
DAVID BUGNI, LANDOWNER, AND CLACKAMAS COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Suter Creek Habitat Restoration

Estacada, Oregon



As part of a landowner-led ecological restoration project, 96 logs and rootwads are reintroduced to a stream to add critical habitat for threatened fish and other aquatic species.

SERVICES

Build

Suter Creek, a tributary to the North Fork of Eagle Creek and ultimately the Clackamas River, long served as habitat for Coho salmon and winter steelhead. Over time, historic logging and ill-informed stream management practices removed much of wood that would otherwise naturally accumulate in the creek. Without the deep pools and complex flow regimes provided by that wood, habitat dwindled.

In 2014, visionary landowner David Bugni launched an ambitious project to improve habitat for endangered fish in more than two miles of Suter Creek. The first three phases of the effort, which removed invasive species and barriers to fish passage, reactivated two side channels, added spawning gravel and added several large wood structures to the channel, occurred on privately owned land.

The fourth phase of the project, a 1-mile reach within a steep canyon on land owned by the Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District and 3 other private landowners added to its logistical complexity. As general contractor, and working closely with our subcontract Columbia Helicopter, Inc., Biohabitats led aerial installation of 95 large Douglas fir logs and rootwads and the intricate engineering of those logs into 22 complex structures that function to stabilize the creek while providing much needed cover, resting, and rearing habitat for threatened Coho salmon and steelhead, as well as other fish and aquatic species.