

NOAA Co-stewardship Report for 2023-2024

*Implementing Joint Secretarial Order
3403 on Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility
to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of
Federal Lands and Waters*

January 8, 2025



Background

On November 21, 2022, in coordination with the Department of Interior (DOI) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), Joint Secretary Order 3403 (Order) “Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters” was amended to include the Department of Commerce (DOC). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was identified as the primary bureau responsible for implementing the Order for DOC.

This Order established that DOI, USDA and DOC will manage federal lands and waters in a way that protects the treaty, religious, subsistence, and cultural interests of federally recognized Indian Tribes, including the Native Hawaiian Community, and is consistent with the U.S. Government’s trust obligations.

NOAA recognizes that Tribal Nations and the Native Hawaiian Community have stewarded our lands, waters, atmosphere and ecosystems since time immemorial and is committed to further developing partnerships and co-stewardship opportunities within the scope of NOAA’s existing authorities.

Compared to U.S. land management agencies, NOAA’s mission primarily focuses on the ocean, atmosphere, and climate. This involves areas that encompass overlapping jurisdictions between federal, state, Tribal, and international governments. As a result, NOAA exercises its authorities and fulfills its trust responsibilities in close coordination with other managers in shared-use areas. Practicing co-stewardship in shared-use areas can be complex, so NOAA held Tribal consultations and a Native Hawaiian engagement after signing the Order to hear Indigenous perspectives on co-stewardship. The comments greatly helped advance the concept of co-stewardship at NOAA to better meet the needs of Tribal Nations and the Native Hawaiian Community, as well as the completion of NOAA’s legal review of existing authorities. These consultations and engagement were also extremely valuable in helping improve NOAA’s core competencies toward the complex and diverse histories related to sovereignty, treaty and trust responsibilities, consultation, and implementation of the Order.

Like DOI and USDA, NOAA views co-stewardship as an expansive concept to improve stewardship of significant resources and environments with Tribes and Native Hawaiian Community to support trust responsibility and inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge into federal decision-making. The following Annual report includes two years of information (2023-2024) related to NOAA’s implementation of the Order that is organized into three sections.

Section I references NOAA's focused engagements on the Order and completion of NOAA's legal review of authorities that can support co-stewardship. The NOAA legal review is the first time NOAA has catalogued these authorities in one place.

Section II provides examples of activities supporting the Order in 2023 and 2024, which includes agreements and funding to help safeguard interests and empower Tribal and Native Hawaiian stewardship.

Section III provides examples of continued education efforts, decisions, and capacity building activities that support the Order and relationship building for future partnership.

2023 - 2024 Accomplishments and Progress

Pursuant to the Order, NOAA made progress in 2023 and 2024 strengthening foundations to better support co-stewardship at NOAA by establishing consistency around terminology, supporting workforce core competencies related to sovereignty, treaty and trust responsibilities, and elevating Tribal stewardship priorities within NOAA funding opportunities.

NOAA's broad mission - from weather and climate services to managing fisheries, marine protected areas, and coastal planning - makes it essential for us to have frequent engagement with Tribal Nations, the Native Hawaiian Community, and other Indigenous communities. Co-stewardship of federal lands and waters with Tribal Nations and the Native Hawaiian Community is not a new concept or practice at NOAA. Over the years, NOAA has implemented agreements, projects, and partnerships with Indigenous communities. The Order allows NOAA to reflect on what we did in the past and inform and strengthen our relationships and competencies for the future. This report should also serve as a reference to Tribal and Native Hawaiian Communities on the types of co-stewardship efforts and agreements that have occurred at NOAA.

Below are examples of NOAA's actions in 2023 and 2024 to advance co-stewardship and uphold the United States' unique treaty and trust obligation to Tribes and the Native Hawaiian Community.

I. Strengthening the Foundation to Support Co-stewardship

- *Consultations and Engagement*
 - **NOAA Co-stewardship consultations and engagement.** NOAA conducted consultation and engagement sessions on October 3rd, 5th, 13th, and 17th, 2023. An additional session was added on November 3rd, 2023, for a small subset of Alaska Tribes who were unable to participate in

October due to conflicting regional meetings. Written comments were accepted on these topics through November 9, 2023. The purpose of these sessions was to develop a better understanding of Tribal Nation and Native Hawaiian Community perspectives on stewardship and co-stewardship and identify pathways to advance the goals of the Order at NOAA and DOC. We hope these consultations and engagements will help set the stage for future dialogue with individual Tribal Nations and Native Hawaiian Community representatives on opportunities for co-stewardship agreements.

- *Co-stewardship Authorities*
 - **Completion of NOAA Legal Review of authorities.** JSO 3403 Section 1(d) directed the DOC, DOI, and USDA to complete a legal review of their “current land, water, and wildlife treaty responsibilities and authorities that can support co-stewardship and Tribal stewardship” within one year of the date of the JSO. NOAA completed our legal review a year after completing our consultations and engagement.

The NOAA consultation summary and legal authorities report can be found here:
https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/508-JSO3403_Consultation%20Summary_LR_FINAL%2012.2024.pdf

II. **Activities Supporting Co-stewardship**

- *Examples of Co-Stewardship Agreements*
 - **Conservation of Cape Foulweather Headland, an Icon of the Central Oregon Coast** - In 2023, NOAA provided \$2 million for the conservation of Cape Foulweather Headland. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians will purchase the ecologically and culturally significant “Cape Foulweather” property, located on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. This project will conserve the undeveloped coastal property that hosts habitats rich in marine mammals, a rare salt spray meadow complex, and upland forest connections that are important to threatened species.
<https://oregonlandtrusts.org/celcp-foulweather/>
 - **Winnemem Wintu Tribe Co-Stewardship Agreement with NOAA and State of California** - In 2023, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe signed agreements to restore Chinook salmon to the mountains north of Redding, California. The goal of this agreement is ecological and cultural restoration, which will one day renew fishing opportunities for the Tribe that depended on the once-plentiful salmon for food and much more.
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/tribe-state-and-federal-partn>

[ers-join-return-endangered-salmon-historic-habitat](#)

- **Conservation of Ancestral Lands – Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe's Return to the River** - In 2023, the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe, through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, acquired and conserved 866 acres of historic Tribal lands along the Tribe's namesake river, the Mattaponi, within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This was the Tribe's first opportunity to acquire ancestral lands for conservation, which will allow them to pursue future activities to enhance culturally significant fish, wildlife, and plants through habitat restoration. The conservation benefits will extend to Tribal citizens and others who enjoy the region's coast. NOAA provided \$3 million to fund this project from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
<https://www.noaa.gov/stories/return-to-river-upper-mattaponi-tribe-reclaim-their-ancestral-lands>
- **Chumash Heritage National Marines Sanctuary** - In 2024, NOAA designated the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary is the 3rd-largest national marine sanctuary in the system, and will conserve the area's diverse range of marine life and celebrate Indigenous peoples' connections to the region. This sanctuary designation is the result of a decade of work by Tribes, Indigenous Peoples, community leaders, organizations, businesses, state and local officials, and members of Congress to develop and advance the vision for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/chumash-heritage/>
- **Federal Agencies and Northern Bering Sea Tribes Commit to Joint Development of a Plan to Promote Salmon and Community Resilience** - In 2024, the Federal Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area and the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council signed an historic Joint Vision Statement to develop a Salmon Resilience Plan. The Statement outlines a vision to develop a plan to restore, conserve, and protect salmon populations and promote resilience of Tribal communities dependent on them through a collaborative and whole-of-government approach. The Joint Vision Statement builds on more than two years of collaboration between Tribal representatives and the agencies pursuant to Executive Order 13754, which created the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. The Statement recognizes the crisis affecting many Alaskan Native communities due to the historically low returns of salmon in the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers and sets forth goals, principles, and elements to be included in a Salmon Resilience Plan to be co-produced in the

coming year. The Statement further recognizes the need to coordinate with other relevant governmental and non-governmental entities in developing and implementing the Plan.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Joint-Vision-Statement.pdf>

- **Efforts to Restore Healthy and Abundant Salmon Populations to Upper Columbia River Basin** - In September 2023, the Biden-Harris administration announced an historic agreement to support Tribally led efforts to restore healthy and abundant salmon populations in the Upper Columbia River Basin. The agreement between the United States, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and the Spokane Tribe of Indians will fund efforts to test the feasibility of, and ultimately to reintroduce salmon in blocked habitats in the Upper Basin. The agreement between the Tribes and the DOI's Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DOC's National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Energy's Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) includes \$200 million over 20 years from the BPA to advance the Phase 2 Implementation Plan. The other agencies, including NOAA, also agreed to use their authorities to seek additional funding for this effort and to take other actions necessary to advance implementation.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/27/fact-sheet-president-biden-takes-action-to-restore-healthy-and-abundant-wild-salmon-and-steelhead-in-the-columbia-river-basin/>

- **Ten-Year Partnership with Tribes and States to Restore Wild Salmon, Expand Clean Energy Production, Increase Resilience, and Provide Energy Stability in the Columbia River Basin** - In December 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration announced an historic agreement to work in partnership with Pacific Northwest Tribes (Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Yakama) and States (Oregon and Washington) to restore wild salmon populations, expand Tribally sponsored clean energy production, and provide stability for communities that depend on the Columbia River system. Implementation of the agreement will diversify and develop affordable, clean, and reliable energy options for the region. Investments under this agreement will help ensure continued energy reliability and affordability, transportation, recreation, irrigation, and other key services.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/12/14/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-10-year-partnership-with-tribes-and-states-to-restore-wild-salmon-expand-clean-energy-prod>

- *Funding Initiatives supporting Tribal and Native Hawaiian Homelands*
 - **Swinomish Indian Tribal Community Clam Garden** - In 2023, NOAA supported and worked with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and key partners, including Washington Sea Grant, to help build the first modern clam garden in the United States. The first modern clam garden is reviving a 3500-year-old Indigenous practice and providing subsistence and environmental resilience for the Tribal community.
https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/video/swinomish-indian-tribal-community-clam-garden?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery
 - **Restoring and Strengthening Resilience of Maui Nui Reefs** - In 2023, NOAA invested \$3.1 million to restore habitats and strengthen coastal resilience at two sites in West Maui and South Moloka'i in Hawai'i. This project will restore the lower Wahikuli streambank, restore estuarine habitat within two 30-acre fishponds in south shore Moloka'i, engage the community in designing a water quality outreach and education program, and document lessons learned to inform and scale future restoration efforts statewide.
<https://coast.noaa.gov/states/stories/maui-nui-reefs.html>
 - **Tribal Ocean and Coastal Resources** - In 2023, NOAA awarded \$1.1 million to the Makah Indian Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and Quileute Tribe — to support Tribal actions related to regional ocean and coastal priorities. Through this first-of-its-kind deployment, these awards will support projects to advance regional ocean partnerships and data sharing among ocean users, and include the engagement of federally recognized Tribes with existing regional ocean partnerships.
<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-awards-205-million-for-ocean-and-coastal-resource-management>
 - **Holistic Community-led Habitat Restoration in a Hawaiian Context** - In 2023, NOAA awarded \$7.8 million to Mālama Maunalua. The traditional Native Hawaiian-based ridge-to-reef (ahupua'a) strategy will be used to address habitat degradation in the Niu, Kuli'ou'ou, and Wailupe watersheds of the Maunalua Bay region of O'ahu and represents the first time this approach has been used in a heavily urbanized area. The project will focus on including Native Hawaiian Communities and organizations in the restoration work, to build capacity and inspiration for future restoration efforts.
<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-bil-investments-2023-hawaii>

- **Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Refuge Kapoho Loko i'a and Lo'i Kalo Restoration Hawaiian Islands Land Trust** - In 2023, NOAA awarded \$804,000 to support the restoration project. The Hawaiian Islands Land Trust and Native Hawaiians from the Waihee and Waiehu communities will work together to restore the flow of water to the taro fields and fish ponds at the Waihee Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Refuge on Maui. They plan to build a ridge-to-reef model for collaborative land and ocean stewardship by engaging the community through outreach meetings, workshops, volunteer workdays, and educational activities.
<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-bil-investments-2023-hawaii>
- **Coral Community Dive Program: Restoration, Resilience, and Monitoring in West O'ahu** - Kuleana Coral Reefs will launch a program to engage community members on West O'ahu in coral reef conservation and reduce barriers to environmental work for Native Hawaiians. The Community Dive Program will provide professional certifications and training in coral restoration to local residents, and conduct on-the-ground coral restoration at community selected sites to help build coastal resilience. In 2023, NOAA awarded \$465,000 to Kuleana Coral Reefs in support of the project.
<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-bil-investments-2023-hawaii>
- **Pacific Salmon Tribal Hatchery Investments** - In 2023 and 2024, DOC and NOAA made a \$300 million investment from Inflation Reduction Act funding to support Tribal fish hatcheries that produce Pacific salmon and steelhead, underscoring the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to empowering Tribal Nations and fulfilling the federal government's trust and treaty responsibilities. \$60 million in funding was provided to deferred maintenance and repairs at Mitchell Act-funded hatchery facilities across the Columbia River Basin. NOAA also partnered with DOI's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to make \$240 million of funding available for deferred hatchery maintenance and modernization to 27 Tribes using 638 contracts in alignment with Executive Order 14112.
<https://www.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2024/07/commerce-and-interior-departments-announce-240-million-president-bidens>

- **Tribal Priority Fish Passage Projects** - 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. NOAA is supporting Tribally important fish passage projects and helping to increase Tribal capacity for fish passage.
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/tribal-priority-fish-passage-projects-selected-funding>

In the first round of funding (2023), NOAA awarded more than \$16 million in funding for 13 projects:

- 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)
- 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 an 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)
- 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)

- 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)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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 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)

In the second round of funding (2024), NOAA recommended more than \$81 million in funding for 19 projects:

- Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) 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)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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 composed 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)

- 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)

Round 3 Fish Passage Awards will be announced in 2025.

- **Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes** - In 2024, NOAA Fisheries recommended more than \$45 million in funding to support 27 new Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes and Underserved Communities. Of the \$45 million in funding, more than \$20 million is recommended for federally recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations, and \$25 million is recommended for projects that will benefit underserved communities. The following projects were recommended for funding.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/coastal-habitat-restoration-and-resilience-grants-tribes-and>

- The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska will build capacity to implement coastal restoration work and strategies for climate resilience. They will hire regional coordinators for Tribal fisheries, traditional foods security, youth stewardship, and communications. They will also support capacity for the Seacoast Indigenous Guardians Network, which helps Tribal communities steward and restore their traditional lands and water. (\$3,000,000)
- The Chugach Regional Resources Commission, an intertribal consortium of Alaska Native villages in the Chugach region, will partner with the Kodiak Area Native Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute to help create and strengthen a network of Tribal collaborators to steward coastal resources and build coastal resilience. They will hire new positions that will serve as catalysts to coordinate the

regional network, engage with Tribal communities, and implement restoration projects. (\$2,900,000)

- The Tyonek Tribal Conservation District will support the Native Village of Tyonek in conducting actionable science to guide planning for restoration in the Chuitna River. They will collect and analyze information to learn more about the causes of the decline of Chinook salmon—a key Tribal subsistence resource—in the river. They will also work to protect existing salmon habitat, identify key spawning locations, and conduct yearly surveys of salmon nests. (\$1,100,000)
- The Mid Klamath Watershed Council will restore habitat on Red Cap Creek and Old Campbell Creek, two tributaries of the Klamath River. They will work to improve spawning and rearing habitat for threatened coho salmon and other species. Restoration will occur on the ancestral territory of the Karuk Tribe and the Tsnungwe Tribe, and the project will work closely with the Tribes to support Tribal capacity for community-driven habitat restoration. (\$589,000)
- The Salmonid Restoration Federation will work with North Coast Tribes to identify and plan restoration projects that benefit salmon and to develop climate resilience plans. In collaboration with several partners, including the California Indian Environmental Alliance, they will conduct technical training, coordinate a restoration symposium, and create a fund to compensate Tribal members for their time participating in project development and consultations. (\$550,000)
- The Yurok Tribe will restore habitat in the lower Blue Creek, a tributary of the Klamath River that provides critical habitat for salmon and other culturally important species. The project will also increase the Tribe's capacity to plan and implement restoration projects and to steward a coastal watershed, Tribally managed forest, and salmon sanctuary. (\$1,400,000)
- The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission will work to support salmon recovery in the Columbia River estuary. CRITFC is a Tribally-led organization created and governed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Nez Perce Tribe. They will work to model the impacts of habitat conservation and restoration, identify climate change threats, and

produce actionable science to guide future restoration work that conserves salmon habitat and reduces flooding. (\$794,000)

- The Lummi Indian Business Council will build capacity and conduct actionable science to support habitat restoration in the Lummi Reservation tidelands. The 10,000-acre tidelands provide habitat for oysters, clams, crabs, and salmon, which are culturally and economically significant to the Lummi Nation. This project will provide employment and training opportunities that will focus on protecting and restoring tidal habitat and helping build resilience to impacts from climate change. (\$491,000)
- The Makah Tribe of the Makah Reservation will conduct habitat restoration and monitoring to support the recovery of Lake Ozette sockeye salmon, a culturally important species to the Makah and Quileute Tribes. They will remove shoreside vegetation that has encroached on historical salmon spawning areas, conduct monitoring to measure the impacts of the restoration work, and map potential spawning sites to target for future restoration. (\$1,000,000)
- The Quinault Indian Nation will restore salmon habitat on the Upper Quinault River that has been degraded by forest clearing and development. This area is a cold-water refuge that historically sustained large populations of sockeye salmon, an important staple for the Quinault people. The project will also build capacity for restoration planning, design, and construction through new staff positions. (\$3,000,000)
- The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will repair two culverts blocking fish passage on Carpenter Creek, which flows into the Skagit River. They will also take initial design and permitting steps to address three additional fish passage barriers on the creek. This project will engage the large agricultural community surrounding the creek, including Tribal members. Through a partnership with Vamos Outdoors, the project will develop an outdoor education program focused on Latine youth. (\$825,000)
- The Skagit River System Cooperative, which provides natural resource management services for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, will work to support salmon and other fish species in the Skagit River. The project will restore streamside habitat, upgrade a native plant nursery, and build the capacity of the Tribes to identify and plan future restoration work. (\$656,000)

- The Chitimacha Tribe, through the Tribally owned business Wayti Services, LLC, will construct a living shoreline to restore and protect areas of Caad Kuujaamnix (Bayou Sale) that are home to culturally sensitive sites. This project will build the Tribe's capacity to plan and implement future restoration projects by engaging Chitimacha students pursuing environmental degrees in project planning, permitting, monitoring, and implementation. (\$3,000,000)
- The Association to Preserve Cape Cod will work closely with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe to restore habitat for river herring on Cape Cod. They will assess potential restoration actions along the Mashpee River, including an abandoned cranberry bog and damaged lake outlets that may be impairing fish migration. Tribal staff, members, resources, and information will be fully integrated into all stages of the restoration effort, to help build Tribal capacity for developing and managing restoration projects. (\$2,600,000)
- The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians will work to identify and assess future climate-related threats to Tribal properties and develop a Tribal strategic plan for climate resilience. They will conduct a greenhouse gas emission study to help measure Tribal progress toward carbon neutrality, and create a Tribal Youth Advisory Council to foster intergenerational connectivity and support Tribal climate literacy. (\$2,000,000)
- **New and Continuing Salmon Recovery Projects and Programs** - In 2024, NOAA Fisheries announced more than \$105 million in recommended funding for 14 new and continuing salmon recovery projects and programs. Located along the West Coast and in Alaska, these state and Tribal efforts will be funded through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF). The funds include Fiscal Year 2024 annual appropriations as well as \$34.4 million under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and \$7.5 million under the Inflation Reduction Act, and will aid programs and projects in Alaska, California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington that include habitat restoration, stock enhancement, sustainable fisheries and research and monitoring. The following projects were recommended for funding.
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/media-release/biden-harris-administration-announces-more-105-million-west-coast-and-alaska-salmon>
 - The Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Consortia will support population research and monitoring to better understand complex relationships between salmon and freshwater, nearshore and marine

environments while improving the management and recovery of declining salmon populations. (\$500,000)

- The Klamath River Inter-Tribal Fish and Water Commission, as a support organization to four federally recognized Tribes in the Klamath Basin, will administer awards to its member Tribes to conduct habitat restoration activities, monitoring and research. (\$2,428,000)
- The Coeur d'Alene Tribe will conduct the final phase of a four-year study to collect baseline data that is necessary to inform the full-scale feasibility of salmon reintroductions upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams by studying the downstream movement and survival of juvenile Chinook salmon. (\$700,000)
- The Shoshone Bannock Tribes will participate in fishery forecasting and in-season management of Tribal fisheries on Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon, under their Cultural and Subsistence Fishery Monitoring and Management Program. (\$41,000)
- The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, as a support organization to the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes, will administer awards to its member Tribes based on high-priority needs for salmon to include all aspects of salmon recovery including planning and design, implementation, monitoring and research. (\$6,862,000)
- The Coquille Indian Tribe will restore the riparian buffer along the main stream of the South Fork Coquille River to improve water quality for threatened Oregon Coast coho salmon. This project will demonstrate new and innovative nature-based restoration solutions to other agricultural landowners within the Coquille River basin. (\$3,608,000,)
- The Northwest Fisheries Indian Commission, as a support organization to 20 Puget Sound and Washington coastal treaty Tribes, will administer awards to restore and protect habitats, conduct monitoring and enable projects that will help fulfill Tribal treaty fishing rights for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. (\$7,693,000)
- The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation will implement the third year of studying salmon reintroduction upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams in the Upper Columbia Basin. The project aims to support the restoration of native subsistence fishing in an area deprived of salmon for more than 80 years. (\$747,000)

III. Education, Rule-making, and Additional Capacity Building

Building Capacity to Inventory Eelgrass Habitat on Lummi Nation Tidelands

Threatened by Invasion of the European Green Crab - In 2023, NOAA awarded funds to the the Lummi Nation, who will conduct an assessment to help determine the potential risk that invasive European green crabs pose to eelgrass beds on Lummi Reservation tidelands. They will build staff capacity, acquire the necessary equipment and training, and engage Indigenous high school and college students to conduct an inventory and establish baselines of the current status of eelgrass habitat and European green crabs.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/coastal-habitat-restoration-and-resilience-grants-tribes-and>

Building Drought Resilience in a Changing Climate with Upper Columbia and Missouri Basin Tribes

- In 2023, NOAA and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes co-hosted the *Workshop for Building Drought Resilience in a Changing Climate with Upper Columbia and Missouri Basin Tribes* to convene Tribal resource managers and climate partners to provide a forum for sharing information and experiences with managing drought in a changing climate, to determine best ways to communicate and collaborate on projects and funding opportunities, and to discuss high-priority data and information needs and gaps so that NOAA can continue to build Tribal drought resilience in these regions.

<https://www.drought.gov/events/workshop-building-drought-resilience-changing-climate-upper-columbia-and-missouri-basin>

Expanding and Connecting Tribal-Led Climate Change Capacity To Serve

Indigenous Community Needs In Alaska - NOAA awarded \$2.7 million in funding through the Inflation Reduction Act to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). Through a collaboration with NOAA's National Ocean Service and National Sea Grant Office, the funding will support efforts over the next four years to expand and enhance ANTHC's Tribal climate program development and capacity in service to Alaska Native communities.

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/fy2024-anthc/>

Climate Ready Workforce - In 2024, the Department of Commerce and NOAA announced \$60 million in funding to help train and place people in jobs that advance a climate-ready workforce for coastal and Great Lakes states, Tribes and Territories as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda under the Inflation Reduction Act. The funding (\$9.25 million) will support a partnership between Washington community colleges and Tribal Nations aimed to cultivate a new generation of Tribal leaders and

co-stewards adept in integrative natural resources management and climate resilience. In addition, \$2.3 million will support a project that aims to address the demand for climate-resilient monitoring programs and local workforce development in Alaska by leveraging existing capacity within the Tribal Government of St. Paul Island's Indigenous Sentinels Network, the Bering Sea Research Center, and a partnership with Iḷisaḡvik College, Alaska's Tribal college.

<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/biden-harris-administration-invests-60-million-to-build-climate-ready-workforce>

Tribal Climate Initiatives Gathering - The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) hosted the first Tribal Climate Initiatives Gathering in Anchorage, AK in 2024. The theme of the gathering “Thriving in the Context of Climate Change” focused on the unmet needs of environmentally threatened communities facing threats to infrastructure from erosion, flooding and melting permafrost and climate adaptation measures associated with managed retreat and relocation. This event was Tribally led and supported by an interagency planning team composed of the Denali Commission, FEMA, NOAA and the State of Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs. NOAA provided sponsorship support with (both funding and extensive staff support). The gathering drew over 100 participants with Tribal leadership from 10 regions across Alaska and federal and state representatives including leadership from the White House Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Science and Technology Policy, and staff from the Offices of Senator Murkowski and Representative Peltola.
<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/fy2024-anthc/>

2nd Cross Pacific Indigenous Exchange - The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) facilitated the 2nd Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange. The Exchange was held in 2024 in Monterey and Seaside, CA, and was supported by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The Exchange welcomed 68 peoples, including 38 Indigenous Leaders, to build relationships with each other and with the ONMS. Throughout the three days, discussions were held on topics related to equity, management tools, how Tribal and Indigenous governments and communities want to be engaged, and much more. Success of the Exchange was in large part due to the equitable approaches and Indigenous methodologies used in the planning and implementation of the Exchange. For example, an Indigenous Advisory Planning Group was established and funded to aid in the planning and agenda development. Building upon the first Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange hosted by the Makah Tribe in Neah Bay, Washington (September 2022), and in response to the requests of Indigenous participants, ONMS leadership is adding to the eight Neah Bay Commitments for a total of 15 commitments. The 15 commitments, called the Imila-alpa Commitments, will be reflected through long-term

and ongoing work and actions. The commitments demonstrate ONMS' dedication to strengthening partnerships with Indigenous governments, organizations, and communities and ensuring that ONMS' intentions align with its actions.

<https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/docs/2024-imila-alpa-commitments.pdf>

Makah Tribe and Grey Whale Take - In June 2024, NOAA announced the final rule and decision to grant the Makah Tribe a waiver from the take prohibitions in the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). This waiver provides for a limited subsistence and ceremonial hunt of Eastern North Pacific gray whales in accordance with the Treaty of Neah Bay of 1855 and quotas established by the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-fisheries-authorizes-makah-tribe-to-resume-gray-whale-hunt>

Conclusion

Despite joining the Order a year after DOI and USDA, NOAA has made steady and deliberate progress in evaluating the authorities, tools, and training needed to implement co-stewardship within the context of the ocean, atmosphere, and climate. Co-stewardship agreements within shared-use areas can be complex, but can and have been done at NOAA. Prior to the Order, NOAA had already developed partnerships and cooperative agreements with Tribal Nations and the Native Hawaiian Community, but not always defined them as co-stewardship.

The Tribal and Native Hawaiian Community input received during the 2023 consultations and engagement greatly helped NOAA in advancing co-stewardship in 2023 and 2024. The feedback helped improve the implementation of other programs beyond those specifically implicated by the Order, as well as our overall engagement strategy with Tribal Nations and the Native Hawaiian Community. The information gathered from these consultations and engagement will be shared with the NOAA workforce and used to develop further training and core competencies related to co-stewardship.

The Order has created an unprecedented emphasis on co-stewardship at NOAA, but continued training for staff is needed to better coordinate co-stewardship requests and opportunities. NOAA intends to hold training workshops across the NOAA workforce to discuss the JSO 3403 definitions and legal authorities. These training sessions also provide an opportunity to share the feedback we received during consultation and

engagement. The training workshops will focus on the exchange of managerial, technical, and professional knowledge, and sharing best practices to fulfill the requirements of the Order. These efforts will allow NOAA to establish a robust framework for how NOAA engages and implements co-stewardship. When appropriate, NOAA Line, Staff, and Regional Offices will be responsible for implementing procedures and best practices consistent with the Order, and evaluating progress toward meeting the objectives and goals of the Order and NOAA's trust responsibility.

NOAA is dedicated to upholding the federal government's treaty and trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations and trust responsibilities to the Native Hawaiian Community and better steward public waters, lands, atmosphere, and climate through a new era of co-stewardship.

Further information on any collaborative agreements or JSO 3403 initiatives will be posted on NOAA's Tribal Resources website when available.