



A PUBLIC - PRIVATE COLLABORATION

CONNECTIONS

AN E-NEWSLETTER OF THE DOLORES RIVER RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

SPRING 2015

Spring Restoration Work

While a number of project sites have shifted to monitoring & maintenance, 2015 will be another year with lots of heavy lifting. Conservation corps crews and interns, volunteers, private landowners, public land managers, and locally hired consultants plan (approximately) to initiate 130 acres of tamarisk treatments, treat 150 acres of tamarisk re-sprouts and over 400 acres of herbaceous weeds (e.g., Russian knapweed, kochia, white top), and plant native grasses and shrubs on 115 acres along the Dolores River.

On a 1.5 mile stretch of Disappointment Creek, a Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC) crew has already cleared more than 25 acres of tamarisk at the Serengeti Sanctuary this spring season. TJ Holmes, the ranch manager, notes, "We are thrilled with the work done by the WCCC crew and so happy to be part of this partnership!"

This project at the Serengeti Sanctuary has pooled resources and technical assistance from multiple collaborators, including: San Miguel County, US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Tamarisk Coalition, Southwest Conservation Corps, WCCC, and the Sanctuary.

Downstream in Mesa County, three WCCC interns are working with the Grand Junction Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to remove dense stands of tamarisk along the Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic & Historic Byway south of Gateway.

Near the Dolores River's confluence with the Colorado River in Grand County, UT, a local contractor has begun working with the Moab BLM Field Office to provide watering for prioritized grass and shrub plantings at Roberts Bottom. To learn more about 2015 restoration work, contact Peter Mueller at pmueller@tnc.org



*WCCC members treat tamarisk along Disappointment Creek.
Photo by TJ Holmes*

Dolores River Plant ID Workshop: Friday, May 29th in Bedrock, CO

Want to learn how to identify common native & exotic plants along the Dolores River in Colorado? Don't miss this opportunity for hands-on plant identification training in the field led by Amanda Clements of the Uncompahgre BLM Field Office. We will also have birding expert John Toolen, from the Uncompahgre BLM Field Office, on hand to identify local bird species.

The workshop is **Friday, May 29th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Please bring your own lunch, water, hat and sunscreen.

*****The workshop is free, but space is limited and you must register. To register for the workshop, go to: www.tamariskcoalition.wildapricot.org and click on the 'Events' link.**

Contact Julie Knudson with any questions at 970-256-7400 or jknudson@tamariskcoalition.org. Brought to you by the DRRP, Tamarisk Coalition, BLM, and the Walton Family Foundation.



Amanda Clements leads the 2014 plant ID workshop. Here, workshop attendees pause during their walk down to the banks of the Dolores River to learn about native upland species in the Paradox Valley.

Recap of Spring Partnership Meeting in Montrose, CO

On April 2nd, the DRRP held its annual partnership meeting in Montrose, CO. Partners learned about and provided feedback on the development of long-term funding strategies and the draft communications plan, both designed to support the monitoring and maintenance phase. In the coming weeks, the Communications Plan will be sent out to the partnership for additional feedback...be on the lookout! In the meantime, to learn more about these efforts, contact Kristen Jespersen at Kjespersen@tamariskcoalition.org.

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Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

A new opportunity to conduct bird monitoring with Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory was vetted and approved. This monitoring will build off of previous work done with the Grand Junction and Moab BLM field offices and evaluate the impacts of restoration on bird communities. The next steps will be for the Core Team to discuss the mechanics including funding, how this ties in with current science and monitoring efforts, and/or implementation plans.

Legislative Initiatives

After approving the bird monitoring study, partners learned about several state and federal legislative initiatives focused on funding invasive phreatophyte control (think tamarisk, Russian olive) in Colorado; regulation of pesticide applicator certification; an instream-flow proposal on the Dolores River; and a draft proposal for a National Conservation Area on the Dolores River. While partnering organizations and agencies may have positions on these policies, as a partnership the DRRP has not taken stances on legislation or policy issues; instead, it has provided a venue to learn about and share different perspectives in a respectful manner.

Break-Out Groups

Following discussions about state and federal legislation, partners split into break-out groups on three distinct topics: evaluating the status and future of the DRRP Outreach & Education Subcommittee; sharing best practices for treating kochia, an invasive plant; and reflecting on lessons learned from the listing of the Gunnison Sage Grouse that might apply to the partnership's restoration work.

Celebration of Success

It was not all serious business: partners celebrated success with the hot-off-the-press 2014 Annual Report (available at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/pdf/2014-progress-report.pdf>), a DRRP cake, and recognition of Peter Mueller's national award that he received earlier this year from the Partnership for the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps for his leadership in providing service opportunities for 250 members of participating youth conservation corps and development of the DRRP Internship model.

To find out more about the meeting or what is happening with the DRRP, contact Daniel Oppenheimer at doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org or visit <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/>.



TNC's Peter Mueller, left, recently received a national award for his leadership in helping the DRRP towards its social goal of supporting the next generation of stewards.

Want to learn more?

The full set of minutes from the spring 2015 DRRP meeting in Montrose can be found here: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/drrp-meetings.htm>