# COMPLETION REPORT Wolf Creek Diversion Dam FCRPS Habitat Improvement Program Wolf Creek, Methow Subbasin, WA



PREPARED FOR
WOLF CREEK
RECLAMATION DISTRICT,
OKANOGAN COUNTY, WA





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
COLUMBIA/SNAKE SALMON RECOVERY OFFICE
BOISE, IDAHO

**MARCH 2009** 

Cover Photo 1. Wolf Creek Diversion Dam prior to rehabilitation to meet fish passage standards. Note sandbags that help direct water into the headgate channel.

Photo by Reclamation (June 2001)

Cover Photo 2. High flows over Wolf Creek Diversion Dam after rehabilitation to meet fish passage standards.

Photo by Reclamation (June 2006)

This project was initiated and completed through the combined efforts of many entities, public and private. The project's purpose of the project was to provide for continued use of water while enhancing conditions for anadromous fish listed under the Endangered Species Act.

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PREPARED FOR
WOLF CREEK RECLAMATION DISTRICT,
OKANOGAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
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### **CONTENTS**

1. INT	FRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND1
1.1	BACKGROUND1
1.2	LOCATION 2
1.3	PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
1.4	Participation and Cooperation
1.5	Environmental Compliance
1.6	PERMITTING4
2. PR	OJECT DESCRIPTION5
3. CO	NCLUSIONS6
4. RE	FERENCES7
ATTACHI	MENT A. CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS
Photo A-1.	. View of steel weir at the entrance to the ditch about 60 feet upstream of the
intake	structure. The weir is designed to provide grade control and prevent cutting of
	anal section during high flows11
	. Downstream view of the fish screen, staging area, and pipe bench prior to
	ruction. The canal and fish screen are running near capacity which is about 13
	. Construction begins with placement of ecology blocks for the cofferdam about
	et upstream of the existing structure. The ecology blocks divert the creek flow in a character HDPE pipe which transports the water to the headworks
	. Completed cofferdam including sandbags and plastic. The creek is diverted
	pipe just out of the bottom of the photo. Dewatered channel can be seen at the
	of the photo
· ·	. The excavator breaks up a section of the previous concrete diversion channel
	had been washed out in the 1948 flood.
Photo A-6.	. Assembling the downstream weir (#4) first. It was critical that the middle three
plates	(of ten) be level and at the proper elevation, so they were bolted together on the
bank a	and set first. Average completion time for each weir was one day13
	. A downstream view of Weir #4 prior to backfill. The bolted plate is almost
•	letely buried in the existing streambed and should be nearly impossible to move.
	250 cfs can flow between the plates before the creek rises high enough to reach
	anks above the plates. Channel capacity should be 700 to 900 cfs14
	. The four weir plates prior to final backfill with angular material from the talus
<del>-</del>	The rise of the plates is clearly visible as is the offset of each one
	. Installation of the geotextile material between two of the weir plates. The xtile is designed to prevent low flows from running under or around the plates,
•	ov reducing the fish passage capability. The space between plates was half-filled

with native material, the geotextile is installed, and then angular rock from the talus slope is added to bring the backfill to grade15
Photo A–10. Backfill material is added to the geotextile material to weight the fabric down prior to installation of the angular talus material
Photo A–11. View of the backfilled weirs: final grading and final fill were completed with talus material. To aid in fish passage, several large-diameter rocks (at left) were randomly placed to help break up the flow, reduce water velocity, and add pockets of slow-moving water.
Photo A–12. Upstream view of all four weirs set in place and backfilled. Large rocks are being randomly placed to act as roughness to the flow and aid in fish passage at various flows. The staggering of the low-flow notches is noticeable
Photo A–13. Upstream view of the low-flow notches after placement of some of the larger rocks designed to interrupt and roughen the flow creating lines and eddies to increase fish passage opportunities
Photo A–14. A view looking downstream toward the entrance to the ditch. A large rock was placed on the creek bank upstream of the ditch entrance to block debris and logs from being forced into the ditch by the current17
Photo A–15. Final grading of the far bank. The line of rocks from the edge of the uppermost weir (#1) should prevent erosion as water rises above the edge of the plates. Willows, logs, and native soil were used to backfill the remainder of the area. This lead to a relatively quick revegetation of the area. Water will only use the area of the far bank in higher that average flow years. The highest of the line of rocks is slightly lower than the top of the headworks of the diversion.
Photo A–16. The crystal-clear water above the first drop of the upper-most weir (#1) provides a view not usually seen in less steep applications. It was possible to see 10 or 15 feet into the upper pool. It is expected that this pool will collect more bedload than it currently has because the new dam is higher than the old one and the flows are concentrated in the middle of creek
ATTACHMENT B. DRAWINGS
B-1. Location Map, No. 1678-100-349
B-2. Site Plan; No. 1678-100-414
B-3. Diversion Plan; No. 1678-100-558
B-4. Plan and Profile, Sta. 1+00 to 9+93.37; No. 1678-100-346
B-5. Plan and Profile, Sta. 6+00 to 1-+27; No. 1678-100-347
B-6. Diversion Plan and Profile; No. 1678-100-557
B-7. Weirs Profile; No. 1678-100-372
B-8. Weir Blades, Elevation, Section and Detail; No. 1678-100-560
B–9. Creek and Diversion Cross Sections; No. 1678-100-559
B-10. Dewatering Plan: No. 1678-100-373

#### 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Throughout the Columbia River Basin, irrigation diversions and other uses of water have negatively affected salmonids and other fish species by reducing water flows, limiting upstream access to watersheds and spawning areas, and hindering downstream migration. This also describes the situation in the Methow River subbasin.

The Wolf Creek Diversion Dam (Cover Photo 1) was identified as a low-flow barrier to fish movement. This project was initiated with the goal of providing passage for fish at all species and life stages, meeting diversion flow requirements for the irrigators, and reducing the visual impact of the structure in river. The Bureau of Reclamation was requested to work with Wolf Creek Reclamation District (WCRD or the District) to design and install a new facility.

This report explains the design process and regulatory requirements leading to the new diversion and documents the construction that took place. To better illustrate what was accomplished, we have included two attachments: Attachment A shows a series of photographs documenting the work; Attachment B contains a location map and "as-built" drawings of the project.

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Methow River provides habitat for several species of fish "listed" as either "threatened" or "endangered" under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as well as resident fish. Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA requires that all Federal agencies consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is "not likely to jeopardize" the continued existence of a listed species or result in adversely modifying its critical habitat. NMFS oversees the implementation of the ESA for certain listed species, including anadromous salmon and steelhead (anadromous trout). FWS has ESA implementation responsibilities for many species, including the bull trout and the Northern spotted owl. In the Columbia River Basin, there are twelve listed anadromous "evolutionarily significant units" (ESU) and one ESU proposed for listing. An ESU is a distinctive group of Pacific salmon or steelhead. Consultation with NMFS was completed in these ESUs and a "biological opinion" (BiOp) was issued in November 2004 (NMFS 2004). This consultation contained an "updated proposed action" by the "Action Agencies" (which include the Bureau of Reclamation); a "tributary habitat program" was one aspect of the

 $\underline{1}$ / NMFS is also called NOAA Fisheries; it is an agency of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

action (ACOE et al. 2004). A revised BiOp superseded the above mentioned document in 2008; however, this project was constructed under the auspices of the 2004 document.

#### 1.2 LOCATION

Wolf Creek originates in the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness Area and flows east for 14.5 miles before entering the Methow River at river mile (RM) 52.8 (upriver about two-and-a-half miles from the city of Winthrop). The creek drains about 37 square miles; 95 percent of the drainage is located within either the wilderness area (above RM 4.6) or the Okanogan National Forest (RM 4.6 to RM 1). Wolf Creek is a "Tier 1 Key Watershed," which means it is considered crucial for certain fish species and that it provides high-quality water.

The creek provides critical habitat for maintaining and recovering three endangered fish species — Upper Columbia River (UCR) steelhead, juvenile UCR spring Chinook salmon, and bull trout. "At-risk" Westslope cutthroat trout are also present. The watershed is within the range of the Northern spotted owl, an endangered species.

The ditch and piping for the WCRD delivery system is limited to about 13 cfs, maximum diversion, which is also the maximum capacity of the fish screen. The surface water that is diverted for irrigation purposes is located on Forest Service land and is monitored by that agency. Diversion by WCRD must ramp down as the creek drops to maintain a flow of 12 cfs at the mouth of the creek.

The point-of-diversion and structure is located about four-and-a-half miles upstream from the creek's mouth and about 500 feet downstream from the Wilderness Area boundary. The log diversion structure spanned the entire channel width and was 5.5 feet in height (Photo A–1). It diverted water into an irrigation ditch on the right bank (looking downstream) of the creek (Photo A–2). Upslope from the stream, the irrigation ditch parallels Wolf Creek for about one mile, drops 100 feet in elevation, and then combines with flow taken from Little Wolf Creek. The ditch enters private land and eventually flows into Patterson Lake. The District has a water-transmission easement through Forest Service land that is about two miles long and 30 feet wide. It generally goes parallel to Wolf Creek and to Little Wolf Creek. The entire flow of Little Wolf Creek is diverted into the Wolf Creek ditch year round.

In 1999, a fish screen designed and maintained by WDFW was placed in the WCRD diversion canal about 150 feet from the diversion on Wolf Creek (Photo A–2). The purpose of the screen was to prevent fish from being carried down the ditch and into Patterson Lake. Prior to 1999, bull trout were effectively removed from the reproductive population of Wolf Creek when they were swept down the flume with no way to return to Wolf Creek.

Water from Patterson Lake is used for recreation, irrigation, and domestic use at the Sun Mountain Resort. Lake water is also used for irrigation purposes and is either pumped or flows to the floor of the Methow Valley via natural channel and pipeline.

#### 1.3 PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The diversion structure was failing and needed to be replaced. If the dam had failed before being upgraded, there would have been a limited opportunity to regain the diversion without instream work more destructive than the proposed project. There were on-going discussions between WCRD, the Forest Service, and other regulatory agencies to establish a mutually satisfactory solution to upgrade the facility by increasing diversion efficiency, reducing if not eliminating a barrier to fish passage, and lessening visual impacts.

The project is located on the upper portion of Wolf Creek, and its successful completion opened up about five additional miles of stream to the passage and rearing of anadromous fish. (There is a barrier waterfall near RM 10, which is inside the wilderness area).

#### 1.4 Participation and Cooperation

The Wolf Creek Diversion Dam fish passage improvement project was a voluntary effort by the WCRD, which issued the contract for implementation and takes ownership of the facilities upon completion of the project.

#### 1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Because of the location of the diversion (on Federal land and near a wilderness area), a series of environmental reports and permits were required before construction could be undertaken. The presence of various fish species of differing life cycles and migration patterns limited the instream construction window to a single month (August) each year.

Federal legislation<sup>2/</sup> required an environmental\_assessment (EA); this was completed in September of 2003 and signed in February 2004 (WCRD 2004, p. 9). The legislation allowed the District to convert from a "special use permit" and to cross Forest Service land (WCRD 2004, p. 9). Requirements for an operation-and-maintenance (O&M) plan and a biological opinion (BiOp) are a part of the easement. Not covered by the EA are any future changes to the footprint of the Wolf Creek irrigation ditch. A "habitat conservation plan" (HCP) was not completed.

Based on the early designs, WCRD obtained construction funding for the project through a grant from the State of Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB, informally called the "Surf Board"). In addition, the District coordinated and administered the contracting process between the landowners and the construction company. WCRD received and held the SRFB grant funds. When provided with paid invoices related to the project and

2/ Commonly known as the "Colorado Ditch Bill," this law authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to issue permanent easements without charge for certain water conveyance systems occupying Forest Service lands and used for agricultural irrigation or livestock watering purposes. The legislation (the Act of October 27, 1986; P.L. No. 99–545; 100 Stat. 3047) amended Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

upon approval of the irrigators, the District paid the contractor and various suppliers of construction materials. WCRD also provided materials and manpower for construction activities and restoration of the construction site. As part of the SRFB agreement, the District will continue its participation by monitoring the restoration efforts, including site revegetation.

#### 1.6 PERMITTING

WDFW administers a coordinated interagency permitting process called JARPA (Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application). As part of this process, a "hydraulic project approval" (HPA) is required from WDFW prior to construction. The HPA has specific requirements for the protection of aquatic habitat, streambank vegetation, prevention of oil and gas spills from equipment, and requirements for site restoration. The HPA for the Wolf Creek Diversion Enhancement project was issued in October 2003 (WDFW 2003).

Because the State of Washington SRFB funding originated from Federal sources, consultation was required with NMFS and FWS under Section 7 of the ESA. Since the project was located on Federal land, ESA consultation and NEPA compliance were completed by the Forest Services (WCRD 2004).

#### 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Wolf Creek Diversion Dam enhancement project was to improve fish passage both upstream and down for all age classes of fish while maintaining the ability of the irrigators to withdraw water. Also, to be compatible with the Scenic and Roadless designation plus candidate for Wild and Scenic designation, had to look natural and be built without long-term road construction. (Jen). This was done by constructing a series of four fish-friendly weirs for passage; these also allowed lowering the water surface while providing a sufficient water supply to the irrigation ditch. The diversion dam was removed.

Only high flows in the neighborhood of 250 cfs will flow over the entire cross-section of the weir plates.(Jen) Most of the stream power is concentrated in the middle of the weirs. The lower six feet of the weir plates are buried, ensuring stability and immobility.

Construction began with placement of ecology blocks for the cofferdam about 25 feet upstream of the existing structure (Photo A–3). These diverted the creek flow into a 30-inch diameter HDPE pipe, transporting the water to the headworks structure, down the wasteway channel, and into the creek about 200 feet downstream of the project site. The completed cofferdam included sandbags and plastic (Photo A–4).

An excavator broke up the previous concrete diversion channel washed out in the 1948 Flood (Photo A–5). It removed smaller pieces of the 1948 diversion dam as well as larger rocks for stockpiling in preparation for excavating the hole for the downstream weir (#4), which was assembled first (Photo A–6). Because it was critical that the middle three plates (of ten) be level and at the proper elevation, they were bolted together on the bank and set first; the other seven were then set and bolted (Photo A–7). Average completion time for each weir was one day. Approximately 250 cfs can flow between the plates before the creek rises high enough to reach the banks above the plates; the channel capacity will range from 700 to 900 cfs.

Each low-flow notch was staggered slightly to help break up the flow patterns. Each weir is about 16 inches higher than the previous weir. The spacing between each of the four weirs is about nine feet (Photo A-8).

Geotextile material was installed between each pair of weirs (Photo A–9). It is used to prevent seasonal low flows from running under or around the plates, thereby reducing fish-passage capability. Native material was used as fill up to about the midway point on the plates (Photo A–10). The fabric in place was not anchored to the weir plates but did run up the side about 18-inches; it was held in place with backfill. Rockfill from the talus slope was added to bring the backfill to grade (Photo A–11).

To aid in fish passage and create resting spots for juvenile fish, large-diameter rocks were placed randomly to help break up the flow, reduce velocities, and add pockets of slow-moving water (Photo A–12 and Photo A–13). A large rock was placed on the creek bank

upstream of the ditch entrance to block debris and logs from being forced into the ditch by the current (Photo A–13).

The line of rocks from the edge of the upper most weir should prevent erosion as water rises above the edge of the plates. Willows, logs, and native soil from the site were used as backfill for the remainder of the area which lead to a relatively quick revegetation (Photo A–15). Water will only use the area of the far bank in higher-than-average flow years. The highest of the line of rocks is slightly lower than the top of the headworks of the diversion.

The uppermost pool is expected to collect more bedload than it currently has because the new dam is higher than the old one and the flows are concentrated in the middle of creek (Photo A-16).

#### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The Wolf Creek fish passage has now been in place for three high-water seasons, two of which were well above long-term-average flows. The structure has performed well and, based on redd counts and observations from USFS personnel, appears to be passing adult bull trout. Some modifications to the left bank of the structure were made after the 2006 high-water season to allow better access to the flood plain. The work was accomplished using rock bars and other hand tools; it was observed to be successful during the 2007 high-water season. After the 2007 season, several large rocks that were blocking the upstream weir's low-flow notch were removed using equipment, and a small deflector barb was built on the right bank about 30 feet upstream of the diversion to adjust flows slightly. After the 2008 high-water season, the diversion ditch was cleaned out, a large log jam was removed from the diversion channel, and an overflow pipe was added just upstream of the fish screen in the canal. It is not anticipated that work will be required every year, however some maintenance will be required, especially after high-flow years.

Site visits over the last three years by personnel from many agencies and organizations have brought general agreement that the structure meets the intent of providing fish passage at the site.

### 4. REFERENCES

In Text	FULL CITATION				
ACOE et al. 2004	Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bonneville Power Administration. 2004. Final Updated Proposed Action for the FCRPS Biological Opinion Remand, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bonneville Power Administration, 24 November 2004.				
EPA 1999	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1999. "Wolf Creek Ditch Special Use Permit, Okanogan National Forest, Okanogan County, WA." <i>Federal Register</i> , August 20, 1999; Vol. 64, No. 161, pp. 45502–45505. [from the Federal Register online <a href="www.wais.access.gpo.gov">www.wais.access.gpo.gov</a> , April 2007]				
FWS 1998a	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998a. A Framework to Assist in Maki Endangered Species Act Determinations of Effect for Individual or Ground Actions at the Bull Trout Subpopulation Watershed Scale, February 199				
FWS 1998b	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998b. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife species, Determination of Threatened Status for the Klamath River and Columbia River Delisting of several Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs) of West Coast steelhead. Final rule. Federal Register, Vol. 63, No. 111, Wednesday, June 10, 1998. pp. 31647-31674.				
FWS 2001	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined on April 3, 2001 that the proposed action was not likely to adversely affect the Upper Columbia River (UCR) spring Chinook salmon or UCR steelhead Evolutionary Significant Units. Document number 01-SP-E 0152.				
FWS 2005a	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2005a. <i>Biological Opinion for the Wolf Creek Diversion Enhancement, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests, Methow Valley Ranger District.</i> FWS Reference Number 1-9-2004-F-W0518. FWS Central Washington Field Office, Wenatchee, WA. February 2, 2005.				
FWS 2005b	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2005b. <i>Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical habitat for the Bull Trout. Final Rule.</i> Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 185, Monday, September 26, 2005. pp 56212–56311. <a href="http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/05-18880.html">http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/05-18880.html</a>				
NMFS 2004	National Marine Fisheries Service. 2004. Biological Opinion on the Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System including the 19 Bureau of Reclamation Projects in the Columbia Basin, November 20, 2004; revised and re-issued pursuant to court order NWF v. NMFS, Civ. No. CV 01-640-RE (D. Oregon).				

IN TEXT	FULL CITATION			
NPCC 2004	Northwest Power and Conservation Council. November 2004. <i>Final Methow Subbasin Plan</i> . [lead preparers] KWA Ecological Sciences, Inc.; Okanogan County; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Tribes. <a href="http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/methow/plan/">http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/subbasinplanning/methow/plan/</a>			
WCRD 2004	Wolf Creek Reclamation District. May 2004. <i>Biological Assessment for the Wolf Creek Diversion Enhancement, Okanogan County, Washington</i> . Prepared by fisheries biologist Darren M. Cross; reviewed by Jennifer A. Molesworth, USFS Methow Valley Ranger District Fisheries Biologist.			
WDFW 2003	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2003. "Hydraulic Project Approval" (HPA). Log Number ST-F 2668-01. Issued on October 22, 2003 by the Region 2 Wenatchee Field Office, Ephrata, WA.			

# ATTACHMENT A -

# **CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS**

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY
U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION DESIGN GROUP, BOISE ID

Photo A-1. View of steel weir at the entrance to the ditch about 60 feet upstream of the intake structure. The weir is designed to provide grade control and prevent cutting of the canal section during high flows.



Photo A-2. **Downstream** view of the fish screen, staging area, and pipe bench prior to construction. The canal and fish screen are running near capacity which is about 13 cfs.



Photo A–3.
Construction begins with placement of ecology blocks for the cofferdam about 25 feet upstream of the existing structure. The ecology blocks divert the creek flow in a 30-inch diameter HDPE pipe which transports the water to the headworks.



Photo A-4.
Completed
cofferdam
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and plastic. The
creek is diverted
into a pipe just out
of the bottom of the
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at the right of the
photo.

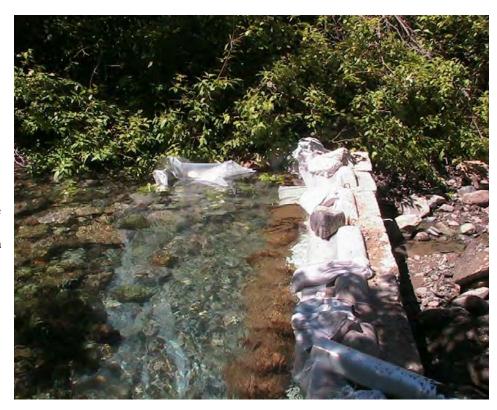


Photo A–5.
The excavator breaks up a section of the previous concrete diversion channel which had been washed out in the 1948 flood.



Photo A-6. Assembling the downstream weir (#4) first. It was critical that the middle three plates (of ten) be level and at the proper elevation, so they were bolted together on the bank and set first. Average completion time for each weir was one day.

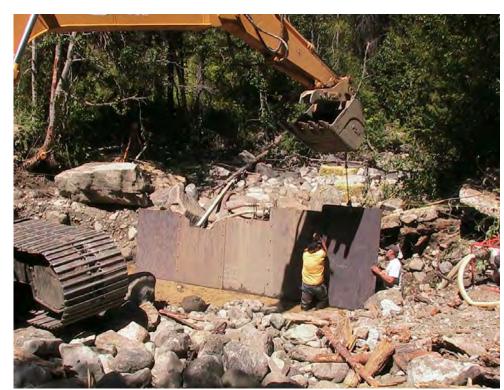


Photo A-7. A downstream view of Weir #4 prior to backfill. The bolted plate is almost completely buried in the existing streambed and should be nearly impossible to move. About 250 cfs can flow between the plates before the creek rises high enough to reach the banks above the plates. **Channel capacity** should be 700 to 900 cfs.



Photo A–8.
The four weir plates prior to final backfill with angular material from the talus slope.
The rise of the plates is clearly visible as is the offset of each one.



Photo A-9. **Installation of the** geotextile material between two of the weir plates. The geotextile is designed to prevent low flows from running under or around the plates, thereby reducing the fish passage capability. The space between plates was halffilled with native material, the geotextile is installed, and then angular rock from the talus slope is added to bring the backfill to grade.



Photo A-10.
Backfill
material is
added to the
geotextile
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fabric down
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Photo A-11. View of the backfilled weirs: final grading and final fill were completed with talus material. To aid in fish passage, several large-diameter rocks (at left) were randomly placed to help break up the flow, reduce water velocity, and add pockets of slow-moving water.



Photo A-12. **Upstream view** of all four weirs set in place and backfilled. Large rocks are being randomly placed to act as roughness to the flow and aid in fish passage at various flows. The staggering of the low-flow notches is noticeable.







Photo A-14. A view looking downstream toward the entrance to the ditch. A large rock was placed on the creek bank upstream of the ditch entrance to block debris and logs from being forced into the ditch by the current.



Photo A-15. Final grading of the far bank. The line of rocks from the edge of the upper-most weir (#1) should prevent erosion as water rises above the edge of the plates. Willows, logs, and native soil were used to backfill the remainder of the area. This lead to a relatively quick revegetation of the area. Water will only use the area of the far bank in higher that average flow years. The highest of the line of rocks is slightly lower than the top of the headworks of the diversion.



Photo A-16. The crystalclear water above the first drop of the uppermost weir (#1) provides a view not usually seen in less steep applications. It was possible to see 10 or 15 feet into the upper pool. It is expected that this pool will collect more bedload than it currently has because the new dam is higher than the old one and the flows are concentrated in the middle of creek.



# ATTACHMENT B – DRAWINGS

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