Clark Fork River
Operable Unit of the Milltown Reservoir Clark Fork River Superfund Site

River Review

December 2015

Phases 5 and 6– Construction Continues

Construction on Phases 5 and 6 of the Clark Fork River cleanup began in July 2014. These phases are located between Galen Road and Gemback Road, near Racetrack, Montana. The project area covers 4.5 river miles on two private ranches. To date, almost 400,000 cubic yards of contaminated material (~75% of the project total) has been removed from the Clark Fork River floodplain. All of the streambanks (approximately 9 miles) have been rebuilt. Seeding was completed on 80 acres of the total 168 acres (47% of the project). Planting of vegetation was completed on 18 acres and includes 12,425 large woody plants (65%of the project total), and 3,000 small woody plants (32% of the project total). This project will continue through winter 2015 with an anticipated completion date of spring 2016.

Crews complete final floodplain grading in preparation for seeding and planting of containerized plants.

First Annual Monitoring Meeting

Are you interested in the cleanup of the Clark Fork River?

Are you curious about the monitoring results from the Clark Fork River for surface water, bed sediment ,vegetation, Periphyton, Macroinvertebrates, fish and birds?

Are you interested in how these results are influencing future designs and future monitoring plans?

If you are, then please attend our first annual Clark Fork River Monitoring meeting. The meeting will be held on January 27, 2015, at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Room 111 in the Lee Metcalf Building (DEQ Main Office) from 9:00 till 2:00. **Please RSVP to Brian Bartkowiak at 444-0214 or bbartkowiak@mt.gov.**

For more information:

Brian Bartkowiak, DEQ
Clark Fork River
Project Lead
bbartkowiak@mt.gov
(406) 444-0214

Katie Garcin, DEQ
CFR Project Officer
kgarcin@mt.gov
(406) 444-6429

Ben Quinones
CFR Project Officer
BEquinones@mt.gov
(406) 444-6593

Jeni Flatow, DEQ
Public Information Officer
jflatow@mt.gov
(406) 444-6469

Tom Mostad, NRDP
Restoration Manager
tmostad2@mt.gov
(406) 444-0227

Websites:
www.deq.mt.gov
www.doj.mt.gov
www.cfrtac.org

Montana DEQ Remediation Division
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

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Phases 2 Construction

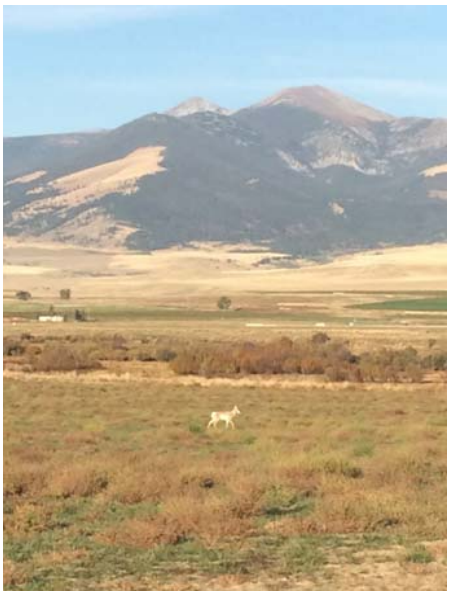
Construction on Phase 2 of the Clark Fork River cleanup began in June 2015. This phase is located directly below Phase 1 and ends at Perkins Lane. The project area covers 1.9 river miles on two private ranches and State of Montana land. To date, almost 200,000 cubic yards of contaminated material (50% of the project total) has been removed from the Clark Fork River floodplain and stream banks. In addition, internal haul roads have been completed and on-site borrow areas have been developed. This project will continue through winter 2015 with an anticipated completion date of spring 2016.

Contaminated material in one of the streambanks in Phase 2. This material was removed and disposed of at the regional repository.

Construction equipment warms up in the early morning.

Other activities

- Sampling and characterization of the Phases 3 and 4 project areas, located between Perkins Lane and Galen Road, was completed winter 2015. The design team is in the early stages of developing the Preliminary Design Plan with the landowners.
- DEQ is currently working with private landowners, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Grant-Kohrs Ranch on the Design Plans for Phases 7, 15 and 16. These plans begin to lay out the design for the phases where remediation work will be conducted. DEQ will continue to provide updates as the designs progress.
- Phase 8 project area, located downstream of Racetrack Pond, is undergoing sampling and characterization.



Antelope grazing in the newly revegetated Eastside Road Pastures

Eastside Road Additional Revegetation Project

After a year of little growth in the Eastside Road pastures south of Deer Lodge, DEQ implemented additional revegetation measures in spring of 2015. Sugar beet lime and top soil was deep tilled into the existing soil. The area was then reseeded and straw was crimped into the ground for erosion control. Vegetation is this area is looking good and blowing dust has been significantly reduced.

The Clark Fork River Operable Unit (CFR OU) is part of the Milltown Reservoir/Clark Fork River Superfund Site. The CFR OU includes the Clark Fork River from its headwaters near Warm Springs Creek to Milltown Reservoir just east of Missoula. The heavy metals (Cadmium, Copper, Zinc, and Lead) and arsenic in the Clark Fork River are from historic mining, milling, and smelting processes linked to the Anaconda Company operations in Butte and Anaconda.

The majority of the cleanup will occur along a 43 mile stretch of the river from Warm Springs in Anaconda/Deer Lodge County downstream to Garrison in Powell County. This is known as “Reach A.” The primary sources of contamination are tailings mixed with soil in the stream banks and historic floodplain. These sources threaten human health and animal and plant life.

Modesty Creek Restoration

Modesty Creek, a tributary to the Clark Fork River, was reconnected to the main stem of the Clark Fork this summer. This project was funded by the Natural Recourse Damage Program. Tom Mostad, a Restoration Manager with the NRDP managed the design and implementation of the project. The project involved construction of over 2,000 linear feet of new channel, moving a fiber optic line, installing a culvert, regrading portions of the floodplain, building streambanks, installing stock water tanks, fencing and planting of vegetation. Tom was instrumental in the success of the project and spent countless hours field fitting the design to maximize the benefit to the resource. Tom, his engineers, and the construction contractor did such a great job that within days of reconnecting the new channel to the main stem, brown trout migrated up the channel and were observed spawning.

Tom Mostad (NRDP) along with Michael Hatten (Tetra Tech) at the newly reconnected Modesty Creek channel.

Brown trout redds were observed in the reconstructed Modesty Creek channel within days of reconnection to the main stem.

Modesty Creek channel after microtopography and planting of vegetation.

Matt Fuller of Streamworks, the contractor rebuilding the streambanks on the Clark Fork, demonstrates the benefits of healthy rivers and healthy tributaries.