

# STREAM INVENTORY REPORT

## Gulch Eleven

### WATERSHED OVERVIEW

Gulch Eleven is a tributary to South Fork Ten Mile River (Figure 1). Elevations range from 420 feet at the mouth of the creek to 1400 feet in the headwater areas. Gulch Eleven's legal description at the confluence with South Fork Ten Mile River is T19N R16W S25. Its location is 39°28'44"N. latitude and 123°35'33"W. longitude according to the USGS Northspur 7.5 minute quadrangle.

### HABITAT INVENTORY RESULTS

The habitat inventory of October 23, 1997, was conducted by Dave Wright and Andrew Hepokowski. The total length of surveyed stream in Gulch Eleven was 4971 feet (0.94 miles, 1.5 km).

Flow measurements were not taken.

Gulch Eleven consists of one reach: a G-3 for the entire length of surveyed stream.

Table 1 summarizes the Level II riffle, flatwater and pool habitat types. By percent occurrence, riffles comprised 37%, flatwater 20% and pools 40% of the habitat types (Graph 1). By percent total length, riffles comprised 51%, flatwater 23% and pools 23% (Graph 2).

17 Level IV Habitat Types were identified and are summarized in Table 2. The most frequently occurring habitat types were low gradient riffles, 36%, plunge pools, 11%, and lateral scour pools, 7% (Graph 3). The most prevalent habitat types by percent total length were low gradient riffles at 36%, runs at 8% and step runs at 8% (Table 2).

Table 3 summarizes main channel, scour and backwater pools, which are Level III pool habitat types. Scour pools were most often encountered at 73% occurrence and comprised 70% of the total length of pools.

Table 4 is a summary of maximum pool depths by Level IV pool habitat types. In second order streams, pools with depths of two feet (0.61 m) or greater are considered optimal for fish habitat. In Gulch Eleven, 21 of the 44 pools (47%) had a depth of two feet or greater (Graph 4).

The depth of cobble embeddedness was estimated at pool tail-outs. Of the pool tail-outs measured, 0% had a value of 1, 8% had a value of 2, 49% had a value of 3 and 44% had a value of 4 (Graph 5).

Of the Level II habitat types, pools had the highest mean shelter rating at 38 (Table 1). Of the Level III pool habitat types, scour pools had the highest mean shelter rating at 44 (Table 3).

## **Gulch Eleven**

Of the 44 pools, 32% were formed by large woody debris (LWD): 18% by logs and 14% by root wads (calculated from Table 4).

Table 6 summarizes dominant substrate by Level IV habitat types. Of the low gradient riffles fully measured, 0% had gravel and small cobble as the dominant substrate (Graph 6).

Mean percent closed canopy was 78%: 47% coniferous trees and 31% deciduous trees. Mean percent open canopy was 22% (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 55%, while mean percent left bank vegetated was 65%. Coniferous trees were the dominant bank vegetation type in 47% of the units fully measured. The dominant substrate composing the structure of the stream banks was cobble/gravel, found in 65% of the units fully measured.

## DISCUSSION

The information gathered in the process of habitat typing will provide Georgia-Pacific 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 Gulch Eleven can be obtained over time.

When reviewing Gulch Eleven data it is important to consider the short distance surveyed. The survey was limited to approximately 5000 feet with only 110 units; therefore, many of the determinations for the indicated parameters were based on only one or two completely measured units. Determinations based on such a limited sample size may lack statistical validity and therefore are of questionable analytical value.

### **Level II habitat types by percent occurrence and length**

Flatwater habitat types comprised a moderate percentage of the units by both percent occurrence and length at 20% and 23% 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 moderate percentage of the stream by both percent occurrence and length at 37% and 51% respectively. Pools comprised a moderate percentage by percent occurrence and a low percentage by length at 40% and 23% 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. In fact, the most productive streams are those consisting of a pool to riffle ratio of approximately one to one (Ruggles 1966).

## **Gulch Eleven**

### **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. Gulch Eleven, a second order stream, has 47% of the pools with 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, root wads, terrestrial vegetation, aquatic vegetation, bedrock ledges and undercut banks. Of the Level II habitat types, pools had the highest shelter rating at 38. Of the Level III habitat types, scour pools had the highest shelter rating at 44. 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 Gulch Eleven was 32%. 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 salmon 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 Gulch Eleven.

## **Gulch Eleven**

### **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 Gulch Eleven was 78%. This parameter is low since a canopy cover of 80% or higher is considered optimum (Flosi and Reynolds, 1994).

Coniferous trees occupied a larger portion of the canopy than did deciduous trees. Coniferous trees comprised 47% 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, more LWD would be available in the future for fish cover and LWD formed pools in this creek and others dominated by coniferous species.

### **Embeddedness**

High embeddedness values (silt levels), such as those found in Gulch Eleven, 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 three or higher are considered to

## **Gulch Eleven**

have poor quality fish habitat. In Gulch Eleven, 93% 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 Gulch Eleven, 0% of the low gradient riffles fully measured had gravel/small cobble as the dominant substrate. This statistic is probably not accurate as it was based on only one or two fully measured units. The relatively low concentration of gravel/small cobble in riffles would indicate that there is an insufficient amount of substrate available as potential spawning habitat in this creek had the statistical measurement for this parameter been valid. While this creek might have sufficient substrate for spawning in the riffles surveyed, the overall percentage of riffles in the surveyed portions of the creek was low at only 37 (Table 1). Subsequently, there may be a lack of sufficient spawning habitat. 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, Gulch Eleven appears to have a relatively high percentage of primary and LWD formed pools. However, this stream also appears to have insufficient canopy, low shelter values and high embeddedness values. In addition, while there was sufficient substrate for spawning, habitat for spawning appeared to be limited.

Georgia-Pacific will attempt to maintain a healthy environment for salmonids in this creek through sound management practices and restoration and enhancement projects.

Georgia-Pacific recognizes that there are areas of Gulch Eleven 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) Due to the small size of this creek, the net results of any expense or effort directed towards creek restoration, other than maintaining good canopy cover, would not be cost effective.
- 2) Gulch Eleven should be managed as an anadromous, natural production watershed.
- 3) Log debris accumulations retaining large quantities of fine sediment should be modified if necessary, over time, to avoid excessive sediment loading in downstream reaches.

## Gulch Eleven

- 4) 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.

### 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:

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20	Begin survey at confluence with South Fork Ten Mile River.
951	Confluence with West Branch Gulch Eleven
1046	Log jam measures 8' high x 25' long x 15' wide; possible barrier to fish passage.
3129	Clear cut unit on right bank.
4569	Confluence with South Branch Gulch Eleven.
4971	End of survey at confluence with unnamed left bank gulch, Diminished habitat.

Gulch Eleven

