



Escalante River Watershed Partnership
June 19, 2017 -- Full Partnership Meeting
Boulder Community Center, Boulder, UT

Attendees

- Ellen Bailey, USU – Utah Water Watch
- Dana Backer, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Dave Bastian, Utah Conservation Corps
- Michellesey Benally, ERWP
- Matthew Betenson, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners / BLM
- Dennis Bramble, Private Landowner
- Kristen Buck, ERWP
- Steve Cox, Boulder Town / Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Nicole Croft, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Mark Dube, UCC – Field Boss
- Veronica Egen, ACE – Great Old Broads
- Alex Engel, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Mark Fuller, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Mike Golden, Dixie National Forest
- Sue Fearon, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Julian Hatch, Boulder
- Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition
- Amber Hughes, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners / BLM
- Matthew Hurst, Arizona Conservation Corps
- Kristen Jespersen, Tamarisk Coalition
- Grant Johnson, Escalante Canyon Outfitters
- Tabitha Kelly, Grand Staircase – Escalante Partners
- Nicole Kreiser, Utah Conservation Corps
- Robert McElaney, Escalante Resident
- Phoebe McNeally, UofU Digit Lab
- Stephanie Minnaert, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Noel Poe, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners
- Sarah Siefken, UT Div. Wildlife Resources

- Craig “Sage” Sorenson, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners and Landowner
- John Spence, National Park Service / Glen Canyon
- Mike White, Conservation Legacy
- Linda Whitham, The Nature Conservancy
- Clint Wirick, US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Erik Woodhouse, UT Div. Wildlife Resources

- Michele Straube, University of Utah EDR Program (out-going facilitator)
- Kim Kernan, University of Utah EDR Program (incoming facilitator)

Coordinating Committee Updates (Linda Whitham)

PowerPoint slides are available from the facilitator.

- Facilitation. Michele Straube is retiring and Kim Kernan will be taking over future facilitation duties.

- Fundraising Subcommittee
 - ERWP 2017 Financials
 - Projected Expenses: \$1,576,781
 - \$1,316,668 raised to date
 - \$150,600 pending
 - shortfall: \$260,093

 - Overview of 2016 Fundraising
 - \$1,316,688 to date
 - 57% Walton Family Foundation
 - 27% State
 - 8% Federal
 - 8% Private

 - Restore our Rivers Update
 - Restore our Rivers (ROR) is a Tamarisk Coalition initiative to help broaden the private donor base for riparian restoration work in the Southwest.
 - ROR intends to raise \$2 million in non-public funding by March, 2018.
 - Raised to date: \$881,998
 - Left to raise: \$1,118,002
 - ERWP is one of nine partnerships eligible for a \$155,000 ROR grant in March 2018.
 - ERPW must raise matching funds of \$46,666 from private sources by March, 2018
 - Raised to date: \$24,318 + \$11,000 “in-kind”
 - Left to raise: \$11,347

- Other ROR Successes:
 - Developed fundraising plan that identified prospective donors
 - GSEP launched fundraising campaign
 - Met with Utah Foundations
 - Recruited assistance from local community members
 - Funding from 1 new donor and 1 foundation
- Outreach
 - Walton Foundation would like to see success stories get out more.
 - Tamarisk Coalition is doing a “Riverside Stories” project to highlight the benefits of river restoration. Escalante has been included in several of these.
 - Film crew has been out for potential follow up to these stories.
 - *Russian Olive* paper under peer review. (Mike Scott, John Spence, and Sue Fearon).
 - The 2016 ERWP Accomplishments has been posted to the ERWP website.
 - Citizen Science – 2 evening presentations:
 - “History in your Attic” June 9 @ 7:00 – Boulder Community Center
 - “The Four Corners Potato – Conserving an Ancient Food from Escalante, Utah” August 2 @ 7:00 Escalante Showhouse.

To Do: Distribute Tamarisk Coalitions’ “Riverside Stories.”

Woody Invasive Control and Restoration Committee (WICR) update (Stephanie Minnaert) PowerPoint slides are available from the facilitator.

- Field Staff Update:
 - Two new hires for 2017 - Kristen Buck and Michellsey Benally
 - Escalante River float trip and RO restoration update.
 - “Vanderbilt Alternative Spring Break” crew had a great experience. For many, it was the first time backpacking and the trip included education, reflection, and direct service. Worked in Harris wash and Glen Canyon.
- XWN Workshop: Gila Watershed, AZ.
 - Great opportunity to connect with peers and other partnerships
 - First trip as a group – good bonding experience
- Escalante River Float Trip:
 - 8-day trip to Lake Powell.

- Noted different treatment areas, and different treatment methods.
- Scouted campsite for fall
- Up the Gulch – only a few RO noted.
- UCC Crew Leader Training.
 - Trained crew in the “hack and squirt” method. More effective and efficient.
 - Crew in the fall will use chain saws – did not on this trip.
 - A lot of interest in “hack and squirt” method. Good opportunity for outreach.

Question: Is there certification for “hack and squirt” method?

Answer: No. There is for chain saw use and for the application of the herbicide, but not the hack & squirt method specifically.

- Utah Partners for Conservation & Development – Watershed Restoration Initiative Workshop (UPCD WRI -wri.utah.gov)
 - As a flagship partnership, ERWP was invited to present to the group.
 - 100 attendees.
 - UPCD has been a great funding source for ERWP.

To Do: Determine where the funding comes from and acknowledge the sources.

- Private Lands Work. (Sue Fearon)
 - Project in March and April. Put out seed and planted 750 plants.
 - Retreatment in Escalante. Started retreatment with small number of acres, but many volunteers.
 - NRCS anchored project and has become a robust partner.
 - Because there is a fee for retreatment, a lot of private landowners are doing their own retreatment.
- WICR Fundraising Update 2017.
 - WFF \$700,000
 - UPCD WR \$352,800
 - Hemingway Foundation \$15,000
 - Patagonia \$10,000
 - NPS \$87,000
 - BLM \$30,000
 - **Total \$1,194,800**
 - *Not funded this year:*
 - NFWF Resilient Communities
 - ClifBar
 - North Face Explorer
 - Coca-Cola
 - New Belgium
 - *May apply later this year:*

- Wilburforce Foundation
 - Keen
 - NFWF Pulling Together Initiative
 - Utah Dept. of Ag & Food – Invasive Species Initiative
- Monitoring and Maintenance.
 - Training for rapid monitoring
 - Stillwater Sciences provided input
 - New subcommittee: need to form a new subcommittee to specifically develop long term monitoring and maintenance program and track developments in a report.

Question: Who is Stillwater Sciences?

Answer: Stillwater Science is a consultant group that has an expertise in riparian ecology and has worked for the Walton Family Foundation on multiple projects.

To do: Form a subcommittee under WICR on “Long Term Monitoring and Maintenance Plan.”

- 2017-2018 Proposed Treatments (map on p. 15 of WICR Slides)
 - Small pieces here and there next to private lands.
 - Alby Wash.
 - Main stem also possible.

Question: Any plans to deal with RO in upper valley?

Answer: Landowners in Upper Valley have been contacted and, in one case, we put together a plan with NRCS. The landowners, however, did not feel like the plan would work with their agricultural operation and there were some fencing difficulties.

- Upcoming this summer:
 - Retreatment
 - SCC-AL Native Youth Crew –Harris Wash GLCA
 - Conservation Corp Training Prep Meeting
 - Training Starts Aug 21st
 - NEPA DNA
 - Approved for fall re: Monument

Question: Has the Park Service made any recommendations for the woody debris deposition?

Answer: There is a significant amount of fluctuation in debris accumulation depending on flooding. The debris also includes many other trees than just RO because other trees come down from Boulder Mountain and pile up there together.

WICR Field Updates – 2017 (Stephanie Minnaert) PowerPoint slides are available from the facilitator.

- Description of new technique for RO – “Hack & Squirt.”
 - Replaces girdle method
 - No need to expose heartwood
 - No shock response
 - Very little biomass produced
 - Not a technical skill:
 - much easier – can crawl in under tree + hand tools are easier
 - highly efficient - 3-5 minutes per tree / much faster than chainsaw
 - Example: Harris Wash Trailhead – a good place to see the effectiveness this technique
 - Fall Plans are well developed

- ERWP River Trip (great photos included in PP slides).
 - On day 1 (Bridge to Temple of Doom), saw untreated portion of RO on overhanging thorny cliffs. Observed areas where RO had been thrown directly into the water but then eventually pushed through. Piles here and there on the bank help the river meander more and become less “ditch-like” which is part of the goal. The river is a rapidly changing eco-system. The trip was very similar to Peter Skidmore’s last year, just went a bit further and included:
 - Bridge to Temple of Doom
 - Temple of Doom to the Gulch
 - The Gulch to Harris Wash
 - Harris Wash to Moody Creek
 - Moody Creek to Fold Canyon
 - Fold Canyon to Coyote Gulch
 - Coyote Gulch to Willow Gulch
 - Willow Gulch to Wahweap Marina

- Utah Conservation Corps Trip – Harris Wash
 - 9-day trip with 7 Trip Leaders and a Field Supervisor
 - Training for Fall Season
 - Fall Season Expectations, Hack & Squirt, and Stump Cut.
 - Completed 3 miles, 47 acres of retreatment and 7.5 acres of initial treatment – ASTOUNDING!!
 - UCC is prepared and hack and squirt is demonstrated to be very efficient.

- Wilderness Volunteer Hitch Mid May
 - 11 Volunteers, 352 hours, 9.5 acres
 - Film crew joined them for several days and may be included in a “This American Land” on PBS in fall 2017.

- **Retreatment Summary**
 - 1079.03 acres National Park Service land
 - 362 acres of BLM land
 - Big picture: all of Glen Canyon has been retreated within a 3-year time frame. Plus, have heard from and listened to a variety of voices from the field.

Question: Has the tamarisk beetle been sited?

Answer: Yes, but much thinner population

To Do: Alert the ERWP elist to the PBS airing of This American Land

Science / Conservation Target Committee Update.

- **ERWP Deer Creek Bio Blitz**
 - ERWP partners and community member collecting information on native plant, animal, and other life forms. Several new mollusks/invertebrate species found.
- **Springs Update (John Spence)**
 - Investigated Harris Walsh and hanging gardens at Fence Canyon.
 - RO is dead.
 - Gueshette with 9 exotic plant species!!
 - Legacy trees in Upper Fence Canyon. The database now includes over 500 legacy trees. It is possible to compare imagery and evaluate how they are dying out. Another possible paper on this topic.
 - Brooke Shakespeare's springs base flow newsletter provided.
- **AIM Report (Ken Bradshaw)**
 - 3 AIM crews on the ground – 4th year for the Monument
 - 19 weather stations installed 18 years ago now have funding for upgrade to make information public over the satellite
 - 2 have been done so far
 - investigating getting weather station data on ERWP watershed resource database.

To Do: Follow up on weather data – can it be accessed through ERWP watershed resource database?

- Update on “Three-Five Species” Fish (Mark Fuller and Erik Wodehouse)
 - Razor-back sucker –using sonar, found larvae in Escalante up and down stream of Lake Powell.
 - Travel netting for Grass Carp. Triploid, not spawning, but now finding diploid carp. Now a target.
 - Willing to share data as it is important for the partnership. Samples going to CSU
 - Three-Species Preservation
 - Focus on Upper Escalante
 - Priority – see how species are disturbed throughout the drainage
 - Collaboration allowing opportunity to get a distribution picture of the broader river basin
 - Funding from the Hemingway Foundation allowed expanded monitoring – 4 days of seining and sampling of tributaries

To Do: Consider follow up report for Fall 2017 ERWP Full Partnership Meeting.

- Native Trout Restoration in Southern Utah (Mike Golden) PowerPoint slides are available from the facilitator.
 - Why Native Cutthroat Trout Restoration?
 - Ethical/Ecological Reasons
 - Policy Reasons
 - Bonneville Cutthroat Trout (BCT) and Colorado River Cutthroat Trout) CRCT have been petitioned for listing under ESA multiple times
 - FS is a signatory to Conservation Agreement for BCT & CRCT
 - FS Manual directs: assist states, maintain or enhance BCT & CRCT through habitat enhancement and agency cooperation
 - Common Threats to Native Trout
 - Nonnative species
 - Disease/pathogens
 - Habitat degradation
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Population isolation
 - Managing for Native Trout – the 3 R Concept
 - Representation
 - Redundancy
 - Resiliency
 - Lingering and Emerging Challenges
 - Expanding disease issues (whirling disease)
 - Public support
 - Economic support

- Acknowledge Partnerships
 - Forest Service
 - Utah DNR – Wildlife Resources
 - Utah DNR – Natural Resources
 - Department of Interior
 - Utah’s Watershed Restoration Initiative
 - ERWP
 - Garkane energy
 - Trout Unlimited
 - US F&WS
- GSENM – Science Update (Dana Backer) PowerPoint slides are available from the facilitator.
 - Science Permits
 - Open permits – 47 (81% held by colleges/universities)
 - Biology, Geology/Paleo, Social Sciences
 - Backcountry Use Impacts – Penn State
 - Impacts of recreational therapy program & other backcountry users
 - Impacts: stripped bark, litter, charcoal, fire evidence, social trails
 - Phase 1 of 5 complete
 - Recreation Base Line Experience – Colorado Mesa University
 - Focus group methodology – 4 years of data – 300 participants
 - GSENM special because “wild and unspoiled”
 - Phase 2 of 4 complete
 - Report Due FY 2018
 - Reptile and Amphibian Inventory and Treatment Survey – Southern Utah University
 - 2-year study comparing: P-J untreated encroachment, sagebrush, and treated P-J encroachment areas,
 - Target surveys
 - No new species yet
 - Hummingbird Banding
 - 9th year
 - 2 common (black chin & broad tail)
 - 2 uncommon (Rufous and Anna)
 - Migratory (Idaho, Vancouver, Tucson)
 - Monitoring locations: Escalante VC, Calf Creek, & Wildcat Gauge Station
 - Numbers are down this year
 - Volunteer to assist
 - Contact Terry Tolbert 435-691-6670

To Do: Remind ERWP Partners and supports about volunteer opportunity.

- Utah Water Watch (Ellen Bailey) PowerPoint slides are available from the facilitator.
 - Ellen stepped into Brian Green's role. Utah Water Watch is looking for additional engagement. Goals:
 - education outreach re: water quality & engage in watershed.
 - provide important citizen science – monitoring can help tell the story. Data used with school groups.
 - Easy data, robust for 2016 – tier 1 monitoring
 - Summary of sites and data (see slides)
 - What sites do we want to add?
 - How do we increase community participation?
 - Tier II – give volunteers a wider understanding of what is done at the state level.
 - Recruiting and Training
 - Combine training with an additional volunteer project
 - Combine with other outreach events – float trips, bioblitz, etc.
 - Not strictly water chemistry data – stream banks, riparian vegetation, flows, etc.
 - Working with additional agencies – DWQ, BLM, US Forest Service, State Parks
 - Signs - Public area, report data on the sign

Question: Any monitoring sites set up to evaluate restoration?

Answer: There is not, but this would be a good next step. Photos are good and provide a tool for before/after evaluations.

To Do: Appoint local person to coordinate with Ellen Bailey/USU on Citizen Science

- Celebrated Michele Straube's Retirement
 - ERWP partners and supporters retired to the common room for great food, cake and speeches to celebrate Michele's many years facilitating ERWP and upcoming retirement.