



Focus on **Little Klickitat River**

from Ecology's Water Quality Program

Problem: high temperatures are harming the river basin

The Little Klickitat River Basin is located in south-central Washington State. It flows from the southwest flank of the Simco Mountains, west across the Munson Prairie, and through the Little Klickitat Canyon to its confluence with the Klickitat River. Field work by the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), the Central Klickitat Conservation District (CKCD), and the Yakama Nation Fisheries staff have confirmed many cases of high surface-water temperatures throughout the basin. High temperatures create poor conditions for fish and other wildlife.

What's being done to address this?

The Little *Klickitat River Watershed Temperature Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)* technical report recommends increasing the amount of shade by planting vegetation next to streams as the most effective change landowners and managers could make to cool stream temperature in surface waters in the Little Klickitat Watershed.

Past and ongoing activities by the Central Klickitat Conservation District, city of Goldendale, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Ecology, Yakama Nation Fisheries Program, landowners, and others already support the recommendations of this water cleanup project. These efforts, including water quality monitoring, riparian (streamside) area restoration projects, sediment reduction projects, and water use practices that consider in-stream flows, will eventually yield cooler temperatures in the watershed.

The Central Klickitat Conservation District (CKCD) was awarded a Centennial Clean Water Fund grant that supports implementation and public involvement with this TMDL. Also, CKCD assists with implementation of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program projects and other stream-bank improvement projects. Additionally, monitoring that CKCD performs provides valuable data to track basin water quality conditions.

CKCD and the Northwest Service Academy (NWSA) have already planted 3,680 trees in various areas alongside the Little Klickitat River and Bowman Creek (a tributary to the Little Klickitat River), including ponderosa pine and Rocky Mountain juniper. District staff and NWSA crew also worked with the landowner to move a fence away from the bank of the Little Klickitat River and establish a buffer between the river and a pasture.



Restoration work crew in the Little Klickitat Watershed

The Natural Resources Conservation Service promotes and administers various technical, educational, and financial assistance programs to help farmers and ranchers address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. Programs include the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP), and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

What's next?



The Klickitat Basin Watershed Planning Unit is assessing water supply and use in the basin, and is developing strategies for future use. In 2004, Ecology will work with the CKCD and basin landowners to develop a Detailed Implementation Plan that will identify specific activities to reduce stream temperatures and who is responsible for implementing these activities. Activities that may be identified include planting additional vegetation along the river bank, bank stabilization, and water conservation.

For more information or to get involved, contact Ann Butler at 360-407-6480 or e-mail anbu461@ecy.wa.gov.

Restoration work in the Little Klickitat Watershed