



Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program

Water is allocated to producers in the Columbia River Basin through a system of legal rights established in the late nineteenth century when it seemed there was no end to land or water. Today, more water rights have been allocated than there are resources to meet them. As a result of water withdrawals during the growing season, stretches of many streams and rivers run low—and sometimes dry—with significant consequences for the habitat of fish and wildlife.

In 2002, BPA worked with several entities to launch the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP), a project that is taking a fresh approach to the challenge. BPA supports the CBWTP to develop innovative and voluntary water transactions that improve flows to tributary streams and rivers in Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho. BPA manages a cooperative agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife

ducers, irrigation districts, tribes and many others in communities across the region to create instream water transactions. Chris Furey, the



BPA project manager for the CBWTP, says, “The CBWTP is playing a unique role in our region, creating new partnerships that increase streamflows and habitat protection.”

Recreating here is a way of life. I also enjoy the green, irrigated fields of summer. If people work together, I believe that we can continue to have both.

— Russell Rhoden, Manager
Ochoco Irrigation District,
Oregon



Foundation (NFWF) to implement the water entity concept with qualified local entities (QLEs). These project partners work with pro-



The CBWTP aims to enhance flows and help recover threatened and endangered fish consistent with guiding frameworks from the Action Agencies' annual habitat implementation plans, NOAA Fisheries Biological Opinions, and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's

In Idaho, the CBWTP has spawned brand new opportunities that water users have turned into measurable successes as they work to improve tributary habitats.

—Bill Graham, Bureau Chief
Idaho Dept of Water
Resources

Fish and Wildlife Program. Using tools ranging from acquisitions to irrigation efficiency improvements, from banking water to switching water sources, the CBWTP is applying innovative approaches to competing demands for limited supplies. NFWF program director Andrew Purkey says, "Our partnership with BPA is building trust with local landowners along streams identified for flow enhancement, providing tools for water right holders to better direct their own destinies and improving conditions for fish and wildlife."

Water Transaction Portfolio Quick Stats

Number of transactions	63
Cubic feet per second of flow restored	367.4
Acre-feet of water restored	722,131
Stream miles improved	886.1

The Qualified Local Entities participating in the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (www.cbwtp.org) include the following:

Deschutes River Conservancy—Bend, OR
Idaho Department of Water Resources—Boise, ID
Montana Water Trust—Missoula, MT
Oregon Water Resources Department—Salem, OR
Oregon Water Trust—Portland, OR
Trout Unlimited—Montana Water Project—Bozeman, Montana
Walla Walla Watershed Alliance—Walla Walla, WA

Washington Department of Ecology—Olympia, WA
Washington Water Trust—Seattle, WA

Additional Comments

Instead of fighting, we three Basin irrigation districts found a way to keep 25 cfs in the Walla Walla River for fish. Now the River's seeing steelhead rear in reaches where they haven't for over a century. We're working hard to get this water protected so that it stays in the River. It's clear to us that if we want our families to farm far into the future, there has to be water for the fish, too."

—Ron Brown
Apple Grower and Board Member
Walla Walla Irrigation
District

Lots of entities talk about improving instream flows, and the CBWTP is doing it.

—Perry Harvester
Fisheries Biologist
Washington Department of
Fish and Wildlife

