



Upper Lolo Creek Watershed: Restoring the Headwaters

The WildWest Institute is currently working with the Lolo National Forest, the community-based Lolo Watershed Group and fellow conservation groups Montana Trout, Wildlands CPR and the Sierra Club on a road removal and watershed restoration project for the Upper Lolo Creek watershed west of Lolo, MT. We're really excited to get involved with some bona-fide restoration work everyone agrees needs to be done.

This project calls for permanently closing 63 miles of roads and "jammer" roads, removing or replacing 21 fish-passage culverts to improve native fish habitat and decommissioning 17 miles of unneeded old logging roads.



Unfortunately, Congress only provides the 2-million acre Lolo NF will a paltry sum of \$50,000 annually for this type of restoration work, so we are currently working with the Lolo National Forest and conservation partners to help find funding for this common-ground and common-sense restoration project that will employ local workers improving forest and watershed health.

Our work on this important collaborative restoration project was initiated during regular meetings we were holding with the Lolo National Forest Supervisor Debbie Austin and her district rangers and leadership team. We were really excited to get involved in some good watershed and road restoration work that we all could agree needed to be done and this project seemed to fit the bill perfectly.

We feel this Upper Lolo Creek watershed restoration project is a perfect opportunity to collaborate locally with the recently formed Lolo Watershed Group (a citizens groups of Lolo area residents who care about the Lolo Watershed), community leaders and restoration workers to ask Montana's congressional delegation to find money for this restoration project that enjoys broad support and would result in a healthier watershed and fishery.

To help the public learn more about this specific project, as well as the concept of forest restoration and job creation, we worked with the Lolo Watershed Group to help put together and attended their workshop titled "Putting Local Labor to Work on Forest Restoration" which took place in at the Lolo Community Center in July 2005.

For more information, contact Jake Kreilick, WildWest Institute's Restoration Coordinator at 406.542.7343.