MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STREAM MITIGATION MONITORING REPORT

Bowser Creek Flathead County, Montana

Project Completed: 2010

Monitoring Report #6: December, 2018



Prepared for:



Prepared by:



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STREAM MITIGATION MONITORING REPORT #6

YEAR 2018

Bowser Creek Flathead County, Montana

MDT Project Number: NH 15(93) Control Number: 2038-011

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Prepared for:

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As part of construction of the Kalispell Bypass U.S. Highway 2 South, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) modified a segment of Bowser Creek to allow for highway widening and improved traffic. In order to offset the impacts of this project, MDT proposed on-site stream mitigation actions within the widened highway right of way. The following report includes results from the sixth year of post-project monitoring of the on-site mitigation actions along the modified segment of Bowser Creek. This monitoring report includes an evaluation of monitoring results in comparison to project performance standards outlined in the post-construction monitoring plan for the site. The project was constructed in 2010; therefore, these results provide documentation of the site's condition eight years following the project's completion.

Over several decades, the alignment of Bowser Creek was modified to fit between the original Highway 2 alignment and residential development. An expanded MDT right-of-way was acquired to provide additional space to relocate the stream away from the widened road footprint. The relocation of Bowser Creek was permitted in a modification to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit NWO-2009-018098-MTM. The project proposed placement of 0.267 acres of wetland fill in the original Bowser Creek channel and 709 feet of stream impacts resulting from relocating 429 feet of the channel and placing a 218-foot segment of the creek into a culvert beneath MT Highway 2.

One goal of the project is to provide compensatory mitigation for stream impacts resulting from widening of U.S. Highway 2 at its intersection with the Alternate U.S. 93 Kalispell Bypass. MDT has selected on-site stream mitigation to meet this goal. Specific objectives intended to achieve this goal include:

- Constructing 430 linear feet of new Bowser Creek channel slightly north of the existing channel
- Laying back floodplain slopes adjacent to the channel from 1.5:1 to a 4:1 slope or flatter
- Implementing an aggressive revegetation plan to re-establish native riparian and upland vegetation.

If successful, the project will create, enhance, restore, and maintain permanent, naturally self-sustaining, native or native-like stream and riparian habitat. The project is designed to protect the functional values of riparian lands, floodplains, wetlands, and uplands for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, floodwater retention, groundwater recharge, open space, aesthetic values, and environmental education.

Provisions outlined in the USACE permit include monitoring the mitigation areas for at least five years following construction to determine whether the site is meeting, or moving toward meeting the performance criteria outlined in the monitoring plan. Specific success criteria for the Bowser Creek stream mitigation site include:

Quantitative success criteria:

- 1. Riparian Buffer Success will be achieved when
 - a. Woody and riparian vegetation becomes established, and noxious weeds do not exceed 10% cover within the riparian buffer areas.
 - b. Any area within the creditable buffer area disturbed by the project construction must have at least 50% areal cover of non-noxious weed species by the end of the monitoring period.
- 2. Vegetation Success will be achieved when
 - a. Combined areal cover of riparian and stream bank vegetation communities is ≥70%
 - b. Planted trees and shrubs will be considered successful where they exhibit 50% survival after 5 years.
- 3. **Vegetation along Stream Banks** will be considered successful when banks are vegetated with a majority of deep-rooting riparian plant species having root stability indices ≥6 (subject to 1.a and 1.b above).
- 4. Stream Bank Stability Success will be achieved where; following restoration, less than 25% of bank length is unstable and classified as eroding bank. For this purpose "eroding bank" will be defined as any bank greater than two feet in length that is more than 50% bare mineral soil and has no roots, surface vegetation, or other stabilizing structure (e.g. rock, woody debris) to inhibit erosion.

Qualitative performance criteria:

Channel Form Success will be achieved when the stream stabilizes, includes
pools and riffles, allows for flood events to occupy the floodplain, and the habitat
features such as riparian plant communities have successfully established along
stream banks.

Additional reporting requirements:

6. **Photo Documenting** success of restored stream channel and stream bank vegetation community development showing distinct positive changes from preconstruction to final monitoring year in comparison with the establishment reference reach.

Results of the sixth year monitoring at the Bowser Creek stream mitigation site are presented in Section 4 and compared to performance standards in Section 5. Additional information to aid in documenting the site's condition are provided as appendices to this report, and include maps showing locations of riparian vegetation transects, perpendicular transects, and locations of noxious weeds; transect and longitudinal profile survey plots; photo documentation of the project site; and a planting schematic from the approved design.

2.0 SITE LOCATION

The modified segment of Bowser Creek flows east within a newly constructed channel immediately north of U.S. Hwy 2 near the intersection of U.S. Highway 2 and Alternate U.S. 93 Kalispell Bypass (Figure 1). This monitoring site is located in Section 12, Township 28 North, Range 22 West, in Flathead County, Montana.

3.0 MONITORING METHODS

Monitoring field crews visited the project site on August 9th, 2018 while topographic survey crews visited the site on August 14th, 2018. Field data collection and surveys followed methodologies as described in the 2013 monitoring report for the Bowser Creek mitigation site, which may be accessed at the following Montana Department of Transportation website:

https://www.mdt.mt.gov/other/webdata/external/planning/STREAM-MITIGATION/2013_REPORTS/2013_BOWSER_CREEK_MONITORING_REPORT.PD F

4.0 RESULTS

4.1. Riparian and Stream Bank Vegetation Inventory

Table 1 summarizes the areal percent cover of total vegetation, woody vegetation, and noxious weeds observed along each three-foot wide streambank transect adjacent to the stream, and each 25-foot wide riparian belt transect during the 2014 through 2018 monitoring events. In addition to presenting results for individual transects, Table 1 includes area-weighted, site-wide totals for each of these vegetation cover categories.

In 2018 the percent cover in riparian belt transects decreased to 91%, with 9% cover by woody species and 16% by noxious weeds. Stream bank transects displayed 100% cover, with 4% by woody species and 8% by noxious weeds. More bare ground was observed within both riparian areas as compared to stream bank areas, likely a result of the allelopathic influence and invasion by the nonnative weed species Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense), bull thistle (Cirsium vulgare), and scotch thistle (Onopordium acanthium). These nonnative species replace native species diversity, which are known to release phytotoxic compounds that inhibit the germination and growth of many surrounding plant species (Kazinczi et al. 2001; Ravlic et al. 2016; Fenner 2008; Watanabe et al. 2014). Additionally, stream bank areas were primarily dominated by reed canary grass (Phalaris arundinacea), an aggressive rhizomotous species that often grows in dense stands and outcompetes most surrounding vegetation. In total, using a length-based weighted average of vegetation cover for riparian and stream bank transects, the site exhibited 93% total vegetation cover, with 8% by woody species and 14% by noxious weeds.

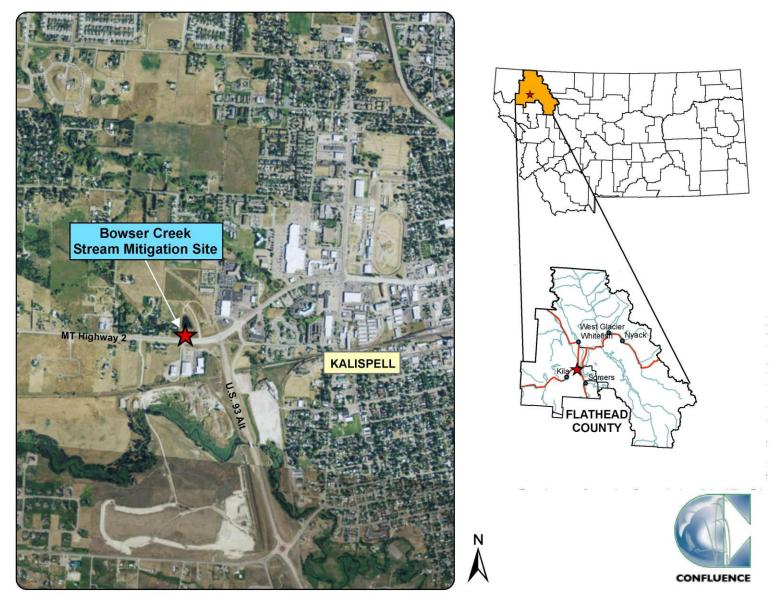


Figure 1. Project location of Bowser Creek stream mitigation site.

Table 1. Percent cover of vegetation transects at Bowser Creek in 2013 through 2018.

Belt Transect	Length (ft)		Total	% Veg	etation	Cover			%	6 Wood	dy Cove	er			% No	oxious \	Weed (Cover	
	,	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Right (South) Riparian	204	100	100	100	100	95	90	2	5	7	5	5	6	2	5	10	13	15	15
Left (North) Riparian	167	100	100	100	100	95	93	14	15	17	15	15	13	5	10	12	15	17	17
Riparian Subtotal		100	100	100	100	95	91	8	10	12	10	10	9	4	7	11	14	16	16
Right (South) Stream Bank	465	100	100	100	100	100	100	17	20	15	7	7	3	4	5	6	10	10	7
Left (North) Stream Bank	465	100	100	100	100	100	99	12	10	10	5	5	5	4	10	10	10	10	8
Stream Bank Subtotal		100	100	100	100	100	100	15	15	13	6	6	4	4	8	8	10	10	8
Area Weighted Total		100	100	100	100	96	93	9	11	12	9	9	8	3	7	10	13	15	14

Dominant species recorded along the riparian and stream bank transects were combined with visual observations in other areas to develop a vegetation community map (Figure 3, Appendix A). Four vegetation community types were observed in 2018, and are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Vegetation community types observed at Bowser Creek in 2018.

Community Type	Dominant Species
2	Phalaris arundinacea
3	Nasturtium officinale
4	Cirsium spp./Bromus inermis
5	Elymus spp./ Festuca ovina

Vegetation community Type 2 – *Phalaris arundinacea* was identified along both stream banks and riparian zones adjacent to the channel. Reed canary grass dominated this community type, with lesser cover provided by Canada thistle, bull thistle, Nebraska sedge (*Carex nebrascensis*), watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*) along both stream banks, fringed willowherb (*Epilobium ciliatum*), and others.

Vegetation community Type 3 – *Nasturtium officinale* was identified within the channel. Watercress dominated this community type with more than 50% cover growing in the channel bed and 6 to 10% cover along both stream banks. This community has been consistently observed in dense stands along the stream bed during the growing season, and had expanded to both stream banks during the 2017 and 2018 monitoring events.

Vegetation community Type 4 – *Cirsium* spp./*Bromus inermis* was observed in between community Types 2 and 5. Canada thistle, bull thistle, scotch thistle, and smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) dominated this community type.

Vegetation community Type 5 – *Elymus* spp./*Festuca ovina* was identified along the upper side slopes of the project area. Sheep fescue (*Festuca ovina*), nodding wild rye (*Elymus canadensis*), slender wild rye (*Elymus trachycaulus*), and western-wheat grass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) were the most commonly observed species within this vegetation community.

Table 3 provides a comprehensive list of plant species observed on site during the 2013 through 2018 monitoring events. Since 2013, 100 plant species have been identified within the project area, including one new species observed in 2018. Flat pea (*Lathyris sylvestris*), a nonnative, invasive species that competes with native species for limited resources, was identified within the project area. In 2018, 50% of the species observed were hydrophytic based on the 2016 National Wetland Plant List (NWPL) (Lichvar *et al.* 2016).

4.2. Stream Bank Vegetation Composition

The stream bank vegetation inventory identified 44 plant species along the banks of Bowser Creek (Table 4). Reed canary grass comprised 21-50% cover along both stream banks in 2018 (see additional photos 1-3 in Appendix C). The Winward stability ratings are based on vegetation communities rather than individual species; therefore, a vegetation community was assigned to each stream bank based on one or more dominant species (Winward 2000). Vegetation community Type 2 – *Phalaris arundinacea* was the dominant vegetation community observed along the stream banks, with an associated Winward stability rating of 9.

4.3. Noxious Weed Inventory

A total of six Montana Listed Priority 2B noxious weeds were identified within the Bowser Creek stream mitigation site and are listed in Table 5. Locations of twenty-nine noxious weed infestations are provided on Figure 3 in Appendix A, with the exception of those observed as isolated occurrences and those in trace amounts (i.e., common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)). A low cover class (1 to 5 percent) was identified for all mapped weed occurrences within the project area. In 2018, a visual estimate of 14% of the project area was colonized by noxious weeds, representing a decrease by 1% since the 2017 monitoring event. Infestations of Canada thistle, the most prevalent noxious weed, were located throughout the project area. In 2016 through 2018, Canada thistle was so commonly observed that it was identified as a dominant species in community Type 4 (Figure 3, Appendix A).

Table 3. Comprehensive vegetation species list for the Bowser Creek stream mitigation site from 2013 through 2018.

		WMVC			WMVC
Scientific Name	Common Name	Indicator	Scientific Name	Common Name	Indicator
		Status*			Status*
Achillea millefolium	Common Yarrow	FACU	Leucanthemum vulgare	Ox-Eye Daisy	FACU
Acer negundo	Ash-Leaf Maple	FAC	Leymus cinereus	Great Basin Lyme Grass	FAC
Agastache urticifolia	Nettle-Leaf Giant-Hyssop	FACU	Linaria vulgaris	Butter-and-Eggs	UPL
Agropyron cristatum	Crested Wheatgrass	UPL	Lysichiton americanus	Yellow-Skunk-Cabbage	OBL
Agrostis gigantea	Black Bent	FAC	Medicago lupulina	Black Medick	FACU
Agrostis stolonifera	Spreading Bent	FAC	Medicago sativa	Alfalfa	UPL
Alnus incana	Speckled Alder	FACW	Melilotus albus	White Sweetclover	UPL
Alopecurus arundinaceus	Creeping Meadow-Foxtail	FAC	Melilotus officinalis	Yellow Sweet-Clover	FACU
Amelanchier alnifolia	Saskatoon Service-Berry	FACU	Mentha arvensis	American Wild Mint	FACW
Artemisia absinthium	Absinthium	UPL	Myosotis scorpioides	True Forget-Me-Not	FACW
Artemisia biennis	Biennial Wormwood	FACW	Nasturtium officinale	Watercress	OBL
Beckmannia syzigachne	American Slough Grass	OBL	Onopordum acanthium	Scotch Thistle	UPL
Betula pumila	Bog Birch	OBL	Pascopyrum smithii	Western-Wheat Grass	FACU
Bromus inermis	Smooth Brome	UPL	Persicaria amphibia	Water Smartweed	OBL
Carduus nutans	Nodding Plumeless-Thistle	UPL	Persicaria sp.	Smartweed	UPL
Carex nebrascensis	Nebraska Sedge	OBL	Phalaris arundinacea	Reed Canary Grass	FACW
Carex sp.	Sedge	N/A	Phleum pratense	Common Timothy	FAC
Carex stipata	Stalk-Grain Sedge	OBL	Plantago lanceolata	English Plantain	FACU
Carex utriculata	Northwest Territory Sedge	OBL	Plantago major	Great Plantain	FAC
Centaurea cyanus	Garden Cornflower	FACU	Poa palustris	Fowl Blue Grass	FAC
Centaurea stoebe	Spotted Knapweed	UPL	Poa pratensis	Kentucky Blue Grass	FAC
Chamaenerion angustifolium	Narrow-Leaf Fireweed	FACU	Prunus virginiana	Choke Cherry	FACU
Chenopodium album	Lamb's-Quarters	FACU	Ranunculus sp.	Buttercup	N/A
	Common Blue-Mustard	UPL	Rosa woodsii	Woods' Rose	FACU
Chorispora tenella	Western Water-Hemlock	OBL			FACU
Cicuta douglasii		FAC	Rudbeckia hirta	Black-Eyed-Susan	FAC
Cirsium arvense	Canadian Thistle		Rumex crispus	Curly Dock	
Cirsium vulgare	Bull Thistle	FACU	Salix bebbiana	Gray Willow	FACW
Cornus alba	Red Osier	FACW	Salix drummondiana	Drummond's Willow	FACW
Cynoglossum officinale	Gypsy-Flower	FACU	Salix exigua	Narrow-Leaf Willow	FACW
Descurainia sophia	Herb Sophia	UPL	Salix sp.	Willow	N/A
Elymus canadensis	Nodding Wild Rye	FAC	Scirpus microcarpus	Red-Tinge Bulrush	OBL
Elymus repens	Creeping Wild Rye	FAC	Silene vulgaris	Maiden's-tears	UPL
Elymus trachycaulus	Slender Wild Rye	FAC	Solanum dulcamara	Climbing Nightshade	FAC
Epilobium ciliatum	Fringed Willowherb	FACW	Solidago canadensis	Canadian Goldenrod	FACU
Equisetum arvense	Field Horsetail	FAC	Sonchus arvensis	Field Sow-Thistle	FACU
Festuca ovina	Sheep Fescue	UPL	Stachys byzantina	Woolly Hedgenettle	UPL
Geum macrophyllum	Large-Leaf Avens	FAC	Stuckenia pectinata	Sago False Pondweed	OBL
Geum sp.	Avens	N/A	Symphoricarpos albus	Common Snowberry	FACU
Geum triflorum	Old-Man's-Whiskers	FACU	Tanacetum vulgare	Common Tansy	FACU
Glyceria grandis	American Manna Grass	OBL	Taraxacum officinale	Common Dandelion	FACU
Glyceria striata	Fowl Manna Grass	OBL	Thlaspi arvense	Field Pennycress	UPL
Helianthus maximiliani	Maximilian Sunflower	UPL	Tragopogon dubius	Meadow Goat's-beard	UPL
Helianthus nuttallii	Nuttall's Sunflower	FACW	Trifolium pratense	Red Clover	FACU
Hordeum jubatum	Fox-Tail Barley	FAC	Trifolium repens	White Clover	FAC
Hypericum perforatum	Common St. John's-Wort	FACU	Triglochin maritima	Seaside Arrow-Grass	OBL
Juncus balticus	Baltic Rush	FACW	Typha latifolia	Broad-Leaf Cat-Tail	OBL
Juncus sp.	Rush	N/A	Urtica dioica	Stinging Nettle	FAC
Lactuca serriola	Prickly Lettuce	FACU	Verbascum thapsus	Great Mullein	FACU
Lathyrus sylvestris	Flat Pea	UPL	Veronica americana	American Brooklime	OBL
Lemna minor	Common Duckweed	OBL	Vicia americana	American Purple Vetch	FAC

^{*2016} National Wetland Plant List; Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coasts (WMVC) (Lichvar et al. 2016) New species identified in 2018 are **bolded**.

Species identified to genus level have been assigned an indicator status of N/A.

Table 4. Plant species and their associated cover classes along the stream banks of the Bowser Creek stream mitigation site in 2018.

Streambank Species	Left bank	Left Bank Cover Class	Right bank	Right Bank Cover Class	WMVC Indicator Status*
Agrostis stolonifera	Х	0	Х	0	FAC
Alnus incana			Х	0	FACW
Alopecurus arundinaceus	Х	2	Χ	2	FAC
Artemisia absinthium			Χ	0	UPL
Bromus inermis	Х	1	Χ	1	UPL
Carex nebrascensis	Х	2	Χ	1	OBL
Carex utriculata	Х	2	Χ	2	OBL
Cirsium arvense	Х	1	Х	1	FAC
Cirsium vulgare	Х	0	Х	1	FACU
Cornus alba	Х	0	Х	0	FACW
Cynoglossum officinale		0	Х	0	FACU
Elymus repens	Х	0	Х	0	FAC
Epilobium ciliatum	Х	1	Х	1	FACW
Equisetum arvense	Х	1	Х	1	FAC
Geum macrophyllum			Х	0	FAC
Glyceria striata	Х	0	Х	0	OBL
Helianthus maximiliani	Х	0	Х	1	UPL
Juncus balticus	Х	1			FACW
Lactuca serriola			Х	0	FACU
Leucanthemum vulgare			Х	0	FACU
Medicago lupulina			Х	0	FACU
Medicago sativa			Х	0	UPL
Melilotus officinalis	Х	0	Х	0	FACU
Mentha arvensis	Х	0	Х	1	FACW
Myosotis scorpioides			Х	0	FACW
Nasturtium officinale***	Х	2	Х	2	OBL
Phalaris arundinacea**	Х	4	Х	4	FACW
Poa palustris	Х	1	Х	1	FAC
Poa pratensis	Х	1	Х	1	FAC
Rumex crispus	Х	0	Х	0	FAC
Salix bebbiana	X	0	Х	0	FACW
Salix drummondiana	Х	0	Х	1	FACW
Salix exigua		_	Х	0	FACW
Scirpus microcarpus	Х	0	X	0	OBL
Solanum dulcamara		_	Х	0	FAC
Sonchus arvensis	X	0			FACU
Taraxacum officinale	X	0	X	0	FACU
Trifolium pratense	X	0	X	0	FACU
Trifolium repens	X	0	X	0	FAC
Typha latifolia	Х	1	X	1	OBL
Urtica dioica			X	0	FAC
Verbascum thapsus	<u>,, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,</u>		X	0	FACU
Veronica americana	X	0	X	0	OBL
Vicia americana	Х	0	Χ	0	FAC

*2016 National Wetland Plant List; Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coasts (WMVC) (Lichvar et al. 2016)

** Dominant species observed along Bowser Creek stream banks

*** Dominant species observed along Bowser Creek stream bed

Classification Values and Percent Cover Classes: 0 = <1%, 1 = 1-5%, 2 = 6-10%, 3 = 11-20%, 4 = 21-50%, 5 = >50%

Table 5. Montana State-listed noxious weed species observed in 2018 at the Bowser Creek Stream Mitigation Site.

Category*	Scientific Name	Common Name		
	Centaurea stoebe	Spotted Knapweed		
	Cirsium arvense	Canada Thistle		
Priority 2B	Cynoglossum officinale	Houndstongue		
Filolity 2D	Leucanthemum vulgare	Oxeye Daisy		
	Linaria vulgaris	Yellow Toadflax		
	Tanacetum vulgare	Common Tansy		

^{*}Based on the Montana Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed List, February 2017

4.4. Woody Plant Survival

Willows (*Salix* spp.), speckled alder (*Alnus incana*), red osier dogwood (*Cornus alba*), common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), bog birch (*Betula pumila*), and Woods' rose (*Rosa woodsii*) were observed as planted woody vegetation species. In 2018, 190 planted trees and shrubs were located, with 176 of those observed alive (Table 6). It is unknown how many plants were installed during construction of the project; however, the revegetation plan called for planting 505 trees and shrubs. As compared to the revegetation plan, 35% (176 of 505) have survived eight years following construction. While a few of the surviving shrubs have grown to between 4 and 5 feet tall, the majority of these shrubs remain small and don't substantially contribute to the percent cover of the site by woody species. Overall, the project site includes less than 10% cover by woody species.

Table 6. Woody plant survival at Bowser Creek stream mitigation site from 2013 through 2018.

Year	Total Plants Inspected	Surviving Plants	# of Woody Plantings in Design	Woody plant survival based on planting plan
2013	127	122		24%
2014	127	119		24%
2015	312	279	505	55%
2016	181	143	505	28%
2017	188	147		29%
2018	190	176		35%

4.5. Bank Erosion Inventory

The prevalence of dense groundcover along the stream banks and thick mats of watercress across much of the stream bed during the late summer created challenging conditions to accurately determine the extent and cause of bank erosion, as well as photo-documenting erosion along banks that were covered with vegetation. As a result, a bank inventory was performed in April, 2016 prior to the growing season to determine causes of erosion. Currently eroding bank locations are provided on Figure 2 in Appendix A, while photos of each eroding bank can be found in Appendix C.

Observations of the reconstructed segment of Bowser Creek during the April, 2016 field visit indicated:

- Bank erosion along the left (north) side of the channel does not appear caused by scour during high flows as is typical of snowmelt driven streams.
- A retention pond has been constructed approximately 100 feet north of Bowser Creek. It appears the water surface elevation of the pond is higher than Bowser Creek, and may be a source of water seeping into Bowser Creek.
- The seepage of water from either the retention pond or from a naturally high groundwater table saturates the north bank and create localized instability where the seeps daylight along the north side of the stream channel.
- Saturated, fine grained materials along the north bank of Bowser Creek are transported downstream during high water events, resulting in bank retreat in locations where seeps enter Bowser Creek.

The bank erosion inventory conducted in 2016 identified slumping and washing of materials at three locations along the left (north) bank; however, no new erosion has been observed during the past two monitoring events. Based on these observations, the majority of bank length previously identified as eroding has stabilized. Continued calving along 15 feet of the bank at EBL3 is due to a seep entering the channel at this location, and remains the only actively eroding bank section. This bank length represents less than 2% of the overall reconstructed bank length of 880 feet.

4.6. Perpendicular Transect Surveys

Two perpendicular cross section transects were surveyed at pools and two at riffles, with maximum depth and bankfull width for each indicated in Table 7 (plots for each transect included in Appendix B). In 2018, maximum bankfull depths ranged from 1.8 to 3.1 feet and bankfull widths ranged from 6.4 to 13.7 feet. Over the past three years, the dimensions at each surveyed cross section have shown minimal adjustments.

Two segments of the channel are wider than originally constructed due to a combination of the natural degradation of coir logs placed during construction and bank slumping where seeps enter the channel from the north. These channel segments are unlikely to recover back to the design dimension due to the unnatural hydrology and continuous saturation caused by seepage from the adjacent retention pond; however they provide a diversity in channel form and are not continuing to degrade or erode. Based on the vast majority of the reconstructed channel performing as intended, attempts to narrow the channel through these relatively short, over-wide segments remains unwarranted.

Table 7. Pool and riffle widths surveyed at Bowser Creek stream mitigation site from 2013 through 2018.

Transect	Туре	e Max Depth (ft)							Bankfull Width (ft)					
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
1	Pool	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	6.0	6.1	5.0	6.0	6.3	6.4	
2	Riffle	2.2	2.2	1.9	2	1.9	2.1	12.7	13.5	12.5	11.8	12.8	13.1	
3	Pool	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.0	3.1	14.8	13.8	13.6	13.8	13.5	13.7	
4	Riffle	1.9	2	1.7	1.9	1.9	2.1	7.8	8.1	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.3	
Averag	e Riffles	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.9	2.1	10.3	10.8	10.1	9.7	10.2	10.2	
Avera	ge Pools	2.8	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.5	10.4	10.0	9.3	9.9	9.9	10.1	
Ave	erage All	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.3	10.3	10.4	9.7	9.8	10.0	10.1	

4.7. Longitudinal Profile Survey

Repeated longitudinal profile surveys of the channel thalweg indicate the presence of at least three distinct pools within the project reach (plotted profile included in Appendix B). Surveys conducted in 2017 indicated sediment deposits had shortened two of the pools; however the most recent survey provides evidence some of this sediment may have flushed through the channel in the past year. The bed elevation of the channel has remained relatively consistent over the past year and has maintained a variety of shallower and deeper water habitat despite the gently meandering planform of the constructed channel.

Fine sediment deposits have been commonly observed in the channel, and may be due to a combination of factors, including 1) increased roughness of the channel bed and water column caused by proliferation of watercress during the growing season, 2) the reduced ability of the channel to transport fine sediments through the short reaches that have widened, 3) upstream development along Bowser Creek that may be contributing fine sediment, and 4) the inability of the channel to scour pool features due to the relatively straight channel alignment. Although reference reach data was not collected as part of this monitoring effort, Bowser Creek may also have a naturally high sediment load. The dense watercress observed in the channel will trap some of the sediment moving downstream during the growing season, and may help to narrow some of the over-wide areas along the channel if the depositional areas are able to vegetate with annual or perennial species.

4.8. Wildlife Documentation

Wildlife observations at the Bowser Creek Stream Mitigation site from 2013 through 2018 have thus far been relatively limited. No new wildlife species were observed in 2018. Limited use of this area by wildlife may be due to the proximity MT Highway 2 and U.S. Highway 93 and lack of high quality habitat.

Table 8. Wildlife observations at Bowser Creek stream mitigation site from 2013 through 2018.

Common Name	Scientific Name						
Mammals							
Raccoon (scat, tracks)	Procyon lotor						
White-tailed Deer	Odocoileus virginianus						
	Birds						
Gull sp.	Larus sp.						
American Robin	Turdus migratorius						
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos						
Red-tailed Hawk	Buteo jamaicensis						
Sparrow sp.	Passer sp.						

5.0 COMPARISON OF RESULTS TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Monitoring of the Bowser Creek stream mitigation site is intended to document whether the reconstructed segment of the channel is meeting, or moving toward meeting the performance standards outlined in the monitoring plan. Results from the sixth year of monitoring suggests four of the six quantitative performance standards are being met eight years following completion of the project (Table 9). Thus far, the project has met the physical objectives of a) constructing 430 linear feet of new channel; b) laying back floodplain slopes adjacent to the channel from 1.5:1 to 4:1 slope or flatter; and c) implementing a revegetation plan to re-establish native riparian and upland vegetation. Channel form success is considered a qualitative criterion, and is discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.

5.1. Riparian Buffer Success

The results in Table 1 indicate the reconstructed segment of Bowser Creek has developed a densely vegetated understory, which primarily consists of herbaceous vegetation along the riparian and stream bank zones. Woody riparian vegetation is also establishing, with a 6% increase in woody planting survival observed during the 2018 monitoring event. Despite this increase in survival, the plantings are relatively small in size, and therefore offer a limited percent of the overall cover.

Vegetation monitoring of the riparian buffer indicated 75% of disturbed areas have revegetated with non-noxious weed species following construction. Non-noxious vegetation cover was determined by subtracting the percent noxious weed cover observed in the riparian transects (16%) from the total vegetation cover observed in the riparian transects (91%). Performance criteria specify at least 50% of the disturbed areas within the creditable buffer area must be vegetated with non-noxious weed species; therefore, this criterion is currently being met. Noxious weeds comprise 14% of the vegetation cover site-wide, which is above the maximum allowable limit to meet the performance criterion. The percent cover estimates recorded for all vegetation categories, including noxious weeds, may have been influenced by a combination of factors, including, but not limited to, adjacent land management, previous herbicide applications, differences in annual precipitation and temperature, calibration training completed by field staff, and other unknown factors that make it difficult to determine the exact cause(s) for increases or decreases in coverage.

Table 9. Performance standards for the Bowser Creek Stream Mitigation Site.

Туре	Parameter	Performance Standard	Site Meeting Performance Criteria?		
	Riparian Buffer Success	1a. Areas within creditable riparian buffer disturbed during construction must have 50% or greater aerial cover of non-noxious weed species by the end of the monitoring period	Vegetation transects indicate 75% cover of the riparian zones with nonnoxious weed species	YES	
		1b. Noxious weeds do not exceed 10% cover within the riparian buffer areas.	Vegetation transects indicate 16% cover of noxious weeds within riparian zones.	NO	
Performance	Vegetation Success	2a. Combined aerial cover of riparian and stream vegetation communities is at least 70%		Combined aerial cover of riparian and stream bank vegetation is 93%	YES
Criteria		2b. Planted trees and shrubs must exhibit 50% survival after 5 years	Planted tree and shrub survival documented at 35% .	NO	
	Vegetation along Streambanks	Majority of plants on the stream bank must have root stability indices of at least 6	Dominant streambank community along both stream banks is community Type 2- <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> , with a root stability index of 9.	YES	
	Streambank Stability Success	4. Less than 25% of bank length is unstable and classified as eroding bank.	Observations noted less than 2% of the stream banks are eroding or unstable.	YES	
Qualitative Criteria	Channel Form	5. Will be achieved when the stream stabilizes, includes pools and riffles, allows for flood events to occupy the floodplain, and the habitat features such as riparian plant communities have successfully established along streambanks.	Evidence of channel form success provided in Section 5.4	YES	

Total combined areal vegetation cover of the riparian zone and both right and left stream banks along Bowser Creek decreased in 2018 to 93%. Both riparian and stream bank zones are primarily vegetated with herbaceous species, while woody species are establishing along the sloped areas adjacent to the channel. The performance criterion for this category specifies ≥70% of the combined riparian and stream bank vegetation communities must have vegetation establishment; therefore, this criterion is currently being met.

Woody vegetation plantings indicated a survival rate of 35% eight years following the project's completion. The performance criteria states 50% or more of the woody plants installed must survive after five years; therefore, this criterion is not currently being met. If the remaining woody plantings survive, their continued growth and maturation should provide increased areal percent cover to the site. Percent cover by woody vegetation is currently 8%, as many of the planted shrubs and trees have yet to grow above the understory layer. Those that have are providing a more substantial overstory layer that may be utilized by migratory birds.

5.2. Vegetation along Stream Banks

Reed canary grass comprised between 21-50% cover (closer to 50%) along both stream banks in 2018. As a result, vegetation community Type 2 – *Phalaris arundinacea* was the dominant vegetation community observed along the stream banks, with an associated Winward stability rating of 9. Therefore, stream bank vegetation is successfully meeting the associated performance criteria.

5.3. Stream Bank Stability

Bank instability has primarily been tied to saturation along the north bank causing segments of the bank to slough into the channel. The majority of these areas have stabilized over the past three years. One 15-foot bank segment (EBL3) continues to exhibit soil losses where a seep is entering the channel. This bank segment represents less than 2% of the overall stream bank length of 880 feet, which is well below the 25% eroding bank success criteria threshold.

5.4. Channel Form Success

The channel form success criteria states, "will be achieved when the stream stabilizes, includes pools and riffles, allows for flood events to occupy the floodplain, and the habitat features such as riparian plant communities have successfully established along streambanks". The following section addresses each of these channel form components as observed along Bowser Creek.

5.4.1. Channel stability

Measures to document stability of the project reach include 1) surveying a longitudinal profile along the channel thalweg, 2) surveying channel cross sections, and 3) conducting an erosion inventory along both banks. The longitudinal profile of the stream bed has thus far offered no evidence of vertical instability such as head cutting or degradation of the stream bed. Cross section surveys reveal portions of the channel have become wider since the project was constructed; however, the channel has not

continued to widen over the past five years. The channel width increased along portions of the channel within the first two years following construction and prior to the first monitoring event in 2013. Bank erosion inventories conducted over the past five years indicate erosion is due to saturated banks resulting from drainage of the adjacent retention pond, all but 15 feet of which have stabilized. While one bank continues to slough into the channel as a result of a seep, overall bank stability is good throughout the project.

5.4.2. Pool and riffle features

Inspection of the longitudinal profile indicates the presence of three distinct pool features separated by riffles. Cross section surveys indicate channel depth ranges between 1.8 and 3.1 feet. These results indicate the channel provides a variety of shallow and deep water habitat features, and supports of aquatic organisms such as salmonids and macroinvertebrates that flourish in diverse habitat types (shallow versus deep water), and variable flow velocities.

5.4.3. Floodplain connectivity

The reconstructed segment of Bowser Creek was designed to convey an estimated 2 year return interval discharge within the low flow channel. Discharges greater than the 2 year flow are able to access a floodplain approximately 14 feet wide with a design grade of 5% slope toward the channel. Beyond this floodplain, the floodway has been designed to convey up to a 100 year discharge without over-topping Highway 2.

5.4.4. Riparian habitat along stream banks

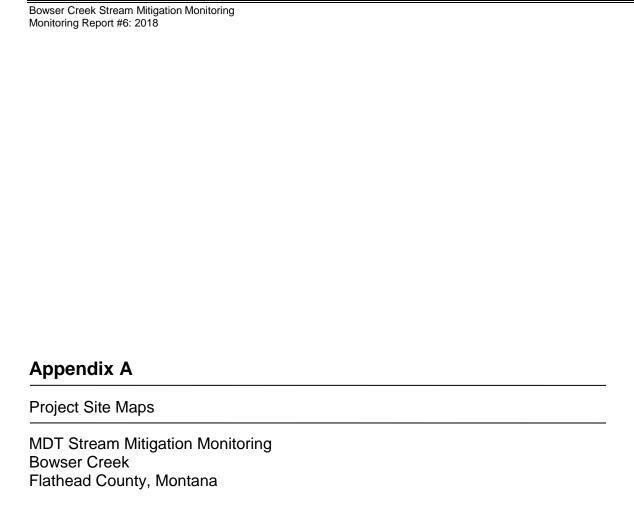
The vegetation along the banks of Bowser Creek is dominated by reed canarygrass, although several additional species have been documented along the banks (see Section 4.2). The reed canarygrass provides excellent resistance to bank erosion. Although five species of planted and/or volunteer woody shrubs were observed, their contribution to cover along the banks is limited to an estimated 1%. The unrooted willow stems installed along the outside meander bends either did not successfully establish or were washed out where the channel widened. As a result, woody species composition along the banks is lacking. Photo documentation of the stream channel is provided in Appendix C and offers additional evidence of riparian vegetation composition along Bowser Creek's banks and riparian corridor. Based on these results and the condition of the riparian corridor along Bowser Creek, this success criterion is currently being met.

6.0 LITERATURE CITED

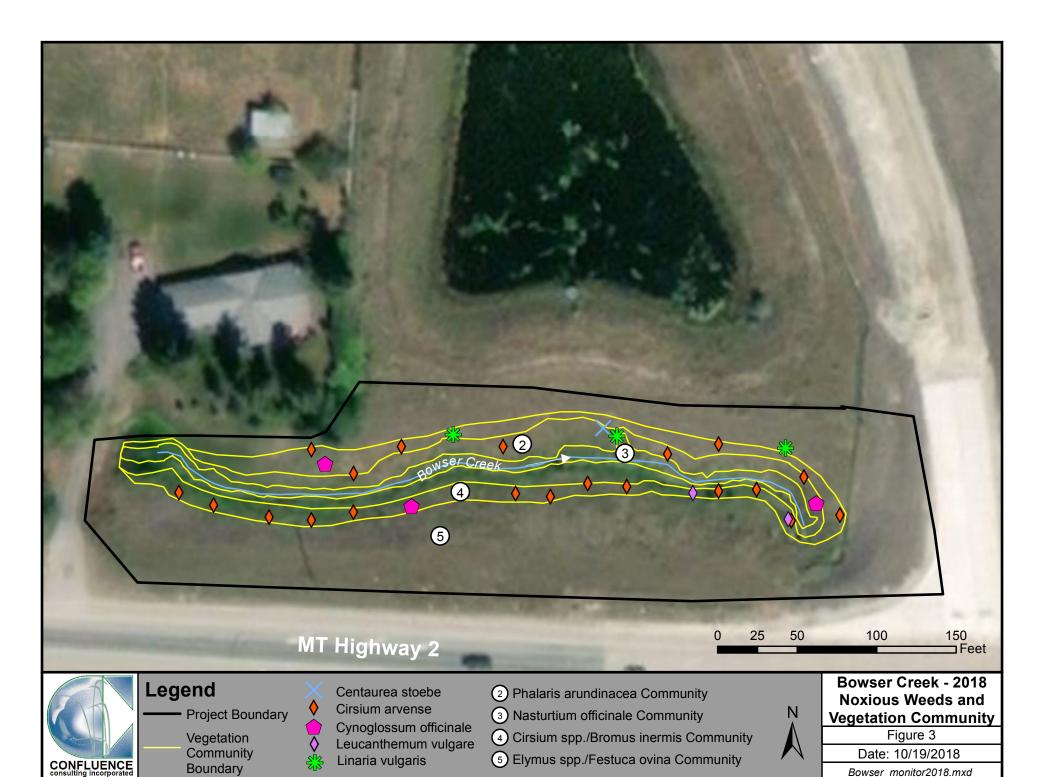
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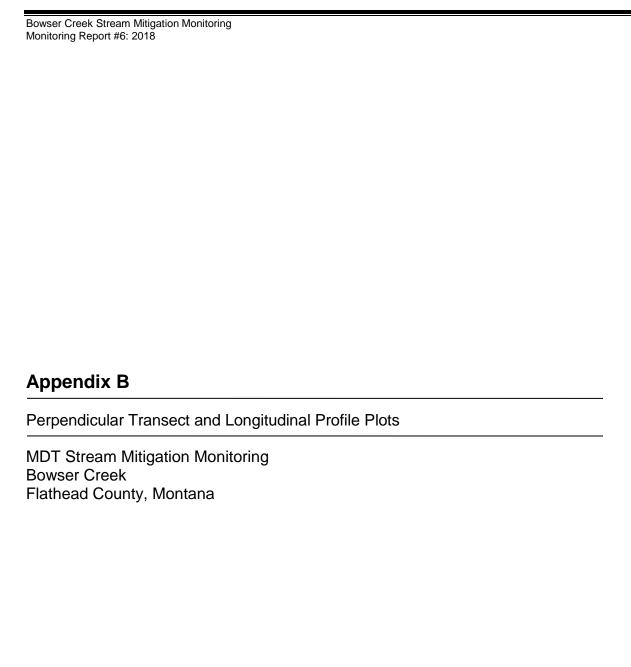
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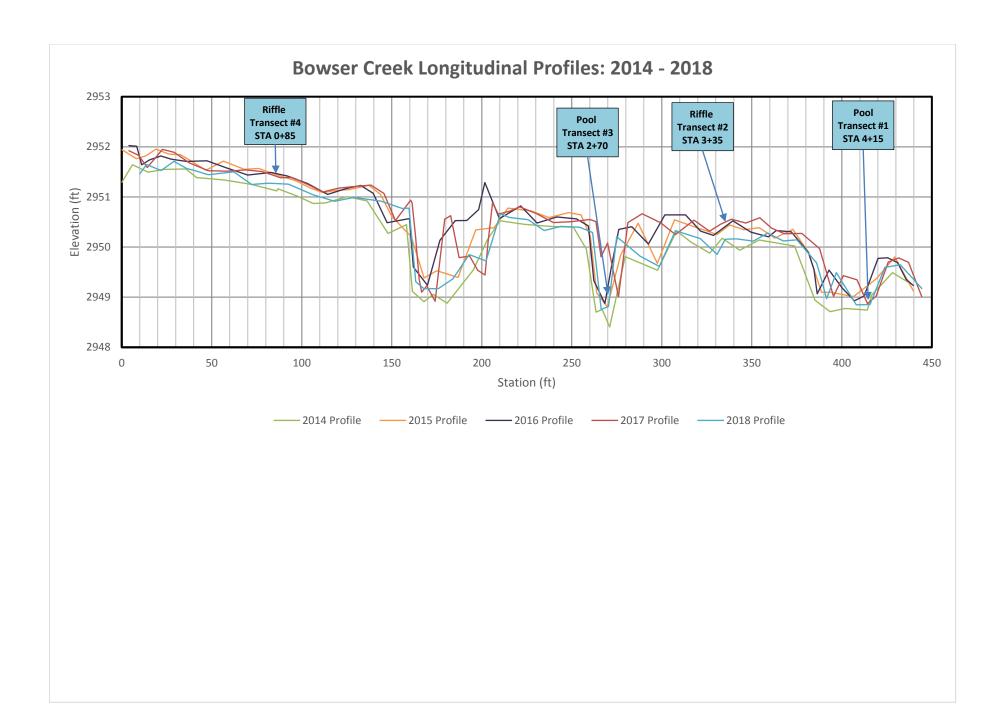


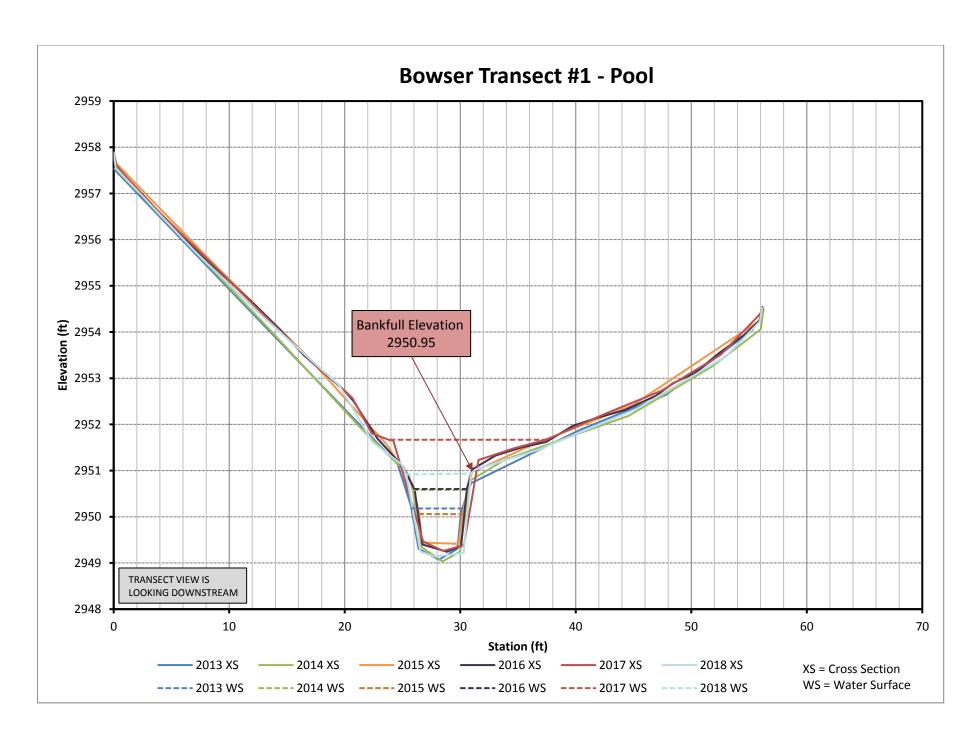


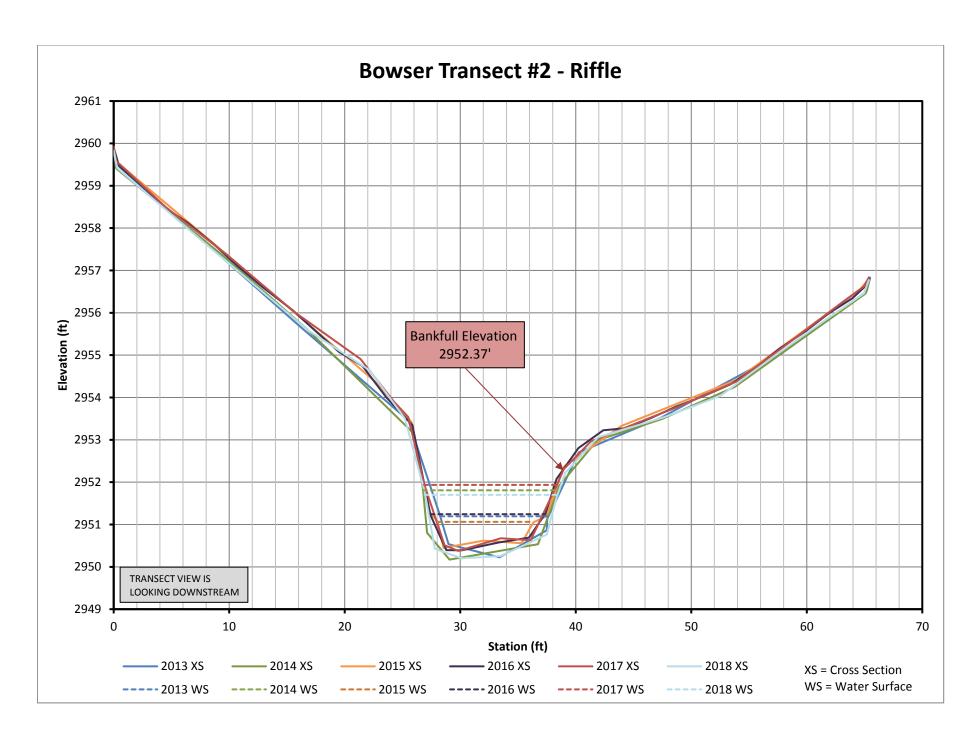


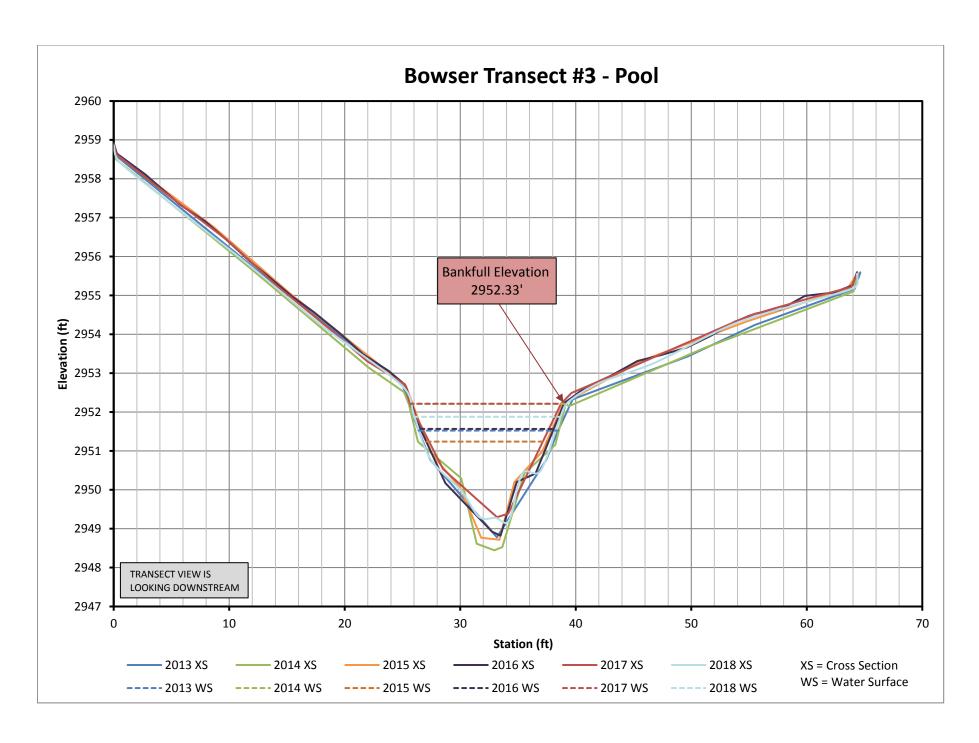


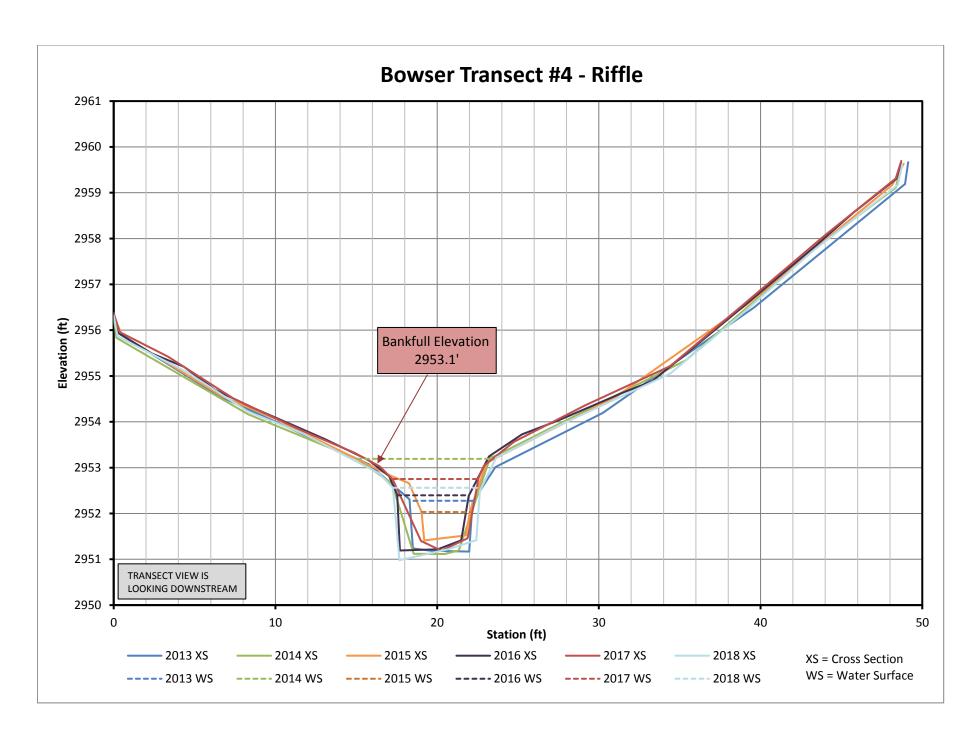












Appendix C

Project Area Photos

MDT Stream Mitigation Monitoring Bowser Creek
Flathead County, Montana

PHOTO INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: Bowser Creek Stream Mitigation Site

DATE: 2013 and 2018 Monitoring Events







2013 2018
Photo 1: View looking west (upstream) of Bowser Creek.





2013 2018 Photo 2.1: View looking northwest at Bowser Creek.





2013 2018 Photo 2.2: View across Bowser Creek looking north.

PHOTO INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: Bowser Creek Stream Mitigation Site









2013 2018 Photo 2.3: View looking east (downstream) of Bowser Creek from photo point 3.





2013 2018
Photo 2.4: View looking east across Bowser Creek. from photo point 2.





2013 2018 Photo 3: View looking east (downstream) of Bowser Creek from photo point 3.

PHOTO INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: Bowser Creek Stream Mitigation Site









2013 2018 Additional Photo 1: Prolific watercress growth shown in 2013 was less prevalent in 2018.





2013 2018 Additional Photo 2: Eroding bank EBL4.





2013 Additional Photo 3: Widened channel segment.



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 1 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:

8-14-18 DATE:



T1 LEFT: LOOKING SOUTHWEST TO T1 RIGHT



T1 RIGHT: LOOKING NORTHEAST TO T1 LEFT



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 2 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:

8-14-18 DATE:



T1 LEFT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T1 LEFT: LOOKING SOUTH DOWNSTREAM



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 3 of 16

PROJECT NAME: 2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK

8-14-18 DATE:



T1: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM FROM MIDDLE OF CREEK



T1: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM FROM MIDDLE CREEK



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATION Page 4 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:

DATE: 8-14-18



T1 RIGHT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T1 RIGHT: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 5 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T2 LEFT: LOOKING SOUTH TO T2 RIGHT



T2 RIGHT: LOOKING NORTH TO T2 LEFT



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 6 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:

DATE: 8-14-18



T2 LEFT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T2 LEFT: LOOKING SOUTH EAST DOWNSTREAM



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2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T2: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM FROM MIDDLE CREEK



T2: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM FROM MIDDLE CREEK



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 8 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T2 RIGHT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T2 RIGHT: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM



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2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T3 LEFT: LOOKING SOUTH TO T3 RIGHT



T3 RIGHT: LOOKING NORTH TO T3 LEFT



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2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T3 LEFT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T3 LEFT: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM



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2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T3: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM FROM MIDDLE OF CREEK



T3: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM FROM MIDDLE CREEK



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2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T3 RIGHT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T3 RIGHT: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 13 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:

DATE: 8-14-18



T4 LEFT: LOOKING SOUTH TO T4 RIGHT



T4 RIGHT: LOOKING NORTH TO T4 LEFT



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATION Page 14 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T4 LEFT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T4 LEFT: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATIONPage 15 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T4: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM FROM MIDDLE OF CREEK



T4: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM FROM MIDDLE CREEK



PHOTOGRAPHIC INSPECTION INFORMATION Page 16 of 16

2018 MDT STREAM MITIGATION—BOWSER CREEK PROJECT NAME:



T4 RIGHT: LOOKING WEST UPSTREAM



T4 RIGHT: LOOKING EAST DOWNSTREAM

