

Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership Fall 2017 Meeting Notes

Revisiting & Learning from Past Work

Date & Time: November 1st, 2017; 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: BLM Conference Room (9:00 am -11:00 am), Field Site Visits (11:00 am – 3:00 pm)

Attendance:

- Liz Ballenger, NPS
- Gabe Bissonette, BLM
- Ben Bloodworth, Tamarisk Coalition
- Jake Deslauriers, Utah Conservation Corps
- Kara Dohrenwend, Rim to Rim Restoration
- Josh Doucette, NPS
- Tim Graham
- Makeda Hanson, UT DWR
- Shannon Hatch, Tamarisk Coalition
- Tim Higgs, Grand County
- Jennifer Jones, BLM
- Jason Kirks, BLM
- Tony Mancuso, UT Forestry, Fire & State Lands
- Tamsin McCormack, Plateau Restoration
- Tif Miller, City of Moab
- Todd Murdock, BLM
- Nichole Nielson, UT DWR
- Kelli Quinn, NPS
- Pam Riddle, BLM
- Jennifer Shostrand, Seeds of Success
- Linda Whitham, The Nature Conservancy
- TJ Cook, UT DWR
- Dave Erley, Castle Valley
- Taylor Hoensen, BLM
- Ann Marie Aubry, BLM
- Jeff Adams, Canyonlands Watershed Council
- Arne Hultquist, UT State University Ext.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting Guidelines, Focus & Goals

- Purpose of meeting to learn from previous project work, dialogue with partners addressing similar issues

REVIEW OF SEURP 2017 ACTIVITIES

Quarterly Work Plan Update/Roles

- Please provide comments and/or updates to this document (attached) to Kara and/or Shannon
- If there are activities that show you responsible for them that you aren't comfortable with (or if there are items you'd like to take on), please let us know!

Vegetation and Beetle Monitoring Report Status

- There are currently 10 years of vegetation and beetle monitoring data; need to compile and analyze to better assess impact, and tell the story that our collective work is having within the watershed
- Using Restore our Rivers (ROR) funding to compile and report on data
- Hope to have draft products developed by spring 2018
- Vegetation monitoring reports
 - RRR be updating reporting on data compiled over the last ten years
 - Assessing vegetative response as a measure of "success"
- Beetle reports
 - Take into account spatial and temporal data, along with qualitative work on recruitment and mortality

- Reports will incorporate beetle history and will attempt to correlate with several variables (diapause, recruitment, seed production, etc.)
- Focusing on mortality and what is coming back after defoliation
 - Presently seeing tamarisk tipping over due to mortality
- Denver University (DU) is publishing a paper soon that will be utilizing Grand County data
- There is some interest in changes in flowering of tamarisk over the time the trees have been influenced by the beetle. RRR's vegetation response forms may include qualitative tamarisk data (e.g. flowering, robustness) and RRR can provide this to Tim.
- Beetle populations and impacts
 - Seeing fluctuations in beetle populations
 - More marginal sites are being heavily impacted by beetles, however, several sites along river have been hit hard as well
 - Hard to tell what environmental factor are all at play
 - Would be good to take advantage of work that Chris Rasmussen completed for USGS report

Geodatabase Development

- How do we best represent work that has been done over the last decade?
 - Work encompasses sites from Utah State Line down to Potash
 - Often there were several treatments at each site
 - In addition to seeing the locations and type of work done throughout our area, we also want to add a current "site evaluation" to the database
- Current system
 - Most previously treated sites are in entered into an existing database with BLM (date, treatment, photos)
- Geodatabase system
 - Moving towards adding data into standardized database that is being used by several watershed partnerships throughout the Colorado River Basin
 - This database was created to show funders how grant monies are being used on ground
 - Partners and funder worked with Digit Lab at Utah State University to combine numerous variables to better compare data; cross-walked data to use same language for data management
 - Ben Bloodworth (Tamarisk Coalition) and USU will work with Gabe and others to make sure that all desirable fields are included in geodatabase; totally customizable based on the needs of SEURP
 - There is currently funding in place to move data into database
 - Still working out timeline; once some internal decisions are made, it will probably only take 4-6 weeks for USU to turn around
 - Monitoring sites will be known; help in communication between partners
 - Tamarisk Coalition will house the data, but SEURP members will be able to upload and edit data via online portal
 - Won't need ESRI products

- Database is triple redundant; ensures that data are correctly uploaded

Budget Update

- 2017 Budget
 - Kara created partnership wide budget; also details out ROR funding and distribution
 - Have met required match but still looking for opportunities to expand match
- 2018 Fundraising Plan Draft and input from the group
 - Kara and core team starting on budget in December
 - Monitoring, reporting, planning, coordination, and data management were noted as important tasks to continue funding in 2018. Please let us know if you disagree on these priorities.

Brief Discussion on Partnership Roles & Responsibilities

- Please comment on the roles document pertaining to RRR and Tamarisk Coalition if you have suggested edits and/or questions
- Updating MOU
 - Shannon will be following up with partners to discuss an update to the MOU (hasn't been updated in a decade)

WATERSHED RESTORATION INITIATIVE GRANT PROPOSAL DISCUSSION

Changes to the WRI Process – Nicole Nielson, UT DWR

- State of Utah following state purchasing guidelines; re-evaluating how things were done in the past
- Nonprofits
 - No real changes
 - Grant agreement includes attachment for standards and conditions; says what will be expected from grantee (this was missing from past grant agreements)
- Federal and state partners, local governments
 - No real changes
 - Will continue doing cooperative agreements; includes standards and conditions
- Youth Corps
 - In past, the state did a grant agreement with youth corps, now; however, project managers will need to let Nicole what youth corps they want to work with, and on what acres
 - A bit confusing when youth corps are also a state agency (Utah Conservation Corps)
 - Proposals will now be run up through purchasing – and there will be a bidding type process
- Contracting process
 - If entity is not a government, non-profit, or youth corps, then contracting has to go through bidding process for purchases over \$5,000
 - Phone bids are acceptable for purchases between \$1000-\$4999
 - It is also ok to have government or non-profit subcontract for work or materials. In this case the above processes should be followed.
- Project proposals
 - Would be good to include justification for why certain organizations are involved; helps state clarify why the project collaborators work with particular nonprofits, etc.
 - Line-item budget; need to have agreements match budget page – very important

- Helpful to have detailed spreadsheets that are tied to budget, with organizations detailed
 - Total budget is fixed, but amounts can be moved on finance page
- Reporting
 - There is a project manager in the WRI system who will act as point person for the project and completion reports; contributors need to help out
 - For example, Jason Kirks is a project manager in WRI system; he has contributors that can help out. Kara is a project coordinator; helps with compiling data, making sure work gets completed. Project collaborators (FFSL, Grand Co, PRI and UCC) need to get information to Jason or into system itself. Kara may be able to help with that.
 - WRI maintains a database that allows for documents and photos to be uploaded and included in report
 - There is also a comment section that helps to keep track of project
 - Things to remember!
 - All invoices need to be submitted by June 30 (July 1-June 30 is fiscal year); if project is begin carried over, Nicole needs to know that
 - Make sure all partners understand what their contributions are for large projects and if projects will be carried over to another fiscal year.

Project Presentations & Discussion of next steps

- Colorado River Cross Watershed Restoration Project (Project number 4009)
 - This project evolved from Jason noticing last year that there were lots of small, similar projects in the Moab area; thought it made more sense to coordinate between partners to draft one large project
 - Grant proposal happened really quickly
 - Ranked very high
 - Total project funds for 4009 increased from \$50,000 to \$300,000; funds greatly leveraged (WRI was about \$160,00 of this amount)
 - Kara, with the help of others, drafted maps and site specific works plans info in Scope of Work that has been incredibly useful
- Phase Two of the Colorado River Cross Watershed Restoration Project (Project number 4374)
 - Deadline **January 8th**
 - The first WRI meeting of the season will be held Dec 6th – this is the meeting that will set focus areas
 - Would like to bundle projects again; projects can include a variety of treatments in a variety of fuel/habitat types (e.g. riparian/upland). To this end Jason has started WRI project # 4374 to do this.
 - Start early on collaboration process this year
 - Kara has a sign-up sheet if you'd like to work on this grant application together
 - Kara and Jason will coordinate a meeting this fall to further discuss projects

- If you want to be a formal contributor, then you need to sign up on the WRI website to enter data, etc. If you want to help out more informally, can still view online and then send ideas to Jason or Kara
 - Took proposal for 4009 and copied text over to 4374 to serve as base. This needs to be revised to reflect what we actually want to do in this second phase.
 - Would be good to start Scope of Work similar to one Kara created for current project; Kara is willing to do that
 - Discuss sites, focus areas (fish, riparian, etc.)
- Ranking
 - Be sure to review ranking criteria on WRI website
 - Respond to comments as they come in on your proposal
 - Very important to discuss benefits of partnership; this section is worth 15 points!
 - Best to group projects; higher dollar projects that include upland and riparian; really encourage partnerships
- Other projects in area/state
 - Fire Protection Well in Castle Valley? Would this fit?
 - Nicole can talk with her office about these project
 - Several other collaborative efforts in the state, including San Juan River, Dolores, among others
 - Tim and Jason should connect about Dolores
- Importance of partnership
 - Jake presenting this project in DC; really sees the benefit of this work
 - Kara has been instrumental in coordinating this work between the state and all of the people in management and on-the-ground
 - Kudos to Nicole for helping out on the state level
 - Importance of staff redundancy noted; good for many within partnership to know what is going on with projects given multiple staff changes
 - Testament to SEURP that projects were implemented and completed given staff changes and concerns about funding

FIELD SITE TOURS, & GROUP DISCUSSION

King's Bottom area

Site Topic: vegetation response to invasive removal, passive revegetation and secondary weeds and how differently sites respond to vegetation manipulations

- Since 2007 little planting was done at this site after initial removal, which was completed through hand-thinning, followed by pile building/burning
- The native vegetation response has been outstanding
 - There were lots of good natives in the understory prior to thinning
- Not clear why there was such a tamarisk "hot bed" in the middle of this site
 - Former site use?
 - Water off paved road?
 - Spring nearby?
- Campground site

- Aided revegetation at this site with the creation of swales
- BLM fire completed planting
- Ongoing weed issues
 - Knapweed under cottonwoods
 - Knapweed gall midges have established on the site
 - Lots of Russian thistle in gravel delivered to site
- Irrigation
 - Has been in place 9 years; working to remove system as it takes too much staff time
 - Infrastructure frequently damaged by campers
- On-going site issues
 - Maintenance
 - Looking at hiring out irrigation in future possibly, but really need to remove it
 - Beaver
 - Beavers are “predictable in their unpredictability” but there is evidence of their activity at this site.
 - Health of cottonwoods
 - Erosion
 - Bank being undercut
 - Due to tamarisk removal?
 - Influenced by jet-boat traffic?
 - 300-400’ riprap being installed to protect campground
 - Epic events are happening more frequently (e.g. severe storms, flooding, etc.)
- Revegetation species
 - Three-leaf sumac and privet do best at this site
 - Box elder
 - Might be just too far south
 - Seems to like side canyons (and the Nat’l Park)
 - Goodding’s willow
 - This is the northern extent of Goodding’s. It does seem to do well.



Liz Ballenger looks at bank erosion in campground



Group getting the Goose lowdown

Goose Island area

Site Topic: recreation and revegetation needs and conflicts – follow up from Dec. 8 2016

- Long fire history at this site (dating back to 70s)
- Prior to removal work, site was completely dominated by tamarisk, with small areas burrowed out for tents
- Three different treatment sites in this area with lots of different revegetation treatments
 - The campground area has an irrigation system
 - The upstream area has been hand watered and some swale areas have shown greater success

- The pollinator garden has had mixed success
- Ongoing revegetation
 - Over the last several years, BLM has worked to improve reveg success with the addition of a pollinator garden (Bee Inspired project) and through additional planting
 - Planting in irregularly shaped basins that are no more than 5' wide has aided success
 - Taking advantage of shade from existing trees/remaining tamarisk has been successful for establishment
 - Salt grass sprigging has worked well at this site
 - Cottonwood poles are rather hit or miss
 - Need sand and gravel
 - Need to hit groundwater; this site may have a bedrock layer
- Ongoing weed concerns
 - Mowing kochia during flowering has helped to reduce population
 - FFSL will be treating Russian olive soon
 - Tamarisk whips
 - Treatment depends on management goals
 - May want to do a cut-stump or basal bark treatment if concerned about aesthetics, otherwise, could leave and let the beetles eat over time
- Other topics
 - Important to consider that when you remove all tamarisk from a site, you lose access to the water that tamarisk was bringing up near the surface through its extensive root system
 - Disconnection from river
 - May have to accept that site is more of an upland site than a riparian site
 - Is soil aggregation occurring at this site (as opposed to the river down-cutting)?
- Outreach
 - Need to better communicate with visitors/tourists about work
 - Existing signs may already be created; Shannon and Jason to touch base
 - Also need to update language for visitor's center
 - Would be good to create a SURP brochure



Tim² at Ground Zero (for beetle releases)

Williams Bottom

Site Topic: Beetle monitoring and discussion about implications for vegetation manipulation goals moving forward

- Vegetation and beetle monitoring overview
 - Ground Zero for beetle releases in 2004
 - Several transects established at this location that have been read for a decade
 - Lots of tamarisk now falling down due to mortality
 - Currently researching possible trends to explain tamarisk mortality; also looking at why beetles do well in one area and not so much in others
 - Denver University research didn't reveal any correlation
 - Russian knapweed gall midge

- First release at Fish Ford in 2012
 - Has now spread on their own to Westwater and Potash; also in Fisher Valley
 - Midge follows new growth; moves out to island and then inland as knapweed grows throughout the year
- How to address sites that are dominated by invasives?
 - Do a phased approach to take advantage of shade, water movement, etc.
 - Could try several different treatments; hard to do any wrong at these sites as they are so degraded
 - Good to leave 3D architecture for birds
 - Provides some habitat
 - Also facilitates seed dispersal by birds
 - By leaving shade, you can also facilitate use by small mammals, which can aid in soil remediation through churning, etc.
 - Establish native plant islands to facilitate propagules
 - Might be best to address only knapweed
 - Reduce fire risk
 - Ameliorate allopathic chemicals
 - Follow-up with grass seeding
 - May want to gather up biocontrol agents ahead of treatment