

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT



Collaborative Aquatic Landscape Restoration Program

08801-0002-22(IN1) – June 2023

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provided \$80 million to the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a collaborative-based, landscape-scale restoration program to restore water quality or fish passage on Federal land, including Indian forestland or rangeland. As a result, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the Collaborative Aquatic Landscape Restoration Program (CALR) within the Forest Service (FS).



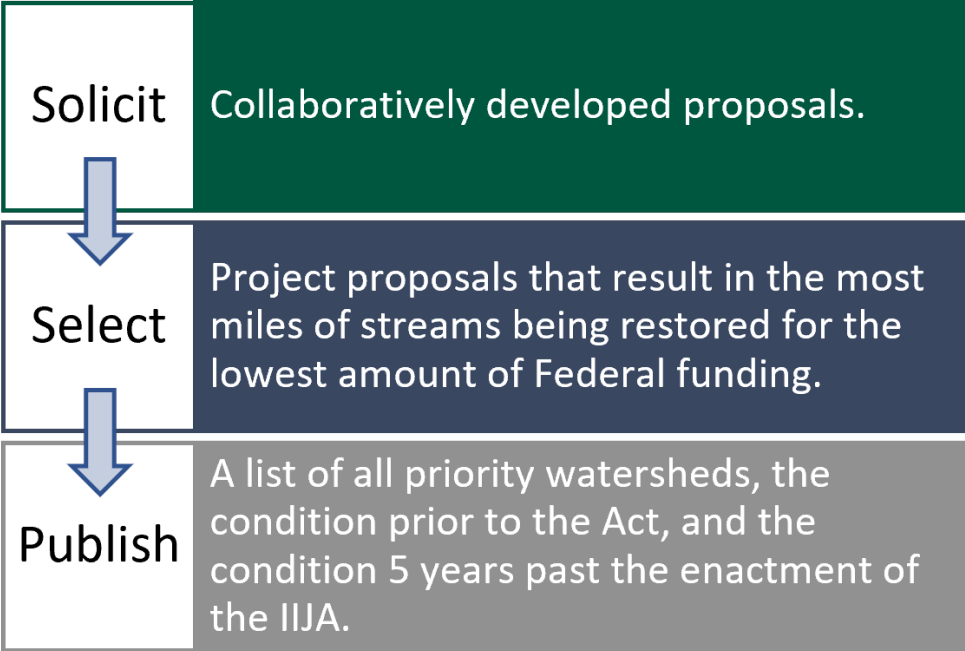
According to FS, CALR is “a remarkable opportunity to fund essential projects and to complete high priority projects on federal and non-federal land to improve water quality or restore passage for fish and other aquatic organisms.” According to the CALR webpage, FS “manages more than 400,000 miles of streams and around 3 million acres of lakes across 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands.” Further, these “streams, rivers, ponds and lakes support vital habitat for native fish and other aquatic organisms.” The following FS video describes aquatic organism passage restoration and how FS has removed barriers that prevent fish and other aquatic species from moving up and down stream corridors.



Figure 1: [Aquatic Organism Passage Restoration - YouTube](#), Video by USDA. Last accessed March 22, 2023.

What Are the CALR IJA Requirements?

IJA requires USDA, in coordination with the Department of Interior, to:



How Did FS Select the Fiscal Year 2022 CALR?

Proposed projects must restore fish passage or water quality on Federal and non-Federal land. In addition, projects must meet the following requirements:



Figure 2: Requirements for Proposal.

The first round of proposals was solicited from FS regions and focused on CALR restoration plans that were ready to begin implementation in fiscal year 2022. FS guidance stated that proposals would be selected for funding based on several factors, including prioritizing those restoration plans that would result in the most miles of streams being restored for fish passage or water quality for the lowest amount of federal funding. At the end of fiscal year 2022, FS had selected 11 proposals in 10 States or Territories as shown in Figure 4. FS plans to announce additional projects in fiscal year 2023.

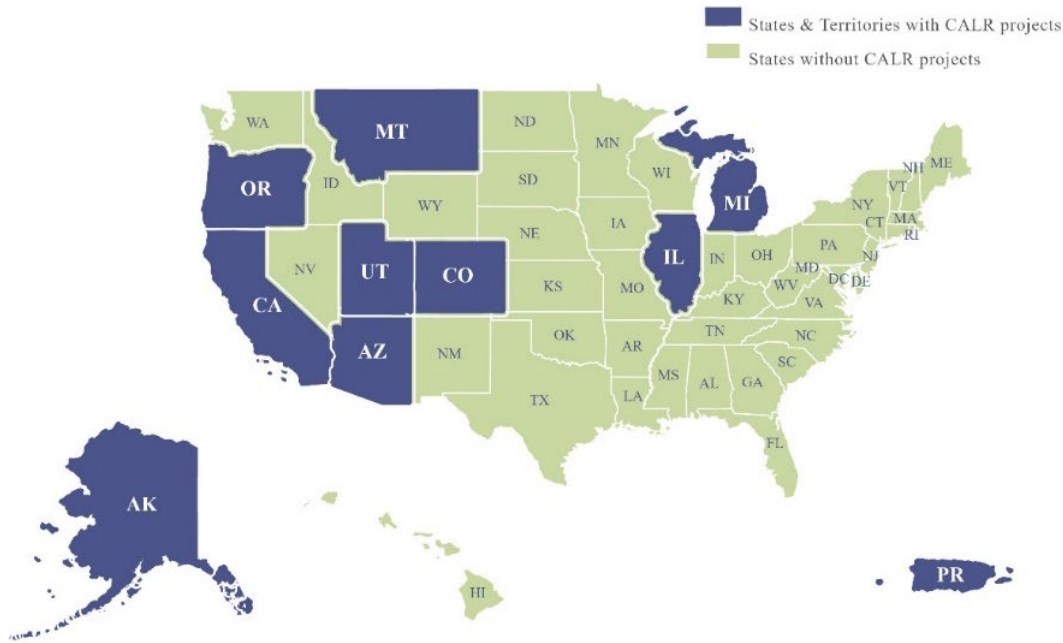


Figure 3: Map of States and Territories with CALR Projects

What Are CALR Funding Allocations as of March 31, 2023?

To expend the \$80 million IJA provided for CALR, FS budgeted \$16 million each year for 5 years.

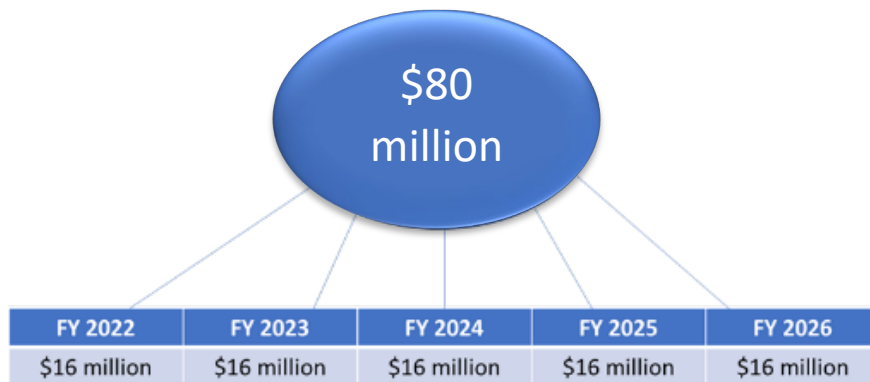


Figure 4: CALR Budget

In fiscal year 2022, FS explained that more than \$7.8 million was collectively transferred to FS Operations (FS Ops), Research and Development (R&D), Salary and Expenses (S&E), and the Office of Inspector General (OIG).¹ More than \$8.1 million was left as the balance. The chart shows the allocation of fiscal year 2022 funding.

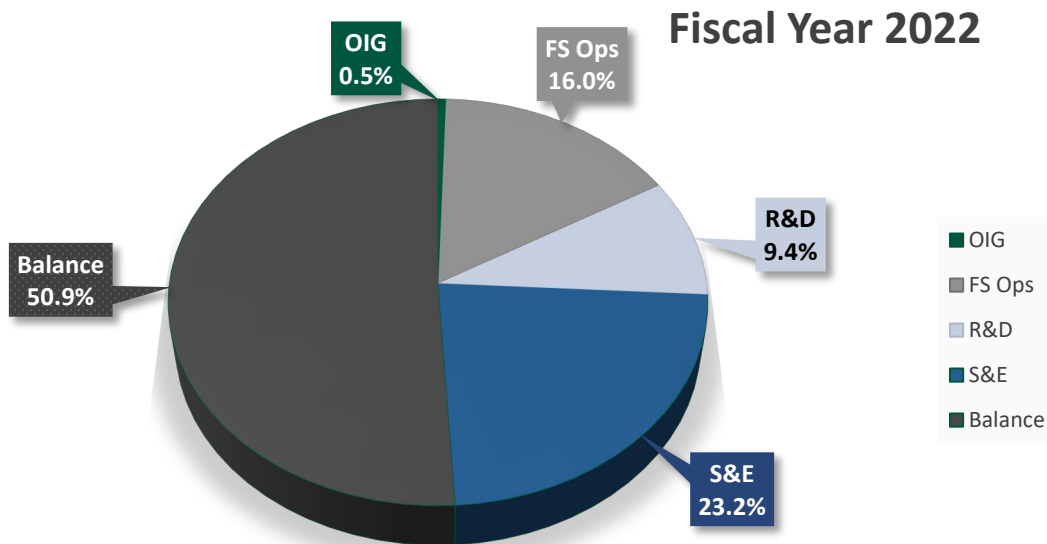


Figure 5: Fiscal Year 2022 CALR Budget

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We conducted this work as part of our ongoing, integrated oversight of the funding provided to FS CALR program by IIJA. Our work includes reviewing program information for transparency and disclosure, performing data analytics on relative data sets for integrity and quality, inspecting key aspects of the internal control environment, and reviewing the implementation of the program. This report includes information about the CALR program as of March 2023.

To accomplish this part of our objectives, we identified the IIJA’s CALR requirements and gained an understanding of the CALR program through publicly available information, discussions with FS officials, and a review of documentation provided by FS. We provided a draft of this product to FS management for their review and technical comments. We have incorporated their comments into our report, as appropriate.



Figure 3: A fish. USDA photo. It does not depict any particular audit or investigation.

We are conducting our inspection in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency’s *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*.

¹ The Act directs FS to transfer funding to the OIG for oversight.

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