Fish are a mainstay of living and working in Alaska.

- Salmon habitat protection and restoration are stakeholder priorities.
- Salmon support 1 in 10 jobs in Southeast Alaska.
- Nearly 90% of rural households in Southeast Alaska use salmon.
- The Tongass produces 70% of all the wild salmon produced from all National Forest lands.
- 80% of the annual Southeast Alaska commercial salmon catch (about 49 million salmon) comes from streams and lakes of the Tongass, valued at $60 million annually.

Integrated, multidisciplinary, strategic investments in relatively few degraded watersheds can successfully restore function critical to salmon life stages, enhance ecological sustainability and promote resilience to climate change.

The forest-wide Watershed Condition Framework assessment found that most of the 900 watersheds within the Tongass are in near natural condition (Condition Class I). Less than 7% have higher condition scores and may be “at risk” for maintaining ecological function due to past management practices; these watersheds likely have restoration needs (see map, other side).


Following a review by Tongass staff and stakeholders, the Forest Supervisor established Priority Watersheds (see map, other side) to focus restoration plans and activities.

Restoration projects include road storage and decommissioning, removal and remediation of fish barriers at road-stream crossings, wildlife habitat improvements in young-growth forests, riparian young-growth forest treatments, and large wood placement to restore floodplain and stream functions that provide spawning and rearing habitat features critical to freshwater salmon life stages.

Partnerships are fundamental to improving watershed condition in the Tongass.

Thanks to The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, State of Alaska, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Sitka Conservation Society and National Forest Foundation, watershed condition has been restored through the completion of all essential projects in Harris River, Twelvemile Creek, Sitkoh River, and Sitkoh Creek. Ongoing partnerships support restoration that will soon be completed in Shelikof (Iris Meadows) and Staney watersheds.

The National Fish Habitat Partnership recognized Twelvemile Creek and Shelikof Creek as “Waters to Watch.” Restoration is ongoing in Saginaw and Luck/Eagle watersheds and plans are underway in Shaheen and Margaret watersheds. The Tongass participates in the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership, a Natural Resource Conservation Service-funded all-lands collaboration of private landowners, Tribes, state and federal agencies, and conservation organizations seeking to improve watershed condition to benefit the community of Hoonah.

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