

Panel: Types of Habitat Improvements. Mark Davidson – The Nature Conservancy, Rob Richardson – Rio Applied Science and Engineering, Jeff Dillucia – Idaho Fish and Game, and Jim Gregory – Lost River Fish Ecology.

- Oral Presentation – Mark Davidson - Conservation Easements
 - I was asked to speak specifically about tools used up here and the importance of conservation easements.
 - Jen Smith did a good job talking about how the tool works in a practical way.
 - I want to talk about the social context of conservation easements in this basin (Lemhi Basin).
 - There are things that easements are and are not.
 - They are voluntary agreements.
 - They keep land in production.
 - May restrict use of land but does not take land out of production.
 - If it does take out of production, there are incentives to do it.
 - The lands stay on the tax roll and continue to be valued as ag lands.
 - Conservation easements were not originally thought of as a tool for salmon and steelhead recovery.
 - Landowners noticed changes in the basin and landowners are a community that work together to solve problems.
 - Back in early 2000s there were several conservation easements.
 - A few things were happening at that time.
 - Partnerships were starting to grow.
 - Landowners in the basin started working together and changed the dynamic of the basin
 - The community here is like salmon, they are very resilient.
 - I'm in awe of what both can do to survive.
 - Landowners are willing to work for it and put in their own blood, sweat, and tears.
 - How conservation easements came about.
 - Value of land is wrapped up in a variety of things from development potential to agricultural production.
 - Early landowners saw the changes in the community and recognized the pressures of skyrocketing land prices.
 - Landowners in the basin decided on their own that something needed to be done and they were the ones that started the momentum of easements being used as a conservation tool.
 - Landowners want to figure out how to keep kids and grandkids on the land.
 - Want to protect these places and keep them as ranches.
 - Had meeting in 2004 and had 94 ranchers show up to participate.
 - Knew that there was money out there and that there was a desire to protect the land and habitat and that's how that relationship grew.
 - Started by protecting spawning habitat and eventually relationships evolved into what they are today.
 - Easements provide mechanisms for us to get where we want to go.

- We try to structure our agreements to meet the needs of the fishery in conjunction with what works for the community.
 - Not something that we force, it is all voluntary.
 - Conservation easements provided a mechanism to talk to landowners about fish habitat and restoration.

Conservation easements are adaptable and can change focus, i.e. spawning to rearing habitat.