



# Flower Pot Creek

**Estuary Restoration and Fish Passage Improvement Project**

Jacob Jesionek – Trout Unlimited



SALMON SUPERHWY

## WHAT IS THE SALMON SUPERHWY?



- Program managers from several agencies convened to develop a **pilot project** to prioritize passage through multiple variables
- Created a scalable prioritization and decision tool that allowed for a more strategic approach to maximize project benefits





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# THE PROBLEM: FAILING CULVERTS

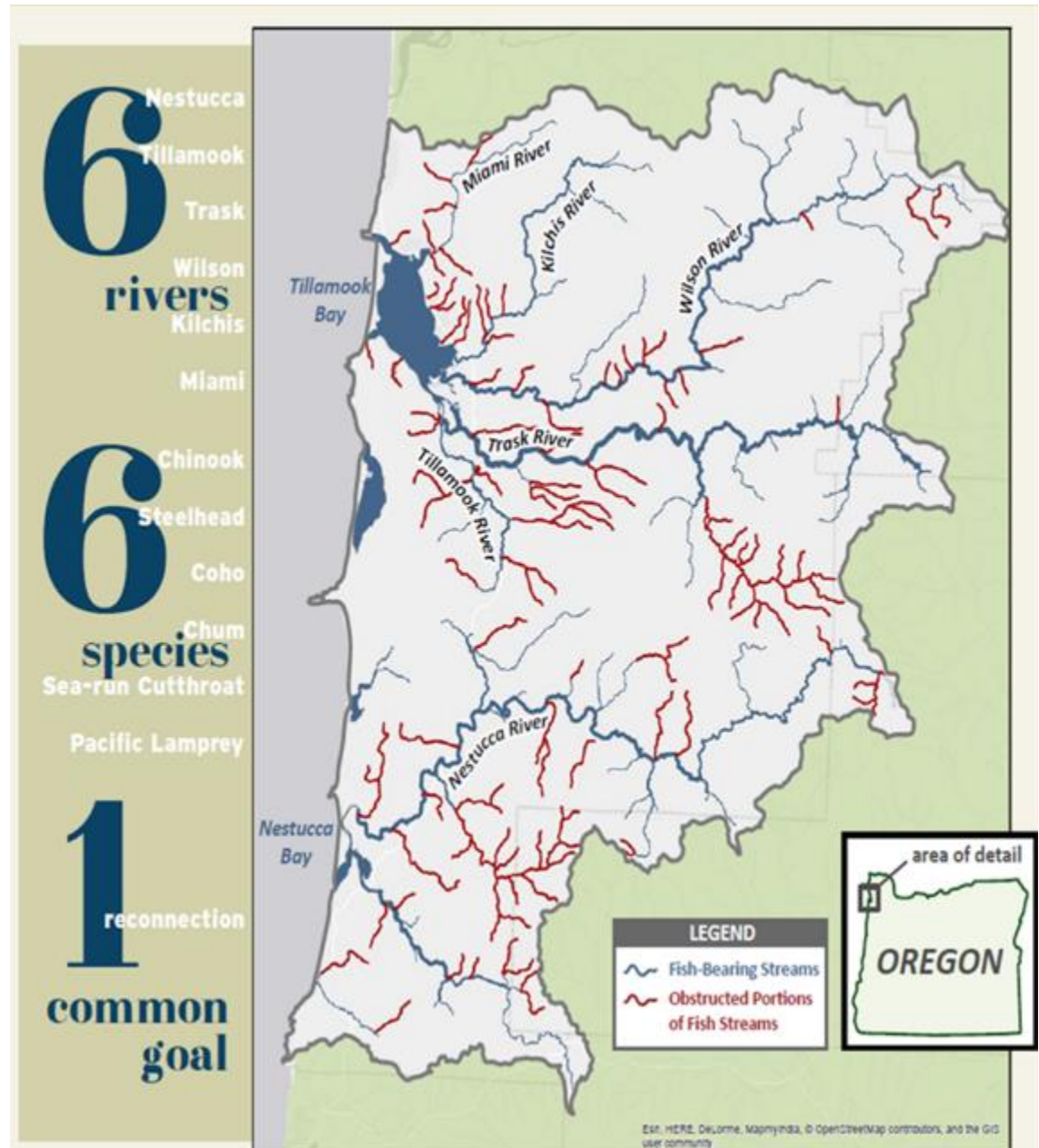




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## PARTNERSHIP GOALS

- Determine where on the landscape fish passage restoration could make the most impact on fish populations
- Optimize habitat gain per funding leveraged
- Develop a passage portfolio that sets priorities at a landscape scale





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## LAUDED PROGRESS: 2014 THROUGH 2024

- 59 barriers removed
- 132 miles reconnected
- \$20M funding leveraged
- 6 species of ocean-going fish species returned to historical habitat
- Landowners united with local, state, and federal partners





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## PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

- Collaborative planning
- Shared technical resources and permit support
- Landowner coordination
- Shared vision and goals
- Strategic, coordinated funding
- Building local support through our project track record





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## PARTNERS

**LOCAL:** Tillamook County, Tillamook Estuaries Partnership, Tillamook County Creamery Association, Tillamook Bay Watershed Council, Nestucca Neskowin Sand Lake Watersheds Council

**STATE:** OR Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, OR Dept. of Forestry, OR Dept. of Transportation, OR Watershed Enhancement Board, OR Fish Passage Task Force

**FEDERAL:** US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service

**NGO:** Trout Unlimited



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## MULTIPLE BENEFITS

- Economic benefit of facilitating project engineering and construction, and less interruption of local industry due to road failure
- Solved stifling funding issues with partnership format
- Successful projects and partnership have brought strong momentum, local, regional and national support and recognition





## HOW I BECAME INVOLVED: Trout Unlimited

- Hired by Trout Unlimited to be a Restoration Project Manager for the Salmon SuperHwy in 2022.
- Previous work experience with Ohio EPA, Yellowstone NPS, WDFW, and Grand Junction USFWS
- Searching for a fisheries adjacent position that would allow for career growth





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## Flower Pot Creek: Project Prioritization



- Flower Pot Creek ranked highly in the barrier survey (88)
- Unique habitat type and quality stream access above the crossing
- Estuarine habitats are a focus of many action plans
- Key transportation route for Cape Meares community



## FLOWER POT CREEK: How Was It Funded?

- Flower Pot Creek combined local, state, and federal funding
- Partners provided In-Kind match through permitting, design review, and on-the-ground project assistance
- In-Kind partners that supported the project:
  - USFWS
  - Tillamook County Public Works (TCPW)
  - US Forest Service (USFS)
- Funding programs that made our project possible:
  - Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
  - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)





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## FLOWER POT CREEK: Project Design

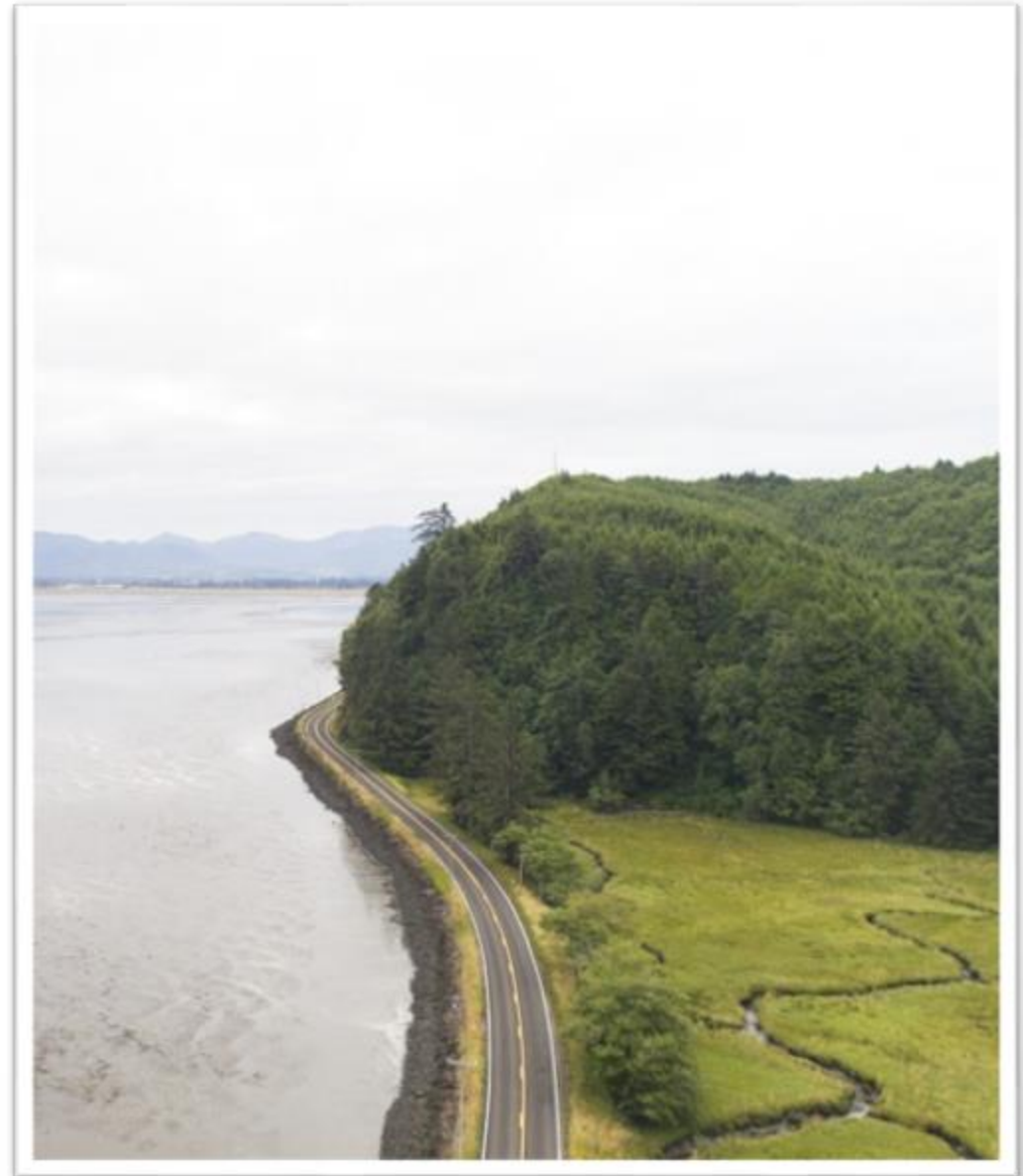
- Focus on reinstating uninhibited tidal exchange for the estuary
- Re-open Flower Pot Creek for fish passage at all flow/tide levels
- Build a structure that will ensure travelers on Bay Ocean Rd will be able to safely utilize the road
- Realign the channels of the estuary for improved function and minimal erosion





## FLOWER POT CREEK: Project Design Cont.

- Waterways Consulting, Inc was hired to design the project
- Technical team reviewed the project designs at various stages
- Permitting for the project began the previous year when 65% designs were delivered
- Designs took multiple years to complete
- Permitting hold ups nearly delayed the project





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## FLOWER POT CREEK: Implementation

- Project broke ground in July of 2025 with an extended In Water Work Window
- Road closure necessary for project construction
- Project constructed by Legacy Consulting, Inc.
- Daily project check ins completed by project manager with additional visits from other partners





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## FLOWER POT CREEK: Implementation Cont.





## FLOWER POT CREEK: Implementation Cont.

- After a fish salvage was completed, in water work could truly begin
- Channel excavation and bridge work were the two main project aspects
- Bridge Pilings ended up being the most difficult portion of the project
- Battling the tides was also a significant challenge and required a strategy change





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## Flower Pot Creek: **Before and After**





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## Flower Pot Creek: Ecological Benefits



- Restored access to 1.4 miles of anadromous fish habitat
- Improved tidal exchange to 14.6 acres of estuarine habitat
- Leveraged funding from multiple partners
- Strengthened local infrastructure



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## FLOWER POT CREEK: Lessons Learned

- Permitting will only become more challenging in the future
- Working in the Tillamook Bay area will lead to project complications with soil structure and density
- Planting within estuarine environments is not as straightforward as expected





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## Flower Pot Creek: **Monitoring and Maintenance**



- Partnered with Tillamook Estuaries Partnership to monitor project
- SSH typically does not complete validation monitoring
- Maintenance should be minimal due to design standard
- TCPW responsible for basic maintenance and scheduled surveys



## Salmon SuperHwy: Upcoming Projects

- Esther Culvert planned for 2026 construction
- Multiple projects in 2027 including Irish, Chance, Davis, etc.
- Typical shift between design years and implementation years
- 5-year schedule for future SSH endeavors
- Always working to add additional projects to the schedule





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## Salmon SuperHwy: How Can You Show Your Support?

- Follow the Salmon SuperHwy on Socials!

Instagram: [salmonsuperhwy](https://www.instagram.com/salmonsuperhwy)

Facebook: [Salmon SuperHwy](https://www.facebook.com/SalmonSuperHwy)

TikTok: [salmon.superhwy](https://www.tiktok.com/@salmon.superhwy)

- Keep up to date with our website!

[www.SalmonSuperHwy.org](http://www.SalmonSuperHwy.org)

- Check out the SSH Merch!

[www.SalmonSuperHwy.org/shop](http://www.SalmonSuperHwy.org/shop)

- Donate to future restoration efforts!

[www.SalmonSuperHwy.org/donate](http://www.SalmonSuperHwy.org/donate)





Questions?

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