

Creek project ends longstanding runoff problem

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS
For the Capital Press

Unexpected help from Mother Nature played a big role in a successful stream rehabilitation in southern Idaho that involved an old dairy site on Trout Creek, near Grace, Idaho.

Landowner Mike Tingey runs beef cattle and wanted to take out the old dairy facility next to the creek.

Pauline Bassett, Natural Resources Conservation Service Caribou District in Soda Springs, said her agency became involved helping with funding, utilizing the State Revolving Fund for clean water projects.

"We finally got this one through with cooperation from the city of Soda Springs, in conjunction with their new wastewater treatment program," she said. "We got to keep half the interest from money they had borrowed; that's what funded the project on Trout Creek."

Chris Banks, water quality resource consultant for Caribou Conservation District, said Soda Springs obtained a low-interest loan from the state fund.

"The (Department of Environmental Quality) allows projects located in the watershed where wastewater facilities are



Courtesy photo

A stream rehabilitation project in southern Idaho involved an old dairy site along Trout Creek, near Grace, Idaho. Rancher Mike Tingey partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service Caribou District in Soda Springs to take out the old dairy facility.

going in to tack on these projects that have not been funded, with permission from the city," he said.

Partnering with Soda Springs increased the amount of the loan the city was requesting from the state, but also reduced the interest.

"It saved the city and the taxpayers money, by allowing us to do this. It's a special kind of project, a new way of participating with a non-traditional partner such as cities that have

the ability to do this," Banks said. Seven of these partnering projects have been undertaken across the state.

Tingey's farm on Trout Creek wasn't used as a dairy anymore, but there were still issues with water quality.

"We wanted to eliminate a concrete area where manure from the dairy was scraped into the stream, and an old dairy lagoon next to the creek," Banks said. There was still waste material, and every time the stream

rose, it took some of that into the creek. It was hauled out and replaced with cinders, gravel and topsoil.

"We removed an old cement retaining wall and stabilized 300 feet of Trout Creek on that side of the stream by reshaping the banks, using rock to hold it, filtered soil on top of the rocks, and planted riparian vegetation, willows, and red ocher dogwoods," he said.

Another goal was to move livestock away from the creek. The old corrals were torn down and a new corral system was built a quarter-mile north, on a flatter area.

Tingey already had a water system on that side of the stream, so he just attached a pipe to the old system to supply water for the livestock.

"That saved money because we didn't have to make a completely new water system," Banks said.

"We're glad to be able to help landowners who want to restore creeks," Bassett said. "The transformation is amazing, from what it looked like before."

Several old buildings — a loafing shed, stanchions and an old dairy parlor — needed to be removed.

"One night we were all at the county fair, getting ready for the 4-H steer show during a lightning storm," Banks said. "A neighbor called Mike and told him his place was on fire." Lightning hit his hay shed, burning the shed and 400 tons of hay, but also burned down those old outbuildings.

"The fire saved us \$60,000 in demolition costs; we didn't have to take the buildings down and haul them off," Bassett said.

The hay and hay shed were insured, so Tingey was able to

replace the hay and rebuild the shed.

"Mother Nature actually helped us out," Banks said.

Tingey put a new hay shed on the old cement flooring of the dairy building. This made a good tradeoff. With the old buildings gone, Tingey now has a larger area for vehicles and machinery, with no more runoff into the creek.

"The Department of Agriculture had met with him earlier, interested in removing runoff, and improving water quality. Tingey wanted to do something about it, but we weren't able to get this project funded until this opportunity came along," Banks said.



Automatic • Affordable • Turbine Drive

NEED WATER?

MicroRain Automatic watering systems are the simple solution for unattended pasture, sports field, or arena irrigation.



Call TOLL FREE TODAY and schedule a demonstration.

1-800-373-9325
www.microrain.net

LEE'S DIESEL & MOBILE REPAIR Rickreall, OR • 866-390-9146

Pierce Pivot & Linear Irrigation Systems High Quality Parts & Service - Valley, Reinke & Zimmatic Linear, Corners, Pivots



Underground Guidance is our Specialty

Submersible, Line-Shaft Turbine & Diesel Pumps, Variable Speed Drives for Pumps & Motors, Trenching for PVC Mainline, Drainage & Electric, Direct Burry Power Cable Sales & Installation

PVC Mainline Pipe & Fittings (all types), Generator Sets, Deutz & Isuzu Diesel Engines & Parts, Diesel Power conversions for Turbine Pumps

See us for your
NRCS EQUIP Projects

www.leesdiesel.com

W16-1/#7

IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT

BOUGHT. SOLD. CONSIGNED.

Design of Effluent Handling Systems

- Gates, Valves & Aerators

New & Used Parts

• Aluminum Pipe • Certa-lok

• Siphon Tubes • HDPE

• Sand Media Filters

• Wheel Lines • Pumps



Office: (209) 460-0450

Fax: (209) 982-1832

www.pacsouthwestirr.com

Carlos (209) 481-7677

Jim (209) 986-0099

W16-4/#18

W16-4/#04X