

RIVER BUDGET



National priorities for healthy rivers and clean water in fiscal year 2027 (Oct. 2026 to Sept. 2027)

Prioritize water infrastructure

Fiscal year 2027 budget recommendations

Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$4.89 billion for the Clean Water SRF and \$4.38 billion for the Drinking Water SRF

Reducing Lead in Drinking Water

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$100 million

Assistance for Small & Disadvantaged Communities Drinking Water

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$140 million

Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant Program

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$280 million

Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Fund

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$73 million

The United States is grappling with significant challenges across every facet of its water infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. The American Society of Civil Engineers has assigned a grade of C- to the nation's drinking water infrastructure and a D to its stormwater systems, reflecting the widespread deficiencies and vulnerabilities within these essential networks. Many communities are burdened by aging infrastructure, environmental contamination, and inconsistent or unaffordable access to safe drinking water.

To address community needs and safeguard public health, Congress must build upon the previous investments, ensuring that the nation's water infrastructure becomes not only more resilient but also universally accessible and sustainable. A commitment to modernizing these systems is essential to creating a more inclusive and sustainable future for all Americans.



TIJUANA RIVER, CALIFORNIA

Modernizing wastewater facilities

Along the U.S.–Mexico border near San Diego and Tijuana, the EPA has a key role in addressing chronic water contamination caused by transboundary sewage flows from Tijuana into the Tijuana River and the Pacific Ocean. For decades, inadequate wastewater infrastructure led to frequent pollution events, beach closures, and public health risks. Through coordinated efforts with the International Boundary and Water Commission and Mexican authorities, EPA funding has supported major infrastructure upgrades, including expanding the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant. These actions aim to reduce untreated sewage, improve water quality, and provide a long-term solution to cross-border pollution challenges.

Create and protect healthy watersheds

Fiscal year 2027 budget recommendations

Cooperative Watershed Management Program

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation

FY27 RECOMMENDATION:

\$10 million

Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Program

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation

FY27 RECOMMENDATION:

\$15 million

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance

AGENCY: National Park Service

FY27 RECOMMENDATION:

\$13.5 million

WaterSMART

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation

FY27 RECOMMENDATION:

\$65 million

Wild and Scenic Rivers

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management

FY27 RECOMMENDATION:

\$7.5 million for Wild and Scenic Rivers (BLM) and \$5.7 million for Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers (NPS)

Water is an invaluable resource, essential to life and the very fabric of our ecosystems. Healthy watersheds—including rivers, wetlands, streams, tributaries, floodplains, and estuaries—serve as critical natural systems that enhance resilience to extreme weather events. The United States has 2,110 watersheds. The largest watershed, the Mississippi River Watershed, drains into 31 states and two Canadian provinces. These vital landscapes provide flood mitigation, support aquifer recharge, offer habitats for wildlife, and deliver essential benefits to water supply and water quality. As changes in climate accelerate the frequency and severity of both floods, fires, and droughts, the importance of maintaining robust, functioning watersheds becomes ever more apparent for the communities, economies, and wildlife that rely on them.



Priority watersheds

In western Colorado, the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project used cost-shared funding from federal partners (including the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation), the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the Colorado River District, to restore a degraded 1-mile stretch of the Uncompahgre River near Ouray and Ridgway. This project addressed long-standing environmental and water management challenges by replacing and stabilizing the Ward Ditch diversion structure, reconnecting the river to its floodplain, and installing rock structures and habitat features to protect banks and improve aquatic function. Ditch and field improvements enhanced agricultural water delivery and supported re-establishment of native riparian vegetation. This has increased floodplain connectivity, reduced downstream erodibility, improved fish and riparian habitat, and helped slow and filter sediment and pollutants before water enters downstream reservoirs. Construction wrapped up in late 2025, and early results include new pools, riffles, sandbars, and extensive plantings of native willows and grasses that are revitalizing the river ecosystem.

Enhance flood-management strategies

As floods grow increasingly frequent and severe, Congress must invest in understanding both the rising flood risks and the response capabilities of affected communities. According to the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will need a minimum of \$800 million annually—totaling between \$3 billion and \$12 billion over time—to enhance flood mapping efforts nationwide and assess future flood risks exacerbated by extreme weather. Congress should prioritize funding for nature-based solutions—such as wetlands restoration, reconnected floodplains, natural floodways, and the preservation of native vegetation. These approaches offer a more sustainable, cost-effective, and reliable alternative to traditional, engineered flood control measures by working with rather than against the natural dynamics of rivers and ecosystems. By investing in these innovative approaches, we can build greater resilience to flooding—safeguarding communities while reducing economic costs.



Nature-based solutions

The Kaskaskia River Basin project in Illinois applies Engineering With Nature principles to enhance ecosystem benefits while maintaining core water resource functions. The basin drains across 22 counties and is a major tributary of the Mississippi River. It includes Lake Shelbyville, Carlyle Lake, and the Jerry F. Costello Lock and Dam, which support flood control, recreation, navigation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and water supply. To improve habitat and vegetation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers–St. Louis District temporarily lowers reservoir water levels by about 6 inches in late summer, allowing native plants to re-establish along shorelines and in shallow backwater areas. These efforts increase native plant growth, enhance habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife, improve water clarity by slowing movement and trapping sediment, and expand recreation opportunities.

Fiscal year 2027 budget recommendations

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$2 billion

Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$175 million

Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis (RiskMAP)

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$313 million

Flood Plain Management and Flooding Mapping

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$225 million

National Flood Risk Management Program

AGENCY: US Army Corps of Engineers

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$6.5 million

Rehabilitate, retrofit, or remove dangerous dams

Fiscal year 2027 budget recommendations

Community-based Restoration Program

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$56 million

High Hazard Potential Dam Safety Grant Program

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$20 million

National Dam Safety Program

AGENCY: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$14 million

National Fish Passage Program

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$18.6 million

Watershed Rehabilitation Program

AGENCY: US Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$10 million

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$75 million

Outdated dams inflict significant stress and harm on river ecosystems, disrupting natural processes and often causing severe declines in native fish populations and wildlife while no longer providing the services for which they were built. To date, nearly 17,000 dams in the United States are considered to be in aging or poor condition. This accounts for about one in five of the nation's dams. These dams are often classified as being in "high hazard" or "significant hazard" condition, meaning their failure would likely result in significant property damage or loss of life. Congress can join the ongoing momentum behind these restoration projects, healing damaged ecosystems while contributing to broader goals of water and energy security.



ROANOKE RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA

Facilitating fish passage

NOAA and local partners are working in the Roanoke River watershed in North Carolina to remove undersized road culverts and other small barriers that have obstructed migratory fish and disrupted natural floodplain function. These efforts, supported with \$3.2 million from NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation, involve replacing six culverts with bridges and removing two additional barriers, which will open more than five miles of stream and 1,130 acres of floodplain forest to fish movement. The Roanoke River, stretching over 400 miles to Albemarle Sound, hosts migratory species including striped bass, blueback herring, hickory shad, American eel, and endangered Atlantic sturgeon. Reconnecting floodplains improves access to spawning and rearing habitat, enhances water quality, reduces prolonged flooding, and supports broader restoration goals across the watershed.

Support river-friendly agriculture

Agriculture holds significant potential for improving resilience on farms. By embracing river-friendly practices and cutting-edge technologies, we can accelerate both the pace and scale of innovation, empowering farmers, ranchers, landowners, and researchers to develop impactful solutions through strengthened state-federal partnerships.

For this vision to fully flourish, Congress must prioritize support for those on the frontlines—farmers who need improved access to voluntary conservation initiatives, better data, and technical assistance to combat nutrient pollution, enhance water quality, and foster healthier soils.



Locally led flood mitigation and recovery projects

The King County Flood Control District in Washington state recently completed three key capital projects: Momb Revetment Repair, North Fork Snoqualmie River Revetment Removal, and Belmondo Levee Repair, totaling over \$3.7 million to reduce flood risk and restore habitat. The district distributed more than \$35.6 million in grants supporting local flood protection, salmon recovery, and watershed health.

Following historic December 2025 floods brought by atmospheric rivers, communities along the Green, Cedar, and Snoqualmie rivers relied on both local investments and USDA's Emergency Watershed Protection program, which provided federal assistance for debris removal, streambank stabilization, and levee repairs. These coordinated efforts highlight the importance of proactive infrastructure, ecological restoration, and state-federal partnerships in building resilience to increasingly intense floods.

Fiscal year 2027 budget recommendations

Agricultural Conservation Easement

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$650 million

Conservation Stewardship Program

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$1.3 billion

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$2.8 billion

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$2.7 billion

Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program – Subsidies and Grants

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$497 million

Watershed And Flood Prevention Operations Program

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Agriculture

FY27 RECOMMENDATION: \$150 million



AMERICAN RIVERS

ACTION FUND

American Rivers and its affiliated American Rivers Action Fund are national organizations working to make every river clean and healthy for people and wildlife. We combine evidence-based solutions with enduring partnerships to safeguard the 4.4 million miles of rivers and streams that are essential to our nation's clean drinking water, extraordinary wildlife, and the strength of our communities. For more than 50 years, American Rivers staff, supporters, and partners have shared a common belief: Life Depends on Rivers. AmericanRiversActionFund.org

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