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WestFAST News

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EPA Releases Annual Report Showing Steady Progress to Protect Communities from PFAS Pollution

Report highlights key EPA accomplishments to safeguard public health and the environment from dangerous 'forever chemicals.'

EPA 12/14/23

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its second annual report on PFAS progress, which highlights significant accomplishments achieved under its PFAS Strategic Roadmap and aligns with the Biden-Harris Administration's all of government strategy to protect communities from the impacts of forever chemicals. The report outlines key accomplishments under the Roadmap over the past year across three fronts– to restrict, remediate, and research PFAS – all centered on achieving fundamental health protections for the American people.

“This PFAS Roadmap progress report illustrates EPA's ongoing commitment to protect people from the harmful effects of forever chemicals,” said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. “By combining science-based solutions, historic funding, and impactful regulations, EPA is following through on the vision set out in our Roadmap – to protect people, achieve environmental justice, and improve the lives of hardworking families across America.”

“One thing is clear: Americans don't have to choose between clean air, land, and water or a prosperous, vibrant, and secure nation,” said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox and co-chair of EPA's Council on PFAS. “As our whole of agency progress clearly illustrates, we are protecting people's health while catalyzing research and innovation, fueling new markets and jobs, and prioritizing equitable infrastructure and treatment solutions for all people in this country.”

Key 2023 accomplishments include efforts to:

- **Make PFAS use safer:** EPA finalized rules for new PFAS reporting, issued a framework for reviewing PFAS to ensure they are used as safely as possible, and proposed to eliminate exemptions for new PFAS and to restrict certain legacy PFAS.
- **Hold polluters accountable:** EPA has proposed to list PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under CERCLA, the nation's Superfund law, and anticipates issuing a final rule in early 2024. This action would give the agency the power to improve transparency around PFAS releases, help ensure that polluters pay for treatment and cleanup, and help communities that are facing significant pollution quickly receive effective protections. In the last year, EPA also took important steps to stop PFAS polluters, including adding PFAS as an EPA enforcement and compliance priority from 2024-2027.
- **Protect America's drinking water and identify the scale of exposure:** EPA proposed

the first national drinking water standard for six PFAS in March 2023. Once final, this rule will save thousands of lives and prevent tens of thousands of avoidable illnesses. EPA expects to finalize the rule in early 2024. Also, to better understand where PFAS exist and how people are being exposed to them, EPA initiated nationwide monitoring for 29 PFAS at more than 10,000 public water systems under the Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. Results are posted publicly each quarter through EPA's website.

- **Deploy infrastructure funding to invest in infrastructure projects to address PFAS in water:** Many communities need to install new infrastructure and treatment technologies to address PFAS in drinking water and wastewater. Thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), EPA is providing \$10 billion dedicated to removing PFAS and other emerging contaminants – more than half of which is going to disadvantaged and underserved communities. In 2023, EPA distributed nearly \$1 billion through the BIL State Revolving Fund Emerging Contaminants programs and announced the first \$2 billion in grant funding to states, Tribes, and territories through the new Small or Disadvantaged Communities Emerging Contaminants grant program. These programs also advance the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 Initiative, which set the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.
- **Turn off the tap at industrial polluters:** EPA has taken several steps to use permitting and regulatory authority of the Clean Water Act to reduce PFAS pollution in our nation's waters— including specific regulations to limit PFAS discharges from PFAS manufacturers, metal finishers, and landfills.
- **Incorporate equity and environmental justice across the EPA's actions:** The EPA has worked to ensure that all communities have equitable access to solutions, to advance

the goals of President Biden's Executive Order 14096, Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All, and to integrate recommendations from the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

- **Advance the science:** The EPA has continued to build the scientific foundation on PFAS through research and development. The agency is investing in research to fill gaps in our understanding of PFAS, to identify which additional PFAS may pose human health and ecological risks at which exposure levels, and to develop methods to test, measure, remove, and destroy them.
- **Listen to communities and incorporate environmental justice:** EPA held listening sessions with community members impacted by PFAS in each of its 10 Regions, as well as a session specifically designed for Tribal partners. Feedback shared during these sessions, in coordination with recommendations from EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and Local Government Advisory Committee, is informing Agency-wide response efforts and helping to ensure that communities with environmental justice concerns have equitable access to information and solutions.

A Whole-of-Government Effort

As EPA advances critical work using its authorities and resources, it is doing so as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government approach to protect public health and the environment from PFAS. This coordinated effort, spearheaded by the White House, involves key collaborations. The Council on Environmental Quality leads a high-level interagency policy group focused on PFAS policy actions and the Office of Science and Technology Policy leads an interagency expert working group of federal technical and scientific leaders. Through these efforts, EPA and its partners are increasing interagency coordination and advancing work on research, analytical methods, contaminated site cleanup, and other areas.

Looking ahead to 2024, the EPA anticipates continuing its 2023 progress with several critical actions, including finalizing national drinking water standards for several PFAS; taking final action to

list certain PFAS as hazardous substances under CERCLA; proposing Effluent Limitation Guidelines for PFAS manufacturers; issuing guidance on destroying and disposing of PFAS; finalizing new methods to monitor for PFAS in a wide range of media; and proposing rules designating certain PFAS as hazardous constituents under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The agency also expects to continue engaging closely with its state partners, who are actively working to address PFAS issues in their communities.

Together, these and other commitments will complement and reinforce each other; hold polluters accountable; and empower communities, water systems, and state partners to protect the American people more effectively from the risks posed by PFAS exposure. [Read the full report.](#)

Interior Departments Announces Landsat 2030 International Partnership Initiative

USGS 12/5/23

The Department of the Interior today announced the Landsat 2030 International Partnership Initiative, which will enhance U.S. and partner governments' ability to sustainably manage their land, surface water and resource use. The announcement was made as part of the third convening of the Biden-Harris administration's National Space Council, chaired by Vice President Harris.

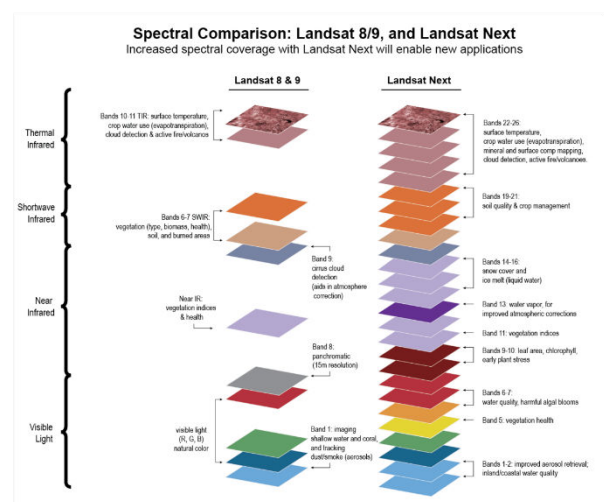
Landsat – a partnership between the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – is the only U.S. satellite system designed and operated to collect essential data on Earth's geologic formations, natural habitats, farmlands, cities, lakes, glaciers, coastlines and other surface features. Landsat provides imagery at landscape-scale resolution that can be used to support the Department's efforts to improve environmental sustainability, climate change resiliency, and economic growth – all while expanding an unparalleled record of Earth's changing landscapes.

“Earth observations are vital in the face of a changing climate,” said Principal Deputy Assistant

Secretary for Water and Science Michael Brain. “By combining Landsat’s long-term dataset and legacy of excellence with global partnership, the 2030 Initiative will provide actionable science that can help other science agencies, stakeholders, industry and academics tackle complex questions about how change is affecting landscapes, waterways and wildlife around the globe.”

“As the impacts of the climate crisis intensify in the United States and across the globe, Landsat satellites are crucial to providing data and imagery to help make science-based decisions on key issues including water use, wildfire impacts, coral reef degradation, glacier and ice-shelf retreat, and tropical deforestation,” said USGS Director David Applegate. “The U.S. Geological Survey is proud to support the continued science and understanding of environmental and climate changes that are occurring—not only on the public lands managed by the Department of the Interior—but throughout the United States and across the world.”

The 2030 Initiative focuses on the [U.S. Landsat Next](#) Earth observation satellite mission and will build on Landsat’s 52-year data record enabling users to record, study, understand and better manage landscape change at local, regional and global scales. The Landsat Next mission will provide a new and improved capability for the next generation of users, with higher spatial resolution, twice the current number of spectral bands and improved local revisit time.



Sources/Usage: Public Domain. This illustration shows the spectral bands of the sensors onboard Landsat 8 and Landsat 9, compared to those of Landsat Next. [Landsat Next](#) will be a constellation of three observatories sent into orbit on the same

launch vehicle, which will provide an improved temporal revisit for monitoring dynamic land and water surfaces such as vegetation, wildfire burns, reservoirs and waterways, coastal and wetland regions, glaciers, and dynamic ice sheets.

Landsat Next will have 26 bands; this includes refined versions of the 11 Landsat “heritage” bands, five bands with similar spatial and spectral characteristics to the European Space Agency’s Copernicus Sentinel-2 bands to allow easier merging of data products, and ten new spectral bands to support emerging Landsat applications. With these improvements, Landsat Next will collect on average about 20 times more data than its predecessor, Landsat 9, and continue to provide free and open data access for all users. Image credit: NASA

The global Landsat data archive maintained by the USGS - Earth Resources Observation Science Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is unparalleled in its length, breadth and quality. Today, Landsat is the most widely cited land-focused Earth observation satellite in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. The Landsat series of satellites have provided science-quality observations of the Earth’s land surfaces, surface waters, and coastal regions for more than five decades.

Historic levee breach opens 300 San Francisco Bay acres to tidal marsh restoration

Partners celebrate 20th anniversary of South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.

FWS 12/14/23

On December 13, the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project partners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opened a 300-acre former industrial salt pond to the Bay with a celebration marking the 20th anniversary of their joint restoration venture. This major milestone event is part of an ambitious 50-year effort to restore 15,000 acres of historic wetlands to tidal marsh and other habitats.

Tidal marsh once ringed the South Bay and cushioned the shore from storms and tides. But over the course of the 20th century, approximately 85% of San Francisco Bay wetlands, over 150,000 acres, were lost to development. Restored tidal marshes help to absorb floodwaters and buffer against sea

level rise, support wildlife and improve water quality by filtering pollutants.



Image Details

“The restoration of the South Bay Salt Ponds is the most ambitious wetland restoration project on the West Coast,” said California State Coastal Conservancy Executive Officer Amy Hutzel. “It is thanks to the many people who have supported this project over two decades that we are able to breach the Ravenswood R4 pond today, opening hundreds of acres to the tides and currents of San Francisco Bay. The benefits of today’s breach will be felt by the wildlife that make their homes in tidal salt marshes, the adjacent communities that are now better protected from coastal flooding, and all of us who will get to watch this habitat come to life over the coming months and years.”

“Partnerships like the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project allow us to develop collaborative solutions and bring innovative initiatives into the future,” said Matt Brown, San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Manager with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “The Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge provides critical habitat to several endangered species, including the California clapper rail, salt marsh harvest mouse and western snowy plover. The restoration work here is protecting and restoring habitat for each of these species, which is significant not just for us today, but for future generations too.”

With this breach, the Restoration Project, the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the West Coast, has opened over 3,300 acres across the South Bay to allow nature to regrow tidal marshes, transforming former industrial salt ponds into a thriving mosaic

of wetlands and creating habitat for endangered species and other wildlife. Restoration is working: since the project began, endangered salt marsh harvest mice and Ridgway's rails have returned to early restoration sites to live and reproduce. Through the Restoration Project, partners have also enhanced 700 pond acres, built nearly seven miles of recreational trails, a kayak launch and several viewing and interpretive areas, and opened the shore to public access. A new public trail is expected to open at Ravenswood in 2024.



Image Details

The South Bay Salt Ponds were acquired in 2003 from Cargill Inc. in a deal brokered by the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, a long-time champion of the restoration effort. The 15,100-acre property transfer represents the largest single acquisition in a larger campaign led by multiple partners to restore 40,000 acres of lost tidal wetlands to San Francisco Bay.

The \$13 million restoration effort at Ravenswood included accommodating a key component of the Bayfront Canal and Atherton Channel Flood Protection project, ensuring that the work is beneficial to wildlife and the surrounding communities. Funding was provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Meta. Services were donated by California Wildlife Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Save the Bay, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory and the City of Menlo Park.

The Restoration Project is a collaborative effort with federal, state and local agencies – for more information, please visit:

www.southbayrestoration.org.

Biden-Harris Administration makes \$106 million available for Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund as part of Investing in America agenda

Funds will support West Coast and Alaska salmon and steelhead recovery.

NOAA 12/5/23



Male and female steelhead trout. (Image credit: NOAA Fisheries)

Today, the Department of Commerce and NOAA are announcing the availability of up to \$106 million in funding through the [Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund \(PCSRF\)](#) for [Pacific salmon and steelhead](#) recovery and conservation projects. This funding — which includes funding from the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#) and [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) — will support state and tribal salmon restoration projects and activities to protect, conserve and restore these fish populations and their habitats.

“Restoring Pacific salmon populations and their habitats is vital for communities on the West Coast and in Alaska,” said Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. “This funding — supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, a key pillar of Bidenomics — will power transformational, high-impact projects and support efforts by states and tribes to protect and conserve salmon populations.”

The PCSRF program funds projects and activities necessary for conservation of salmon and steelhead populations listed as threatened or endangered or identified by a state as at-risk to be listed; for maintaining populations necessary for exercise of tribal treaty fishing rights or native subsistence fishing; or for conservation of Pacific coastal salmon and steelhead habitat.

Within the overall objectives of the PCSRF grant program, these funds will specifically provide federal financial assistance to states and tribes to support projects that:

- Protect, restore and conserve Pacific salmon and steelhead and their habitats, using approaches that enhance ecosystem resilience to climate hazards.
- Support tribes' role as fishery managers and stewards of tribal trust resources for cultural, spiritual, subsistence and recreational purposes before implementing conservation activities including outreach, research and monitoring.

“The PCSRF program benefits fish populations and their habitats,” said Janet Coit, assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries. “However, the value of these investments goes far beyond recovering Pacific salmon and steelhead and their habitats, as they also provide community and economic benefits, such as jobs and climate resilience.”

NOAA will accept proposals from eligible applicants in the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, California and Alaska, and federally-recognized tribes of the Columbia River Basin and Pacific coast (including Alaska). The [application](#) deadline is March 4, 2024. NOAA Fisheries' [PCSRF program](#) has a long history of successful, targeted on-the-ground habitat restoration projects. Since the program's inception in 2000, NOAA's PCSRF has provided more than \$1.7 billion to implement more than 15,000 salmon recovery projects. Our partners have protected, restored and created nearly 1.2 million acres of salmon habitat and have made over 11,800 stream miles accessible to salmon and steelhead. More information about the program and examples of projects previously funded within your state can be

found on the latest [PCSRF FY22 Report to Congress Story Map](#).

The IRA funding was first [announced in June 2023](#) as part of the historic \$3.3 billion in investments focused on ensuring America's communities and economies are ready for and resilient to climate change. As part of this Investing in America Agenda, NOAA recently announced [\\$60 million](#) for Columbia River Basin tribal salmon hatcheries, [\\$106 million](#) in recommended funding for West Coast and Alaska salmon recovery and made [\\$260 million](#) available for new fish passage projects.

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than \\$51 Million from the President's Investing in America Agenda to Restore and Protect Rivers and Watersheds](#)

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to fund 18 projects in eight states that will improve aquatic habitats.

DOI 12/19/23

The Department of the Interior today announced more than \$51 million in funding from President Biden's Investing in America agenda for 18 projects in eight states that will restore and protect aquatic ecosystems.

Crucial funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program will support the study, design and construction of collaboratively developed ecosystem restoration projects that provide widespread regional benefits and improve the health of fisheries, wildlife and aquatic habitat through restoration and improved fish passage.

“Through President Biden's Investing in America agenda, we are advancing nature-based solutions that benefit local water supplies, and the wildlife and habitats that support them,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “The Interior Department continues to advance water solutions that are environmentally and economically sound for the American West.”

“The benefits of these projects are far-reaching in terms of climate resilience and ecosystem restoration benefits,” said Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton. “The work to restore and protect the habitat for fish and wildlife also helps to improve water quality and mitigate impacts of drought and potential flood events.”

Commissioner Touton made the announcement during a visit to the Las Vegas Wash project outside Henderson, Nevada. As part of today’s announcement, the Southern Nevada Water Authority will receive \$20 million to create a wetland and other habitat within the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. The project will improve water quality and help protect the spawning area for the endangered razorback sucker in Las Vegas Bay. The Wash is a crucial link in the Las Vegas Valley watershed, channeling more than 200 million gallons of urban runoff, highly treated effluent and shallow groundwater to Lake Mead.

President Biden’s Investing in America agenda represents the largest investment in climate resilience in the nation’s history and is providing much-needed resources to enhance Western communities’ resilience to drought and climate change. Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Reclamation is investing a total of \$8.3 billion over five years for water infrastructure projects, including rural water, water storage, conservation and conveyance, nature-based solutions, dam safety, water purification and reuse, and desalination. Over the first two years of its implementation, Reclamation has selected [421 projects to receive over \\$2.9 billion](#).

The projects selected under this round of the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program are:

California

East Bay Municipal Utility District, Mokelumne River Floodplain Project: Improving Conditions for California’s Central Valley Anadromous Fisheries (Task A: Study and Design) **Reclamation Funding: \$650,000**

The East Bay Municipal Utility District will work with local landowners to complete the study and design of two 25-acre floodplain restoration projects which, once constructed, will inundate roughly 50

acres of off-channel rearing habitat benefitting federally listed, Fall-run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

Sonoma County Water Agency, Eel River at Cape Horn Dam Fish Passage Improvement Project (Task A: Study and Design) **Reclamation Funding: \$2,000,000**

The Sonoma County Water Agency will study and complete design for fish passage enhancements at the Eel River’s Cape Horn Dam and explore options for continued trans-basin diversions from the Eel River into the neighboring Russian River. The Cape Horn Dam is part of the Potter Valley Project, located in Mendocino County, California, which has been diverting water from the Eel River into the Russian River watershed for more than a century. The Potter Valley Project has played a crucial role in supplying water for agriculture, consumptive use, and instream flows for aquatic ecosystems, however, native populations of federally listed Chinook and Coho salmon and winter Steelhead in the Eel River have declined substantially.

Colorado

Blue River Watershed Group, Blue River Habitat Restoration Project (Task A: Study and Design) **Reclamation Funding: \$1,857,570**

The Blue River Watershed Group, working in partnership with the Town of Silverthorne, will complete the engineering and design for a project to repair degraded aquatic habitat in the Blue River, downstream of the Dillon Reservoir in Summit County, Colorado. This reach of the Blue River is impacted by its proximity to the outflow of the Reservoir, which has contributed to an un-naturally low flow regime, below average water temperatures due to cold-water releases from the bottom of the Reservoir, and a lack of natural sediment and nutrient transport.

Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, Kawuneeche Valley Ecosystem Restoration Project (Task A: Study and Design) **Reclamation Funding: \$761,000**

The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, in collaboration with the Kawuneeche Valley Ecosystem Restoration Collaborative (KVERC), will study and design a suite of restoration projects within the Kawuneeche Valley

aimed to return the landscape to a natural beaver-willow ecosystem. The Kawuneeche Valley is located in north-central Colorado, along the headwaters of the Colorado River within the boundaries of Rocky Mountain National Park. Over the past three decades, elk and moose browsing has reduced the density and area of the valley's native tall willow stands, severely limiting material for beaver dam construction, leading the species to leave the area. As a result, the valley landscape has changed from one of the most significant wetlands in Colorado into an unnatural grassland ecosystem.

Montana

Trout Unlimited, Upper Clark Fork Basin Fish Passage Improvement Project (Task A: Study and Design)

Reclamation Funding: \$594,306

Trout Unlimited, in partnership with the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) and the Clark Fork Coalition, will design a suite of infrastructure improvements to provide fish and recreational boat passage, screen ditches, and improve water delivery at ten irrigation diversion sites within the Upper Clark Fork River Basin located in western Montana. This project extends across two subbasins encompassing the Upper Clark Fork River Basin, the Flint Rock and Upper Clark Fork. The Clark Fork is home to imperiled populations of native threatened bull trout and West slope cutthroat trout. Currently, irrigation diversion structures are fragmenting habitat, entraining fish and posing hazards to floaters and anglers on public waterways along the Upper Clark Fork River.

Nevada

Southern Nevada Water Authority, Erosion Control Structure at the Las Vegas Wash: Completion of Weir 5 (Task B: Construction)

Reclamation Funding: \$20,000,000

The Southern Nevada Water Authority will implement erosion control measures and create in-stream habitat in the lower Las Vegas Wash within Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Clark County, Nevada. Serving as the crucial final link in the Valley's watershed, the Wash channels more than 200 million gallons of highly treated effluent, urban runoff, and shallow groundwater to Lake Mead each day, and carries stormwater to the lake

during rain events. Wetlands in the Wash help to filter impurities from these flows and provide important animal habitat in the desert climate of Southern Nevada. The project will create additional wetlands for the benefit of water quality and wildlife and will involve the removal of invasive tamarisk and revegetation with native shrubs, trees, and grasses. The project will improve habitat conditions for wildlife, including the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and Yuma Ridgway's rail, and the threatened, yellow-billed cuckoo, and improve spawning habitat for the razorback sucker.

New Mexico

Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, Southside Wastewater Reclamation Plant Outfall Restoration Project (Task B: Construction)

Reclamation Funding: \$3,014,481

The Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) will reconnect approximately 11 acres of floodplain habitat along 1,900 linear feet of the Rio Grande approximately five miles south of downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Water Authority operates the Southside Wastewater Reclamation Plant, which treats approximately 55 million gallons of wastewater per day. The land surrounding the outfall is part of the Rio Grande Valley State park and is jointly owned by Middle Rio Grande Conservancy district and the Bureau of Reclamation. High-quality treated effluent is then released to the Rio Grande via an outfall channel on the east bank of the river. The project will reconnect the Rio Grande to its floodplain by excavating the banks, allowing water to stretch across the floodplain, restoring the river's natural hydraulic processes and enhancing and adding 2.2 acres of expanded floodplain habitat for the endangered Rio Grande Silvery Minnow

Oregon

Deschutes River Conservancy, Restoring Upper Deschutes River Aquatic Habitat for Oregon Spotted Frog and Other Native Species (Task A: Study and Design)

Reclamation Funding: \$651,542

The Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC), in partnership with the Deschutes Basin Board of Control (DBBC), will complete the study and design of habitat restoration projects that will benefit the Oregon spotted frog, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and the native Redband trout designated by the state as a sensitive species, on the Deschutes River in central Oregon. Habitat for these species has been degraded in this section of the Upper Deschutes River between the Wickiup Reservoir and the City of Bend, which includes Reclamation's Deschutes Project, through the storage and release of water for irrigation. The DRC and DBBC will conduct site studies and analysis to prioritize projects to restore the stream channel through regrading the riverbanks and reconnecting the active channel to its floodplains to allow flows to inundate wetlands and riparian areas adjacent to the river channels, providing habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog and improving in-stream habitat.

North Unit Irrigation District, Fish Screen Replacement at Bend Headworks (Task B: Construction)

Reclamation Funding: \$5,965,809

North Unit Irrigation District will replace the existing, rotary drum fish screens with upgraded, flat plate screens and a traveling screen cleaning system at the Bend Headworks, located at the district's main canal intake on the mainstem of the Deschutes River, in Bend, Oregon. The Deschutes River is home to brown and rainbow trout, the rare brook trout, whitefish, and transient fingerling coho and kokanee from Wickiup Reservoir, a Bureau of Reclamation Project. The design of the new screens will slow the approach velocity, shrink the mesh size of the screen, and provide a safe path for fish to the fish ladder.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Restoring Ecosystem Function and Fish Habitat in the Hood River Watershed (Task A: Study and Design)

Reclamation Funding: \$500,000

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Hood River Watershed Group will complete the study and design of five stream restoration projects across the East Fork Hood River, Neal Creek, and Baldwin Creek sub-watersheds in north-central Oregon. Funding will be used to develop 100 percent designs to remove two fish passage barriers

and restore at least 3.5 miles of fish habitat, which will improve wetland function, increase stream complexity, restore riparian habitat, and connect the floodplain to the main channel. The projects will advance the recovery of Endangered Species Act listed Lower-Columbia River Salmon and steelhead.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Reconnecting Fish Passage to Recover Oregon Coast Coho in the Nehalem and Tillamook Watersheds (Task B: Construction)

Reclamation Funding: \$3,000,000

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and local partners will complete a suite of high-priority fish passage and habitat restoration actions in the Lower Nehalem Watershed, in coastal, Northwest Oregon. The project will include the removal of 4 dams and culverts and will replace 5 tide gates, which are fish passage barriers that also restrict floodplain connectivity with two muted tidal regulator gates, which will result in 22 miles of coho spawning and rearing habitat reconnected and 381 acres of floodplain wetlands reconnected.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Restoring Habitat Connectivity for Lower Columbia River Salmonids in the North Fork Klaskanine River Watershed (Task B: Construction)

Reclamation Funding: \$3,175,089

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will restore fish passage in the North Fork Klaskanine River by providing fish passage at the Ogee Dam. The project builds upon progress made in previous phases of a watershed-scale effort, that included the removal of one dam and installation of a fish passage structure at a second dam upstream of the proposed project location at Ogee Dam. Once installed, the fish passage feature at Ogee Dam will provide access to 12 full miles of critical spawning and rearing habitat in the upper reaches of the North Fork Klaskanine River for the benefit of ESA-listed coho salmon. The project will also benefit several non-listed, but culturally significant species, including coastal cutthroat trout, Pacific lamprey, and Western brook lamprey.

Washington

Chelan County, Peshastin Creek Historic Channel and Floodplain Reconnection and Design Project (Task A: Study and Design)

Reclamation Funding: \$768,587

Chelan County will complete the study and design of a comprehensive restoration project to relocate and reconnect the Peshastin Creek channel with its historic floodplain and build two highway bridges across the rerouted creek in Chelan County, Washington. Aquatic habitat within Peshastin Creek was severely degraded by the construction of State Route 97 in the 1950's, which reduced and straightened the stream channel and disconnected it from the historic channel footprint and floodplain. The County will complete a hydrology and hydraulic assessment of existing and proposed conditions, perform an alternatives analysis seeking input from fish biologists, local landowners, and other stakeholders, and conduct a bridge study and risk analyses, to produce a 60% design package.

Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation, Pom Pom Road at Toppenish Creek Habitat Restoration and Fish Passage Project (Task B: Construction)**Reclamation Funding: \$3,020,000**

The Yakama Nation will restore aquatic habitat and fish passage on Toppenish Creek, a tributary to the Yakima River in Yakima County, Washington. Irrigation diversions, roads, bridges, and agriculture have disconnected the creek's main channel from its historic floodplain. As a result, federally-listed salmonid species have been cut-off from healthy floodplain spawning habitat, and groundwater recharge from the floodplain has been eliminated. When completed, the restoration project will provide 2.4 miles of complex high-quality rearing and spawning habitat for the federally threatened Columbia River steelhead and culturally important Pacific lamprey by routing stream flows back into of the historic channel. Installation of a new bridge and three box culverts will increase flow conveyance width by 270%, the creek will be reconnected to 100 acres of floodplain forests, restoring natural stream processes, and increasing flood water storage.

Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation, Nason Creek Floodplain (DOT-N1) RM 3.2 to 4.6 Floodplain Project (Task A: Study and Design)**Reclamation Funding: \$500,000**

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation), in partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation

(WSDOT) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and in coordination with the Wenatchee Subbasin Watershed Action Team (WAT), will complete final construction designs for a large-scale salmon habitat restoration project along Nason Creek near the City of Leavenworth in Chelan County, Washington, within the Northern Treaty Territory of the Yakama Nation. The project will develop final construction designs to remove, and subsequently re-route, a problematic 0.65-mile-long segment of State Route 207 away from the Nason Creek floodway to restore stream habitat for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed spring Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation, Wapato Diversion: Improvements for Anadromous Fish Passage (Task A: Study and Design)**Reclamation Funding: \$2,000,000**

The Yakama Nation, working in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, will develop alternatives for the passage of anadromous fish species at the Wapato Diversion on the lower Yakima River in Central Washington State. Following an alternatives analysis, the selected project concept will be advanced to a 60% level of design. The purpose of the design alternatives is to restore fish passage for fish within the Yakima Major Population Group of federally-threatened, Middle Columbia River (MCR) Steelhead, spring and summer run Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon, and juvenile and adult Pacific Lamprey.

Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation, Prosser Diversion: Improvements for Anadromous Fish Passage (Task A: Study and Design)**Reclamation Funding: \$2,000,000**

The Yakama Nation will study, select, and design alternatives to improve fish passage and avoid entrainment at the Prosser Diversion on the lower Yakima River of Central Washington State. The Prosser Diversion supplies irrigation water through the Chandler Canal serving the Kennewick Division of Reclamation's Yakima Project. The dam can divert more than 50% of Yakima River flow at times, creating very dangerous fish passage conditions. A large proportion of the Yakima basin's smolts get entrained in the canal and suffer high mortality. Removal or modification of the dam and headworks

will create safer passage conditions for all anadromous species. These improvements will benefit all four populations comprising the Yakima Major Population Group of federally-threatened Middle Columbia River Steelhead juveniles and adults; juveniles and adults from the entire Yakima populations of spring and summer run Chinook, naturally-spawning fall Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon; and juvenile and adult Pacific Lamprey.

Wyoming

City of Casper, Study and Design North Platte River Restoration (Task A: Study and Design) Reclamation Funding: \$567,117

The City of Casper will complete the study and design of a project to restore approximately 3- miles of the North Casper and Knife River Reaches of the North Platte River in Natrona County, Wyoming. Widespread colonization of the invasive Russian olive, entrenchment of upstream dams and reservoirs, bank erosion, channel widening, and poor riffle and pool complexity from upstream sediment inputs have reduced the ecosystem function of the riparian and aquatic habitats. The project has the potential to restore over three miles of river channel, improve adjacent riparian health, create various types of new wetlands, create an Audubon Important Bird Area, protect adjacent critical infrastructure, and improve recreational opportunity along the river.

Upcoming Meetings and Webinars

2024 WSWC Spring (203rd) Meetings and Washington Roundtable

March 13 & 14, Washington DC

Other Federal News

DOI 12/4/23. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Agreement with Imperial Irrigation District to Save 100,000 Acre-Feet of Water in Colorado River System](#)

DOI 12/4/23. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$72 Million from Investing in America Agenda to Restore the Salton Sea](#)

DOI 12/11/23. [Interior Department Announces New Actions in Support of Nature-Based Solutions](#)

DOI 12/12/23. [President Biden's Investing in America Agenda Provides \\$16.5 Million to Support Tribes Impacted by Drought](#)

DOI 12/13/23. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces Several New Water Conservation Agreements in California to Protect the Colorado River System](#)

DOI 12/19/23. [Interior Department Announces \\$27 Million from President's Investing in America Agenda for Tribal Dam Safety, Water Sanitation Projects](#)

EPA 12/1/23. [EPA Takes Action to Protect People from PFAS that Leach from Plastic Containers into Pesticides and Other Products](#)

EPA 12/4/23. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces Availability of \\$30.7 Million in Grants to Support Water Systems in Small and Rural Communities](#)

EPA 12/14/23. [EPA Begins Process to Prioritize Five Chemicals for Risk Evaluation Under Toxic Substances Control Act](#)

EPA 12/15/23. [EPA Seeks Public Input on Proposal to Reduce Water Pollution from Meat and Poultry Processing Facilities](#)

EPA 12/1/23. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$600M to 11 Grantmakers to Fund Thousands of Environmental Justice Projects Across the Nation as Part of Investing in America Agenda](#)

FEMA 12/19/23. [Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$150 Million to Help Underserved Communities Receive Low-Interest Loans for Resilience Projects](#)

FWS 12/12/23. [Service Approves Conservation Agreement for Lower Colorado River Basin Mussels](#)

USDA 12/5/23. [USDA and EPA Strengthen Partnership to Improve Access to Modern and Affordable Wastewater Infrastructure for People in Rural America](#)

USGS 12/5/23. Smallmouth Bass Mercury Levels
Linked to Habitat Types Along the Snake River

USGS 12/19/23. Popular Ice Control Products Used
at Airports can Increase Phosphorus in Nearby
Waterways

The Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) is a collaboration between 13 Federal agencies with water management responsibilities in the West. WestFAST was established to support the Western States Water Council (WSWC), and the Western Governors Association in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water resources.