

Trucks hauling trees and root wads into the Teanaway Community Forest

by Jim Fossett

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TEANAWAY – Last week Teanaway Road's **Violet Burke** called the *NKC Tribune* to ask why so many trucks were hauling trees past her house in the direction of the Teanaway Community Forest.

Scott Nicolai, a Yakama Nation Fisheries watershed restoration scientist and **Ryan DeKnikker**, a Yakama Nation Fisheries habitat biologist, provided explanations about a project years in the planning that began on Tuesday, July 18. Said Nicolai, "They're hauling this woody debris to targeted sites in the Community Forest, part of a habitat restoration project aimed to create complexity in creeks and streams."

Said DeKnikker, "The debris provides pools for fish, captures sediments moving downstream, and slows the flow, which in times of flooding moves water onto the floodplain and that, in turn, recharges the groundwater.

"Groundwater is cooler, which is good for cold-water fish such as salmon and steelhead trout. This kind of project also makes more water available for fish, which is good."

Nicolai said trucks were hauling the woody debris from a stockpile of trees felled during Suncadia's Swiftwater Drive extension project. That 1.75-mile road was paved in October 2016. Those felled trees were stockpiled at the Winston pit near the Cle Elum River.

"We're also getting some trees from the U.S. Forest Service in Cle Elum," DeKnikker said, "which were saved from restoration work done near Swauk Creek. We're also getting blowdown trees from Lake Kachess Campground.

"Local contractors were hired to transport the wood to our project sites."

DeKnikker said it's taken three weeks to get a third of the Indian Creek portion of the project done. Crews there are working upstream of the culvert running beneath Teanaway Road.

"After we're done with Indian Creek we'll move to First Creek, Middle Creek and Jungle Creek – and hopefully get everything done this year."

He said a team from AmeriCorps is also working at Indian Creek removing an age-old "defunct" stretch of barbed wire fence.

"That work is being done upstream, quite a way

from Teanaway Road," DeKnikker said.

Bonneville Power Administration and the Yakima Integrated Plan are providing the funding for the four-stream project.

Said Nicolai, "In the future we'll be spending grant dollars from NOAA and private dollars we're getting from American Rivers."

DeKnikker said he feels fortunate to be working with talented local loggers who are helping with hauling and building logjams. "They're doing a great job getting it done the way we

designed it."

In a few weeks DeKnikker detours for a spell, to a thinning project on Washington State Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) land in the Taneum's L.T. Murray Wildlife Area. "That's where we'll get woody debris for the remaining tributaries I mentioned. We're thinning to promote forest health and to firewise the region.

"It's great this is happening. The trees are on WDFW land and we're using them to restore uplands and aquatic zones in the Community Forest."



CREWS ARE IN THE Teanaway Community Forest at Indian Creek, creating logjams with woody debris (trees and root wads), part of a restoration project aimed to deliver several benefits. Here the excavator is at work creating logjams for the creek.

Photo courtesy of Ryan DeKnikker