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CONNECTIONS

AN E-NEWSLETTER OF THE DOLORES RIVER RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

JUNE 2013

DRRP Bi-Annual Meeting—May in Montrose!

The Partnership meets twice a year and the hosting entity this past month was the Uncompahgre Field Office of the BLM in Montrose, Colorado. Over 35 people attended and it was a day chalked full of learning. Launching the day with a theme about reflection on ecological accomplishments, Peter Muller with The Nature Conservancy and Jim Cagney with the Northwest District of Colorado's BLM, gave a presentation that answers this key question: **Where do we stand?** Each of the BLM Field Offices has categorized the work done, or work to be done, into four areas. Through this process, the criteria for evaluating when a site has met Partnership objectives have been redefined to better assess restoration progress.

Below is a table showing the number of acres for each category in aggregate across the four BLM offices:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No Restoration Action Planned	680.2	24.9%
Scheduled for Future Treatment	1,262.7	46.2%
Initial Treatment Complete	761.9	27.9%
Objectives Met	30.2	1.1 %

Through this detailed presentation, participants heard that we are collectively 1/3 of the way through initiating restored treatments.

At lunch, the partnership was presented with a plaque presented by the Department of Interior for DRRP's recognition as an *America's Great Outdoors River Initiative Project*, and Justin Marler was given an award for his many years of service with the Tres Rios BLM. While the partnership loses an important contributor, we congratulate Justin as he moves on to a permanent Range Tech position with the Columbine BLM out of Bayfield, CO.

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Complementing Jim and Peter's presentation, Nikki Grant-Hoffman, of the Grand Junction BLM Field Office, provided a synopsis of the partnership's forty watershed-wide intensive monitoring transects. Monitoring these transects provides important vegetation data to understand patterns, such as how we met our restoration goals at a given site (e.g. by invasive species control treatments versus native vegetation regrowth). Initial data from 2010 and 2012 indicates we have made substantial progress, especially in our actively treated sites, and that progress can take time. In the Tres Rios BLM Field Office, for example, where the partnership first initiated its work and has nearly completed tamarisk removal, project sites are showing some of the greatest responses to active treatment.

The afternoon kicked off with a panel on re-vegetation. The presenters included: John Sanderson; The Nature Conservancy; Amanda Clements, Uncompahgre BLM; Sparky Taber, Grand Junction BLM; and Justin Marler, Tres Rios BLM. These key issues were covered: a) cottonwood regeneration; b) where to plant in relation to disturbance; c) re-seeding burn areas; and d) the Uncompahgre Field Office's experiences and research related to the success of various types and methods for re-vegetation. Feedback from participants shows that everyone involved in the DRRP very much wishes to continue this method of peer-to-peer learning.

Rusty Lloyd, Chair of the Funding Subcommittee, reported in his presentation that:

- From 2009 to 2012 the DRRP has raised \$3,260,576
- The budget for 2013 is \$1,015,733, with a projected carry-over into next year due to grant cycles—in 2014, the need is \$659,500
- Funding comes from a variety of public and private sources
- Future funding will be needed for re-vegetation, monitoring and maintenance plus any other DRRP-identified priorities

Other highlights were:

- A presentation by Nikki Grant-Hoffman with the Grand Junction BLM Field Office called: *The State of the Transects, a Watershed-Wide Monitoring Story*
- A talk by Chris Shea, who served as an intern in the Tres Rios Office, about all the ways he has benefited from his career as an intern
- Information about an in-depth program regarding the Conservation Corps' Internship Program

The day ended with announcements and a look ahead!

(Find all the Power Points given at the May meeting at: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/full-drrphandouts.htm>)



The partnership, during a break at its biannual meeting, poses with a plaque presented by the Department of Interior for DRRP's recognition as an "America's Great Outdoors River Initiative Project."

Pre-Meeting Volunteer Event: Bedrock, Colorado

Last fall's pre-meeting volunteer project was such a success that the Outreach and Education subcommittee decided to repeat the opportunity this spring. Participants gathered at the old Bedrock general store (featured in the movie *Thelma and Louise*) on May 14th and spent the day working with a Western Colorado Conservation Corps crew that had been treating tamarisk in Bedrock for almost two months on a river reach managed by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Controlling tamarisk that, in some places competed with New Mexico Privet and in others posed a fire risk to a stand of cottonwoods, the group also caged 8 cottonwood trees to keep them safe from beaver predation. This work is important to help protect the natives that will produce seed into the future, helping to extend the spread of the good guys on this site. Thanks to the WCCC crew and the volunteers. The partnership looks forward to continuing this tradition!



Partners traveled from Montrose, San Miguel, and Mesa Counties—and in the case of the WCCC crew, 10 minutes walking upstream—to remove prioritized stands of tamarisk along the Dolores River in Bedrock, CO.

Standing proudly by a cottonwood protected by beaver predation.



Private Lands Subcommittee—Peter Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, Co-Chairs

Since sending out a press release across the Dolores River Basin last summer to announce new funding opportunities, planning resources, and technical assistance for volunteering landowners, the Private Lands Subcommittee has continued to ramp up its work. Currently, subcommittee members are collaborating with seven landowners in various stages of riparian restoration projects. Landowners new to the partnership are working to clear initial stands of tamarisk while those that have been involved since 2012 and earlier are conducting Russian knapweed treatments and active revegetation. As we collaborate with familiar faces, we are also forging new relationships with landowners in and south of Gateway, CO, throughout the Paradox Valley, and along Roc and Mesa Creeks.

If you'd like to help support our work or know of landowners who are interested in improving their wildlife and grazing habitat, we'd love to hear from you. We could use your help building on existing relationships with private landowners; putting together workshops, outreach materials, and other education events. As we work to improve the health and vitality of riparian areas across public and private lands, we would love your participation! Please contact Peter Mueller or Daniel Oppenheimer for more information: pmueller@tnc.org or doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org.

Funding Subcommittee—Rusty Lloyd, Chair

The DRRP Funding Subcommittee has been hard at work identifying, applying for and securing funding to meet the immediate and future needs of the partnership. The total projected funding need for 2013 is shown here. →

Now the Funding Subcommittee is working to develop a budget and secure funding for 2014 and 2015.

Although some surplus funding from 2013 will be carried over to cover expenses for 2014, there is still a funding gap which the Funding Subcommittee is working to meet. As we wait to hear the status of several pending grants, the Funding Subcommittee continues to identify new and alternative sources of funding to cover the cost of project work in 2014. Looking forward, the Funding Subcommittee's main focus will be to collaborate with the other DRRP subcommittees to develop funding needs for 2015 and beyond. This will entail adequately planning for and working to procure funding from innovative and sustainable sources. Additionally, we are working to develop funding resources that can be used to fund ongoing monitoring and maintenance work to meet the long-term adaptive management goals of the partnership.

If you have any questions about the work of the Funding Subcommittee or would like to join us in our efforts to support the partnership's work, please contact Rusty Lloyd at rlloyd@tamariskcoalition.org.

DRRP 2013 Funding Needs:

Expenses	Amount
Implementation	\$948,733
Monitoring	\$60,000
Education & Outreach	\$7,000
	<u>\$1,015,733</u>

Science & Monitoring Subcommittee—Julie Knudson, Chair

The DRRP Science & Monitoring Subcommittee (SMS) has been busy this past year working to ensure that the right monitoring is happening on the ground to inform our restoration efforts and track progress in the watershed, working to translate all of our monitoring efforts into an easy-to-digest summary for the Partnership of all that we have accomplished/learned thus far, and working to ensure that those that need on-the-ground training for monitoring efforts (and for restoration efforts) are getting what they need. Over the past year, the DRRP SMS has worked hard with our contractors to conduct and finalize the 2012 Rapid Monitoring, 2012 Watershed Wide Monitoring, and 2012 Pilot Project Monitoring efforts. The SMS has also been working very hard (with a special thank you to Nikki Grant-Hoffman of the BLM) on 'Our Story', the summary of watershed-wide monitoring efforts to date that was recently presented at the May 2013 DRRP Full Partnership meeting.

The SMS also organized the 2012 Plant Identification training along the Dolores River last June, and developed an educational plant identification booklet for the Dolores River as a result of this training. Other activities over the past year include working to revise the Rapid Monitoring and Watershed Wide Monitoring Protocol, and assisting with development of the new Progress Reporting efforts for the Partnership.

In 2013 we are looking towards conducting monitoring efforts this season, and organizing and supporting the 2013 Plant Identification & Rapid Monitoring training being held June 20 along the Dolores River for all interested parties. If you are interested in learning more about the DRRP SMS or would like to join us, please contact Julie Knudson of the Tamarisk Coalition at jknudson@tamariskcoalition.org.



Jesse Lanci, DRRP Rapid Monitoring crew member, collecting data during the 2012 field season.

Implementation Subcommittee—Daniel Oppenheimer, Chair

Created in January 2012, the Implementation Subcommittee found its groove in 2013, collectively developing and approving the “2013 Implementation Overview and Funding Needs” spreadsheet. This year, approximately 500 acres of woody invasive trees (mostly tamarisk and some Siberian elm) will be treated, with 500 more acres of secondary weeds (mostly Russian knapweed and some kochia) and 200 acres of active revegetation (broadcast seeding and plantings) also to be conducted.

This past February, the subcommittee held its second annual meeting, during which valuable lessons learned were shared and documented. These lessons, along with those shared in past DRRP workshops, subcommittee meetings, and recent research findings from the Dolores River Basin, are currently being synthesized into the first DRRP Managers’ Report.

Also in the works, we are augmenting our Corps-BLM Internship program, to bridge DRRP’s social and ecological goals. Currently, we are looking at ways to improve existing internship programs in the Tres Rios and Grand Junction BLM Field Offices as well as creating new ones in Moab and Uncompahgre Field Offices. These internship programs provide important mentoring and skill-building for young adult interns as well as experienced, passionate small task forces to address important DRRP implementation needs.

Looking forward, there is much work to be done: over 450 acres of woody invasive trees still to be controlled and hundreds more of secondary weeds to be treated and restored with active revegetation. This requires lots of collective planning, problem solving, and sharing of lessons learned. Please join us as we coordinate restoration work and build on our experience over 174 miles of the Dolores River!

To get involved, contact Daniel Oppenheimer: doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org.



Corps crews and local contractors play a critical role in implementation. Here the WCCC and CCYC crews show off the work they completed during the spring Dolores River Restoration Crew training. Gary Rushing (BackCountry Vegetation Management, LLC) has a new machine that is impressive and efficient for initial removal of dense stands of tamarisk, like these near Gateway.



Outreach and Education Subcommittee—Mike Wight, Chair

Keep your eyes out for volunteer opportunities this fall. The O+E Subcommittee has five projects in the hopper with three of the four BLM field offices that manage land along the Dolores. Much of the energy this spring has been used to complete the interpretive signage for the new trail at Gateway Canyons Resort, built with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado last fall. The signage is nearing completion and everyone is excited to install these and host an interactive dedication ceremony. The dedication will involve diverse groups from the area, the press, refreshments and a tour of the trail with an expert at each sign to help folks learn more about the watershed, DRRP, geology, history, plants, wildlife and recreation.

If you are interested in helping out or being an expert presenter, contact Mike Wight at mike@sccorps.org. Look for announcements coming soon about this event!

The Subcommittee has also budgeted for a new project this year—developing hats and tee-shirts to get the DRRP logo and project out there! In addition, we are always looking for strategic presentations and tours to continue to highlight the great work of the DRRP.

Plant Identification & Rapid Monitoring Workshop – June 20th

On Thursday, June 20, DRRP will be presenting a free workshop along the Dolores River in Bedrock, CO. During this day in the field, participants will learn to identify common native and non-native plant species at several sites. This is your chance to learn about that plant with the yellow flowers or that shrub with the funny-looking leaves on your restoration site.

A short introduction to rapid monitoring methods for assessing vegetation cover will also be provided. If there is sufficient interest, a second day of more intensive rapid monitoring training may be provided.

For more information and/or to RSVP for this free workshop, please contact Julie Knudson at jknudson@tamariskcoalition.org.



Partners gather along the Dolores to learn more about Russian knapweed during one of our first workshops.

New Website Highlights Partnerships, Corps, and Provides Resources

Take a minute to check out www.corpsriverrestoration.org, a new website developed to highlight the work of multiple watershed partnerships and corps programs across the southwest. The intent of this site is to share resources for corps programs and enhance outreach for five partnerships (Dolores River Restoration Partnership, Escalante River Watershed Partnership, Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition, Virgin River SWFL Collaborative, and the Gila Watershed Partnership). Each of these groups partners with conservation corps in their region to complete restoration project work. The Southwest Conservation Corps (Durango/Tucson), Canyon Country Youth Corps, Utah Conservation Corps, Coconino Rural Environment Corps, Nevada Conservation Corps, and Western Colorado Conservation Corps have been sending young adults into the front and back-country, engaging local, diverse individuals and providing important work ethic and conservation stewardship education to these hard working crews.

This website also highlights recent news, has links to education, training, and restoration resources and a growing photo gallery! Send any thoughts, comments, photos or resources you may have to Mike Wight (mike@sccorps.org) for addition to the site. In order to be as useful and relevant as possible, this website will continue to be enhanced and grow over time.

Justin Marler, Tres Rios BLM Staff, Moves On and Is Recognized

For the last three years, Conservation Corps crews have been hard at work treating tamarisk in the Tres Rios BLM managed lands along the Dolores—and are nearly finished! This represents a big partnership milestone, one that would not have been possible without dedicated individuals such as Justin Marler. As a seasonal invasive species staff at the BLM, Justin supported Conservation Corps crews and interns in treating vast and remote reaches of invasive plants, inventorying past treatment areas, and in reseeding burn piles with a native seed mix.

Justin's excitement, knowledge and attention to detail have been noted by every crew and every intern he has worked with. For all of this and more, the DRRP recognized Justin at our May partnership meeting with an award for his service. While the partnership loses an important contributor, we congratulate Justin as he moves on to a permanent Range Tech position with the Columbine BLM out of Bayfield, CO.



Justin helped with the spring crew training on Ruby-Horsethief, captaining a boat and training the members in proper, safe herbicide application.



Gear boats are an essential item for raft supported work. These boats carried crews and gear down to the cottonwood camps on Ruby-Horsethief on the Colorado River, where the spring crew training took place in partnership with Troy Schnurr of the GJ BLM.

Save-the-Date!

Cross-Watershed Network (XWN) 2013 Riparian Restoration Workshop

September 10 - 12, 2013, Cottonwood, AZ

What: A peer-to-peer sharing workshop, designed for both new and seasoned practitioners, which will combine field and classroom learning. Hosted by the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition, participants will visit treated sites, share observations and insights, and problem-solve on resource management challenges related to riparian restoration.

Who: Practitioners and partnerships from watersheds across the arid southwest/west.

Riparian restoration topics to be discussed: Practitioners will share challenges, successes, and lessons learned about topics including enhancing fish and wildlife habitat; addressing geomorphic processes; and planning for long-term maintenance.

More information is forthcoming: In the meantime, please contact Daniel Oppenheimer (doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org) with any questions; make sure to pencil this in; and please forward to other colleagues who may be interested.

XWN Mission: To connect practitioners through information sharing, collective capacity building, and collaboration across watersheds. Learn more about the XWN at www.crosswatershed.net.

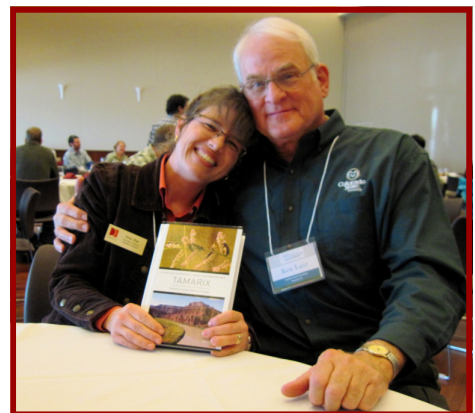
Partner in the Spotlight

This month we would like to highlight all of the great work that Dr. Anna Sher of Denver University has provided for the Dolores River Restoration Partnership. Dr. Sher has been a long-time partner of the DRRP, and has provided an incredible amount of guidance, educational materials, and monitoring products for the Partnership that have not only enhanced the knowledge-base of the partners working along the Dolores River but directly, positively contributed to the on-the-ground restoration efforts. Dr. Sher was instrumental in designing and conducting the first (and continuing) Watershed-Wide monitoring efforts for the Partnership, and is the first author of the BMP booklet *Best Management Practices for Revegetation after Tamarisk Removal in the Upper Colorado River Basin* (Sher et al. 2010) used as a reference for weed management and restoration activities by multiple partners within the watershed. She has given presentations and written articles on the DRRP and the monitoring we are conducting, and provided a host of information on lessons being learned through DRRP monitoring and other monitoring efforts being conducted on the Dolores River.

So a hearty thank you to Dr. Anna Sher for all she has done for the DRRP over the years!

Dr. Sher also recently published the book *Tamarix: A Case Study of Ecological Change in the American West*. To obtain a copy of either her BMP booklet mentioned above or her new tamarisk book, you can contact her at anna.sher@du.edu.

Anna Sher, editor of *Tamarix: A Case Study of Ecological Change in the American West*, poses with co-author, Ken Lair at the 2013 River Crossings Research Conference.



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Photos compliments of:

- Mike Wight, Southwest Conservation Corps
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