

Escalante River Watershed Partnership Full Partnership Meeting

Wednesday, November 17, 2021 | 1:00-3:30PM | Zoom meeting

NOTES

Participants - see [here](#)

Next Steps

- Contact Kaitlin Martin if interested in doing a field tour in 2022
- Fill out this [Google Form](#) with project ideas for the Stewardship Committee
- The next ERWP meeting will be in February 2022, close in timing to the Science Symposium (date TBD)

Committee Updates

[Slides for all updates here](#)

Coordinating Committee - Linda Whitham (TNC), Kristen Jespersen (REW)

- Linda gave an overview of the accomplishments of the Coordinating Committee over 2021
- Most people at the meeting are interested in attending the upcoming science symposium in February
 - Planning team: Linda, Sarah, Marc Coles-Ritchie, Dennis, Jake Deslauriers
 - Alex can help with set-up and take-down
- Kristen reviewed the partnership's general expenses and income
 - This breakdown will be restructured in the future to reflect in-kind or staff time contributions; the actual work accomplished is much larger than what is reflected, and it would be great to have the budget reflect the true cost of projects and all of the work that is involved (fundraising, field work, etc.)
 - Diversity of income sources for the variety of work being done despite circumstances
 - New success with the Native Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help with fish and tamarisk removal work

Stewardship & Community Engagement - Neak Loucks (GSEP)

- Goal is to identify where volunteer labor would be helpful in pursuing goals.
- Meant to help and clarify the logistical support that can be done to help with projects
- [Contact Kaitlin to share specific project ideas](#) and the committee can help manage scheduling.
 - kaitlin@gsenm.org. 406-431-0218
- [Let Kaitlin know by the next Full Partnership Meeting if interested in doing a 2022 field tour](#)

Climate Change Committee - Dennis Bramble (private landowner)

- Documenting baseline biodiversity through a bio blitz to capture and identify species
 - Future bio blitzes will expand to document small animals, birds, arthropods, etc.
- Collected tree cores
 - Showing narrow cords which suggest stressful conditions for the tree
 - Potentially in a mega-drought now
 - Historically drove communities out of the area 800 years ago when it last happened
- Research Natural Area (RNA) next step: generate key questions to help identify what species need to be tracked
- To complement the RNA work, committee is also looking at springs that are hydrologically linked and see how they respond long term

- Missing:
 - Drought
 - Cross-boundary
 - Youth engagement
 - Sustainable RO removal
 - Community connection
 - Nearby watersheds

Trends and concerns for the next 5-10 years

- Trends
 - Worsening drought and fires
 - Recreation capacity and increasing pressure leading to improper human waste management, disturbance of cultural sites, and challenges with managing infrastructure like toilets and parking areas
 - Look at who is dealing with this well (e.g., Bears Ears), map where the worst improper human waste management issues are
 - Increasing development in surrounding area
 - Loss of habitat
- Concerns
 - Drought and connected management
 - Litigation
 - Impacts from livestock grazing in riparian and upland areas
 - New invasive species
 - Not enough intentional collaboration and integration of indigenous paradigms and perspectives into land management
 - Not enough collaboration and partnership beyond boundaries for long-term sustainability
- Planning efforts and upcoming programs
 - Landscape-level projects using modeling to determine long-term implications
 - Temporary increase of available funds (infrastructure bill, Civilian Climate Corps, etc.)
 - BLM Resource Management Plan
 - Landscape (LCF) forecasting - should see progress by summer 2022

Meeting Evaluation

Participants were asked for their feedback on the virtual meeting. Below are the summarized comments:

- Great participation and the word cloud activity, breakout groups, and networking was successful if too short; in future, the informal networking groups could be organized by shared projects/ideas
- Need to connect more with indigenous communities on watershed management topics and invest in the surrounding area
- Committee updates could focus on just one specific topic or recent project with data to share within the committee
- It was helpful to have the longer-term strategic discussions; from here, focus on objective measures of the most pressing issues in the watershed
- Could fill the needs of the Stewardship committee by bringing partners into the field to do some project work that doesn't require training
- Avoid February 23-25 for the Science Symposium and next Partnership meeting - these are the dates for the RiversEdge West conference in Grand Junction