Noisy Creek Habitat Accessibility and Fish Passage Enhancement Project *(amended)*

Recipient: Eel River Watershed Improvement Group
Project Period: 12/01/2019 – 03/31/2021
Project Cost: $14,439.57
Project Number: #8006.20.067161

Summary of Accomplishments

Ninety-five trees were planted on the left bank riparian zone of Noisy Creek. The plantings included 69 red alders, 19 black cottonwoods and 7 redwoods. All trees were protected with wire fencing. Ninety-one trees (95%) were still alive 15 months after planting. Four cottonwoods that died were replaced with 4 new cottonwoods. These trees will help increase habitat availability in Noisy Creek, tributary to Hall Creek, tributary to Mad River.

Project Activities

ERWIG purchased all materials for this project, including trees, wire fencing, t-posts, galvanized wire, shovels, wire cutters, post pounders, marking flags, measuring tape, gloves and other necessary items. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) were subcontracted to plant trees for the project and to construct the wire fencing around the trees. In January 2020, the CCC planted 95 trees along the riparian zone of Noisy Creek, all trees were planted within 30 feet of the stream channel. ERWIG staff oversaw the planting and assisted where necessary. ERWIG staff also took pre-project photos, implementation photos and post project photos. Four photo points were used to help document changes over time. In the winter following the planting ERWIG staff removed vegetation that was growing inside of the tree cages and replaced four cottonwoods. In the spring of 2021 all 95 trees were still alive and ERWIG staff removed any new vegetation had grown within the tree cages.

The grant agreement outlined the planting of 91 trees, ERWIG was able to purchase and plant 95 trees while staying within budget.

Project Outcomes

There is already significant improvement in the riparian corridor of the project reach. Before planting there were zero trees along the right bank of the 550’ long project reach, now there are 95 living trees. Most of the trees show significant new growth of around 1-3 feet in height. This indicates that their root systems are already well established, and it is expected that growth rates will continue at this speed or will increase. Canopy cover and leaf litter quantities have increased, and additional desired project outcomes are expected as the trees mature. These outcomes include woody debris recruitment which will improve habitat conditions in Noisy Creek and will improve fish passage through channel deepening (scour).

The larger red alder trees have grown substantially in just one year and some may already be too tall for elk to reach the top branches. These trees provide significant biomass to the stream channel when they shed their leaves each year.

Lessons Learned

Projects within elk habitat that involve a replanting component can imitate the fencing construction that was used in this project as it seems to protect trees from herbivory by elk.

Dissemination

ERWIG discussed our fencing techniques with CCC staff in Ukiah who were contemplating a similar project.

POSTING OF FINAL REPORT: *This report and attached project documents may be shared by the Foundation and any Funding Source for the Project via their respective websites. In the event that the Recipient intends to claim that its final report or project documents contains material that does not have to be posted on such websites because it is protected from disclosure by statutory or regulatory provisions, the Recipient shall clearly mark all such potentially protected materials as "PROTECTED" and provide an explanation and complete citation to the statutory or regulatory source for such protection.*

Project Photos

Image 1: Pre-project photo from photo point #1

Image 2: Post-project photo from photo point #1

Image 3: Pre-project photo from photo point #2

Image 4: Post-project photo from photo point #2

Image 5: Pre-project photo from photo point #3

Image 6: Post-project photo from photo point #3

Image 7: Pre-project photo from photo point #4

Image 8: Post-project photo from photo point #4

Image 9: Post-project photo of planted cottonwood tree