



Wild Connections

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE PRAIRIES

Selkirk Gulch Habitat Restoration Project
Report to Park County Land and Water Trust Fund
Final Report - January 8, 2017



Water quality and wildlife habitat are better protected as a result of the Selkirk Gulch restoration project in North Tarryall Creek headwaters

Summary of Work Completed from October 11, 2016 to December 31, 2016.

- Wild Connections' Board member, Misi Ballard, presented the Selkirk 2nd Interim Report at the Park County Land and Water Trust Fund meeting held on November 2, 2016 in Shawnee, CO.
- The two seasonal gates were installed on November 28, 2016. One gate is located to the east of Selkirk Campground, on the west side of Selkirk Gulch, and the second gate is located approximately 500' west of Selkirk Campground, on FS 801. Gates were custom-fabricated at 18.5 and 21.0 ft. widths, in a sliding rail adjustable style.
- 3 ½ cu.yards 3000 psi concrete was placed at each gate location.
- South Park Ranger District staff inspected the gate installation on December 14, 2016. Both gates were closed and significant snowfall prohibited further travel.
- A spring 2017 monitoring trip will be conducted by Wild Connections after snow-melt. A report of this monitoring trip will be submitted to the LWTF Board following the site visit.
- USFS South Park District Ranger Josh Voorhis has received some public objection to the re-enforcement of the closure at the legal terminus of FS 801, along with positive support from area hunters for protection of the habitat. Closures of illegal routes routinely generate comments from motorized users. Signage was installed to educate the public on the work completed.

Preliminary Evaluation

- Cooperation between Wild Connections, Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative, Coalition for Upper South Platte, South Park Ranger District, volunteers and funders, which included LWTF, South Park National Heritage Area, Patagonia and several individuals, was exemplary.
- Planning and preparation between Wild Connections coordinators and the Forest Service paid off in early site preparation and augering of post-holes, pre-staging materials and equipment and smooth execution of the four consecutive work days. Overnight camping contributed the general sense of accomplishment by all staff and volunteers.

- Fifty-two individuals (including six Forest Service staff) completed nearly 1,000 person-hours of work. The monetary value of this work at approximately \$22,000 leverages cash inputs from funders and makes projects such as this economically feasible.
- Closure of more than two miles of illegal track beyond the end of FSR 801 up to Hoosier Ridge and a shoulder below Red Peak, closure of illegal camping routes, installation of 204 posts with 2,000 feet of cable, two gates, and covering illegal tracks with logs and brush will prevent or greatly discourage illegal motorized use in sensitive riparian and wildlife areas.
- Challenges to the effective execution of this project:
 - Coordination, volunteer recruitment and administration took more time than we anticipated.
 - At these high altitudes, the work season is more limited between late snow-melt and potential early fall storms.
 - Overnight camping logistics are complicated and time-consuming, but are worth the convenience and camaraderie for multi-day volunteers.
 - The biggest challenge will be whether visitors to the area honor the closures and restrict their motorized activities and camping to authorized routes and sites. Because this area has seen heavy motorized off-road use for many years, this will require a change in perceptions of appropriate activities and recognition of the greater value of protecting the water sources, riparian zones and wildlife habitat. Monitoring trips in 2017 will evaluate the early effectiveness of the project.



Two gates were installed for seasonal closures to reduce impact on deer, elk, moose and other wintering grounds and restrict travel during spring birthing periods.

Left –Forest Service arrives to close gates;

Right- Closed gate near camp ground.

Photos South Park Ranger District

