

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation

Revitalizing Rearing Habitat

Yankee Fork of the Salmon River, ID

[music]

Mike Edmundson: The Yankee Fork has a lot of history. There's a lot that's occurred here in terms of the dredge and gold extraction, and it grew Idaho's economy and employed a lot of people.

Bart Gamett: And so it's important for us not only for us to evaluate the effects of that mining on the fish habitat and work to restore those, but make sure that we also protect the heritage that's here of our cultural history. And that includes the dredge tailing.

Paul Drury: They dredged through the salmon habitat and destroyed the salmon habitat. So our projects really do need to restore river processes and restore the river system back, which is going to include moving and reconfiguring some of the dredge piles.

Mike: And to preserve some portion of that and restore the fishery and have a balance between the two, I think is really important.

Chad Colter: The long-term goal of the tribes for the Yankee Fork is to protect, preserve, and enhance the fisheries. We want to ensure that our future generations have an opportunity to exercise our reserve treaty rights on the Yankee Fork, and we want those to be meaningful.

[construction]

Paul: It's a project called PS3 Side Channel. It's a habitat improvement project for juvenile Chinook Salmon to create and enhance rearing habitat.

Mike: To have a viable population... that's our goal. That's where we want to be.

Paul: Through the side channel we're going to have a series of pools and riffles that'll be dynamic with the river flows.

Bart: Imagine a little fish trying to swim in a torrent of waters as large as the Yankee Fork. It's really important that they have a smaller water that they can go hang out in.

Paul: We're going to incorporate some large woody structures for cover and protection so that the juveniles have places to hide.

[construction]

Mike: Here in the Yankee Fork, since the '80s really, no habitat restoration, to my knowledge, has occurred. So this is a big deal—getting the first project on the ground, and showing the success will be important.

Jerry Myers: We wouldn't even be here today if we didn't have Simplot fully supportive of what we're trying to do. ...the Forrest Service, I'd say ditto.

Bart: And we're excited to be able to work together in a collaborative fashion with Simplot to restore the effects of the dredge mining.

[music]

Allan Prouty: Part of our company, we have kind of three pillars that we talk about in terms of sustainability. And the first of those is respect for resources, the second is passion for people, and the third is spirit of innovation. When I look at this project I see all three pillars there.

Jerry: We are going to see, I think, in this dredge stretch a reawakening of some of the natural processes that we all care so much about and we all want to see return here.

Bart: If people can come here and visit Dredge Camp and Bonanza and Custer and see spawning Chinook and maybe even someday angle for them, or for steelhead, (it) is the best of both worlds.

[music]