News Release

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Growden Dam: Air Force, Ferry Conservation District, and Forest Service folks celebrate

Colville, WA…About 35 individuals from the US Air Force Reserve, Colville National Forest (CNF), and Ferry Conservation District gathered with cameras on Thursday, September 10, 2009 to witness a moment in history: the release of Sherman Creek through a newly constructed stream bed at the currently closed Growden site along Hwy 20. The group cheered as they clocked the stream's release at 4:18 p.m. and its reunion with the main channel at 5:30 p.m.

Since June of this year, 2009, a twenty-person Air Force Reservist crew has been working hard to realize Project Manager and CNF Fisheries Biologist Karen Honeycutt's ten year dream of removing the high risk earthen Growden Dam and restoring Sherman Creek's continuous stream flow through the area decreasing the water temperature to provide for better fish habitat.

The Growden Dam, built by the CCC in 1937, was designed to create a recreational pond. Small dams of this type were built with an average life span of 50 years. Unfortunately, by 1954, the dam was completely filled in with sediment from the construction of Highway 20. The recreational value of the area had waned and the safety risk continued to escalate, especially when a breach threat became real in 1998 when a 100 year flood almost toppled over the dam.

"This is really neat to see," said Ferry Conservation District employee Lloyd O'Dell, "We've been waiting ten years to see this project happen. It will be a great learning opportunity showcasing what kinds of restoration work can be done. With it being so close to the highway, anyone driving along will be able to enjoy it."

This year alone, the US Air Force Reserve was able to save the Colville National Forest $900,000 of the anticipated $1.3 million project costs. The Reservists, stationed in Colville, also gave the economies of Kettle Falls and Colville a little boost; purchasing four-wheelers from a local dealer, a Craig's-listed truck from a local college student, and regular outings bowling, eating out, and visiting hot-spots in Kettle Falls and Colville.

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Colville National Forest officials worked to find funds for Growden Dam's removal since 1991, but dam removals were not part of the Forest Service budget. During Honeycutt's ten years on the project she discovered a unique partnership opportunity through a US Armed Forces Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program and was able solicit enough support from the Forest Service Regional Office in Portland to commence the Growden Dam project.

The Armed Forces Innovative Response Training (IRT) program's main goal is to improve military readiness and quality services to communities throughout the United States. Many Reservists working on the Growden Dam project under the direction of IRT Project Manager Chief Master Sergeant Ray Riel are Red Horse (Rapid Engineer Deployment, Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineering) Reservists. Coming from states across the nation such as North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Colorado; these Reservists plan for a dispatch to Iraq or Afghanistan sometime in 2010 or 2011.

"The crew was awesome. It is amazing to think that the CCCs built this in 1937 for the benefit of the public and the Reservists are restoring the area now to serve future generations," says Karen Honeycutt of her experience working with the Reservists on this project since June. "In the beginning we weren't sure if we were going to be able to get as far as we did by this time, but they came through. They worked really hard."

Honeycutt looks forward to working again with the Air Force Reserve next year removing of the remaining soil and concrete from the CCC's Growden dam; re-routing a small section of the stream to its original location; continuing revegetation efforts of Cottonwood, Willow and Dogwood; and creating a visitor area showcasing part of the dam saved during demolition and highlighting local CCC contributions through educational signs.

Plans for the new stream bed were designed to mimic the stream before Growden Dam's construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCC) in 1937 and were done using maps from the 1937 Growden dam designs showing the original stream channel in 1937 and historic photographs. CNF's Project Engineer Bruce Bailey, Fisheries Biologist and Project Manager Karen Honeycutt, and Forest Hydrologist Jennifer Hickenbottom worked to recreate the stream as close to the original landscape as possible. As sediment and debris was lifted from the area during these 2009 summer months, they were excited to find the old streambed material exactly where they anticipated it would be.

For more information, time lapse footage or photos : Karen Honeycutt, 509-738-7738 or khoneycutt@fs.fed.us
For video footage of the release on 09/10/2009: Elsha Kirby, 509-684-7174 or elshakirby@fs.fed.us

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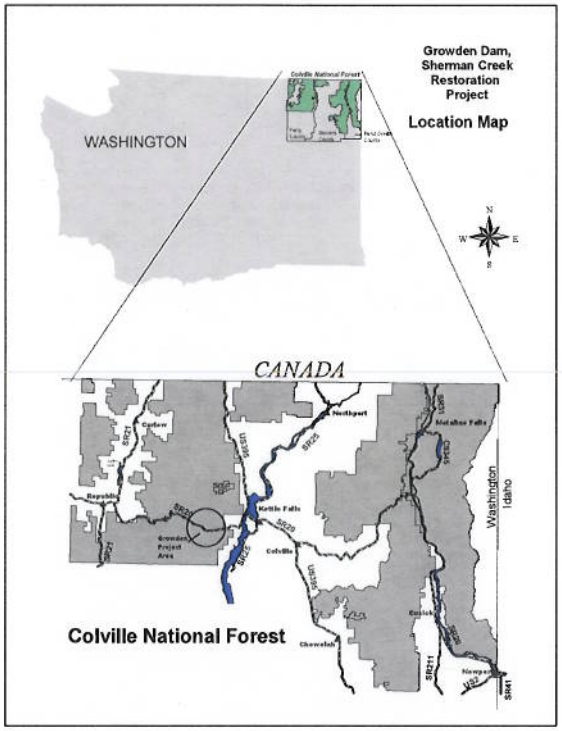
Forest Service Region 6 Dam Removals

There are 2 dams being removed in Region 6 this year. Growden Dam and Hemlock Dam were both built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. While similar in size, Hemlock Dam is a concrete dam and Growden Dam is a earthen dam. Both dams were full with sediment. Both dams are being removed with full removal of sediment.

Hemlock Dam (above) is located on the Wind River Ranger District of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Growden Dam is located 15 miles from Kettle Falls on Highway 20. The Growden Dam Site and Lane Creek Road are closed during construction. However the site is easily viewed from the road. Care should be taken to avoid the trucks hauling sand and other traffic on Highway 20.



For More Information:

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Growden Dam Removal

Three Rivers Ranger District
Colville National Forest

Growden Dam Removal

Growden Dam is past the end of its useful life. Small dams of this type were built with an average life span of 50 years. The dam was built in 1937 as a recreational pond. It filled in with sediment by 1954 after the construction of Highway 20. It has not served its designed purpose for over 55 years, yet the Forest Service has maintained the dam and assumed the safety risk.

The dam was recognized as a significant safety risk in the early part of the 1970's. This threat became real in 1998 when a 100 year flood almost overtopped the dam. This 72 year old dam has become a liability.

An Innovative Approach to Dam Removal

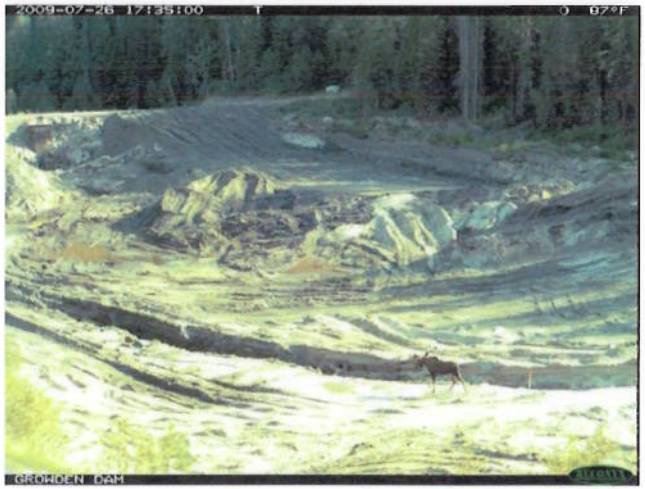
The Air Force Reserve provides training opportunities for its equipment operators through the Innovative Readiness Training Program. The program is designed to meet the needs of the nation while providing valuable training. This project would not have occurred without this program. The AFR provides equipment, operators, and fuel for the project. The Forest is managing the overall dam removal and will be responsible for revegetation and monitoring.

The goals of the project are to provide for safety, temperature reduction, bedload movement, and fish passage.

The dam will be completely removed and the sediment behind the dam will be taken to Lane Creek pit for restoration of the pit.

Time-lapse Photography

Two time-lapse photography cameras have been placed to record the removal of the dam. Below are pictures of before the Air Force Reserve started and July 26, 2009 when a moose wandered through.



Before and After Aerial Pictures of Growden

This picture was taken in 7/6/2004 by a helicopter flood recon trip.

This picture and the next ones were taken 9/24/2009 by the Fire Recon plane.