



ERWP Full Partnership Meeting Summary -- October 1, 2015

**Escalante River Watershed Partnership
October 1, 2015, Full Partnership Meeting
Interagency Visitor Center, Escalante, UT**

Attendees

- Dave Bastian, Utah Conservation Corps
- Rhett Boswell, UT Division of Wildlife Resources
- Dennis Bramble, private landowner
- Chris Brotherson, Utah Conservation Corps
- Rose Chilcoat, Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Steve Cox, Boulder Town Council
- Terry DeLay, UD Forest Service, Dixie National Forest
- Amy Dickey, UT Division of Water Quality
- Lionel DiGiacomo, Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Sue Fearon, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Mike Golden, Dixie National Forest
- Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition
- David B. Holladay, Deer Creek
- Tom Hoyt, Boulder Community Alliance
- Amber Hughes, BLM/GSENM
- Grant Johnson, private landowner
- Afton McKusick, American Conservation Experience
- Phoebe McNeally, U of U / DIGIT Lab
- Richard Madril, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Kevin Miller, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Noel Poe, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Jake Powell, American Conservation Experience
- Mike Putiak, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Dan Rountree, visitor from Florida
- Brooke Shakespeare, US Forest Service
- Peter Skidmore, Walton Family Foundation
- Craig "Sage" Sorenson, private landowner
- John Spence, National Park Service / Glen Canyon
- Travis Thomason, NRCS
- Joel Tuhy, The Nature Conservancy
- Loch Wade, private landowner
- Kris Waggoner, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Jessie Warner, Dixie National Forest
- Linda Whitham, The Nature Conservancy



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Coordinating Committee Update

- Funding and forecast 2016
 - Total spent \$2,146,468
 - Total WFF Contribution: \$742,955 or 35% of ERWP budget
 - Funding needs: \$1,773,150 [slide needs updating]
 - Coordinating Committee working on fundraising
 - Grants status:
 - NFWF 5 Star - \$25,600 - DENIED
 - Watershed Restoration Initiative - \$335,800 - RECEIVED
 - UT Dept. of Agriculture - \$25,000 (for FY 2016) – NOT RECEIVED
 - George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles –\$100,000 - DENIED
 - Weeden Foundation - \$20,000 - DENIED
 - Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation - \$20,000 - DENIED
 - Arthur and Elaine Johnson –\$90,000 - WAITING
 - KEEN Effect - \$10,000 - WAITING
 - 2015 accomplishments
 - Completed Outreach and Fundraising Plan
 - Began implementation of the Outreach and Fundraising Plan
 - Went to Outdoor Retailer Show
 - Presented to Escalante Chamber of Commerce
 - Increased engagement with local utilities
 - Identified and applied to more private foundations
 - Developed long-term budget 2016 – 2020
 - Initiated Watershed Partnership Coordinator hiring process
 - Next steps
 - Hire and train Watershed Partnership Coordinator
 - Continue implementing the Outreach and Fundraising plan (e.g. applying to new grants, soliciting donations, outreach to businesses and agencies)
 - Near-term actions include:
 - Apply to “Developing the Next Generation” ~\$50,000
 - Apply to UPCD
 - Planning Coordinating Committee winter retreat
 - Assemble & distribute 2015 ERWP Accomplishments
 - **Action Item for ALL**: track and provide in-kind donations (time) to Linda
- Watershed Partnership Coordinator application review process / selection
 - Coordinating Committee approved Coordinator Search Subcommittee’s recommendation to make offer to top candidate: subcommittee hopes she can start by or before December
 - Explained process for advertising and interviewing, described top candidates
 - Q: What’s her experience with community outreach and dealing with controversial issues?
 - She’s been involved in the contentious Grand Canyon eagle program. Enjoys these types of challenges, appreciates the listening process. Currently working on Tamarisk removal on tribal lands



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- Q: Where did most applicants hear of job?
 - We didn't ask, widely advertised. Candidates referred to River Management Society and Tamarisk Coalition websites
- Next steps:
 - Hire and train coordinator, continue implementing Funding and Outreach Plan
 - Coordinating Committee Winter Retreat Dec 11, 2015 in Page, AZ,
 - Next Full Partnership to be scheduled in late January 2016
- Kris' role moving forward: work closely with coordinator for 2 months, especially on grant reporting. Moving forward, Kris to dedicate 5-10/week
- Walton Family Foundation Update:
 - Just completed 5 year strategic plan, Board needs to approve budget
 - Explained a few WFF funding priorities, including water allocation in the west
 - Q: Has funding for this watershed and ERWP been focused on riparian restoration?
 - Yes, we are not expecting to fund water allocation issues in this watershed

Education/Outreach Committee Update

- Escalante Canyons Arts Festival:
 - Took artists interested in spreading the word about watershed out to river for them to paint.
 - Artists learned more about watershed and Partnership. Good/fun experience.
 - Some paintings sold and money donated to ERWP, 3 paintings donated to ERWP
 - Award given to artist who best represented a healthy watershed
- Materials created: Escalante plant guide, book chapter, Etched Magazine article, local newspaper article, bumper sticker, ERWP coasters and cutting boards

Wide Hollow Update (Kim Harding and Pat Coughlin, New Escalante Irrigation Company)

- System: dependent on N. Creek. It has reservoir/storage (of 1/3 of capacity) 7mi up N. Creek. Other reservoir is Wide Hollow, which filled with sediment. We use every ounce of water we get. Water right is for 40cfs (Mar-Oct), but our system doesn't have enough capacity for this.
- Beavers: flooding removes beaver dams/releases sediment into system
 - Lose a lot of water from beaver catchments through evaporation and surrounding vegetation. Fish and Game is catching and relocating beavers. No longer an issue, but next flash flood will flush sediment from remaining dams.
- Q: Do you have issues meeting all irrigator's needs?
 - Yes
- Q: Because there's less water in system?
 - Yes, we're at 50%
- Q: How many irrigators are you supplying? What are they growing and how many acres?
 - 30 mi of pipe, 1660 shares. About 300 stockholders, though this varies. We have to watch/police water use.
 - Most irrigation used for field alfalfa, town system used for gardens



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- Q: When you go to 50%, is it up to the user on how to reduce their use?
 - Yes, the strategy is their own choice
- Q: What do you think the natural silting cycle is? How many years does it take?
 - Don't know how many years it would take to fill up
- Q: Is there an ultimate system that would be the model?
 - Yes, one with more de-silting structures, but this is expensive
- Q: When you take 50% from N. Creek and 50% from Wide Hollow, are you operating at full capacity?
 - No, pipes can only carry 32 cfs
- Q: What does your water right translate in acre feet?
 - 43k acre feet (April 1-Nov 1), not sure
- Q: Do you have info on how much was improved after the new system was put in? How many more fields were put in?
 - The system is more efficient, especially for flood management. Water was already designated before the new system.
- Q: Does Co. own its system?
 - We're paying it off, it will be ours by 2021
- Sediment management process: Canyonlands Conservation District agreed to take lead in writing plan, County Commissioners agreed to sponsor, NRCC voted to fund. Gathered support letters from all agencies, held meeting with proposed participants, formed steering committee, formed technical advisory committee, and held public scoping meeting. Strategy meeting planned for next week.
- Q: How big is watershed above North Creek? What are current uses there today?
 - 10 sq. miles, couple of side drainages, lots of roads, grazing, recreation natural big earth slumps/earth slides that create suspended sediment
- Q: Can ERWP or partners be helpful at this time?
 - ERWP should keep this project on the radar as process develops. In future ERWP member may be able to lead meetings. District needs to hire facilitator.
- Q: Pipeline can only carry 32 cfs, but have 40 cfs. Could you move this water if pipe was bigger?
 - We need additional storage capacity. It's more of a pressure issue.

Joint Science / Conservation Targets Committee Update

- Work is based on Conservation Action Plan
 - Created 7 priorities, including Aspen: Grand Canyon Trust is working on a brochure
- Citizen science project update
 - Partnered with USU Water Watch Program: their mission is to educate communities on water quality and assist in collecting quality data which is then shared publicly
 - Training tomorrow for 12 volunteers to conduct 7 month sampling survey
- National Parks has funding for springs surveys for 2 years
- No update on USGS \$25,000 proposal to look at state discharge levels

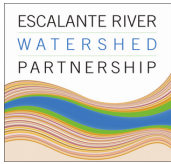


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- Legacy Tree Project, identifying trees 300-400 years old that are dying out
 - May have trip next month. Hard to do this work with Russian olive in the way and therefore have only completed half of work expected to date.
 - Will publish a report, with maps, in 1 year
- Fish update (Mike Golden)
 - Environmental DNA (eDNA) Research: looking for sloughed skin, excrement, reproductive materials in water to detect rare species. Explained how data is collected and processed.
 - Used on Boreal toad work in Dixie National Forest. Explained objectives and results (poor success to date)
 - Q: Are they indicator species?
 - They've declined due to disease from invasive species. Indicates health of habitat, like all species
 - Q: When you get DNA information, is it detailed enough to show if populations are genetically distinct?
 - No, it's not designed that way, just shows if they're present or not.
 - Q: Are you going to keep working on boreal frog?
 - I'm not sure
 - Monitoring Mammoth Creek native trout restoration
 - 2015 accomplishments: 3 permanent and 2 temporary barriers,
 - First Phase – two tributaries (~9 miles) underwent first treatment
 - Q: What is affecting the fish resilience?
 - Combination of factors, especially lack of connectivity
 - Monitoring temperature: Finished collecting continuous temperature data at 9 locations in the Main Canyon, North Creek and Pine Creek drainages over a five year period (2010-2015)
 - Hope to summarize these data into a report about status of temperature profile in Escalante headwaters
 - Monitoring fish: Quantitative fish stations completed at six locations in the Boulder Creek, Deer Creek, Pine Creek and Sand Creek drainages
 - Interesting initial observations: Bear Creek fire effects, Deer Creek flood effects, Sweetwater Creek – previously undocumented
 - Q: Can streams be re-designated from warm to cold vice versa
 - Yes, Division of Water Quality working on this
 - Monitoring habitat: Bank stability, bank cover and stream width assessments (MIM protocol) conducted at 11 sites in Boulder Creek, Deer Creek, Pine Creek and Sand Creek drainages

Field trip / box lunch (walk to Private lands, Sue Fearon)

- Field trip visited 4 private contiguous parcels totaling 78 acres on the river across from the Interagency Office. These projects have completion dates of January 2014 and April 2015, and one project was underway.
- We discussed challenges of working with contractors and engaging landowners. We observed different methods of debris removal including burning, chipping (which we observed) and mastication. We also discussed the re-vegetation component for each parcel.



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Woody Invasives Control and Restoration Committee (update provided as part of Field Trip)

- Woody Invasives Control Plan (WICP) - in final stages of being edited. Committee did a thorough review and final edits are being made.
- EIS update - during our committee meeting the day before, learned that the GSENM programmatic EA has been updated and all documentation for the ERWP Woody Invasives Control (WIC) project has been completed for 2015. We will have to do a new DNA for 2016, and every year after.
- Phoebe has been working on a WIC story map that will go live on the website (www.escalantewatershed.org) after final review
- Monitoring updates - all 10 long term monitoring sites are now completed, and rapid monitoring sites are being established for 2015 field work
- Field Season updates:
 - Public lands:
 - Conservation Corps training was held Aug 17-26. Over 88 crew members attended. Thank you to ERWP members that helped put that on and presented.
 - Hosted a week-long Russian olive removal trip with the Great Old Broads and Colorado Rocky Mountain High School
 - New partnership with Southwest Conservation Corps Ancestral Lands program going well
 - All crews on target to meet 2015 goals
 - 4-person retreatment crew this year has been essential to getting all the work done
 - Private Lands:
 - This year to date, private lands work has included 71 acres of primary treatment, 182 acres of re-treatment, 49 acres of re-seeding, and 19 people have paid for re-treatment in the Boulder area.
- 2016 Planning:
 - Starting to raise funds for 2016 - have to keep the same level of funding as 2015 to complete project by 2018, as outlined in the WICP.
 - Already have volunteer trips for 2016 - Great!
 - Need to completed Determining NEPA Adequacy (DNA) for work on GSENM for 2016
 - John going to work on updated NEPA documentation for GLCA

Joint Science / Conservation Targets Committee Update_(continued)

- Groundwater dependent ecosystems (DGEs), aka Springs and Seeps (Brooke Shakespeare)
 - Monitoring hydrologic alterations, including: water diversions, upgradient extraction, pollution, flooding, etc.
 - Monitoring soil alterations, including: channel erosion, compaction, debris flow, deposition, etc.
 - Results: total GDEs surveyed (85), GDEs without hydrologic alterations (59), most common GDE type with no hydrologic alterations (hillslope), GDEs without soil alterations (5), most common DGE type with no soil alterations (hillslope/helorene)



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- East Fork Deer Creek- temperature, topic for next meeting: first week of July, temp went below 35 degrees, then back up. Observed in another creek also. Not sure why.
- Discussion yielded the following ideas for temperature change:
 - Could be a flush of high mountain water finally melting
 - Hail storm
 - Lake water could have inverted
 - Q: Do you go back every year or regularly?
 - This is a one-time thing. Not designed to monitor change or trend.
- Watershed Resource Database Update
 - Slowly moving forward with collecting data. If you have data that is not fully processed, talk to Phoebe.
- Water study update
 - Western Water Assessments was collecting data. Our contact left the organization for another job.
 - Contacted hydrologist at USU re: scope of work to collect data
 - One ERWP member wanted to know what exactly we would do with the data and how it might impact water rights. This helped us take a step back and think about these questions and how best to involve the community.
 - Instead of proceeding with water assessment, the committee will survey community to see if/what they're interested in learning about water. Survey to be relatively informal and interview-based. What do you know, what do you want to know, what do you not want to know, etc.?
 - Moab Valley Study took 10 years to agree to conduct groundwater study, and there was a sense of urgency there
 - Some Escalante community members haven't expressed clear urgency or interest
 - Some stakeholders have expressed a strong interest: BLM is very concerned

Other Partnership Updates

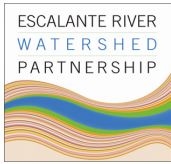
- Deserts River Collaborative is going to start doing more work, so it's good to hear ERWP is working on similar issues.
- Q: Is anyone from Tamarisk Coalition going to the XWN workshop?
 - Yes

Upcoming Events

- XWN Workshop is next week: let Michele know if you have ideas for case clinics by end of day
- Tamarisk Coalition Conference January 9-11; they're still accepting abstracts

Schedule Next ERWP Meeting

- Late January 2016, will send Doodle Survey
- Locals want it in Escalante and will take care of food
- Coordinating Committee Retreat set for Dec 11, 2015



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Escalante River Watershed Partnership October 1, 2015, Full Partnership Meeting Escalante, UT

Meeting Schedule

Wed September 30, 2015

- 3-5 pm, Woody Invasives Committee F2F meeting (*Interagency Office*)
- 5 pm — Science/Conservation Targets joint committees F2F meeting (*Interagency Office*)

Thu October 1, 2015

- 8:00-9:30 am – Coordinating Committee F2F meeting (*Interagency Office*)
- 10-5 – Full Partnership meeting (*Interagency Office, except for field trip over lunch*)
 - noon-2 pm – Field trip to private land treatment area within walking distance from visitor center
 - Pick up box lunches and depart for field trip from *Interagency Office* (RSVP was required for box lunch)

Fri October 2, 2015

- 9 am – 1 pm – Citizen Science volunteer training (*Meet at Interagency Visitor Center*)
- Lunch included (RSVP was required)

October 1 Full Partnership Meeting Agenda*

- Introductions
- Housekeeping
- Coordinating Committee
 - Watershed Partnership Coordinator application review process / selection
 - Funding and forecast 2016
- Education/Outreach Committee
- Joint Science / Conservation Targets Committee
 - Water study update
 - Citizen science project update
 - Fish update (Mike Golden)
 - Headwater springs (Brooke Shakespeare)
- Woody Invasives Control and Restoration Committee
- 11 am -- Wide Hollow update (Kim Harding, New Escalante Irrigation Company)
- NOON-2 (restart agenda when we return)
 - Field trip / box lunch
- Other Partnership Updates
- Upcoming Events
- Additional Agenda Items (if any)
- Schedule Next ERWP Meeting

* Breaks will be taken at appropriate times in agenda