

GREATER MILL CREEK ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT

Purpose and Need



The purpose of the project is rehabilitation of the Greater Mill Creek (GMC) area and restoration of ecosystem processes that have been degraded by historical land use activities. Rehabilitation would be accomplished through forest restoration thinning to reduce stand density, shift species composition, promote the growth of trees and understory vegetation, and develop a multi-story canopy; reintroducing fire as an ecological process through prescribed fire; maintaining sensitive plant communities; managing invasive plant species and pathogens; reducing erosion and sedimentation into streams; restoring in-stream habitat complexity; and managing vegetation within riparian corridors.

These actions are needed to build resiliency, accelerate the development of forest characteristics more typical of late-seral forests, reduce fire hazards and chronic sediment inputs to creeks, and enhance habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species.

The following objectives have been identified for the project:

- Vegetation management objectives include, among others, creating conditions to put impaired forests on a trajectory that expedites the development of late-seral structure; protecting and connecting existing, fragmented old-growth forest; controlling vegetation encroaching into uncommon and sensitive natural communities where they would not normally occur; and preventing the expansion and new establishment of invasive non-native plant and pathogen populations.
- Aquatic restoration objectives include increasing in-channel complexity, maintaining ecological function while long-term recovery occurs, and reestablishing riparian function.
- Road removal and rehabilitation objectives include reducing erosion and sediment delivery into streams from existing infrastructure, reducing mass wasting, reestablishing natural stream morphology, restoring hydrology, and reducing terrestrial habitat fragmentation.



A remaining logging road slowly erodes away, putting sediment into streams.



A young second growth forest grows around a large stump that was left following a timber harvest.



Marten



Coho salmon