

STREAM INVENTORY REPORT

“East Branch Abalobadiah Creek”

WATERSHED OVERVIEW

The unnamed tributary to Abalobadiah Creek locally known as, and herein after referred to as, East Branch Abalobadiah Creek is a tributary to Abalobadiah Creek (Figure 1). Elevations range from 70 feet at the mouth of the creek to 600 feet in the headwater areas. East Branch Abalobadiah Creek’s legal description at the confluence with Abalobadiah Creek is T20N R17W Sec21. Its location is 39°34'56"N. latitude and 123°45'30"W. longitude according to the USGS Inglenook 7.5 minute quadrangle.

HABITAT INVENTORY RESULTS

The habitat inventory of August 27 through August 29, 1996, was conducted by Dave Wright and Diana Hines. The total length of surveyed stream in East Branch Abalobadiah Creek was 4,253 feet (0.81 miles, 1.3 km) (Table 1). There were no side channels in this creek.

Flow measured at the mouth of East Branch Abalobadiah Creek on October 17, 1996 was 0.66 cubic feet per second (cfs).

East Branch Abalobadiah Creek consists of one reach: a B4 for the entire length of stream surveyed.

Table 1 summarizes the Level II riffle, flatwater and pool habitat types. By percent occurrence, riffles comprised 16%, flatwater 51% and pools 32% of the habitat types (Graph 1). By percent total length, riffles comprised 6%, flatwater 86% and pools 7% (Graph 2).

Ten Level IV habitat types were identified and are summarized in Table 2. The most frequently occurring habitat types were step runs, 35%, low gradient riffles, 16% and glides and mid-channel pools, both at 13% each (Graph 3). The most prevalent habitat types by percent total length were step runs at 79%, and low gradient riffles and glides, both at 6% each (Table 2).

Table 3 summarizes main, scour and backwater pools which are Level III pool habitat types. Scour pools were most often encountered at 60% occurrence and comprised 68% of the total length of pools.

Table 4 is a summary of maximum pool depths by Level IV pool habitat types. In first and second order streams pools with depths of two feet (0.61 m) or greater are considered optimal for fish habitat. In East Branch Abalobadiah Creek, two of the 20 pools (10%) had a depth of two feet or greater (Graph 4).

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The depth of cobble embeddedness was estimated at pool tail-outs. Of the pool tail-outs measured, 0% had a value of 1, 0% had a value of 2, 0% had a value of 3 and 100% had a value of 4 (Graph 5).

Of the Level II habitat types, flatwater units had the highest mean shelter rating at 65 (Table 1). Of the Level III pool habitat types, scour pools had the highest mean shelter rating at 50 (Table 3).

Of the 20 pools, 20% were formed by large woody debris (LWD): 20% by logs and 0% by root wads (calculated from Table 4).

Table 6 summarizes dominant substrate by Level IV habitat types. Of the low gradient riffles fully measured, none had gravel or small cobble as the dominant substrate (Graph 6).

Mean percent closed canopy was 96%: 16% coniferous trees and 80% deciduous trees. Mean percent open canopy was 4% (Graph 7, calculated from Table 7).

Table 7 summarizes the mean percent substrate/vegetation types found along the banks of the stream. Mean percent right bank vegetated was 62% while mean percent left bank vegetated was 79%. Brush and deciduous trees were each the dominant bank vegetation type both in 43% of the units fully measured. The dominant substrate composing the structure of the stream banks was cobble/gravel, found in 50% of the units fully measured.

DISCUSSION

The information gathered in the process of habitat typing will provide Georgia-Pacific (G.P.) with baseline data on the current condition of this creek and the available habitat for salmonids. These data can be used to identify components of the habitat in need of enhancement so appropriate conditions for East Branch Abalobadiah Creek can be obtained over time.

Level II habitat types by percent occurrence and length

Flatwater habitat types comprised a high percentage of the stream by both percent occurrence and length at 51% and 86% respectively (Table 1 and Graph 1). These unit types usually do not provide optimal spawning or rearing habitat for salmonids. Riffle habitat units comprised a low percentage of the stream by both percent occurrence and length at 16% and 6% respectively. Pools comprised a moderate percentage by percent occurrence and a low percentage by length at 32% and 7% respectively. Riffles usually provide good spawning habitat while pools provide important rearing habitat. In addition, Mundie (1969) reported that invertebrate food production is maximized in riffles while pools provide an optimum feeding environment for coho salmon. In fact, the most productive streams are those consisting of a pool to riffle ratio of approximately one to one (Ruggles 1966).

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Pool Depth

According to Flosi and Reynolds (1994), a stream with at least 50% of its total habitat comprised of primary pools is generally desirable. Primary pools are at least two feet deep in first and second order streams and at least three feet deep in third order streams. The information from Graph 4 on maximum depth in pools was used to determine percent of primary pools. East Branch Abalobadiah Creek, a first order stream, is comprised mainly of shallow pools with 10% of the pools having a maximum depth of two feet or greater.

Instream Shelter

Instream shelter ratings are derived from two measurements: instream shelter complexity and instream shelter percent cover. The first is a value rating which provides a relative measure of the quality and composition of the shelter, and the second is a measure of the area of a habitat unit covered by shelter. The various types of instream shelter include LWD, small woody debris, boulders, rootwads, terrestrial vegetation, aquatic vegetation, bedrock ledges and undercut banks. Of the Level II habitat types, flatwater units had the highest shelter rating at 65. Of the Level III habitat types, scour pools had the highest shelter rating at 50. These values are low as shelter values of 80 or higher are considered optimal for good rearing habitat (Flosi and Reynolds 1994).

Large Woody Debris

The presence of large woody debris in streams is a significant component of fish habitat. Woody debris creates areas of low flow, providing a refuge for fish during periods of high flow (Robison and Beschta, 1990). Woody debris also provides cover for fish, lowering the risk of predation. The percent of pools formed by LWD in East Branch Abalobadiah Creek was 20%. Whether these numbers are high or low, relative to the needs of salmonids is difficult to ascertain since the optimum amount of woody debris in streams has not been specified (Robison and Beschta 1990). However, based on data from Georgia-Pacific's 1995 Aquatic Vertebrate Study, the only coho found in the Ten Mile River Basin were in stream reaches where approximately 50% of pools were formed by large woody debris. Those reaches that did not support coho had a significantly lower percentage of pools formed by large woody debris (Ambrose et al, 1996). This suggests that a low percentage of LWD formed pools could adversely affect juvenile coho populations (C.S. Shirvel 1990).

The above LWD analysis pertains only to pools formed by logs or root wads as described in Flosi and Reynolds (1994): lateral scour pool-log enhanced, lateral scour pool rootwad enhanced, backwater pool-log formed and backwater pool-rootwad formed. Other pools containing LWD as a component were not included in the calculation. For example, plunge pools may be formed by boulders, bedrock or LWD, but are not described as such by habitat unit types. Therefore, the LWD formed pool calculation is limited to four pool types and does not quantify the total amount of LWD in East Branch Abalobadiah Creek.

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Canopy

There are two important benefits of canopy cover in coastal streams. Canopy keeps stream temperatures cool as well as providing nutrients in the form of leaf litter and organic material (Bilby 1988). This leaf litter, organic material, and their associated nutrients are utilized as a food source by benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects). The macroinvertebrates, in turn, are major food sources for most fish species in forested areas (Gregory et al., 1987). Mean percent canopy cover for the East Branch Abalobadiah Creek was 96%. This is high since a canopy cover of 80% or higher is considered optimum, Flosi and Reynolds (1994).

Deciduous trees occupied a larger portion of the canopy than did coniferous trees. Coniferous trees comprised only 16% of the canopy. The significance of this is that wood from alders and most other deciduous species deteriorates more rapidly than wood from coniferous species (Sedell, *et al.* 1988). Therefore, less LWD would be available in the future for fish cover and LWD formed pools in this creek and others dominated by deciduous species.

Embeddedness

High embeddedness values (silt levels), such as those found in East Branch Abalobadiah Creek, have been associated with many negative impacts to salmonids. These negative impacts can be observed in important environmental components of salmonid habitat, such as pool habitats, dissolved oxygen levels and water temperatures.

The impact high silt levels have on pool habitat is that they fill in and eventually eliminate pools. As already mentioned, pools provide important habitat for rearing salmonids.

High silt levels also impact oxygen levels in the water. They do so by reducing water circulation within the substrate, thus lowering the oxygen levels needed by salmonid eggs (Sandercock, 1991). This can hinder the survival of the eggs deposited in redds, as well as the survival of juvenile salmonids.

Water temperature is impacted by high silt levels in several ways. Hagans et al (1986) reported the following impacts to water temperatures: 1) the loss of a reflective bottom; 2) darker sediment (as opposed to clean gravels) storing heat from direct solar radiation which is then transferred to the water column; and 3) a reduction in the flow of water through the substrate interstitial spaces thereby exposing more of the water column to direct solar radiation.

Another means by which water temperatures are increased is through the widening of stream channels: over time, high silt levels increase the substrate surface level of the creek, resulting in a wider, shallower stream channel (Flosi and Reynolds 1994). In shallow streams more surface area is exposed to the sun relative to the volume of water, leading to an increase in solar heating which in turn leads to higher water temperatures.

Substrates embedded with silt in varying degrees were given corresponding values as follows: 0-25%= value 1, 26 - 50% = value 2, 51 - 75% = value 3 and 76 - 100% = value 4. According to Flosi and Reynolds (1994), creeks with embeddedness values of two or higher are considered to

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have poor quality fish habitat. In East Branch Abalobadiah Creek, 100% of the pool tail-outs measured had embeddedness values of two or more.

It is important to consider, however, that the above embeddedness values were obtained in the summer during low flow conditions. In winter and spring, flows are usually higher due to the rainy season and the lowered evapotranspiration of the trees. This higher flow can carry away some of the previously deposited silt to sites further downstream. Therefore, embeddedness values may fluctuate throughout the year along different sections of the stream.

Substrate

In East Branch Abalobadiah Creek, none of the low gradient riffles had gravel or small cobble as the dominant substrate. The absence of these substrates indicates that there is an insufficient amount of substrate available as potential spawning habitat. It is also important to note that 100% of the low gradient riffles surveyed were dominated by sand. The high degree of sand observed most likely occurred due to cattle, which were observed to be freely ranging throughout the creek. In addition to lacking substrate for spawning in the riffles surveyed, the overall percentage of riffles in the surveyed portions of the creek was low at only 16% (Table 1). Subsequently, there may be a lack of sufficient spawning habitat as well. Another point to consider is that regardless of the amount of substrate or spawning habitat available, this habitat may not be suitable for salmonids if it is highly embedded.

Overall, East Branch Abalobadiah Creek appears to have a relatively low percentage of primary and LWD formed pools. This creek also appears to have low shelter values, high embeddedness values and insufficient substrate and habitat for spawning. This creek does appear to have sufficient canopy.

Georgia-Pacific recognizes that there are areas of East Branch Abalobadiah Creek in need of enhancement, and where feasible will attempt to restore those areas over time as part of its long term management plan. The company will also attempt to facilitate a healthy environment for salmonids in this creek through sound management practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) East Branch Abalobadiah Creek should be managed as an anadromous, natural production watershed.
- 2) Where feasible, design and engineer pool enhancement structures to increase the depth of pools. This must be done where the banks are stable or in conjunction with stream bank armor to prevent erosion.
- 3) Shelter values throughout East Branch Abalobadiah Creek could be increased by addition of large logs and root wads, boulder clusters, log and boulder wiers and log and boulder deflectors. These need to be placed carefully to prevent washing out in high flows. The

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Stream Habitat Restoration Manual, by Flosi and Reynolds, 1994, provides detailed descriptions for restoration efforts.

- 4) Log debris accumulations retaining large quantities of fine sediment should be modified if necessary, over time, to avoid excessive sediment loading in downstream reaches.
- 5) Sources of stream bank erosion should be mapped and prioritized according to present and potential sediment yield. Identified sites should then be treated to reduce the amount of fine sediment entering the stream. In addition, sediment sources related to road systems need to be identified, mapped and treated according to their potential for sediment yield to the watershed.
- 6) Spawning gravel in this creek was limited. Projects should be designed at suitable sites to trap spawning gravel in order to increase spawning habitat throughout the stream.

COMMENTS AND LANDMARKS

The following landmarks and possible problem sites were noted. All distances are approximate and taken from the beginning of the survey reach.

Position
(ft):

Comments:

422	Right bank failure measures 10' high x 25' long.
474	One young-of-the-year (YOY) salmonid observed.
556	Three YOY observed. Cow tracks along creek.
886	Left bank failure measures 30' long x 12' high. Contributing fines to the channel.
1081	Tributary enters on left bank.
1216	Two YOY observed.
1419	One 3-inch salmonid observed.
1975	One YOY observed.
2340	Tributary enters on left bank.
2684	G.P. property line. Two YOY observed.
3284	Confluence with second gulch.

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- 3630 Habitat appears to be diminishing.
- 3832 Log jam measures 8' high x 10' wide x 18' long, possible barrier.
- 4062 No fish observed.
- 4253 End of survey. High gradient, diminished habitat, no water, no fish observed since log jam.

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