## Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) Meeting 11/9/11 Escalante Community Center, Escalante Meeting Summary P. 1 of 16

### Attending:

Tim Bardsley, Western Water Assessment Boz Bosworth, Boulder Community Alliance Dennis Bramble, private landowner Tim Carlson, Walton Family Foundation Jim Catlin, Wild Utah Project Bobbie Cleave, Boulder Community Alliance Don Coleman, retired BLM and rancher Terry DeLay, Dixie National Forest Amy Dickey, Utah Division of Water Quality Kim Dolatta. US Forest Service Steve Gessig, Pine Creek Irrigation Mike Golden, Dixie National Forest Gen Green, The Nature Conservancy Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition Amber Hughes, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Grant Johnson, Escalante Canyon Outfitters Stacy Kolegas, Tamarisk Coalition Rob MacWhorter, Dixie National Forest Afton McKusick, American Conservation Experience Alexander Nees, Canyon Country Youth Corps Chip Norton, Friends of Verde River Greenway Kris Pack, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners Lonnie Pilkington, Glen Canyon NRA Noel Poe. Grand Staircase Escalante Partners Nick Reznick, Pine Creek Irrigation Michael Santiago, American Conservation Experience Sarah Sampson, Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands Brooke Shakespeare, Dixie National Forest Carolyn Shelton, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Peg Smith, Boulder Community Alliance Craig (Sage) Sorenson, Boulder Community Alliance John Spence, National Park Service Derrel Spencer, NEIC / Flying V Bar ranches Adam Stoldal, Utah Conservation Corps Adam Trunzo, Utah Conservation Corps Joel Tuhy, The Nature Conservancy Nate Waggoner, fly fisherman Mindy Wheeler, Grand Canyon Trust Linda Whitham, The Nature Conservancy

Ron Wilson, Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands

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### **Upcoming trainings and workshops**

- December 1, 9-3:30
  - Utah Bark Beetles and Watershed Workshop
  - Western Water Assessment, USFS Intermountain Region, Rocky Mountain Research Station
  - SLC and videoconference
  - o RSVP by 11/23 to Tim Bardsley, wwa.bardsley@gmail.com, 801-524-5130 ext 336
- February 16-17, 2012
  - Cross-Watersheds Collaboration Workshop
  - Tamarisk Coalition
  - o Grand Junction, CO
- April 24-26, 2012
  - First ever Colorado River Summit
  - The Nature Conservancy
  - o Moab, UT
  - More details to follow
- September 21-22, 2012
  - Leave It to Beavers Festival
  - Escalante Petrified Forest State Park

### **Next ERWP Meeting**

- Full partnership meeting in February 2012 (not in Escalante or Boulder)
- Will do doodle poll to determine best date and location

#### **ERWP Data Portal**

- http://erwp.dyndns.org/
- username: partner (lower case letters)
- password: committee (lower case letters)

### **Overview of ERWP Accomplishments**

- Linda Whitham gave an overview of 2011 ERWP accomplishments. (PowerPoint is available directly from Linda) Highlights:
  - Partnership Agreement signed
  - Ten Year Action Plan
  - Beaver habitat assessments and reintroduction



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- Wet meadow and montane riparian assessments
- Reference site establishment
- Woody Invasives Control Plan implementation
- o Long-term Monitoring Protocols and Methods established
- o Trainings: grants, project management, beaver, monitoring
- Workshops: beaver, riparian restoration
- o Field Trips: UPCD, South Hollow, beaver reintroduction sites
- o GIS databases, mapping, web portal
- Funding: multiple sources
- o Education and Outreach: landowner engagement
- Strategic Communication Plan implementation
- o ERWP article published in the Salt Lake Tribune on 11/7/11 (http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/politics/52850331-90/escalante-native-riverpartnership.html.csp)
- John Spence shared the video about ERWP he presented at the biennial Colorado Plateau research forum. The video will be posted to the partnership's data portal.
- John identified the following lessons learned from the first two years of the partnership:
  - Focus early and follow your focus
  - Plan early (when enthusiasm is strong)
  - Strong leadership
  - Open (public) meetings
  - Meet often (to keep momentum going)
  - o 100% concurrence
  - Engage local communities early
  - Professional facilitation

#### **Woody Invasives and Restoration Committee Update**

- 2011 Russian olive removal accomplishments
  - NPS met goal for this year
    - Got to within 1.5 miles of mouth of Harris Wash
    - Next year, going up Harris Wash and mainstem
    - No real issues
  - GSENM inventoried 614 acres, removed 413 new acres, retreated 285 acres, active restoration 3 acres
    - Boulder Creek / Deer Creek, 14 trees left
    - Death Hollow / Sand Creek, not quite all done
    - Great season with conservation crews and volunteer groups
  - o Private lands 347 acres covered, 145 of which were Russian olive
    - Ahead of schedule, due to fantastic crews
    - Large amount of burning to do now (some of this is done as landowner match)

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- Alvey Wash removal of RO this summer on private lands will help BLM for the future
  - Cooperation with FFSL and landowners
  - Future issue is how to get in / access to the RO areas is dense

#### Questions on RO Removal

- Q: What percentage Russian olive is found on private lands?
- A: 60-90% on some properties.
- Q: What is the post-RO-removal monitoring in place?
- A: 50 veg transects have been placed all on public and state lands
  - Putting in more
  - Monitoring methods plan is now under final ERWP review
  - Over the winter, will identify additional monitoring locations
- Woody Invasives Control Plan will be updated Feb/March 2012
- Restoration Plan work group has developed a draft restoration plan
  - Contains best management practices for revegetation
  - o Restoration Plan outline and list of publications will be posted on the data portal
  - o Process for finalizing plan:
    - Draft Restoration Plan will be emailed to ERWP for comments
    - Comments due by mid-December
    - Final plan by spring or summer 2012
  - o Native species of plants are recommended for restoration on public lands
  - o One active restoration area from last month is restoring well by itself
- Alvey Wash
  - Contains BLM, private, state and FS lands
  - o BLM
    - 2012: inventory on GSENM
    - 2012-2013: plan
    - 2013: treatment efforts
  - Private lands
    - Acreage of RO on private lands in Alvey Wash equals the rest of the watershed
    - 2012: BCA would like to be in Alvey Wash
    - Will work with FFSL as needed

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#### **Headwaters Committee Update**

- BCA beaver reintroduction activities:
  - Volunteer assessments to identify beaver reintroduction locations
  - Put on workshops with partners
  - Put up covert trail cams to monitor beaver activity
- Beaver Solutions Workshop DVDs available through BCA

#### Questions and Comments on Beaver Reintroduction

Q: What is being done to control the reintroduction of beaver, so that they do not become overwhelming. We all know the damage beaver can do if there are too many of them.

A: There are mitigation measures that can be implemented if individual beavers cause problems. Please contact Sage Sorenson at BCA with any concerns or specific locations with problems.

Comments about reintroduction of beavers:

- Beaver should not be allowed to interfere with irrigation
- Hiking has become difficult in the "box" area of Davis Gulch due to beaver ponds
- The water diversion/dam at Deer Creek has not needed to be rebuilt because beaver have raised the stream bottom with sediment
- Davis Gulch gully is filling back in due to lack of grazing
- There were lots of beaver on Boulder Mountain in the 1970's, now there are none, which means that the water does not last as long
- Terry DeLay outlined the Forest Service's activities that are consistent with the ERWP Action Plan:
  - Removal and replacement of culverts that fragment fish habitat (due to sediment transport)
  - Springs exclosure (RAC funded)
  - Trout restoration project (streams)
  - Vegetation improvement projects (NEPA projects)
  - Fish passage (streams)
  - Watershed condition framework assessment
    - Birch Creek (in ERWP headwaters) given highest priority watershed designation
  - Sawmill aspen stewardship
    - Removed conifers from existing aspen stands
  - Toed burn area reforestation
    - 150 acres ponderosa pine planted



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- Escalante cone collection project
  - Pine cones sent to FS nursery to grow seedlings
  - Species benefits climate change
- o Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) proposal submitted
  - Dept of Agriculture money to fund high priority projects
  - Escalante headwaters proposal made it into the final cut
  - Would provide up to 10 years of matching funding for FS program work in the district
  - If this proposal not selected under CFLRP, there may be regional level money available
  - This proposal received a lot of support from Garfield County Commissioners and Senator Hatch

#### Questions on Forest Service Activities

Q: Why don't we see fencing to keep all ungulates out (not just livestock)?

A: Cost of building and maintenance higher fences is one factor.

- Higher fencing to keep all ungulates out is needed more in the uplands than in riparian areas.
- There may be value to having conversations with various stakeholders about the appropriate height and type of fence for each individual spring.
- Beaver habitat assessment completed in GSENM by Peter Gurche (Whitman College student)
  - Identified historic and active beaver dams
  - Developed complete picture of beaver in headwaters and lower watershed
- Fencing project completed on South Hollow FS property
  - Grand Canyon Trust volunteer project
  - Part of creating a reference area
- North Creek trail cams
  - o On BLM dam, 1 mile up from Upper Valley Creek
  - Documenting wildlife visits, beaver and sediment loading
- · North Creek dam sediment capture
  - o Beaver have rebuilt, despite extensive sediment capture
  - Veg transects show new willow seedlings
    - What will be their fate in 2012-2013?

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- Mindy Wheeler provided an overview of data and pictures from quantitative and qualitative assessments done over the summer
  - 7 riparian areas assessed
  - o 15 wet meadow areas assessed
  - These are the two targets for which the Conservation Action Plan (CAP) process could not be completed due to lack of data
  - The data will go through the CAP process
    - Fill out integrity tables
    - Identify health of the two targets
    - Identify possible causes for problem areas ("threats")
    - Develop possible action items to address those "threats"
    - Bring completed CAP process and suggested prioritized action items back to full partnership (hopefully at the next ERWP meeting)

#### **Streams Committee Update**

- Birch Creek fish passage project
  - Removed grade control structures
  - Found Colorado River cutthroat trout
  - Developed a map with current and potential habitat, and 4 barriers
- East Fork Boulder Creek trout reintroduction opportunity
  - o Controversy over use of rotenone
  - o 13 appeals pending from 3-4 entities and numerous individuals
  - Awaiting decision through appeals process (hearings were last week)
  - o Appeals process includes individual meetings with appellants
    - Presents intriguing collaboration opportunity to combine and increase gene pool
- Plan for conservation actions for Colorado River cutthroat trout
  - o And 3 other species, but they are not found on FS lands
  - Call for assistance from private sector, GSENM, NPS
    - Need to expand beyond FS and DWR

Q: Are there any exotics in Birch Creek?

A: No.

Comment: Grayling and brook trout were planted in the lake above East Fork Boulder Creek. One grayling went over the barrier.

- FS on-the-ground work
  - Water temperature probes
  - o Climate change models re: trout



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#### **Science Committee Update**

- Committee has broken into two working groups
  - Springs and seeps John Spence as lead
    - Get a better understanding for the watershed
  - o Reference areas Dennis Bramble and Kevin Miller as leads
    - Integrated system of reference areas
    - Marriage of science and management
  - Package these activities as proposals for funding
  - o Timeline: early 2012
- One additional working group being formed soon:
  - Climate change assessment
  - Need volunteers
- South Hollow spring protection
  - o Have FS money, but not done yet
- Upper Valley riparian area / sediment capture
  - Brooke Shakespeare will be doing official transects
- Highest elevation of Russian olive in watershed is on Dennis Bramble's property

  - o May be a correlation between health of the riparian zone and death of RO and tamarisk
    - Are the RO drowning?
- Held meeting with irrigation companies last night

#### Questions on Science Committee Update

- Q: Does disturbed soil bring up RO faster?
- A: Areas where RO and tamarisk die out, leaving zero bare soil, are getting wetter.
- Q: Does passive restoration make a difference?
- A: Don't know.

#### **Action Plan Committee Update / CAP Draft Action Plan**

- Action Plan for all targets (except two) is DONE
  - Hard copy (pdf) was disseminated by email
  - o Interactive excel file also disseminated by email and explained at meeting

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- Committees are responsible for updating the Action Plan (as things get done)
  - Password protected
  - Changes to Action Plan should go to Joel Tuhy
- How do we systematically evaluate what's been done and the results?

### **Education and Outreach Committee Update**

- Each individual ERWP partner / participant has been part of this year's education and outreach about partnership efforts
- THANK YOU!
- Strategic Communications Plan Update
  - This week's Salt Lake Tribune article was a test-drive of the "Key Messages"
    - Key Messages should be completed by the end of the year
    - Will go to full partnership for review
    - Will be an internal document
  - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
    - We now have 44 FAQs
    - Answers will be developed in the next 2-3 months
    - o Committee will be in touch with experts and partners to fact-check the answers
    - Will be a public document
  - One-pager (double-sided) introduction to ERWP
    - We are still making phone calls to confirm that full list of "partners" is comfortable being included
    - Will be a public document
  - Facebook page
    - o In the process of redrafting to change tone of narrative
    - Will go to ERWP for review
    - o Kris Pack will be gatekeeper to monitor comments made on the page
  - Data portal
    - Has become a crucial part of storage for large documents
    - Front page contains five most common things people are looking for
    - Orange box = everything else
    - Could separate public and private information in the future

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#### Questions on Data Portal

Q: Can it be organized by folders?

A: There are currently folders for maps, documents, tables and spatial data. We could add a folder for photos.

- ERWP Logo
  - The designer has presented the work group with four revised logo options
  - o It will be important to check them out in black & white, as well as color
  - Final logo suggestion will be presented to ERWP for review

### **Funding Committee Update**

- Purpose of Funding Committee
  - Coordinate and leverage funding for watershed
  - Help find sources for any funding shortfalls
- Need to develop 2012 funding spreadsheet
  - Woody Invasives information already in
  - Need funding information from all other committees

#### Questions for Funding Committee

Q: What if there was another federal agency wanting to give money to ERWP?

A: Could enter into a grant agreement with a partner, run it through a 501(c)(3)

- NPS, BLM, DOI can transfer \$\$ between federal agencies
- NPS can accept donations
- Since ERWP is not a legal entity, funds need to go to a partner organization

#### **Introduction to Other Partnerships**

- Tamarisk Coalition shares information between watersheds in the Colorado River basin
  - Regional meetings
  - o Colorado River Water Users conference
  - On-line web bulletin board launching soon
    - Find workshops, seminars, trainings
  - Identify available resources
  - Facilitate collaboration
- Verde River
  - Geography
    - Upper 2/3 of watershed
    - 450 miles of river and streams



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- Stakeholders
  - 80% of 100 miles is private land 1700 landowners
  - FS, NPS, AZ state parks are agency land managers
  - Mining firm
  - Cement producer
  - 2 largest agricultural producers
- o Impetus for group creation
  - 4 people on river trip (2 FS, 2 NGOs)
  - Organizing entities TNC, Tamarisk Coalition, Friends of Verde River
- Funding
  - Walton Family Foundation provided funding to build institutional capacity (as opposed to funding projects)
- Staffing (starting January 2012)
  - Facilitator
  - New staff members
  - GIS specialist
- On-the-ground activities
  - 3 demo projects in 2011/2012 winter
  - Identified treatment season as October April (not bird migration season)
- Southeast Utah Tamarisk Partnership (SEUTP)
  - Stakeholders
    - 20+ partners, MOU
      - Federal and state agencies
      - Local government
      - NGOs
      - 40 private landowners engaged along 2 major creeks in Moab
      - Local businesses
  - Impetus for group creation
    - 2006, after tamarisk leaf beetle was released, causing a brownout
  - Funding
    - Primary funding is from UPCD and BLM
    - Looking at NRCS funding and Partners for Fish & Wildlife
  - Staffing / Group process
    - Facilitator
    - 2 co-chairs
    - Group meets every other month for 2 hours
  - On-the-ground activities
    - Riparian restoration along the Colorado River and tributaries in Southeast
    - Extensive mapping
    - 2007, comprehensive woody invasives species management plan

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- Have not prioritized sites for tamarisk removal
  - Fuels-based prioritization (because GIS person is in BLM fuels program)
- Education/outreach materials for landowners
- Science and research committee
  - Tracking tamarisk leaf beetle
  - Vegetation response to tamarisk removal
  - Secondary invasion of Russian olive (after tamarisk removed)

#### Questions for SEUTP

Q: Have you used a biological approach or herbicides?

A: We used to use herbicides on tamarisk after the beetle was released. We were watching for resprouts.

- Lot of data still needs to be analyzed to see what works best.
  - O Virgin River an additional place data is being gathered
  - Harris Wash tamarisk is dead
  - o Bullfrog Creek all browned out
- John Wesley Powell photographs may be helpful
- · Cottonwoods and willows cannot survive in this niche; tamarisk does survive
- Tamarisk are encroaching onto what were wide open sandy areas

Comment: Tamarisk Coalition will funnel questions about what works and what doesn't re: tamarisk.

- Tamarisk Coalition
  - Priority areas
    - Virgin (flycatcher and beetle coexist)
    - Gila
    - Verde
- Virgin River
  - o Impetus for group creation
    - Flycatcher as overarching goal
    - 3 different states
    - Lot of partnerships already in place
  - Funding
    - Totally Walton Family Foundation funding
  - Staffing / Group process
    - Still need governance structure
    - Looking for funding opportunities

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- On-the-ground activities
  - Developed common criteria
  - 2-day field trip → Technical Advisory Committee → concept paper with different projects
  - 5 projects announced, plus eco-hydrological assessment
- Green-White-Yampa-Little Snake (NW Colorado)
  - Stakeholders
    - Just finalizing MOU
    - Mostly private landowners
  - Impetus for group creation
    - Just formed
    - Tamarisk and Russian olive
- **Dolores River Watershed Partnership** 
  - Stakeholders
    - 2 states and 4 BLM districts
  - Impetus for starting group
    - Only tamarisk
    - Integrating beetle in restoration plans
  - Staffing / Group process
    - Co-leads: Tamarisk Coalition, TNC, BLM
  - On-the-ground activities
    - Prioritized watershed
    - 5 years to restore

#### 2012 Planning

- Group agreed to continue to hold four meetings per year
  - January/February 2012 work plans for each committee
  - April prepare for summer field work
  - o End of summer review summer field work
  - November 2013 planning
- Role of committees
  - Implement Ten-Year Action Plan
  - Develop and implement annual committee work plan (based on priorities in Ten-Year CAP)
    - o Annual work plan to be presented to ERWP at first meeting of the year
  - Provide summary of year's activities to Linda Whitham or facilitator
    - o Due 12/31
  - Identify potential funding as needed for committee's work
    - o Committee's next 12-month budget due to Funding Committee by 12/31



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- Keep Funding Committee apprised of funding status and needs
  - At least quarterly
- Responsibility of committee chair
  - Schedule regular committee meetings (conf call or F2F)
    - o Circulate meeting summary to committee members, Linda Whitham and facilitator
  - Delegate work to be done to committee members (and follow-up as necessary)
  - Provide committee updates at quarterly ERWP meetings (or delegate)
- Responsibility of committee membership
  - Participate in regular committee meetings
  - Do your fair share of the committee's work planning and implementation
  - Share information with committee from your "day job" that is relevant to ERWP i.e., be collaborative
  - Signing up as a committee member implies you will be an active member
  - Information about committees' work is available via quarterly committee updates at **ERWP** meetings
- Committee membership for 2012
  - Meeting participants signed up for 2012 committees
  - ERWP partners who could not attend the meeting will be contacted to determine their interest in serving on committee(s)

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### **Escalante River Watershed Partnership** November 9, 2011, 11 am - 5 pm

Escalante Community Center, on the corner of 100 West and 100 North, Escalante, UT. NOTE NEW MEETING LOCATION

Directions to New Meeting Location: From Main Street/Hwy 12 turn north onto 100 West. (town marquee on corner of 100 west). Drive to the end of the block, the building will be on the west side of the road. It's a red rock building with a sign on it.

### Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, 11/9 –8-10 am – Combined Woody Invasives/Funding Committees meeting Wednesday, 11/9 – 11 am – 5 pm – full partnership meeting

Thursday, 11/10 – 8 am – 1 pm – Field trip to North Creek (times and meeting location are still fluid; final details will be provided at 11/9 meeting)

Sage Sorenson and Mary O'Brien, field trip guides

View trail cam locations at BLM beaver site and vegetation transects at FS beaver site)

Meet location TBD (short orientation, then carpool to North Creek)

Bring your own water and snacks, wear shoes/boots that can get wet and muddy

### November 9 Full Partnership Meeting - Agenda

11:00-11:15	Introductions Housekeeping	Facilitator
11:15-11:30	Overview of ERWP Accomplishments	Linda Whitham John Spence
11:30-1:00	<ul> <li>Committee Updates</li> <li>Woody Invasives &amp; Restoration (45 min)</li> <li>Headwaters (15 min)</li> <li>Streams (15 min)</li> <li>Science (10 min)</li> </ul>	Committee Chairs
1:00-1:45	<b>LUNCH</b> (\$10 pre-ordered OR bring your own)	



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1:45-3:15	<ul> <li>Committee Updates – cont'd.</li> <li>CAP (15 min)</li> <li>Wild &amp; Scenic River Designation (15 min)</li> <li>Education &amp; Outreach (10 min)</li> <li>Draft Strategic Communications Plan (30 min)</li> <li>Funding (10 min)</li> <li>Miscellaneous Q/A time</li> </ul>	Committee Chairs
3:15-3:30	BREAK	
3:30-3:50	Introduction to Other Partnerships	Stacy Kolegas Shannon Hatch Linda Whitham
3:50-3:55	Tamarisk Leaf Beetle Monitoring	Shannon Hatch
3:55-4:25	2012 planning	Facilitator
4:25-4:40	Upcoming Events	All Partners
4:40-5:00	Additional Agenda Items (if any)	

Please take care of your own garbage before you leave the meeting.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- November 11/12, 2 full days
  - o Volunteer trip to replant natives along Escalante River
  - The Nature Conservancy
  - o RSVP to Heidi Nedreberg
- December 1, 9-3:30
  - Utah Bark Beetles and Watershed Workshop
  - o Western Water Assessment, USFS Intermountain Region, Rocky Mountain Research Station
  - o SLC and videoconference
  - o RSVP by 11/23 to Tim Bardsley, <a href="www.bardsley@gmail.com">wwa.bardsley@gmail.com</a>, 801-524-5130 ext 336

