



September 4, 2025

The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Introduction

The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) provides federal funding for the protection, conservation, and restoration of Pacific salmon species (*Oncorhynchus spp.*) and steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*) that are listed or at risk of being listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S.C. §§1531-1544). Specifically, the PCSRF supports West Coast Pacific salmon recovery efforts by providing grants to the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, California, and Alaska and to federally recognized Tribes of the Columbia River and Pacific Coast. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) administers the PCSRF.

Currently, 17 *evolutionarily significant units* of Pacific salmon and 11 *distinct population segments* of steelhead trout are listed under the ESA (Table 1). Other species at risk of being listed and potentially eligible for assistance through the PCSRF might include state-designated *salmonids* of concern (e.g., by the State of California).

Table 1. Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Trout Population Groups Listed Under the Endangered Species Act

Species	Number of ESUs or DPSs	Geographies of ESUs or DPSs
Chinook Salmon (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>)	9 ESUs	Coastal CA, CCV, CR (Lower, Upper), PS, Sacr R, SR, UWR
Chum Salmon (<i>O. keta</i>)	2 ESUs	CR, HC
Coho Salmon (<i>O. kisutch</i>)	4 ESUs	Central CA Coast, CR (Lower), OR Coast, Southern OR / Northern CA Coast
Sockeye Salmon (<i>O. nerka</i>)	2 ESUs	OL, SR
Steelhead Trout (<i>O. mykiss</i>)	11 DPSs	CCV, CR (Lower, Middle, Upper), CA Coast (Northern, Central, South-Central, Southern), PS, SR Basin, UWR

Source: CRS, using information from NMFS, “Pacific Salmon and Steelhead: ESA Protected Species.”

Notes: CA = California; CCV = California Central Valley; CR = Columbia River; DPS = Distinct Population Segment; ESU = Evolutionarily Significant Unit; HC = Hood Canal;

OL = Ozette Lake; OR = Oregon; PS = Puget Sound; Sacr R = Sacramento River; SR = Snake River; UWR = Upper Willamette River. Each included geographic location pertains to a particular ESU of Pacific salmon or DPS of steelhead trout. Some ESUs also include specific *spawning runs* (e.g., spring/summer- or fall-run Chinook salmon in the Snake River).

Congress established the PCSRF through provisions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000 (P.L. 106-113, Section 623; 16 U.S.C. §3645(d)(2)), and has appropriated funds to NOAA for its purposes. Some in Congress continue to express interest in the conservation, management, and future of Pacific salmon and steelhead trout. In its FY2026 budget request, NOAA requested to eliminate funding for the PCSRF. As of September 4, 2025, Congress had not enacted FY2026 appropriations for NOAA.

Types of Projects Supported by the PCSRF

Projects funded by grants from the PCSRF include those “necessary for the conservation of” salmon and steelhead trout populations listed or at risk of being listed under the ESA. Eligible projects also include those that restore or conserve habitat, monitor fish populations and habitat conditions, address watershed planning for fish populations, and maintain Pacific salmon and steelhead trout populations at levels necessary for the exercise of tribal treaty fishing rights or native subsistence fishing. Eligible projects are funded according to priorities, such as priority-one projects addressing factors limiting the success of ESA-listed Pacific salmon and/or necessary for exercising tribal treaty rights or native subsistence fishing (non-treaty tribal salmon fisheries). According to NMFS, state grant recipients are required to match at least 33% of PCSRF funds received.

NMFS’s FY2023 report to Congress on the PCSRF (the most recent such report) indicates that the majority of PCSRF funding since FY2000 (in nominal U.S. dollars [USD]) has gone to the states of Washington (\$563.5 million), California (\$333.6 million), and Oregon (\$330.8 million). Funds also have gone to the states of Alaska (\$256.6 million) and Idaho (\$84.9 million). Additionally, \$173.0 million has gone to Pacific Coastal Tribes and \$71.3 million has gone to Columbia River Tribes. Cumulatively, these funds total over \$1.8 billion (approximately \$2.7 billion in 2025 USD) in support of nearly 16,000 projects.

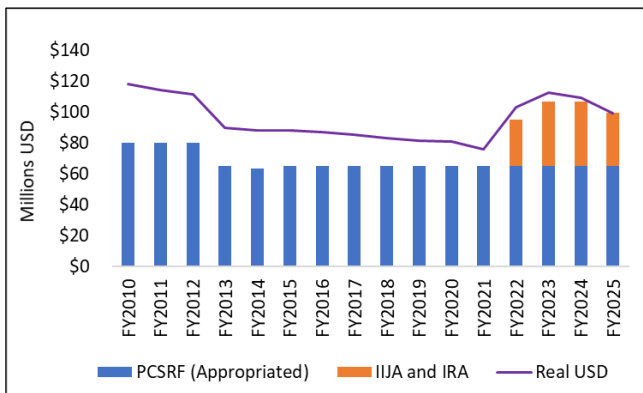
Appropriations for the PCSRF

Congress primarily has addressed the PCSRF through discretionary appropriations. Congress typically provides appropriations to the PCSRF through annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations laws. Additional funding from both the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; P.L. 117-58) and the

budget reconciliation measure commonly referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA; P.L. 117-169) also have supported certain PCSRF projects since FY2022.

Figure 1 includes appropriations for the PCSRF since FY2010. In its FY2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the PCSRF, NMFS indicated that funding sources for FY2025 were from annual appropriations and the IIJA. Among its contents, the FY2025 reconciliation law, P.L. 119-21 (also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act), rescinded unobligated balances of amounts made available to NOAA under certain sections of the IRA. As of September 4, 2025, CRS was unable to determine whether any rescissions included unobligated funds for the PCSRF.

Figure 1. Appropriations to NOAA in Support of the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF)
(FY2010-FY2025; in millions of appropriated nominal and real dollars [2025 USD])



Sources: Senate Committee on Appropriations, Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations acts and reports for FY2010 to FY2025; P.L. 117-58; P.L. 117-169; NMFS, *Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund FY2023 Report to Congress*, July 2024; NMFS, “Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund,” including press releases; NMFS, “Apply for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund,” and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index.

Notes: The PCSRF is a discretionary appropriations account, which typically receives appropriations in annual appropriations legislation and periodically receives appropriations in other laws (i.e., IRA; P.L. 117-169). Values include funds (orange bars) provided through the IIJA (P.L. 117-58) and the IRA. Additional funds identified for FY2025 include only those identified by NMFS in association with the IIJA. Nominal appropriated dollar values (bars) were converted to real USD (purple line) using Consumer Price Index data and the gross domestic product deflator. For FY2000-FY2009, Congress appropriated approximately \$800 million in support of the PCSRF (nominal USD; equivalent to approximately \$1.4 billion real USD).

In June 2025, NOAA submitted a budget proposal to Congress seeking to terminate funding for the PCSRF in FY2026. A House FY2026 draft appropriations measure, scheduled for markup, recommended \$65 million for the PCSRF (the same nominal amount in annual CJS appropriations since FY2013). The Senate committee on appropriations for CJS recommended \$65 million (S. 2354).

PCSRF Progress and FY2024 Funded Projects

NMFS has stated that it measures progress on PCSRF projects through various performance metrics. For example, NMFS reported that from FY2000 to FY2023, PCSRF

projects created approximately 4,500 acres of wetland and estuarine habitat and resulted in the treatment of approximately 880,000 acres of wetland, upland, and riparian habitat. The majority (77%) of these *treated* (i.e., restored or enhanced) acres are upland habitat. NMFS also reported that approximately 4,000 barriers to fish passage have been removed through PCSRF-supported efforts, including the opening of over 12,000 stream miles. Other reported uses of funds include support of projects for land acquisition and habitat treatment; hatchery fish enhancement; research, monitoring, and evaluation; and program administration and support for tribal capacity for fishing and conservation. NMFS estimates that every \$1 million PCSRF investment in watershed restoration creates 13 to 32 jobs and \$2.2 million to \$3.4 million in economic activity.

In FY2024, NMFS recommended approximately \$105.9 million in PCSRF funding for 14 projects and programs in the states of Alaska (3 projects; \$8.0 million total), California (2 projects; \$20.5 million total), Idaho (3 projects; \$10.2 million), Oregon (3 projects; \$32.7 million total), and Washington (3 projects; \$34.4 million total). Of these projects, eight are in support of tribal efforts.

Issues and Considerations for Congress

NOAA’s proposed PCSRF funding cuts are of concern to some Members of Congress and some stakeholders because of potential effects to fish populations and to Tribes that rely on PCSRF support. Some others raise concerns about present and future threats (e.g., climatic stressors) to salmon and steelhead trout populations and the ability to respond to them with less federal support. Others are concerned about the time that may be needed to restore salmon and steelhead trout populations and their habitat without consistent levels of funding, including implications for tribal treaty rights. Alternatively, other concerns include the cost and effectiveness of past PCSRF-supported conservation efforts and the degree to which PCSRF-funded land acquisitions may result in conflicts among stakeholders. Relatedly, some Members have introduced past proposals seeking to limit funding for the PCSRF (e.g., H.Amdt. 1048 in the 112th Congress) or its use for certain activities (e.g., H.Amdt. 740 in the 113th Congress).

Congress may evaluate the PCSRF’s functions when debating appropriations and may consider aforementioned stakeholder perspectives on its relative necessity and effectiveness for salmon and steelhead trout conservation efforts. In these debates, Congress also may consider potential ecological or economic implications of decreasing, maintaining, or increasing PCSRF appropriations (e.g., if altered funding for conservation may affect salmon populations or native subsistence fishing). Congress also may assess how PCSRF-supported efforts might overlap with other federal fish conservation programs (e.g., those in support of restoring fish passage) and whether opportunities to address redundancies or efficiencies may be desirable. Further, Congress may consider if programs similar to the PCSRF may be warranted for other ESA-listed or depleted fish species.

Anthony R. Marshak, Analyst in Natural Resources Policy

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.