

Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) Meeting 11/7/13
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Interagency Office, Escalante
MEETING SUMMARY P: 1 of 14

ATTENDEES

Tim Bardsley, Western Water Assessment
Dave Bastian, Utah Conservation Corps
Rhett Boswell, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Dennis Bramble, private landowner
Tim Carlson, Walton Family Foundation
Scott Carrier, writer
Rose Chilcoat, Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Steve Cox, Boulder Community Alliance/Boulder Town Council
Terry DeLay, US Forest Service
David deRoulhac, Grand Canyon Trust
Sue Fearon, Boulder Community Alliance
Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition
Ryan Howe, Coconino Rural Environmental Corps
Amber Hughes, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Kristen Jespersen, Tamarisk Coalition
Grant Johnson, Escalante Canyon Outfitters
Jason A. Metzger, American Conservation Experience
Kevin Miller, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Matt Moore, Canyon Country Conservation Corps
Noel Poe, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
Ron Rogers, Escalante River Watershed Partnership (via Grand Staircase Escalante Partners)
Mike Scott, USU/USGS
Brooke Shakespeare, US Forest Service
Carolyn Z. Shelton, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Peg Smith, Boulder Community Alliance
Sage Sorenson, Boulder Community Alliance/concerned citizen
Adam Stoldal, Utah Conservation Corps
Dan Trujillo, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Kristina Waggoner, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
Linda Whitham, The Nature Conservancy

Michele Straube, University of Utah (facilitator)

NEXT ERWP MEETINGS

- 2/12/14, 1-5 pm – Joint Science / Conservation Targets Committees meeting
 - Trout Unlimited aquatic analysis presentation
 - Discussion about building ERWP watershed resource database (with Phoebe McNeally, new GIS consultant to ERWP)
- 2/12/14 — ERWP evening program, Escalante, UT (likely topic: historic photos of Escalante watershed)
- 2/13/14, 10-5 pm — ERWP full partnership meeting, Escalante, UT
- Before or after full partnership meeting — ERWP committee planning meetings, Escalante, UT

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

- 12/2 — Public comments due re: possible listing of yellow-billed cuckoo (western distinct population segment) as threatened species under Endangered Species Act (http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/outreach/Public-Advisories/WesternYellow-BilledCuckoo/outreach_PA_Western-Yellow-Billed-Cuckoo.htm)
- 12/3-4 — ERWP Coordinating Committee strategic planning retreat (1.5 days), Moab, UT
- 12/6 — Public comments due re: proposed fee increase for Calf Creek Recreation Area and Deer Creek Campground (http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/ut/grand_staircase-escalante/planning/CalfCreek_RecreationArea.Par.71952.File.dat/Draft%20Business%20Plan_Calf%20Creek%20Recreation%20Area_Deer%20Creek%20Campground_11_01_13.pdf)
- 12/10 — Public scoping meeting in Kanab, GSENM Livestock Grazing Monument Management Plan Amendment and associated EIS (http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand_staircase-escalante/planning0/livestock_grazing.html)
- 12/11 — Public scoping meeting in Escalante, GSENM Livestock Grazing Monument Management Plan Amendment and associated EIS (http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand_staircase-escalante/planning0/livestock_grazing.html)
- 12/12 — Public scoping meeting in SLC, GSENM Livestock Grazing Monument Management Plan Amendment and associated EIS (http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand_staircase-escalante/planning0/livestock_grazing.html)
- 12/18 — Tamarisk Coalition webinar: Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (<http://www.tamariskcoalition.org/programs/funding-webinar-series>)
- 1/21-23/14 — Story Clark strategic funding boot camp, Boulder, UT
- 2/18-20/14 — Tamarisk Coalition Research and Management Conference, Grand Junction, CO (<http://www.tamariskcoalition.org/programs/conferences/2014>)
- Early March 2014 – NRST workshop tentative reschedule (November workshop dates canceled due to federal government shutdown) (for more information contact Sue Fearon or Linda Whitham)

KRISTINA WAGGONER GIVEN AWARD

Carolyn Shelton presented an award to Kris Waggoner on behalf of the BLM State Director (Juan Palma), naming Kris a Youth Program Superstar for her work with conservation corps on the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Dixie National Forest and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

KUDOS to Kris!

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Coordinating Committee (Chair, Linda Whitham)

- Kristen Jespersen reminded everyone about the partnership timeline, indicating that the upcoming fourth quarter is the most intensive one.
- Individual Committee responsibilities (submit by 12/31 to Linda Whitham):
 - Compile year-in-review *Activity Summary* for the year ending
 - Develop *Work Plan* for the upcoming year and update *Ten-Year Action Plan* if needed
 - Assess *Funding Needs* and *Budget* for upcoming year and two years out, including any funding gaps
 - Prepare *Work Plan* and upcoming year *Budget* presentation to share at Jan/Feb Meeting
 - Prepare *Funding Plan* for next calendar year
- Coordinating Committee responsibilities
 - Review various plans from individual committees for duplication / coordination needs / gaps
 - Prepare *Fiscal Report* presentation to share at Jan/Feb meeting
- ERWP participant responsibilities (submit by 12/31 to Linda Whitham):
 - Agencies/organizations fill out *Funding Tracking* document for the year
 - Everyone fill out *In-Kind/Volunteer Tracking* document for the year
- Funding updates
 - Funding received
 - NFWF Pulling Together Initiative, \$75,000 (RO removal)
 - Walton Family Foundation (ERWP capacity for 2014/2015)
 - Funding not received
 - BOR WaterSmart, \$40,100 (partnership coordinator)
 - Funding requests pending
 - NRCS EQ Incentive Program, \$21,750 (private land project)
 - Partners for Fish & Wildlife, \$13,100 (same private land project)
 - BLM BPS (budget proposal system), \$25-30,000 (hydrology)
 - Funding needs as yet undetermined
 - Four private land projects for 2014

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- Application received by GSENM from researchers on east coast to study Russian Olive in the watershed
- 2013 funding portfolio (pie chart available from facilitator)
 - Total funding received (without in-kind services) -- \$1,596,708
 - Total funding received (including in-kind services) -- \$2,033,442
- Second Coordinating Committee strategic planning retreat to be held in Moab 12/3-4
- Agenda:
 - Review self-evaluation results (12/8 is due date for taking survey)
 - Prioritize funding → funding plan
 - Conflict management training
- Story Clark workshop to be held in January 2014 in Boulder
 - Purpose: coach key partners in strategic fundraising
 - Story Clark is a professional finance management consultant
- Ongoing ERWP coordinating efforts
 - 2013 annual report being compiled (including metrics)
 - Ten-Year Action Plan updates will be completed by early December 2013
- Interactive geospatial database
 - GIS specialist hired to help ERWP develop watershed resource database (formerly known as “limiting factors” database)
 - Phoebe McNeally, Digit Lab, University of Utah
 - Objective: be accessible to anyone interested in watershed and ERWP activities
 - Process: gather up existing data and identify data gaps – examples:
 - Springs data (photos, water quality data, plant list, etc.)
 - Old photos of watershed (before-and-after shots where available)
 - Interested ERWP participants will meet with Phoebe McNeally in early 2014 to get started
- Community event held evening before full partnership meeting (12/6) at Cowboy Blues (PowerPoint presentation available from facilitator)
 - 76 participants – great turnout, new faces, good diversity
 - Science presentations
 - Fire history in watershed through tree ring analysis (Dennis Bramble)
 - Russian Olive invasion into Escalante River watershed (Mike Scott)

Woody Invasives Committee (Co-chairs, Amber Hughes and Kris Waggoner)
(PowerPoint slides available from facilitator)

- Upcoming active restoration on private lands
 - 1 property identified in North Creek (40 acre parcel, 7 acres riparian, Southwest Willow Flycatcher habitat)
 - Landowner goal: wildlife habitat

Environmental Dispute Resolution Program, Stegner Center, SJ Quinney College of Law, U of Utah
801-585-5516 - michele.straube@law.utah.edu
<http://www.law.utah.edu/stegner/environmental-dispute-resolution/>

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- Restoration activities: boundary fencing (hired local contractor), exotic removal, revegetation
- Funding: Landowner, Partners for Fish & Wildlife, NRCS (Working Lands For Wildlife program), FFSL, BCA
- 2013 activities conducted on private lands
 - Initial cutting in Boulder area completed (Steve Cox)
 - Escalante area (Sue Fearon)
 - 34 treatment areas (151 acres) completed
 - 7 treatment areas (25 acres) in progress
 - 54 retreatment areas completed / ongoing
 - 4 areas identified for multi-agency partnership (95 acres riparian, 367 acres total over 2013-2014)
 - Partner comment: “This is a big deal” – KUDOS!
- 2013 activities conducted on public lands
 - Flooding:
 - Lost full week of work with every crew
 - Pre-season training for crew members made huge difference (no accidents, no injuries during flood incident)
 - Support from local community/volunteers to help crews
 - Floods deposited a lot of sand; buried baby ROs permanently?
 - Federal government shutdown:
 - Some crews pulled out early, others re-directed
 - Long-term monitoring trip cancelled
 - Projected acres not totally met, although accomplished more than projected in Alvey Wash and other GSENM acreage
 - GIS transition:
 - Providing help with finalizing acres and documenting WIC plan accomplishments
 - Plan to finalize Woody Invasive Control Guide this winter
 - Review of 2013 planned project areas
 - Between Death Hollow and Sand Creek – almost done
 - Boulder Creek – made huge dent this year
 - Still need NCRA to complete their section
 - Sand Creek and Highway 12 – shrinking, finish in 2014?
 - Partner comment: Area is looking great, nice camping areas, native species
 - Alvey Wash – inventory and treatment completed in tributaries / side canyons
 - Got more than expected accomplished this year
 - Light infestations
 - 2 crews might be able to finish the rest in one season
 - Dixie National Forest – started treatments this year in Naser Draw
 - 2014 – finish remainder (Boulder Creek and a few little spots)

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- Volunteer trips
 - Wilderness Volunteers (GSENM)
 - Native American crew (ReThink Dine Power and CREC crew) (GCRA)
 - Next year – get funding for exotic plant management team
- Long-term monitoring and rapid assessments
 - Tested out rapid assessment data sheets in several areas → before-and-after photos
 - 5 interns → 8 more long-term monitoring plots (below Boulder Creek confluence on Escalante River)
 - Other long-term plots scheduled during government shutdown (October)
 - Now too late in season (not good canopy cover)
- 2014 woody invasives removal budget and potential funders
 - 3 grants being wrapped up
 - 1 grant in middle of cycle
 - 1 grant just received
 - 1 grant being applied for
 - Partner comment: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Tom Ryan) has talked to Tamarisk Coalition re: potential funding available to remove tamarisk from upland benches
 - Opportunity for Alvey Wash?
- Active revegetation opportunities
 - Flyer distributed re: plants being grown and available (contact Shannon Hatch or Kara Dohrenwend)
 - Seeds collected in Boulder and Escalante areas
- Video (6 min) developed by CCYC Americorps Vista (contact Mike Wight)
 - Documents ERWP and 2013 3-crew training
 - Features many ERWP partners

Conservation Targets Committee (Co-chairs, Mike Golden and Mary O'Brien)
(PowerPoint slides available from facilitator)

- Main Canyon restoration project
 - 8.2 miles stream connected / 2 remnant CRCT populations connected
 - 10 miles road resurfaced
 - Garfield County did work for Hall Creek fish passage
- Main Canyon riparian treatments leading to cottonwood regeneration
- Colorado River Cutthroat Trout (CRCT) activities
 - DWR trend monitoring completed, report being drafted
 - Disease certification from streams throughout region
 - Masters thesis on CRCT habitat resistance and resilience to climate change (<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/1965/>)

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- Projects in planning phases
 - Calf Creek restoration – DWR and GSENM discussions to introduce CRCT
 - Mitchell Springs – vegetation management
 - Proposed action in development
 - Vegetation treatments to make it less susceptible to burning
 - Upper Valley vegetation treatment – Environmental Assessment nearly completed
 - East Fork Boulder Creek – native trout reintroduction
 - Garkane Power filed for extension of variance to May 2014
 - August 2014 is new target for reintroduction
 - Q/A: In the case of lightning strikes, consider whether to let fire burn itself out
 - Allows underburn of ponderosa pine / bitterbrush and has been a major success
 - Allow fire to become a natural management measure, especially in wilderness / research areas

- Beaver (contact Mary O'Brien or David DeRoulhac)
 - BRAT (Beaver Reintroduction Assessment Tool) developed for entire state of Utah
 - Can identify areas where beaver will stay >2 years
 - DWR has contract with Joe Wheaton (USU) to map the entire state
 - BRAT first developed and applied in Escalante watershed
 - Utah beaver management plan
 - Beaver surveys -- one of stakeholder and one of agency employees
 - DWR \$\$ → Mark Brunsen (USU) to implement both surveys
 - Beaver Best Management Practices (BMPs) booklet available
 - Methods to mitigate conflicts between beaver and landowners
 - USU Water Watch beaver app (<http://extension.usu.edu/utahwaterwatch/>)
 - Use BRAT in the field, with data going to USU database
 - Allows real-time tracking of beaver by citizens
 - Q/A: Beaver transplanting into Escalante watershed is on hold for now
 - Beaver management plan includes a list of locations; DWR essentially limited to those locations
 - Send information about potential additional transplantation spots to Heather Tally/DWR and Grand Canyon Trust
 - Q/A: “Beaver are awesome.” DWR has had great success with beaver in Iron County. Water masters have asked DWR to put beavers into their water systems; mini-dams created by beaver retain water for use upstream.

- Springs and seeps
 - Groundwater-dependent ecosystem source survey being conducted by USFS
 - Level 1 inventory (probably really did 0.5 inventory!)
 - 29 different locations in Escalante subbasin (headwaters)
 - What looking for: verify presence of seep/spring, flow amount, quantify relative amounts of vegetation types, water chemistry, soil profile, evidence of disturbance and development

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- Not monitoring impact
- Data have been collected, still being compiled → national data set
- Q/A: Next steps? Depends on Forest direction

Science Committee (Co-chairs, Dennis Bramble and Linda Whitham)
(PowerPoint slides of 11/6 evening presentations on Fire History through Tree Rings and Russian Olive Invasion available from facilitator)

- Piezometer well study
 - One well at bottom of South Hollow watershed
 - Water surface readings relative ground (in feet)
 - Show “severe drought” for 4 months → “moderate drought” now
 - On 9/14/13 (time of floods), well’s water level almost at surface of ground
 - Dennis Bramble’s interpretation: wave of water moving through
 - In future, will correlate to precipitation
 - 6 wells at headwaters demo site (although can only find 5 wells right now)
 - 4 readings so far (not 4 wells, 4 times readings were taken)
 - Full of water (a “bog”)
 - Need to know sub-surface geology – water being driven up under pressure
 - Well water often 9-10” above water level; water level goes down as move away from rock outcroppings
- Exclosure in headwaters
 - Pulled out some seedling RO
 - Found young tamarisk inside exclosure (tamarisk exists where cows graze outside exclosure)
- Climate change – mitigation v. adaptation
 - Definitions
 - Mitigation: social changes, methods or technologies used to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions produced by humans
 - Adaptation: societal and ecological processes used to adapt to a new future that may have a very different climate
 - Climate predictions
 - Less effective precipitation over time → looking at water shortages
 - Species response: toleration (e.g. juniper, moose), habitat shift, migration, extinction
 - 2005 National Academy of Sciences study: predictions of 40-80% die-off for some species (PJ?)
 - Various available responses to changes in exposure and adaptive capacity / sensitivity
 - More active interventions as increase exposure and sensitivity
 - Described ACT approach for adaptation workshops

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- Full Group discussion
 - Gunnison: taken small steps to create dams (contact Shannon Hatch for video)
 - Partner comment: Question assumption that Escalante watershed will get dryer
 - But, monsoon is moving north
 - Year 1000, summers got wetter → Anasazi moved up cliffs
 - Monsoon is a great unknown
 - Query: How changes in distribution of moisture receipts could change over time, and the potential impacts
 - Suggestion: Focus on resilience in "uncertain present"
 - How can Escalante watershed build in needed resilience?
 - Focus on impact to local farmers?
 - Escalante City is in a current crisis re: culinary water pipe being exposed by 300 inches
- Tentative approach
 - Provide information session re: where water in Escalante watershed comes from
 - Aquifer
 - Volume
 - Future
 - Invitation to attend to be made by City Council or irrigation companies
 - NRCS provides this kind of information all the time
 - Escalante City could ask State Director of Rural Development, Dave Conine

Education/Outreach Committee (Co-Chairs, Kris Waggoner and Linda Whitham)
(PowerPoint slides available from facilitator)

- NRST workshop has been rescheduled for March 2014
 - Canyonlands Conservation District and USU Ag Extension agent working with NRST to develop workshop and identify potential participants
 - Selected private land workshop locations
 - Priority resource concerns: water quantity, water quality, plant condition (prevalence of plants), weeds
- Ron Rogers outreach efforts
 - Developing website
 - Should be up and running within 30 days
 - Will be a subset of GSEP website
 - Can each committee post blog content once/month?
 - Writing news releases
 - Developing brochures and newsletters
 - Maintaining ERWP's Facebook presence
 - 2-3 posts / week
 - Average monthly viewers = 2,046
 - Post news media reports about or citing to ERWP
 - Hope to target new audience – outdoor industry / visitors to watershed

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- Education/Outreach Committee is working on guidelines regarding where and how to post information of potential interest to ERWP partners and supporters
 - Reduce email traffic that does not interest all
 - Intent is to provide easy access to information that partners want to make available, with minimum administrative effort
- ERWP presence at local community meetings
 - Boulder City Council: Steve Cox is on council, Peg Smith attends
 - Interagency meetings with County Commissioners: Terry DeLay attends (monthly)
 - Escalante City Council: Ron Rogers attends
 - Intends to present a 2013 ERWP wrap-up, highlighting local economic impact of ERWP activities
- Outreach at local festivals
 - Intent is to have an ERWP booth at local festivals
 - Patagonia volunteer was very helpful with this – find more volunteers?
- Outreach to private landowners
 - Explore the landowner's desired outcome → dovetail with WICP
 - Topics of interest to landowners extend far beyond woody invasives (e.g., turkey habitat, youth crews, fencing and floods, erosion control, grazing)
 - 2013 activities
 - 58 landowners with RO on property contacted in Boulder and Escalante
 - 41 private land restoration partnership created
 - 4 multi-agency partnerships under development -- activities include RO treatment, as well as practices improvement (brush management, seeding, erosion control, irrigation improvement, grazing management, pasture improvement)
 - Sue Fearon is the central point of communication with private landowners
 - Streamline communication for landowners (they know who to call)
 - Ensure that all relevant topics are covered (follow up, retreatment, maintaining investment in their property)
 - Maintaining records of landowners and treatment areas using GoogleEarthPro
 - Will provide files to GIS contractor for year-end accounting
 - BCA/Sue maintaining full files to maintain confidentiality desired by landowners
- Leave It to Beavers Festival
 - Held in Boulder 9/21
 - A few hundred participants

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CROSS-WATERSHED NETWORK (XWN) PEER-TO-PEER SHARING WORKSHOP (Ron Rogers)

- Ron Rogers attended the first-ever XWN riparian restoration peer-to-peer workshop held in Cottonwood AZ (Verde watershed) September 10-11
 - Ron offered his assessment of XWN and the workshop from the perspective of a relatively new ERWP participant
- Workshop overview
 - Well attended: ERWP supporters, other watershed partnerships, individual practitioners
 - Format: presentations, small break-out sessions, field trip
- XWN serves as a clearinghouse
 - Communicate
 - Cross-pollinate
 - Peer-to-peer sharing
- Workshop was helpful
 - Opportunity to network
 - Common problems and solution sets across watersheds
 - Improve skills
- Was workshop / will XWN be helpful to partnerships?
 - Pluses
 - Strong positive reviews from workshop participants in closing session
 - Benchmarking others' solutions to common problems
 - Develop sense of community / leverages various groups' political power
 - Minuses
 - Many politics and solutions are unique to each location
 - ERWP = "mature"; transfer of information somewhat one-way
 - Commitment of time and money, including travel
- Open questions Ron posed on behalf of ERWP
 - Will XWN increase competition for funding or does strong regional success "grow the pie"?
 - Is XWN redundant of Tamarisk Coalition operations?
 - Will ERWP actually use the resource?
 - How do you really set a value on an operation?
 - If XWN will impose a membership cost, how much would ERWP be willing to pay?
 - What's the return on investment?
 - XWN has to provide something of value

OTHER PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

- Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership (SURP)
 - Struggling with growing pains / where do we go next?
 - January retreat – should we continue as a partnership?
- Virgin River Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Collaborative
 - WFF not funding partnership any longer, except specific ongoing projects
 - Barriers to success: WFF wants to see more collaborative effort and long-term planning
- Desert Rivers Collaborative
 - Yellow-billed cuckoo just identified for listing under ESA

OTHER RESEARCH OF POTENTIAL INTEREST

- Tim Bardsley briefly explained work he is involved with for Salt Lake City Public Utilities
 - Compiled location-specific climate data to assist with sensitivity and adaptation planning
 - Identified long-term sensitivities for municipal water supply
 - Paper published: “Planning for an Uncertain Future: Climate Change Sensitivity Assessment toward Adaptation Planning for Public Water Supply”
 - See more at:
<http://cires.colorado.edu/news/press/2013/watersupply.html#sthash.2rFrZWL.dpuf>

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**Escalante River Watershed Partnership
 November 6-7, 2013**

Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, November 6

- 5:30ish – “Happy hour” at Cowboy Blues
- 6-7:15 – Presentations and group discussion
 - RO invasion research – Mike Scott
 - Tree ring study / fire history – Dennis Bramble
- 7:15ish -- Dutch oven dinner at Cowboy Blues

Thursday, November 7

- 8-9 – Education / Outreach committee meeting (Interagency Office)
- **10-5 – full partnership meeting** (Interagency Office)
 - Lunch \$12, **RSVP by Thu 10/31** to amber_hughes@blm.gov)

Friday, November 8

- 8-11 am – Woody Invasives committee meeting (Interagency Office)

November 7 Full Partnership Meeting – Agenda

| | |
|--|--|
| Introductions Housekeeping | Facilitator |
| Committee Updates | |
| • Coordinating Committee | Linda Whitham Kristen Jespersen |
| • Woody Invasives & Restoration | Amber Hughes Kris Waggoner |
| LUNCH (\$12) -- RSVP to Amber Hughes by 10/31 | |
| <i>Don't forget to admire the ERWP interpretive display panels in the Visitor Center</i> | |
| • Conservation Targets Committee | Mike Golden Mary O'Brien John Spence |

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science • Education / Outreach | Linda Whitham Kris Waggoner Linda Whitham |
| Cross-Watershed Network (XWN) peer-to-peer sharing workshop update | Ron Rogers |
| Other Partnership Updates | Partnership reps |
| Upcoming Events | All Partners |
| Additional Agenda Items (if any) Next ERWP Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb 12-13, 2014 • Escalante/Boulder area | |
| BREAK -- as needed during afternoon | |
| <i>Please take care of your own garbage before you leave the meeting</i> | |