
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

26 September 2012

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Forest Service partners with National Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, local communities to complete Twelvemile Creek restoration project

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, Alaska—The Tongass National Forest has completed the first phase of a large-scale watershed restoration project begun this summer with the National Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and communities on Prince of Wales Island.

The Twelvemile Creek watershed restoration project encompasses 28 miles of salmon and other fish-bearing streams as well as 59 miles of additional streams covering an area just under 20 square miles in central Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska. The project will strengthen salmon and steelhead populations and boost recreation opportunities in the area while providing jobs and bolstering the local economy.

Past logging and road building in the watershed occurred under less protective regulations in the 1960s and 70s, including harvesting of 92% of the riparian forest along salmon streams. Crews carrying out the first phase of the project this summer thinned dense young-growth forests to improve wildlife habitat and promote larger streamside trees; placed wood in streams to stabilize banks and improve fish habitat; removed invasive vegetation; stabilized roads; and converted several stretches to OHV trail.

Twelvemile Creek is one of several restoration efforts that exemplify the highly successful and productive partnerships the Forest Service maintains with invaluable partners like National Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy.

“Whether we are restoring salmon habitat or building trails, these partnerships are critical in our efforts to restore long-term productivity and health to key areas on the Tongass,” said Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole. “Twelvemile is a very important part of the larger restoration effort we’re committed to carrying out.”

The Twelvemile Creek project is a featured site of the National Forest Foundation’s *Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences* conservation campaign, which is focused on restoring damaged forests and grasslands and renewing people’s connection to these shared public lands.

“The National Forest Foundation is thrilled to be a part of the tremendous work taking place at Twelvemile Creek,” stated NFF Northwest Regional Director Kathleen Dowd-Gailey. “As the largest National Forest in

the country and home to the world's largest temperate rain forest, the Tongass holds a special place in the hearts of many Americans.”

Randy Hagenstein, Alaska state director of The Nature Conservancy stressed, “Salmon are a way of life in Alaska, and restoring streams helps ensure our traditions continue for future generations.” Tying the project to the Economic Transition for Southeast Alaska, Hagenstein continued, “Restoration projects like this show how the transition toward sustainability now underway on the Tongass National Forest is good for fish and wildlife and provides jobs in rural communities.”

The next phase of work at Twelvemile Creek is set for next year.

On-the-ground footage from Twelvemile is available at <http://youtu.be/YZyfDcaUhx8>; view blog posts on the project at <http://bit.ly/SRTww5> and www.myalaskaforests.com.

Visit www.friendsoftheforest.org for complete information on the NFF's national *Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences* campaign.