.

In the Jack Creek watershed is an array of unique, special habitats. A few parcels of private land remain after the extensive land exchanges between the Crown Pacific and the Fremont-Winema Forests. On private land, there is a sphagnum bog-like plant community, with carnivorous sundew plants that digest insects for nutrients. Speckled Dace, members of the minnow family, reside in reaches of Jack Creek. So do small lampreys that spend most of their lifecycle in the streambed as larvae. Oregon spotted frogs live their entire life in the small, deep pools along the stream course. Belted kingfishers hunt along the creek.

A series of Title II funded projects cover much of the Jack Creek watershed. In the north, the Round Meadow Restoration Project filled drainage ditches and installed dams. Sandhill cranes now forage for invertebrates, and ducks and geese nest in the meadow. Rakes Meadow project, in the south end of the watershed, repaired a series of headcuts that were modifying the water regime in the meadow. Vegetative structures were installed improving the stream

gradient and retaining water in the meadow.

A serious issue in the watershed is the shrinking size of the meadows. This is due to the growth of lodgepole pine into the meadow, a process called encroachment. The lodgepole grow in from the meadow edges, shading out grasses and forbs. They also pump water out of the meadow through transpiration. This reduces the forage in the meadow and changes the hydrology. Title II projects such as the First/State Meadow Project remove the lodgepole from the meadow, allowing more forage to grow.



Round Meadow before



Round Meadow after restoration

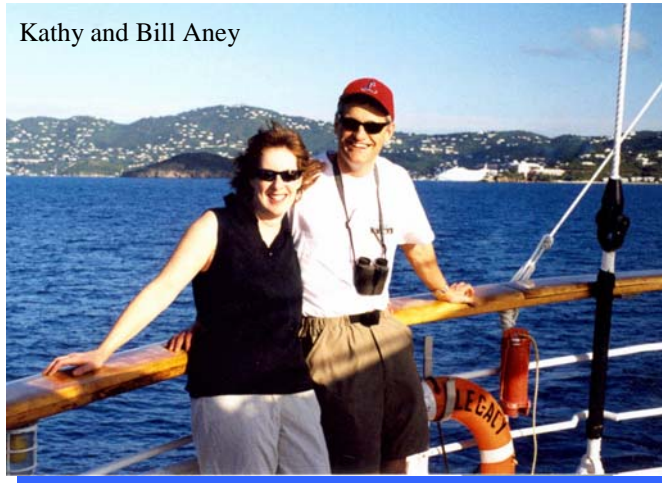


Mr. Bill Aney is Leaving...

Our leader and DFO (Designated Federal Official), Mr. Bill Aney, is leaving mid- May for an opportunity in Pendleton, Oregon. He will be greatly missed by the Fremont-Winema RAC and his staff.

The Fremont-Winema RAC has been faithfully and most efficiently led by Bill since it's inception. He leaves a large pair of shoes to be filled. Bill has been a big part of the reason the RAC has been so successful. He really put a lot of his heart into the Title II work that has been accomplished on the Fremont-Winema forest.

We wish Bill and his wife, Kathy, much luck in this new season of their lives.



Kathy and Bill Aney

New DFO for the Fremont-Winema RAC

Amy Gowan has agreed to serve as the DFO for the Fremont-Winema RAC. Amy is currently sharing her time with the Fremont-Winema and the three northern California Forests, specializing in Tribal-government relations. This should be a smooth transition, with no noticeable glitch. This RAC is known for their excellent ability to make good decisions and the cooperation between members.

Welcome Amy.

RAC COMMITTEE-MEMBERS

2004-2007

Gary Johnson

Hank Mroczkowski

Sherm Radtke

Lani Hickey

Melvin Dick

Fred Rasmussen

Mary Baker

Bill Duke

Anita Ward

Charles Wells

Richard Brown

Craig Bienz

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