



Conservation in Washington: Powered by People



MAKING AN IMPACT:

- *Adult Coho returns jumped from a historic average of 4 to 33 after first construction season in 2012.*
- *Coho redd counts went from historic average of 4.6 to 17.*
- *Constructed five engineered log jams and installed innumerous additional large wood pieces.*

UNDERWOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT - LANDOWNERS IMPROVE HABITAT IN WIND RIVER WATERSHED

Lower Columbia River Steelhead are listed as threatened in the Wind River watershed of Skamania County. The Little Wind River is the first major tributary in the watershed, and habitat in this stream had been degraded through a history of intensive logging, road building, and landslides. Fish habitat consisted of a continuous riffle with very little refuge or spawning area.

FINDING A COMMON PATH Underwood Conservation District (UCD) works with several major partners on restoring steelhead habitat in the Wind River watershed. The District's role is to engage private landowners in this effort. UCD contracted two renowned restoration designers to plan and engineer habitat restoration work in the Little Wind River, and in 2012-2013 the project was constructed. A participating landowner contributed logs and rootwads that were used to construct engineered log jams. Pools, riffles, and spawning glides were also constructed in the stream.

RESULTS ON THE GROUND Five engineered log jams were constructed and innumerous additional large wood pieces were installed along the stream. In addition, nine pools were excavated for fish holding; ten riffles were constructed to help maintain stream grade and retain gravels; and three glides were constructed to provide materials and space for fish spawning. The Little Wind's confluence with the Wind River was modified slightly to allow easier fish passage from the mainstem. One off-channel alcove was constructed for fish refuge, and the entire site was restored and replanted.

While this project was aimed at improving steelhead habitat, benefits were observed for Coho salmon as well. After the first construction season in 2012, live adult Coho returns jumped from a historic average of 4 to 33! Additionally, Coho redd counts went from a historic average of 4.6 to 17! Fish population monitoring in this tributary is limited, but even more increases in fish use of this significant little stream are anticipated over the coming years.

Dan Gundersen, a participating landowner, said of the project: "As the landowners, we are impressed by the professionalism and commitment shown by the UCD staff and volunteers that worked on the site and your concern for our satisfaction with the end result."

Little Wind River, pre-construction (left) and post-construction (right)

