



NFWF's Western Water Program
Assessment Strategy



Environmental Water Transactions
Stanford University
January 15, 2014



NFWF

Conservation Challenge



Conservation Response: Water Transactions



- *Voluntary Agreements to benefit freshwater-dependent fish, wildlife, and habitats while addressing the needs and interests of willing sellers and other key stakeholders*

Western Water Program Business Plan Concept

Goal: increase select populations of focal fish, bird and other freshwater dependent species through strategic application of water transactions

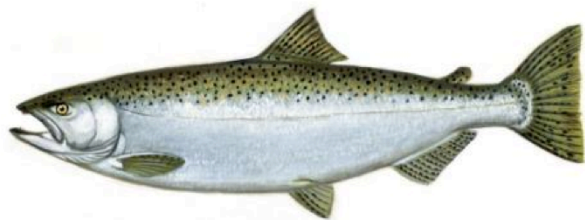
- NFWF will strategically expand its market reach
- NFWF will build on prior successes and leverage its experiences and networks



Conservation Outcomes

1. Enhance instream flows to achieve species outcomes in key river and stream segments

➤ e.g., salmon, steelhead, silvery minnow, and amphibians



Chinook Salmon



Conservation Outcomes

2. Restore water to support riparian and wetland habitats

- e.g., willow flycatcher, yellow billed cuckoo, migratory waterfowl



Willow Flycatcher

Conservation Outcomes

3. Increase flows to benefit at-risk desert terminal lakes

- e.g., Lahontan cutthroat trout, common loons



Conservation Outcomes

4. Improve base flows and periodic pulse flows to restore degraded delta/estuary ecosystems

➤ e.g., Colorado River Delta

5. Improve flows to restore natural hydrologic function to desert riparian habitats

➤ e.g., Rio Grande



Scaling Up the Western Water Program

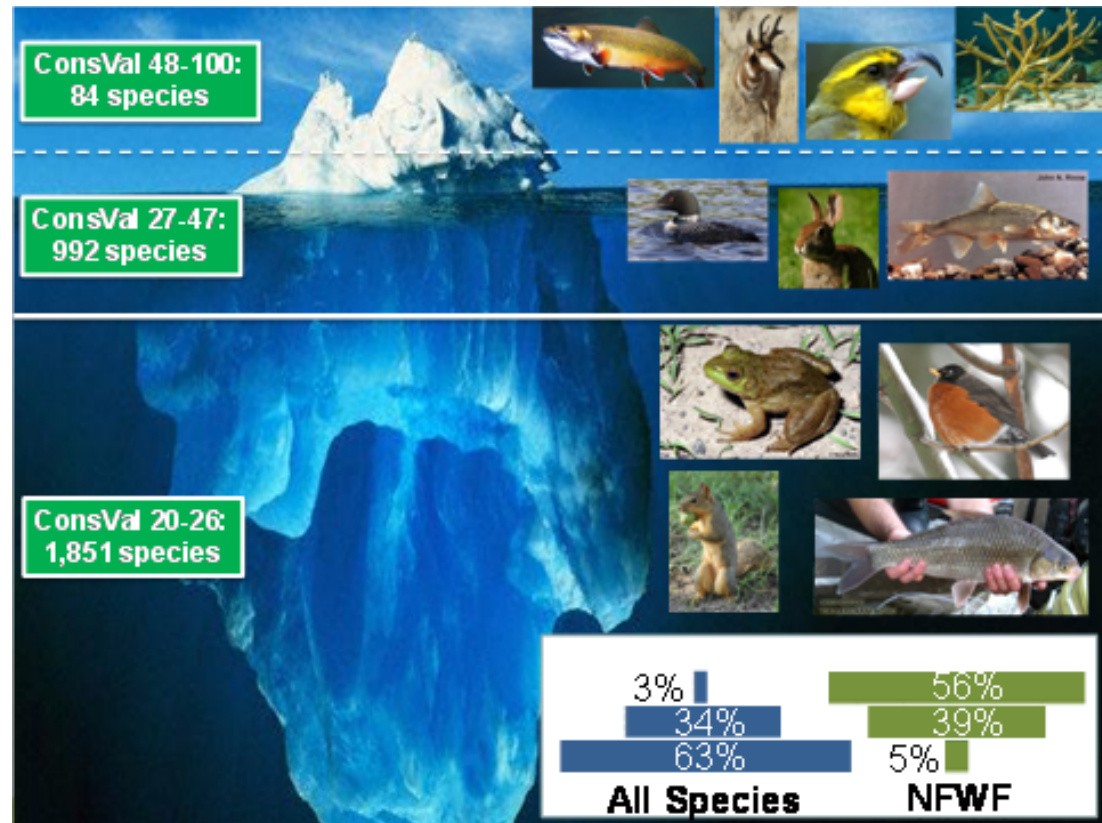


- Enhance existing focus areas
- Fully integrate WWP into existing conservation initiatives
- High level assessment of geographies by overlaying science with regulatory, financial and cultural considerations
- Develop geographically-specific business plans with partners through NFWF's science and evaluation team



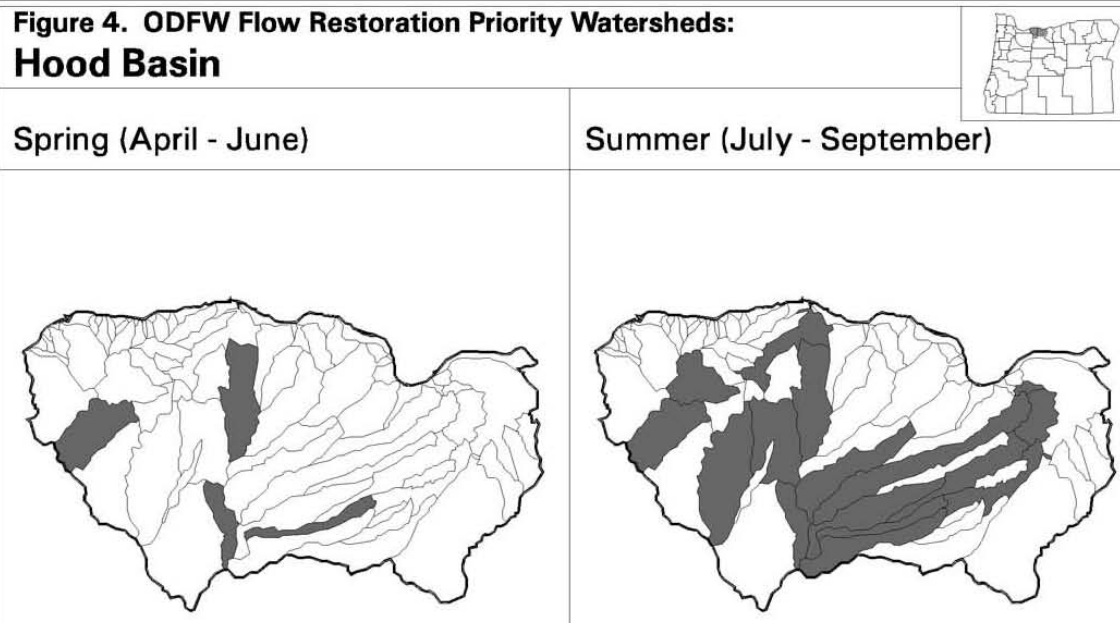
Assessment Criterion

➤ Extent to which the geography in question is an existing investment priority for NFWF or benefits species identified in NFWF scientific assessments.



Assessment Criterion

- Extent to which inadequate freshwater is a documented limiting factor to the health of fish, bird and wildlife populations that can be addressed through use of water transaction -



Assessment Criterion

➤ Existence of onstructive legal and policy tools and a supportive political climate conducive to the use of water transactions and transfers for freshwater ecosystem restoration.



Assessment Criterion

➤ Experience with and ease of transacting with water right holders; Local perception of NFWF, non-profits, and water agencies; Local organizational capacity to implement transactions and transfer water to environmental use.



Assessment Criterion

➤ Cost of water and the extent to which expected or existing economic factors could impact price and willingness to sell.



Assessment Criterion

- Existence of regulatory drivers that require reduced water diversions to achieve a conservation objective.
- Existence of voluntary drivers to restore freshwater to ecosystems.



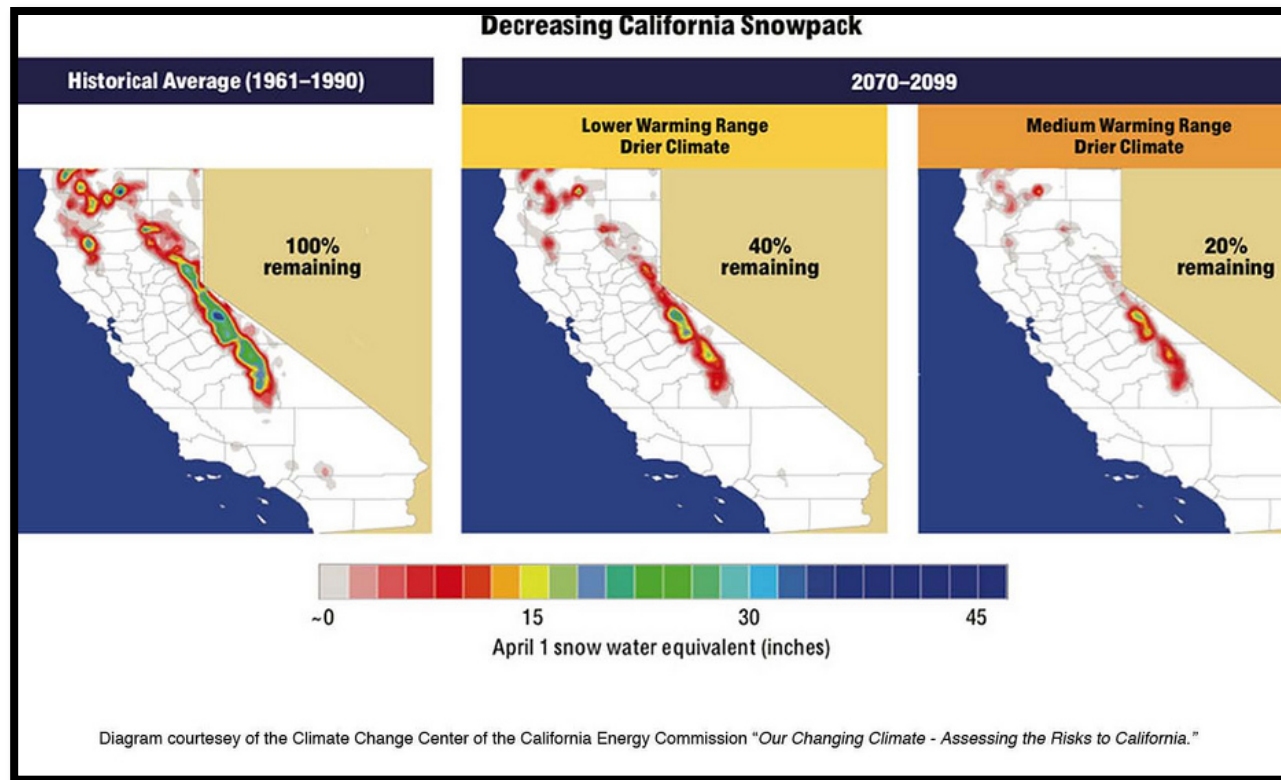
Assessment Criterion

- Existence of potential funders or funding sources with geographical or species interest sufficient to achieve water restoration outcomes.
- Opportunity for development of a long-term revenue stream(s)



Assessment Criterion

➤ Extent to which environmental conditions could threaten outcomes. Climate change; drought; reduced snowpack; declining riparian health.



Assessment Criterion

➤ Extent to which other limiting factors can be addressed by NFWF and partners through additional conservation practices to achieve desired outcomes.



Critical Needs for Scaling Up

- Clear understanding of potential outcomes and costs
- Local capacity to implement transactions
- Proper legal and policy context
- Funding
 - Seed funding for pilots, capacity building, etc.
 - Sustained funding to implement

