HABITAT CONSERVATION

Tribal Priority Fish Passage Projects Selected for Funding

Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, NOAA is supporting tribally important fish passage projects and helping to increase tribal capacity for fish passage.

National

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NOAA has run two rounds of the *Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal* funding opportunity under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. In the first round of funding, NOAA awarded more than $16 million in funding for 13 projects. In the second round of funding, NOAA recommended more than $81 million in funding for 19 projects.

These projects will support Indian tribes in their role as managers and stewards of tribal trust resources for cultural, spiritual, economic, subsistence, and recreational purposes. They will support

tribally important fish passage barrier removal projects and increase tribal capacity to participate in developing current and future fish passage projects.

Alaska

Second Round

Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission will increase tribal capacity for fish passage by supporting a stream restoration biologist within the Ahtna Territory in southcentral Alaska, which includes a large majority of the Copper River watershed. AITRC is made up of representatives from the eight federally recognized tribes and two Alaska Native Corporations of the Ahtna Territory. The Copper River supports all five Pacific salmon species, which are key subsistence and cultural resources. ($497,000)

Chickaloon Native Village will provide training to tribal staff in fish passage restoration planning, design, and implementation and support the coordination of the Alaska Tribal Fish Passage Working Group. This group includes tribal entities and federal, state, and local agencies which will work towards the implementation of future tribal fish passage projects. This project will also remove three culverts blocking fish passage in the Matanuska watershed and design a stream restoration project on Moose Creek. ($6.2 million)

The Organized Village of Kasaan will replace multiple culverts at road stream crossings along the Kasaan to Goose Creek Road. This work is part of a larger effort to rehabilitate the former logging road and reopen habitat for salmon by replacing 4 bridges and 374 culverts. It will also help reduce flooding on the only road to the Organized Village of Kasaan. ($5 million)

The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska will replace three undersized culverts blocking fish passage between two sides of Unalaska Lake with a single large structure. This will expand access to shoreline and spawning habitat for sockeye and pink salmon, which are important cultural and subsistence resources for the tribe. The project will also support a Tribal Fisheries Coordinator to oversee the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska's Fisheries Program, including this project and a detailed inventory of culverts along roadways. ($342,000 in first year; up to $2.7 million total over three years)

Tyonek Tribal Conservation District, a tribally-governed non-profit with representation from the Native Village of Tyonek and the Tyonek Native Corporation, will restore spawning and rearing habitat for all five species of Pacific salmon by removing four fish passage barriers in West Cook Inlet. This work will benefit the endangered Cook Inlet Beluga Whale, a NOAA Species in the Spotlight, which preys on salmon. It will also help protect against climate change related flooding and subsequent road washouts. ($3.8 million)

First Round

Chickaloon Native Village will remove fish passage barriers within traditional ancestral lands and develop a Fish Passage Working Group for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. They will also increase the knowledge and capacity of tribal staff members to oversee fish passage restoration planning, design, and implementation. ($1.9 million)

Sealaska Corporation will assess and prioritize stream-crossing barriers on Prince of Wales Island and will create designs for 10 individual barrier projects. The island is one of the most productive

areas for salmon in Southeast Alaska, supporting coho, chum, pink, and sockeye, which have been important to inhabitants for millennia. ($426,000)

The Eyak Corporation will build capacity for planning and implementing fish passage and connection restoration projects in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Copper River Watershed Project. The work will support salmon species of profound importance to native and rural subsistence users, recreational anglers, and commercial fishermen. ($321,000 in first year; up to $2.9 million total over three years)

California

First Round

The Round Valley Indian Tribes will support building tribal capacity to engage in the decommissioning process and dam removal at the Potter Valley Project on the Eel River. The river is a historic tribal source of livelihood, sustenance, and connection to the landscape. The effort will improve tribal participation in the decommissioning process and ensure outcomes are aligned with tribal objectives. ($1.3 million)

Idaho

First Round

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation will restore fish passage and habitat connectivity in the Yankee Fork watershed, supporting three Endangered Species Act-listed species: Snake River spring/summer-run Chinook salmon, Snake River steelhead, and bull trout. It will help increase capacity to effectively manage tribal trust resources for cultural, spiritual, and subsistence purposes. ($1.1 million)

Maine

Second Round

The Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point will work to increase fish passage at the Woodland Dam on the Skutik River (St. Croix River). With the downstream Milltown Dam currently being removed, Woodland is one of only two remaining barriers to migratory fish in the lower river. This effort will improve access to habitat for alewife and other migratory species important to tribal cultural traditions and sustenance lifeways practices. ($12 million)

The Penobscot Indian Nation will address five barriers in the Penobscot and St. George River watersheds to increase access to stream and spawning habitats for migratory fish. This work will help support alewives, endangered Atlantic salmon, and other migratory species of cultural, subsistence, economic, and recreational importance to the tribe. The project will also support tribal capacity for public outreach and community engagement to identify and implement new projects. ($5.4 million)

First Round

The Penobscot Indian Nation will eliminate five culvert and dam barriers within the East Branch of the Penobscot River. This work will benefit Endangered Species Act-listed Atlantic salmon and other

migratory fish species. The project will also build tribal capacity to manage and steward migratory fish resources by funding fishery biologist positions. ($3 million)

The Passamaquoddy Tribe (Pleasant Point) will identify preferred approaches to enhance fish passage across the Grand Falls and Woodland Dams. The project will strengthen tribal engagement in restoration decision-making alongside state and federal agencies at the site of an active paper mill that is economically important to the community. ($997,000 in first year; up to $2 million total over three years)

Michigan

First Round

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians will replace 12 road stream crossings with fish passage infrastructure. They will also investigate fish passage alternatives for two hydropower dams: Tower Dam and Kleber Dam. Funding will support hiring of an additional position to help with conservation planning, implementation, and partner engagement. ($3.6 million)

Oregon

Second Round

The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians will restore more than 200 acres of habitat for migratory fish, including threatened Oregon Coast coho and Oregon Coast Chinook and steelhead. The removal of a dike, culvert, and tide gate will reconnect tidal and river flows to the site of the former Waite Ranch in the Siuslaw River estuary. The project will also construct a levee to protect neighboring properties and infrastructure. ($5.5 million)

The Coquille Indian Tribe will restore fish passage at four culvert and tide gate barriers in the Coquille River watershed. This will open significant habitat for threatened Oregon Coast coho, Coquille River fall Chinook, and Pacific lamprey—species that are culturally important to the Coquille Indian Tribe and the community of Coos Bay. The work will help reduce the impacts of climate change by providing functioning floodplains and upgrading a major road and tsunami evacuation route. ($4.2 million)

First Round

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation will remove or remediate barriers to fish migration in three watersheds: Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Grande Ronde. Projects within the Walla Walla and Umatilla watersheds are classified as imminent threat or priority passage barriers. Projects within the Grande Ronde watershed will remove barriers in critical spawning and rearing habitats. ($680,000 in first year; up to $3.3 million total over three years)

Washington

Second Round

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe will address the last remaining fish passage barrier on Ostrander Creek, a tributary of the lower Cowlitz River, by completely removing a culvert and associated abandoned railroad crossing. This work will benefit multiple species of steelhead and salmon that are important

subsistence and cultural resources for tribal members. It will also help reduce the risk of downstream flooding. ($1.9 million)

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe will address one of the last remaining fish passage barriers in the Ennis Creek watershed by replacing undersized culverts on a city road in Port Angeles, Washington, with a bridge. This work will benefit threatened Puget Sound steelhead, bull trout, and Chinook salmon. The new bridge will also help reduce maintenance costs and reduce the risk of road failure and flooding. ($1.4 million)

The Nisqually Indian Tribe will remove a culvert that is completely blocking fish passage on Brighton Creek, a tributary of the Nisqually River. They will replace it with a new channel-spanning culvert, opening up high quality habitat to access by threatened Puget Sound steelhead and Chinook salmon. The project design incorporates climate change projections to help prevent flooding, and a wildlife crossing to reduce the chance of animal strikes. The project will also support the tribe's Native Plant Restoration Crew's work at the project site after implementation. ($5.8 million)

The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe will work to address fish passage at the floating Hood Canal Bridge to reduce a major cause of mortality for juvenile steelhead. They will develop a plan for near-term solutions to immediately reduce the loss of steelhead at the bridge, and evaluate the possibility of replacing the bridge as a long-term solution. Addressing this significant barrier will help support sustainable tribal fisheries and protect tribal trust resources. ($2.2 million)

The Skagit River System Cooperative, which provides natural resource management services for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, will remove or replace seven culverts that block fish passage in the Skagit and Samish watersheds. They will also assess the feasibility of one additional fish passage project. This project will support tribal capacity to develop and engage in fish passage projects, and provide a hands-on opportunity for tribal members and youth to participate in habitat restoration. ($3.3 million)

The Squaxin Island Tribe will work to remove the 5th Avenue Dam, a barrier built across the mouth of the Deschutes River to create Capitol Lake. Removal of the dam and restoration of the estuary will create a significant amount of habitat of key importance to the recovery of threatened Puget Sound Chinook. The project will also support tribal capacity to expand their barrier removal efforts and engagement in salmon recovery planning in south Puget Sound. ($6.4 million)

The Tulalip Tribes will work with partners to remove multiple fish passage barriers at priority streams in the Stillaguamish and Snohomish Basins, part of the South Whidbey Basin in Puget Sound. This effort will open significant habitat to access by threatened Puget Sound Chinook and steelhead, as well as Puget Sound coho. It will also benefit Southern Resident killer whales, a NOAA Species in the Spotlight, by supporting their prey. Climate change considerations will be incorporated into the barrier replacements, to help prevent flooding and increase community resilience. ($9.2 million)

The Yakama Nation will build tribal capacity by establishing new staff positions to support fish passage efforts in the Yakima and Klickitat watersheds. They will also replace a barrier comprised of three culverts with a bridge, to address the last remaining fish passage barrier on Brush Creek in the Klickitat watershed. This work will support threatened Middle Columbia River steelhead as well as additional migratory species. ($3.1 million)

The Yakama Nation will work to relocate a portion of a state highway to improve fish passage, reduce roadway flooding, and reconnect habitat for salmon and steelhead. Currently, this section of Route 207 restricts migratory fish access to half of the floodplain. This project will reconnect 13 acres

of floodplain habitat in a highly important area for the spawning and rearing of endangered Upper Columbia spring-run Chinook and threatened Upper Columbia steelhead. ($3 million in first year; up to $6.1 million total over three years)

First Round

The Nooksack Tribe will work collaboratively with the Lummi Tribe, the City of Bellingham, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a plan for city-owned passage barriers that both addresses infrastructure needs and meets fisheries goals. The tribe will also develop a communications plan to ensure local and tribal communities are informed and provide input. ($456,000)

The Yakama Nation will remove barriers on the Snake Creek to address a “mortality hotspot” for Endangered Species Act-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead in the Yakima River watershed. Two dams will be removed, opening six miles of habitat. They will also develop an interactive tool and database for fish passage management on Yakama Nation territory. ($251,000 in first year; up to $1.2 million over three years)

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe will remove Kwoneesum Dam on Wildboy Creek, a tributary to the West Fork Washougal River in the Columbia River watershed. Removal of the 55-foot tall, 425-foot long rock fill embankment dam will restore access to 6.5 miles of highly productive habitat, benefitting native fish and other aquatic species. ($2.6 million)

The Skagit River System Cooperative will reopen access to habitat that has been blocked by undersized or improperly installed culverts. Work will focus on three sites of interest to the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Sauk-Suiattle Tribes: Martin Slough, Hatchery Creek, and Everett Creek. The project will also expand a collaborative process aimed at identifying and repairing barriers in the Skagit River watershed. ($320,000 in first
year; up to $1.2 million total over three years)

Wisconsin

Second Round

The Forest County Potawatomi Community will replace several culverts on the North Branch Oconto River and in the headwaters of Otter Creek in Wabeno, Wisconsin. The new culverts will reconnect habitat for migratory fish. They will also help improve community resilience to climate change by being designed to withstand increased extreme weather events and flooding. ($1.7 million)

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