



haich ikt'at'uu Tidal Wetland Restoration Project, Fall 2024 (credit: Brent Ross, MRT)

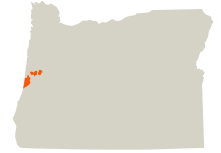
Siuslaw Coho Partnership

Oregon Coast Coho Recovery in the Siuslaw River & Coastal Lakes Basins

COHO HABITAT AND POPULATIONS ALONG THE COAST

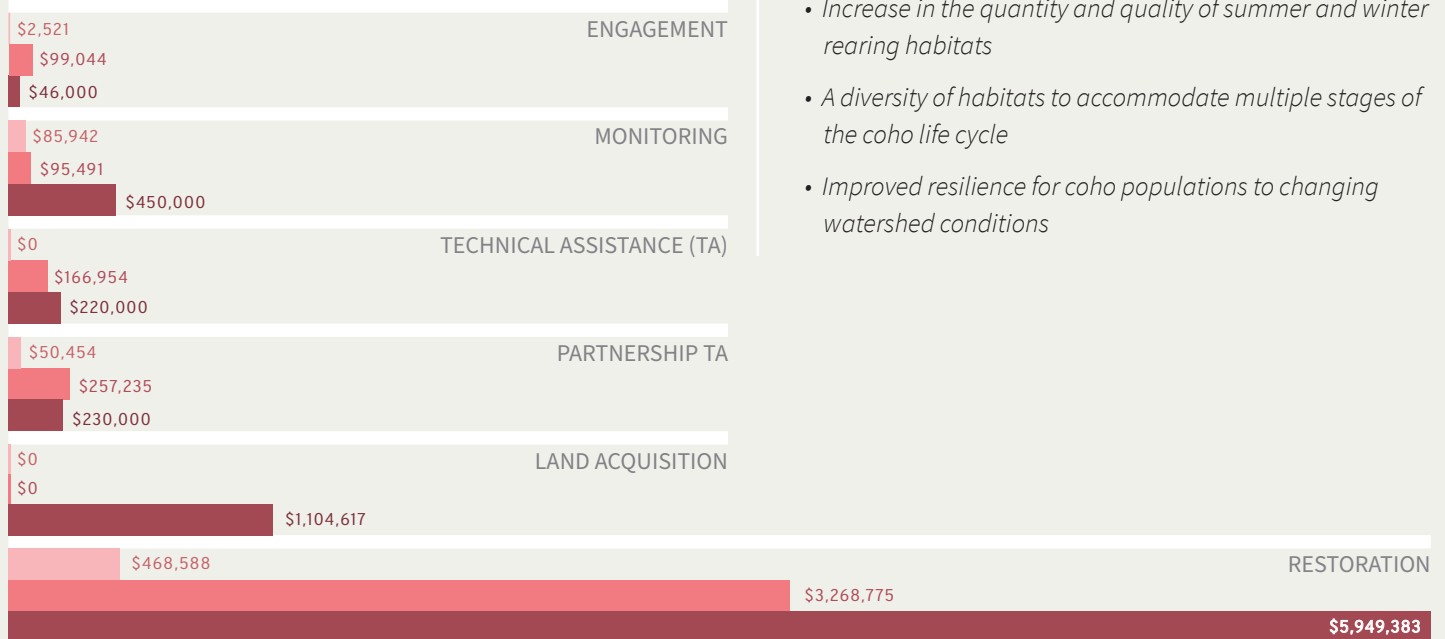
The Siuslaw Coho Partnership

(SCP) builds on over 20 years of collaboration among various partners, including conservation organizations and local tribes. The initiative aims to conserve and recover Oregon Coast coho salmon through habitat protection and restoration. Key ecological goals include enhancing the quantity and quality of rearing habitats and ensuring a diverse range of habitats to support different life-history strategies in the coho populations.



Funding

OWEB awarded \$8,000,000 in funding for the first two of an anticipated 3 biennia. At the time of application, the FIP anticipated leveraging an additional \$11,999,593 throughout the life of the initiative.



Benefits

- Increase in the quantity and quality of summer and winter rearing habitats
- A diversity of habitats to accommodate multiple stages of the coho life cycle
- Improved resilience for coho populations to changing watershed conditions

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant program supports high-performing partnerships to implement strategic restoration actions and measure ecological outcomes through coordinated monitoring. In January 2022, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) awarded a FIP grant to the Siuslaw Coho Partnership. This report documents cumulative progress since the FIP was initiated in 2022. Work completed under the FIP grant program is part of a much larger on-going collaborative effort of federal, state and local agencies, tribes, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations in the Siuslaw River Watershed and Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Coastal Lakes Watersheds. Accomplishments included in the report only reflect actions completed with OWEB FIP funding.

PARTNERS

Bureau of Land Management – Siuslaw Field Office, Northwest Oregon District • Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians • Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, McKenzie River Trust • Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife • Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District • Siuslaw Watershed Council • US Forest Service – Siuslaw National Forest



Stage 0 Floodplain Reconnection Project, Summer 2024 (credit: Paul Burns, USFS)

PRE-RESTORATION

POST-RESTORATION

DNS Stage 0 Floodplain Reconnection Project, Fall 2024 (credit: Paul Burns, USFS)

GOAL

Restore and protect instream, riparian, and floodplain habitats in the Siuslaw River Watershed as well as the Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Coastal Lakes Watersheds.



- Reconnect floodplains and tidal channels to promote rearing habitats.
- Reduce water temperature by planting riparian vegetation.
- Add large woody debris for habitat complexity.

STRATEGIES



- Engage landowners and local community to promote conservation actions and outcomes.
- Upgrade tidegates, culverts, roads and other working lands infrastructure to increase longitudinal connectivity of instream habitat, and improve water quality.

IMPLEMENTATION

Stream Restoration

Riparian Enhancements

52

ACRES OF FLOODPLAINS RECONNECTED

2

FISH BARRIERS REMOVED;
1 STREAM-MILE RECONNECTED

7.65

STREAM MILES OF LARGE WOOD INSTALLED

3,263

PIECES OF IN-STREAM LWD PLACED

90

ACRES INVASIVE VEGETATION REPLACED WITH NATIVE VEGETATION



OUTCOMES

Near Term 0-5 YEARS

- Reduced sedimentation.
- Increased water table, instream complexity, and connectivity.

Mid-Term 5-10 YEARS

- Increased availability of floodplain habitat and thermal refugia.

Long Term 10+ YEARS

- Increased quality and quantity of diverse habitat that contribute to coho population resilience.
- Healthy watershed restoration economy viewed as an important source of local income.

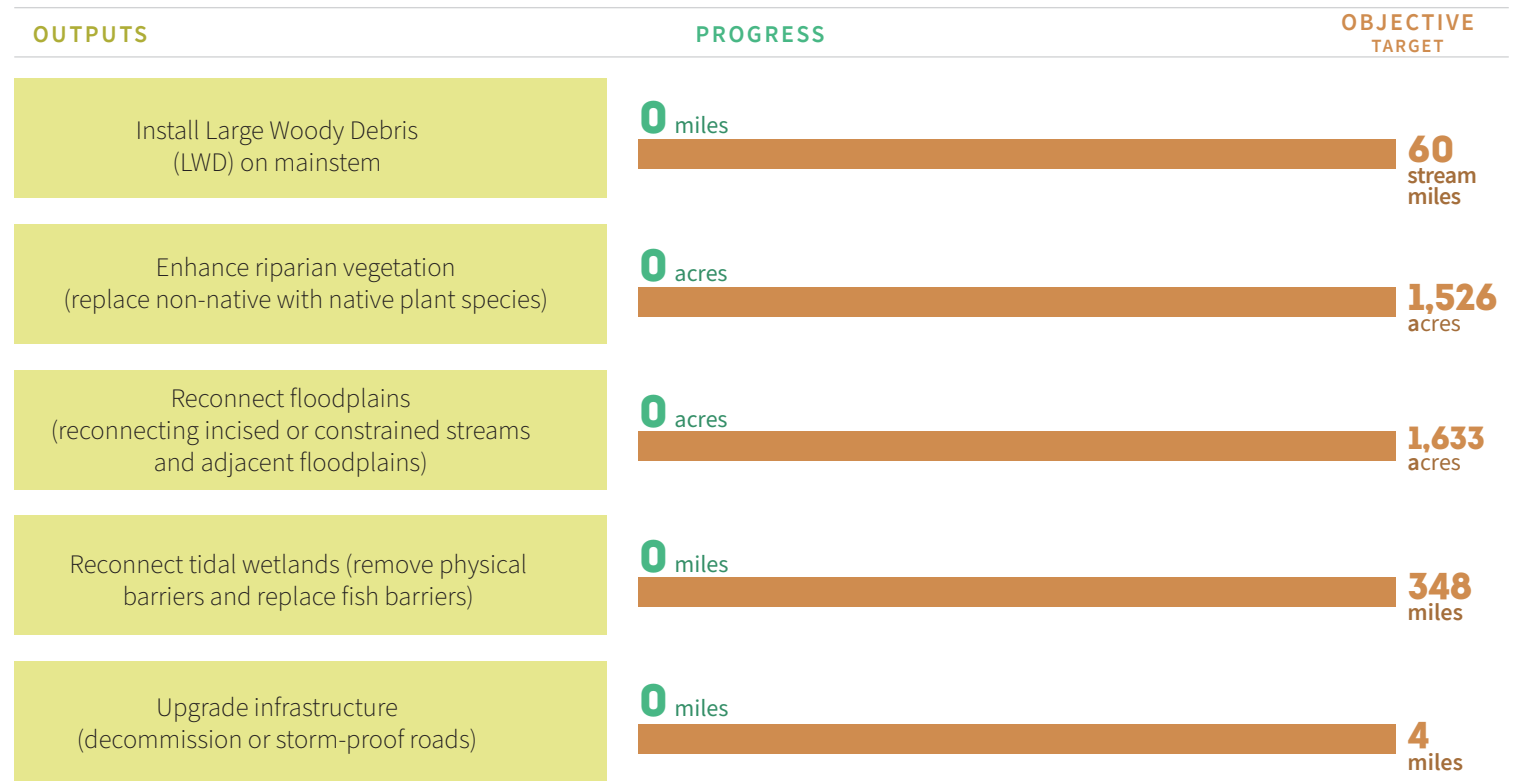


Upper Deadwood Helicopter Large Wood Placement Project, Fall 2024 (credit: SWC)

haich ikt'at'uu Tidal Wetland Restoration Project, Fall 2024 (credit: SWC)

FIP Initiative Progress, Biennia 1-2

Progress on outputs shown below represents actions completed through OWEB grants.



Dorff-Nichols-Steinberg Floodplain Reconnection Project October 2024 (credit: USFS)

Monitoring Approach

The Siuslaw Coho Partnership contracted Wolf Water Resources to work with the Partnership to create an effectiveness monitoring plan and protocols. This plan was completed and delivered to the Partnership in May 2024. The Partnership submitted a funding proposal in December 2024 to fund the development of the monitoring program and implementation of the monitoring plan.

Adaptive Management

Restoration

CHALLENGES

Cost increases between time of project identification, grant proposal, and implementation.



LESSONS LEARNED

Use conservative cost estimates when developing budgets and/or include contingency funds in budget.

Anticipate greater cost increases for projects with a longer development timeline.



ADAPTATIONS

Short term: We have successfully sought funding outside of the FIP award to fill budget gaps on B2 projects.

Medium term: We are anticipating cost increases when building budgets for B2 and B3 projects.

Long term: We will add a preliminary budget review step for cost increases to the Partnership project review process.

Monitoring

CHALLENGES

Initially intended to hire a monitoring coordinator to write the monitoring plan and protocols, develop the program to implement that plan, and then implement the plan. This hire was unsuccessful due to a lack of qualified candidates.

Experienced difficulty in regularly convening the Monitoring Committee.



LESSONS LEARNED

Developing and implementing a monitoring plan requires a diverse skillset, which narrows the field of potential applicants (as does our geographic location and the size of our organization).

Need a filled Committee Chair position.

Need to plan Committee activities around participants' annual schedules.

Need to diversify Committee membership, if possible, to include non-field staff.



ADAPTATIONS

We hired a contractor to complete the monitoring plan and protocols.

We plan to repost the monitoring coordinator position with a more focused scope of work and to include on-the-job training in the scope.

Established a de facto Committee Chair tasked with coordinating monitoring-related tasks until the Coordinator role is filled.

Will schedule monitoring committee meetings and work outside of field season.

Will recruit Committee members who are not on-the-ground project implementers.

Adaptive Management

Engagement

CHALLENGES

The community's desire for outreach is greater than we can usually meet.

Difficulty in communicating and conveying accessible information to the community about the benefits and challenges of complex, high-visibility restoration projects in the area.

Capacity challenges—outreach takes personnel time.



LESSONS LEARNED

Plan for as much outreach for each project or project type as feasible.

Need to gather insight and expertise from partners and other resources to be prepared to answer a range of questions about projects.

Funds are needed for outreach on projects throughout the geography and breadth of project types.



ADAPTATIONS

Utilize our Outreach and Engagement Plan to maximize outreach efficiency and impacts.

Involve partners and experts in project presentations. Also need to gather outreach resources from all sources in one accessible electronic location.

Our first engagement grant requested funds for estuary projects only; we will apply for funding to implement outreach goals across all of the FIP geography and project types.

Partnership Capacity

CHALLENGES

Turnover in the role of Chair.



LESSONS LEARNED

There is a need for overlap in leadership roles for continuity in the event of change in leadership.

There is a need to have thorough governance documents that clearly define roles and include some redundancy.

There is a need to have Partnership resources organized and available to Partnership members.



ADAPTATIONS

Placed a renewed importance on having the Vice-Chair role filled, and actively participating in Partnership business.

Will review the organization and availability of Partnership resources, and take action to improve as necessary.