

Salmon Recovery Creates Rural Jobs



Morgan Heim

Jobs have long been scarce on the Oregon coast. But now, investments in watershed restoration driven by the Coast Coho Partnership are creating a wave of jobs that demand local expertise.

The public/private partnership, led by Wild Salmon Center, works to recover threatened Oregon Coast coho by collaborating with local partners to prioritize and implement watershed restoration projects. Since 2017, the Partnership has directed nearly **\$11 million to projects up and down the Oregon coast**: dollars that stay in the coastal communities.

A University of Oregon study found that for every \$1 million invested in restoration, 15 to 30 new jobs are created. In 2022, habitat restoration projects funded by the Coast Coho Partnership will

“In the city, dozens of jobs might look small. But out here, in terms of employment, these numbers are huge.”

- Mizu Burruss, Siuslaw Watershed Council

fund dozens of workers in rural communities, from timber cutters and helicopter crews to biologists and restoration project managers.

In rural Lane County, for example, Partnership grants (surpassing \$1 million to date) fund seasonal work for dozens of tree tippers, heavy equipment operators, excavators, and truck drivers in the Siuslaw River watershed. These multi-year projects stabilize local incomes, boost the local tax base, and invest in the fishing jobs of the future.

BY THE NUMBERS:

15-30

Jobs created per \$1 million spent on watershed restoration work

90

Percent of watershed restoration grant dollars that stay in Oregon

\$1.2m

CCP 2021 funding for watershed restoration projects

168

Estimated 2021 seasonal jobs funded

29

Estimated 2021 long-term jobs funded

\$11m

CCP funds leveraged for the Oregon coast since 2017

Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; University of Oregon; Wild Salmon Center



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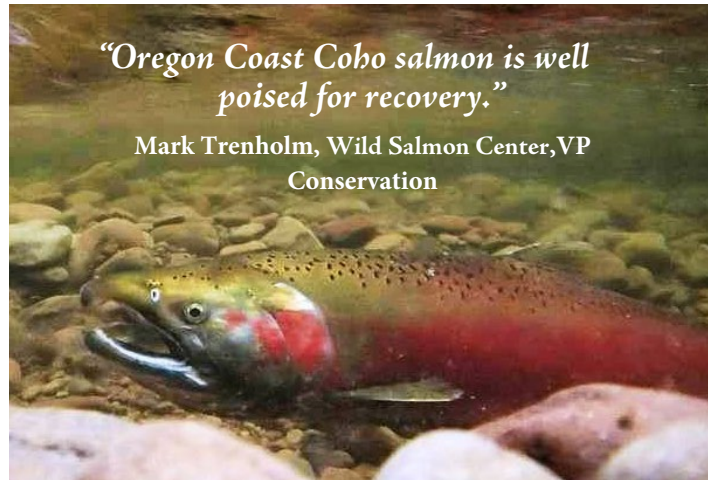
Benefits Now, and For Generations to Come

Even with intensive farm and forest land management, the Oregon coast still boasts some of the most intact salmon ecosystems in the lower 48. By strategically restoring watersheds, we can nudge the state’s coho salmon runs back to health.

Reintroducing logs into streams, constructing beaver dam analogues, and replacing aging culverts and tide gates—these and other restoration tools help create and reestablish access to the complex, cold-water habitat that coho need to thrive and adapt in the face of climate change.

Watershed restoration isn’t possible without local partners: boots on the ground to walk streams, build working relationships among neighbors, and get projects done. But the value of this work extends well beyond today. By restoring salmon runs, we restore the lifeblood of the Oregon coast. Salmon support commercial fishing businesses and guides, create recreational opportunities, and are a core cultural and food resource for Tribal communities.

Federal scientists agree that Oregon Coast coho is one of the best opportunities we have to recover a threatened salmon run. With investments in job-creating restoration, we can deliver a win for coastal communities that will last for generations.



“Oregon Coast Coho salmon is well poised for recovery.”

Mark Trenholm, Wild Salmon Center, VP Conservation



Oregon Coast coho and Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho are evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) protected under the Endangered Species Act. CCP strategic action plans (SAPs) prioritize coho habitat restoration needs in multiple Oregon coastal watersheds.

Coast Coho Partnership



The Coast Coho Partnership is a team of public and private partners, managed by the Wild Salmon Center, that convened in 2015 to accelerate the recovery of Oregon’s two oast coho runs.

coastcoho.org