



NEWS

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Project to Remove Hemlock Dam and Restore Trout Creek

VANCOUVER, WA – A significant steelhead run will benefit from a project on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest near the former Wind River Nursery north of Carson, Washington. The project is the removal of Hemlock Dam—built in the 1930s to provide irrigation and power for the nursery—and the restoration of Trout Creek to free flowing status benefiting the Wind River run of Lower Columbia River Steelhead. The \$2 million construction project was awarded to the James Dean Construction company.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Mount Adams Ranger District, will host an open house on Saturday May 16, 2009 to provide information regarding Trout Creek restoration, and the removal of Hemlock Dam, a 22-foot high structure on Trout Creek, which is a tributary to the Wind River in southwest Washington.

The open house will be held at the Wind River Work Center eight miles north of Carson, Washington from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Staff from the District and the Forest will provide information about the project.

Construction on the project will begin later this spring. Construction during the project will require road detours, and the temporary closure of the Hemlock recreation site and the vicinity around the site including Whistlepunk Trail. Access to the Pacific Crest Trail, via Forest Road 43, will also be restricted. Specific dates and locations for the detours will be announced as the construction date approaches. Once the project is completed, the picnic area will be rehabilitated and reopened for public use. In addition to removing Hemlock Dam, the natural stream channel will be restored, and native vegetation will be planted along the banks. The Forest will be providing some temporary day use picnic sites along Panther Creek in the vicinity of Forest Road 65 while the temporary closure is in place. These sites will be available throughout the summer of 2009.

"Trout Creek is a significant contributor to the Wind River steelhead run," said Nancy Ryke, Mt. Adams District Ranger, Gifford Pinchot National Forest. "This project is the culmination of cooperative efforts and support from the Bonneville Power Administration, Yakama Nation, Washington State Department of Ecology, American Rivers, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, Ecotrust, and Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group," Ryke added.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest completed an environmental impact statement in 2005 which addressed concerns associated with the dam such as water quality, fish passage and habitat. The analysis evaluated a range of possible actions to improve conditions for steelhead, and examined how those actions might affect recreational uses and other fish and wildlife species that live in the vicinity. The selected option recommended the removal of the 22- foot high dam, and the dredging and disposal of accumulated sediment, restoration of the stream channel, and alterations to the Hemlock recreational site.

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