



2025-2027  
**Biennial Work Plan**  
**Governor's Salmon Strategy**

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WASHINGTON STATE  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

Governor's Salmon  
Recovery Office

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## Overview

## Background

The federal government listed the first salmon populations in Washington under the Endangered Species Act in the 1990s. Those listings set off a series of actions, including the creation of the first statewide strategy to recover salmon, *Extinction is not an Option*. Written in 1999, the strategy served as the foundation for the State's recovery efforts.

In 2021, Governor Jay Inslee updated the strategy to renew and strengthen the State's commitment to salmon recovery. The [Governor's salmon strategy](#) addresses known threats, honors commitments to tribes, is consistent with regional recovery plans, and expands priorities to include climate resiliency.

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) is the lead organization to maintain and implement the strategy.<sup>1</sup> In a 2022 budget proviso, the Legislature provided additional direction to implement the strategy by convening the Natural Resource Subcabinet and developing a biennial work plan.<sup>2</sup>

This *2025-2027 Biennial Work Plan* is a summary of statewide priorities and a recommended budget for implementing the strategy.<sup>3</sup> GSRO works closely with each state agency and evaluates each request to develop statewide work priorities that are aligned with known tribal priorities and federally approved salmon recovery plans.

## Why recover salmon

Salmon are the lifeblood of the Pacific Northwest and have been present in what is now Washington State for more than six million years. Salmon are a primary food source for tribal nations and hold deep cultural value dating back thousands of years. Salmon are essential to tribal treaty rights. Salmon are embedded in the culture and identity of all Washingtonians and are critical to the state's ecosystems, health, and well-being. Salmon are essential to the economy representing billions of dollars in economic activity across their ranges. And finally, salmon are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act and must be recovered.

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<sup>1</sup>Revised Code of Washington 77.85.030

<sup>2</sup>Section 305(14) of Chapter 297, Laws of 2022, supplemental operating budget (Engrossed Senate Substitute Bill 5693)

<sup>3</sup>Section 305(4) of Chapter 475, Laws of 2023, operating budget (Engrossed Senate Substitute Bill 5187)

Because salmon are born in streams and migrate from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean and back again, they have a diversity of life histories that are resilient to environmental change. However, because they also interact with humans all along their journey, this makes them vulnerable to impacts that alter the habitats they depend upon.

Salmon need access to clean and cold water and abundant food, protection from predators, and refuge to survive. As Washington's population has grown, rivers have been blocked, trees removed, water polluted, and food for salmon disappeared. Ongoing impacts to salmon have resulted in federal Endangered Species Act listings beginning in the 1990s.

For more information on salmon recovery, please visit [State of Salmon in Watersheds website](#).

## ***Governor's salmon strategy***

As early as 150 years ago, the first U.S. fisheries commissioner identified overfishing, dams, and habitat degradation as threats to salmon, but it wasn't until the 1990s that salmon in Washington were listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Listings under the Endangered Species Act prompted state lawmakers to adopt the Salmon Recovery Act<sup>4</sup> in 1998. The Act directed GSRO to coordinate a statewide strategy to recover salmon.

The first strategy focused on restoring critical habitat, improving land-use practices, reducing the impact of fishing on at-risk salmon, improving hatchery management, and better managing large dams and other hydropower facilities. Progress has been made, but recovery efforts have met new challenges—the human population has increased by more than two million residents since the first strategy<sup>5</sup> and as much as another two million residents are projected by 2050;<sup>6</sup> predation and climate impacts are emerging; and the cost and complexity of restoration work has increased—to name a few. With more than 70 percent of the endangered or threatened salmon and steelhead populations either not keeping pace with recovery goals or requiring immediate action, it is clear that salmon are struggling.

Recognizing the State needed to do more for salmon, Governor Inslee updated the strategy. The [Governor's salmon strategy](#) envisions healthy and resilient salmon, steelhead,

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<sup>4</sup>Revised Code of Washington 77.85

<sup>5</sup>Office of Financial Management. Population used for allocation of selected state revenues, April 1, 2024.

<sup>6</sup>Office of Financial Management. Growth Management Act population projections for counties: 2020 to 2050.

and trout runs, restored to harvestable levels across the state. It prioritizes actions around the following eight recommendations:

1. Protect and restore vital salmon habitat
2. Invest in clean water infrastructure for salmon and people
3. Correct fish passage barriers and restore salmon access to historical habitat
4. Build climate resiliency
5. Align harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower with salmon recovery
6. Address predation and food web issues for salmon
7. Strengthen science, monitoring, and accountability
8. Enhance commitments and coordination across agencies and programs

## Development of the work plan

This work plan summarizes statewide priorities and recommends a budget to implement the strategy. Working through an interagency salmon policy committee, the state natural resource agencies provided the policy proposals and budget recommendations, which then were evaluated by GSRO using the following criteria:

- Identified as a specific strategy action; and
- Urgent in the 2025-2027 biennium; and
- Aligned with a known tribal priority; and
- Aligned with a regional recovery plan

## Natural Resources Subcabinet

The Legislature tasked GSRO with formally convening the Natural Resources Subcabinet<sup>7</sup> to bring together the Governor's Office and state agency directors to ensure coordination and strengthen commitment and accountability on key salmon recovery emerging issues to effectively implement the statewide strategy. An interagency salmon policy committee

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<sup>7</sup>The Joint Natural Resources Cabinet originally was convened in 1997 under Governor Gary Locke to address listings of salmon and steelhead stocks and the State's commitment to government-to-government relationships with federally recognized tribes.

meets monthly to discuss salmon recovery work, provide information for the biennial work plan, and support biannual meetings of the Natural Resources Subcabinet.

## Tribal engagement

Tribes are sovereign nations with rights inherent in the U.S. Constitution, reserved in treaties with the federal government, and reaffirmed through court cases and legal battles stretching back a century. Treaty Indian tribes have a legal authority to co-manage salmon with the State and state government relies on tribal knowledge, expertise, and experience to co-manage salmon populations.

The tribal priorities in this work plan came from tribal commission reports, comments on the *Governor's salmon strategy*, and meetings with tribal commissions and individual tribes. A summary of tribal priorities is in appendix A.

## Regional priorities

While the federal government is responsible for overseeing recovery under the Endangered Species Act, Washington has embraced a regional model that emphasizes local planning and decision-making. Regional salmon recovery organizations work with state agencies and the federal government to prepare and maintain locally based recovery plans.

Located across the state, regional recovery organizations also oversee and monitor implementation of regional recovery plans. Each regional recovery plan provides federal assurances under the Endangered Species Act<sup>8</sup> and organizations are managed by a board of directors that may include tribes, state and local governments, and partners in salmon recovery.

A primary responsibility of GSRO is to coordinate and assist in the development, implementation, and revision of regional salmon recovery plans as an integral part of the strategy.<sup>9</sup> GSRO works closely with the directors of the regional salmon recovery organization to understand each region's priority actions to recover salmon. Regional organizations include the Coast Salmon Partnership, Hood Canal Coordinating Council, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, Puget Sound Partnership, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, and the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board.

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<sup>8</sup>A state-approved sustainability plan was developed for the Washington coast region, with the goal of preventing future Endangered Species Act listings of salmon and steelhead.

<sup>9</sup>Revised Code of Washington 77.85.150



To inform the 2025-2027 work plan, GSRO facilitated meetings between regional directors and state agencies (Conservation Commission, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Natural Resources) to discuss agency programs and regional priorities to recover salmon. Directors of regional recovery organizations then evaluated agency budget requests and indicated which proposals were urgent to implement their recovery plans in the coming biennium. Each proposal included in the 2025-2027 biennial work plan is supported by one or more regional director.

## Work plan priorities

### 2023-2025 biennial salmon budget

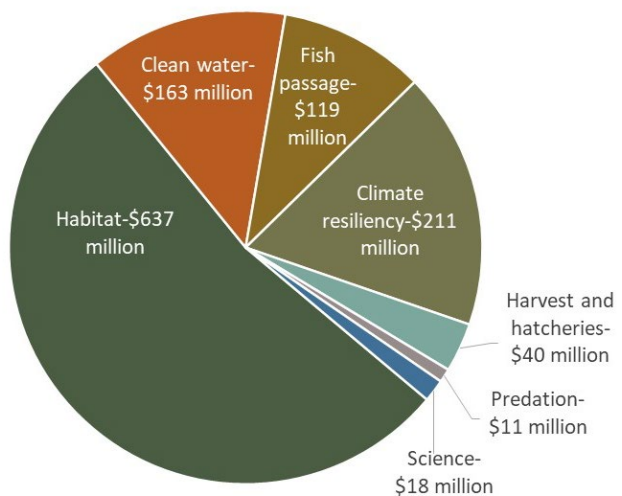
The [2023-2025 biennial work plan](#) was the first report implementing the 2021 *Governor’s salmon strategy update*. The work plan included agency requests that aligned with the strategy, known tribal priorities, and/or regional recovery plans. The work plan informed the Governor’s salmon budget and many of the agency requests were included in the final \$1.1 billion budget for salmon. Highlights include investments in riparian (land along waterways) habitat, reducing toxics and improving stormwater management, correcting barriers that impede recovery, conserving water and responding to drought in the Columbia River basin, and addressing predation. A summary of these investments is in appendix B.

### 2025-2027 biennial work plan

The 2025-2027 biennial work plan builds on these investments to keep the highest priority programs and initiatives funded to recover salmon. The total request this biennium is \$1.2 billion. The requests are not listed in a priority order, and are organized by strategy priorities and action areas.

A table summarizing each investment area is at the end of this report. Highlights include investing in riparian grant programs and statewide habitat restoration programs to improve salmonid survival, reducing toxics and

Salmon Strategy 2025-27 Work Plan Summary  
Total = \$1.2 billion



improving stormwater management to ensure clean water, guaranteeing passage for salmon to migrate, building climate resilience by maintaining cold water and improving streamflow, protecting salmon from predators, and evaluating salmon abundance to inform recovery actions and planning.

\$637  
MILLION

## Protect and restore vital salmon habitat

Salmon need healthy places to live. This includes a variety of habitats that allow them to feed, travel, rest, hide from predators, and spawn.

### Riparian management—\$96 million

Riparian areas provide habitat critical for salmon survival as well as many other species. Riparian areas also increase climate resilience by reducing summer water temperature and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. State agencies propose building on incentive programs funded in the 2023-2025 biennium to protect and restore riparian areas.

- **Riparian grant programs**
  - **Riparian funding**, Salmon Recovery Funding Board (Recreation and Conservation Office)—project funding to enhance salmon recovery through the protection and restoration of fully functioning riparian areas. This program was first funded in the 2023-2025 biennium. (\$25 million capital budget)
  - **Riparian Grant Program** (Conservation Commission)—project funding<sup>10</sup> to conservation districts to restore and protect riparian habitat. This program was first funded in the 2023-2025 biennium. (\$25 million capital budget)
  - **Riparian incentive grants** (Department of Ecology)—project funding to accelerate implementation of riparian buffers, implement water quality cleanup plans, and support climate resiliency. This expands a pilot program and augments Ecology’s water quality funding programs with additional funding for incentive payments. (\$30 million capital budget)

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<sup>10</sup>“Project funding” refers to state capital budget requests. The capital budget funds projects such as protecting public lands and assets.



- **Other riparian investments**

- **Accelerating floodplain resiliency** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding<sup>11</sup> to provide staffing to update flood risk maps, provide technical support to communities, and help move salmon recovery projects forward. (\$1.1 million operating budget)
- **Aerial imagery and preservation** (Department of Natural Resources)—This proposal purchases the annual updates to orthophotos and biannual updates to stereo imagery, as well as the software used to create digital surface models from the stereo images. This is critical data used by many state agencies including the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the riparian systems assessment. (\$2.8 million operating budget)
- **Riparian Plant Propagation Program** (Conservation Commission)—ongoing funding to increase the availability of native trees and shrubs for riparian restoration in support of salmon recovery. (\$1.4 million operating budget)
- **Riparian systems assessment** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to identify streams, that if conserved or restored, will provide the greatest habitat value and offer the most efficient approach to recovering salmon and other native species. (\$2 million operating budget)
- **River migration and stream mapping for salmon** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding to advance a statewide channel migration zone mapping effort and work with tribes, partner agencies, and others to complete the remaining tasks and provide ongoing technical assistance. (\$378,000 operating budget)
- **Statewide lidar acquisition and refresh** (Department of Natural Resources)—ongoing funding to create a consistent and predictable baseline for the collection of statewide lidar (light detection and ranging) data to inform the riparian systems assessment and other natural resource planning efforts. (\$7.8 million operating budget)

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<sup>11</sup>“Ongoing funding” and “one-time funding” refer to state operating budget requests. The operating budget funds agency operations.

## Voluntary protection and restoration—\$483 million

Established in 1999 under the Salmon Recovery Act, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board offers the primary grant program dedicated to achieving overall salmon recovery, including habitat projects and other activities in all regions of the state. Overtime, additional grant programs tailored to certain habitat types or geographies have been added to support recovery needs. The grant programs listed below implement the regional recovery plans by funding the highest priority projects in watersheds throughout the state—projects that have been scientifically and publicly vetted. Dedicated funding greatly would improve the success of these programs.

- **Salmon recovery grant programs**
  - **Chehalis strategy implementation** (Department of Ecology)—project funding for the long-term flood damage reduction and aquatic species restoration in the Chehalis River basin. (\$80 million capital budget)
  - **Coastal wetlands funds** (Department of Ecology)—authorizes administration of a federal grant program to acquire wetlands and coastal and estuarine lands. (\$10 million capital budget)
  - **Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—project funding for Puget Sound near-shore recovery. (\$27.5 million capital budget)
  - **Floodplains by Design** (Department of Ecology)—project funding for integrated floodplain projects that combine flood hazard reduction with restoring floodplain conditions to improve salmon habitat in Washington’s major river corridors. (\$84 million capital budget)
  - **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Program** (Puget Sound Partnership)—project funding for habitat restoration and protection to restore Puget Sound's natural systems. (\$109.2 million capital budget)
  - **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** (Recreation and Conservation Office)—project funding for habitat projects and other activities necessary to achieve overall salmon recovery. (\$125 million capital budget)
  - **Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative** (Recreation and Conservation Office)—project funding for the region’s highest priority ecological protection and restoration needs to ensure resilient coastal lands and waters. (\$16.7 million capital budget)

- **Site-specific project requests**

- **Deschutes Estuary restoration** (Department of Enterprise Services)—project funding for design and permitting to restore the Deschutes Estuary in the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Region. This large restoration project includes dam removal and bridge, transportation, and utility infrastructure replacement, as well as restoration of 260 acres. (\$25.5 million capital budget)
- **Twanoh State Park shoreline restoration** (State Parks and Recreation Commission)—project funding to restore shoreline at Twanoh State Park in the Hood Canal Salmon Recovery Region. This is an Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program project and the funding request is dependent on that program’s budget. (\$534,000 capital budget)
- **Wooten Wildlife Area floodplain restoration** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—project funding to restore floodplain habitat in the Tucannon River watershed. The watershed supports the only remaining population of Endangered Species Act-listed spring Chinook salmon in the lower Snake River Salmon Recovery Region. A companion project to a Salmon Recovery Funding Board Targeted Investments program project that will be funded if the Climate Commitment Act resolution fails. (\$4.3 million capital budget)

#### **Habitat restoration on working lands—\$58 million**

The Department of Natural Resources and the Conservation Commission propose ongoing funding for programs that reduce impacts to water quality and improve habitat conditions on agricultural and forest lands. These programs improve implementation of the regional recovery plans.

- **Climate-smart forest treatments** (Department of Natural Resources)—ongoing funding to ensure Washington’s forests: are resilient to drought, insects, disease, and invasive species; provide clean and cold water to support aquatic species and habitat; sequester more carbon; and support sustainable timber production. (\$3.2 million operating budget)
- **Conservation technical assistance** (Conservation Commission)—ongoing funding for conservation districts to educate landowners about practices that keep waters clean for salmon such as conservation and farm planning, nutrient management, and habitat restoration. (\$20 million operating budget)

- **Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program** (Department of Natural Resources)—ongoing funding to support Endangered Species Act compliance and salmon recovery goals on forested landscapes. (\$3.9 million operating budget)
- **Forest Riparian Easement Program** (Department of Natural Resources)—project funding to reimburse small forest landowners for the value of the trees they are required to leave to protect fish habitat. (\$4.9 million capital budget)
- **Natural resource investments** (Conservation Commission)—project funding to help local land users or land managers pay for and construct conservation projects that address the most pressing state and local priorities, such as managing forests for wildfire resiliency, upgrading irrigation systems for water conservation, building manure storage facilities, and installing livestock fencing for pasture management. Natural resource investments are often the missing piece to leverage landowner interests to match other recovery funds. (\$10 million capital budget)
- **Post-Wildfire Reforestation Grant Program** (Department of Natural Resources)—project funding to administer grants to forest landowners to support reforestation, seedling infrastructure, and workforce development to help the timely and successful restoration of forests impacted by wildfires across Washington. This grant program was established in 2024, and this request would help plant five hundred thousand seedlings during the biennium. (\$2.5 million capital budget)
- **Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program** (Department of Natural Resources)—project funding to buy conservation easements from willing private forest landowners to protect riparian open space, especially channel migration zones to support recovery of Endangered Species Act-listed species. (\$4.6 million capital budget)
- **Voluntary Stewardship Program** (Conservation Commission)—project funding and ongoing monitoring funding of county projects to protect critical areas including salmon habitat through voluntary farm-friendly options. (\$4 million capital budget and \$3 million operating budget)
- **Watershed experiment in the Olympics—Type 3** (Department of Natural Resources)—ongoing funding to continue the T3 watershed experiment, a twenty-thousand-acre study in the Olympic Experimental State Forest examining new and innovative approaches to forest management with the goal of healthy ecological systems. (\$290,000 operating budget)

- **Watershed Resilience Program** (Department of Natural Resources)—ongoing funding to implement the Snohomish watershed-scale salmon recovery plan as well as watershed resilience actions in the Nisqually River and Puyallup River watersheds. (\$1.7 million operating budget)

\$163  
MILLION

## Invest in clean water infrastructure for salmon and people

Salmon and people need clean water to survive. As the population grows, pavement and hard surfaces increase, resulting in more pollutants running into streams and rivers. Stormwater runoff poses ongoing threats to water quality and salmon health and survival statewide, and acutely in urbanized environments.

### Toxics reduction—\$28 million

The highest priority proposals this biennium will address toxics entering freshwater and marine waterways that are directly toxic to some salmon populations (such as 6PPD-Q) or affect the food web.

- **Cleanup of toxic sites in the Puget Sound initiative** (Department of Ecology)—project funding to integrate shoreline habitat restoration opportunities with cleanup projects to protect public and environmental health, create jobs, and promote economic development. (\$3.1 million capital budget)
- **Large derelict vessel removal** (Department of Natural Resources)—project funding to remediate very large, high-risk vessels that pose a significant risk to the environment and are extremely costly to remove while the program continues the ongoing critical work of intercepting and removing hundreds of smaller vessels to protect marine and fresh waters. (\$13.5 million capital budget)
- **Managing emergent toxic threats** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to track two highly toxic chemicals, PFAS and 6PPD-q, that threaten Chinook salmon and other key Puget Sound aquatic species. Results will be used to guide cleanup and pollution prevention. (\$1.9 million operating budget)
- **Reduce toxic tire chemical exposure** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding to identify effective stormwater treatments and find safer alternatives to reduce or mitigate 6PPD-Q, which is lethal to coho salmon and other aquatic life. (\$9 million operating budget)

## Stormwater infrastructure improvements—\$135 million

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature authorized \$500 million over sixteen years in the Move Ahead Washington funding package for stormwater retrofits. The current legislative plan does not include another funding allocation until 2027-2029. The Department of Transportation is reporting that a \$50 million allocation in 2025-2027 would be optimal to continue enhancing stormwater treatment from roads and infrastructure. Priority projects emphasize recovering salmon and ecological system health, reducing pollution (including the toxic chemical 6PPD-Q), and addressing health disparities.

The Department of Ecology identifies toxic hot spots and reduces pollutants through transformative investments in stormwater infrastructure. This critical work improves water quality for salmon and many other species.

- **Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Grants Program** (Department of Ecology)—project funding to help municipalities address general permit requirements for wastewater facilities to meet nutrient reduction targets, address significant impairments to the health of Puget Sound, and improve dissolved oxygen levels. (\$30 million capital budget)
- **Stormwater Financial Assistance Program** (Department of Ecology)—project funding grants to local governments to finance stormwater retrofit projects that treat polluted stormwater in priority areas throughout the state to protect marine waters, estuaries, lakes, rivers, and groundwater. (\$80 million capital budget)
- **Stormwater Community-Based Public-Private Partnership Program** (Department of Ecology)—project funding for shovel-ready public-private partnership or pay-for-performance pilot projects that achieve stormwater quality goals. (\$25 million capital budget)

\$119  
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## Correct fish passage barriers and restore salmon access

Improving fish passage is a long-recognized priority action of recovery and the State has been making steady progress since the first strategy was adopted. The Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates there are at least twenty-thousand barriers remaining<sup>12</sup> that affect salmon and steelhead in Washington State.

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<sup>12</sup>Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2024. Draft statewide barrier prioritization strategy. Olympia, Washington.



## Fish passage—\$116 million

Improving fish passage and access to habitat includes a variety of strategic investments including barrier removal of the highest priority projects, developing long-range plans that sequence fish barrier removal, and implementing regulations to prevent future barriers.

- **Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—project funding to correct prioritized impediments to salmon and steelhead migration. (\$77 million capital budget)
- **Culvert injunction requirements**
  - Department of Fish and Wildlife—project funding to replace five barrier culverts with fully passable stream crossing structures in the Chehalis Wildlife Area and replace two barriers and remove one crossing in the Cherry Valley Wildlife Area. All these crossings are in wetland habitat. (\$817,000 capital budget)
  - Department of Natural Resources—project funding to correct fish barriers on state lands including four required to comply with the 2030 deadline of the culvert injunction. Projects to comply with the culvert injunction total \$230,000 of the agency request. (\$3.3 million capital budget)
  - Department of Transportation—additional funding is needed in the Move Ahead Washington package to comply with the 2030 deadline of the culvert injunction. (\$3.5 billion transportation budget<sup>13</sup>)
  - State Parks and Recreation Commission—project funding to correct fish barriers to comply with the 2030 deadline of the culvert injunction. The total is a combination of two agency requests. (\$3.9 million capital budget)
- **Family Forest Fish Passage Program** (Department of Natural Resources)—project funding for financial assistance grants to family forest landowners to correct fish passage barriers. (\$12 million capital budget)
- **Fish passage and screening capacity** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to implement new fishways and screening rules surrounding fish passage and water diversions on the date they become effective. (\$3.3 million operating budget)

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<sup>13</sup>The culvert injunction requirements in the transportation budget are not included in work plan totals.

- **Fish passage prioritization** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to continue strategy development and focus efforts of all fish passage programs to maximize salmon and orca recovery investments. (\$768,000 operating budget)
- **Toutle River fish collection facility upgrades** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—project funding to meet a 95 percent passage requirement for Endangered Species Act-listed coho salmon and steelhead to historic spawning habitat in the Toutle River watershed. (\$15.2 million capital budget)

### Reintroduction—\$3.3 million

Reintroduction above dams and other human-caused barriers supports recovery efforts, honors treaty rights, and increases cultural and economic benefits for all Washingtonians.

- **Upper Columbia River reintroduction** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—funding to continue salmon reintroduction efforts above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams. (\$2 million capital budget; \$1.3 million operating budget)



### Build climate resiliency

Air and water temperatures are warming throughout the Pacific Northwest. The air across Washington has warmed by 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit during the past century<sup>14</sup> and this trend is expected to continue. Glaciers, which store much of the freshwater in Washington, are melting. Precipitation patterns, such as declining snowpack, more intense winter rains, and less rain in the summer, are intensifying. Climate change is altering the availability and timing of water in Washington’s rivers and streams. The result is less cold water available in streams in the summer when salmon need it the most and high winter flows that can damage salmon nests and eggs. Stream temperatures are projected to increase in response to warming air temperatures and decreases in summer streamflow, affecting salmon at critical stages in their lives.

### Streamflow restoration—\$74 million

Protecting and enhancing streamflows will improve salmon survival at all life stages. This includes investing in programs that monitor streams and groundwater, and promote water conservation and water reuse.

<sup>14</sup>Shirk, A., Morgan, H., Krosby, M., Raymond, C., Mauger, G.S., Helbrecht, L. 2021. Preparing Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for a changing climate: assessing risks and opportunities for action. A collaboration of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and University of Washington Climate Impacts Group. [wdfw\\_report\\_71421\\_w\\_cover.pdf \(wa.gov\)](https://www.wdfw.wa.gov/reports/71421_w_cover.pdf)

- **Streamflow policy support** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to participate in the science and policy interface around streamflows and aquatic ecological systems (e.g., assessing mitigation adequacy, climate change impacts, drought response and preparedness, water banking, trust water rights, in-stream flow rulemaking, and future water right adjudications). (\$1.1 million operating budget)
- **Streamflow Restoration Program** (Department of Ecology)—project funding for the Streamflow Restoration Program<sup>15</sup> by funding projects to acquire senior water rights, promote water conservation and water reuse, monitor streams and groundwater, and develop natural and constructed infrastructure to improve in-stream flows. (\$40 million capital budget)
- **Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program** (Conservation Commission)—project funding to improve how water is conveyed to the farm and applied to the field. These projects reduce water demand from the supply source. (\$30 million capital budget)
- **Water management and compliance** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding to increase metering to actively manage water use and increase staffing to ensure compliance with state water law. (\$702,000 operating budget)
- **Water resources and climate resiliency** (Department of Ecology)—one-time funding to support climate resilience actions designed to build the capacity and knowledge needed to adaptively design solutions to boost in-stream flows and support statewide water security. (\$1.9 million operating budget)

### **Columbia River basin water supply—\$122 million**

The following proposals were identified as a high priority by the Columbia River recovery regions to improve water supply and stream conditions for salmon.

- **Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program** (Department of Ecology)—project funding to continue implementing the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program, including funding for implementing high-priority projects in the Walla Walla 2050 plan, to deliver additional water supplies for agricultural purposes, meet the water needs for growing communities, make several water uses more efficient, and improve streamflow conditions for fish and other wildlife. (\$57.8 million capital budget)

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<sup>15</sup>Chapter 90.94 Revised Code of Washington

- **Drought planning and preparedness** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding to support continuation of a pilot program to stabilize access to water supplies before an emergency and to improve resiliency to the effects of climate change, which include less and warmer water, that kills hundreds of thousands of salmon and other aquatic species. (\$2 million operating budget)
- **Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District water conservation** (Department of Ecology)—project funding of state match to manage conservation improvements mandated by a court order. (\$3.3 million capital budget)
- **Yakima Basin integrated plan water supply** (Department of Ecology)—project funding to continue implementing the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Plan to provide a comprehensive, long-term water resources and habitat improvement program to address the environmental and economic demands that support wildlife, irrigation, and municipal water supplies. (\$59 million capital budget)

#### **Technical capacity for climate resilience—\$15 million**

Research and planning to improve climate resilience implementation will directly benefit salmon recovery. Building climate resilience requires moving beyond risk assessment to identify, evaluate, implement, and learn from response actions.

- **Climate resilient Department of Fish and Wildlife** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to build fish and habitat climate resiliency by supporting hydrological research that will foster climate-resilient waterways, supporting climate-informed harvest modeling, improving survey methodologies, and reducing department-generated emissions. (\$13 million operating budget)
- **Implementing climate resilience** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding to support interagency coordination and implementation of the 2024 Climate Resilience Strategy, including establishing a governance structure through proposed agency request legislation. (\$1.1 million operating budget)
- **Protecting Washington’s shorelines** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding to provide climate resilience technical assistance and incorporate riparian guidance in shoreline master program updates and support effective integration of new requirements and implementation of shoreline master program provisions. (\$1.3 million operating budget)

\$40  
MILLION

## Align harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower with salmon recovery

The State must maintain and support co-manager processes between the State and tribes for harvest and hatchery management to better align with salmon recovery and meet tribal treaty rights.

### Harvest management—\$25 million

The following proposals align with some regional recovery plans and tribal priorities and include a variety of harvest management techniques include permitting, alternative fishing gear, increase in enforcement, and better data collection.

- **Columbia River Endangered Species Act permitting** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to expand staffing to complete and implement a new suite of fishery permits for the Columbia River. (\$1.4 million operating budget)
- **Emerging fishery implementation in the Columbia River** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to assess the viability of alternative gears in a commercial setting and use this information to provide recommendations to the Legislature. (\$598,000 operating budget)
- **Expanding fish and wildlife police** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding of additional enforcement officers to ensure public safety and resource protection on state and federal lands and waters and respond to a variety of related issues from poaching to habitat protection. (\$17.3 million operating budget)
- **Mobile harvest application support** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to develop mobile harvest reporting tools allowing the recording and submission of harvest information into an electronic catch-record card in real time. (\$6.2 million operating budget)

### Hatchery investments—\$15 million

The strategy calls for more effectively integrating salmon recovery into hatchery operations. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified a few high-priority hatchery improvements and new policies to enhance genetic diversity and improve marking of hatchery fish.

- **Habitat improvements related to hatchery operations** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—project funding to restore floodplains and improve fish passage and water quality in statewide hatcheries including the following:
  - Elochoman hatchery—project funding to decommission the hatchery and restore habitat. (\$1.3 million capital budget)
  - Kendall Creek hatchery—project funding to restore fish passage at hatchery intake on Kendall Creek. (\$415,000 capital budget)
  - Minter hatchery—project funding to restore fish passage at hatchery intake on Minter Creek. (\$4.5 million capital budget)
  - Samish hatchery—project funding to restore fish passage at hatchery intake. (\$1.9 million capital budget)
- **Hatchery conservation programs** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to maintain at-risk populations and increase genetic diversity through conservation hatchery programs that have proven to be an effective tool. (\$2.6 million operating budget)
- **Hatchery investment strategy** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding for current and expanded production, including additional fish health services and mass marking of hatchery salmonids. This funding supports recreational and commercial harvest, tribal harvest, Southern Resident killer whale prey, and conservation efforts for wild salmonids. (\$2.7 million operating budget)
- **Hatchery investment strategy fish marking trailer storage** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—project funding for a facility to store fish marking trailers. (\$1.5 million capital budget)

\$11  
MILLION

## Address predation and food web issues for salmon

Human activities have modified and upset ecological systems and food webs, making them more accommodating to predators and more hostile to salmon. Managing predators is a high priority for every salmon recovery region in the state.

### Predation management—\$11 million

- **European green crab** (Department of Natural Resources)—ongoing funding to continue implementing European green crab management on state-owned aquatic lands beyond fiscal year 2025. (\$2.5 million operating budget)



- **European green crab research** (Department of Ecology)—ongoing funding for long-term management and improvement of response effectiveness through research, deeper knowledge of European green crab behavior, environmental factors affecting its dispersal, and broader impacts to coastal resources. (\$542,000 operating budget)
- **Lake Washington predator suppression** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to suppress non-native predators, leading to increased adult returns and fishing opportunities for Chinook and sockeye salmon in Lake Washington. (\$1.4 million operating budget)
- **Pinniped predation** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to continue participation in a seal and sea lion management program partnership with regional states and tribes. The proposal includes work in the Columbia River, Salish Sea, and outer coast to study seal and sea lion abundance, diet, and movement to better understand predation impacts. (\$3.1 million operating budget)
- **Quagga and zebra mussel prevention** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to expand activities including detection monitoring, implementing protections for habitat and infrastructure, and reducing impacts to the economy, environment, and species, including salmon and steelhead. (\$3.6 million operating budget)

**\$18  
MILLION**

## **Strengthen science, monitoring, and accountability**

The following investments implement the strategy action to increase funding for monitoring and to establish accountability and effectiveness monitoring of state programs.

### **Monitoring—\$6 million**

The strategy calls for an increase in funding for monitoring and science-based efforts across Washington. Evaluating salmon abundance provides critical data to inform recovery actions and planning. With listed Puget Sound salmon and steelhead in crisis, and potential coastal listings on the horizon, these investments are urgent in the 2025-2027 biennium.

- **Coastal salmonids management** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to address multiple data gaps related to essential monitoring of salmon and steelhead population viability and harvest on the Coast. (\$4.8 million operating budget)

- **Salmon and steelhead monitoring** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding to improve steelhead spawner estimates, monitor Puget Sound freshwater fisheries, and develop fishery management plans. (\$1.6 million operating budget)

### **Accountability—\$12 million**

Salmon recovery metrics inform the effectiveness of state programs and actions. They improve transparency, fill data gaps, and provide accountability on investments and programs.

- **Science hub** (Conservation Commission)—ongoing funding for the implementation of science-based solutions to protect and enhance natural resources and agricultural viability. These projects provide key information for incentive-based approaches for riparian conservation and restoration on private lands. (\$5 million operating budget)
- **Scientific data modernization** (Department of Fish and Wildlife)—ongoing funding for a comprehensive scientific data management program to enhance conservation efforts. This program will introduce cloud storage, a modern data library, and a collaborative scientific data analytics environment for the department and its partners. (\$6.9 million operating budget)

## Conclusion

Salmon have shaped the past, influenced cultures, buoyed the economy, and strengthened communities. Investing in the *2025-2027 Biennial Work Plan Governor's salmon strategy* benefits all Washingtonians as they build climate and community resiliency; provide habitat that benefits an entire food web from insects to orca; ensure clean, cold water; and support Washington's economy.

## Work plan summary table

Proposal	Agency	Amount	Budget
<b>PROTECT AND RESTORE VITAL SALMON HABITAT</b>			
<b>Riparian management</b>			
<b>Grant programs</b>			
Riparian funding, Salmon Recovery Funding Board	Recreation and Conservation Office	\$25,000,000	Capital
Riparian grant program	Conservation Commission	\$25,000,000	Capital
Riparian incentive grants	Ecology	\$30,000,000	Capital
<b>Other riparian investments</b>			
Accelerating floodplain resiliency	Ecology	\$1,112,306	Operating
Aerial imagery and preservation	Natural Resources	\$2,799,000	Operating
Riparian plant propagation program	Conservation Commission	\$1,400,000	Operating
Riparian systems assessment	Fish and Wildlife	\$2,006,000	Operating
River migration and stream mapping for salmon	Ecology	\$378,000	Operating
Statewide lidar acquisition and refresh	Natural Resources	\$7,848,000	Operating
<b>Voluntary protection and restoration</b>			
<b>Salmon recovery grant programs</b>			
Chehalis strategy implementation	Ecology	\$80,000,000	Capital
Coastal wetlands funds	Ecology	\$10,000,000	Capital
Estuary And Salmon Restoration Program	Fish and Wildlife	\$27,534,000	Capital
Floodplains by Design	Ecology	\$84,001,974	Capital
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Program	Puget Sound Partnership	\$109,187,000	Capital
Salmon Recovery Funding Board	Recreation and Conservation Office	\$125,000,000	Capital
Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative	Recreation and Conservation Office	\$16,713,000	Capital
<b>Site-specific project requests</b>			
Deschutes estuary restoration	Enterprise Services	\$25,523,000	Capital
Twano State Park shoreline restoration	State Parks	\$534,000	Capital
Wooten Wildlife Area floodplain restoration	Fish and Wildlife	\$4,275,000	Capital
<b>Habitat restoration on working lands</b>			
Climate-smart forest treatments	Natural Resources	\$3,224,000	Operating
Conservation technical assistance	Conservation Commission	\$20,000,000	Operating

Proposal	Agency	Amount	Budget
Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program	Natural Resources	\$3,932,000	Operating
Forest Riparian Easement Program	Natural Resources	\$4,900,000	Capital
Natural resources investments	Conservation Commission	\$10,000,000	Capital
Post-Wildfire Reforestation Grant Program	Natural Resources	\$2,500,000	Capital
Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program	Natural Resources	\$4,631,000	Capital
Voluntary Stewardship Program	Conservation Commission	\$4,000,000	Capital
Voluntary Stewardship Program	Conservation Commission	\$3,000,000	Operating
Watershed experiment in the Olympics– Type 3	Natural Resources	\$290,000	Operating
Watershed Resilience Program	Natural Resources	\$1,756,000	Operating
<b>Habitat Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$636,544,280</b>	
<b>INVEST IN CLEAN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SALMON AND PEOPLE</b>			
<b>Toxics reduction</b>			
Cleanup of toxic sites in Puget Sound initiative	Ecology	\$3,150,000	Capital
Large derelict vessel removal	Natural Resources	\$13,500,000	Capital
Managing emergent toxic threats	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,946,000	Operating
Reduce toxic tire chemical exposure	Ecology	\$8,974,000	Operating
<b>Stormwater and wastewater infrastructure improvements</b>			
Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Grants Program	Ecology	\$30,000,000	Capital
Stormwater Financial Assistance Program	Ecology	\$80,000,000	Capital
Stormwater Community-Based Public-Private Partnership Program	Ecology	\$25,000,000	Capital
<b>Clean Water Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$162,570,000</b>	
<b>CORRECT FISH PASSAGE BARRIERS AND RESTORE SALMON ACCESS TO HISTORICAL HABITAT</b>			
<b>Fish passage barrier removal</b>			
Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board	Fish and Wildlife	\$76,790,000	Capital
Culvert injunction requirements	Fish and Wildlife	\$817,000	Capital
Culvert injunction requirements	Natural Resources	\$3,260,000	Capital
Culvert injunction requirements	State Parks	\$3,895,000	Capital
Culvert injunction requirements	State Parks	\$245,000	Capital
Family Forest Fish Passage Program	Natural Resources	\$12,084,000	Capital
Fish passage and screening capacity	Fish and Wildlife	\$3,349,000	Operating

Proposal	Agency	Amount	Budget
Fish passage prioritization	Fish and Wildlife	\$768,000	Operating
Toutle River fish collection facility upgrades	Fish and Wildlife	\$15,185,000	Capital
<b>Reintroduction</b>			
Upper Columbia River reintroduction	Fish and Wildlife	\$2,003,000	Capital
Upper Columbia River reintroduction	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,325,770	Operating
<b>Fish Passage Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$119,721,770</b>	
<b>BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCY</b>			
<b>Streamflow restoration</b>			
Streamflow policy support	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,100,000	Operating
Streamflow Restoration Program	Ecology	\$40,000,000	Capital
Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program	Conservation Commission	\$30,000,000	Capital
Water management and compliance	Ecology	\$702,000	Operating
Water resources and climate resiliency	Ecology	\$1,895,000	Operating
<b>Columbia River basin water supply</b>			
Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program	Ecology	\$57,884,000	Capital
Drought planning and preparedness	Ecology	\$2,000,000	Operating
Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District water conservation	Ecology	\$3,320,000	Capital
Yakima Basin integrated plan water supply	Ecology	\$59,000,000	Capital
<b>Technical capacity for climate resilience</b>			
Climate resilient Department of Fish and Wildlife	Fish and Wildlife	\$13,027,000	Operating
Implementing climate resilience	Ecology	\$1,158,000	Operating
Protecting Washington's shorelines	Ecology	\$1,317,000	Operating
<b>Climate Resilience Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$211,403,000</b>	
<b>ALIGN HARVEST, HATCHERIES, AND HYDROPOWER WITH SALMON RECOVERY</b>			
<b>Harvest management</b>			
Columbia River Endangered Species Act permitting	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,394,000	Operating
Emerging fishery implementation in the Columbia River	Fish and Wildlife	\$598,000	Operating
Expanding fish and wildlife police	Fish and Wildlife	\$17,281,000	Operating
Mobile harvest application support	Fish and Wildlife	\$6,203,000	Operating
<b>Hatchery investments</b>			
Habitat improvements related to hatchery operations—Elochoman	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,275,000	Capital
Habitat improvements related to hatchery operations—Kendall Creek	Fish and Wildlife	\$415,000	Capital

Proposal	Agency	Amount	Budget
Habitat improvements related to hatchery operations–Minter	Fish and Wildlife	\$4,497,000	Capital
Habitat improvements related to hatchery operations–Samish	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,964,000	Capital
Hatchery conservation programs	Fish and Wildlife	\$2,594,000	Operating
Hatchery investment strategy	Fish and Wildlife	\$2,725,000	Operating
Hatchery investment strategy fish marking trailer storage	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,500,000	Capital
<b>Harvest and Hatcheries Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$40,446,000</b>	
ADDRESS PREDATION AND FOOD WEB ISSUES FOR SALMON			
Predation management			
European green crab	Natural Resources	\$2,543,000	Operating
European green crab research	Ecology	\$542,000	Operating
Lake Washington predator suppression	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,400,000	Operating
Pinniped predation	Fish and Wildlife	\$3,118,000	Operating
Quagga and zebra mussel prevention	Fish and Wildlife	\$3,620,000	Operating
<b>Predation Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$11,223,000</b>	
STRENGTHEN SCIENCE, MONITORING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY			
Monitoring			
Coastal salmonids management	Fish and Wildlife	\$4,820,000	Operating
Salmon and steelhead monitoring	Fish and Wildlife	\$1,644,000	Operating
Accountability			
Science hub	Conservation Commission	\$5,000,000	Operating
Scientific data modernization	Fish and Wildlife	\$6,902,000	Operating
<b>Science Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$18,366,000</b>	
<b>SALMON WORK PLAN TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$1,200,274,050</b>	



# Appendix A: Tribal priorities

## Tribal organizations' budget and policy priorities

GSRO met with Northwest Treaty Tribes, the Upper Columbia United Tribes, and the Columbia River Intertribal Commission to understand and document biennial budget and policy priorities. This summary reflects the information shared by the tribal consortiums.

## Summary of tribal priorities

### Key messages

- Emergency declaration at the cabinet level. Extinction is not an option.
- Watershed planning is the best model for implementing priorities.
- Salmon recovery actions build climate resilience. The challenges will increase and change as the effects of climate change become more evident.
- Recognize, honor, and incorporate tribal culture and values as part of the solution.

### Protect and restore vital salmon habitat

- Dedicate sufficient funding to implement regional salmon recovery plans.
- Invest in work force to update Puget Sound recovery plan chapters.
- Secure funding for salmonid habitat restoration projects for the Spokane lead entity.
- Land use is the highest called out limiting factor.
  - The Growth Management Act and Shoreline Management Act do not provide specific directions to cities and counties on measures for salmon habitat protection and restoration and do not go as far as the tribes and salmon need it to go.
  - Increase regulatory land-use protection and enforcement for riparian areas.
  - Need regulatory backstops to protect critical areas. The voluntary stewardship program is not enough.

- Protect and restore habitats and ecosystems that are holistic, sustainable, and resilient.

#### **Invest in clean water**

- Ensure clean water standards are based on sound science and are enforced.
- Monitor water quality of the Columbia River between Bonneville and The Dalles Dams.

#### **Correct fish passage barriers**

- Continue funding for reintroduction above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams.
- Remedy fish passage barriers statewide.

#### **Build climate resiliency**

- Provide regulatory oversight on permit exempt wells to protect fish.
- Increase streamflow restoration funds to adequately fund Hirst decision mitigation to increase outmigration survival.
- Provide cold-water refugia in the Columbia River between Bonneville and The Dalles Dams.
- Restore ecological functions and implement strategies to prevent the energy supply system from placing undue reliance on the Columbia River ecological system.

#### **Align harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower with salmon recovery**

- Fund hatchery infrastructure to support salmon conservation and harvest.
- Fund salmon acclimation sites in the Columbia River.
- Address deferred maintenance on hatcheries (a proper and functioning system benefits all fish).
- Manage hatcheries and planning in co-managers framework; invest in treaty rights for tribes.

#### **Address predation and food web issues**

- Fund northern pike suppression and prevention in the upper Columbia River to protect juvenile salmon abundance.
- Address and monitor avian predation to protect juvenile salmonids.

- Improve predation management for seal and sea lions to protect salmonids.

**Strengthen science, monitoring, and accountability**

- Improve metrics to measure success in recovery (including development of metrics of success for watershed-specific recovery plans).
- Improve science and understanding of ocean conditions (what is happening to the fish when they don't return).



# Salmon Strategy : End-of-Session Highlights

2023-25 State legislative actions implementing the *Governor's Salmon Strategy Update*

## Protect and restore vital salmon habitat

- ▶ The State invested nearly \$400 million to fund **salmon recovery projects** throughout the state; 38 percent were funded by the Climate Commitment Act (CCA).
- ▶ The State committed nearly \$100 million to establish a statewide approach for **fully functioning riparian habitat** by:
  - » Establishing the **riparian roundtable** to develop recommendations to improve riparian habitat.
  - » Investing \$50 million in CCA funds to establish **new riparian grant programs** to improve salmon habitat.
  - » Adding a **new planning grant program** with CCA funds to incorporate salmon recovery into local land use plans.

## Invest in clean water for salmon and people

- ▶ The State improved clean water for salmon and people by:
  - » Allocating \$15 million to **address the toxic chemical 6PPD-quinone**-that can be lethal to coho in urban streams.
  - » Providing more than \$100 million to **improve stormwater management practices** with retrofits and better management strategies.

## Correct fish passage barriers that impede recovery

- ▶ The State **improved salmon passage** by:
  - » Providing \$3 million to fund salmon **reintroduction above dams in the upper Columbia River**.
  - » Funding more than \$90 million to **correct fish passage barriers** that impede salmon recovery (55 percent funded by CCA).
  - » Investing \$1.2 billion toward compliance with the **culvert injunction**<sup>1</sup>.
  - » Financing \$10 million to study the services provided by the **lower Snake River dams**.

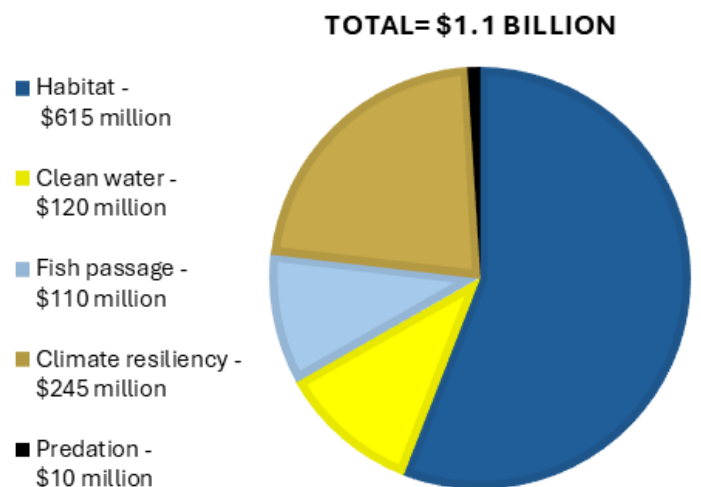
## Build climate resiliency

- ▶ The State expanded programs to **increase climate resilience** by:
  - » Investing nearly \$80 million to **build community resilience** to climate change.
  - » Providing \$120 million for **water supply and drought response** in the Columbia River basin.
  - » **Improving streamflow restoration** with \$45 million in new investments.

## Address predation and food web issues

- ▶ The State funded \$10 million to study and manage bird, marine mammal, and fish **predation on salmon and steelhead** across the state.

## Salmon Strategy 2023-25 Funding Summary



<sup>1</sup>Culvert injunction spending is not included in the Funding Summary.