

Independent Evaluation of the *Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program*

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Focus of Evaluation

Market development & river restoration

1. Experiment with open market transactions in water rights
2. Increase water in flow-limited reaches of Columbia Basin
3. Restore habitat for anadromous and resident fish

Attributes of program model

1. Sustainability and scalability in Columbia Basin
2. Broader applicability of CBWTP model



Main Findings

- CBWTP successful in developing a market
- Measurable progress towards restoring rivers
- Monitoring ensures compliance
- Integration with habitat restoration needed
- CBWTP is well administered by NFWF
- CBWTP has broader application
 - Complementary restoration activities
 - Water transactions in other western states



Methods

- Evaluation Question Development
- Evaluation Framework
- Interviews (n=56) & Data Collection on Transactions
- Analysis & Discussion w/ QLEs
- Presentation of Results (NFWF & NPCC)

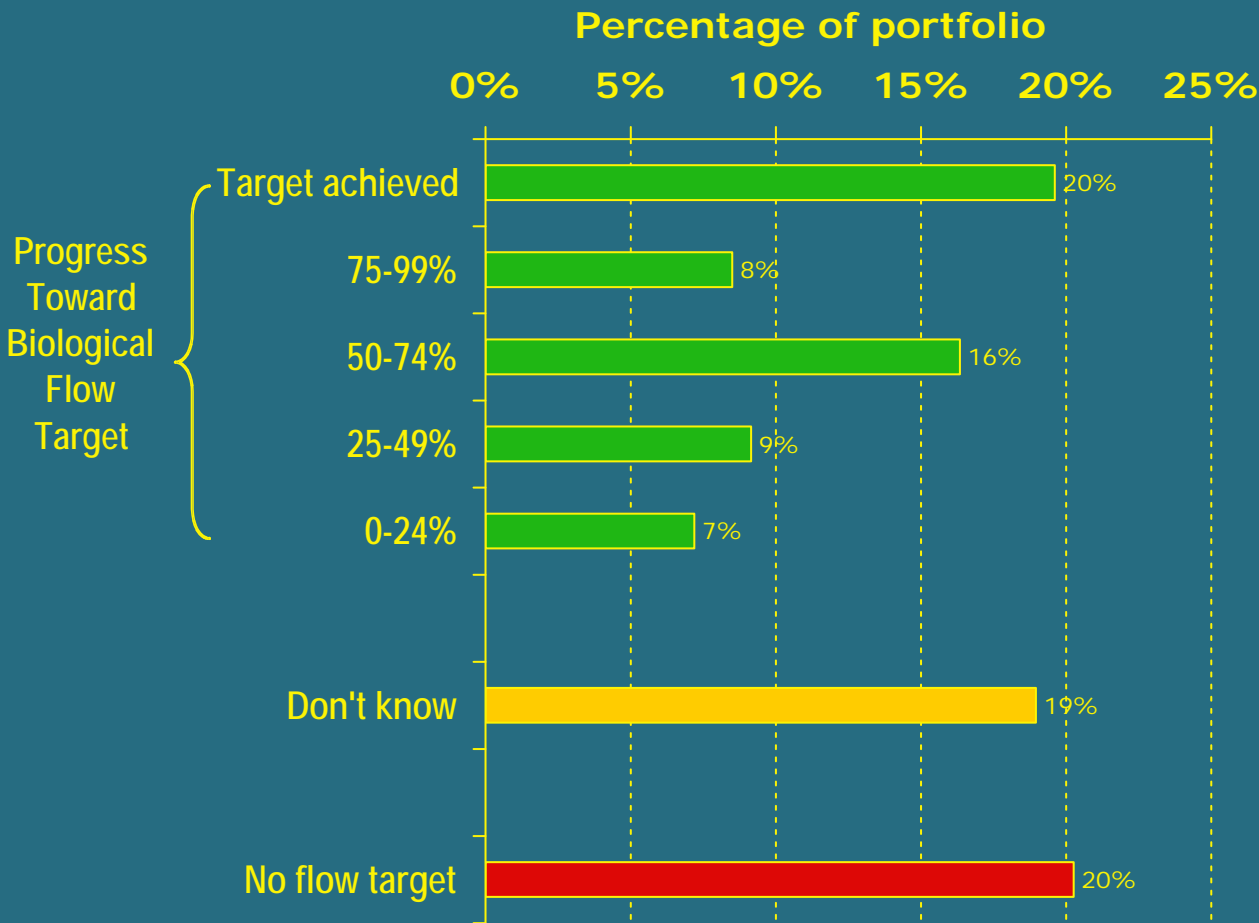


CBWTP Successful in Developing a Market

- 152 deals completed, 2003-2006
- Innovations in approach
 - Leases
 - Donations
 - Purchases
 - Irrigation efficiency projects
 - Others



Steady Progress Towards Restoring Rivers

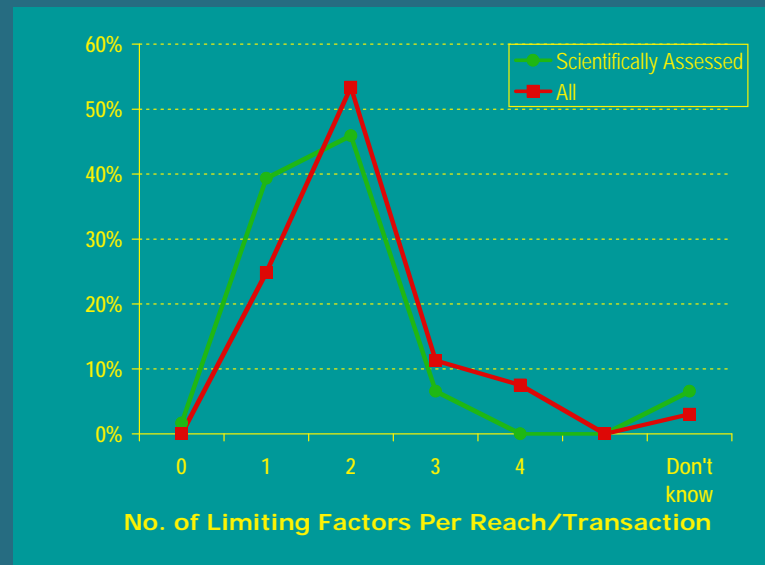
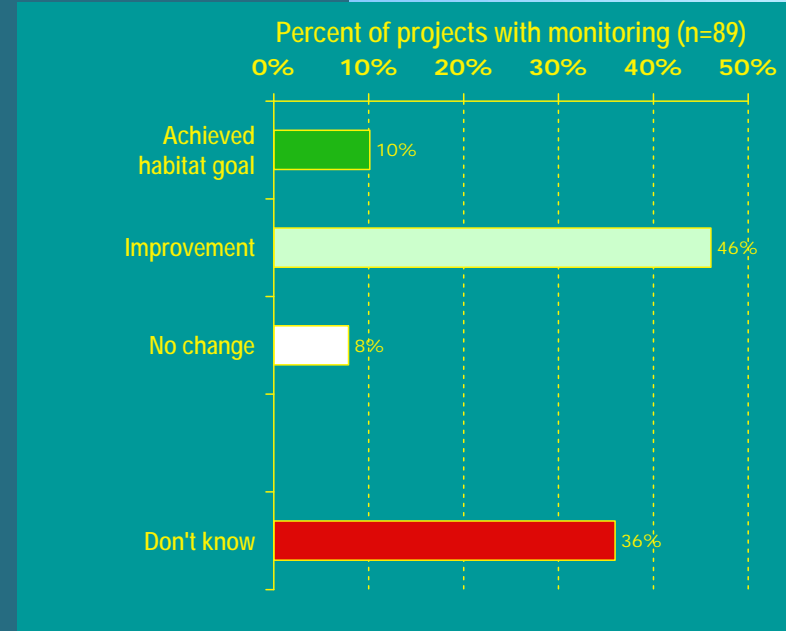
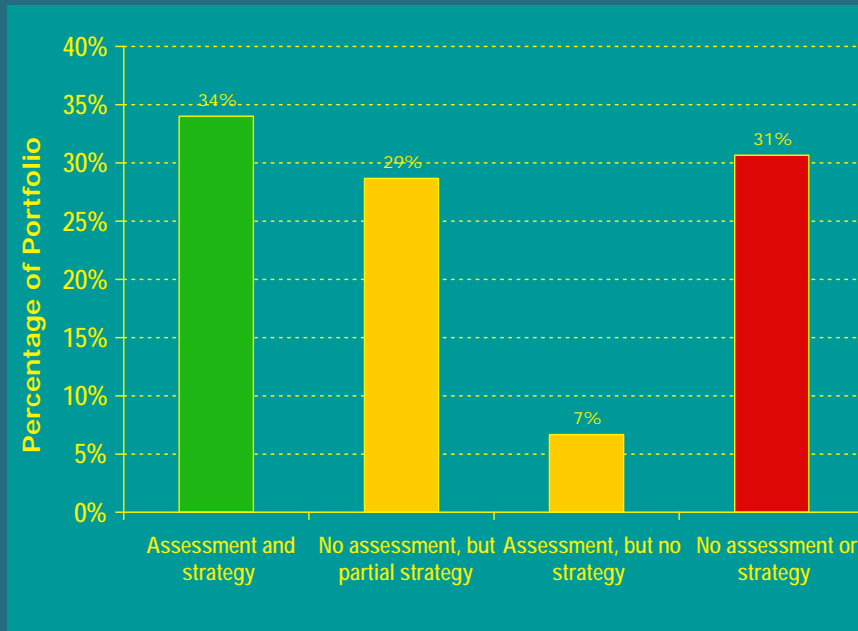


Monitoring Ensures Compliance

- 90% deals include monitoring to ensure water is allocated to in-stream flow



Integration with Habitat Restoration Needed



CBWTP is Well Administered by NFWF

- Grantees give top marks for administration
- Our observations are:
 - NFWF has developed a unifying vision
 - NFWF is effective and efficient as a granting organization
 - NFWF has acted as a strategic integrator of donors, grantees, and regulators
 - NFWF has assembled a constructive and collaborative community of grantees



CBWTP has Broader Application

- Complementary restoration activities
 - Ex: Riparian habitat restoration
- A model for other western states



Recommendations

- Revise performance metrics
- Integrate with other restoration activities
- Develop guidelines for habitat monitoring
- Continue short and long-term transactions
- Fund transaction costs
- Explore land-water conservation deals

