PURPOSE/NEED: Bear Creek supports the largest wild Chinook salmon runs in the Sammamish population. The former straightened channel, with few streamside plants and little shoreline complexity, offered little refuge or rearing habitat. Enhancing the lower reach of Bear Creek is a key component of restoring Chinook and other salmon runs to the entire Bear Creek system. The project is a high priority for Chinook salmon recovery in the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan and also benefits coho and sockeye salmon and other wildlife. An earlier phase of this project, immediately upstream and completed by WSDOT in 1999, is functioning well and provided a template for this phase.

INTENDED OUTCOME: Relocating the channel to the north has created a larger area for streamside plants and increased the buffer between the creek and State Route 520. Parts of the old channel now provide fish with backwaters for off-channel rearing habitat and refuge from high flows. The less-steep gradient now allows passage for all life stages of salmon.

STATUS: Construction began in 2013 and will continue through the end of 2014.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: To increase and improve salmon habitat and enhance fish passage in the creek, this project relocates the lower 3,500 feet of Bear Creek away from State Route 520, adding meanders and large wood to what had been a straightened channel.

FUNDING/PARTNERS: The City of Redmond is implementing this project in partnership with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) with funding from WSDOT, Redmond, the King County Flood Control District, Conservation Futures, and King Conservation District (through WRIA 8).

COST: Total project cost is $11.5 million, including design and archaeology expenses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Roger Dane, City of Redmond, at rdane@redmond.gov or www.redmond.gov/PlansProjects/connectingCommunity/Bear%20Creek%20Rehabilitation/
An earlier project completed upstream serves as a model.

Heavy equipment shapes the new channel.