



Lower Columbia  
Estuary  
Partnership

## 2023 BRIEFING REPORT for our federal delegation

In 2021-2022, the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership raised **\$17.80 for every \$1 federal dollar** invested from the National Estuary Program.

The Estuary Partnership leveraged this investment to generate **\$12.4 million** to support our local economies in Oregon and Washington:

- improving water quality
- restoring habitat for salmon & other species
- supporting jobs in the restoration economy
- educating students and engaging community members to care for their watershed
- bringing together diverse stakeholders to tackle the big issues facing our estuary.

**\$700,000**  
**The Big**  
**Impact**

352 JOBS  
created



**\$12.4 MILLION**  
leveraged



OF YOUR 2021 FEDERAL  
NATIONAL ESTUARY  
PROGRAM INVESTMENT

3,900+ PEOPLE  
engaged



376,934 TREES  
planted



# Our Economic Impact

*The Federal National Estuary Program appropriation is essential seed money that allows us to raise millions of dollars for the region, restore ecosystems, protect water quality, support local businesses and industries, and coordinate efforts across the region.*

Since 1999, the Estuary Partnership has raised over **\$93.5 million in cash for the region** and created **1,914 local, family wage jobs**. With the economic multiplier, this is a total impact of **\$177.65 million**.

**\$17.80 : \$1**  
NEP funds  
leveraged in  
2022

The National Estuary Program was re-authorized through the 2021 Protect and Restore America's Estuaries Act for up to \$1 million per National Estuary Program.

**\$1 million per National Estuary Program**  
is critical to continue our gains in the lower Columbia and in estuaries across the country.

## Community Programs

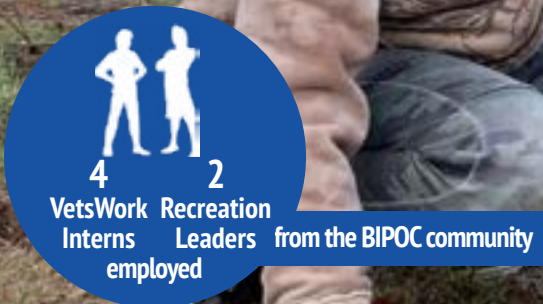
Across our region we support local schools and teachers, and engage people to care for the river.

**Environmental education programs** equip the next generation with hands-on science lessons and watershed-based outdoor learning.

**Volunteer events** engage members of the community to plant trees to improve their community.

**Big Canoe paddles** get students and community groups out on the water for the first time.

*The Federal National Estuary Program investment allow us to leverage more than \$900,000 for our community engagement programs last year.*



## Economic impact case study: Steigerwald Reconnection Project

Steigerwald Lake is an urban National Wildlife Refuge that attracts more than 90,000 visitors every year. This was the largest restoration project to date on the lower Columbia River. The project reconnected 932 acres of floodplain habitat to the Columbia River while removing 124 acres of industrial land from the FEMA-mapped floodplain—protecting public infrastructure and private property and saving the Port of Camas-Washougal more than \$40,000 in annual flood-related expenses.

The \$32 million Steigerwald Reconnection Project was a major economic and community success story:

**\$75 million**  
brought to the region

**550 jobs**  
created

**600,000+**  
trees planted

**1250**  
students learned at the refuge

**500**  
volunteers engaged

**More than 70% of the project funds were spent in Clark County, and more than 90% of funds were spent within a 50-mile radius of the refuge.**



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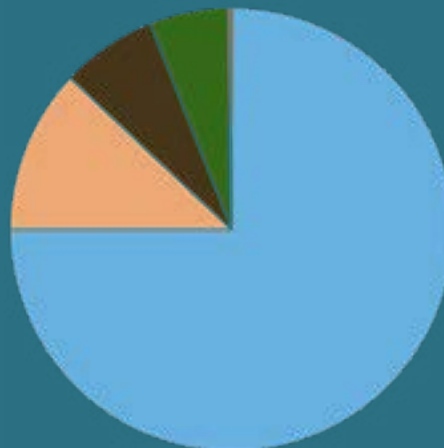
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### Impact of NEP Funds in Oregon and Washington

- 5.1% NEP Funds
- 2.4% Oregon NEP Funds
- 1.9% Washington NEP Funds
- 90.6% Cash Raised: Leveraged Funds



### Where 2022 Funds Went

- 75% Steigerwald: construction & planting
- 12% Other Technical Programs: restoration, monitoring & data
- 7% Community Programs: Education, Volunteer, Paddling & Stormwater
- 5.7% General and Administrative
- 0.3% Fundraising

***Our mission: to protect and care for the lower Columbia River for current and future generations of fish, wildlife, and people.***

## Bay to Bay Project

Pacific and Wahkiakum counties, Washington  
Partnering with rural communities to develop **climate resilience related to sea level rise.**

## Fish Barrier Mapping

Southwest Washington  
Updating maps of barriers to fish passage, such as undersized culverts.

**Our study area:** The lower Columbia River watershed, Bonneville Dam to the Pacific Ocean, with portions of 10 counties in northwest Oregon and southwest Washington. Founded in 1995, the Estuary Partnership is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and a National Estuary Program.

## Restoring Habitat

29,823 acres have been restored in the region to date to benefit salmon and other wildlife.

### Restoration Projects in Planning (shown by yellow dots)

- **Multnomah Channel Marsh Natural Area** – Portland, Oregon • 278 acres / 0.57 miles (feasibility)
- **La Center Wetlands (Phase II)**, East Fork Lewis River – La Center, Washington • 159 acres (feasibility)
- **East Fork Lewis River Floodplain Reclamation\*\*** – Clark County, Washington • 200 acres / 2 miles (design)
- **Mason Creek** – Clark County, Washington • 80 acres / 1.35 miles (design)
- **Woodard Creek (Phase II)** – Skamania County, Washington • 10 acres / 1 mile (design)
- **Campen Creek\*\*** – Washougal, Washington (feasibility)

2000-2022  
Estuary Partnership



5,149 84  
acres projects  
83.7 miles

### Cold Water Refuge Project\*\*

Multnomah County, Oregon (feasibility)  
This project will increase an area of **cold water habitat** for migrating salmon at the confluence of Horsetail Creek and the Columbia. It is a pilot project for future projects to aid salmon during increasingly hot summer months.

### Steigerwald Reconnection Project

965 acres / 4 stream miles restored  
The project reconnected 932 acres of critical floodplain habitat directly to the Columbia River to provide unobstructed access to salmon and lamprey. It also improved recreation and protected port and city infrastructure from flooding.

### Woodard Creek (Phase I)

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Skamania County, WA  
15 acres / 1 stream miles restored  
This salmon-bearing creek was affected by road development, wildfire, and timber harvest. The project added large wood to the creek and revegetated along its banks to improve habitat for salmon.

## Collaboration

We partner with agencies, Tribes, local governments, nonprofits, and businesses.

- Our **Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan** is a blueprint to restore the river.
- We **track restoration** completed by partners throughout the lower Columbia.
- Our **Science Work Group** is a forum to share scientific and technical knowledge.
- The **Columbia River Estuary Conference** promotes research and projects from the restoration community.

## Stormwater Solutions

**Stormwater projects** capture pollution from runoff before it enters the river. (shown by blue dots)

- The **Grattix box\*** is a low-cost, above-ground stormwater solution designed to prevent industrial pollution from flowing into the Columbia. We partnered with the Port of Vancouver and Oregon State University to assemble and distribute Grattix boxes to industrial sites along the Columbia River.
- Stormwater features will be added to the **riverfront in Ilwaco** to improve water quality in Baker Bay, which supports a thriving fishery.
- A project planned at **Washougal High School\*\*** will improve water quality in Campen Creek, just upstream from the Steigerwald Reconnection Project.
- A project planned at **Mittleman Jewish Community Center** will reduce stormwater impacts on upper Fanno Creek in Southwest Portland.

## Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

\$4.545 million over 5 years to support critical projects like these:

**Carbon Sequestration Study** – Supporting climate resilience by assessing lower Columbia River wetlands for their potential to store greenhouse gases. 2022 – 2027

**East Fork Lewis River Floodplain Reclamation Project** – Restoring a river from past gravel mining activities. The restoration will support salmonid populations and protect critical infrastructure and neighboring properties from flood risk. 2022-2026

**Campen Creek Restoration** – Restoring habitat, reducing stormwater pollution, and supporting climate resilience upstream from the Steigerwald Reconnection Project at Washougal High School and Mable Kerr Park. 2022-2025

**Clark County Urban Streams Project** – Enhancing habitat along highly-urbanized Burnt Bridge Creek and Salmon Creek with students and community members to promote climate resilience and improve salmon habitat. 2022-2027

**Environmental Education** – Engaging communities disproportionately impacted by climate change with hands-on outdoor science education and riparian planting projects. 2022-2027

## Monitoring

Monitoring efforts throughout the lower Columbia estuary improve our understanding of the river system and inform restoration practices.

- We monitor **habitat quality at restored sites** and at **areas relatively undisturbed by development.**
- We partner with Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District to monitor **five watersheds** for *E. coli* and other contaminants (select sites shown by green dots).
- We are launching a project to **assess current levels of toxic contaminants\*\*** in the lower Columbia. *Funding for sustained toxics monitoring in the lower Columbia remains an unmet need.*

\* Supported by a grant from the US EPA through the Columbia River Basin Restoration Program.

\*\* Supported by Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds

