

This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

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How Can Water Efficiency Improve Stream Flows?

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What is it?

A joint project of :

- The Alliance for Water Efficiency
- The Environmental Law Institute
- American Rivers

Funded by:

- The Walton Family Foundation's Freshwater Initiative Strategy



Our focus: Colorado River basin



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Our questions

- Has this already been done?
- Legal issues?
- Practical challenges?
- Opportunities?



Case studies

- Deschutes River, OR- role of nonprofit
- Grand Valley, CO-modernizing irrigation
- Manastash Creek, WA-agricultural efficiencies
- Cedar River, WA-Long term conservation
- N Blackfoot River, MT-individual efforts
- Russian River, CA-more natural flows



What the cases tell us

1. External drivers often prompt action
2. Creative funding is key to success
3. Cooperation multiplies benefits and success
4. Water efficiency is just one part of package
5. Scale and location are site-specific



Grand Valley, CO



Legal setting

- Law of the river is a framework
- Federal influence and management are significant
- Each state's prior appropriation law differs
- Assessment is needed case by case

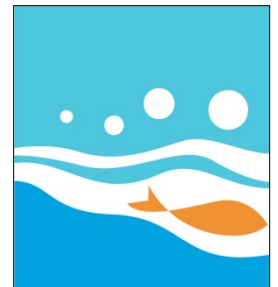


Colorado River basin



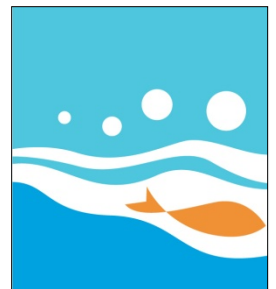
Practical challenges

- Legal obstacles
- Institutions and motivations
- Economics and finance
- Physical and environmental
- Water use
- Many challenges suggest incentives or strategies



How to forge a link

- Attitude, trust, willingness counteract obstacles
- Partnerships and leadership are key
- External drivers not required
- Money not the only factor
- Actual law and perception of it can differ
- Timing and location, not just volume, matter



What makes for success

- Clearly identified stream flow stretch and need
- Water efficiency program that produces water when and where needed



Colorado River basin



Water efficiency factors

- Need to translate annual water savings to real-time stream flow benefit
- Volume
- Timing - day and season
- Location - withdrawal and return
- Legal protections and water rights
- Part of water management package



What makes for success

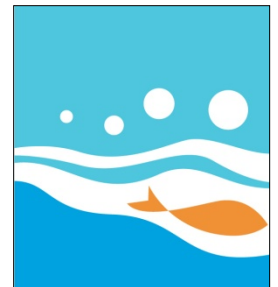
- Willing partners
- Champion for the cause
- Locally tailored approach

- Creative funding
- Defined legal path
- Short term efforts



Approaches to partnership

- Farmer and nonprofit
- Community with direct river connection
- Modernizing agricultural district
- Three way trades
- Nonprofit catalyst
- Multiple watershed partners



Setting the stage

- Major legal or policy changes not necessary
- Connecting existing state programs a place to start
- Pilot projects show possibilities
- Upcoming ESA hot spots matter
- Dialogue with conservation practitioners can spark ideas



Colorado River basin



Water efficiency and stream flows

- Water efficiency can help improve stream flow
- Possible legally in each basin state
- Willing partners most important
- Tailored incentives for different partners
- Several approaches possible
- Can work in other basins

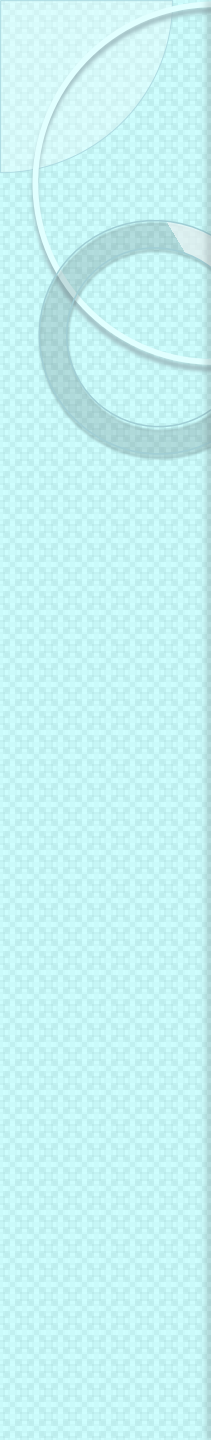


Where to get the report

- online on the Alliance for Water Efficiency's home page:

www.a4we.org





Water Efficiency for Instream Flow:

Making the Link in Practice



October 2011



A joint project of the Alliance for Water Efficiency, American Rivers, and the University of California