



Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

2023 Annual Report



A Note from the Director

President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law into law on November 15, 2021, providing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a five-year, \$455 million transformational investment in our future. This historical funding is having positive impacts on people, local communities, and economies, and is providing critical resources for the Service to better support locally led conservation projects; improving public access; protecting people, infrastructure and wildlife habitats; and rebuilding the ecological infrastructure from the Klamath River to the Delaware Basin.

The Service's success in meeting its mission is dependent on us leading with our values: stewardship, integrity, respect, collaboration, and innovation. Working collaboratively with communities and partners helps drive how we direct investments to achieve the greatest benefits for wildlife and communities. The projects supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are critical to helping communities withstand mounting environmental challenges and changes and ensuring the health and well-being of current and future generations.

In little more than two years, thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Service has implemented funding for 18 projects in the Delaware River Basin, 40 in the Klamath Basin, and six in the Lake Tahoe area, which are supporting habitat restoration, invasive species control, and lasting solutions for healthy and functional ecosystems that benefit local communities, Tribes, agriculture, and a diversity of species.

The Delaware River Watershed is in one of the most densely populated urban areas in the nation, yet it remains 50% forested and boasts 400 miles of designated rivers within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This watershed also provides drinking water to more than 15 million people and sustains habitats for a host of wildlife species from red knots and other shorebirds to iconic and economically valuable fish such as alewives, American shad, and eastern brook trout.

In the Lake Tahoe watershed, we are working alongside key partners, including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Washoe Tribe, who play a lead role in aquatic invasive species management through innovative removal methods, community engagement, and new aquatic invasive species prevention. In fact, aquatic invasive species management is a priority of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, one of the most comprehensive, collaborative restoration programs in the United States.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also provides funding for 79 National Fish Passage Program projects across the country to remove barriers that are fragmenting rivers, blocking fish migration, and putting communities at higher risk for flooding. When complete, these projects are expected to remove 212 barriers and reopen roughly 6,200 stream miles, which will improve broader aquatic connectivity and help conserve vulnerable species.

We are also leading a multi-agency effort to coordinate the delivery of roughly \$2 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for the restoration of fish passage and aquatic connectivity through the Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force.



Garrett Peterson/USFWS

Across the sagebrush country – the plains and mountains of western North America – we continue to use Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to work with federal and state agencies, Tribes, nongovernmental organizations, private landowners, and other partners to plan and deliver on-the-ground projects to conserve strategic habitat “cores” within the larger sagebrush ecosystem. These projects are underpinned by innovative science, including a landscape-scale conservation design that combats invasive grasses and wildfire, reduces encroaching conifers, and safeguards precious water resources. The outcomes of these vital investments will bolster ecological and community resilience to climate change and advance habitat conservation in this iconic American landscape.

Ecosystem Restoration is an important component for much of our work, and to date, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is funding 46 projects across the landscape that will lead to better outdoor spaces and habitats by advancing healthy forests, detecting and eradicating invasive species, investing in National Seed Strategy collection and production, restoring recreation sites and national parks, and mitigating hazards on mined lands. These projects are focused on furthering the [Restoration and Resiliency Framework’s](#) goals of restoring our lands and waters and advancing climate resilience.



Christian Thorsberg/USFWS

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing capital to pay for plugging and reclaiming orphan well sites with the objective of eliminating environmental and public safety hazards stemming from leaking hydrocarbons, methane, and contaminated water. These derelict structures pose a threat to wildlife, their habitats, and nearby communities. In the last two years, the Service has established an inventory of orphan well sites across the National Wildlife Refuge System and is working with partners in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and West Virginia to create cooperative agreements for this work and provide technical oversight for the plugging and reclamation of orphan well sites on National Wildlife Refuges in these states.

Additionally, in Texas, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing funding for surface reclamation efforts on three National Wildlife Refuges for 30 sites where plugging operations are complete. These efforts will restore emergent wetland areas and protect habitats for sensitive nesting species and whooping cranes.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also provides the Service with \$180 million for maintaining, improving, and constructing roads, trails, and other transportation infrastructure and the Service receives additional Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding through the Department of the Interior’s orphan well remediation, wildland fire, and ecosystem restoration programs.

While Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding only spans a five-year period, investments and projects supported by the law will provide benefits far into the future to both people and wildlife.

As we embark on the third year of support under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, I am inspired by the positive, lasting impact these projects are making for communities across the country. With many groundbreaking and completion milestones happening soon, this is an exciting time for fish and wildlife conservation and for all of us. Through stewardship supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are investing in our shared future.

— Martha Williams

Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Program

Supporting Collaborative Sagebrush Conservation Projects in the West

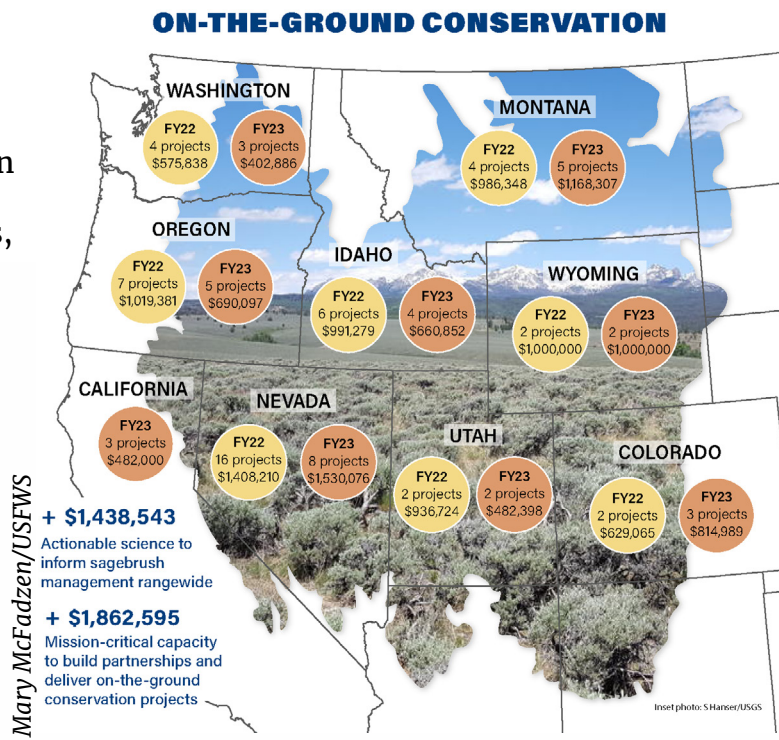
America’s sagebrush ecosystem is the lifeblood of rural communities and Tribal lands in the West. Sprawling across 175 million acres and 11 western states, the sagebrush ecosystem supports Tribal lifeways; agricultural, energy and mineral production; outdoor recreation; and hundreds of species that live nowhere else in the world. In recent years, sagebrush ecological integrity has been threatened by increasingly long and severe wildfire seasons driven by climate change, lengthy droughts, and invasive annual grasses.

Since 2022, the Service has invested just over \$18 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure funding in the sagebrush ecosystem to combat invasive grasses and wildfire, reduce encroaching conifers, safeguard precious water resources for neighboring communities and wildlife, and promote community and economic sustainability. Sagebrush country contains biological, cultural, and economic resources of national significance. It is home to more than 350 species, including pronghorn, elk, mule deer, and greater sage-grouse. America’s sagebrush ecosystem is the largest contiguous ecotype in the U.S., comprising one-third of the land mass of the lower 48 states.

The Service is committed to working with local communities, state and federal agencies, Tribes, conservation groups, and private sector partners to ensure they have the tools they need to conserve these important areas. Sagebrush funding is allocated to existing and new projects based on priorities established by the Service’s Sagebrush Ecosystem Team (SET) and our partners, including the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA).

The SET, WAFWA, and others are using the Sagebrush Conservation Design – a landscape-scale tool to prioritize conservation investments in sagebrush – to collaboratively conserve intact, functioning sagebrush geographies and mitigate the primary threats to sagebrush ecological health, namely invasive grasses and wildfire, drought, and encroaching conifers. By anchoring conservation in these areas, the Service and its partners can focus on working to restore degraded lands and habitat through the “Defend the Core, Grow the Core” approach endorsed by the Western Governors Association and a growing number of partners working across the West.

Sagebrush Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding FY22 & FY23 Investments



Deb Kornblut/USFWS

Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Program

New and Multi-year Projects Critical to Ongoing Sage Steppe Work

While the Service and our partners broke ground on many new projects in 2023, approximately 60% of the projects are multi-year projects and received continued funding for ongoing work. Examples include:

Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbit Recovery (Washington)

This project will propagate and release pygmy rabbits (listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act and by the state), assist landowners with habitat restoration, and enroll up to 25,000 acres of private land into Safe Harbor Agreements.

Sarah Arnoff/USFWS



\$209,100

Improving Climate Resilience of Sagebrush Ecosystem Communities (Nevada)

Partnering with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, this project focuses on climate resilience of the sagebrush ecosystem at four sites across northern Nevada. This includes pinyon-juniper removal, protective fencing, seeding with native forbs and grasses, and in-situ restoration for the benefit of greater sage-grouse, mule deer, and other sagebrush obligate species.

Joanna Gilkeson/USFWS



2022 - \$887,832
2023 - \$503,786

Impacts of Japanese Brome Treatment on Pollinators in Sagebrush Rangeland (Montana)

Japanese brome infestations are present within sagebrush areas of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. Herbicidal treatment sites will be paired with untreated Japanese brome-invaded sagebrush areas and sagebrush areas with native dominated understory to determine effectiveness of restoration efforts and non-target impacts of the treatments.

Pam Sponholtz/USFWS



\$95,000

Wyoming Invasive Annual Grass Management Collaborative (Wyoming)

This project is a partnership among the Service, the state of Wyoming, Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes, U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies, local governments, and other partners to control invasive annual grass and defend approximately 100,000 acres of high-quality sagebrush habitat on mixed-ownership lands in Wyoming through on-the-ground treatments.

Tom Koerner/USFWS



2022 - \$750,000
2023 - \$630,000

Visit our [Sagebrush Conservation website](#) for a complete list of funded projects and their locations.

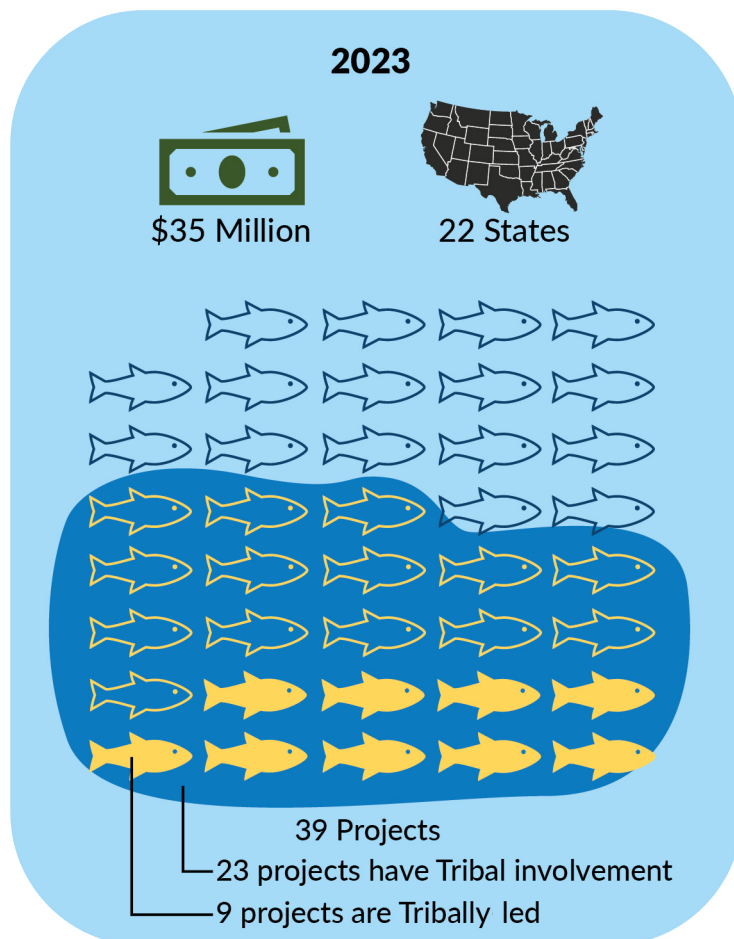
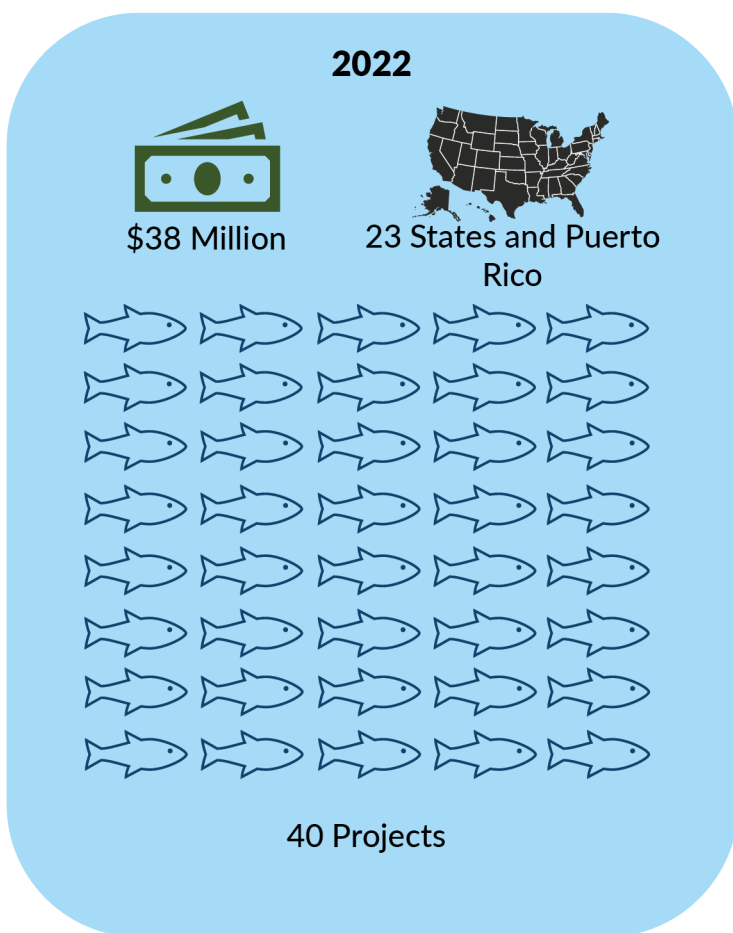
National Fish Passage Program

\$35 Million Awarded for 39 Fish Passage Projects in 22 States

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was awarded \$200 million over five years to provide technical assistance and to distribute to local projects that are removing hundreds of barriers through the National Fish Passage Program.

Since 2022, the Service has awarded a total of \$73 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for 79 projects in 30 states and Puerto Rico. In 2023, the Service announced 22 states would receive \$35 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to support 39 projects to address outdated or obsolete dams, culverts, levees, and other barriers fragmenting the nation’s rivers and streams.

All these projects will improve fish migration by reopening almost 6,200 miles of streams and rivers and improve our nation’s infrastructure and natural resources by reconnecting fragmented rivers and enhancing local economies. In fact, since 1999, the National Fish Passage Program has worked with over 2,000 partners to restore connectivity to fragmented rivers by removing or bypassing over 3,500 barriers to fish passage and reopen access to over 64,000 miles of upstream habitat.



Through the Service’s engagement with communities across the country, we are working to improve habitat and help fish species thrive. From endangered Atlantic salmon in Maine, to the Bonneville cutthroat trout in Utah’s Bear River watershed, to Alaska’s iconic sockeye and king salmon, the Service and our partners are using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to restore habitat connectivity for these species. Here’s a look at some of these projects.

National Fish Passage Program

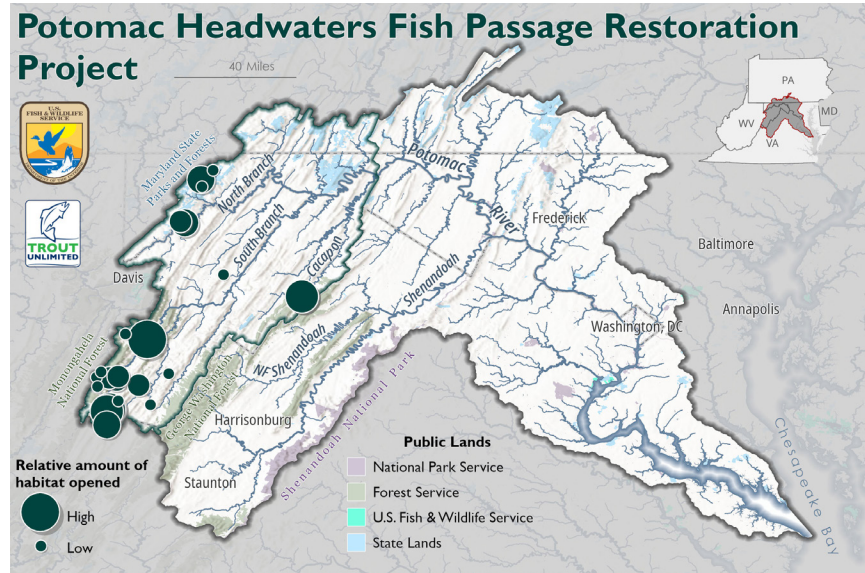
Brook trout *Ryan Haqerty/USFWS*



Northeast

One example of the positive impacts these projects are having can be found in the Potomac Headwaters Fish Passage Restoration project throughout Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. This \$1.15 million investment is scheduled to open 195 stream miles and reconnect 150 square miles of brook trout cold water refugia by 2024.

The watershed-scale project would not be possible without partners such as Trout Unlimited, U.S. Forest Service, West Virginia Division of Highways, and Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as the communities along the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay who have put their own time and energy into similar efforts for over 15 years and helped provide expertise to ensure dollars are going to the areas of highest need. In addition to supporting native species like the American eel and wood turtle, local communities will benefit from increased access to public lands, and the replacement of failing and undersized culverts along roadways will vastly improve public safety for drivers in rural areas.



Trout Unlimited



Trout Unlimited

Improvements to the culvert on a tributary to Blue Lick Run, Maryland.

National Fish Passage Program

Trispot darter

Alan Cressler/USGS



Southeast

Manulife Investment Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service teamed up to restore natural habitats for the federally threatened tri-spot darter, found in three locations on land owned by a timber company managed by Manulife Investment Management in St. Clair County, Alabama. One site crossed through the Manulife Investment Management timber area and bordered a private farmer's property.

The Service used money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to replace the old, dilapidated culvert with a bottomless arch structure. The new culvert helps restore the stream to its natural condition and promotes upstream migration for the tri-spot darter, especially during periods of low water flow.

The benefits for the tri-spot and other species are far-reaching as biologists discovered a federally listed mussel – the fine-lined pocketbook – during the project. The discovery exemplifies how collaborations can lead to surprising results.

“As our first joint project, I was a little apprehensive to work with the federal government, because things can take a while and be very cumbersome, but they made it very easy for us. There was a lot of behind the scenes work to streamline the process, but it went smoothly, and the project turned out great.”

— Robert Colville, Manulife Investment Management's area forester for Central and East Alabama

Before



Manulife Investment Management

After



Improvements to the culvert on private property in St. Clair County, Alabama.

National Fish Passage Program

Chinook salmon

Ryan Hagerty/USFWS



Pacific Northwest

In just a decade, the Salmon SuperHwy project is already more than halfway to its goal of opening 180 miles of cold, clean water for spawning anadromous fish such as coho, Chinook, steelhead and cutthroat trout, and lamprey in Oregon’s North Coast region. Once complete, the project will have restored 95% of historic habitat connectivity in this area.

The Service uses a variety of programs and funding sources, including Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, to support this work. In 2023, the Samson Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project broke ground and was completed. At the confluence where Samson Creek meets Trask River, there was a failing culvert blocking fish passage to areas upstream that had high quality fish habitat. Replacing the culvert with a new 46-foot bridge reconnected 1.3 miles of previously blocked spawning habitat for five fish species while minimizing the possibility of road failure due to storms.



Before



Salmon SuperHwy

PROJECT FUNDED BY
**Bipartisan
 Infrastructure Law**

INVESTING IN
 AMERICA

Tillamook County
 Public Works

National Fish Passage Program

Lahontan cutthroat trout *Greg Ritland*



Pacific Southwest

In Nevada, the Service is partnering with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and others to construct a permanent roughened rock ramp, opening 65 miles of stream habitat for two federally listed species: the Lahontan cutthroat trout and the Cui-ui. Utilizing nearly \$8.3 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, the project supports the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's vision of addressing a more than 100-year-old barrier to fish migration along the Truckee River at Numana Dam. Both fish are central to the Tribe's culture and have been negatively impacted by water infrastructure and land-use changes over the last century.

This project also supports Pyramid Lake's fishery, a recreational, world-class fishery that is recognized locally, nationally, and internationally, through recovery of this iconic population of Lahontan cutthroat trout.

“The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe is excited to implement another project to reverse centuries of obstacles to fish spawning in the lower Truckee River. This project will allow both the endangered Cui-ui and threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, each of which is culturally and spiritually important to the members of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, to once again access their historic spawning areas on and upstream of the Tribe's reservation.”

— Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Chairman James Phoenix



National Fish Passage Program

Dolly Varden char

Ryan Hagerty/USFWS



Alaska

Since its inception, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding has supported nine Alaska projects, totaling \$7.6 million and leveraging an additional \$20 million. When completed, these projects will remove 41 barriers, opening 215 miles of stream and river habitat and over 360 acres of lake and wetland habitats for several salmonid species.

On Southeast Alaska's Good River in Gustavus, Alaska, a new timber bridge replaced an outdated road culvert and now joins a whole cohort of channel-spanning bridges throughout the Good River watershed. This was the culminating project of a decade-long effort to outfit the Good River's tributaries with eight fish-friendly bridges to reconnect the Good River's watershed.

With the setting of this final bridge, Pacific salmon, Dolly Varden char, and coastal cutthroat trout will be free of migration barriers throughout the entire Good River and its tributaries, which is critical to many Gustavus residents.



Trent Liebich/USFWS



Shorezone

Top photo: One of a series of timber bridges throughout the Good River watershed in Gustavus, Alaska.

Bottom photo: Good River outlet into Icy Strait

“Salmon are central to the Gustavus economy and lifestyles, and a growing community needs safer and more serviceable roads. Replacing failing fish barrier culverts at hazardous stream crossings with safe, barrier-free bridges is a win for people and the environment. We are most grateful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and our other funding partners for their support of the Gustavus Fish Passage Improvement Project.”

— Mayor of Gustavus Mike Taylor

Visit our [National Fish Passage Program](#) website for a list of funded projects and their locations.

Interagency Fish Passage Task Force

Working Together to Restore Rivers, Streams, and Wetlands

In July 2022, the Service co-sponsored a Partner Workshop at the Service's National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, W.Va., focusing on the implementation of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for fish passage to increase coordination and maximize the impact of this historic investment. This workshop helped establish new partnerships and bolster existing ones by identifying common goals, sharing agency expertise, and leveraging new funding opportunities.

As a result of this meeting, the Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force was established. The task force is composed of 13 federal agencies working together to strategically implement fish passage funding while improving outcomes for ecosystems and communities. The task force promotes the benefits of fish passage projects, provides technical advice and capacity across federal agencies, and better coordinates funding, creating transformational impact across the landscape.

The task force is already yielding important results that provide a model for continued success. Since its inception, the task force created and launched the [Interagency Fish Passage Portal](#) to share funding information and resources in a centralized location. This increases accessibility and reduces the burden on landowners, dam owners, cities, states, and Tribes when looking for funding opportunities. The portal also contains a dashboard of over 220 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law-funded fish passage projects, resources for training and guidance, and additional information about the task force.

In late 2023, the task force co-hosted the Second Annual Partner Workshop in Charleston, S.C., with the National Fish Habitat Partnership and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies also in attendance. Much like the inaugural workshop, this gathering provided an invaluable forum to exchange insights, experiences, and innovative ideas on advancing aquatic connectivity nationwide.



Delaware River Basin Restoration Program

Focusing on Conservation to Restore Fish and Wildlife Habitats, Reduce Flooding and Runoff, Improve Water Quality, and Enhance Safe Recreational Access

For years, the Delaware River watershed has been home to voluntary, partner-led conservation efforts. Through grants from the Service, communities have pursued projects to restore fish and wildlife habitat, reduce flooding and runoff, improve water quality, and enhance safe recreational access for the public. Dedication to “from-the-ground-up” conservation has garnered recognition from Congress, which passed the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act in 2016 and reaffirmed support for those efforts with \$26 million in funding for the watershed through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Since 2022, the Service has allocated just over \$9 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding supporting 18 projects across the watershed. These investments will accelerate conservation and restoration efforts by expanding support for innovative green-infrastructure and nature-based solution projects that contribute to the health and economic vitality of communities in the watershed. These projects advance ecosystem resilience, expand fish and aquatic species passage, reduce flood risk, and improve community access to natural areas. Strong partnerships with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the states of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York have allowed the Service to advance conservation efforts across the watershed.

As an example, through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, the Service is investing in a 300-foot living shoreline habitat restoration project led by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary as a part of the locally led Christina Brandywine Remediation Restoration and Resilience Initiative (CBR4), with additional support from national partners and the state of Delaware. The goal of CBR4 is to address legacy pollution and restore the health of the Lower Christina River and tidal Brandywine River so they are once again swimmable, drinkable, and fishable. Improving community access is especially important for disadvantaged communities and for local businesses focusing on fish and wildlife related recreation.

The restored shrublands and wetlands adjacent to the shoreline will increase the area’s natural beauty and help protect communities in Wilmington from flooding, providing benefits to some of Wilmington’s most vulnerable communities.

To date, the Service has funded four projects that are part of the CBR4 Initiative. These strategic investments complement the 177 projects that have been funded through the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act.



Delaware River Basin Restoration Program

Conservation Trainings to Implement Dam Removal and Fish Passage Projects

Using \$106,000 in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments from the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program's grant program, The Nature Conservancy hosted more than 75 conservation practitioners in a series of workshops focused on habitat restoration, access for recreation, and hazard reduction. These workshops increased capacity and expertise among non-governmental organizations, consultants, and government agencies in response to a growing demand for these green-jobs skillsets.

The Nature Conservancy is also training local contractors in conservation techniques to implement dam removal and fish passage projects — an investment that will only grow in importance with increasing concerns among local communities over flooding and healthy fisheries.

About one third of workshop participants opted to join a year-long shared-learning cohort that will continue to meet through 2024.



The Nature Conservancy

“Through these strategic training opportunities, we can expand our capacity for transformative river restoration initiatives, such as dam removal. As we invest in capacity-building, we’re not just advancing dam removals and building individual skillsets, we’re restoring ecosystems, fostering collaboration, and forging a path to a more resilient and connected future.”

—Michelle DiBlasio, Freshwater Restoration Manager, The Nature Conservancy, New Jersey

Visit our [Delaware River Basin Restoration website](#) for a complete list of funded projects and their locations.

Lake Tahoe Restoration Program

Lake Tahoe is the second deepest body of water in the United States and one of the clearest and most spectacular bodies of water in the nation. Today, Lake Tahoe’s native Lahontan cutthroat trout and other native aquatic species are threatened by Eurasian watermilfoil and other aquatic invasive species. Native species like Lahontan cutthroat trout are critical for the health of the ecosystem and are an important part of the culture and history of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. Invasive weeds can also snare boat propellers, reduce fish populations for anglers, and create dense mats of plant matter at the water’s surface. These threats to recreational boating and fishing opportunities on the lake impact local economies.

Tackling any invasive species requires coordination and collaboration, and that is the focus of the Service’s \$17 million in Lake Tahoe Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding. The Service is working closely with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the Washoe Tribe, and the multi-partner Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinating Committee to identify priority projects and support locally led

conservation efforts. To date, the Service has allocated \$6.8 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for the basin, supporting six projects and their associated job opportunities.

The largest of those projects is addressing aquatic invasive species in the Taylor-Tallac ecosystem, the largest functioning wetland at Lake Tahoe. Taylor-Tallac has the potential to provide habitat for almost every native species in the basin, but the Taylor and Tallac creeks and marshes are infested with the Eurasian watermilfoil.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has used Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding from the Service to install 17 acres of benthic barriers designed to block sunlight and inhibit growth of these aggressive invasive plants. Addressing this invasive species in the Taylor-Tallac ecosystem represents the largest eradication project implemented in the basin so far and will serve as a model for other similar ecosystem restoration efforts in the area.

The Service has worked to incorporate bilingual signage to increase public awareness about aquatic invasive species and is supplementing existing seasonal watercraft inspection stations with new permanent stations to speed up processing of recreational watercraft and improve public access without spreading invasive species. The Service is also deeply invested in working with the Washoe Tribe to manage these lands and waters and has provided funding for the Tribe to plan for, monitor, and control aquatic invasive plants and fish while recovering native species, including Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Conviértase en un Tahoe Keeper

TAHOE KEEPERS

¿Qué hay en el fondo?

Take care.

foto: Lake Tahoe Water Trail

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

See our [Lake Tahoe Basin Restoration](#) story map for a complete list of funded projects and their locations.

Klamath Basin Restoration Program

For two decades, the Klamath Basin has relied on collaboration and partnerships to address its diverse water needs in the face of ongoing droughts and limited water supplies. Clean, healthy water and fertile land make the watershed a home to Tribal communities, productive agriculture, and abundant populations of migratory birds, suckers, salmon, and other important aquatic and terrestrial species.

**\$52
Million**

**40
Projects**

The Service has been working closely with the states of California and Oregon, the Klamath Tribes, the Yurok Tribe, the Karuk Tribe, the Hoopa Valley Tribe, Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, Resighini Rancheria, private landowners, farmers, and ranchers to improve conditions for fish, birds, and local communities with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding.

To date, the Service has allocated just over \$32 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to support 39 projects driven by partners and communities addressing local and regional needs. These wide-reaching conservation projects help to create fish habitat, monitor water quality, quantify ecosystem recovery, improve hydrologic models, and better track salmon and sucker populations. The Service is also using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to install pumping stations to improve water availability for national wildlife refuges and farms, support post-fire stream restoration activities in the Sprague River watershed after the Bootleg Fire, and restore natural springs. These projects build a more resilient basin that can support the communities that call it home.



Jason Ching/USGS

Lost River suckers

The Service is also investing in a significant expansion of the Klamath Falls National Fish Hatchery to prevent the extinction of two federally listed species: the Lost River and shortnose sucker (C'waam and Koptu), which are found only in the Klamath Basin. Since 2022, the Service has allocated \$20 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, with another \$10 million planned in 2024, that will result in a completed hatchery that will advance sucker recovery and reduce community conflict over water needs for the ecosystem and local agriculture. These investments at the fish hatchery are working in parallel with funding for the Klamath Tribes' own sucker rearing and salmon reintroduction programs. The hatchery investment enjoys support from both Tribal and agricultural communities, representing a key point of consensus.



Klamath Basin Restoration Program

In partnership with the Yurok Tribe, the Service provided funding to the Trinity River Restoration Program to redirect a 0.5 mile section of mainstem river and remove 500,000 cubic yards of mining tailings at the Oregon Gulch Restoration Project. These left-over mining materials smothered the entire valley floodplain. The removal project will allow for healthier juvenile salmon rearing habitat and adult spawning habitat. The project site is located just below the Sheridan Riffle, which has the highest density of natural spawning in the restoration reach of the mainstem Trinity River.



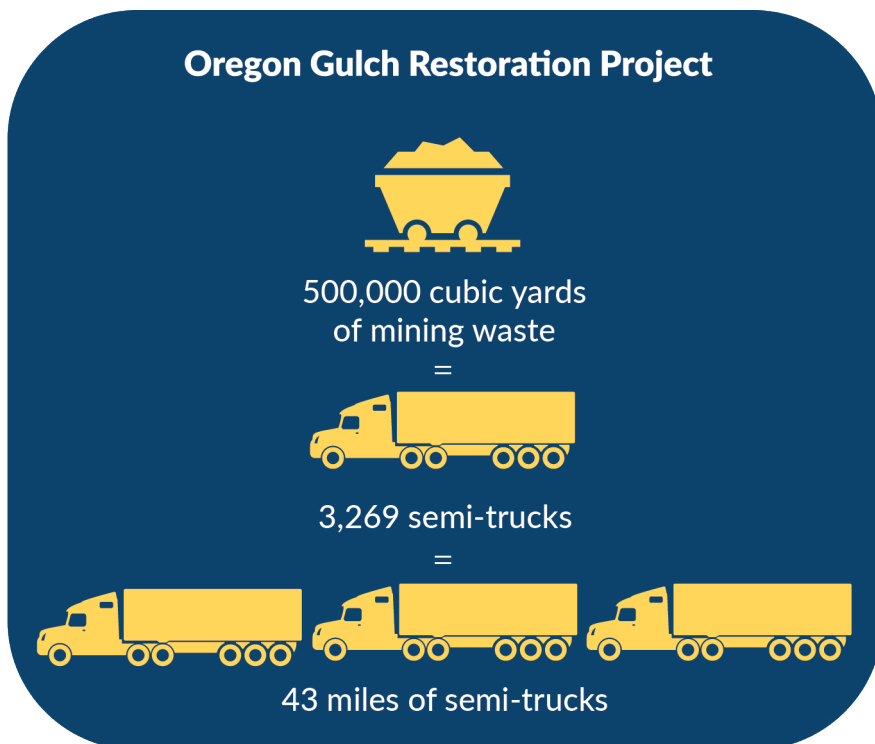
G. Gray/USFWS



USFWS

Partners from the Yurok Tribe, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Service discuss restoration work being completed on mainstem Trinity River.

Juvenile Chinook salmon surveyed from the mainstem of the Klamath River, Oregon.



See our [Klamath Basin Restoration website](#) for a complete list of funded projects and their locations.

Ecosystem Restoration Program

Through the Department of the Interior’s Ecosystem Restoration Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, the Service is working to support the Department’s Restoration and Resilience Framework. The framework supports and guides restoration programs across agencies and prioritizes addressing climate change impacts, restoring healthy lands and waters, and enhancing communities’ quality of life.

Since 2022, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has received more than \$34 million for 46 projects in five Ecosystem Restoration activity areas that will lead to better outdoor spaces and habitats for people and wildlife for generations to come. These projects will advance healthy forests, detect and eradicate invasive species, invest in National Seed Strategy collection and production, restore recreation sites and national parks, and mitigate hazards on mined lands.

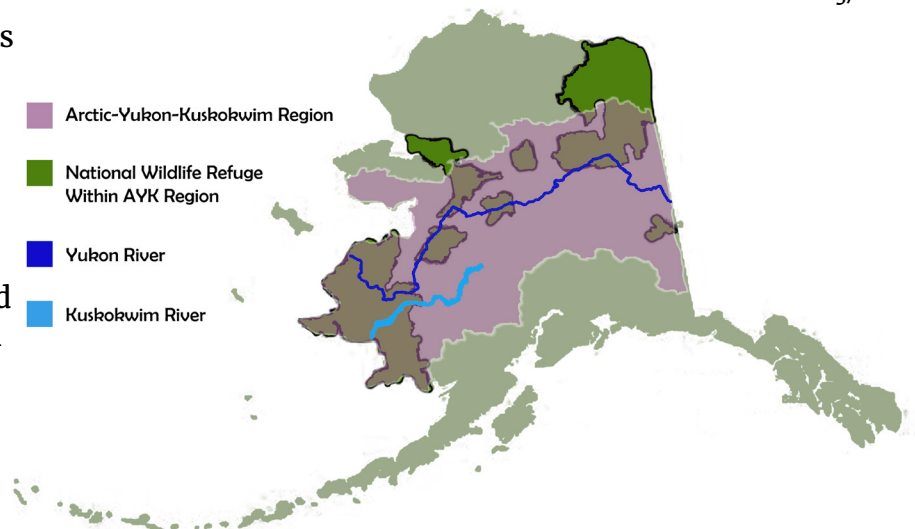
In fiscal year 2023, the Service received \$19 million in Department of the Interior Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for 37 of these projects, which support a wide range of community-developed conservation actions.

Supporting “From-the-Ground-Up” Conservation

Gravel-to-Gravel

In Alaska, the Service is supporting the interagency Gravel-to-Gravel initiative with Alaska Native communities to restore salmon habitats and populations over a massive geographic area covering 419,274 square miles. These projects will invest in co-stewardship with Tribes in the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Norton Sound region (sometimes referred to as the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim or AYK) to restore degraded streams and expand habitat restoration practices that replenish native vegetation. This work builds on previous efforts and relationships while catalyzing future Service work in Alaska.

Christian Thorsberg/USEWS



“The Gravel-to-Gravel Keystone Initiative for People, Salmon, and the Land has allocated funding to support co-stewardship, ecological restoration, and partnerships between DOI bureaus in Alaska and AYK Tribes. We are proud to have offered our input and recommendations in the development of this initiative, and we look forward to continuing our engagement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management to further shape Gravel-to-Gravel into an effort with enduring results beyond the initiative’s funding timeline.”

— Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium

Ecosystem Restoration Program

Hawai'i Forest Birds

In Hawai'i, the Service is working with other federal agencies, the state of Hawai'i, and the Native Hawaiian Community to curb the spread of mosquito-borne avian malaria in Hawai'i's native forest bird populations. As climate change accelerates, invasive mosquitoes are expanding their ranges into habitat previously safe for Hawai'i's native birds, including four that are at immediate risk of extinction. Investments under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are already being put to work to conduct needed research, listen to Native Hawaiian perspectives, and put in place [conservation measures](#) to benefit the bird species that are most at risk.

“Protection of Hawaiian forest birds is essential in preserving the natural and cultural heritage of our islands, though we cannot do so alone. Our scientists have been working with DOI and other conservation partners and engaging local communities to find ways to protect Hawai'i's rare birds. We are proud to collaborate on innovations in mosquito control and other efforts that can improve the outlook for these birds which are found nowhere else on Earth.”

— Ulalia Woodside Lee, The Nature Conservancy's Executive Director for the Hawai'i and Palmyra chapter

Four endemic Hawaiian forest birds, (left to right) 'akikiki, kiwikiu, 'akeke'e, 'akohekohe, are at risk of extinction due to avian malaria, a disease transferred by infected, invasive mosquitoes.



Ecosystem Restoration Program

National Seed Strategy

In 2022, 12 Seed Strategy projects were initiated by the Service's National Seed Strategy Implementation Team in coordination with the federal agencies of the Plant Conservation Alliance in the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Pacific Southwest regions and nationally with a \$2 million investment through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Ecosystem Restoration funding.

In fiscal year 2023, the Service received an additional \$5 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Ecosystem Restoration investments to fund projects in Alaska as well as the Midwest, Northeast, and Pacific Northwest regions, expanding seed collection in the Midwest and Southeast. These projects focus on seed collection, seed production, and ecoregional coordination, with an emphasis on Tribal partnerships, national capacity, seed processing, and expanding hubs.

In 2023, nine Seeds of Success (SOS) teams coordinated by the Service submitted 144 seed collections of 89 unique species from 18 states, 20 level III ecoregions, and 17 provisional seed transfer zones to the national SOS collection.

The 12 Seed Strategy projects initiated in 2022 created 23 jobs and supported 19 non-federal jobs in 2023. A total of 45 native plant species are under research due to these investments and 367 native plant species were targeted for seed collection.



See our [Ecosystem Restoration website](#) for a complete list of funded projects and their locations.

Orphan Wells Program

Restoration in the Owyhee Uplands Helps Both Wildlife and People

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing the largest investment in American history for tackling the removal of abandoned oil and gas equipment from National Wildlife Refuge System lands. Abandoned sites are environmental hazards that jeopardize public health and safety by contaminating groundwater and emitting greenhouse gases such as methane. Cleaning up these sites stops the ongoing damage to the ecosystem and makes refuge lands safe for fish, wildlife, and people, while reducing impacts to air and water quality for nearby communities.

To date, the Service has received almost \$22 million through the Department of the Interior to begin removing and remediating sites on nine different refuges across the country, creating good paying jobs that are putting a significant dent in the hundreds of abandoned wells on refuge lands.

Additionally, in Texas the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing almost \$4 million in funding for surface reclamation efforts on three national wildlife refuges for 30 sites where plugging operations are complete. These efforts will restore wetland areas and protect habitats for sensitive nesting species and whooping cranes.

In Louisiana, more than \$14.3 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds are being invested in seven national wildlife refuges (NWR) across the state, including Red River NWR, Tensas NWR, Atchafalaya NWR, Upper Ouachita NWR, Lacassine NWR, Black Bayou Lake NWR, and D'Arbonne NWR to plug 164 orphan wells through a Cooperative Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Through their existing Oilfield Site Restoration Program, the Louisiana DNR adds orphan wells on refuge lands into their statewide program and plugs those wells using the same contractors and resources involved in plugging state-managed orphan wells. This results in program efficiencies and reduced costs for both the Louisiana DNR and the Service. In 2023, mediation and reclamation of 11 sites at Lacassine NWR were completed, and mediation continues at Black Bayou Lake NWR and D'Arbonne NWR.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also funded the plugging and remediation of 69 orphan wells at Deep Fork NWR. Some of these wells were actively leaking hydrocarbons onto the soil surface. With assistance from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission and local contractors, the plugging of 24 wells was completed in December, 2023, and by the spring of 2024, these sites are expected to be restored to native vegetation.

In 2024, Deep Fork NWR will plug and remove the additional 45 funded orphan wells from refuge lands, allowing the refuge to better conserve the remnant bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands it was founded to protect.



Evan Monnett/USFWS

“These projects create jobs that strengthen local economies and the longstanding relationship between the Service and the state.”

— *Patrick Courreges, communication director for Louisiana DNR*

See our [Oil, Gas and Mineral Management website](#) for additional information.

By The Numbers

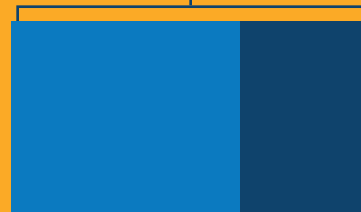
Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation

Total New Projects

59

Total 5 Year Commitment

\$50M



\$18.22M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

Fish Passage

Total New Projects

79

Total 5 Year Commitment

\$200M



\$72.93M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

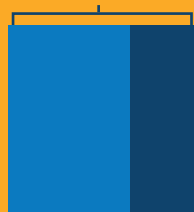
Delaware River Basin Restoration

Total New Projects

18

Total 5 Year Commitment

\$26M



\$9.27M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

Lake Tahoe Restoration

Total New Projects

6

Total 5 Year Commitment

\$17M



\$6.8M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

By The Numbers

Ecosystem Restoration Program

Total New Projects
46

\$34.19M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

Orphan Wells

Total New Projects
242

\$25.88M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

Klamath Basin Restoration

Total New Projects
40

Total 5 Year Commitment
\$162M

\$52.38M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

Combined Totals*

Total New Projects
490

Total 5 Year Commitment
\$455M

\$159.6M
Allocated in
FY 22-23

*Combined totals do not include Orphan Wells or Ecosystem Restoration. These programs are funded through the Department of the Interior and are not part of the five-year, \$455 million investment directly appropriated to the Service.

Project numbers and amounts may change (or may have changed) due to adjustments made during implementation.

Learn more about Bipartisan Infrastructure Act
funding and projects at
[www.fws.gov/initiative/directors-priorities/biparti-
san-infrastructure-law-funds-proven-projects-wild-
life](http://www.fws.gov/initiative/directors-priorities/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-funds-proven-projects-wild-life)



Andrea Finnegan/USFWS