

Klickitat River Haul Road Restoration Project Summer 2016 Update

Construction on Phase 6 (the last phase of the project located up and downstream of Stinson Flats) is scheduled for July 2017. The exact dates and hours of operation are to be determined. Turbidity generated by the project may occasionally impact fishing downstream of Dead Canyon. Work is being coordinated with regulatory agencies.

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Imagine the legacy left to future generations if several miles of a beautiful, productive, fish-bearing river could be restored to a wild, natural condition. Imagine you could take your children and grandchildren to this river and still see or catch salmon and steelhead in the resulting deep pools and braided river channels decades from now. Imagine removing asphalt and eroding road fill from a wilderness where no other built infrastructure exists. There are few places in the Pacific Northwest where this could be possible and it's happening right now, right here, on the Klickitat River. Please read on to learn more about this once in a lifetime opportunity with Columbia Land Trust.

Who is Columbia Land Trust and what is the Haul Road?
Columbia Land Trust is a non-profit organization that conserves and cares for the northwest places you love. See our website or contact us for more information about our work throughout the lower Columbia River region.

The Haul Road is an impassible two-lane, paved road that traverses the floodplain of an otherwise pristine 12-mile section of the Klickitat River between the Twin Bridges on Hwy 142 north of Klickitat, WA and Dead Canyon Creek. In 2007, with

funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Columbia Land Trust purchased the road and began work to restore river processes to enhance fish habitat. Together with partner, Yakama Nation Fisheries Program, Columbia Land Trust has implemented five phases of restoration work. We hope to be done by 2016.

Why restoration?

When the road was built, it was quite a feat. The road had to be perched on fill that was imported to the floodplain, sometimes being placed directly in the river. Floodplains are the natural consequence of flowing water: as the water collects and flows downhill, the energy of the water moves sediments and wood, scouring channels and pools along the way. The fill placed in the floodplain to elevate the road had to be armored by riprap, or large boulders, to prevent erosion. Water that once circled into backwater channels, spilled around islands and down side channels, and into deep pools at the foot of bedrock walls flowed instead down a single straight, confined channel. Streams that historically flowed directly into the river were placed in culverts under the road surface restricting fish movement, sediment and wood transport. Trees and shrubs that once lined the banks of the river struggled to grow in the large boulders and asphalt. The river had effectively been placed in a straight jacket.

So what now? The restoration goal on the Haul Road is to remove portions of the road that limit the river's natural processes so the river can once again reclaim its floodplain. This is a process-based restoration project: We are removing the limitations on the system so that it can restore itself. We expect the river to continue to shape and change the floodplain, including in the footprint of the old road. This would be success.

What's been done and how does it look?

We've removed nearly 170,000 tons of fill from the active floodplain of the river, re-contoured historic slopes, planted native vegetation, constructed large woody debris jams (to improve habitat complexity) and recycled all the asphalt. The changes look like this:



What impacts will construction have on uses of the corridor?

During periods of active construction, the road will be closed to public access to ensure public safety. From the river, boaters will see areas downstream of Dead Canyon that are several years into recovery, as well as recently restored areas. The land trust and the contractor work closely with the permitting agencies to minimize turbidity during in-water work using best management practices, but sediments will inevitably enter the water when fill and armor rock is removed from *underwater*. We try to time our work to reduce impacts to fishing and recreation, sometimes working at night. These events are significantly less intense and shorter in duration than those following late summer and early fall natural rain events, but nevertheless can impact fishing conditions. Please keep in mind that we are balancing permit requirements, construction site logistics, ecological and economic factors, as well as land-based and water-based recreational and commercial impacts in determining the work schedule. **Please click on the “Klickitat Haul Road: Access Update” link on our home page (www.columbialandtrust.org) for updates and additional project information.**



How can the restored areas be used in the future?

The Land Trust has continued the tradition of allowing public access to this privately-owned corridor and remains dedicated to public access in the future. The public is free to enjoy all the traditional uses of the corridor including walking, biking, hunting, fishing and boating. The 2 miles of road above the gate at Twin Bridges will remain paved. We remind users that the haul road corridor is a narrow corridor surrounded by public and private lands. Adjacent landowners may have other policies or beliefs about access. Please know whose land you are on when you visit and be prepared to honor the wishes of adjacent landowners.

When will the road be closed?

The road is closed to all public entry during periods of high fire risk, usually between July and September. This policy is consistent with past owners and is implemented to protect public health and safety as well as the natural resources in this remote, difficult to access part of the watershed. For information about public access, changes to the corridor and seasonal closures for construction, fire or other emergencies, please contact us or refer to our website. The corridor is constantly changing due to natural flooding events and restoration activities, so caution is always

advised. Do not walk on disturbed slopes near the water and please avoid damaging areas recently planted or seeded.

What happens when the projects are finished?

The river is a dynamic, active system. A river attempts to find a balance between the energy in flowing water and the sediments and rock it transports through its floodplain. This process is marked by change – changes in where channels form, what sediments and rocks are moved downstream, which banks remain stable and which become deformed. Erosion, when it occurs at the behest of the river in a natural setting and acting upon natural materials in the floodplain (like sand, silt, gravels, etc), is a healthy process in an active floodplain. It is necessary for recruitment of spawning gravels, to form new channels and pools, and to recycle nutrients. You can expect to see active erosion in the project area, as well as deposition (formation of new gravel bars, islands, beaches, etc). The Land Trust will be monitoring the corridor for such changes, capturing this dynamic, exciting journey with photography and aerial (LiDAR) imagery.



The above LiDAR images demonstrate the change in topography following the removal of road fill across Dead Canyon at the north end of the project area. The image on the left, before restoration, shows the horseshoe-shaped fill and the washed-out railroad bridge that carried trains across Dead Canyon Creek. The creek was forced downstream through an unnaturally narrow confinement (the creek is flowing from left to right), scouring a pool at the base of the bridge that attracted fish in the spring and then dried up during summer, killing the fish. The image on the right, following restoration, shows the removal of the fill from the floodplain.

Columbia Land Trust will continue to manage the corridor for habitat with our proven dedication to public access, safety and community. We pay taxes on the property despite our exempt status, and will remain dedicated to all facets of property management, including noxious weed control. We will continue to work closely with neighbors and local community who have traditionally had access to the corridor as well as with staff of the Klickitat Wildlife Area through which the corridor passes.

Please contact us using the information above if you have questions or concerns, or visit our website at: www.columbialandtrust.org. Thank you!