



The Upper Quinault River riparian floodplain and terraces where volunteers planted trees to help watershed health in April. Loss of old growth conifers decades ago, still contributes to the river's instability today. **Inset Photo:** Newly planted Douglas fir, one of thousands of trees donated by Rayonier Northwest Forest Resources.

Rayonier helps landowners save property

When Rich McConnell, co-chair of the Lake Quinault Community Action Forum Quinault River Committee, asked ColPac to help find funding to buy 3,000 trees for a watershed restoration project, the response was immediate. ColPac contacted Rayonier Northwest Forest Resources of Hoquiam and they enthusiastically offered to donate the trees.

Rayonier's response was so quick that it kicked the project into high gear. Within a month, the Quinault River Committee was planting bare root western hemlock and Douglas fir seedlings along the river.

"Rayonier's response from the start was an emphatic 'YES' to this project," noted Roger Milliman, ColPac's President. "All of the folks at Rayonier were extremely helpful. They worked with us to get the right tree species and stored the trees until the community was ready to plant them."

The Quinault River Committee with 12 volunteers planted about 3,000 trees on private lands. Many of the volunteers own land along the river and this tree planting project was personal.

In December 2007 a neighbor's home was lost to the Quinault River. High waters eroded the river bank and the house was precariously undercut.

Planting conifers is one way the

volunteers can make a difference to river and watershed health.

Decades ago, old growth spruce, hemlock and Douglas fir were part of the riparian environment. The big trees stored and deflected the rain, resulting in slow storm run-off and less streambank erosion. Tree roots held the riverbank, protecting the banks even in high water.

When early settlers cut the big trees for lumber and cleared the land for pasture they didn't realize their actions would have such long-lasting impacts.

So in April 2010 the volunteers gathered to plant trees back to those lands cleared years ago. Their hours of hard work will pay off in the future.

"While the results will not be felt for years to come," McConnell said. "Planting trees is one step we are able to accomplish now that may provide more stable floodplains and river banks in the future."

By Sunday evening 10 to 12 acres of private land had been re-planted. Next year the Quinault River Committee intends to plant even more acres.

"This is exactly the kind of project we like to do," explained Milliman. "The partnership of Rayonier, Quinault River Committee and ColPac made this opportunity happen."