

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Focal Areas



Klamath Basin Restoration

Background

The Klamath Basin contained some of the largest wetland complexes in the western United States and the Klamath River supported the third most productive salmon runs on the West Coast. However, long-term habitat changes including wetland conversion, river channelization, dams, and riparian degradation are contributing to chronic issue of poor water quality and lack of water.

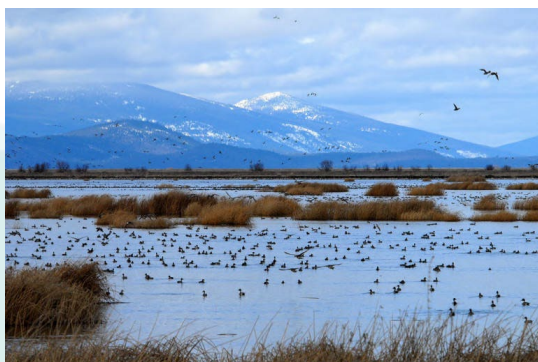
Climate change influenced drought is exacerbating the issue and taking toll on the fish, wildlife, and human populations in the Klamath Basin. Once abundant fish populations are threatened with extinction, and waterfowl now encounter wildlife refuges nearly devoid of water during their annual migrations.



Despite the challenges in the Klamath Basin, many stakeholders continue to engage and seek a productive path forward. Multiple agreements exist to guide productive collaboration to address these issues. The [Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement \(expired\)](#) (KBRA), outlines the natural resource, social, and economic priorities in the basin. The [Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement](#) (KHSA) will result in removal of four hydroelectric dams on the lower Klamath River beginning in 2023 to allow anadromous fishes to re-inhabit nearly 400 miles of river in the upper basin. [The Klamath Integrated Fisheries Restoration and Monitoring Plan](#) (IFRMP) provides a framework for prioritizing on the ground restoration projects. The resources provided by the IIJA will allow this work to proceed at a pace that was previously unfeasible.

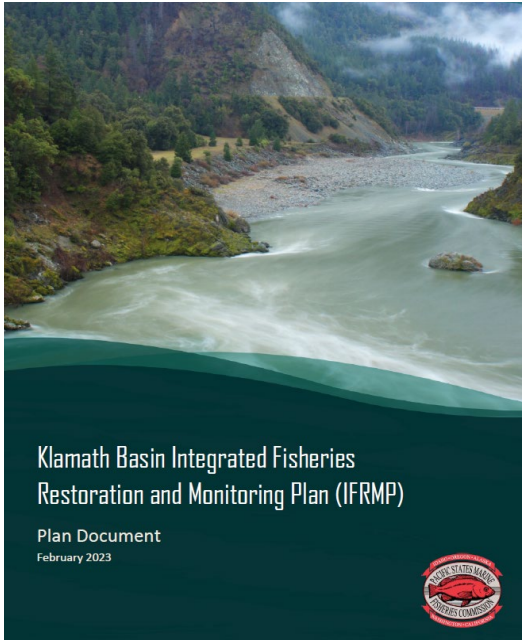
ODFW Implementation Strategies

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has identified habitat restoration and enhancement, fish screening and passage, and re-establishment of native anadromous fish runs as the primary areas of emphasis for IIJA opportunities in the Klamath Basin.



To facilitate this work, ODFW has added a Regional Habitat Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service Liaison, and Private Forest Stream Biologist position to assist in the Klamath region. This added capacity will provide the ability to engage with partners on more extensive restoration projects and to work across ownership boundaries to achieve the best outcome for the resources. The agency will continue to work on building capacity and encouraging partnerships to implement the projects and actions identified in the KBRA, [Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement](#), and IFRMP.





Accelerating ongoing efforts for fish screening and passage projects in the Klamath Basin is a priority for conservation of re-established fish populations, and is identified in the KPFA as a priority action item to address regulatory burdens on irrigators. ODFW and Trout Unlimited have a long-standing cooperative relationship to identify, prioritize, and fund screening and passage projects. ODFW and partners anticipate applying for IIJA funding to update the fish screening needs inventory, adding capacity to implement more fish screening and passage projects than was possible prior to the IIJA.

As part of salmon re-introduction and monitoring, ODFW is conducting baseline assessments and small-scale experiential releases of spring chinook to evaluate survival and outmigration patterns prior to dam removal. To facilitate data sharing for fishery monitoring projects, ODFW and partners are advancing a proposal to expand and integrate the existing fish monitoring network in the Klamath Basin and establish an efficient data

sharing system across agencies. IIJA funding is being sought to fill gaps in the existing system to provide for database integration and ongoing maintenance.

Potential IIJA Funding Opportunities

The ODFW plans to work in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, and partners to complete projects listed within the Klamath Basin. Programs through the IIJA that are well-aligned with focal area projects include:

- *USFWS Klamath Basin Restoration* has \$162 million earmarked for habitat restoration and water right acquisition to help restore the Klamath ecosystem, as well as for enhanced hatchery production of listed Klamath species.
- *USFWS National Fish Passage Program* provides \$200 million for fish passage and barrier removal projects.
- *NOAA Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants* provide \$400 million for fish passage by removal of dams and other in-stream barriers for native migratory fish.
- *BOR Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program* supports design, study, and construction of aquatic ecosystem restoration and protection projects.
- *BOR WaterSmart Program* has multiple grant opportunities totaling approximately \$565 million for water management improvements that contribute to water supply sustainability, increase drought resilience, and have environmental benefits.
- *NFWF American the Beautiful Challenge* includes IIJA funds from the DOI, USFS, and USDOD totaling approximately \$85 million a year for projects that connect and restore lands, waters, and wildlife.

Keep checking ODFW's IIJA website for updated information (<https://dfw.state.or.us/IIJA/>)

