

Partnerships to Benefit Agricultural Operations and Improve River Flows in the Lower Price River

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Abstract

The Nature Conservancy is working with a wide range of partners in the Price River watershed to enhance water use in ways that benefit agricultural operations while improving flows.

Together we are exploring temporary, voluntary and compensated measures, like water banking, to help reduce the risk of water shortages for all. Since 2016 TNC has worked with farmers to test water-saving methods that could inform drought contingency plans in the Colorado River's Upper Basin. More recent, the Conservancy, has negotiated an innovative water-management agreement with the Carbon Canal Company to enhance flows and agriculture. The agreement upgrades the company's infrastructure and provides flows for the benefit of six rare fish species in the lower Price. Saved water and water that cannot be delivered to shareholders will be stored in an off-river reservoir for strategic releases in late summer when levels in the lower Price River typically drop. While all of these measures enhance environmental flows, they also help to increase farm productivity and improve the security of water for agriculture.