

Buffalo Flats (cont.)

In 2018 the USWCD and other conservation partners were asked to investigate opportunities to restore functional floodplain and stream channel conditions in a setting where active ranching will continue. Restoration activities in the project area would be designed to increase and improve salmonid spawning areas and summer/winter juvenile salmonid habitat conditions, but with consideration of farming and ranching operations. Restoring a more natural channel alignment with a series of meandering side channels across an active floodplain will provide a physical foundation to support a more productive meadow and improvements in fish and wildlife habitat. The addition of large woody material will improve aquatic habitat, increase instream cover, and protect floodplain surfaces where riparian vegetation can begin growing. The combination of restoration actions will be designed to specifically:

1. Improve fish habitat conditions by increasing large pools, areas of low velocity flow, and hiding cover,
2. Increase channel and habitat complexity with woody material and diverse channel forms,
3. Promote and enhance riparian and floodplain vegetation,
4. Improve irrigation delivery and efficiency,
5. Reduce damage and erosion from flooding and ice flows, and
6. Increase streambank and alluvial water storage to attenuate peakflows.

The USWCD and project partners are currently gathering information on the project site to determine the existing project opportunities and constraints. This has included communication with neighboring property owners and land managers to identify and understand the conditions. Project coordination, engineering designs, and environmental compliance will be the focus of work through at least 2021 as engineers and scientists with the BOR and other partner agencies assist the USWCD.



Buffalo Flats Planning Area