

Project has many partners

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and had a hard time getting back out. His fences were falling into the stream,” Banks said. “So he met with a group of us to discuss a stream restoration project.”

This project has many partners interested in protecting and enhancing habitat for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout.

“We had participation from Southeast Idaho Flyfishers; Simplot; Idaho Department of Environmental Quality; U.S. Forest Service (the property borders the Forest Service on its west end); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Darden Co. (owners of the Red Lobster and Olive Garden restaurant chains), who donated money for the project; Trout Unlimited; and the local school district from Bancroft (North Gem High School),” Banks said.

The entire high school — 65 kids in grades 9 through 12 — came out twice to help. Their service, called Cowboys in Action, helped plant willows and lay out the fence, and helped put up some of the buck-and-pole fence along the riparian area.

“Mike and Roxy had decided they needed to put the channels back into a more normal, meandering course, after looking at an aerial photo from 1941, in the U.S. Forest Service archives,” Banks said. “It showed what the stream looked like originally.”

The project was coordinated by the Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District in cooper-

ation with the Caribou Soil and Water Conservation District. Banks wrote a grant that provided most of the funding.

“Donations from various partners made up the difference, along with inputs from Mike and Roxy. They supplied equipment, posts for the fence, helped us plant trees, and a host of other things,” Banks said.

“We found a contractor, Rockin’ T Construction, in Swan Valley, owned by Troy and Tara Hicks. Tara is the excavator driver and she’s a magician with that machine. She put both channels back the way they were originally, restoring more than 6,000 feet of stream channel,” Banks said.

He took photos before and after — six weeks after it was finished, six months after and a year after.

“The amount of growth in that new riparian area is incredible. We planted willows, and fenced off each channel on both sides,” he said.

This took more than two miles of fence.

Mike and Roxy had a corral next to one channel so they rebuilt the corral away from the stream.

“Since we’d fenced the cattle away from the stream we drilled a well to supply stock water, put in 1,500 feet of pipeline and three water troughs. Fencing off both stream segments created fence for three different pastures, so we placed a water trough in each pasture,” Banks said.



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