



The Enterprise

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Removing a White Salmon River Shoreline Dump

Last spring, Trout Lake resident Joanne Sala told a neighbor about a “legacy” garbage dump on her riverside farm, a remnant of long past land use activity. The abandoned farm implements, appliances, car parts, bottles, cans, etc. represented an unattractive intrusion on the otherwise pristine White Salmon River shoreline.

Today, after what was a model of organization, cooperation and efficiency the dump is gone and the rock slope clean. An environmental group, a conservation district, an AmeriCorp program, a garbage company, a county solid waste department and a construction company came together to 'get the job done.'

Joanne's neighbor is Pat Arnold, President of the Friends of the White Salmon River organization. Pat asked to see the dump. Impressed that it was an eyesore and a possible threat to the water below Pat agreed it should and said it could be removed. With the Sala's permission, Pat asked Steve Stampfli, a Husum tree farmer and Coordinator of the Hood River Watershed Group, to assess the challenge. Steve had done similar projects in his current position and also when he managed the Underwood Conservation District. Steve detailed a work plan based on his assessment of the type and volume of trash. In short, the plan involved using a hydraulic excavator to reach down about 30 feet to remove large pieces of garbage, and following-up with crews to collect and bag the cans, bottles, etc. by hand. Pat also contacted Tova Cochrane of Underwood Conservation District who volunteered to co-sponsor the clean-up.

The Salas invited Kevin Gross of Gross Enterprises to assess the suitability of his company's heavy equipment for the job. He said an excavator was right for the job. Pat also visited the site with John Longfellow of Klickitat County Solid Waste Department, and Brendan Norman, the Director of Northwest Service Academy's Mt. Adams Center. John estimated the volume of trash to require two 50 cu. yd. dumpsters. Brendan agreed that the follow-up job was right for his crews.

Next, Pat spoke with Matt Henry and Kevin Vaughn of Allied Waste who agreed to provide dumpsters for the project. Allied Waste subsequently decided that the severe pitting of the waste metal prevented it from being recycled. Unfortunately the recovered material all would go to landfill. UCD then solicited 250 trash bags from the WA Department of Ecology.

On the first day of the project, David Sala and volunteers attached cables to the large items so Gross Enterprises' Jake Jensen could lift them up off the boulder slope with the excavator. Among the volunteers were Kelly Clothier of Husum (and the Friends of the

White Salmon), and Nate Johnson and Luke Lambert of Trout Lake. After a manure spreader, pick-up truck bed and other items, were placed in the dumpsters, the crew continued to fill plastic bags with cans and bottles. Bagging continued until the next day, when 14 members from the Northwest Service Academy arrived on-site.. By lunch time of the second day, there was just a clean boulder field above a river. Very little evidence of a dump remained.

In "New Strategies for America's Watersheds," the National Research Council concluded that when local communities take responsibility for protecting their natural resources or environment, "they do it more effectively and more economically than a top-down regulatory approach."

The clean-up of Sala's dump would support that conclusion.