

The South Fork Tolt River Wood Placement Project

In October 2020, 194 trees, rootwads and all, were placed in the South Fork Tolt River using a Chinook helicopter. This project was planned and implemented by a multi-agency committee, the Tolt Fish Advisory Committee (TFAC), that includes Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, Tulalip Tribes, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries, as part of mitigation under the City of Seattle's Tolt Hydroelectric Project Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. On the day of implementation, there were four teams in the river directing the tree placements and two teams at wood staging areas dictating where the trees would go. Trees were placed in five miles of river where salmon including Chinook salmon and winter and summer steelhead spawn and rear.

In two days, 27 jams were strategically positioned with the intent of facilitating the development of reach-level geomorphic change, expanding flows into the floodplain and side channels, and increasing much-needed structural complexity. At an additional 13 locations, trees were placed in two- and three-piece complexes to facilitate local habitat creation. Most of the trees' lengths were 90 feet or greater with diameters as great as 47 inches. These are large trees that are creating large jams that should remain in the river for a long time to come. With approximately 100 more trees salvaged for this project still available, more tree placement is planned for next year. The real excitement will take place this winter when high flows interact with the freshly placed wood. Future monitoring will tell the story.

Here is a link to a video taken on the day of implementation by the Tulalip Tribes.

<https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=efe0e55c-b07bdc54-efe0cdec-86e696e30194-cd736c09abed7208&q=1&e=733f73ad-0e42-4b08-9395-0eb3eb6cc02c&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FTulalipNews%2Fvideos%2F378092906743422>



A Chinook Helicopter places two large trees precisely where crews indicated from the ground.



Two examples of jams created on the South Fork Tolt River.



And yes, here is the Chinook helicopter in action.