

CALIFORNIA TROUT



FISH · WATER · PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Meeting challenge and complexity
with collaboration



Cover photo: The Requa; terminal point of the Klamath River Watershed by Eric Wiseman
This page: Half-Dome Reflection by Colton Dixon, People's Choice Award Winner for 2023 CalTrout Photo Contest

WHY WE SUPPORT CALTROUT

"Because you keep California's streams and rivers open and clean, and free flowing."

CAMILLE I, CalTrout Member

"I am deeply committed to California and protecting its beauty and resources. I don't ever want to leave, and I want to leave a legacy so that my children's children won't want to either."

ANTHONY B, CalTrout Member

"You get the job done! You work hard, work from a "one health" mindset, bringing people together to save the ecosystems we are hurting. You focus on California, my home state. Growing up in Los Angeles, I remember visiting countless coastal streams that once had trout, or steelhead. This was always sad and confusing to me. Your organization is trying to make strides to bring them back in resilient ways through science, policy, and education. Thank you."

THOMAS T, CalTrout Member

"CalTrout has a slogan I can live by: fish water people. I think you represent that motto well. CalTrout seems to have more action and is using the money wisely. For fish, you identify which fish to help. For water, you identify which water projects and how can we get involved besides donating money. And for people, you show younger people doing the work, which reminds me that the work being done is for our future. It is time for more inclusion of different groups in the fly fishing industry."

THOMAS R, CalTrout Member

EMBRACING LARGE SCALE COMPLEXITY AND EXPANDING COLLABORATION

We want to welcome you as a CalTrout supporter to our Annual Report where we reflect on 2023 and the work that you have made happen. As we navigate the dynamic landscape of conservation in California, we are proud of our track record of getting things done. We have faced challenges head-on, embraced innovation and continued to forge meaningful partnerships to achieve our mission of ensuring healthy waters and resilient wild fish for a better California.

One thing that stands out to us this past year is scale. We are thinking big and taking on projects that are watershed scale with lasting impact—one dam out and three to go on the Klamath, targeting removal of two dams on the Eel River, working on 70,000 acres of floodplain habitat in the Central Valley, opening up an entire watershed for Southern steelhead, assessing source water spring waters around Mt. Shasta, increasingly engaging with youth throughout the state, leading on policy in Sacramento, and so much more as you will see in our report.

Our work is evolving. We lead with science, get restoration done on-the-ground, and shape water policy in the state. We also recognize how important community engagement is to the work we do. Our regional working model is built around this concept. Our regional structure has us living and working locally where our restoration work is conducted, building trust among stakeholders, collaborating with tribal nations, farmers, and local partners, and implementing landscape-scale projects. We believe our work local model is well-suited to address the increasing impacts of climate change on our rivers and water supplies.

This year's report is not just a reflection of past successes but also a roadmap for the future. This winter we are embarking on our next 3-year Strategic Plan, an effort that incorporates input from the Board, staff and partners to chart our path. CalTrout's ability to have an impact statewide has grown and we are over the top excited about focusing on what we do well and doing more of it in the coming three years.

And thank you for your support, your belief in us and our work. We truly could not get to where we are today without you. So, thank you and we hope as you read this report you take pride in being a part of making California a better place today and for future generations.

With gratitude,



Kelly J. Barlow

Kelly Barlow,
Board Chair



Curtis Knight,
Executive Director

AMPLIFYING ALL VOICES

2023 marked the debut of our Fish Water People Podcast. We work hard every day to restore California's freshwater ecosystems and to keep them healthy for years to come, but we don't do it alone. Our podcast highlights the individuals who make our work possible, at CalTrout and beyond. We talk about the science, policy, restoration, equity, and more that goes into making the changes we want to see in the world. With voices including Congressman Jared Huffman, award-winning journalist and National Geographic Explorer Erica Gies, and a special in-depth episode on the Klamath Dams, we've enjoyed sharing a behind-the-scenes look at our work, and voices with insightful, thought-provoking points of view. And of course, we can't resist the occasional fish story.

Follow the Fish Water People Podcast today. Or listen today on your favorite podcast app.

BIG MOVES

The dam removal movement has continued to accelerate across the United States in recent years, as we come to terms with the need for ecosystem repair to reverse plummeting migratory fish populations and promote resilience in the face of climate change. Obsolete dams can cause damage to our fish, raise water temperatures, lose large water volumes to evaporation, and risk failure threatening downstream communities and ecosystems.

CalTrout is a leader in building strong partnerships and providing solid, thoughtful science to facilitate the removal of outdated California dams. Ecosystem recovery and restoration is at the core of what we do, and we have projects across the state tackling these obsolete barriers:

Klamath Dams: With four dams to be removed, this is the largest dam removal project in the history of the United States. This has been over twenty years in the making, and we're thrilled to report—and celebrate—that one dam, Copco 2, came down this past summer! The remaining three dams are on track to be removed next summer with a free-flowing Klamath River by the fall of 2024.

Potter Valley Project on Eel River: PG&E is seeking to surrender their license for the Potter Valley Project and recently proposed the removal of both Eel River dams as part of their decommissioning plan, something CalTrout and our partners

have been working hard to ensure. CalTrout is now working with tribes, agencies and partners in the Eel and Russian basins to ensure dam removal will start by 2028, reopening an almost 300 square mile watershed cutoff for nearly 100-years.

Searsville Dam: The sediment behind the dam, if able to flow freely, could slow the impacts of sea level rise in the tidal marshes along the eroding San Francisco Bay shoreline. CalTrout is engaged in ensuring full removal is among the list of options considered for the project.

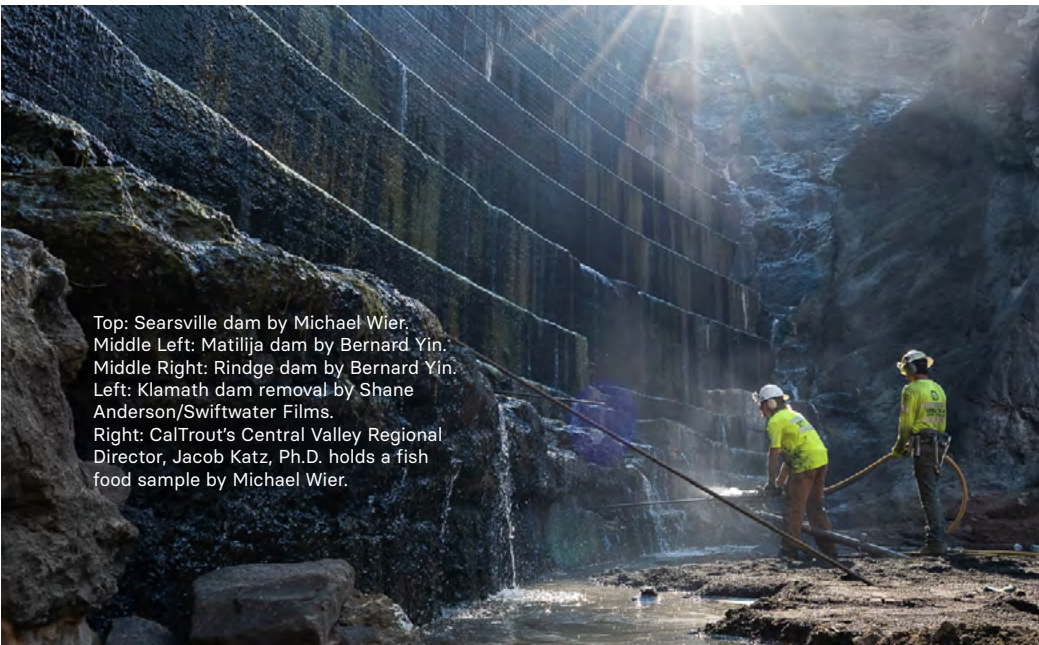
Matilija Dam: CalTrout plays a pivotal role within the technical review team responsible for enhancing fish passage designs in order to modernize downstream water delivery infrastructure and community flood protection projects, all in preparation for the removal of an aging dam. Both state and local leaders are in agreement that this dam has far exceeded its lifespan. A concerted

IN TOTAL, 17 DAMS WILL BE DECONSTRUCTED IN SIX DIFFERENT WATERSHEDS, OPENING UP OVER 750 MILES OF HABITAT.

effort is underway to revitalize the Ventura River watershed and restore its function and integrity for native species and downstream communities.

Rindge Dam: The process of dam removal is currently in the design phase. We expect the plan for dam removal and the management of impoundment sediment (see pg 6) to be finalized in 2025. Working with CA State Parks, CalTrout is leading the strategic public engagement initiative and actively pursuing additional fish barrier removal and remediation projects within the watershed.

Battle Creek Dams: This project includes eight dams that block migrations of salmon and steelhead, 42 miles of diversion canals, pipelines and flumes and ten additional dams upstream of anadromous reaches. Caltrout is working with our partners to accelerate the decommissioning process and ensure fish have full access to their historical range in the watershed and a natural flow regime.



Top: Searsville dam by Michael Wier.
Middle Left: Matilija dam by Bernard Yin.
Middle Right: Rindge dam by Bernard Yin.
Left: Klamath dam removal by Shane Anderson/Swiftwater Films.
Right: CalTrout's Central Valley Regional Director, Jacob Katz, Ph.D. holds a fish food sample by Michael Wier.

STRING OF PEARLS

In collaboration with leading farm businesses and water suppliers, bird, fish and wildlife conservation non-profits, government agencies and tribes we continue to work on large-scale reconnection of Central Valley rivers to their floodplains. Only through landscape-scale action can we expect a population-level response.

Recovery of endangered Winter-Run Chinook salmon populations, therefore, requires transformational change to the highly-altered landscape of the Sacramento River Valley which, like most major rivers in the developed world, has been extensively leveed and channelized leaving only a scattered remnant of floodplain rearing habitats accessible to native fish. That's why CalTrout has turned to a landscape-scale approach to stitch these small, disconnected restoration opportunities together into a string of floodplain "pearls". For more than 300 miles—from Shasta to the salt—our project is restoring the floodplains, oxbows and side-channels where young salmon stop and feed and get big on their journey to sea. Finding refuge and abundant food resources allows these "floodplain fatties" to grow large and healthy and dramatically increases their chances of returning as spawning adults. And more fish, as our many partners agree, is good for everyone.



SOURCE TO SEA

California State Parks is partnering with CalTrout to manage the Malibu Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project, with support from a team of consultants. The restoration project includes creating an interpretive site at a historic overlook where visitors will be able to view the dam removal, learn about the Malibu Creek watershed and its cultural history, all while taking in the area’s majestic beauty. In the summer, CalTrout reached out to the UCLA Extension Landscape Architecture Program to help interpret the points of interest into a “stop the car!” experience with welcoming aesthetics and engaging displays.

Recognizing the local impact of this project, CalTrout is also partnering with State Parks to lead a comprehensive outreach and education program. This includes public workshops with local attendees to hear from the technical team and tabling at dozens of events, engaging as many voices as possible in this landscape-scale restoration program.

From top to bottom, left to right: Shasta Valley by Michael Wier; CalTrout Summer Intern Emily Winn helps with Scott Bar Mill Creek fish passage project by Serena Doose; CalTrout and CA State Park staff collaborate at Malibu Creek by Bernard Yin; Malibu Creek State Park by Kelli Frye



A MOSAIC OF PROJECTS

CalTrout’s mosaic of projects across the state corresponds to the mosaic of ecosystems that are unique to each watershed, and the wide range of constantly-shifting conditions within them. This requires direct and ongoing restoration work in addition to planning for the effects and consequences of big moves such as dam removal.

COMMITMENT TO ECOSYSTEMS WITHIN WATERSHEDS

By the end of 2024, the Klamath River dams will be removed, opening hundreds of miles of habitat to native fishes including coho salmon. But until that time, and even after as the river recovers, juvenile coho salmon in the Klamath Basin are in desperate need of places to safely grow. CalTrout and our partners are committed to the restoration and revitalization of fish habitat throughout the entire Scott River watershed, a tributary to the Klamath.

Reconnecting a stream to its natural floodplain

On the South Fork of the Scott River, we recently began the fourth phase of a restoration project that will reconnect the stream to its natural floodplain and improve cold water rearing habitat for Klamath Basin fish. Coho salmon in the Klamath Basin are listed under the Endangered Species Act. The South Fork of the Scott River offers perennial, cold water, that has never been observed to run dry even in drought years—a rarity in the Scott

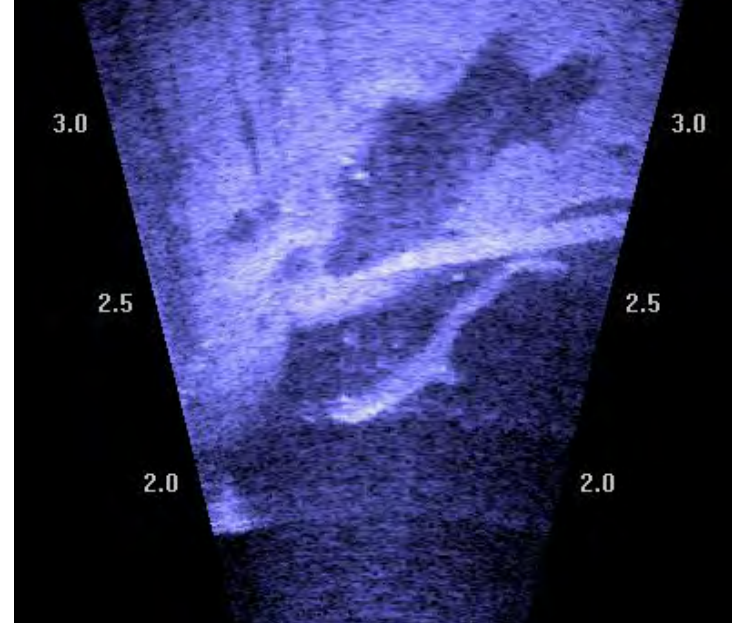
River watershed and crucial for coho salmon recovery. The next round of construction will begin in the summer of 2024.

Complex project restores a tributary

Mill Creek is the lowermost tributary to the Scott River, and during the fall spawning migration for coho and Chinook salmon, it is the first tributary they encounter. In the last few years, the mainstem Scott went dry in multiple locations in the summer and early fall due to drought and late fall rains. These conditions prevented adult salmon from accessing their typical spawning areas and significantly impacted fisheries populations. In November 2023, after much effort by state, federal, and tribal partners, and private landowners, construction concluded on the Scott-Bar Mill Creek Fish Passage Restoration Project. The project replaced the road crossing with a channel-spanning bridge, re-profiled the channel to improve fish passage, and restored riparian and instream habitat conditions in Mill Creek. Restoring a tributary this low in the watershed ensures that salmon have a place to spawn and rear, regardless of upstream conditions and drought years.

“CALTROUT UNDERSTANDS THE CONCEPT OF SLOW WATER. THROUGH THEIR DISTRIBUTED PROJECTS THEY ARE JOINING OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD IN MOVING AWAY FROM SINGLE-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS AND ASKING, ‘WHAT DOES WATER WANT?’”

ERICA GIES, AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST AND NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER



COMMUNITY PLUS SCIENCE

CalTrout finds that a great challenge facing watershed and salmon recovery is creating and sustaining a shared vision of a healthy river ecosystem and a healthy human community –a shared understanding of a healthy relationship between humans and the river ecosystem. While we strive for ‘ecosystem health’ as measured by quantifiable objectives (for example: population abundance, habitat area) many attributes such as resilience, diversity and productivity may be more difficult to quantify and also imply a qualitative meaning that emerges from shared understanding within the human community invested in place. We use this model to consider ecology, watershed sciences and a community’s shared vision for ecological and social outcomes. For us, this is a way to create a “restoration community” that works towards a shared vision of health, rather than an indifferent referee of facts and data.

Left: Snorkelers performing the annual summer surveys by Eric Wiseman; Right top: DIDSON sonar image of a fish casting a shadow. Fish migration studies, Murray Darling Basin (NSW). Photo: Lee Baumgartner. Right bottom: Fall River Fish Tagging by Michael Wier

INTEGRATING SCIENCE

In order to innovate, deliver nature-based solutions, and maximize the impact of our projects, we rely on science. From climate science, watershed sciences, state-of-the-art equipment and techniques for fieldwork, and the collection, synthesis and reporting of robust data, science helps us protect and restore our watershed. This, in turn, helps to ensure resilient, abundant fish for generations to come, and arrest declines in biodiversity.

OUR WORK BEGINS WITH SCIENCE

Data collection

In the Bay Area, we’ve now extended our PIT (Passive Integrated Transponders) to track steelhead and coho salmon on their annual spawning runs which will provide us with important information on migration timing and behaviors. This data collection is imperative to understanding population dynamics of steelhead, tracking coho salmon movement, gauging the success of restoration work throughout the Pescadero Marsh, and informing future restoration work.

eDNA sampling

In Silver Creek, CalTrout works with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to remove non-native brook trout, which threaten

the Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), currently listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Before beginning removal efforts, staff took eDNA samples of the creek. These samples provided information about where certain species are present or absent from a watershed. Knowing where non-native species are in the watershed helps us focus our removal efforts.

Video monitoring

To inform our conservation on the South Fork Eel River, a salmon and steelhead stronghold that represents one of the best opportunities to restore wild fish abundance, we installed a Sound Metrics Dual Frequency Identification Sonar (DIDSON) camera system. The sonar camera records video of fish as they migrate upstream to their spawning grounds. These videos help us

“I LOVE WORKING WITH CALTROUT BECAUSE THEY ARE A SCIENTIFICALLY BASED ORGANIZATION THAT FOLLOWS SCIENCE TO GUIDE POLICY. NOTHING COULD MAKE ME HAPPIER.”

DR. ROB LUSARDI, UC DAVIS

estimate the abundance of spawning Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead in the watershed allowing us to more accurately monitor salmon which, under past survey techniques, may have been undetectable.



CLIMATE LITERACY

Over the past year, CalTrout has significantly strengthened our ability to engage with members in the local communities where we work. It's a critical component of our working model and one we embrace as we connect with the people in our communities who can help define, advise, participate in, and benefit from our projects. CalTrout's Outreach and Education programs bring people into direct relationship with the land, while growing climate literacy across the state.

INTERNATIONAL FLY FISHING FILM FESTIVAL FLOURISHES

We were pleased to once again bring our community together for the International Fly Fishing Film Festival (IF4). We had five venues across California and over 600 attendees this year to watch, listen, learn and engage with fellow conservationists and enthusiasts.

IF4 is the world's leading fly fishing film event, consisting of films produced by professional filmmakers from all corners of the globe and showcases the passion, lifestyle, and culture of fly fishing. It honors our CalTrout legacy and the strong bond we share with anglers and the connection to our watersheds. Looking forward, we are excited to host the coming season for a curated selection of CalTrout films alongside the IF4.

Top: Courtesy of Edna Maguire Elementary School, Right: Youth Flyfishing, Emma Ancel



BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS OPENS DOORS

Each regional office dedicates time and effort towards increasing awareness in the community of local restoration and policy issues through attending and tabling at events, presenting at conferences, and being good community members. We've expanded our youth education program with collaborations that immerse young people in their local ecologies by providing real world data and field experiences, simultaneously increasing climate literacy. In 2023, 80% of our regions participated in school engagements, presenting to young people in classrooms or in the field.

CalTrout's Outreach and Education work reaches across the state, and includes thoughtful, local partnership in communities, and within schools. CalTrout is working diligently to deepen our engagement efforts in the places that we work. We hope to fund opportunities for careers in

conservation pathways and trainings for local and Indigenous young people. We plan to elevate our projects in the communities most affected by their impacts through creative and authentic participation. We want to inspire youth to action through showing up in spaces that serve them, from yearly classroom visits, to fly fishing events alongside local fly clubs.

Empowering educators

At Walker Creek Ranch and Outdoor School, we've brought scientific expertise into salmonid-focused curricula. Through empowering educators with knowledge, our work in this watershed ripples out to the 4000+ 4th and 5th graders that these educators serve over the course of the school year.

Developing a new curriculum

In conjunction with our Iron Canyon Fish Passage project in Chico, CalTrout is providing support to the Watershed Collective, a collective of area teachers led by Anne Stephens, Ed.D, to build out a culturally and ecologically relevant K-12 curriculum informed

- PRESENTED TO 20+ K-12 CLASSES
- REACHED 500+ K-12 YOUTH
- 200% INCREASE IN TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM FOR SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOLS SINCE 2021
- SUPPORTED CLIMATE LITERACY WITHIN 80% OF CALTROUT'S REGIONS

by the local watershed ecology and traditional ecological knowledge provided by the Mechoopda Indian Tribe's culture keepers.

Fieldwork with young people

In Pescadero and Walker Creek, CalTrout is connecting local youth to fisheries monitoring efforts in Pescadero Marsh, rooting their educational experience in ecology and conservation career pathways.



Left: The California State Capitol. Right top: Southern steelhead by Mark Capelli. Right bottom: CalTrout Policy team gathers at an event with colleagues and partners.

IMPACT AT THE CAPITOL

We believe that advocacy and legal work goes hand-in-hand with our projects and is critical to restoring and sustaining the natural work for conservation success and the generations to come, especially in these times of climate change. CalTrout is thrilled to have opened its first Sacramento Office in 2023 and our Policy Team has never been stronger.

"I APPRECIATE CALTROUT'S THOUGHTFUL COLLABORATION WITH MANY ORGANIZATIONS AND TRIBES IN MY DISTRICT. SIMPLY PUT, THEY NOT ONLY GET IMPORTANT CONSERVATION WORK DONE, THEY DO IT IN AN INCLUSIVE, LOCALLY-FOCUSED, SCIENCE-FORWARD WAY THAT HELPS US ALL PROTECT OUR WATERSHEDS NOW AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CALIFORNIANS."

CONGRESSMAN HUFFMAN

DEFENDING CALTROUT'S LISTING OF SOUTHERN STEELHEAD

CalTrout made the important decision to list Southern steelhead under the Endangered Species Act in 2020. The petition to list all *O. Mykiss* below barriers, underpinned by impressive genetic research from Sandra Jacobson, Ph.D., South Coast & Sierra Headwaters Regional Director, and Russell Marlow, South Coast Senior Project Manager, was accepted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and thus protections for Southern steelhead were live in 2023.

Despite CDFW supporting the work by the CalTrout team, United Water Agency chose to challenge the ruling and CalTrout's science-based approach to our work. Along with generous pro-bono support by close partners Orrick, Herrington, and Sutcliffe, CalTrout joined the State of California in defending our petition.

CalTrout has zealously defended our petition along with the State, and after multiple rounds of briefs and mock trials, CalTrout successfully defended our petition in Los Angeles Superior Court on October 24th, 2023. This landmark victory ensured that CalTrout's scientific reputation was intact and that Southern steelhead will continue to march towards full endangered species listing in 2024.



FOREGROUNDING POLICY

CalTrout's legal team's work in 2023 focused on internal risk management and contract oversight and targeted litigation to protect and support project work. The former is essential to sustaining the growth of CalTrout. This growth is allowing us to have a greater impact and with that impact comes greater risk.

CalTrout balances productive collaboration with diverse partners but understands that legal action that directly promotes important CalTrout projects or initiatives is equally important. This year, CalTrout targeted two important projects: the listing of Southern steelhead under the California Endangered Species Act and the removal of the Eel River Dams. On October 25, 2023, we successfully defended this listing in California Superior Court in Los Angeles.

This victory (see more above) brings us one step closer to providing these fish the protections they deserve.

2023 highlights

- 120** CalTrout met with every legislative office in 2023. Yup! All 120 of them.
- 809** CalTrout sponsored AB 809, which was signed into law by Governor Newsom in September, 2023. AB 809 creates the California Monitoring Plan, which will ensure that we have consistent data on salmonid numbers on Coastal streams in California.
- 75** People attending CalTrout's "Welcome Back to Session" event at the Capitol. We honored Senator McGuire with an award for environmental stewardship.
- 5** Number of times CalTrout served as lead witness testimony for bills in 2023.
- 1** Presentation to the Women's Legislative Caucus during a site visit day.

Budget overview

The Policy Team supported and advocated for mission critical funding in this year's state budget. Here is a snapshot of just a few items that made it into the final budget:

- \$417M** Total amount of funding for the California Natural Resources Agency
- \$784M** Total amount of funding for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- \$262M** Total amount of funding for the Wildlife Conservation Board
- \$26.7M** Amount of funding in the state budget to support reactivation and deployment of priority stream gages
- \$31.5M** State Water Resources Control Board's Updating Water Rights Data for California modernization project.



HONORING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

This past year CalTrout has been especially focused on increasing our tribal engagement, and, in fact, this has happened across every region and on almost all of our restoration projects. We’ve worked across the state to build deep accomplice-ships with California Tribes and peoples in which capacity is strengthened, real work is done on lands, and Indigenous leadership is honored throughout their sovereign homelands.

We honor our conservation and community partnerships with the Karuk Tribe, the Klamath Tribe, the Mechoopda Indian Tribe, the Pala Band of Mission Indians, the Pauma Band of Mission Indians, the Pechanga Tribe, the Pit River Tribe, the Round Valley Indian Tribes, the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, the Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation, the Wiyot Tribe, the Yurok Tribe, and the many other Indigenous nations and organizations that we have worked with and hope to work with in the future. Thank you to these peoples, organizations, and sovereign governments who honor us with their collaboration.

Top: Upper Sardine Lake by Patrick J Sheehan
Middle: Fish on by Mike Lee
Bottom: Representatives from CalTrout, the Yurok Tribe, and Farmer’s Ditch Company gather to sign an MOU by Michael Wier.



COLLECTIVE VISION

By working collectively, CalTrout can ensure the longevity and resilience of our conservation efforts beyond individual projects or funding cycles. We’ve had a few incredible successes that speak to our ability to connect across the aisle, build working bridges, and help our projects and communities thrive and grow.

DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE MODELS AND COALITIONS

Scott River Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
CalTrout, the Yurok Tribe, and Farmer’s Ditch Company (FDC) signed a historic MOU for collaborative work that envisions a future where salmon populations and family farms both flourish. This historic alliance was built with a mutual respect and understanding that communities, farmers and fish all rely on healthy water, and finding and building partnerships with mutually beneficial solutions can strengthen fish runs and farmers alike.

The Scott River is a crucial source of water for farms and ranches. Farmers Ditch Company provides water to 1,028 acres of family-owned farmland adjacent to the Scott River. The river also provides unique and highly productive habitat for fish including Chinook salmon, federally threatened coho salmon, steelhead, Pacific lamprey, all of which the Yurok Tribe depends on for sustenance and ceremony.

Based on local landowner feedback, the project, the Scott River Tailings Reach Watershed Restoration Project will relocate or modify Farmers Ditch Company’s point of diversion

and provide irrigation system improvements which will increase flows for juvenile and adult salmon. The project will also restore degraded fish habitat and improve fish passage within a section of the river.

The project is led by the Yurok Tribe and funded by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Brought together by the devastating impact of the extended drought, CalTrout, the Yurok and Karuk Tribes, Scott River Water Trust, Farmers Ditch Company, and other partners will be working cooperatively on the project.

‘Floodplain Forward’; a model for collaborative working
Signed by the California Rice Commission, CalTrout, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and the Northern California Water Association, the ‘Floodplain Forward’ MOU develops and expands a framework of cooperation to preserve and sustain ecosystem function and provide landscape-scale habitat benefits for fish, bird, and wildlife populations.

The parties committed to working together with their common interest in promoting functional ecosystems and sustainable waters supplies in the Sacramento Valley. While signed in 2021, this MOU continues to be a model for which we use science-based

“THE YUROK TRIBAL FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAS DEVELOPED AN AMAZING PARTNERSHIP WITH CALTROUT OVER THE YEARS. WE HAVE A SHARED VISION OF RESTORING AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS IN THE KLAMATH BASIN AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA. THIS IS ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS AND WE VALUE IT IMMENSELY.”

BARRY MCCOVEY JR., YUROK TRIBAL FISHERIES DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

efforts to achieve a landscape that mimics historic ecosystems and values to which fish, birds, and other wildlife populations are adapted.

We believe models such as these are strengthened through years of collaboration and candor, and rolling up our sleeves to create natural and working landscapes through the interaction of water, sun, and land.

SEEING SYSTEMS

Seeing systems means more than joining the dots, it necessitates a sensitivity to the circular nature of the world we live in; understanding how the conditions we face are created, recognizing the structures and laws that are in place, and that events and actions are continuously happening, requiring us to adapt, repair, maintain and innovate.

NATURAL FLOWS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO FLOURISHING ECOSYSTEMS

At CalTrout, we separate our conservation work into seven geographical regions, but each creek, river, and estuary are interconnected, interacting with each other through the same larger ecosystem. From the tiniest bug, to the oldest forest, to the longest river, everything is connected. In our restoration work, we rely on our experience with how systems work and use this knowledge to inform smart, science-based solutions – and to invest in more research in system interactions that we know little about.

The intricate connection between forest and waterbody health

In northern Mono County in the Walker River Basin, CalTrout is working to protect federally threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout in By-Day Creek by thinning the forest surrounding the watershed. The By-Day Creek Forest Health Project is a collaborative project with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement thinning of overly dense white fir forest understory. Thinning the forest will improve forest health and reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire on this watershed and the fish within it.

Implementation for this project began in September 2023. When complete, it will span across 163 acres.

Building a toolset to inform future policy

The spring waters that emerge from the volcanic rocks of northern California's Cascade Range are of critical importance to water security, fish, and people, yet relatively little is known about them and how they have been affected by recent drought. This year we embarked on a three-year study to provide a scientifically based toolset to better understand, manage, and advance the protection of the cold, clean spring waters in the Upper Sacramento Basin. Building on our past efforts to assess baseline conditions of springs in the Mount Shasta region, this study will define and quantify source areas and flows, assess ecosystem sensitivity to climate change, and determine how these systems support the diverse life history of wild cold-water fish. Study locations include the spring-fed streams above Shasta Reservoir: the McCloud, Upper Sacramento, Rising, and Fall rivers, Hat Creek, and Burney Creek, which feeds the iconic Burney Falls. We have teamed up with organizations and universities with a wide range of expertise to do this work, including CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, CSU East Bay, UC Davis, and Lawrence Livermore National

Laboratory. This study will help inform future policy and management to further protect these vital aquifers in an increasingly variable climate.

"CALTROUT AND ITS COALITION OF PARTNERS ARE WATER HEROES IN CALIFORNIA – A PLACE THAT NEEDS THIS KIND OF HELP SO GREATLY. THEIR UNWAVERING DEDICATION TO FISH, COMMUNITIES AND SCIENCE ARE UNPARALLELED, AND I AM SO PROUD AND FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO COLLABORATE WITH THEM."

ANDREW L. RYPEL, PH.D., PROFESSOR, PETER B. MOYLE & CALIFORNIA TROUT ENDOWED CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISH & CONSERVATION BIOLOGY, UC, DAVIS



RESTORATION IN THE OLD-GROWTH REDWOODS

Amidst the largest remaining contiguous old-growth coastal redwood forest in the world, just off Highway 101, Bull Creek trickles by. This modest 41.5 square mile watershed has incredible potential to support endangered salmonids—but the conditions in the creek have not yet been quite right for fish. The recent completion of a restoration project on the Hamilton Reach of Bull Creek will help change this giving existing coho salmon populations in the South Fork Eel River watershed the chance to migrate through.

Throughout their lifecycles, salmonids need varied water temperatures. When they are young, they might need warmer water, and as they grow, they seek out colder temperatures. They need different summer and winter habitats to thrive. Ultimately, these fish need habitat year-round that can fulfill the full spectrum of their lifecycle needs.

The Bull Creek Hamilton Reach restoration project included three main components to provide these varied conditions for fish: installing four large wood in-stream structures, constructing habitat ponds and restoring side channels, and planting over 18,000 native plants.

In October 2023, construction and implementation of this restoration project concluded. Monitoring will continue for a number of years after to better understand project performance. The Hamilton Reach is just one of four reaches in Bull Creek, but the Bull Creek watershed is protected and managed, in its entirety, under California State Parks. This provides unprecedented landscape level restoration and protection opportunities. CalTrout hopes to be able to continue with restoration of the other reaches of Bull Creek.

Top: Bull Creek flows through redwoods by Catch Creative/Hanford; Middle: Construction at Bull Creek by Catch Creative/Hanford; Bottom: Walker Creek field work by Patrick Samuel

A TRUSTED LEADER

2023 was another year of fortifying the organization's capacity to move forward more large-scale, watershed restoration projects and efforts across the state. Our 27% average annual growth rate over the last five years, doubling in size twice during that time, is a reflection of the resources going to our on-the-ground projects. Fueling this growth is CalTrout's ability to secure public grant funding for river and fisheries restoration & water infrastructure.

CalTrout has earned a reputation as the organization that makes stuff happen. Our financial health, success rate, and proven ability to deliver results on the ground, have made us a trusted partner that funding agencies turn to and can rely on to perform, as evidenced by \$30 million in government grants awarded in the past year.

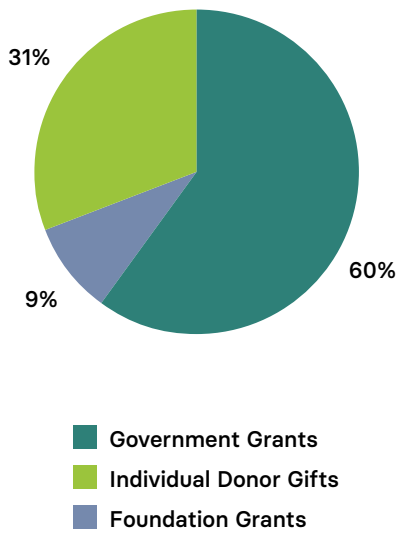
Our ability to unlock these public funds starts with you. It starts with the generous donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations that fuel the engine powering the machine that invested \$14.2 million into the communities where we work. This investment impacts our local communities economically as well as fostering continued community partnership, engagement, and representation. These private donations fund the relationship-building, science and research, partner collaboration, and project development required to compete for public funds, and contribute to the cultural diversity and inclusivity with the community.

With this rapid level of growth, we've been keenly attuned to the need for fiscal stability. Our business model is intended to maintain company stability during large budget swings resulting from unanticipated project delays. We've developed strong risk management policies combined with conservative fiscal management, and dynamic internal and external legal teams who are experts in contracting

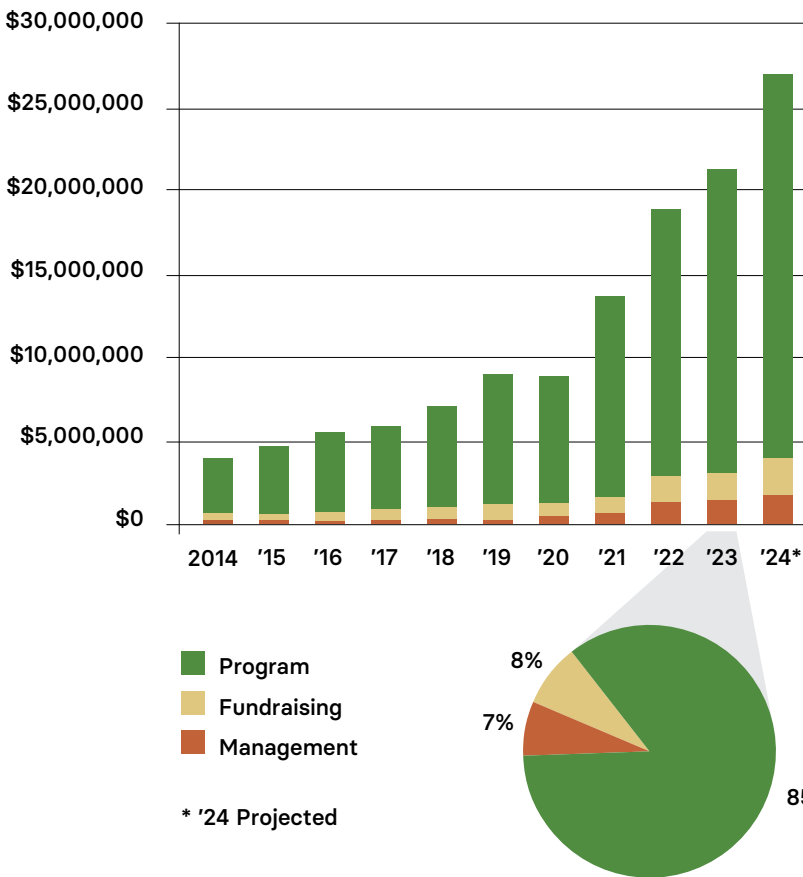
in our areas of service. But don't take our word for it. CalTrout has been evaluated by Charity Navigator, the world's largest and most trusted nonprofit evaluator, and earned a perfect score of 100/100, continuing our Four-Star Rating! This is the highest possible rating on Charity Navigator. This third-party accreditation is validation of our organization's operational excellence.



REVENUE FISCAL YEAR 2023



EXPENSE FISCAL YEAR 2014 - 2024



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- Will Ware**
Project Coordinator

CENTRAL VALLEY

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Regional Director, Senior Scientist
- Jacob Montgomery**
Senior Project Manager

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- Katy Gurin**
Project Manager
- Christine Davis**
Project Manager
- Gabe Rossi, Ph.D.**
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Fisheries Research Technician
- Ashley Shannon**
Project Assistant

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- Serena Doose**
Senior Project Manager
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Project Manager
- Dustin Revel**
Project Manager
- Brittney Charlesworth**
Project Coordinator
- Laurel Tuggle**
Project Coordinator
- Nicole Dove**
Grants & Contracts Administrator
- Tyanna Blaschak**
Project Manager

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South Coast & Sierra Headwaters Regional Director
- Allison Dodds**
Project Manager
- Marrina Nation**
Project Manager

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- Elizabeth Burns**
Project Coordinator
- Nate Yancheff**
Project Coordinator

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- Redgie Collins**
Legal and Policy Director
- Analise Rivero**
Associate Director of Policy
- Amanda Cooper**
Staff Attorney
- Kam Bezdek**
Policy Associate
- Charlie Schneider**
Lost Coast Project Manager

IN THE FIELD

- Craig Ballenger**
Fly Fishing Ambassador
- Michael E. Wier**
Field Reporter

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- Andrew Bassak
- Bill Epstein
- Frank Pipgras
- Steve Rogers
- Alan Vidinsky

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- UC Berkeley**
- UC Davis, Center for Watershed Sciences**
- Dr. Peter Moyle
- Dr. Jeff Mount
- Dr. Jay Lund
- Dr. Carson Jeffres
- Dr. Andrew Rypel - Peter B. Moyle and California Trout Endowed Chair in Coldwater Fishes
- Dr. Rob Lusardi - Leader, CalTrout/UC Davis Wild Fish Partnership
- UC Santa Barbara**
- UC Santa Cruz**
- Humbolt State University**
- University Nevada-Reno**
- Public Policy Institute of California**
- 2023-24 PPIC CalTrout Ecosystem Fellow: Ted Sommers

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- Earth Advocacy

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- Environmental Defense Center
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- O'Melveny and Myers LLP
- Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe
- Shute, Mihaly & Weinberg
- Water Power & Law Group - Richard Roos Collins

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What will your legacy be?

Honoring California Trout with a gift in your will or living trust is a meaningful way to make a lasting difference. Your legacy gift will help to ensure healthy waters and resilient wild fish thriving for generations to come.

Contact Tracey Diaz at tdiaz@calt trout.org for more information or scan the QR code to become a member today.

The Spot by Alan Sarpy

