

Trout Creek Riparian Restoration: Willow Planting Project

FY07 Accomplishment Report

The Custer National Forest, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and a MT Conservation Corp crew planted over 4,000 willow cuttings in the Trout Creek drainage of the Custer National Forest. Three stream miles of upper Trout Creek historically supported an extensive willow community, with beaver established throughout. Drought, timber harvest, livestock use, and most recently, the Derby Fire of August 2006 had depleted native willow stock from upper Trout Creek. Willows were planted in May 2007 using a Waterjet Stinger willow planter to maximize planting depth (3 to 5ft) and increase water access for the 4 to 6ft long cuttings. Survival estimates as of September 2007 were over 90%. Willow cuttings were harvested from 2 adjacent watersheds and were transported via helicopter to the project area for immediate planting. Areas planted included inside meander bends and low areas of the adjacent floodplain with wetland characteristics. The target was to transplant 2,400 willow cuttings throughout 3 miles of riparian area. However, nearly 4,500 cuttings were successfully planted, nearly doubling our estimate. Establishment of native willow species in this area should aid in stabilizing stream banks, filtering sediment, creating wildlife and fisheries habitat, increasing water holding capacity, and could foster beaver introduction or natural recolonization. Additionally, once established, this willow source could be used for future plantings throughout the remainder of the Trout Creek drainage.



Planted willow cuttings in the Trout Creek drainage, May 2007.



Representative willow growth/development since May 2007. Photo was taken in July 2007.

Year Awarded: 2007

Project completion: May 2007

Report number: 1

Expenditures:

- FY07 funding: \$16,000
- Expend: \$16,000
- Remaining: \$0

Partners/Contractors/Coop:

MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks
MT Conservation Corp

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