

## Featuring:

Trestle Creek -  
A Strategic Mess

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[www.bonnierswcd.org](http://www.bonnierswcd.org)

## A “Strategic Mess”

By T.J. Ross, IDFG Regional Communications Manager

Trestle Creek is one of the most important spawning tributaries for Bull Trout in Lake Pend Oreille, but the number of Bull Trout returning to spawn has declined in recent years. Fish and Game biologists took notice and developed plans to improve the creek’s habitat to increase native trout numbers



Trestle Creek before habitat enhancement. (K. Bouwens)

while also meeting the needs of crews planning work on Trestle Creek Road.

Good fish habitat relies on things that often come across as messy to the casual observer, and while a uniform bank and shoreline may be scenic, young fish require places to hide from predators and feed, such as small side-channels.

Without a large, natural disruption, root systems of large trees solidified the creek bank, and as those roots firmed up the shoreline, the stream bed slowly became more and more locked into a main channel. That reduced the creek’s ability to form the side-channels young trout needed.

The “messy” part lies in the eye of the beholder. For the average person, it may look more like havoc than order. After the projects were done, portions of Trestle Creek looked like a land slide had struck with trees, root wads, branches and boulders strewn all about.

But what may look to the human eye like a natural disaster, young trout see as a place to escape predators and grow large enough to later survive in the lake’s vast expanse of open water. And as all anglers know, there can be no big trout without little trout first.

This collaborative project benefits young trout while also reducing risk of the creek damaging vulnerable parts of Trestle Creek Road. It was a win for trout and for road users.

Project partners included Idaho Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Avista, Bonner County and Federal Highways Administration.



Trestle Creek after habitat enhancement. (K. Bouwens)

## Conserving our Wild Backyards for the Future

By Regan Plumb, KLT

Change is occurring at a rapid pace across our rural landscape. Although some change is inevitable, there are special places that warrant extra care to make sure they stay the same.

free to sell, gift, or lease it to others.

KLT has now protected nearly 4,000 acres of special places in north Idaho and northwest Montana using these voluntary agreements. These places will continue to serve important

functions for our rural communities in the face of future growth and development.

Examples along the Pack River include a large agricultural property that provides pasture for cattle and sustainable forest management in addition to a handful of smaller family parcels that protect the river corridor and supply forage and cover for deer and other wildlife.



Conservation lands along the Pack River

Examples include streams and wetlands that provide fresh water and homes for wildlife, working farms and ranches that supply food and jobs for our community, and scenic views that our neighbors can enjoy while traveling by.

Everyone needs a place to live, but if we allow each square inch of our landscape to be developed, then these special places will be lost forever, along with the habitat, clean water, healthy forests, and essential jobs that they supply.

KLT works to assist willing private landowners to set aside lands with important conservation values so that they may provide benefits for future generations. If you have a property of 20 acres or more that you feel is worthy of keeping the same, feel free to contact the land trust to learn more about conservation agreements and whether they are a good fit for your family.

Kaniksu Land Trust's (KLT) conservation efforts have evolved over the years to include an array of land protection projects such as these. KLT uses purely voluntary conservation agreements with local landowners who wish to make sure that the things they love most about their lands will stay the same.

Future uses are restricted through the agreement to ensure that this is the case. The property remains in private hands, traditional land uses are preserved, and the landowners continue to own and manage their land and are

Regardless of what the future brings, our lands will continue to be an essential component of the quality of life that we depend on. Kaniksu Land Trust can be reached at (208) 263-9471 or [info@kaniksu.org](mailto:info@kaniksu.org).

*"We have sensed for many years that this property is unique. The past 40 years have given us time to reflect on its importance."*

*~ Conservation landowner*

## Pack River Native Salmonid Habitat Plan

The Pack River Watershed Council, in partnership with Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Avista, are leading the development of a Native Salmonid Habitat Plan for the Pack River watershed.

The Pack River watershed provides critical habitat for native salmonids, especially Bull Trout, which have been listed as a threatened species since 1998. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified the primary threats to recovery are due to degraded habitat conditions.

The overall goal and focus of the Native Salmonid Plan is to improve native salmonid habitat in the Pack River



**Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*).** Photo from [www.ecofishresearch.com](http://www.ecofishresearch.com)

watershed, especially for migratory Bull Trout and West-slope Cutthroat Trout.

This plan will summarize and prioritize all recommended watershed restoration, conservation and enhancement projects from previously conducted assessments, especially those which would most benefit Bull Trout. It would also list completed restoration projects and provide a brief history of watershed management in each sub-watershed.

This plan will provide a user-friendly living document for project partners that can be reviewed and revised periodically to reflect current local priorities and provide updates on project implementation progress.

A technical advisory committee has been formed to oversee the development of this plan and has been meeting monthly.

Project partners include U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Kalispel Tribe, Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District, Panhandle Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Kaniksu Land Trust, and other local stakeholders.

### ***Funding available for conservation projects***

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary US Department of Agriculture conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that provides federal match funding to eligible projects that support forestry, wildlife, agriculture and water quality enhancements or protection.

Eligible high-priority projects include those that address specific causes of ground or surface water impairment relating to excessive nutrients, water conservation, drought mitigation, and/or meet priority resource con-

cerns identified in habitat or watershed restoration plans.

EQIP is offered to private landowners and managers, and can provide 50 percent in cost-share funds for completed projects. NRCS offers many programs, but they are also available as a cost-free resource for consultation and technical assistance.

Applications are accepted on an on-going basis. Contact Cindy Lewis, NRCS Soil Conservationist at 208-263-5310 ext. 102 to discuss which programs you may qualify for.

***If you would like to receive this publication by e-mail, please contact Sarah Garcia at [Sarah.Garcia@id.nacdn.net](mailto:Sarah.Garcia@id.nacdn.net) or call 208-263-5310 x 100. Archived newsletters are available at [www.bonnernswcd.org](http://www.bonnernswcd.org)***





# Pack River Watershed Council

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*“The mission of the Pack River Watershed Council is to improve water quality and riparian habitat in the Pack River watershed for people, fish, and wildlife through education, collaboration, and cooperative projects.”*

*Thanks to Avista Watershed Council Funding, we are able to print and distribute this newsletter.*