



**DOLORES RIVER  
RESTORATION  
PARTNERSHIP**

A PUBLIC - PRIVATE COLLABORATION

## CONNECTIONS

THE DRRP NEWSLETTER: FALL 2015 ISSUE

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### Annual Plant ID Workshop Held in Bedrock

On Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, the DRRP held its annual plant identification workshop in Bedrock, CO. Nearly thirty community members attended the event, during which they learned about the common native and non-native riparian plants along the Dolores River, as well as, the importance of ongoing riparian restoration efforts across the watershed.

Thanks to Julie Knudson with the Tamarisk Coalition, John Toolen, and Amanda Clements with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for coordinating the event!

To learn more about this and other workshop opportunities, contact Julie Knudson at [jkudson@tamariskcoalition.org](mailto:jkudson@tamariskcoalition.org).

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#### Inside this issue:

Enhancing recreational opportunities along the Dolores River	2
Ongoing private lands works	2
Monitoring our progress	3
Volunteer planting projects	3
Looking ahead	4



Can you identify the plants that comprise the riparian corridor of the Dolores River? To review a few of the common species, check out the DRRP website at:  
[http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/outreach\\_education/pdf/DRRP\\_Plants525.pdf](http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/outreach_education/pdf/DRRP_Plants525.pdf)

## The DRRP Economic Goal – Enhancing Recreational Opportunities

In early June, board members of the Dolores River Boating Advocates (DRBA) joined staff from the BLM and Tamarisk Coalition to float 33 miles of the Dolores River—from the confluence with the San Miguel River to the town of Gateway.

During the float, they inventoried potential campsites, improved several existing campsites by clearing brush and adding signage, and observed ongoing restoration work completed by the Western Colorado Conservation Corps strike teams.

To date, restoration work has improved more than 20 river-side campsites along the Dolores River.

Working with the DRBA's board and staff will not only increase the number and quality of accessible campsites, but also increase regional awareness about these great public resources.

To learn more about the DRBA, check out their website at: <http://doloresriverboating.org/>



## Restoration Work with Private Landowners

To date, the partnership has worked with more than 20 landowners to initiate restoration projects on private lands in the Dolores River Basin. Some of these lands, having undergone upwards of five years of intensive treatments, have been restored. Others are just getting started.

In San Miguel County, for example, managers from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Corps, and the county noxious weed program are currently working with the Serengeti Sanctuary to restore native plant communities along several miles of Disappointment Creek, a major tributary to the Dolores River.



Above: Corey Kanuckel (Partners for Fish and Wildlife), Ron Mabry and Beth Goralski (San Miguel County), and Mike Wight (Southwest Conservation Corps), meet with TJ Holmes, manager of the Serengeti Sanctuary, to prioritize restoration work.

# Rapid Monitoring to Track Progress and Inform Future Work

This summer, two interns hired by the Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) conducted annual rapid monitoring across the watershed.

For two months, Chris Jones and Gideon Pace monitored projects on public and private lands along the Dolores River, assessing cover of native and non-native vegetation, as well as, documenting where natural recruitment is occurring.

Results have been shared with land managers to assess progress towards the partnership's ecological objectives and to inform project planning for 2016 and beyond.



*Chris Jones and Gideon Pace, interns with SCC, receive training from Julie Knudson, TC's staff scientist and chair of the DRRP Science and Monitoring Subcommittee.*

# Volunteers Plant Thousands of Native Grasses, Shrubs, and Trees

In 2015, we have coordinated a strong series of DRRP volunteer projects geared towards active revegetation.

With plant materials purchased from Southwest Seed Inc., Wildland Scapes, LLC, and Stevenson Intermountain Seed, Inc., the DRRP has worked with several groups to enhance habitat and prevent re-encroachment of noxious weeds by planting and seeding native plant species. Private landowners from

the west-end of Montrose County and Gateway, CO spent a day helping broadcast grass seed in Bedrock during the summer. In the fall, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, DRBA, student groups from the Paradox Valley Charter School, Dove Creek Elementary School, and Colorado Mountain College-Leadville planted native grasses, shrubs and trees in prioritized sites from Slickrock all the way down to the bottomlands of Utah, at the University of Utah Rio Mesa Center.



*Left: Clint Wirick (Partners for Fish and Wildlife) works with students from Colorado Mountain College to enhance habitat in the Utah bottomlands. Right: Daniel Oppenheimer (Tamarisk Coalition) works with students from Dove Creek to add native grasses to the riparian corridor along Disappointment Creek, near Slickrock, CO.*

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## DRRP Vision:

*The Dolores River watershed is dominated by native vegetation, where the threats from tamarisk and other associated invasive species have been mitigated and the riparian areas of the watershed continue to become more naturally functioning, self-sustaining, diverse, and resilient over time.*



## Looking ahead: Community Stewardship, Bird Monitoring, and the Communications Plan

At the November 12, 2015 partnership meeting in Montrose, CO, partners discussed and learned about a variety of issues (notes from the meeting will soon be posted to: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drrp/drrp-meetings.htm>). Two partnership decisions were made:

1. Agreement to develop clear goals and metrics around the partnership's work towards community stewardship.
2. Starting in 2016, the partnership will shift from hosting biannual partnership meetings to holding a field-based partnership event during the spring and a continued fall meeting based on the current meeting structure.

During its annual winter retreat, the Core Team will discuss how best to move forward with these partnership decisions.

Winter will also see major advancement in implementing the DRRP Communications Plan with the hiring of a marketing firm to develop branding and consistent messaging tools.

Finally, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory) will work with partners to finalize an avian monitoring program for the Colorado portion of the Dolores River; the monitoring protocol will assess impacts of ongoing restoration work and build on an ongoing monitoring effort being conducted by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Moab BLM Field Office.

To learn more about these initiatives, contact Daniel Oppenheimer at 970-256-7400 or [doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org](mailto:doppenheimer@tamariskcoalition.org).