



Riparian Restoration Partnership Successes, Lessons Learned, and Models for Other Initiatives

A review of five partnerships funded by
the Walton Family Foundation

Tamarisk Coalition, October 31, 2016

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Introduction

This report synthesizes key programmatic successes and lessons learned from collaborative watershed restoration partnerships in the Colorado River Basin (CRB), with emphasis on partnerships funded by the Walton Family Foundation (WFF or Foundation), through its Freshwater Initiative Program. The intended audience for this report includes potential funders interested in replicating or contributing to a comparable program, as well as other professionals and community members looking to initiate or enhance collaborative restoration efforts within their respective watersheds.

Tamarisk Coalition (TC), a regional nonprofit with the mission of improving riparian habitat through education, collaboration, and technical assistance, was tasked by the WFF to synthesize this report given its long-term role as a leader and technical assistance provider for the watershed partnership groups profiled in this document.

Utilizing its long-standing relationships, TC completed interviews with a suite of partners in an attempt to discern and catalogue programmatic successes and lessons learned across watersheds (see [Appendix](#) for interviewees). Information garnered from these discussions has been compiled, with specific comments remaining anonymous. Other literature was utilized to augment personal communications (see [References](#)).

Walton Family Foundation

The primary objective of the Foundation's Freshwater Initiative, which also includes work on the Mississippi River, is to promote healthy and resilient communities of both wildlife and humans in selected watersheds. The Initiative accomplishes its goals through economic incentives and other conservation tools.

As part of its strategy, the Foundation has invested millions of dollars in the restoration of riparian lands in the CRB impacted by invasive plant species, including tamarisk and Russian olive.

Funding has been provided to a variety of stakeholders working collaboratively through engagement with four key watershed partnership groups in the CRB (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Additionally, the Foundation provided some funding, over a shorter time period, to support restoration efforts for the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher in the Virgin River Watershed through the

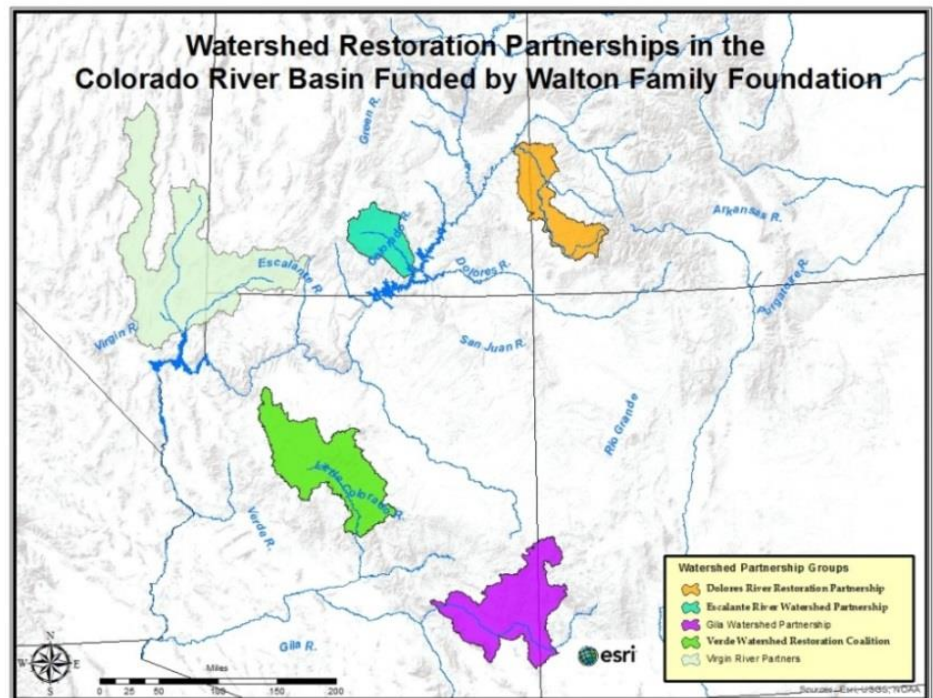


FIGURE 1- MAP OF FOUNDATION FUNDED WATERSHEDS

Virgin River Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Collaborative (VR SWFL Collaborative). While this particular group is no longer active, restoration efforts are being undertaken by partners working through the Virgin River Program (VRP) and the Virgin River Conservation Program (VRCP).

The Foundation is also supporting work in the Colorado River Delta; however, findings from this work are not presented in this paper due to the unique and complex character of conservation approaches and binational governance in the Delta.

The Foundation has provided significant capacity funding to these groups (Table 1), as well as substantial implementation funding. The expectation was that partnerships would leverage this investment to raise the majority of their implementation funding from outside sources. While the partnerships have worked to diversify their funding, the Foundation continues to provide a large percentage of implementation and total funding for many of the partnership groups, despite funding from other foundations, private donations, and state and federal grants.

TABLE 1 – WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION FUNDED WATERSHED GROUPS

| Partnership Name | Acronym | Year Founded | Website |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|--|
| Dolores River Restoration Partnership | DRRP | 2009 | drrpartnership.org |
| Escalante River Watershed Partnership | ERWP | 2009 | escalanteriverwatershedpartnership.org |
| Gila Watershed Partnership | GWP | 1992 | www.gwpaz.org |
| Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition | VWRC | 2010 | www.verdewrc.org |
| Virgin River Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Collaborative | VR SWFL Collaborative | 2013 | https://sites.google.com/a/tamariskcoalition.org/virgin-river-swfl-collaborative/ ; <i>no longer updated</i> |

Brief Overview of Partnerships

Working across social and jurisdictional boundaries, the four chief watershed partnerships are comprised of diverse associates, including private landowners, interested citizens, contractors, conservation corps members, non-governmental agency (NGO) staff, and local, state, and federal agency representatives. With the exception of the Gila Watershed Partnership (GWP), the profiled watershed groups are not legal entities. As such, each partnership is dependent on leadership from other organizations. For example, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners (GSEP) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) provide much of the leadership for the Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP); for the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC) employees from Friends of the Verde River Greenway (FVRG) serve in leadership roles. The Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) is led by TC, with support from TNC and other organizations, including Conservation Legacy. TC, through support from the Foundation, provides technical assistance to each of the partnerships based on their specific needs.

Landscape-scale management of invasive riparian plant species provided the basis for the establishment of these partnerships; however, some have also addressed, to varying degrees, other watershed issues as well, including fish and beaver habitat improvement, native cutthroat reintroduction, aspen forest regeneration, and erosion concerns. In addition to ecological goals, partnerships are striving to meet social, economic, and management goals established by participants.

Summary of Lessons Learned

While it is difficult to ascribe generalities to the diverse group of partnerships profiled in this report, a number of themes emerged, broken down by valuable lessons for 1) potential funders and 2) partnership initiatives. Each of these components is described in more detail in the [Partnership Components & Lessons Learned Discussion](#) section.

LESSONS FOR POTENTIAL FUNDERS

- Partnership Planning & Engagement
 - Sustained funder engagement with partnerships should be a priority to ensure clear communication.
 - Funders can provide extremely valuable assistance in helping to define restoration success, goal setting, and metric establishment.
 - Financial support of subject matter experts can help make planning processes more robust.
 - Ensure areas of potential investment are supported by a committed community of engaged individuals. Place value on smart and effective people to ensure success.
 - Invest in areas that are supported by a natural flow regime if pursuing riparian restoration work.
 - Funding of planning efforts allows groups to develop guiding documents that inform successful implementation.
 - While a non-controversial issue (e.g. invasive species) can provide a strong rallying point for partnership development, other stressors and/or opportunities may need to be considered at the inception of a partnership, and funding for these planning efforts can be important.
- Funding
 - Funding work at a watershed-scale is critically important to achieving lasting ecological, social, economic, and management goals.
 - Funding of work on both public and private lands is important to overall partnership success.
 - Partnership building and capacity funding is paramount; dedicated staff are essential to meeting partnership goals and objectives – and for ensuring grant deliverables are met.
 - Many of the ecological issues being addressed by partnerships may require a long-term commitment (5-10 years) before lasting benefits are realized. While funders may not wish to remain involved for this time period, it is important to understand where partners are coming from and what may be tempering their expectations from a funder.
 - Funders looking for shorter-term engagement can make huge impacts by investing in discrete partnership components (e.g. technology advancements, project specific assistance, capacity).
- Telling the Story
 - Investment in technologies and resources, such as Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, can provide long-term cost savings. Development of these tools is critical for planning and tracking progress over the long-term – which leads to improved messaging.
 - Effective storytelling can help to rally community support and can bring in additional funding partners.

LESSONS FOR WATERSHED PARTNERSHIPS

- Partnership Planning & Implementation
 - There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to watershed planning; a variety of techniques and level of engagement have proven effective – **as long as clear goals, measurable objectives, and appropriate metrics are defined early on.**
 - Ensure ample time and effort are dedicated to developing clear and appropriate goals, objectives, and metrics.
 - Flexibility and creativity are key in all aspects of partnership engagement – from goal setting to fund management.
 - Start planning for transition early on; consider the “end-game” and determine how that impacts stakeholders and community members.
 - Incorporation of federal requirements for watershed planning and permitting is recommended in order to avoid permitting delays, improve funding opportunities, and ensure continued agency participation.
 - Permitting projects on a watershed-scale may be more time- and cost-effective than site-by-site permitting.
- Partner Engagement
 - Governance documents can help to define partner roles and commitments towards shared goals.
 - Success is a “sum of parts”, made possible by a diverse group of dedicated participants, working individually and collectively. Develop diversity and expertise within the partnership group.
 - When necessary, seek outside expertise from consultants and scientists to inform restoration planning and implementation.
 - Professional, third party, neutral facilitation is imperative.
 - Engagement of high-level agency personnel early and often is critical for planning, decision making, and funding support.
- Funding
 - Development of a business plan describing how partnerships allocate, track, and leverage a large amount of funding is helpful in establishing clear communication and expectations.
 - Communicate about funding challenges early and often; develop a strong group of partners to seek out diverse funding sources to initiate and sustain all aspects of partnership development and implementation.
 - Develop robust tracking systems with partners early on.
- Technology
 - Embrace new technologies; time and money investments early will likely pay off in the long run.
- Outreach
 - Shepard community stewards to advance the importance of restoration work; utilize existing networks and the reach of elected officials .
 - Dedicate resources to telling your partnership’s story in a compelling and engaging way.

Partnership Components & Lessons Learned Discussion

The following describes various watershed partnership components and lessons learned from interviewees pertaining to each of these facets.

Governance Documents

The majority of the WFF-funded watersheds have one, if not several, guiding documents in place that help to define partner roles and responsibilities towards sustaining effective governance, which is simply how different parties (e.g. organizations, agencies, businesses) work through formal and informal processes towards shared goals. Given that these partnerships are working across a multitude of jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. county lines, public and private lands, agency field office boundaries), a form of governance that is both appropriate for working across these boundaries at a watershed-scale and tailored to the unique set of partnership interests and needs is critically important (McKinney & Johnson 2009).

For most of these partnerships, the document outlining their governance has taken the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Partnership Agreement (PA). While these documents are non-binding, they are signed by leaders from partner organizations and agencies, an act of engagement that helps to ensure continued participation from line-officers and/or staff. Agency staff and large NGOs may have templates that can help to determine appropriate language to ensure buy-in. It should be noted that participation in the various partnerships is not limited to signatory agencies or groups; all stakeholders or interested parties are encouraged to attend open partnership meetings.

Several interviewees noted that a well-crafted MOU or PA can help provide legitimacy, both internally and externally, for partnerships, many of which function as non-legal entities. For example, the DRRP MOU provides decision-making guidance across jurisdictional boundaries, outlines partner commitments, and helps to validate the organization when seeking state, federal, or private grant funds (Oppenheimer et al. 2014). The DRRP recently updated its MOU to reflect the partnership's move toward monitoring and maintenance activities and partners' evolving roles.

In addition to a PA, one partnership also developed a Charter. This document further defines the structure of the partnership, decision making-processes, and expected participant behavior. As this document is not signed, unlike a PA or MOU, it affords more flexibility and is more open to revision as circumstances change.

The VRCP, once part of the VR SWFL Collaborative, was the sole organization interviewed without any formal agreement in place; this type of document was deemed unnecessary given the group's current role as an informal, information-sharing network. That being said, a formal agreement could help to accelerate long-term planning for the region, an outstanding goal of many within the partnership.

It should be noted that the GWP, the only 501(c)3 organization represented, functions differently than the other watershed partnerships profiled as it has its own board and full-time staff. Established in 1992, this group is comprised of various partner organizations working on a suite of issues; its foray into invasive species management was initiated by the Foundation's investments in this area.

Planning

Collaborative planning, when performed well, can yield helpful analysis and comprehensive, as well as publicly supported, restoration goals and strategies (Bentrup 2001). The scope and type of collaborative planning undertaken by each profiled watershed partnership depended on participants' interests, the

political climate of the watershed, and the perceived capacity of the partnership to carry out goals over a set period of time. While a variety of planning modalities were utilized, processes were largely viewed as effective exercises in collaborative decision making. Aside from determining ecological, economic, social, and management goals and objectives that resonated with and empowered partners, the planning process provided the venue for ascribing appropriate governance structures and protocols for continued partner engagement - models that ultimately ensured long-term partnership success.

Early involvement of funders in the planning process can help to communicate and clarify how their goals and timelines for engagement align with those of the partnership – an important discussion for ensuring long-term success for all partners. One interviewee stated that partnerships would benefit from learning more about foundations that strive to be “change agents” as a component of their philanthropic work. For example, clarification about funders’ desire for policy change, as well as associated outcomes and timelines, could help create a shared vision for long-term goal setting.

Deep engagement from the WFF in the planning processes of the profiled partnerships was largely positive, with few minor drawbacks. Some felt that their watershed planning efforts more strongly reflected WFF values than those of the partnership; however, as partnerships developed, many were able to better refine their goals as other partners and/or public funders became more deeply engaged.

Distinct planning grants that enable partnerships to strategically craft plans that truly meet their needs and lay the groundwork for implementation moving forward were noted as highly desirable. Without dedicated funding for planning, partnerships may run the risk of jumping into project implementation without a well-conceived strategy, creating problems that can derail efforts over the long-term. The Foundation’s support of planning efforts, including science-based and expert-informed planning, was highly valued. Funding for on-the-ground reconnaissance and mapping, as part of planning efforts, was also critical to ensuring well-informed decision making.

Scope & Focus

Determining the size and emphasis of partnerships’ planning efforts can be an art in and of itself. As one interviewee stated, it is best to assume a “Goldilocks” approach –taking on a geographic and focus area that is neither too big nor too small. The goal is to find a problem, at an appropriate scale, that participants can wrap their arms around and see the difference that their work is making. That being said, a watershed-scale approach is critical to achieving lasting ecological impacts; work should not be defined by arbitrary political or jurisdictional boundaries.

Some partnerships, such as the DRRP, chose to focus exclusively on management of non-native, invasive plants in order to avoid mission “dilution” and to reduce duplication of efforts with existing initiatives, such as the Dolores River Dialogue, which is focused on recreational water flows within the river. The DRRP also chose to emphasize an issue that was a common denominator for the four Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices encompassed by the focus area, many of which had recently completed comprehensive Resource Management Plans to address other resource concerns. As invasive plant targets are met, additional goals are being considered. For example, the DRRP is currently exploring options for extended partner involvement on a number of issues, including fish habitat improvement and expanded watershed stewardship. The partnership is also looking at ways to be more engaged with efforts to implement the Colorado Water Plan through processes with Colorado Basin Roundtables, given the current focus on non-consumptive water use.

In contrast to the DRRP, ERWP and VWRC adopted a more comprehensive approach to planning at the partnerships' inception. These groups utilized TNC's Conservation Action Planning (CAP), a method that takes a holistic view to addressing watershed health. CAP uses an iterative process to analyze ecosystems of concerns, stressors impacting target ecosystems, strategies to conserve or protect ecosystems, mechanisms for gauging success, and public engagement processes. This undertaking was somewhat cumbersome and time consuming; however, it meaningfully engaged a number of diverse partners, including agency personnel working on projects tangentially related to woody invasives control. While the outcomes of CAP have changed over time, with some goals gradually diminished, this framework provided a substantive record of decision making and partnership development. As woody invasives objectives are met, this plan can be re-visited to address outstanding goals.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, GWP and the VR SWFL Collaborative adopted a more site-specific approach to planning, largely informed by outside consultants. It is the hope of the GWP that site-specific planning can be replicated on the "macro-level" to help better inform watershed priorities over the long-term. While this scaling-up approach was desired by the WFF for the Virgin River as well, site-by-site plans have done little to catalyze larger watershed engagement through comprehensive planning efforts. One interviewee stated that a sub-committee may have been more effective at addressing SWFL habitat improvement, the primary target for this initiative, as opposed to a full-partnership approach. This sentiment, along with a lack of clear leadership, may have contributed to planning processes deficiencies.

Many groups chose their scope based on the political climate in their respective watersheds. For example, the ERWP chose to focus on tasks, such as Russian olive removal and fish habitat improvement, which are relatively non-controversial. Initially, the partnership decided that it would be counterproductive to focus on controversial topics, such as grazing management and water improvement projects, in light of community dynamics.

It should be noted that while planning efforts provided a path forward for project implementation, it is of the opinion of some that many of these plans did an inadequate job of addressing the systemic reasons behind invasive species infestations and proliferation. Furthermore, many plans did not address preventative steps to ensure future re-infestations of target species. In many instances, the vector for establishment may be of greater concern than the invasive species themselves – something that most partnerships failed to recognize. In light of the complexities associated with riparian restoration, one interviewee noted that funders may want to limit investments to watersheds with free-flowing rivers, or at least ones with relatively natural hydrographs, thereby greatly improving the chances for restoration success.

While addressing the forces at play influencing invasive species establishment may be outside the realm of the partnership, acknowledgement of these issues and mention of other groups/organizations working on these problems is warranted. Work being undertaken by the ERWP to study establishment trends for Russian olive provides a good template that other groups may want to emulate, if possible.

Permitting

Incorporation of federal requirements for watershed planning and permitting from the onset is recommended in order to avoid permitting delays, improve funding opportunities, and ensure continued agency participation. Looking back, many noted that they would have benefited from going through National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation during partnership formation, as opposed to permitting projects on a case-by-case basis. In order to undertake

this task successfully, partners noted the need for federal agency leadership, in coordination with state and NGO partners. While some permitting, such as Section 7 consultation through ESA, may take considerable time up-front, this process may ultimately expedite work on a watershed-scale. Permitting may, in some instances, expand the seasonal time frame during which projects can be completed, thereby extending the work-season for contractors and crews.

While one watershed had NEPA in place prior to the creation of the partnership, this group experienced problems with permitting after upper management changed and differences in document interpretation were revealed. One interviewee suggested that rigorous examination of existing NEPA would have been prudent at the inception of the partnership to ensure ongoing compliance with federal rules and regulations. Similarly, other partnerships experienced frustration and/or delays with changes in staff at various permitting agencies. In order to create a documentable record of decision making, the importance of obtaining correspondence in writing from federal agency staff is underscored – as is the continual engagement of personnel.

Goal Setting & Programmatic Assessment

Programmatic evaluation is important for a variety of reasons, including helping partnerships to track progress towards shared goals, assess shared accountability for outcomes, as well as to adapt and improve decision-making and restoration strategies (Kleiman et al. 2000). Ample time should be dedicated to clarifying explicitly all partners' goals identified during the planning process. Furthermore, the exercise of developing measurable objectives, expectations *and* monitoring protocols to assess those goals from the very start is critical. Lacking clear guidelines on how to gauge success can hinder reporting efforts and participants' abilities to determine how their work contributes to a larger cause.

Although many partnerships were born out of a desire to address ecological goals, they quickly set their sights on social, economic, and management targets as well. Taking the time to define expectations for evaluating these targets up-front can save extensive time over the lifespan of the partnership. If partners do not push to define clear monitoring protocols for each of their goals, chances are these processes will remain unclear – a model that should not be replicated.

Funders can provide a leading voice in these discussions based on their diverse experiences in similar processes and they can help partnerships “see where they have come and asses where they need to go” (Reeve and Warren 2015, p. 55). Funders can also push grantees towards a higher level of accountability through their grant making processes and comparison of annual review plans with stated goals and objectives. Open dialogue between grantors and grantees results in more authentic discussions about restoration approaches and what is necessary to “achieve ambitious restoration goals – or in many cases to discuss whether such goals are attainable” (Ibid, p. 57).

As evidenced in several interviews, many appreciated the Foundation's insistence on goals and objectives tied to grant deliverables. While development of these metrics was, and continues to be, difficult for many partnership groups, partners appreciate the value and utility for defining progress. Having flexibility within each partnership to determine unique measures of progress is important given the differences of each watershed, not only on an ecological level, but on social and political levels as well. That being said, one funder noted that standardized monitoring would help to better convey impacts and the effectiveness of implementation across watersheds.

It is critical for each watershed to establish a process for documenting institutional memory, especially if there are leadership and/or staff transitions. At a bare minimum, policies, procedures and job

descriptions should be in place, as should clear documentation of the watershed's mission, vision, and historical restoration legacy. Committed funders can play an important role in helping partnership groups document their work by requiring annual reports or similar documentation (Reeve and Warren 2015). Likewise, regional experts, such as TC, can encourage adoption of appropriate infrastructure and best management practices for assessing and reporting goals and programmatic accomplishments.

Transitional Planning

Collaborative partnerships can transition in timely, proactive, and ameliorative ways or in less ideal circumstances, such as when organizations fail to adjust to changing circumstances (e.g. political turnover, societal pressures) to garner necessary resources and maintain an effective form of governance (Adam et al. 2007). Discussion about how, and when, a partnership will transition to meet new challenges, including long-term monitoring and maintenance, is critically important for overall partnership success. Some partnerships noted that the "end game" discussion should be included during initial planning efforts in order to determine what "success" looks like pertaining to goal attainment; having this vision in place better positions partnerships to know when they can "call it quits" or move on to new goals. Setting aside this time early on also provides space for funders to clarify their long-term commitments and vision.

While most WFF funded watersheds continue to address transition, the DRRP has taken substantive steps to outline a plan for reduced capacity, including long-term funding strategies, responsive and flexible implementation teams, updated communications plans, and streamlined governance. As part of this transition, the DRRP has made a commitment to focus on 1) monitoring and maintaining work completed to date, 2) implementing new projects that can bolster previous work, and 3) creating systems and garnering support for long-term stewardship and community engagement. The DRRP has noted that a shifting focus has resulted in engagement from a new suite of partners, based on the position of current partners within their respective agencies - and based on the organizational focus of participants. For example, the move towards increased stewardship has necessitated engagement with new agencies focused on youth education as part of their primary mission.

For some partnerships, a more substantial reconfiguration of the partnership may be necessary to transition towards achieving new goals. For example, in order for one partnership to take on issues centered on water quality and quantity, it may need a new suite of partners, along with a revised mission statement and goals. While this concept runs counter to the idea that partnership goodwill developed to date would extend to new challenges, given the political climate in the region, major changes would likely be necessary to ensure community buy-in. That being said, established governance structures and procedures would likely provide a strong framework upon which to build.

Partner Engagement

The word "inclusiveness" dominated most discussions centered on partner engagement. While partnerships need not include everyone in order to achieve stated goals, the importance of assembling a diverse team of inter-disciplinary partners and community members is critical for long-term partnership success and resiliency. This heterogeneity can also lead to effective problem solving as cultural, legal, thought, and knowledge horizons are expanded. And as noted by one interviewee, having strong-willed, even-keeled personalities can be a plus as well.

Central to partner engagement is the building of trust among participants. As most of these partnerships are non-legal entities, effective work towards shared goals relies on trust and good working relationships. Collaborative processes that include informal, face-to-face approaches to identifying

management problems, as well as site visits to promote sharing of experiences and lessons learned can help in building trust with new partners (Bentrup 2001).

While composition varies from partnership to partnership, for many, the inclusion of certain state, federal, and business partners is necessary based on the land ownership within the watershed and inherent land management goals. Full engagement from all impacted federal agencies, for example, has been essential in many instances to enable mutually beneficial work across boundaries - one of the basic desired outcomes from a collaborative effort. As some agencies have experienced significant turnover, the importance of initiating and/or maintaining continued engagement and communication with upper echelon staff is vital.

In some groups, such as the DRRP and the ERWP, the BLM, for example, has become a backbone of these partnerships. In addition to managing land, actively participating in subcommittees, and providing funding, the federal agency is always looking for ways to champion projects on a local, regional, and national level - an approach that benefits the partnerships, as well as the agency.

The need to respect agency process and bureaucracy should be underscored; however, immediate engagement may not be possible due to internal timelines and processes. Partnership organizers cannot “force people to jump in with both feet”, and many may also be slow to engage if they are not seeing immediate accomplishments.

Private Landowners

In addition to reaching out to potentially affected agencies and NGOs, the importance of cultivating community champions, including both small and large landowners, was underscored. While working with numerous private landowners can be more time consuming than working with large land management agencies, the benefits can be far reaching. Private landowners can create a “groundswell” for the partnership within neighboring communities and can help to organically bring along other agencies, such as Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW), and Extension agencies - groups that work squarely in the private lands realm. These agencies staff personnel with a high level of expertise that can provide beneficial contracting templates, implementation expertise, and well-established monitoring protocols.

Working with NRCS can prove a definite challenge, given their program structuring and the cost of implementing some improvements on private land. Specific challenges include: finding willing landowners with enough capital to carry out high-cost reimbursement-based programs; the willingness of NRCS Field Office staff to prioritize and implement conservation action planning and restoration work in a timely fashion; the limited capacity of NRCS; and the very specific criteria used by NRCS to determine project work eligible for funding.

Having a dedicated private lands liaison can be invaluable in watersheds that have a high percentage of private lands. For example, in the ERWP, GSEP employs a Private Land Project Coordinator that organizes woody invasives removal and retreatment on private land. This position has been critical to ensuring clear communication between the NRCS and other agencies, landowners, contractors, and the partnership. This model has been highly effective for VWRC as well; this partnership employs a Community Outreach and Development Director that works extensively with private landowners in the watershed.

Some regret missed opportunities to engage private landowners and community members prior to working with more mission dominated local and regional NGOs. For example, in one watershed, partnership representatives believe that initial engagement from one NGO limited involvement from the community, due to long-standing mistrust of this organization. Given the partnership's commitment to inclusion and diversity, limiting this group's participation was not an option at the time of formation, and at this point, exclusion of this group would unlikely gain traction from skeptical community members.

Community

The ease and extent of community engagement varies from watershed to watershed and is influenced by a number of social and economic factors. While engagement in some areas is limited by a simple dearth of residents, engagement in other areas may be due to deeper seeded issues, such as an inherent mistrust of outside groups. Looking back, some interview participants stated that early community presentations may have alleviated misconceptions about the partnership and its intended goals for the area. Likewise, the meetings may have empowered locals to become more engaged with the partnership - helping to structure goals and objectives relevant to different sectors of the population. Despite several creative attempts at engaging the community, input has been limited to date, and in instances where residents have become involved, some feel that they do not have a strong voice at the table.

On the other end of the spectrum, a bit too much community input can lead to mission drift and a watering down of goals, based on changing community interests. Having well defined organizational goals and objectives prior to more extensive community outreach and engagement may be important to ensure input and comments are relevant and productive.

Youth and Veteran Crews

The Foundation's emphasis on employing disadvantaged populations, including sectors of the young-adult population and veteran groups, has been seen as extremely beneficial for all partnerships. For the DRRP, for example, focus on the inclusion of youth corps spurred the creation of valuable social goals for the partnership; these social goals, in turn, opened the door to further conversation about the importance of community engagement, something that is now a core tenant for the partnership. This engagement has been a key way to draw in other funders for restoration work.

As another example, in the Verde Valley the veteran crews have become strong advocates for the value of restoration work within their local watershed – and many have benefited on a personal level from this type of employment. Many veterans have been able to move from the streets into permanent housing thanks to their work with VWRC and some have even discovered a new love for learning, including one veteran who is now a self-proclaimed “botany nerd”. As one drawback to this program, some have enjoyed working with VWRC so much that they have yet to move on to other jobs – an underlying goal of this program.

Although there has been some concern from the Foundation that not enough emphasis has been placed on local hires, and the concomitant impact on local communities, given the isolated nature of the target watersheds, “local” is a relative proposition.

In a 2015 study conducted to assess the impact of river restoration work undertaken by youth conservation corps members, significant growth for participants on measures of teamwork, leadership and “grit”, or perseverance and passion for long-term goals, was determined (Duerden & Edwards 2015). Unfortunately, this study found no significant difference for changes in participants' and

comparisons' interest in obtaining additional education, confidence in getting a job, or interest in pursuing a conservation related career.

However, it is clear, through interaction with corps members and based on partner interviews, that corps members are developing diverse skill sets that may help with future employment. For example, thanks to their work on river restoration efforts, many corps members are now certified sawyers and pesticide applicators. Many others have also been trained on the use of tablets for data collection related to monitoring efforts.

The corps network has worked to develop career pathways that encourage continued development of skills and knowledge. As an example, it is not uncommon for corps member to move into crew leader or intern positions, and many have assumed jobs with partnerships or as corps field staff. Several others have taken positions with the BLM as interns or seasonal staff.

Capacity funding from the Foundation has encouraged innovation and program development within the corps network as partnerships have grown. The "strike team" model developed in the last several years provides an example of the versatility employed by crews to meet needs for monitoring, maintenance, and revegetation as overall partnership capacity wanes and as secondary weeds and retreatment needs become higher priority.

While there are drawbacks to employing at-risk populations, such as high-turnover and a consistent need for on-going training, exposing underserved communities to landscapes that may have been previously inaccessible to them is invaluable and likely a life-changing experience for many participants – one that will resonate throughout the West and the natural resources field.

Grantors

Establishing clear expectations about grantors' roles and specific goals for a watershed partnership effort is important, especially when foundations that are dedicated to long-term funding, such as the WFF, are at the table. Strong engagement from a designated Program Officer or other representative from the onset of planning processes can help to facilitate open dialogue and ensure that the funder's goals for the process are incorporated at the outset. This early engagement also sets the stage for defining expectations on the length of engagement, and opens the door for early development of a long-term "weaning plan" as substantial, consistent support is withdrawn or substantially limited over time.

The timeframe for funder engagement will vary in each watershed based on the complexity of the issues being addressed - as well as grantor interest and capacity; however, long-term engagement from foundational funders can lead to higher levels of organizational stability, comprehensive strategic planning, more effective monitoring, and a greater level of transparency between grantors and grantees (Reeve and Warren 2015). Reeve and Warren determined that 10 years was the minimum time frame required to build functional partnership operations and the community momentum needed to sustain restoration efforts. In fact, based on the amount of restoration needs addressed in a survey of a dozen partnerships over a 10-year period, the authors determined that engagement from a suite of partners, including funders, may require upwards of 50-years to achieve lasting impact. As evidenced by many partners, they experienced first-hand the difficulties of riparian restoration and how a long-term approach is necessary to achieve lasting success.

However, this is not to suggest that a shorter time frame and/or funding commitment is without merit; there are several ways that grantors can play an important role in supporting a partnership, including development of staff and/or resources. As noted by Warren et al. (2016, p. 7), “(a) supporting institution need not possess the capacity and expertise to deliver the full range of needed services but could retain an array of trusted consultants for specific support as needed”.

While the WFF was consistently clear in its time horizons for engagement, some partnerships expressed concern that funding is being substantially reduced before the “heavy-lifting” is complete. This could potentially impact completion of initial woody invasives treatment, despite efforts to raise additional funds. Furthermore, as supported by Reeve and Warren, many partnerships continue to be challenged by their capacity to grow funding portfolios that can support partnership operations through private funding – development of which requires significant investments in time and expertise.

Accountability

The majority of the partners interviewed did not have any issues with partner accountability, due in large part to a high level of trust. By and large, participants are actively engaged and collectively contribute to the success of the partnership. As one participant stated, “we rely on passion as a motivator, and hope that commitment and follow-through are resulting”. Partnership coordinators and leadership teams have helped to promote accountability, as has the creation of other subcommittees focused on specific tasks. Clear notes and action items from partnership meetings and subcommittee chairs have also been key in holding partners to stated commitments. Taking the time to show appreciation, while showcasing action and innovation, has also been helpful – as has a bit of “friendly nagging”.

In the rare cases where partners are not upholding their end of the bargain, some have noted that they lack clear channels for ensuring commitments are met, especially when leadership is diffuse. In instances where there is direct supervision, managers are often located several hours away from ongoing project work, complicating timely decision making. Given the delicate balancing act played out in many large-scale collaborative efforts whose work is based on social capital, reciprocity, and good working relationships, confronting a partner about their shortcomings, or those of its employees, can also be politically and socially challenging.

Some have suggested a need to re-address their partnership’s mission, expectations, and communication channels on a regular basis to ensure continued engagement and accountability, especially from field staff and contractors, which often change from season to season. This could be accomplished at annual meetings and crew training events. Substantive oversight from partnership staff, including development of explicit contracts, has been useful for communicating expectations to contractors, many of which may be new to river restoration work.

On the private landowner front, many partnerships are re-evaluating their model of engagement to ensure continued stewardship and accountability. In many instances, partnerships paid for 100% of initial woody invasives removal work on private land and expected little in return from landowners, aside from property access. Cost-share and fee-for-service agreements are now being drafted to have landowners put some “skin-in-the-game”. This approach is working well for the ERWP, where a number of landowners are now providing payment to GSEP for retreatment of Russian olive on their land.

DRRP has worked with other organizations, such as PFW, NRCS, and BLM to help share responsibility for landowner coordination and accountability. Through development of creative funding approaches, the

partnership has utilized tools that allow federal funding to be put to use on private lands – along with technical assistance and oversight from federal employees.

VWRC, which sees private landowner engagement as one of their key successes, has also moved towards a cost-share model. Up until recently, VWRC did not require any input from private landowners prior to beginning work on their land. VWRC is now emphasizing cost-share contributions during their first contact with potential landowners. As part of this effort, VWRC has started communicating the “true-cost” of restoration work on private lands, including VWRC staff time, crew time, and treatment costs. It is their hope that landowners will feel more inclined to contribute once they understand the inputs necessary to successfully implement restoration work.

Changing Roles

A key partnership participant stated “regardless of your planning, there will be a change in partners and someone will have to pick up the slack”; change is a given in these partnerships, “don’t let that panic you”. As in any long-term relationship, accountability and open, honest communication are key in maintaining harmony between partners - and this is no different in the world of watershed restoration.

While change is inevitable, timely communication about expected personnel changes and/or organizational levels of commitment helps facilitate necessary adjustments and ensures commitments to other partners, including funders, are fulfilled. Reference to roles outlined in a MOU or PA can help guide a path forward for new agency staff and/or management.

Leadership & Facilitation

Many groups stressed the importance of having a *consistent* and *dedicated* partnership representative(s) or leader(s), working in tandem with a leadership team. The representative puts a “face” on the partnership and serves as the point-person for both internal and external communication, which can be especially helpful when conducting outreach to elected officials and community members. Hiring and appointing a partnership coordinator early on may have benefited each of the profiled groups, especially those without non-profit status.

Unlike some watershed partnership groups in other parts of the country, the groups profiled here do not typically hire an “official” partnership coordinator; rather representative NGOs, such as GSEP, FVRG, and TC, provide leadership and representation through designated staff.

While not a necessity, employment of the coordinator by an NGO, as opposed to a governmental agency, can be helpful on the managerial side of things, especially when it comes to applying for grants and administering funding. The need for local leadership, and reliance on professionals in the watershed, was also stressed. This point was especially salient in the Virgin River, where some participants felt that local knowledge was usurped when outside council was brought in to help coordinate restoration activities.

The leadership team structure, which is referred to by different names based on the partnership, has been a largely successful model for most groups. While it is often times difficult to make decisions without central leadership, these teams have been able to successfully navigate complex, collective decision making through consistent and open communication that promotes guidance and accountability. One interviewee said that this model of decision making has been so successful for his watershed group that he has decided to employ it in other related ventures.

Membership on leadership teams varies by partnership. In the case of VWRC's Steering Committee, members are often handpicked by the chair of FVRG. ERWP's Coordinating Committee (CC), on the other hand, is comprised of rotating sub-committee chairs and some major landowners. This format has allowed the CC to focus more on the partnership's needs, rather than being driven solely by strong-willed personalities, as seemed to be the case when an Executive Committee was used for decision making. As noted by one CC member, decisions made by this group are rarely challenged by the larger partnership group; this may be due to the fact that the leadership is seen as diverse and equitable.

The ERWP holds an annual CC retreat that is viewed as critical; this format allows for deeper discussion about key issues and provides face-to-face time for conversations that are often relegated to conference calls. Despite being two days, some noted that this event could be even longer, in order to more fully cover agenda topics.

The GWP attempted to implement leadership models employed by other WFF funded watershed partnerships, however, this group slowly "withered" away; this may have resulted from increased involvement from hired staff or due to increased involvement from GWP's board of directors.

Facilitation

The most consistent message conveyed during the interviews was the sustained need for professional, third party, neutral facilitation. Several noted that facilitation has been instrumental in their partnership's initial and on-going planning and achievements, if not one of the main keys to their success. This point was especially salient for watershed partnerships lacking a designated watershed coordinator, as the facilitator has been able to hold partners accountable to stated goals and objectives. Facilitators can also provide legitimacy to the partnership's work.

Many noted that it was important to identify a skilled facilitator during the partnership's inception, especially in cases where the partnership was striving to recruit partners skeptical about the group's goals and objectives. Often times, facilitators can help ease the transition for new members by providing pertinent background information along with introductions to other group members.

The need for *neutral* facilitation was emphasized by several and many noted that it is helpful if a facilitator is well-versed in conflict resolution skills, especially if the partnership is moving in a new direction or taking on potentially contentious issues. In the case of one partnership, the facilitator's skill in navigating a potentially hostile situation quickly de-escalated the perceived threat.

The importance of raising funds to cover the cost of effective facilitation is of high priority for many watersheds, and in instances where fundraising hasn't been successful to meet these costs, such as in the case of the Virgin River, the frequency of meetings and symposia has been negatively impacted.

One interview participant, noting that it may be difficult to sustain on-going facilitator support, said that it would be useful to her to start learning facilitator skills as a benefit to the partnership. While a level of neutrality and objectivity would be lost, the garnered skills could be helpful in conducting productive meetings. This is a model that other partnerships are pursuing as well.

Funding

The expectation that partnerships be based on "shared funding, shared responsibility", from both private and government organizations, should be created during the partnership's establishment; otherwise, fund development tends to fall on a few organizations. For those partnerships that are loose networks of partners fundraising together, having a point person or central clearinghouse that tracks,

manages and shares financial information with the group is key to ensuring all budgets are managed effectively, fundraising takes place in a timely fashion, and funding gaps are anticipated and met.

The creation of a funding subcommittee can help to establish both expectations for the group and a clear plan for how the team can work together strategically to acquire and administer funds. Clear tracking methods, along with creative shared-funding agreements, are often useful outcomes of these committees. As an example, the DRRP funding subcommittee, which met monthly during heavy project implementation, was represented by all grant managers and administrators. Frequent meetings allowed for open communication regarding new funding requests and reporting requirements, and with overlapping representatives from the implementation committee, context was provided on how funds were being spent on the ground; likewise input from the funding committee helped to frame projects within a bigger picture.

Without a cadre of willing partners, however, the creation of a funding committee may be redundant, and as noted by one individual, lack of full participation by other organizations may leave the lead organization up to financial scrutiny.

While NGOs necessarily shoulder the majority of grant writing, based on funding sources' eligibility requirements and the need to diversify funding portfolios through private philanthropic giving, federal and state agencies do play a critical role in most groups. As a prime example, the BLM has entered into a long-term Assistance Agreement with the DRRP to help fund capacity, implementation, and monitoring and maintenance. Additionally, the BLM has worked with the DRRP to support interns, which are also paid for through this agreement. This arrangement affords the partnership a degree of flexibility that some grant funds do not permit.

Although, some interviewees from other partnerships expressed frustration about the lack of funding committed to restoration work by federal and state agencies, especially considering the amount of work being conducted on their land with outside funding. If starting a partnership anew, early engagement with federal and state partners about the importance of funding this work, over the long-term, is encouraged.

Foundation Funding

It goes without saying that WFF funding dramatically elevated the performance of the ERWP, VRCP, GWP, and DRRP; these groups would not be where they are today without the Foundation's continued, and generous support for capacity, implementation, monitoring, and maintenance. While the Virgin River partners received the least amount of funding, the support for site-specific planning was substantial and impactful.

The ability to utilize funding on lands administered by a variety of stakeholders, including private landowners, has been important for achieving restoration success. WFF's dual emphasis on in-stream flow work in select watersheds has also advanced broader restoration goals, in addition to woody invasives targets.

Furthermore, WFF funding has created unprecedented leveraging opportunities formerly unimaginable by many of these groups. In addition to providing private dollars with few matching restrictions, WFF's participation has brought other funders to the table, including many from within the WFF's sphere of influence.

All partnerships noted the importance of WFF's focus on "people", not just projects. Ongoing institutional capacity building, through support of various NGOs, has been critical to the overall success of the partnerships' efforts and goal delivery. Several organizations and their programmatic focal areas have grown by leaps and bounds since receiving WFF funding – as has the capacity, knowledge, and training of associated staff and work crews. Outside of WFF's funding, capacity funding remains one of the more difficult aspects of this work to fund, closely behind funding for research and maintenance.

Managing large amounts of funding was not without its challenges for many groups, especially those with limited business acumen. Development of a business plan at the onset, describing how the partnership would allocate, track, and leverage a large amount of funding, would have been helpful and could have helped to reduce some perceived conflict between grantees. For example, several WFF grant recipients received funding from the Foundation to work towards similar goals in each watershed. However, it was not necessarily clear to each recipient, and the larger watershed as a whole, how each group was to work synergistically at the outset of engagement.

In order to maximize and sustain investments in capacity, one interviewee stated that future investors should look to well-connected and well-established groups that are part of a larger mosaic of partners and potential funders, both locally and regionally. Without this connection, funds may not be appropriately leveraged, and other funders may see little return on their investments as funding as projects are not maximized to their fullest potential.

New funders of restoration should, as demonstrated by the WFF, consider building funding for monitoring, planning, project management, and capacity activities into their programs since these components of restoration work are integral to ensuring the implementation work being done is consistent, effective and necessary. Without adequate and appropriate monitoring, practitioners are unable to adapt their methods to the changing realities on the ground and the investments in project work could be wasted. Without proper planning and oversight, restoration activities may not be sequenced appropriately, adequately funded or follow best practices. General operating costs should not be prohibited activities in restoration funding programs as these activities are necessary for successful work and are not extraneous to implementation.

Fundraising in particular is essential to ensuring a project can continue as scheduled. By prohibiting these activities funders run the risk of funding one-time projects that will not have the same level of sustainability as projects with an ongoing, and diversified funding streams. Funding general operating costs can be an effective way to ensure that grant monies are maximally leveraged.

Funder Communication

Clear and consistent communication from a funder on its grant reporting requirements can help to facilitate timely communication of information from partnership participants to grantor. Standardized reporting formats and guidelines are helpful, as are streamlined reporting guidelines, which minimize reporting burdens on grantees.

As noted above, active engagement from grantors is crucial for not only communicating expectations to a partnership, but for relaying challenges faced by each partnership back to a funder's board. Employing a representative with in-depth knowledge of the restoration field can also be immensely helpful in problem solving and decision making. For heavily invested grantors, participation throughout the evolution of the partnership should be paramount. While attendance at each quarterly or semi-annual

meeting is not realistic, these face-to-face meetings provide opportunities for tactically important discussions, whether out in the field, or over a beer – and should remain a priority for program staff.

Networking, Outreach, & Communication

The importance of continued networking and relationship building was discussed by several partnerships. Having a regional coordinating body, such as TC, has been seen as a positive for many groups in helping to provide communication between groups. One interviewee from the Verde Watershed said that attending TC’s annual conference has been a real positive for their work. The conference has “opened VWRC up to a whole new world”, allowing for substantive lesson sharing between watershed partnerships. This person also noted the role that the Cross Watershed Network has played in providing continued learning opportunities. Formal and informal cross-visits between partnerships have been instrumental in improving best practices as diverse partners interact and as different projects are showcased.

While in its nascency, the “sister watershed” model being practiced by GWP and VWRC has helped to cut down on redundancy and capacity needs. For example, a joint training was recently held for conservation corps crew members that provide services in both watersheds; GWP and VWRC staff helped to coordinate and lead this event. Continued improvements in communication could help to strengthen this particular relationship.

WFF capacity support has been instrumental in making strides on that outreach front; however, effective outreach remains a challenge, especially given the fact that many of these groups lack a dedicated outreach coordinator or communications specialist. While one group did hire a short-term outreach coordinator, this person was not included in discussions where major decisions were made, nor was he often out in the field. Looking back, better integration of this position would have greatly increased the reach and importance of this role. The hiring of outside consultants to help with targeted branding and outreach strategies has helped to fill the void for some partnerships and has resulted in visually engaging marketing materials, including websites, annual reports, placards, and newsletters. Development of marketing tools early on, if capacity permits, is suggested.

The importance of tailoring messaging should be emphasized, as evidenced by the storytelling work that the WFF is currently funding. This project, which takes important steps to elevate the importance of riparian restoration work, takes into consideration key audiences impacted by restoration and provides tangible examples of engaged constituencies. For example, a one-page hand out for a private landowner may be very different than one intended for agency personnel. Landowners, for example, may be more concerned more about property values, flood and fire protection, and increased access, than improvements to critical habitat for endangered birds afforded by restoration work.

Measuring Success

Based on the relative difficulty of acquiring specific monitoring and assessment funds, the recommendation to include monitoring as a necessary component of implementation was put forth. Concomitantly, as noted earlier, the need to clearly define monitoring objectives and appropriate protocols early on in partnership development was emphasized. While partners have maintained fluidity in their approach to measuring success, having customizable templates in place for assessing goals and metrics is essential. Allocating and encouraging ample time and discussion for the development of these procedures is recommended, as in engagement of qualified agency and other NGO staff. Outside contractors may be appropriate in some instances, especially when specialized knowledge is required for robust data collection and analysis.

The Foundation has played a critical role in its support of systems development, such as the geodatabase designed by University of Utah. This geodatabase provides a common language and platform for discussing and documenting restoration work completed and restoration outcomes over time. Prior to its development, there was not a common language for measuring on-the-ground accomplishments. While the completion of the system is still pending and uploading data to this system has been time consuming, partnerships now have a much improved picture of work being completed in real time. In hindsight, many interviewees, including funders, wished that this tool had been in place during the creation of each partnership.

While many partnerships have access to support from agency data and GIS specialists, the sheer volume of data that must be managed for these large-scale projects can be overwhelming; as such committed GIS assistance is recommended. Time allocation for extensive training is also critical when implementing new technologies; this is especially imperative when data are being collected by field-staff, which may change on a seasonal basis. As field collected data are now being directly integrated into GIS, it is especially important that for staff to be able to trouble shoot issues that may arise in remote locations.

Creative methodologies may need to be utilized in order to gauge durable socio-economic metrics, and continued partnerships with groups, such as the conservation corps, are important for assessing long-term impacts. Capacity for tracking conservation corps alumni remains an outstanding funding need, as does the effort to develop career pathway awareness for youth participants.

Conclusions & Additional Resources

Riparian restoration at the watershed-scale is an inherently difficult undertaking that truly requires a village in order to realize measurable success. Ideally, the models employed, and the lessons learned, by the profiled partnership groups can provide valuable information to future watershed partnership participants, be they grantors or grantees. While these groups will undoubtedly continue to learn, refining their practices and procedures as they mature, the collective knowledge garnered over the last several years is immense and can serve as a foundation for nascent groups looking to learn from their predecessors in this ever-evolving field.

Readers are encouraged to reference articles specific to the DRRP (Oppenheimer et al. 2014) and the ERWP (Spence and Whitham 2015). Both of these articles describe in greater detail the genesis of these partnerships, as well as their specific lessons learned, pitfalls, and successes.

The paper entitled: *Are we Doing our Best to Restore Watersheds – Lessons from a 10-Year Watershed Restoration Strategy* (Reeve and Warren 2015) presents solutions to common challenges identified by the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) across six western states and 15 watershed partnerships – and may be of specific interest to funders, as well as practitioners. A related document, *Reimagining Watershed Restoration: A Call for New Investment and Support Structures for Greater Resiliency and Longterm Impact* (Warren et al. 2016) also provides key recommendations to funders for maximizing investments.

Appendix: Partnership Survey Questions & List of Interviewees

Partnership Survey Questions

I. Partnership Development:

1. If you could start your watershed partnership anew today, what would you do differently based on what you've learned to date in terms of partnership development and engaging partners(e.g. I would have included a certain partner earlier on; I would have been more consistent in messaging).
2. What has been the best way to include new people into your group (onboarding training, etc.)?
3. Do you have a guiding document such as an MOU or Charter Agreement that helps to set expectations? If so, what takeaways might you have for someone creating a new partnership about whether/how to create such a document?
4. Did your partnership talk about its end goal from the start? If so, what did that look like?
 - a. If not, is that something you are doing now, or have you considered how to have this discussion?

II. Planning & Goal Setting:

1. Describe your planning processes done to date. Would you employ your planning mechanisms again (e.g. TNC's CAP process)?
 - a. If not, what approach would you take?
2. Do you feel like you have defined goals and action items that partners can buy into?
 - a. If not, what would you change about how your plan is currently written?
3. How have you planned for transition? Do you feel like you addressed transition at the correct time (not too early, nor too late)?

III. Leadership & Communications:

1. Describe the leadership of the partnership. What attributes of leadership have been most successful/challenging for your partnership?
2. How do you hold partners accountable?
3. What are your biggest communication challenges between leaders/partners? How have you worked to improve communication?

IV. Funding:

1. How has funding from the Walton Family Foundation allowed you to meet or exceed your various goals?
 - a. Can you describe the impact that this type of funding has had on your program/staff development?
2. For foundations wanting to play a similar role in helping new partnerships develop and grow, what are some key considerations or guidance you might offer that foundation?
3. Can you talk about how you have diversified your funding and how this has helped you to achieve your partnerships' goals?
4. What are your ongoing funding issues?

V. Implementation:

1. What do you see as they key successes in your watershed?
 - a. Please include successes related to how you helped create, build, nurture, and sustain your watershed partnership group (e.g. we have made great strides in communication since our inception due to the formation of a Core Team).

VI. Monitoring & Evaluation of Success:

1. Can you talk about how you track progress (e.g. GIS framework, monitoring reports)?
2. Do you think your monitoring and evaluation criteria are providing you with a complete picture of the work you've undertaken? If not, what would you do differently?
3. How do you track socioeconomic metrics/goals?
4. If you could set up a monitoring and/or tracking system again knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?

List of Interviewees

| | Name | Title | Organization |
|--|----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Escalante River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) | Noel Poe | Executive Director | Grand Staircase Escalante Partners |
| | Kristina Waggoner | | Grand Staircase Escalante Partners |
| | Linda Whitham | Central Canyonlands Program Manager | The Nature Conservancy |
| | John Spence | Chief Scientist and Terrestrial Natural Resources Branch Chief | Glen Canyon National Recreation Area |
| | Sue Fearon | Private Lands Project Coordinator | Grand Staircase Escalante Partners |
| Gila Watershed Partnership of Arizona (GWP) | Shawn Stone | Restoration Specialist | GWP |
| | Rachel More-Hla | Program Coordinator | GWP |
| Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC) | Chip Norton | President | Friends of the Verde River Green |
| | Anna Schrenk | Program Coordinator | VWRC |
| Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) | Daniel Oppenheimer | Restoration Coordinator | Tamarisk Coalition |
| | Marsha Porter Norton | Facilitator | |
| | Stacy Beagh | Executive Director | Tamarisk Coalition |
| | Mike Wight | Corps River Restoration Director | Southwest Conservation Corps |
| Virgin River Watershed | Deborah Campbell | Facilitator | Virgin River Conservation Partnership |
| | Curt Deuser | Supervisory Restoration Biologist, Exotic Plant Management Team | National Park Service |
| Walton Family Foundation (WFF) | Margaret Bowman | Former Environment Program Deputy Director | |
| | Tim Carlson | Former consultant | |
| | Peter Skidmore | Program Officer | WFF |

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