

FishAmerica Foundation

Helicopters Help Restore Salmon Habitat

The FishAmerica Foundation, through its partnership with the NOAA Restoration Center, awarded a \$36,850 grant to the Coos Watershed Association in Charleston, Ore., to restore salmonid habitat in the Coos Bay watershed, located on the southern Oregon coast. The association restored in-stream habitat along 8,200 feet of stream in Anderson and Dalton Creeks. The streams support juvenile coho salmon and sea-run cutthroat trout.

In the early 1800's, many of the complex marshes and freshwater streams in the watershed were drained or rerouted for agricultural use, destroying salmonid spawning and rearing habitat. To restore this critical habitat, the Coos Watershed Association placed 40 large trees with intact root wads along the streams.

The trees, donated by the Oregon Department of Transportation from a local road construction site, were airlifted by helicopter to the project site. The helicopters reduced the need for heavy equipment on the ground, limiting the environmental impact to the surrounding area and maximizing the benefits to juvenile salmon and trout.

By placing the full-size trees by helicopter rather than partial tree lengths by on-the-ground equipment, the Coos Watershed Association reduced project costs and increased the complexity of the fisheries habitat.



Top: Workers prepare the helicopter to lift trees into place along Anderson and Dalton Creeks in Oregon.

Top right: The helicopter lifts the trees in their entirety to the stream for placement. Placement of whole trees in-stream is more cost-efficient and provides more complexity in the fish habitat.

Right: The whole tree is placed under the guidance of biologists and contractors to ensure its proper placement.

Above: A tree is seen in its final in-stream placement.

