



A PUBLIC - PRIVATE COLLABORATION

CONNECTIONS

AN E-NEWSLETTER OF THE DOLORES RIVER RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

WINTER 2014

2014 Winners of the Colorado Collaboration Award!

Earlier this fall, the Dolores River Restoration Partnership received the 2014 Colorado Collaboration Award. The award is administered by the Colorado Nonprofit Alliance and “recognizes an outstanding collaboration” based on the following six criteria: depth of collaboration; significant impact and community benefits; innovative responsiveness to a specific challenge or opportunity; serves as a model that can be replicated; effective community engagement; and collaborative and nonprofit best practices.

Several DRRP partners from The Nature Conservancy, Tamarisk Coalition, Conservation Legacy’s Southwest Conservation Corps, and the Bureau of Land Management attended the Colorado Nonprofit Alliance’s annual conference on October 6th in Denver, where we received the award in front of 800 members of Colorado’s non-profit community and later held a workshop with conference attendees to discuss the DRRP’s challenges, successes, and lessons learned for initiating and sustaining an effective collaboration. The Colorado Collaboration Award includes a \$50,000 award, which the partnership will leverage to support long-term stewardship of the Dolores River.



On October 6th, several DRRP partners attended the Colorado Nonprofit Association's annual conference in Denver to accept the 2014 Colorado Collaboration Award.

Fall Biannual Partnership Meeting in Dolores, CO

On Tuesday, October 28th, the DRRP held its biannual partnership meeting in Dolores, Colorado. Meeting at the Tres Rios BLM field office, partners discussed a range of topics, made some key decisions, shared important updates, and took time to celebrate our successes.

The MOU:

Daniel Oppenheimer with the Tamarisk Coalition provided an overview of the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to vet and seek feedback on the governance document.

Designed to affirm partners' commitment to implementing the DRRP Transition Plan for Monitoring and Maintenance, which was approved at our last partnership meeting, the new MOU will extend from 2015 (when the current MOU expires) through 2019. The draft MOU will be finalized this winter, after which partners will be asked to sign the new governance document beginning in 2015.



Students from Colorado Mountain College traveled from Leadville, CO to the University of Utah's Rio Mesa Center this fall to learn about the important connections between montane and desert ecosystems as well as to help plant more than 200 plants along the Dolores River.

Project Implementation and Monitoring:

Following the vetting of the draft MOU, land managers from all four BLM field offices that encompass the Dolores River and partners that work with private landowners provided updates on project implementation, including: treating hundreds of acres of tamarisk and secondary weeds such as Russian knapweed, as well as planting grasses, shrubs, and trees. The 2014 annual report will be developed in the coming months and will detail all the acreages of restoration work done on public and private lands.

After an overview of restoration projects and discussion of some of the challenges encountered (e.g., early frosts and dropping water tables that affected cottonwood plantings), the DRRP then learned from two Southwest Conservation Corps interns, Katie Birch & Kristin Maier, about project site observations from this past summer's rapid monitoring program.



After several years of collaboration, the DRRP and Gateway Canyons Resort proudly opened the Dolores River Interpretive Trail on October 25th. Nearly 20 citizens from across southwest Colorado attended the event. The interpretive trail, which features seven interpretive signs about the DRRP, local flora and fauna, geology, history, and more, is located in Gateway, CO, just off of Highway 141 on County Road 4.1.

Exploring Additional Opportunities to Collaborate with Native Fish Restoration Efforts:

After lunch, the DRRP learned from Peter Mueller with The Nature Conservancy, Mike Preston with the Dolores Water Conservancy District, and David Graf with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, about some of the grass-roots efforts to improve in-stream fish habitat and discussed potential opportunities for greater bridging between these and the DRRP's riparian restoration efforts. Collaborative opportunities will be discussed further in future meetings of the Implementation and Science & Monitoring Subcommittees.

DRRP Fundraising:

Following this discussion, the DRRP heard from the Tamarisk Coalition's Kristen Jespersen, who provided an overview of the partnership's long-term budget, fundraising challenges, and strategies, including the development of a partnership fund, which will leverage the award monies garnered by the Colorado Collaboration Award.

To learn more about the meeting, check out the presentations and notes at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/drrp-meetings.htm>.

Looking Ahead:

While dormancy is setting in along the Dolores River, much is in the works for the DRRP this winter: in January, the Implementation Subcommittee will be holding its annual meeting to share lessons learned from the field, discuss informational needs, and review restoration plans for 2015; based on all the feedback received to date, an MOU will be circulated for signatures; the Core Team will meet to advance strategies surrounding DRRP communications and long-term funding; and perhaps most exciting, our third annual report will be completed, showcasing all the great progress towards shared ecological, economic, social, and management goals!

To learn more, contact Daniel Oppenheimer (doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org) or visit the DRRP website at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/>.

Happy Holidays!



At the end of the fall DRRP meeting in Dolores, CO, partners pose before heading home.