

Left Hand Fork Blacksmiths Fork Habitat Improvement Project

Proposal Title: Left Hand Fork Blacksmiths Fork – Habitat Improvement

Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service

Proposed Start Date: May, 2013

Project Submitter: Paul Chase

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Project Location: Left Hand Fork Blacksmiths Fork

Township Range Section: T11N R3E sections 34 County: Cache

Brief Project Description:

The project work consists of two parts: riparian/stream restoration and road work/trailhead construction. **Part I:** The project would rehabilitate and protect riparian and stream habitat damaged by stream channelization by removing berms of dredged material placed along the stream bank. This material has prevented water in the spring from reaching historical floodplains. This in turn has prevented/eliminated associated riparian vegetation. Both floodplains and vegetation would be reestablished with this project and protected from future motorized impacts by a post and pole fence. **Part II:** This portion of the project would create/define a trailhead for Forest visitors at the Forest Boundary. User created hill climbs and “mudding” areas would be ripped and seeded.

Priority: High

Description of Priority: User created hill climbs and “mudding” areas have expanded over the years in Left Hand Fork. The worst spots are located at the Forest boundary before a seasonal road gate where there is year round access. To address this, the Logan Ranger District has proposed creating/defining a trailhead with parking for Forest visitors. To prevent future hill climbs from occurring, the existing gate would be moved down near the Forest boundary, a fence and/or large rocks would be placed along the road to discourage visitors from leaving the road, and a fence would be constructed around the trailhead.

This project supports the mission of the Utah’s Blue Ribbon Fisheries program by identifying, enhancing, and protecting waters that provide quality public fishing. In addition, this project would meet the intent of the Range-wide Bonneville cutthroat trout (BCT) conservation agreement by protecting and improving BCT habitat.

Equipment Needed:

- 1) Backhoe or trackhoe for two weeks
- 2) Road Grader for one week
- 3) Dump truck for two weeks

Description of Problem/Need - Why should we do the project?: The Left-Hand Fork of the Blacksmith Fork River is paralleled the majority of its length by Forest Service road 245. Several large complex dispersed sites have evolved from minor sites into year-

round major motorized play areas. At these areas, portions of the stream and upland areas have been rutted and denuded by atvs and 4x4 vehicles.

The Blacksmith Fork River is an important fishery in Northern Utah and is currently considered a Utah Blue Ribbon Fishery. Left Hand Fork of Blacksmith Fork is a major tributary to Blacksmiths Fork and supports the largest remaining population of Bonneville cutthroat trout in this drainage. In addition, this stream provides habitat for both brown trout and brook trout.

This project would reduce impacts of motorized recreation to aquatic and riparian habitat along the Left-Hand Fork of the Blacksmith Fork and to upland habitats while providing Forest visitors an improved parking area and a defined trailhead for the numerous dispersed recreational opportunities found throughout the canyon.

Project Objectives – What will be accomplished by the project:

- Reduce watershed degradation and sedimentation within streams, riparian areas, and other wetlands (Closure of several user created hillclimbs and “mudding” areas that are impacting riparian and fisheries habitat and reducing in size two dispersed camping sites that are located in along the stream).
- Restore a 1,000 foot section of stream by removing a berm that was placed along the stream in the mid 1990’s.
- Improve habitat conditions for the Bonneville Cutthroat trout, (a forest service and state sensitive species) and for other sport fish species by reducing sediment inputs, improving riparian vegetation and restoring the natural floodplain.
- Construct a trailhead to provide year round parking for Forest visitors and move an existing gate down to the Forest boundary.
- Build and maintain partnerships through involvement and assistance in the management of fish and wildlife and their habitat.

Budget:

Backhoe or Trackhoe for 2 weeks - \$10,000

Dumptruck for 2 weeks – \$7,200

Road Grader for 1 week – \$4,800

300^{^3} yards of road base – \$1,800

100 barrier rock (3’x 3’ or larger) – \$5,000

1,300’ of Post and Pole fence – \$5,000

Five acres of seeding (150 lbs of seed) – \$1,000

Project Planning/Management, Implementation, and NEPA – \$5,600

Erosion Control 1,000’ - \$1,200

Fence Construction Labor (dedicated hunters)- \$2,400

Total = \$44,000

Funding Commitments Already Received (Both \$ and in-kind):

The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest will provide the following:

100 barrier rock (3'x 3' or larger) – \$5,000

Project Planning/Management, Implementation, and NEPA– \$5,600

1,300 feet of Post and Pole Fencing - \$5,000

Fence Construction Labor (dedicated hunters) - \$2,400

Total = \$18,000

Amount requested = \$26,000