

Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) Meeting 6/11/15  
Interagency Visitor Center & Field Trip, Escalante, UT  
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**Attendees** Michele Straube & Mara Elana Burstein, University of Utah (facilitators)

Beverly Howland, Private Landowner  
Brooke Shakespeare, US Forest Service  
Chris Brotherson, Utah Conservation Corps  
Connor Penrod, USU graduate student  
Craig "Sage" Sorenson, Private Landowner / Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Danon Hulet, UT Forestry, Fire, and State Lands  
Dave Bastian, Utah Conservation Corps  
Dave Livermore, The Nature Conservancy  
Dennis Bramble, Private Landowner  
Jake Deslauriers, Canyon Country Youth Corps / Four Corners School  
James Page, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Joel Tuhy, The Nature Conservancy  
John Spence, National Park Service / Glen Canyon  
Kevin Miller, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument  
Kris Waggoner, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Kristen Jespersen, Tamarisk Coalition  
Linda Whitham, The Nature Conservancy  
Lindsay Murdoch, Cross-Watershed Network  
Loch Wade, Private Landowner  
Marjorie Rask, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Mary O'Brien, Grand Canyon Trust  
Melissa Masbruch, US Geologic Survey  
Michael Soren, Private Landowner  
Mike Putiak, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Mike Scott, USU  
Mike Wight, Conservation Legacy  
Noel Poe, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Phoebe McNeally, U of U / DIGIT Lab  
Rhett Boswell, UT Division of Wildlife Resources  
Richard Madril, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument  
Ron Rogers, ERWP (via Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners)  
Sarah Schlanger, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument  
Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition  
Steve Cox, Boulder Town Council / Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Sue Fearon, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners  
Tom Hoyt, Boulder Community Alliance

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**ERWP Partnership Meeting (interagency visitor center)**

Coordinating Committee Update (PowerPoint slides available from facilitator)

- Budget
  - ERWP 2015 funding status (numbers still need to be updated based on yesterday's Coordinating Committee meeting discussions)
    - Mostly met funding goals for 2015
      - Walton Family Foundation has requested that they be a diminishing percentage of total funding; we did that.
    - Funding totals (includes all committees): Need: \$2,137,468; secured: \$1,175,300; in kind: \$553,333; gap: \$406,335 (minus restoration grant)
      - Just heard that ERWP received UPCD funding (~\$335,000)
  - Funding requests pending: NFWF, Dept. of Ag, Eccles Foundation
  - Letters Of Interest submitted: Weeden Foundation, Dreyfus Foundation, Arthur and Elaine Johnson
  - Funding request denied: KEEN Effect
  - Other fundraising activities:
    - ERWP outreach brochure with donor options
    - ERWP website
    - Love UT, Give UT- raised \$700 (good lesson in crowd sourcing)
    - Ongoing development of Outreach and Fundraising Plan
- Outreach and Fundraising Plan
  - Process for developing draft plan
    - August 2014 Coordinating Committee funding retreat – identified need for strategic messaging
    - Subgroup formed (Linda Whitham, Kris Waggoner, Sue Fearon, Kristen Jespersen)
    - Worked on developing draft document throughout Fall 2014
    - December 2014 retreat – obtained Coordinating Committee input on goals and audiences
    - May 2015 – received Coordinating Committee input on draft plan and watershed coordinator position
    - June 2015 – received final Coordinating Committee inputs, present to full partnership
  - Plan Outline
    - Purpose
    - Goals, Objectives and Strategies
    - Targeted Audiences

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- Messaging
- Materials Needed
- Capacity Requirements
- Goals:
  - Goal 1: Protect current investments and fund Conservation Action Plan implementation for the next 5 years.
  - Goal 2: Cultivate a lasting group of watershed stewards and ERWP advocates to ensure ongoing protection of the Escalante River's health.
  - Goal 3: Retain existing partners and engage new partners to address future issues.
  - Goal 4: Share success stories and lessons learned within and outside of the watershed to establish the ERWP as a "Legacy" watershed.
- Q, what does "legacy" watershed mean?
  - A, documentation, and lessons learned to share with other watersheds. Able to communicate what was learned here.
  - A, usually it means a toxic waste site (e.g., Superfund); be careful about terminology.
  - A, beyond lessons learned, ERWP is an initiative/experiment/pilot, one of the few to do work at a watershed scale. Important to recognize that. Also think about youth as the legacy.
- Q, goal 2, "watershed stewards" -- is that a group of dedicated funders or small group of signatory funders?
  - A, anyone who lives in or cares about this watershed and has taken it upon themselves to be a steward. No official designation.
- Q, for funding sources, do you have a diagram of which entities the funding flows through? It does not all flow through one partner.
  - A, we have that information, but don't have a diagram. We have separated funding sources out by committee, not by recipient partner organizations. But could easily put that together for ERWP.
  - **Action Item:** Kristen to email. This would be helpful to show ERWP as clearing house. To be presented at the next full partnership meeting.
- Q, with goal 4, using Cross-Watershed Network (XWN) could be good way to share lessons learned from this watershed.
  - A, yes, this is one of the strategies in the plan.
- Watershed Coordinator Recommendation (position description available from facilitator)
  - Job description was sent to ERWP full e-distribution list.
  - One year of funding secured for position.
  - Position important because no one voice speaks for ERWP. All representatives are from different organizations with different priorities. This confuses communities and funders.
  - Yesterday in Coordinating Committee meeting, made 2 changes to job description based on feedback:

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1. Facilitation
  - Originally ERWP going to transition to self-facilitation, with Watershed Coordinator's tasks to include facilitation.
  - Suggested change – Provide information in background section about use of third-party neutral facilitator, with indicate that this may change in the future. Take facilitation out of current tasks. Leave leadership and negotiation experience in list of desired experience/skills.
2. Coordinator's role in water deliver systems
  - Seemed like coordinator would have larger role in water delivery systems than we intended.
  - Suggested change -- Revise the language to reflect that coordinator would work with communities *as requested* to build support for and implement efficient water use practices. Add another job requirement: knowledge of water delivery practices, water use efficiency, conservation for agricultural communities.
- Supervision of Watershed Coordinator
  - Employee would work for ERWP, but be paid by Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners.
  - Watershed Coordinator would take strategic direction from, and be accountable to, the Coordinating Committee.
  - This is similar to the set up with Kris Waggoner and Sue Fearon.
- Group Discussion
  - Q, can the title say watershed **partnership** coordinator? Then it would show that the individual will be responsible for partnership efforts.
    - A, Good idea.
  - Q, thank you coordinating committee. Really appreciated process yesterday to address my specific concerns. I'm really happy with final product.
  - Q, are there other watershed partnerships that are being staffed this way? With employee working within another organization?
    - A, XWN does this. Lindsay is here, she works for Tamarisk Coalition but her work is directed by XWN Steering Committee. ERWP is not a legal entity, so can't hire someone.
    - A, Conservation Corps does it all the time. Other examples given.
    - A, 2 models in N. Carolina. 1) agency employee works on coordinating partnership; often housed in soil and water conservation district, but can be a state regulatory agency employee. 2) NGO model, like suggested here.
  - Q, facilitation aspect of job description still seems ambiguous. Are you or are you not looking for those skills? It may be confusing for applicants.
    - A, some think it's clear because current situation is described in background section and skill requirements include leadership and negotiation skills. We can also include that if ERWP moves towards self-

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facilitation, the coordinator should get facilitation training if they didn't have it.

- *Call for consensus* from signatory partners to *empower Coordinating Committee to move forward and post the revised job description.*
  - 14 signatory partners present -- All thumbs up
  - 1 signatory partner not present – had sent “thumbs up” via email
  - 4 signatory partners not present
- **Action items:**
  - Email Noel Poe if you have suggestions on where to post the job or funding sources
  - Subcommittee to share distribution plan
  - Word of mouth will help, please get the word out
- Coordinating Committee next steps
  - Refine long-term budget for years 2016-2020
  - Hire Watershed Partnership Coordinator
  - Finish and implement Outreach and Fundraising Plan
  - Continue to request funding

#### Education/Outreach Committee Update

- Education and Outreach over winter
  - Presented to Chamber of Commerce, over 30 locals attended
  - Went to Outdoor Retailers, sought Conservation Alliance nomination to apply for funding. Got it, but they're changing focus to permanent conservation, like easements.
    - Q, how is this change worded? More than 90% of watershed is permanently protected. Can we have a discussion with them about our situation?
      - **Action Item:** Kris to forward email to Kevin to see if he has ideas.
  - Spoke at GSENM's Walks and Talks Program
  - Engaged NRCS with New Escalante Irrigation Co
  - Targeted outreach to NPS and BLM
- GSEP received leadership (\$5k) award at annual Conservation Lands Foundation conference
- ERWP-branded items for sale
  - ERWP locally made Russian olive cutting boards and coasters available, all proceeds go to ERWP

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- ERWP shirts, Conservation Corps crews are wearing as uniform and giving to volunteers, will sell at booths
  - Q, are those at Escalante Outfitters? A, no
  - **Action Item:** email Kris if you want one
- Volunteer trips
  - U of Wisconsin, prepped 15 acres for saw crews
  - Wilderness Volunteers-GLCA
- Frontier Science School and ERWP
  - Escalante High School, the first to participate in a Frontier Science School field trip!
    - GSEP program Monument wide
  - Activities along the Escalante River (April 2015):
    - water quality testing and macroinvertebrate sampling,
    - ranger-led hike introducing citizen science,
    - vegetation mapping with invasive species specialists,
    - electrofishing with field biologists, and
    - nature journaling.
  - Went great, scientists showed what they do
  - Q, was this done during spring break?
    - A, it was a 1 day field trip during the school year. 5 stations, rotated groups of 8 students through each.
  - Tremendous support from school, principal, faculty, parents, and others
  - Taking this to all schools around Nat. Monument
    - Have already done Escalante, Page, Kanab
  - Q, was it school day, was it the whole school?
    - A, yes it was a school day. 90% of students were there. 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - **Action Item:** If continue, please contact UT Division of Wildlife, we would love to be involved
  - Check out Frontier HS website: <http://gsenm.org/programs/education-outreach/frontier-science-school/>
- Sign at highway 12 bridge (36x24")
  - Faded, to replace is \$300, have room in budget. Would like to replace, please provide feedback.
  - Mock up idea in slides, based on community feedback
  - Discussion regarding whether or not to include logos
    - Pros: # of groups is impressive, few will go to website, good way to thank funders
    - Cons: text is smaller

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- Other ideas: include website somewhere else, write out partner names instead of logos. Include QR code.
- **Action item:** provide feedback to Kris. Mock ups in slide. Plan to add logos based on feedback here. Include conservation corps. Kris to draft. Michele to email to group.
- ERWP Website <http://escalanteriverwatershedpartnership.org/>
  - Live, check it out
    - **Action item:** provide feedback on website content (not layout) to Kris ASAP
    - **Action item:** provide information about committees to put into website to Kris ASAP
  - Need more meeting minutes, WFF has asked for this [DONE]
  - Riparian Restoration Treatment by Year- real time interactive map
    - Q, can we put most important things at the top?
      - **Action item:** Phoebe will do this
    - Q, treated acres aren't clearly labeled.
      - **Action item:** consider total acres, cleared acres.
    - Q, am I reading dates right, 1960's?
      - **Action item:** we will update default date
    - Email comments to Kris
    - Data layer is available, google "Escalante ERWP"
    - Q, can UT Division of Wildlife include link to this?
      - A, yes!
    - We will do email blast announcement
  - Q, do we have list of publications? Action plan, research studies?
    - A, will have link to action plan, good idea, we should add. Can add to success stories.
  - Q, May need special permissions to post from journals and link to journals.
    - A, can link to digital library at USU
    - **Action item:** Kris, Phoebe, John Spence to follow up offline
  - Working on story map, place holder for now
  - Calendar
    - **Action item:** Email events to Kris
    - **Action item:** Join mailing list. This is separate from Michele's email list. Will include annual newsletter, crowd sourcing requests, call for volunteers, etc.

## Field Trip Notes

### Highway 12 Bridge at Escalante River

- Ecological outcomes of RO removal; channel widening (Mike Scott)
  - >400 RO stems have been aged (from public and private land removal areas)
  - >1980's, see increased RO recruitment then and later sporadic recruitment increases
    - Due to increased precipitation and stream flow along Escalante River
    - Same pattern seen in Canyon de Chelly
  - RO has defined the channel and built levees
    - Negative implications for aquatic organisms
    - Reduces habitat for native cottonwood and willows
  - After removal of RO, subsequent flood events erodes levees and widens channels
    - Allows increased establishment of native plants
    - Field trip stop was a visual example that effective erosion of levees happens after RO removal (RO stumps cut off at ground level are now half-foot or more uncovered), as well as channel widening and braiding
  
- Legacy cottonwood project (Mike Scott, John Spence)
  - Way to identify legacy cottonwoods is subjective / qualitative difference from surrounding young trees (the "oh sh\*\*" factor)
  - Term "legacy" used to denote that these trees are something of value handed down to next generations
    - Also serve as seed source for post-RO cut restoration
  - Consultant has been working with USU and NPS to collect data on individual trees
  - Individual cottonwood trees are potentially immortal
    - They don't die of old age; they die because they fail structurally
    - Growth tips are juvenile tissue; during drought, single limbs die to adjust to water demand
  - Have found cottonwoods (elsewhere) >400 years old
  - Legacy cottonwood we gathered round on field trip was from 1876 (139 years old, based on coring) !!!
  
- Draft adaptive restoration protocol (John Spence)
  - Developed draft protocol to monitor whether landscape is restoring to proper functioning post RO removal (vegetation, channel form, morphology, habitat)
  - Funder has requested specific numbers; challenge is that numbers do not necessarily correlate to what is happening on the ground



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- E.g., seedlings can be scoured out by a flood event after they have been counted; flood-caused channel changes are a positive outcome)
- Draft protocol includes qualitative assessment to determine changes in site due to restoration (esp. overflow channels, which document desired flooding benefits)

Alvey Wash -- Tamarisk leaf beetle; brainstorm new approach for treatment/outcomes (Kris Waggoner)

- Alvey Wash differs from other areas in watershed where RO removal occurred thus far
  - Tamarisk *and* RO; many tamarisk are already dead
  - Woody debris will have fire plan impacts
  - Different rules / implications because of Wilderness Study Area designation in places
  - May need to do active restoration
  - May be a series of restoration goals as move downstream, because historic vegetation was not uniform along stream length
- Problem-solving discussion held in field – many discrete suggestions made based on experiences elsewhere
- Logical next steps
  - Identify sideboards (where are WSA boundaries; what are applicable rules/regulations, etc.)
  - Identify ultimate objective / desired outcomes – following topics were brainstormed (without any attempts at reaching decisions):
    - Probably don't know historic vegetation patterns
    - Recreating historic geomorphic processes may be impossible
    - Just removing woody invasives may not be adequate goal; may be a “bigger picture” objective
    - Possibly conduct pilot projects to compare outcomes from different approaches in different reaches (e.g., girdle v. cut down totally)
    - Reduce fire fuel
    - Replace what's there with desired species to hold system in place
  - Create subcommittee to explore desired outcomes / possible approaches
    - Monument manager is ultimate decision-maker, through public planning process
    - Grazing permittee should be consulted / included early
    - Include at least the following:
      - BLM: Kevin Miller, wilderness coordinator, fire resources person
      - NPS /NRA rep.
      - Shannon Hatch

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- GSEP

Woody Invasive Control and Restoration Committee Update

- Woody Invasives Control and Restoration Plan update – 2<sup>nd</sup> draft in near final stages- watch your inbox for the final
- GSENM programmatic EA – weed program
  - Everything is on schedule
  - Draft EA in final stages
  - Amber Hughes’ first task when she returns to Escalante – demonstration of NEPA adequacy
  - Encompasses all invasives Monument-wide, covers all modes of treatments
  - Q: Individual areas, how are they handled?
    - A: Tier off programmatic EA with demonstration of NEPA adequacy (DNA)
    - Address site-specific issues (e.g., work in WSA’s, use of chainsaws)
    - DNA will be done every season with new workplan and projects
- Funding update – Funds have been received from:
  - Walton Family Foundation - \$465,000
  - Utah Partners for Conservation and Development - \$335,800
  - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - \$75,000
  - BLM - \$36,000
  - Conservation Lands Foundation - \$97,000
  - Partners for Fish and Wildlife - \$20,000?
  - Forestry, Fire and State Lands - \$80,000?Still waiting to hear from:
  - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – 5Star program - \$25,600
  - Eccles Family Foundation - \$100,000Next grants due:
  - Arthur L. & Elaine V. Johnson Foundation
  - Patagonia
  - Keen Effect
  - Coca-Cola
- Field Season Work Plan update (public and private)
  - Field Work to date for 2015:
    - 53 Acres of Primary treatment on public lands completed this spring with volunteer groups and Arizona Conservation Corps working in GLCA
    - Private Lands work – New treatments completed this spring

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- Retreatment work started
- Public Lands Conservation Corps – 78 crew members being hired in 2015:
  - Utah Conservation Corps – 36 Members
    - Working on GSENM, Escalante River above and below Boulder Creek Confluence
  - Canyon Country Youth Corps – 16 Members
    - Working on GSENM, Escalante River above and below HWY 12 bridge
  - Arizona Conservation Corps – 16 Members
    - Working on GLCA, Escalante River above Harris Wash Confluence
  - Ancestral Lands Program – 10 Members
    - Working on GLCA, Escalante River above Harris Wash Confluence
    - Working on GSENM, front country, at Harris Wash trailhead
- Public Lands important dates: (check out the calendar at [www.escalantewatershed.org](http://www.escalantewatershed.org) for the most up-to-date information)
- Native Conservation Corps – high school crew: July 23-27 working on GSENM at Harris Wash Trailhead
- Joint ERWP Conservation Corps Crew Training – Aug 17- 26
- First Crew start in field – Aug 31
- Front Country Volunteer week – Sept 20 – 26: Working on GSENM at Harris Wash trailhead
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness volunteer week – Sept 27 – Oct 3: Working on GSENM, Escalante River below Phipps Wash Confluence
- RRAFT (River Restoration Adventures for Tomorrow) volunteer week – Oct 11 – Oct 17: Working on GSENM, Escalante River below Boulder Creek Confluence
- GIS Database update
  - Public version of database now available – [www.escalantewatershed.org](http://www.escalantewatershed.org)
  - Story maps coming
- Private Lands Updates
  - Initial treatments done in spring, continuing now
  - Active revegetation (forbs, grasses, shrubs, salvaged willows and cottonwoods, some potted plants)
  - Retreatment
- Long term monitoring and maintenance plan update (John Spence)
  - Putting in final plots this summer
  - Will reread 2010 plots

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Dixie Nat'l Forest location along Main Canyon (Brooke Shakespeare)

- Springs and Seeps Protocol, Levels I & II
  - Q, does BLM have the same protocol to identify springs and seeps?
    - A, similar but different
  - Q, is fire an indicator?
    - A, yes but it has a different level of impact vs. other indicators
  - Q, is the Level I protocol on the web?
    - **Action Item:** Brooke can send this around
  - Q, what are the indicators?
    - A, presence of ungulates, vegetation, oil sheen
  - Q, have you seen any obvious changes here since the 2008 fire?
    - A, huge changes, huge floods
  - Q, do you want more volunteers?
    - A, a reasonable amount of committee people. They need to be trained so it is an investment
  - Q, is Dixie NF taking the lead or are other forests doing the same thing?
    - A, not sure
    - Q, are other forests expected to?
    - A, our new directives say that we need to disclose/analyze greater impacts to streams and seeps
  - Q, how many streams/seeps have been assessed?
    - A, about 24