LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2023-2025 Biennium

Background

Oregon's fish screening program is highly effective and successful, providing substantial benefits for fish and people. The program directive is to share the cost of installing fish screens with water users. This popular and cost-effective program includes monetary, major maintenance, technical and design assistance, and a tax credit to qualifying water users. The fish screening program was adopted in 1995 and is directed by ORS 496.141 to report to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

Benefits of Fish Screens

●Prevent fish from entering water diversions. ●More than 98% of young salmon survive an encounter with a properly designed screen. ●Improves the protection, survival, and restoration of native fish. ●Achieves sustainable agriculture and fisheries. ●Allows clean and efficient diversion of water for farms, cities, businesses, and landowners. ●Protects restoration investments in watersheds by protecting fish produced by increased quality or quantity of habitat. ●Juvenile and adult fish are allowed to continue their up and downstream migration. ●As fish populations increase, anglers are provided with more fishing opportunities. ●Fish screens help deliver socially and economically valuable water for irrigation, drinking, and power.

What is a Fish Screen?

Water from streams and rivers is redirected for irrigation, power production, drinking water, and other uses. Diversions used to redirect water also pull fish into pumps, reservoirs, irrigation canals, and fields (called "entrainment") – reducing survival and preventing migration. Fish that reside in streams for their entire lifecycle (resident) and fish that migrate to and from the ocean (anadromous) are susceptible to entrainment into diversions. Fish screens are fish-friendly devices placed at water diversion intakes that allow water to pass through while keeping fish in streams.

Program Success

- So far, during the 2023-2025 biennium, 39 fish screens have been installed, protecting 52.64 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water. An additional twenty-three projects are planned for installation by the end of June 2025.
- Projects are located throughout the state, benefiting both small and large water users. Because Oregon laws do not require the majority of diversions to be screened, most screens are installed voluntarily. Valuable partnerships have been forged with water users who volunteer to cost share fish screening projects. This program directly contributes to fish conservation and recovery.

Fish Screening Program, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE, Salem, Oregon 97302

Incentives to Screen Water Diversions

- Incentives in the form of cost share and a tax credit encourage water users to screen their diversions. As a result, over 1,590 fish screens have been installed throughout Oregon since 2000.
- Water users can apply for cost share funding and receive technical and financial assistance from ODFW to install a fish screen.
- Water users may be eligible for a tax credit of 50%, up to $5,000, of the cost of installing a new screen. The screen does not need to be cost shared or installed by ODFW.
- Screen projects can be installed by ODFW or the water user. ODFW ensures that state and federal fish screening criteria are met by reviewing project designs, providing technical assistance, inspecting, and certifying the project once it has been installed.

A three-bay rotary drum screen at a 15 CFS diversion from the Klamath River.

Program Oversight

A seven-member citizen task force is appointed by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to advise ODFW regarding fish screening policy, funding, and technology issues.

Fish Screening Task Force Members 2025		
Task Force Member	**Representing**	**Location**
Darin Olson	Agriculture	Salem
Kristin Bishop	Fishing and Fish Conservation	McMinnville
William Freeland	Fishing and Fish Conservation	Springfield
Judith Barkstedt	Fishing and Fish Conservation	Portland
Vacant	Agriculture	
Alexis Vaivoda	Public-at-Large	Hood River
Robert Durham	Agriculture	Dufer

Fish Screens Maintenance

The Program has maintained over 1,300 fish screens during the 2023-2025 biennium. Maintenance of fish screening structures is an important component of the Screens Program. While most water users that enter the cost share program are responsible for minor maintenance, screens that are not maintained by the Program are often inadequately maintained – increasing major maintenance costs, reducing the screen's effective lifespan, diminishing the State's return on investment, and leaving fish vulnerable to mortality and entrainment loss. In addition, ODFW is responsible for all major maintenance at fish screens installed through our cost share program that are under 30 cfs.

As funds allow, ODFW staff maintain fish screening structures to ensure they operate to protect fish adequately. Typical maintenance includes the following:

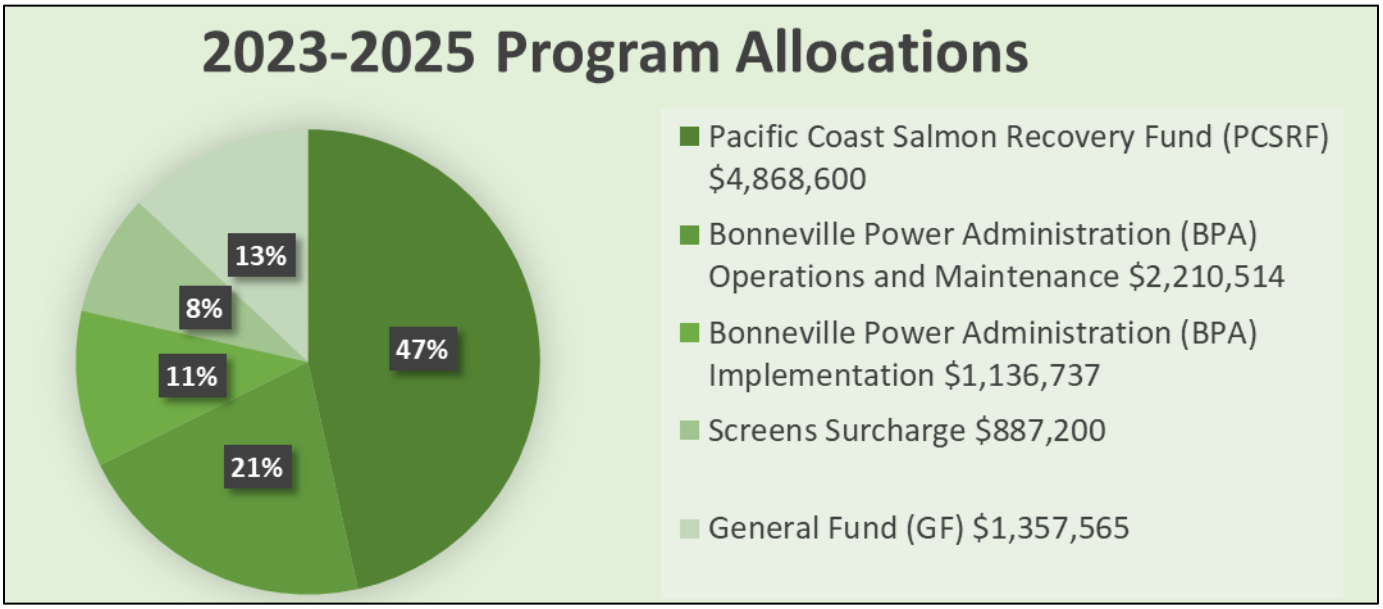
- inspect to determine maintenance needs,
- remove accumulated sediment and debris,
- lubricate moving parts,
- replace worn or damaged parts, including seals, screen material, power systems, and other parts, and
- adjust to ensure proper operation.

Screen components removed for off-season maintenance.

Funding for Maintenance

Funding for maintenance varies throughout the state. In the Columbia Basin, Bonneville Power Administration provides fish screen operation and maintenance funding. In areas with anadromous fish, Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Funds (PCSRF) provide some funding. ODFW utilizes dedicated angling license surcharges and General Funds to address additional fish screens maintenance needs.

Budget Summary



Note: *Budget information provided is for the entire Fish Screening and Passage Program. Fish Passage projects and associated costs implemented through that program are not included in this fish screen report.*

Federal Funding

- ***Bonneville Power Administration***
  - ***Operations and Maintenance Funding.*** BPA is a major source of funds for screen maintenance in the Columbia River Basin and is critical to continued fish protection.
  - ***Implementation Funding***. BPA funds are used to install new screens and replace some fish screens in the Columbia River Basin. The screens being replaced may be worn out, damaged, or do not meet current fish protection needs.
- ***Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Funds.*** The majority of the cost share program is funded by PCSRF. Funds are used toward project outreach and development, engineering and construction of fish screens, and some screen maintenance. These funds are only eligible for projects that benefit anadromous fish.

State Funding

State funds fluctuate every biennium; the sport fishing license surcharge depends on license sales.

- ***General Fund.*** General funds support project construction, maintenance, and program implementation.
- ***Sport Fishing License Surcharge***. A 75-cent surcharge on Oregon sport fishing licenses is dedicated to the Fish Screening Program. These funds are used for fish screen maintenance, construction, the Fish Screening Task Force, and program support.

Funding Challenges

Costs associated with fish screen installation and maintenance continue to rise. PCSRF funds can only be used to benefit anadromous fish and future funding allocations are uncertain. This is the Program's primary funding source for new construction and replacement screens. This limits funding to projects in specific areas of the state, primarily the coast, Willamette Valley, John Day River and Snake River basins. Other funds are needed to support resident fish protection. PCSRF reductions will limit the state's ability to achieve Key Performance Measure #6 (*Decrease Number of Unscreened Priority Water Diversions*).

An additional Program challenge is that as new screens are funded and installed, the required maintenance responsibility and costs also increase cumulatively. As a result, proportionally more money goes to maintenance over time compared to new screen installation.

Screens Installed July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024

Fish screens come in a wide range of types and sizes, including pump, cone, rotary drum, traveling belt, and panel screens. The amount of water screened and number of projects installed are used to track Program success. The projects summarized below represent the number of projects installed, the volume of water screened by both Senate and House Districts.

Screens Installed by Senate District		
District	# Installed	CFS
1	1	0.1
2	3	1.24
5	2	0.15
6	3	0.1
9	1	1.67
12	4	6.88
28	2	6.5
29	8	13.84
30	15	22.16
Total	**39**	**52.64**

Screens Installed by House District		
District	# Installed	CFS
1	1	.10
4	3	1.24
9	1	0.02
10	1	0.13
11	3	0.1
18	1	1.67
23	4	6.88
55	2	6.5
57	5	4.59
58	3	9.25
59	8	16.04
60	7	6.12
Total	**39**	**52.64**