



## Program Summaries (3)

The Round Valley Indian Tribes (RVIT) is a Federally recognized Confederation of Six Tribes located in northern California and whose original, historic Reservation Boundaries were delineated by three forks of the Eel River and two smaller tributaries, all of which support salmon and steelhead populations. The number and proximity of salmonid bearing streams to the Reservation, combined with the cultural significance associated with subsistence fishing and the declining trend in salmonid populations within the region motivated the Round Valley Indian Tribes, in 1998, to undertake a comprehensive Inventory and Assessment of all Class I stream systems available to anadromous Salmonids within Reservation boundaries. Based on this, and subsequent data collected in 1999, RVIT hired a Fisheries/Wildlife Biologist to protect, preserve and enhance the myriad of issues identified therein, as well as a host of other wildlife concerns associated with managing the 30,000+ acres under its stewardship.

### 1). The 2005 Mill Creek Restoration Project, Phase V.

Mill Creek was identified in 1998 as one of the few streams in Round Valley that still supports native runs of both Chinook Salmon and steelhead. The primary goal of the Mill Creek restoration project is to develop and connect a single, primary channel system with a functional riparian corridor through an area nearly two miles long that is characterized by a myriad of side channels, extensive bank erosion and no riparian corridor that is nearly 700 feet wide in places to a point downstream that is once again naturally characterized by a single, primary channel with a functional riparian corridor contained within a 50 foot wide channel.

This objective is being systematically achieved by a series (or Phases) of restorative efforts that combine channel excavation, sinuosity patterning, bank rip rap stabilization, bio-engineering methods and an aggressive re-vegetation effort along the primary channel course. Concurrently, side channel modifications are designed to: 1) discourage water flow from entering the side channels (by diversion or exclusion) during normal flow events and, 2) act as "overflow" systems that capture high water flows that exceed bank full capacity therein a series of brush baffles will reduce flow rate and facilitate the "settling out" of suspended materials hence naturally filling in the old side channel routes. Re-vegetation efforts include planting various species of trees and brush (Willows) from bankfull demarcation to approximately 30 from the banks edge. Phase V will implement an additional 2,500 feet of primary channel work and an additional 1,200 feet of side channel modifications and plant thousands of trees.

### 2). Mill Creek Restoration Enhancement Module.

This project is specifically designated to adjust, modify or otherwise enhance the restoration work previously completed in Phases I - IV of the Mill Creek Project. Each year, the winter and spring rains make various changes in the streams flow patterns. Most of these are beneficial and according to plan, others changes may be detrimental if left unchecked or may just need "tweaking" in order to improve or obtain maximum efficiency from a specific site. With more than a mile of stream length behind the leading edge of Restoration efforts (Phase V), there are several locations that can benefit from minor adjustments or additions of LWD or Boulder or vegetation to improve scouring action or improve shelter value, stabilize a stream bank or just plant more trees.

### 3). Development of a Fisheries & Wildlife Management Plan.

When RVIT hired a Fisheries & Wildlife Biologist in November of 1999, the Tribe had no formal, long-range scope of objectives to be addressed, short term and annual objectives were sufficient to warrant a Biologist. In 2001 the Tribe began efforts to resurrect development of its own Fish & Wildlife Ordinance Code, it is currently pending final Council Approval. The Tribe is also in the process of developing a Deer Herd Management Program and is contemplating a Fish Hatchery to help restore fish numbers in the upper Eel River system. As the Fisheries and Wildlife Program continues to develop and expand its role, the need for a long-term management plan is becoming increasingly self-evident.