

Business Notes

Cooperative approach stretches habitat funds for salmon and trout

By Bill Langmaid

Another tributary of the Nehalem River has recently been made more fish friendly due to the proactive efforts of the Hancock Timber Group. While working in the area, Dave Fitch, a forester with the company, noticed the culverts weren't working properly and felt they were both a danger to company roads and a barrier to fish passage. The company has been studying all of its culverts in order to make better-informed decisions on suitability and reliability.

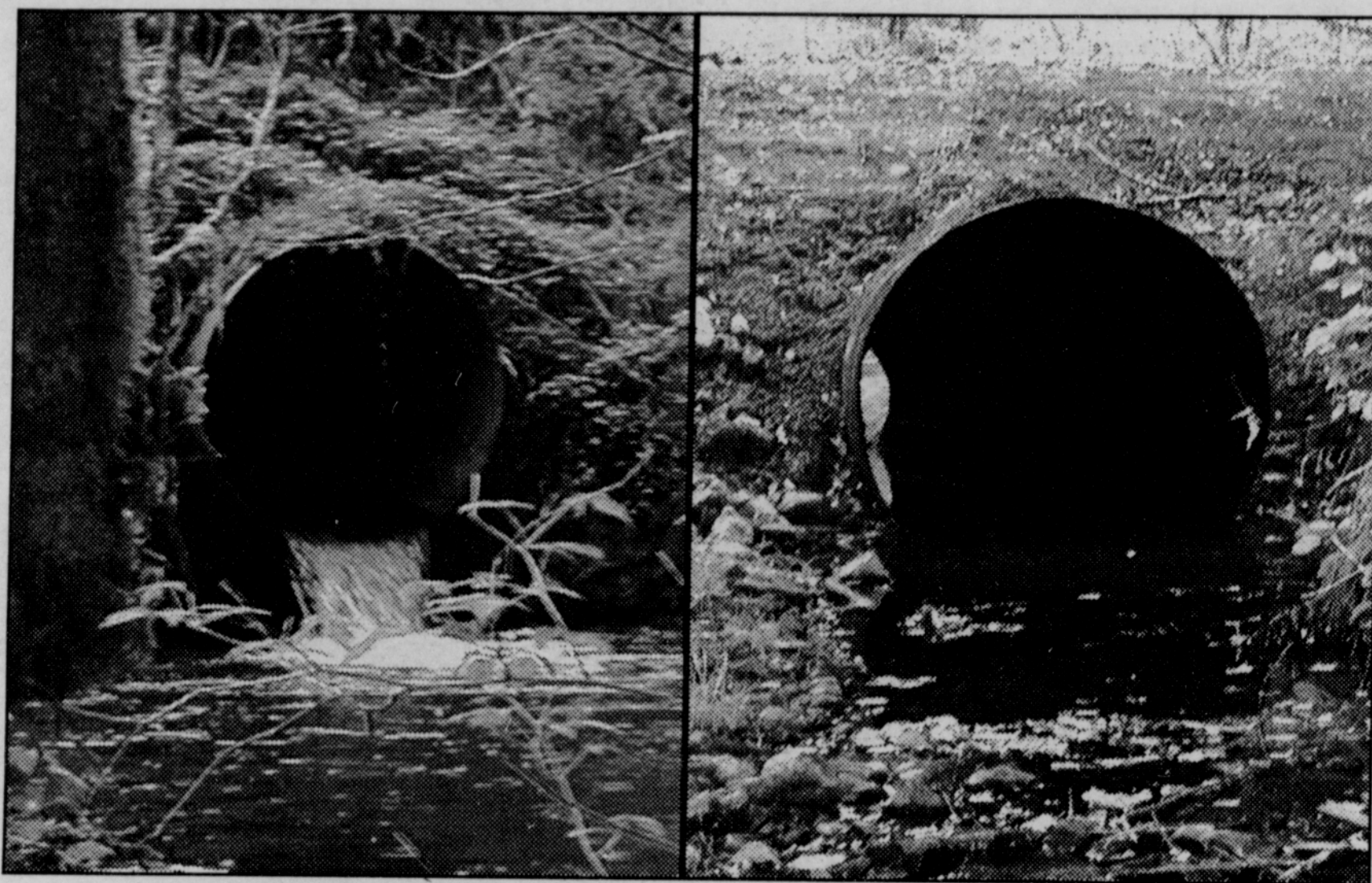
Jane Butterfield, a fish passage specialist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, was consulted last spring on design, and the contractor completed the replacement this August. Two culverts were replaced with devices exceeding the specifications found in the Forest Protection Act. It will be perhaps several years before the stream returns to normal function, as many yards of sediment and gravel have been deposited above each road crossing, but salmon and trout now have access to the mile of stream above the new culverts.

The Hancock Timber management people have had a long-time relationship with local watershed councils, and continue to donate their dollars to be used as leverage through grants to get even more money for the restoration efforts made

by both the Scappoose Bay and Upper Nehalem Watershed Councils, for those landowners unable to generate matching funds of their own. This culvert replacement alone provided \$23,000 in matching funds to the Upper Nehalem, leveraging up to \$50,000 in federal grant money for use by others.

Fitch reported that their contractor, Road Builders Inc. of Seaside, took advantage of the situation and removed 8-10 old, discarded appliances from the creek while replacing one of the culverts. "They certainly looked to be over thirty years old, probably dumped before illegal dumping was as big an issue as it is today." As for the new culverts, the contractor did a superb job, and even with the low water flows there is plenty of water for fish to swim comfortably.

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council was pleased to hear the news of this work, and is eager to help all landowners in the Nehalem basin with projects that enhance habitat along



Before and after photos of culvert replacement on a small unnamed tributary of the Nehalem River illustrate how a culvert (left above) that is too small and

too high can block upstream access for fish. The photo at right above, shows how a larger, properly placed culvert assures fish passage, even during low water.

or within waterways. The Council is a non-profit organization that specializes in acquiring federal and state grant money

to help make improvements to salmon habitat. Meeting times are published in this paper, and interested people can contact

Maggie Peyton, coordinator of the Nehalem Watershed Councils, at 503-429-2401.

Smoke Management fee changes

The Oregon Department of Forestry will accept public comment, Oct. 1 through Nov. 3, on a proposed administrative rule change to consolidate the fees charged to forest landowners for burning piled logging slash.

The rule change would result in an estimated \$90,000 in revenue for the Smoke Management Program. The fees would partially offset the recent loss of more than \$100,000 in state general fund support.

The Smoke Management Plan regulates prescribed burning on private, state and federal forestland in Oregon to minimize the impact on air quality. Prescribed burning is used to remove logging slash or debris, for fire prevention and reforestation purposes, to manage wildlife habitat and to attain and

maintain forest health.

The rule change would affect fees for pile burning, only. Broadcast and underburning fees would be unchanged. The fee for burning piled logging slash is now \$2 per acre, and burning of slash across the landscape is \$5 per acre. The change would set a fee of \$5 per acre for pile burning. It be effective in January 2004.

The text of the rule and the proposed change are on the ODF website, <http://www.odf.state.or.us/DIVISIONS/protection/fire_protection/smp/FeeRule.asp>. Comments can be e-mailed via the website or mailed to: Smoke Management Program, Oregon Department of Forestry, 2600 State St., Salem, OR 97310, or faxed to (503) 945-7454.

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