

CHARTER
for the Operation of the Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP)
to develop a collaborative and comprehensive approach
to restore, protect and maintain a healthy watershed in Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah

June 2016 Revision, approved by all Signatory Partners as of August 5, 2016

Mission

To restore and maintain the natural ecological conditions of the Escalante River and its watershed, and involve local communities in promoting and implementing sustainable land and water use practices.

Background

In June 2009 a partnership formed to coordinate riparian restoration efforts in southern Utah’s Escalante River Watershed. The partnership, known as Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP), is composed of agencies, local governments, organizations, businesses, non-profits, and individuals who live and work near or on the Escalante River. The ERWP operates under the principles set forth in the 2011 Partnership Agreement.

Purpose of the Partnership Agreement, Charter, Ten-Year Action Plan, and Annual Plan

The Partnership Agreement outlines the foundation for the ERWP and creates principles of cooperation and coordination between the signatories.

This Charter arises from the Partnership Agreement and more fully describes ERWP’s working structure, including roles and responsibilities of cooperation and coordination of its Partners and Participants, the decision-making process, and ground rules/norms for productive meetings.

ERWP collaboratively developed a Ten-Year Action Plan (2010-2020), which has guided the partnership’s work ever since. The Ten-Year Action Plan identified targets (particular habitats and imbedded species of concern), assessed the integrity or “health” of those targets, identified factors and activities (“threats”) that are adversely affecting or inhibiting the health of the targets, and identified strategies and actions to abate some of the threats.

ERWP committees develop an Annual Plan of Work based on the Ten-Year Action Plan. The Annual Plan of Work describes the priorities and actions for the coming fiscal year, and gives direction to ERWP’s committees to achieve overall success.

Partnership Structure

The original partnership structure consisted of a five-person Executive Committee including the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, and a private landowner representative. In 2013, the partnership moved to a Coordinating Committee structure; the Coordinating Committee is the requisite size to include committee (co-)chairs, as well as a representative from each of these stakeholder interests: federal agencies (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service), state agencies, Conservation Youth Corps, local non-profit organization(s) doing on-the-ground work on behalf of ERWP. One individual can represent multiple interests on the Coordinating Committee (e.g., a federal agency representative may also be a committee co-chair).

ERWP originally established multiple standing committees: Action Plan Committee, Education and Outreach Committee, Funding Committee, Headwaters Committee, Science Committee, Streams Committee, Woody Invasives and Active Restoration Committee. In 2013, the Coordinating Committee reduced the number of committees to four and went to a co-chair structure for each committee:

- *Education and Outreach Committee*: Engages the local, regional, and national communities in ERWP activities and disseminates information locally and regionally. Advises and assists other committees on education and outreach opportunities.
- *Woody Invasive Control and Restoration Committee*: Works on woody invasive removal and follow-up restoration efforts on both public and private lands. The committee works with public and private land managers to set project areas, meet compliance, apply for grants, and coordinate all on-the-ground work being done in regards to woody invasives. The ERWP maintains a GIS database to track all public and private lands restoration work being done within the watershed.
- *Conservation Targets Committee*: Implements restoration efforts for conservation targets outlined in the Ten-Year Action Plan, including riparian areas, cold and warm water streams, springs and seeps, aspen communities, restoring beaver habitat, and expanding and protecting native fish populations.
- *Science Committee*: Assesses the science and research needs and opportunities of ERWP programs; identifies important data gaps and finds ways to fill them; advises other committees on science issues; helps assure the quality and effectiveness of ERWP projects.

In December 2015, the Coordinating Committee further reduced the number of committees to two, maintained the co-chair structure for each committee, and added a subcommittee:

- *Woody Invasive Control and Restoration Committee*: Works on woody invasive removal and follow-up restoration efforts on both public and private lands. The committee works with public and private land managers to set project areas, meet compliance, apply for grants, and coordinate all on-the-ground work being done in regards to woody invasives. The ERWP maintains a GIS database to track all public and private lands restoration work being done within the watershed. This committee is also responsible for project-specific outreach and fundraising.
- *Joint Science/Conservation Targets Committee*: Implements restoration efforts for conservation targets outlined in the Ten-Year Action Plan, including riparian areas, cold and warm water streams, springs and seeps, aspen communities, restoring beaver habitat,

and expanding and protecting native fish populations. Assesses the science and research needs and opportunities of ERWP programs; identifies important data gaps and finds ways to fill them; advises other committees on science issues; helps assure the quality and effectiveness of ERWP projects. This committee is also responsible for project-specific outreach and fundraising.

- *Outreach & Funding Subcommittee of the Coordinating Committee*: Responsible for implementing outreach and partnership capacity fundraising in accordance with the Outreach & Funding Plan.

ERWP also contracts with a third-party facilitator. The partnership will move to self-facilitation if and when the Partners reach a consensus decision to do so.

This structure may be subject to change based on the needs and desires of the partnership.

Membership in the ERWP is limited to the entities that sign the Partnership Agreement (“Partners”); however meetings, events, programs and other ERWP-sponsored activities are open to anyone wishing to participate (“Participants”).

Roles and Responsibilities

Coordinating Committee:

- Work with the facilitator to convene meetings, prepare agendas and coordinate with Partners, as needed;
- Coordinate across committees, develop a long-term fundraising plan, and review committees’ annual budgets, to enable ERWP to meet its mission;
- Work with substantive committees to clarify and facilitate tasks for ERWP to implement the Annual Plan of Work;
- Coordinating Committee members may act as an ERWP spokesperson, communicating ERWP progress and milestones when appropriate; and
- Coordinating Committee members may assume responsibility for special tasks.

Partners (signatories to the Partnership Agreement) and Participants (active participants in ERWP who have not signed the Partnership Agreement):

- Attend meetings and present the views of their constituents or organizations as part of a respectful, constructive dialogue;
- Participate in committees;
- Promote the mission of the partnership, including providing factually accurate information to their constituents and the public (as appropriate) about the ERWP, its activities, Partners and Participants;
- Come to meetings prepared;
- Read the last meeting’s minutes in advance; and
- Follow through on agreements and assigned tasks.

Facilitator:

- Facilitate all full partnership meetings and committee meetings as requested by Coordinating Committee;

- Ensure that meeting agendas are followed, discussion items are brought to decision as needed, and enforce ground rules as necessary to maintain constructive conversation;
- Draft meeting summaries that capture the meeting highlights, including list of attendees, record of critical events, assignments, decisions, etc.;
- Distribute draft meeting summaries to Coordinating Committee;
- Work with Coordinating Committee to establish goals and set workable agendas for each meeting; and
- Follow up with Partners and others between meetings to assure that action items are timely implemented, as requested by Coordinating Committee.

The Annual Plan of Work will delineate committees, and chairs and members of each committee.

Decision-Making Process

Each ERWP Partner retains authority to make decisions as appropriate as an independent agency or entity. Independent agency or entity decisions relating to the goals and objectives of the Partnership, however, will be made with information from ERWP Partners. I.e., ERWP Partners consider ERWP goals as they make their individual agency or entity decisions, and alert ERWP if the individual agency or entity is pursuing a path that may affect ERWP and its work.

The following are the types of decisions that will be made as a partnership:

- Partnership structure;
- The Ten-Year Action Plan, approved by consensus of the partnership in 2011, reflects the prioritization of strategies, actions and funding to meet ERWP goals and objectives, regardless of whether the actions will be taken or the funding sought by individual ERWP Partners or Participants, groups of Partners or Participants, or the partnership as a whole. Significant changes to the Ten-Year Action Plan should be approved by partnership consensus. Implementation of the Ten-Year Action Plan, as approved, is done at the committee level.

Representatives to the Coordinating Committee will be appointed by the Partner whom they represent. Other committee membership and leadership is voluntary, and is open to all Partners and Participants.

The following topics can be discussed at the partnership level, but do not necessarily require partnership decisions:

- Identification of opportunities to work collaboratively between ERWP Partners and/or Participants; and
- Input and assistance on individual ERWP Partners' projects.

ERWP has determined that all decisions made by the full partnership or any committee will be made by a consensus of ERWP Partners present. Therefore, all ERWP Partners agree to work toward consensus and not simply block a decision they disagree with. In striving for consensus, ERWP Partners will listen actively and suggest options s/he believes can meet all perspectives. If a consensus is not reached after allowing a reasonable time for discussion, ERWP Partners will follow this process to move toward consensus:

- Determine whether all available facts or information have been shared, and if not, get the information and review it together.
- Clarify the areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Those who do not consent have the responsibility to suggest alternatives that meet the needs of all parties and incorporate the differing perspectives.
- ERWP Partners should remain at the table during deliberations to hear the full discussions in order to make informed judgments when decision-making occurs. Absence will be equivalent to not dissenting.

If consensus cannot be attained after following this process, the group will vote by super-majority (80% of ERWP Partners present) whether to (a) decide the issue by a super-majority vote, or (b) table the decision with suggestions on ways to make future progress toward consensus.

Fundraising Process

Successful fundraising efforts by ERWP Partners have resulted in numerous restoration projects and monitoring efforts on NPS, BLM and USFS administered lands and on privately-owned lands. The five-year Woody Invasive Control Plan (ratified Summer 2011) and the Ten-Year Action Plan (ratified Spring 2011) will guide ERWP in seeking both private and public funds for the next five years to address priority actions in the Escalante watershed.

Each partnering entity is encouraged to continue to raise funds that meet the goals and objectives set forth in these two plans and subsequent Annual Work Plans. All Partners will regularly share information about their independent fundraising efforts with the Coordinating Committee, to ensure strategic and coordinated submission of funding requests, and to assist in identifying potential funding matches.

The partnership can also request funding for projects as an entity (subject to approval by ERWP Partners). Committee chairs will recommend projects for funding as a partnership; requests will be submitted to the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee will review the request and make a recommendation to the full partnership. The Coordinating Committee will review membership annually.

Behavioral Norms

In order to facilitate an open and collaborative discussion, ERWP Partners and Participants will follow these behavioral norms in *all* communications (including written, verbal and on-line communications):

- Only one person will speak at a time, and no one will interrupt when another person is speaking.
- Each person will express his or her own views and/or those of their constituents or organization, rather than speaking for others at the table.

- No one will make personal attacks or issue statements blaming others for specific actions or outcomes.
- Each person has an equal right to speak and be heard. Individuals will speak briefly and clearly, and avoid grandstanding and digressions.
- Side conversations are unacceptable, as they prevent others from participating fully in group discussion. Side conversations can be held before or after the meeting, or during breaks.
- Meetings will begin on time. Meetings will end on time, unless there is group consensus to continue discussion past the agreed-upon ending time.
- If an ERWP Partner cannot attend a regularly scheduled full partnership meeting, s/he will send an alternate or provide relevant information before the meeting via email. Partnership decisions made during a Partner's absence will not be revisited.
- Whenever ERWP Partners or Participants communicate with the public, they should clearly state that they are speaking for themselves only, and not as a representative of the ERWP (unless their communication as a spokesperson of ERWP has been approved by the Coordinating Committee). Opinions should be clearly identified as personal opinions, not those of the ERWP.
- ERWP Partners and Participants shall at all times provide factually accurate information about ERWP, its activities, Partners and Participants.

Violation of the behavioral norms may result in removal of the Partner or Participant from a meeting at which the violation occurred. The Coordinating Committee or facilitator will meet with the individual allegedly violating the behavioral norms. In a case of significant or repeated violations of the behavioral norms or other responsibilities under the Partnership Agreement or this Charter by an ERWP Partner, the remaining ERWP Partners may decide by consensus whether to terminate the ERWP Partnership Agreement with the violating Partner.