



2021

Governor's salmon strategy update

Securing a future for people and salmon in Washington

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Tribal land acknowledgement

Washington acknowledges the ancestral and contemporary lands that Native American tribes and nations have called home since ancient times. We recognize tribal sovereignty and recognize that this place and region of the Pacific Northwest holds spiritual, cultural, and personal significance for Native American Indian tribes and nations. This acknowledgment is an expression of gratitude for the historic and ongoing self-determination of the tribes to be stewards for these lands, waters, natural resources, and many creatures that we are so privileged to enjoy here. Washington commits to honor the role of Native American tribes and nations as it works collectively to recover salmon.

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Message from the governor

Dear fellow Washingtonians,

As a young boy, I spent most of my summers at my grandpa's cabin. I ran wild, sailed a little boat on the lake, fished, and learned about the natural environment. Those were glorious days.

One of my most profound memories from that time is when members of the Tulalip Tribes invited me to help pull in the beach seine lines. As salmon thrashed in the nets, I understood – even at a young age – that the Tulalip people had a respect and appreciation for the fish and that what I was doing was part of something much bigger than myself.

These childhood experiences influenced who I am today and how I hope to protect our beautiful state as it grapples with the consequences of climate change and a changing landscape.

Despite the significant progress we've made by establishing environmental regulations, limiting fishing, and creating and implementing habitat restoration plans, too many salmon runs are teetering on the brink of extinction and our orcas are starving to death. Simply put, our progress is outpaced by mounting challenges.

This document details the priorities that will bring us closer to saving salmon, Washington's economy and our way of life. Making these recommendations a reality will not only secure Washington's natural heritage, but they will better honor our treaties with tribes and amend past injustices.

The spirit of that future is captured here. Let's get to work.

Very truly yours,

Gov. Jay Inslee

Urgency of salmon recovery

Today, Washingtonians stand at a crossroads with two, clear choices on salmon recovery.

We can continue our current practices and lose salmon, orcas and a way of life that has sustained the Pacific Northwest for eons.

Or we can put Washington on a recovery path that more actively protects salmon and other natural resources — all which are vital to the state's economy, growth and prosperity.

While the Snake River Sockeye has been endangered for at least 30 years, the number of protected salmon has increased, with the government listing 15 endangered or threatened salmon species² in Washington since the 1990s. Determined to save this treasured icon, thousands of people across the state have worked to restore and recover salmon, restoring thousands of acres for fish habitat over the years.

Despite these efforts, we're losing more habitat than we're gaining.

Far too many salmon face increased threats that could make them extinct. Over 70% of the salmon and steelhead listed as 'federally threatened' or 'endangered' are not keeping pace with recovery, are in crisis or they require immediate action.

Climate change has increased wildfires and droughts, worsened ocean conditions, warmed streams, shifted food webs, intensified pollutants, thrown predator populations out of balance, and brought ecosystems that support salmon and people at a tipping point. Salmon runs, which once numbered in the 10-16 million in the Columbia River, are experiencing their lowest abundance in 10 years. And scarcity of Puget Sound salmon has pushed Southern Resident orcas closer to extinction and limited fishing across the West Coast up into Alaska. The last groups of salmon and steelhead from the federal Endangered Species Act show signs of decline, providing dire warning signs of what's to come.

Time is running out. We must act now to restore balance and save our salmon.

What we propose

We envision a future with healthy and resilient salmon, steelhead and trout runs that are restored to harvestable levels across the state.

These healthy and resilient runs are indicators of clean and abundant water, thriving habitat and ecosystems, a stabilized climate, a growing orca population, honored tribal treaty rights, commercially and recreationally harvestable fisheries, a diverse and robust economy, engaged communities and strong cultural traditions that speak to the uniqueness of Washington.

To put us on a path to save salmon and Washington's way of life, we recommend the following actions:

1. Protect and restore vital salmon habitat (*on governor's 2022-25 action list*).
2. Invest in clean water infrastructure for salmon and people (*on governor's 2022-25 action list*).
3. Correct fish passage barriers and restore salmon access to historical habitat (*on governor's 2022-25 action list*).
4. Build climate resiliency (*on governor's 2022-25 action list*).
5. Align harvest, hatcheries and hydropower with salmon recovery.
6. Address predation and food web issues for salmon.
7. Enhance commitments and coordination across agencies and programs.
8. Strengthen science, monitoring and accountability.

How we will better enforce and expand land use regulatory protections for habitat:

- Exercise its full range of land use regulatory authorities and work with local jurisdictions to fully enforce current regulatory protections. Provide technical assistance to local governments to implement local land use plans. The state will also work with local jurisdictions to enhance its authorities where gaps exist.
- Work with local jurisdictions to close loopholes and eliminate exemptions that allow vital salmon habitat to degrade. Habitats include floodplains, shorelines and riparian areas.
- Improve and sustain current state incentive programs while looking for opportunities to create new incentive programs.
- Better integrate salmon recovery into local, county, and state regulatory land use programs. Work to define the term 'net ecological gain,' and work with tribes to establish a baseline for net ecological gain. Create programs where land use development improves habitat and/or ecological function at the watershed scale.
- Seek opportunities to develop programs that support and promote the concepts and practices of ecosystems as natural infrastructure worthy of long-term capital planning and investments.
- Protect and restore fish habitat by avoiding and/or mitigating site-specific and cumulative negative impacts of continuing growth and development.
- Amend and improve state and federal regulatory permitting processes to increase the implementation of habitat restoration efforts.

How we will establish a statewide approach for fully functioning riparian habitat:

- Establish a statewide standard for fully functioning riparian habitat, which requires actions through growth management, agriculture, forest lands, water quality and quantity and riparian strategies. This will help us better protect existing habitat and increase riparian habitat in watersheds where riparian areas are critical to maintaining cool water temperatures.
- Leverage the Growth Management Act and Shoreline Master program to implement a statewide riparian standard through local land use planning and regulation.
- Establish a riparian reserve program that provides financial incentives for all landowners to set aside and restore riparian areas important for salmon recovery.

How we will establish a permanent funding source to fully fund salmon recovery plans:

- Establish a permanent, dedicated funding source to fully fund salmon recovery plans with a focus on habitat restoration and protection programs. This will build local capacity to fully implement and integrate recovery plans with state agency programs. We need to come together and work on the “how” of this. One option that would require legislative action is to create a Natural Resources Capital Commission to better understand and value ecosystem services and make recommendations to the governor and Legislature about how to fund conservation and recovery actions.
- Prioritize funding for protection and restoration of marine and nearshore habitat, stream flow, floodplain habitat, wetlands and other critical salmon habitat to support salmon rearing, migration and foraging.

How we will improve habitat conditions on agricultural lands to support salmon recovery:

- Create, restore, and maintain riparian buffers adjacent to agricultural lands. This will protect and make sure we reach water quality standards for salmon rearing and spawning.
- Work with agricultural communities to improve farm and sector-based practices to prevent runoff and reduce the use of chemicals on agricultural lands. This will improve water quality and quantity, in part through protecting and restoring habitat in riparian areas that are adjacent to agricultural lands.
- Improve the regulation, monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards that are adjacent to agricultural lands while we work collaboratively with farmers. Modify the best management practices on agricultural land to protect aquatic life.

How we will maintain and improve forest and fish agreement to support salmon recovery:

- Fully support forest and riparian programs that restore and protect habitat to support healthy, harvestable quantities of fish. Strengthen regulations to restore and maintain habitat. This will support healthy, harvestable quantities of fish.
- Strengthen regulations and other measures necessary to meet fish conservation requirements of the Endangered Species Act, as well as water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act.
- Maintain a viable timber industry and provide long-term regulatory certainty.

How we will improve stormwater management to support salmon recovery:

- Fund transformative investments in stormwater infrastructure to achieve clean, cold water for salmon and people. The state will make investments to reduce negative impacts on salmon habitat and water quality caused by urban land development and changes in stormwater flow.
- Ensure that local jurisdictions mitigate impacts of urban stormwater and restore habitat where impacts occur.
- Identify and reduce pollutants and chemicals in runoff from roadways through new infrastructure and road maintenance while at the same time working with industry to identify alternative materials that are less harmful to salmon (e.g., the harmful chemical 6PPD-quinone in tire dust).
- Identify toxic hot spots in the stormwater. Prioritize these for retrofits and/or redevelopment to meet current standards.
- Prioritize and accelerate sediment remediation, nearshore restoration, and cleanup of hot spots in forage fish and Chinook rearing habitats consistent with recovery plan priorities. Increase funding for the Stormwater Financial Assistance program to incentivize immediate and accelerated retrofits and other source control actions.

How we will improve wastewater management to achieve clean water for salmon and people:

- Invest in wastewater infrastructure to reduce nutrients (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus) and pollutants (e.g., pharmaceuticals, PCB's and metals) in waterways.
- Revise and implement water quality standards to respond to aquatic ecosystem needs.
- Implement nonpoint source "best management practices," and nonpoint action plans.
- Improve regulations, monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards.
- Encourage and incentivize greater reuse/reclamation of wastewater for beneficial uses to keep water in streams for salmon.
- Incentivize waste-to-energy and energy efficiency upgrades for wastewater treatment plants.
- Boost local government capacity to plan and execute grant and loan-funded wastewater infrastructure projects.

Correct fish passage barriers and restore salmon access to their historical habitat

How we will correct all state-owned fish passage barriers that impede recovery:

- Complete the requirements of the culvert injunction for correcting state-owned fish barriers by 2030. Also expand barrier correction efforts beyond the geographic areas addressed by the culvert injunction.
- Expand funding and support beyond state-owned salmon barriers throughout every salmon recovery region to restore salmon access to historical habitat.
- Fund and implement the statewide barrier correction strategy developed by the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board and make sure it aligns with barrier removal priorities that regional recovery plans identify.
- Develop long-range plans to address large-scale infrastructure barriers, such as railroads and highways, that will require major state and federal investments.

How we will correct non-state-owned fish passage barriers that impede recovery:

- Work with local jurisdictions (cities and counties) across the state to improve fish access and correct barriers on local roads.
- Sequence fish barrier correction efforts within stream reaches to amplify access to more habitat.
- Secure federal funding to correct federally-owned fish passage barriers.
- Secure state and federal funding to support barrier corrections for local jurisdictions.

How we will increase access to historic salmon habitat, which includes reintroducing salmon above blocked areas by dams, culverts, undersized bridges or other barriers:

- Reintroduce salmon above dams and other human-caused barriers to meet native peoples' cultural and spiritual values, honor treaty rights, support recovery efforts and increase cultural and economic benefits for all Washingtonians. This includes the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams on the Columbia River and the Tacoma Diversion, Howard Hanson and Mud Mountain dams in the Puget Sound.
- Secure funding and science to facilitate partnerships with tribes and recovery partners to prioritize and pursue reintroductions across the state.

How we will improve the adaptive capacity of natural systems so they can absorb increasing stresses from climate change:

- Implement strategies and actions to address changing conditions and protect and enhance stream flows for salmon at all life stages. Actions include protecting and restoring key salmon habitats and ecosystem functions, including the need for cold water, based on future impacts due to a changing climate. These actions must include senior tribal water rights once those have been adjudicated and quantified.
- Assess changing stream flows due to climate change and improve flows by adaptively managing water use. This includes peak flows and low flows because both can be detrimental to salmon at different life stages.
- Identify and protect current or new sources of cold water that will be vital to salmon survival with a changing climate.
- Identify lake and reservoir temperature impacts with stream flow to buffer stream temperatures for salmon.
- Retain or provide adequate amounts of water in streams throughout the year to protect and restore fish habitat that supports all salmon life stages.
- Monitor progress on instream flow mitigation plans to determine whether they are effective and require improvements to meet targeted flows.
- Provide funding to update salmon recovery plans to incorporate changing conditions and climate resiliency.
- Ensure culvert and barrier corrections are climate resilient and will accommodate predicted changes in stream flows due to climate change.
- Monitor investments made through the Climate Commitment Act to ensure we are achieving climate resiliency.
- Better understand ocean conditions and how they impact salmon survival while they are at sea, including if there is enough food in the ocean to support juvenile salmonid growth and adult survival. Also better understand the impact of ocean acidification on salmon behavior.

How we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, expand programs to sequester carbon and improve habitat conditions:

- Fully implement ESSHB 2311 from the 2020 legislative session to stem the tide of climate change and impacts to salmon habitat by achieving greenhouse gas emissions targets by 2050.

- Substantively engage in global efforts to combat the causes of climate change as salmon life cycle depends on more than actions in Washington.
- Increase carbon sequestration by planting trees, preserving forests, restoring estuaries and kelp forests, improving agricultural soil health and other carbon storage opportunities to absorb existing high levels of carbon in the atmosphere and prevent more carbon release.
- Implement provisions of the Climate Commitment Act that provides funding for climate resilient habitat improvements.

How we will ensure clean, cold water in streams and rivers in the future with a changing climate:

- Implement water quality plans for temperature in high priority salmon recovery areas to restore the baseline temperature needs of salmon today.
- Incorporate future climate change impacts when prioritizing investments in natural infrastructure in upland habitat and riparian areas. This will help us buffer against increasing weather variability and intensity and offer better success at absorbing environmental changes.
- Incorporate future climate change impacts into future water quantity and water quality streamflow needs for salmon that satisfy all of the salmon’s life cycle needs for migration and temperature. Consider the beneficial uses of reclaimed water and take pressure off areas that have exceed its allocated water rights.
- Launch a Blueprint 2030 initiative to identify reforms we need to Washington water law. These will keep pace with demands for water in the context of climate change and population growth and incorporate salmon as a beneficial public use.

5

More effectively integrate salmon recovery into harvest, hatcheries and hydropower

How we will maintain and support co-manager processes for hatchery management to better align with salmon recovery:

- Protect, restore and enhance the productivity, production and diversity of salmonids and their ecosystems. This will sustain ceremonial, subsistence, commercial and recreational fisheries, and other related cultural, spiritual, and ecological values.
- Support all regional salmon recovery organizations to address hatchery management within the regional salmon recovery plans.

How we will maintain and support co-manager processes for harvest management to align with salmon recovery:

- Protect, restore, and enhance the production and diversity of salmonids and their ecosystems to sustain treaty reserved fishing rights, ceremonial subsistence, commercial and recreational fisheries, and other related cultural, spiritual and ecological values.
- Develop and implement a harvest management and enforcement program that documents recreational and commercial harvest rates and demonstrates the state's compliance with allocated harvest limits.
- Transition the Columbia River mainstem commercial gillnet fishery to other types of fishing gear to reduce impacts to natural original salmon runs and increase available food sources for our Southern Resident orcas.
- Work with co-managers to develop new strategies for harvest while harvest and habitat managers coordinate management decisions.
- Work with Canadian, tribal, federal, and other state managers to resolve interjurisdictional impediments to salmon recovery.
- Ensure that salmon harvest allocations provide food for Southern Resident orcas *first* before allocating the harvest to commercial or recreational anglers.

How we will align hydropower with salmon recovery:

- Expand and diversify renewable energy sources (hydro, solar, wind and tidal) as a green energy source with salmon recovery.
- Engage in the federal permitting process to ensure there are effective upstream and downstream fish passages at hydro sites. When fish passage is not feasible, we must advocate for alternative methods to get salmon to their historical migration areas.
- Achieve 'no net impact' for each species affected by hydropower projects by requiring appropriate mitigation strategies throughout the projects' license term.
- Pursue flexible spill strategies to ensure there is adequate upstream and downstream fish passage at hydropower facilities.

6

Address predatory and food web issues for salmon

How we will address predatory issues in the Columbia River, Puget Sound and the Washington coast:

- Reduce the impacts from predators, including pinnipeds, avian predators, native and nonnative fish, and other invasive species.
- Monitor efforts to reduce pinniped impacts on salmon survival in the Columbia River estuary to guide current and future management actions.
- Adjust catch and size limits on nonnative predatory game fish to minimize their impact on listed species when they are shown to be a threat.

How we will increase forage fish populations in Puget Sound:

- Fund ecosystem-wide monitoring programs to establish baseline for underlying ecosystem conditions and forage fish populations.
- Implement findings from Salish Sea Marine Survival Study.
- Support acquisition and restoration of nearshore habitat to increase the abundance of forage fish for salmon sustenance.

7

Enhance commitments and coordination across agencies and programs.

How we will make sure agencies are coordinating activities across habitat, hatcheries, hydropower, harvest and predation:

- Convene the Natural Resources Subcabinet on a biannual basis to ensure agency cross-coordination on key salmon recovery emerging issues and actions.
- Strengthen the state's commitment and accountability across separately elected agencies, cabinet agencies, and commissions to effectively implement this statewide, salmon recovery strategy.

How we will align state agency salmon recovery budget and policy priorities with recovery plans:

- Amplify the role of the Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office to convene and coordinate state agencies around salmon recovery priorities. The Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office will track implementation of this strategy and make recommendations to the governor and Legislature that would further the success of salmon recovery.
- The GSRO will prepare a timeline and implementation plan that, together with a schedule and recommended budget, identifies specific actions in regional recovery plans for state agency actions and assistance necessary to implement local and regional recovery plans.

8

Strengthen science, monitoring and accountability

How we will establish an independent science adviser panel to coordinate a statewide science, monitoring, accountability and adaptive management approach for salmon recovery:

- Re-establish the Independent Science Panel at the Washington State Academy of Sciences to ensure that sound science is used in salmon recovery efforts. The panel will also help us develop a statewide salmon recovery science plan that guides state agency science, monitors programs and supports implementation of regional recovery plans.

How we will secure funding for monitoring, accountability, communication and adaptive management:

- Advocate for federal funding for federal agencies (NOAA, USGS, USFS) to help us monitor and evaluate for salmon recovery.
- Increase funding for monitoring and science-based efforts across Washington for salmon recovery. Collaborate on the science and monitoring needs across regions to leverage resources, better understand the gaps in salmon recovery and provide accountability on investments and programs.
- Establish accountability and effectiveness monitoring of state programs. This will help us achieve salmon recovery goals. It will also help us more effectively monitor restoration projects to determine if we’re successful in achieving salmon recovery metrics, which includes increased salmon abundance.
- Secure funding to update limiting factors analysis. Increase funding for monitoring and science-based efforts across Washington for salmon recovery to better assess the responses in salmon, steelhead, and trout populations and their habitats to specific strategies undertaken. Collaborate on the science and monitoring needs across regions to leverage resources, better understand the gaps in salmon recovery and provide accountability on investments and programs.

How we will improve communication and coordination:

- Increase salmon recovery outreach and education to promote knowledge and awareness in schools and communities. Better recognize the benefits of salmon recovery and leverage them. This includes increasing economic benefits, jobs and climate resiliency.
- Expand the collaborative, engagement processes with public and private sectors and interest groups that impact and influence salmon recovery (e.g., Columbia Basin Partnership, Yakima Basin Integrated Plan; Flooding, Farms and Fish; business and tech companies, etc.).
- Expand collaborative engagement with local and state governments to coordinate salmon recovery actions, improve partnerships and enhance operational capacity to implement recovery programs.

Our commitments to salmon and people

This section details our commitments as we follow our new action items and work to achieve salmon recovery.

1. Honor commitments to tribes.
2. Assure federal commitments and funding for salmon recovery.
3. Prioritize commitments to environmental justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.

1 Honor commitments to tribes

The state will meet its obligations to honor commitments to tribes and the co-management process.

- The Governor's Office will make sure there is government-to-government engagement and commitment through the executive branch in support of salmon recovery and upholding tribal treaty rights.

2 Assure federal commitments and funding for salmon recovery

- The state will work with federal agencies and the Congressional Delegation to prevent federal rollbacks of landmark environmental protection and funding. It will also specifically work with the delegation to resist and oppose federal decisions to roll back environmental laws that impact water, land, air, the environment and ecosystems.

- Assure federal funding, engagement, and support for salmon recovery across key federal agencies, programs and sectors. It will also strengthen federal funding and ensure consistency with federal regulatory programs or measures to meet fish conservation requirements of the Endangered Species Act, as well as water quality.

3

Prioritize commitments to environmental justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.

- Incorporate environmental justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion policies within the salmon recovery effort by including Indigenous knowledge; better assessing and considering the needs and values of historically marginalized, or overburdened communities; and funding for more diverse salmon recovery voices.
- Incorporate environmental justice and equity considerations within salmon recovery grant and incentive programs.
- Expand the salmon recovery partner base and develop relationships and increase coordination with community leaders and local governments, especially in vulnerable and overburdened communities.

How we will implement these recommendations

This strategy will require engagement from state agencies, tribes, regional recovery organizations, and salmon recovery partners to ensure our progress on these long-term goals.

GSRO is the lead agency to coordinate this statewide strategy and its implementation. It will bring state agency leadership together to develop biennial agency work priorities that include legislative, policy and budget proposals with regards to salmon recovery. The biennial work priorities will reflect near-term (2-4 year) priorities and Governor's Office initiatives that align with tribal priorities and salmon recovery plans.

The GSRO will then submit a biennial work plan (on behalf of state agencies) to the Governor's Office. The biennial work plan will leverage data provided in the statewide state of salmon recovery and watershed health report¹ and will be consistent with guidance provided in the state's salmon recovery act² and adopted salmon recovery plans.

¹ RCW 77.85.020

² RCW 77.85.150(2)

Biennial work plan

The biennial work plan for salmon recovery will outline the near-term legislative, policy and budget priorities for salmon recovery.

In coordination with the Governor's Office, the GSRO in will convene natural resource agencies beginning January 2022.

The Statewide Salmon Recovery Strategy agency priorities will be due to the Governor's Office in September during even years to coincide with the biennial legislative process. All cabinet agencies must help the GSRO prepare the priorities. The state asks noncabinet agencies and separately elected officials to help develop biennial priorities so that it can reflect all statewide needs for achieving salmon recovery.

The Governor's Office will use the work priorities to consult with federally recognized tribes at the state/tribal Centennial Accord meetings in the fall. The statewide priorities will be used to inform the Governor's salmon recovery legislative and budget proposals.

As the entity tasked with maintaining the state's commitment to salmon recovery, GSRO will continue to³:

- Work with regional salmon recovery organizations on salmon recovery issues to ensure a coordinated and consistent statewide approach to salmon recovery.
- Consult federal agencies to implement federal commitments in the recovery plans.
- Help state agencies, local governments, landowners and other interested parties get federal assurances that plans, programs or activities are consistent with fish recovery under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Convene science panels as needed on issues that pertain to salmon recovery.
- Prepare a 10-year implementation plan that, with a schedule and recommended budget, identifies specific actions in regional recovery plans for state agency actions and assistance that we need to implement local and regional recovery plans.
- Report progress on state's commitments in the biennial State of the Salmon Report.

³ RCW 77.85.030(4)

How we will manage these recommendations

The 2021 strategy relies on a commitment to monitor progress and adaptively manage programs and agencies to achieve recovery. This requires a robust monitoring and adaptive management program that is aligned with the regional salmon recovery plans and tied to actions and activities of state agencies to ensure our progress. **Basically, we will use science to inform our management decisions so that we know what's really happening to salmon.**

How we monitor guidance

The state operates under guidance provided by the Statewide Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy (2002), The Washington State Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health (2011), and NOAA Northwest Region Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation Guidance for ESA Listed Species (2011).

These documents form the foundation for statewide salmon recovery monitoring in Washington. We need to update and synthesize findings from these guidance documents and more adequately evaluate progress of recovery strategies, activities, actions and outcomes.

Washington State Academy of Sciences

GSRO is authorized to contract with the Washington State Academy of Sciences to ensure that we use sound science to guide salmon recovery (RCW 77.85).

The Washington State Academy of Sciences (WSAS) reviewed the 2021 strategy to help us develop an initial list of science priorities that would inform a science and adaptive management plan. Ahead of developing this plan, the WSAS developed a list of initial findings from the strategy that can guide future work (reference Appendix F).

The 2021 strategy will rely on these previous science-based documents. It will also enlist the support and services of Washington State Academy of Sciences to lead the development of an updated adaptive management strategy that guides and tracks the 2021 strategy's progress, actions and outcomes.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management Strategies

How we will organize and align existing salmon population and data:

- Coordinate and align the collection, storage, analysis and reporting of viable salmon population data for recovery reporting purposes.

How we will enhance data collection and analysis:

- Work with state and tribes to identify key priorities for data expansion and identify key questions associated with key information. Expand the collection of adult and juvenile data to ensure we have adequate statewide coverage of freshwater productivity assessments.

How we will conduct statewide population status and population designation assessments:

- Work with tribes and the state to update the Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI) statewide.

How we will update and revive limiting factors analysis:

- Work with regional salmon recovery organizations, tribes, and state agencies to update limiting factors analyses to ensure actions are targeting the most important factors that limit salmon recovery.

How we will develop a statewide adapting management framework:

- Work with the Washington State Academy of Sciences and build on existing monitoring guidance to carry out the following items:
 - Reaffirm key questions for salmon recovery.
 - Identify clear objectives and measurable outcomes.
 - Work with agencies to ensure data collection aligns with measurable outcomes.
 - Establish clear triggers and benchmarks for our key strategies.
 - Work with tribes and the state to compile data and reports on the progress.
 - Develop and promote complementary, integrated and flexible approaches to collect, analyze and share monitoring information within and across sites, watersheds and regions.
 - Provide agencies with leadership, coordination and technical assistance to deliver an adaptive management program.

Tribes and salmon background

Since ancient times, Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest have rooted their cultures and economies in the region's land, water and abundant natural resources. The arrival of Western settlers in the Pacific Northwest significantly affected Indigenous communities and the region's salmon populations. The tribes have worked on salmon recovery since then. Ultimately, the return and survival of salmon relies on the tribe's knowledge, understanding, expertise and experience with salmon.

The importance of sovereign nations and treaty rights

Washington recognizes the sovereignty of all federally recognized tribes through regular government-to-government relations and the co-management of fisheries. There are 29 federally recognized tribes within the state and many more tribes across the Northwest that have a sovereign right to manage resources within and adjacent to Washington. The work of the state begins with honoring and recognizing tribal sovereignty.

Between 1854 and 1856, Washington Territorial Gov. Isaac Stevens negotiated eight treaties with tribes throughout the region. Congress ratified these treaties, which (like other international treaties) hold the same legal weight as the U.S. Constitution, and are the supreme law of the land (article 6, clause 2, U.S. Constitution).

In signing treaties with the United States, tribes ceded title to much of the land that would become the state of Washington (statehood in 1889) and moved their communities to reservations.⁴ However, the tribes retained their aboriginal right to fish, hunt, and gather in traditional places on and off reservations. The federal government recognized these rights in the signing of the treaties.

All treaties with the tribes in what is now Washington include similar language referencing "the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations is secured to said Native Americans in common with all citizens of the Territory..." Treaties with tribes from the inland Northwest also included clauses that retained the tribes' right to fish and hunt in usual places. As early as 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court issued decisions that upheld tribal members' right to fish. The right to access salmon in traditional places off-reservation was a right reserved by the tribes and recognized by the United States in treaties, which U.S. citizens⁵ could not infringe upon.

⁴ Not all federally recognized tribes in the Washington signed treaties with the U.S government and in some cases were moved to reservations via executive order. Some non-treaty tribe's right to fish and hunt are limited to reservations while in other non-treaty tribes maintain a legal right to fish and hunt off reservation.

⁵ See *United States v. Winans*, 198 U.S. 371 (1905)

Many court cases have upheld federally recognized rights of tribes including US v. Oregon in 1969 (Judge Belloni) and U.S. v. Washington in 1974 (Judge Boldt). Among other provisions, these legal decisions found that the treaty tribes had a federally recognized right to fish in usual and accustomed places. Furthermore, these decisions ruled that treaty tribes had a right to half of the annual harvestable salmon catch in Washington and led to the current legal co-management framework where treaty tribes are co-managers of the salmon and steelhead with state and federal agencies.

Roles in salmon recovery

Role of the tribes

There are 29 federally recognized tribal governments within Washington. And there are several tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest with interests in salmon who pass through Washington waters.

Tribes have multiple legal authorities and roles in salmon recovery. Tribes are sovereign nations and engage on a government-to-government basis with the United States and Washington on salmon issues. They have treaty reserved rights for salmon and shellfish and exercise those rights through a variety of forums. These forums include state-tribal co-management processes and government-to-government negotiations. The tribes are recognized by the U.S. federal government as co-managers of natural resources and work in close collaboration together — as equals — to manage salmon harvest, hatcheries, and habitat recovery efforts in Washington.

In addition to a tribe's legal standing as sovereign nations and treaty tribes, they also engage in watershed restoration and protection efforts across the state. This includes serving as board members on regional salmon recovery boards, lead entity watersheds and project sponsors, and implementing salmon habitat restoration and acquisition projects across Washington.

Role of state agencies

Since we published the 1999 salmon recovery strategy, our state agencies have adopted and incorporated many of the report's proposed strategies to protect and restore salmon into their daily operations. To work toward achieving salmon recovery goals, each agency has designed and improved several programs that directly and indirectly benefit threatened salmon and their critical habitat. Additionally, each state biennium allocates funds for salmon recovery projects and agency-run programs designed to fund grant projects and better regulate human impacts to the state's watersheds. *(To learn more about each state agency's role and see an overview of the projects and programs they have implemented in the last 20 years, please see [Appendix A.](#))*

Role of the regional organizations

The regional recovery organizations develop and implement salmon recovery plans and regional recovery strategies for salmon and steelhead. These include habitat, harvest management regimes, hatchery management and hydroelectric impacts (RCW 77.85.090).

Eight salmon recovery regions and seven regional organizations developed and coordinated the following recovery plans in Washington:

1. Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership
2. Puget Sound Partnership
3. Hood Canal Coordinating Council
4. Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
5. Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board
6. Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board
7. Snake River Salmon Recovery Board
8. Northeast Upper Columbia Region

Regional organizations advise respective lead entities to implement habitat protection and restoration projects under regional salmon recovery plans. They also ensure that habitat strategies align with the broader regional framework for salmon recovery for their respective watersheds.

Lead entities are watershed-based groups that bring local governments, state and federal agencies, tribes, citizens, communities, nonprofits and businesses together under the direction and guidance of their respective regions. They also coordinate state and federal funding that is available for salmon restoration and protection, recruit grant applicants to develop habitat projects aligned with the regional strategies, and evaluate and prioritize these projects to maximize the public's investment into habitat restoration and protection.

Role of the salmon recovery plans

Recovery plans are a requirement under the Federal Endangered Species Act and are the responsibility of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, depending on the ESA-listed species.

Our federal ESA salmon recovery plans were developed locally by the regional salmon recovery organizations and were federally approved and adopted by NOAA Fisheries. In most regions, the plans and strategies focus on recovering ESA-listed salmon species with a target of meeting the defined recovery goals, as well as threat reduction and productivity improvement targets. In the Washington Coast Region, most salmonid species are not ESA-listed (exception is Lake Ozette sockeye salmon and bull trout) and the regional organization developed a sustainability plan to help prevent future ESA listings for the salmon and steelhead populations.

The salmon recovery plans provide a road map for the recovery of Washington salmonids and local governing bodies of the regional organizations that are implementing each plan's progress. Salmon recovery plans lay out the groundwork and require periodic updates to stay current and address ongoing and emerging issues such as climate change, population growth and development, predation and other threats limiting recovery.

Role of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office maintains a statewide strategy for salmon recovery, helps develop and revise regional salmon recovery plans, and coordinates with regional salmon recovery organizations and federal agencies to implement the recovery plans. The office will continue to coordinate the statewide strategy and work with state agencies, tribes, recovery regions, and partners to establish statewide biennial priorities that can guide our salmon recovery commitments.

The Salmon Recovery Act directed the GSRO to work with state, federal, and local partners to convene regional recovery organizations that are made up of local government, tribal, agency and stakeholder representatives. With financial support from NOAA and GSRO, these organizations developed species-specific salmon recovery plans (Regional Recovery Plan) that were then adopted by NOAA Fisheries as part of the recovery planning required by the federal Endangered Species Act. A Regional Recovery Plan for the Washington Coast Region, focused on the sustainability of its nonlisted species, was subsequently finalized in 2013 and approved by the state. These remain at the heart of Washington's strategy to recover salmon. *(To read more about the multiple key partners that work for salmon recovery, see [Appendix B](#)).*

Role of the federal partners

Multiple federal agencies play a role in salmon, steelhead and bull trout recovery. One key agency is the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries), which is responsible for recovering salmon and steelhead under the Endangered Species Act. The other is USFWS, which manages the recovery of bull trout. The federal agencies fund recovery efforts and approve or write recovery plans, as well as provide science and monitoring information.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), implements the Clean Water Act (CWA). This act establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The EPA also funds recovery efforts, which includes restoration actions and research by not-for-profit research groups, state agencies, tribes and local parties that carry out research on the ground.