

From: [BRUCE WISEMAN](#)
To: [Paul Kolp](#)
Subject: Re: Ridgefield Pits technical memo
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 12:00:59 PM

Good morning, Paul,

Thanks for your note/reminder. I had looked through the July info when I received it and then promptly filed it away and had forgotten you were looking for feedback!

Most, if not all, of my remarks will be directed to the areas immediately upstream of the Ridgefield Pits, as that's where our property is located and naturally what I'm most familiar with.

This property has been in our family since 1963 when my folks purchased 130 acres along the E. Fork. After my father died in 1979, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to move back into the county in 1982, and I managed the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge complex until I retired in 12/1997. When my family and I moved into my folk's home we also began farming Christmas trees which we continue to do today.

My father had a long 34-year career with the same US Fish and Wildlife Service as I worked for and this farm was also his dream. He worked closely with different agencies in 'managing' the river during 1963-1979, including mining rock, under permit, in the flood plain along our property. I have a very large file of his that documents meetings, phone calls, etc, during those years, documenting the evolution of differing philosophies on how best to 'manage' the river. The last actual mining that was completed under his permit appears to be in 1971 or 72.

From 1972-1996, as old photos document, a six or seven-acre pond remained from remnants of the gravel operation on our property. In February of 1996 (not 1995 as I believe your document states), the dike protecting the pond was over-topped, swiftly destroying and filling it with gravels/sediments. I was standing on the dike, filming its demise that evening with an old 8-track camera. (I might add also, that the Ridgefield Refuges also sustained millions of dollars of damage during that flood.) During this 150-year flood event (on the E. Fork) the old river channel had aggraded to the extent that the new channel nearly dried it up. Keep this in mind when I visit about reconnecting with historical channels.

For lack of time, I'm only going to hit the high points of what I consider as pertinent to the properties from our property upstream to the Daybreak County maintenance yard.

Lack of redds/egg burial is a huge problem below our property. This is directly in response to the huge erosion problems along the south bank of the river along not only our property but

also along the high back opposite the county maintenance yard, immediately upstream. You may or may not be aware that in approximately 1966 Clark County constructed a dike that completely destroyed what was then the main channel of the river, moving the entire river into a less-used side channel (that became the main channel). The dike provided protection to their maintenance yard. In so doing, however, it diverted the full force of the river against the 100-foot cliff on the opposite (south) side of the river. For nearly 60 years that bluff has been depositing huge sediment loads into the river, with resultant consequences. Working with the county while trying to put a plan together for protecting our property, post 1996, the County did remove their dike, but that original channel was never restored. I believe part of doing so is noted in one of your Alternatives.

Subsequent to the '96 flood, high flows (and floods) continued to erode further south along out property, and finally reached (1999) the toe of our high bluff where it has, and continues to, also dump huge loads of sediments into the river. During one such flood event in 1999, there was a 'slump', and uphill movement, setting of what has been determined to be an old historical landslide area. This slide actually made its way to the top of our cliff at one of my neighbor's yards! Numerous slumps continue as the toe of the cliff erodes.

It was subsequent to that slide that I personally began to solicit help to address this serious erosion problem, but also the threat to our properties/homes. There was not one County, State or Federal agency that would lend a hand to even begin looking at the problem/solution. Fish First stepped up and during the next 7-8 years, 'we' worked trying to find a solution and funding to address 'our' problem. I personally was able to cobble together nearly \$600,000 and it was only through some political persuasion that permits were finally received to allow the construction - **but** of only 50% of our designed project. The critical upper 50% of the project that would have been completed, out of the river, was not approved by the permitting agencies. It was actually like they wanted to project to fail. Unfortunately, the river did exactly as we predicted pre-construction; a flood event avulsed across the upper proposed project area, eroding tons of gravels downstream onto our lower project, partially destroying a lower constructed structure. The upper portion of the project actually caught stream gravels and in so doing moved the river further away from our high bluff - but it buried the structures, destroying the fish/wildlife enhancements that had been designed into the project. Even though our permit allowed for 'maintenance' of the project, post construction, once again the permitting agencies denied our requests.

So much for background/history.

Point being, short of drying up/diverting the river, working on these two huge eroding cliffs and reducing the severe erosion from them is nearly impossible, but critical to accomplish. The only way to address this then is to open up old historical channels on the north side of the river to reduce flows against the bluffs. Your alternatives address doing this but there are

additional channels that are not identified, both adjacent our property but also below the county's maintenance yard. Opening historic channels will meet/address many of your goals. Many of these channels already have adequate buffer zones, with trees and understory vegetation that would eliminate plantings; there would be immediate (shade) decreased critical water temperatures when the river is partially diverted/high flows. These projects can be accomplished out of the river under dry conditions, will therefore be much less expensive than working in the river, and permitting 'should' also be easier?

There's been a wealth of documentation on the East Fork. I don't know if you've seen an evaluation prepared by Dr. Frank Reckendorf in 2010, but you might want to read it for a little more recent history. It's titled; East Fork Lewis River (RM13 to RM6) Including West Daybreak Park Project Reach.

Don't hesitate to call if you've questions. Like I said, my comments are very local, along our stretch of the river. At this time, in the scheme of things and knowing what we had to go through trying to get permits 10-12 years ago, I don't see anything being allowed in the river that would address the severe sediment loading occurring from these two high cliff areas. There is just no access from the south. Therefore, opening up the historical channels across (north) are solutions that should seriously be considered. Getting at least the high flows/flood events away from both cliffs would accomplish many of your stated goals for this once identified 'Blue Ribbon' river. (I've got a picture of my father holding up a 25 # steelhead that he caught right below our house!)

Regards,

Bruce Wiseman
The Tree Wisemans
360-600-5062
