

Winter 2023

# SIUSLAW

## WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWS

*What's Happening in Your Watershed?*

### Iktatuu

*First appearing in Lane County  
Public Health Perspectives*

The Siuslaw River connects our Coast Range mountains to the great Pacific Ocean. In the Siuslaw Basin there are coastal lakes, meandering rivers and an expansive estuary. The Siuslaw River, iktatuu, or big one, is at the center of the traditional homeland of the Siuslaw people, shayuushtl'a or sha'yuushtl'a.

Connection to place has always been at the center of tribal identity for the shayuushtl'a. Managing for abundance is a lesson from the Tribes, and in this way our watershed reflects our identity and our vision for the future generations that will call this place home. This is a place we fish, swim, canoe, crab, clam, gather and celebrate. This is a place we raise our families and practice our traditions. This is the place we take care of.



**"What exactly is a watershed? A watershed is the area of land where all precipitation drains to a common water body, such as a river or lake. Watersheds are not made only of water, but also of land, and what we do on that land affects our rivers, lakes and streams."**

**- Siuslaw Watershed Council**



Sample harvest of berries collected by Ashley Russell (Miluk Coos).

Large wood is placed to recreate salmon habitat lost by prior agricultural strategies that worked against natural flooding systems at Fivemile Bell site near Lake Tahkenitch.

Photos by Morgan Heim





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Kate Harnedy



US Forest Service staff protect native fish and invertebrates during large scale floodplain reconnection and restoration at Fivemile and Bell Creeks which drain into Lake Tahkenitch  
Photos by Morgan Heim

As a Tribal citizen myself, I know that making positive change is important for my Tribe. The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw (CTCLUSI) is a sovereign Tribal government acting to steward resources within traditional territories for protection of lifeways and citizen health. The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC), a non-profit organization, and the CTCLUSI Department of Natural Resources and Culture partner to enhance ecological and social outcomes in the Siuslaw. The collaboration between the SWC and Tribe, as well as other partners, is key to accelerating the restoration of our watershed.

As the SWC Board President, I am committed to ensuring the Siuslaw can support our economy, clean water, abundant fish, recreation, subsistence, and the whole ecosystem. For the Watershed Council, it's a substantial job, but we don't do it alone. We work in partnership with our community members, landowners, tourists, businesses, schools, health providers, state agencies, local governments, federal landowners and Tribal nations. Together, we seek to restore and reciprocate the many gifts of the Siuslaw watershed, such as returning salmon runs, clean water, shaded creeks and a breathtaking estuary, for the enjoyment and subsistence of all its residents.

While our watershed is beautiful, it isn't what it once was when managed for abundance by the shayuushtl'a. The more recent history, of the last 150 years, dominated by adverse forestry and fisheries management practices, has impacted the habitats of birds, fish, salamanders, newts, mussels, clams and more. On Tribal lands throughout the state of Oregon, the water people, salmon, are an especially important part of who we are. At the SWC, the priority is to lead and support salmon recovery under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds through habitat restoration with partners including Tribes.

Salmon habitat restoration—including floodplain reconnection, native planting, and log placement for stream complexity—enhances the natural functions of the watershed and benefits both human and ecological systems.

In addition to hands-on habitat restoration, we are also focused on education and community engagement. To build community, we host regular informative and watershed-relevant meetings open to the public. To invest in our future here, we organize youth camps to engage the next generation with the local environment. To reclaim our landscapes, we provide native plants to landowners and community members on an annual basis. To act as a resource, we connect people to funding, expertise and information. To remember and learn from each other, we have created a video and story series with our partners and the Tribe to inspire and share our experience.



Observation of plants at Takenitch Lake by CTCLUSI Natural Resource staff and citizens Ashley Russell (Miluk Coos) and John Schaefer (Hanis Coos).  
Photos by Morgan Heim

To me, taking care of this place is a critical and necessary part of life here. Since time immemorial, the shayuushtl'a have called this watershed their home and stewarded this place through tradition. Iktatuu connects me to my ancestors. Today, our broader Siuslaw community, passionate and rooted here, is part of healing these lands. Our collaboration is a labor of love for a place, our place, the Siuslaw.

hiisa, luuwii, thank you

Margaret Corvi

Hanis Coos citizen, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw  
Board of Director's President, Siuslaw Watershed Council  
Sixth generation resident of the Siuslaw

To learn more about salmon habitat restoration, history, to hear stories, or to watch videos, please visit: **CTCLUSI Abundance StoryMap** and the **Siuslaw Watershed Council website**

**"From the farthest reaches of our forests to the river basin and onward to the beach, everywhere you go in the Siuslaw and Coastal Lakes, our rivers connect us. And the annual return of salmon — strong, vital, wild — is an essential link from the water to the well-being of our communities, economy, and environment. When we invest in the health of our lands and waters, we restore our connections to each other and this place we call home. Join us."**

**— Siuslaw Watershed Council**



**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Introduction from Jocelyn Warren, Lane County Public Health Manager

In recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day, we are bringing you this very special feature from Margaret Corvi on the Siuslaw River. Margaret is a citizen of the Hannis Coos Tribe of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw and Board President of the

Siuslaw Watershed Council. Margaret and her team, along with community partners, are working to restore the Siuslaw to its previous abundance. To learn more about the Tribes, ancestral homelands, traditional practices, music, languages and much more, be sure to also visit the Abundance website. We are grateful to Margaret for sharing this perspective with us! ~Jocelyn



## Welcome New Crew Members!

Hello to all our fellow watershed stewards out there. We hope you are well and staying warm this winter! We are pleased to share that we will have a full crew as of January 3rd. We are so excited to introduce our new restoration technicians, Daniel and Elijah, and our winter seasonal technicians, Austin and Melanie! If you're curious, here is what we'll be up to this winter:

**January**—The new crew members will be starting their field work off right with native plant revegetation at Qa'aich. This project and property are funded and owned by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, one of our restoration partners and core members of the Siuslaw Coho Partnership. Next we will be diving into Native Plant Distribution (NPD), including site preparation and willow harvest.

**February**—We will be full throttle with NPD. Please don't forget to place your order by January 29th! For the remainder of the winter and early spring we'll be working on riparian planting in multiple sites throughout the Siuslaw Watershed.

If you see any of these faces out in your part of the watershed, make sure to give a warm welcome and a loud shout out!

*Britnee Church, Project Manager and Crew Lead*



I am looking forward to playing a key role in habitat restoration as well as encouraging the planting of native plants within the Siuslaw watershed.

I'm looking forward to exploring the Siuslaw River watershed during a season I have not previously worked! I am also excited to learn new things about this local ecosystem!

The thing that I am looking forward to most about working in the Siuslaw watershed this winter is getting to meet new people while working in such a beautiful area.

I am looking forward to getting to know the local community and native ecology of the Siuslaw Watershed by actively implementing restorative designs that enhance stream and coastal wetland habitats.

**SWC staff with new crew truck, the Great Egret, and new cargo trailer, the Great Blue Heron.**  
Funding for the crew truck was provided by Roundhouse Foundation, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, The Reser Family Foundation, and private donors. Funding for the cargo trailer was provided by Western Lane Community Foundation and BOGS Impact Fund





## FREE Community Activities & Event Schedule 2023



### January

**Annual Meeting & Potluck**  
Florence Senior Center, Florence

### February

**Jig Tying Workshop**  
SWC Office, Mapleton

### March

**Dunes Walking Tour & Invasive Species Removal**  
Dunes City

### April

**Siuslaw Estuary Cleanup**  
Florence

### May

**Birding**  
Waite Ranch, Cushman

### June

**Forest Succession Tour & Picnic**  
Deadwood

### July

**Paddling Tour**  
Location TBD

### August

**Mushroom Hunt & Culinary Demonstration**  
Florence

### September

**Beaver Ecology Seminar**  
Location TBD

### October

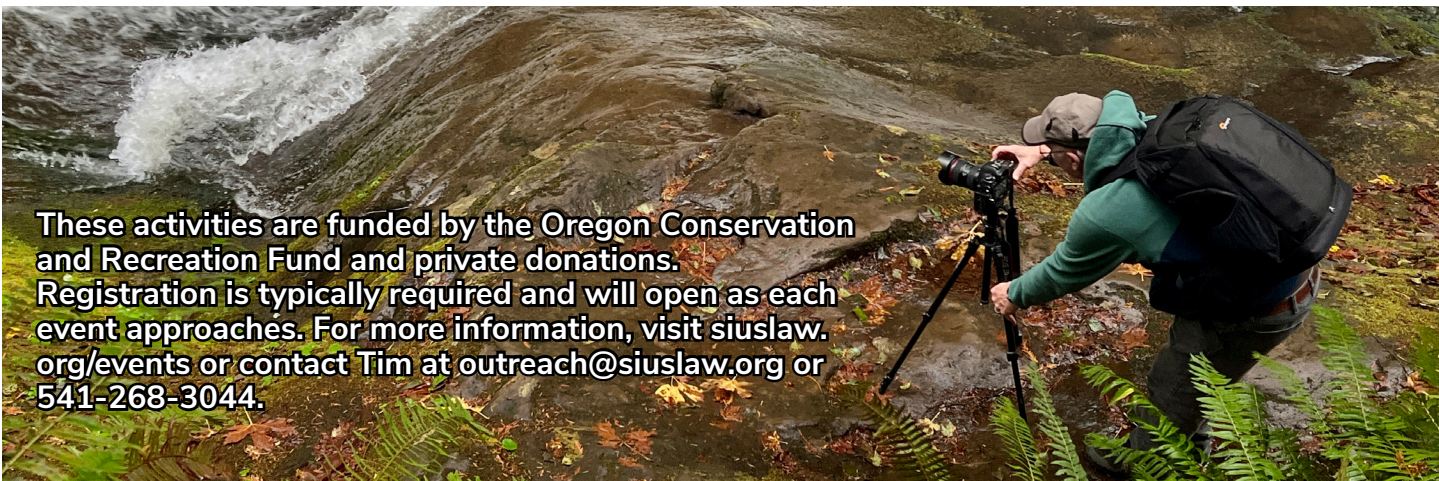
**Siuslaw Sauntering**  
PAWN Old Growth Trail, Minerva

### November

**Waterfall Photography Workshop**  
Sweet Creek Trail, Mapleton

### December

**Salmon Viewing & Sauntering**  
Deadwood



These activities are funded by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund and private donations. Registration is typically required and will open as each event approaches. For more information, visit [siuslaw.org/events](https://siuslaw.org/events) or contact Tim at [outreach@siuslaw.org](mailto:outreach@siuslaw.org) or 541-268-3044.



# **Siuslaw Coho Partnership Focused Investment Partnership Biennium One Project List**

**Project proposal period: July 26, 2022 (award date of FIP) – June 30, 2023**

**Implementation period: January 2023 – December 2024**

The Siuslaw Coho Partnership (SCP) is a group of local habitat conservation practitioners and organizations that work together to implement restoration and conservation projects in the Siuslaw and Coastal Lakes Basins. The Siuslaw Watershed Council is a core partner of the SCP and serves as the SCP Chair. In July, the Oregon Watershed Enhance Board (OWEB) awarded the SCP a Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant. The expected ecological outcomes of the SCP's FIP initiative include (1) an increase in quantity and quality of summer and winter rearing habitats in the initiative geography sufficient to anchor population resilience and (2) a connected assemblage of diverse habitats sufficient to foster a broad expression of life history strategies in the Siuslaw and Coastal Lakes Oregon Coast coho populations. In the first biennium of our FIP, the SCP will implement a slate of more than 25 projects, some of which are outlined below. The types of projects in the first biennium include fish passage, instream complexity, floodplain reconnection, and revegetation of native species.

## **North Fork Indian Creek Fish Passage and Road Improvement Project**

Sub-watershed: Upper Indian Creek

Expected implementation: 2023/24

Lead Partners: SWC, USFS\*

Summary of project: Blocking fish passage at road-stream crossings lowers the carrying capacity of the basin by restricting access to high quality spawning and rearing habitat. This project will address two high priority crossings, which will be designed to meet ARBO II standards, be sized at 1.5x the active channel, and utilize downstream grade-control structures to promote gravel aggradation and floodplain connectivity.



## **Bear Creek Large Woody Debris (LWD) Placement & Riparian Revegetation**

Sub-watershed: Fiddle Creek

Expected implementation: 2023

Lead Partners: SSWCD, USFS

Summary of project: The goal of the project is to restore healthy riparian and aquatic habitats to the site, and to enable sustainable agricultural activity while providing cool clean water and high quality habitats for native species. This project will include large wood placement, riparian revegetation with native species, and construction of browsing exclosures.



## **North Fork Bend Tidal Wetland Restoration**

Sub-watershed: Lower North Fork Siuslaw

Expected implementation: 2023/24

Lead Partners: SWC, MRT, TNC

Summary of project: This project will advance the goal of restoring a significant portion of tidal wetland habitat and natural estuarine ecosystem function at a 247-acre property located in the Siuslaw River estuary. Restoration activities include design, engineering, permitting, and levee removal to facilitate tidal hydrological reconnection.





### **West Fork Deadwood Creek Helicopter LWD Placement**

Sub-watershed: Lower Deadwood Creek

Expected implementation: 2023

Lead Partners: SWC, USFS

Summary of project: This project addresses a lack of large wood and includes tipping and cutting of 500 trees in nearby source locations, and transporting them by helicopter to place into up to 6 miles of stream. Whole trees with root wads will be placed in strategic locations and structures will be configured to mimic log jams resulting from natural processes.



### **West Fork/Misery Creek Floodplain Reconnection/Stage 0 and Bridge Redesign**

Sub-watershed: Lower Deadwood Creek

Expected implementation: 2023/24

Lead Partners: SWC, USFS

Summary of project: Project actions will establish conditions including a higher water table, increased floodplain connectivity, increased floodplain roughness, and increased quantity, quality, and diversity of the riparian plant community. These conditions allow for natural fluvial processes to support complex and diverse habitat.



### **Hanson Creek Floodplain Reconnection Stage 0/8**

Sub-watershed: Bernhardt

Expected implementation: 2023

Lead Partners: SSWCD, USFS

Summary of project: This process based effort will transform a section of floodplain isolated from Hanson Creek, currently idle legacy pasture dominated by exotic blackberries, back into a fully connected wetland complex. Specifically, restoration actions include reconnecting 3.75 acres of floodplain, placing LWD in .5 mile of stream habitat, and reestablishing 3.75 acres of native vegetation.



### **Salamander Floodplain Reconnection/Stage 0**

Sub-watershed: Tahkenitch Lake

Expected implementation: 2023

Lead Partners: CTSI, USFS

Summary of project: Historic (past 100 years) land management has resulted in a simplified channel and associated network. Restoration will include floodplain reconnection on approximately 45 acres in Fivemile Creek. This Stage 0 floodplain project is in coordination with research to monitor and evaluate aquatic restoration actions in partnership with scientists from PNW.



### **Non-native Beachgrass Removal at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Estuaries**

Sub-watershed: Tahkenitch and Siltcoos Lakes

Expected implementation: 2023/24

Lead Partners: USFS

Summary of project: Non-native species removal in the dunes to restore dynamic ecological processes.





### **Herman Creek Riparian Enhancement**

Sub-watershed: Upper Indian Creek

Expected implementation: 2024

Lead Partners: USFS

Summary of project: Enhance riparian vegetation to reduce stream temperatures and promote future LWD recruitment into anchor habitats.



### **Waite Ranch Tidal Wetland Reconnection**

Sub-watershed: Bernhardt Creek

Expected implementation: 2023/24

Lead Partners: CTCLUSI, MRT, SWC

Summary of project: This is a multi-phased, active restoration initiative designed to transform wetlands from degraded, freshwater wet pasture into a natural, tidal wetland mosaic through the reintroduction of tidal exchange with the mainstem Siuslaw River. The Waite Ranch property is 217 acres of floodplain wetlands in the estuary, which was formerly a dairy ranch, and was purchased by MRT in 2011.



### **Upper Deadwood Creek Stage 0 and Road Relocation**

Sub-watershed: Upper Deadwood Creek

Expected implementation: 2024

Lead Partners: USFS

Summary of project: The project will restore floodplain connectivity across the width of the valley-floor by aggrading the existing channel, lowering the elevation of the adjacent floodplain, installing large wood, and planting native vegetation. A USFS road (6300) that runs parallel to the floodplain within the project reach will be relocated out of the floodplain.



### **North Fork Fish Creek Fish Passage Improvement and LWD Placement**

Sub-watershed: Triangle Lake

Expected implementation: 2024

Lead Partners: SWC, BLM

Summary of project: The North Fork Fish Creek needs to be restored due to poor stream habitat conditions and lack of potential wood delivery to streams. Restoration actions include culvert replacement and placing 140 - 160 logs in 0.7 mile. Logs will be placed with an excavator in log jams consisting of 12 to 20 pieces per site.



### **Swartz Creek Fish Passage Improvement**

Sub-watershed: Triangle Lake

Expected implementation: 2024

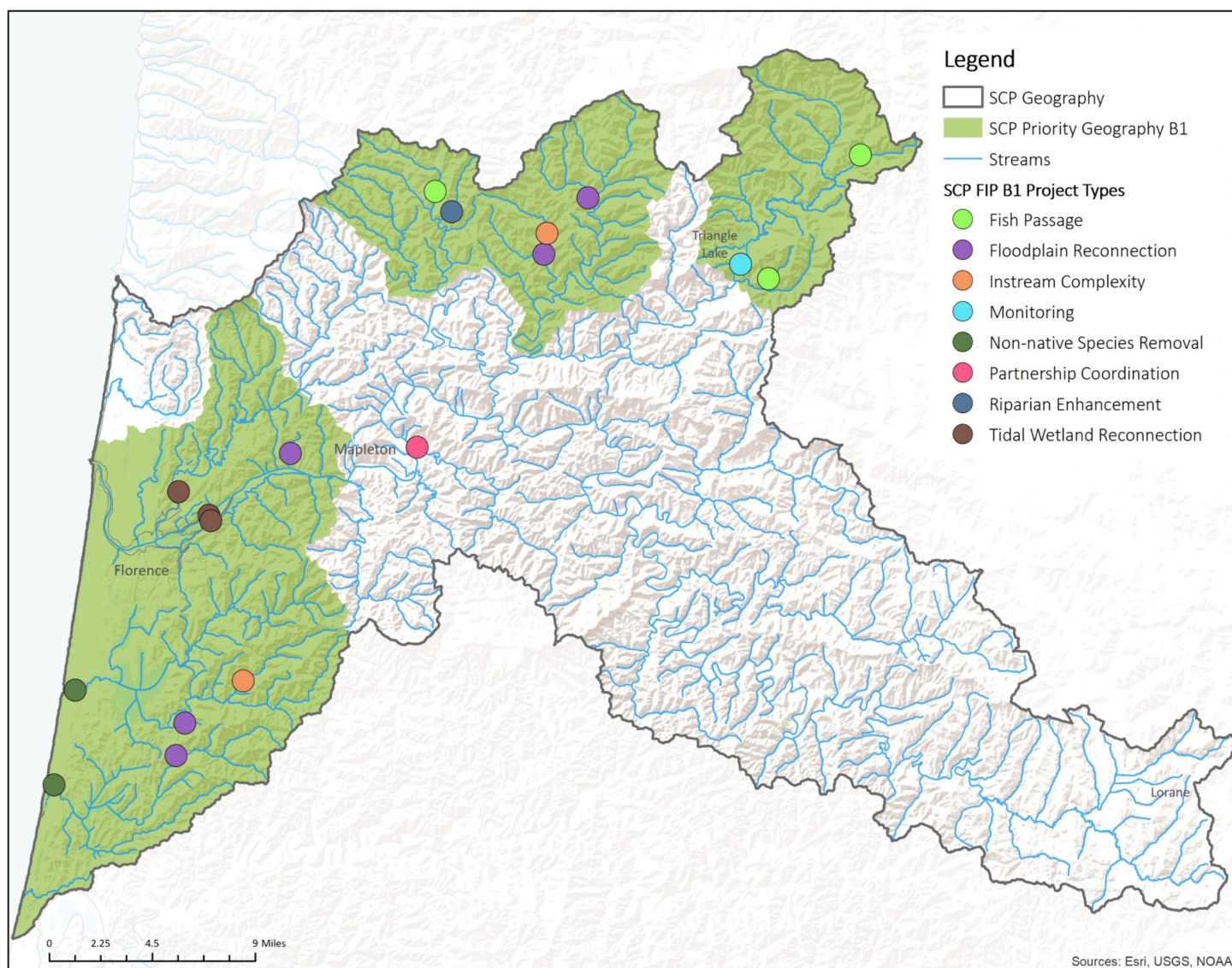
Lead Partners: SWC, BLM

Summary of project: The goal of the Swartz Creek Aquatic Organism Passage Improvement Project is to increase the quality and quantity of available coho spawning and winter and summer rearing habitat through the removal and replacement of a fish passage barrier culvert to improve longitudinal connectivity. The new culvert will be designed in accordance with ODFW and ARBO II specifications.





# Map of Siuslaw Coho Partnership FIP Project Slate 2023-2024



Through the FIP, the SCP will (1) implement projects outlined in our Strategic Action Plan which will promote the conservation and recovery of Oregon Coast coho through voluntary habitat protection and restoration efforts; (2) build the capacity of the partnership; (3) provide technical assistance for project development; (4) allow us to engage with stakeholders for watershed restoration initiatives; and (5) allow the SCP to monitor the effectiveness of our efforts.

\*Partner organization acronyms: USFS (U.S. Forest Service); MRT (McKenzie River Trust); CTCLUSI (Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians); TNC (The Nature Conservancy); SSWCD (Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District); CTSI (Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians); BLM (Bureau of Land Management)

## Siuslaw Watershed Council Mission Statement

SWC supports sound economic, social and environmental uses of natural and human resources in the Siuslaw River Basin. The Council encourages cooperation among public and private watershed entities to promote awareness and understanding of watershed functions by adopting and implementing a total watershed approach to natural resource management and production.





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## **Annual Meeting & Potluck**

**When: 1:00-3:30pm, January 28, 2023**

**Where: Florence Senior Center  
1570 Kingwood Street**

**What: Community Conversations, Project  
Previews & Board Elections**

**Who: All Welcome, Bring the Family,  
Bring a Dish!**