

Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project Update

Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)

BACKGROUND

Historically, the forests of the East Cascades were shaped by frequent fire. Years of fire exclusion have altered forest structure and composition creating uncharacteristically severe fire, insect, and disease impacts. The 34,000 acre Oak Creek Wildlife Area includes a checkerboard of ownership managed by the State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife State Dept. of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service, and lands ceded to the Yakama Nation. These 5 land managers comprise the Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative (<http://www.tapash.org/>).



Deer utilize forested stands after commercial thinning treatments in Oak Creek.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

“To protect and restore riparian and forest habitat while creating a landscape condition that is more resilient to disturbance processes such as fire and insects”. The restoration strategy and treatment prescriptions are based on a landscape evaluation that was completed specifically for the Oak Creek watershed <https://tnc.box.com/s/pdfa5wdbd6097vclmorqfplu6nk4cndf>.

PARTNERSHIPS, FUNDING & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In the past year active restoration treatments have been funded and implemented by all of the Tapash partners. In addition, the project was supported by Oak Creek Riparian Legacy Tree Protection Project, Partners for Fish and Wildlife with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.



Addition (replenishment) of large wood in streams helps salmon and improves floodplain habitat.



Last year a total of 314 acres of small diameter trees were thinned

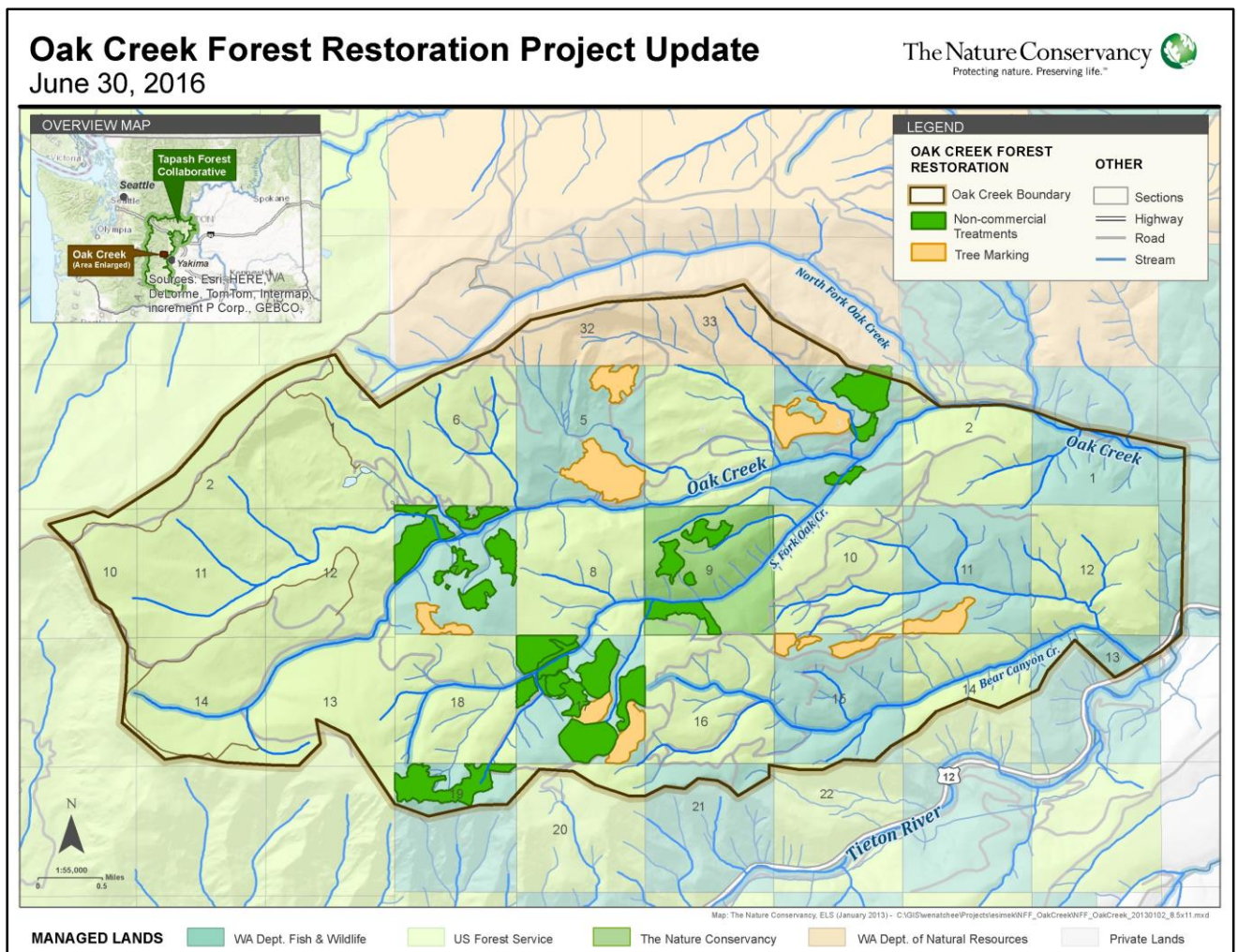


339 acres of trees thinned from previously harvested units were gathered into piles and burned

PROJECT STATUS & RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In FY 2016 an array of treatments and work plans were completed by the Tapash Collaborative partners in order to improve forest health and aquatic conditions, including:

- ✓ **80 acre burn plan** approved and permit issued for future prescribed burns (WDFW lands).
- ✓ **3 miles of stream assessed** for future restoration potential (MCFEG)
- ✓ **Planning Progress** – ESA consultation re-initiated for Elderberry Timber Sale (USFS); Pre-work completed for USFS scoping letter for future floodplain restoration (USFS, WDFW, TNC).
- ✓ **462 acres of commercial thins** completed (WDFW and TNC lands).
- ✓ **314 acres non-commercial harvest** completed (WDFW lands).
- ✓ **369 acres of pile burning** completed (WDFW and USFS)
- ✓ **100 acres of seeding** for erosion control was completed (WDFW)
- ✓ **7 acres selective harvest for future wood replenishment** in streams (Yakama).
- ✓ **25 miles road maintenance, 1.25 miles decommissioning** completed (WDFW)



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