



# WHITE RIVER PARTNERSHIP

Fall 2023 Meeting Notes

Thursday November 2, 2023, 12:00-1:30

**12:00** Welcome and introductions

**In attendance:**

John Leary, Shannon Wadas, Rusty Lloyd (RiversEdge West); Jordan McMahon, Holly Mitchell, Roger Bankert (BLM VFO); Mary Taylor (BLM WRFO); Mike Partlow (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources), Mandi Etheridge (Town of Meeker); Cassie Mellon (BLM Utah); Jennifer O’Hearon (Rio Blanco County Commissioner); Deirdre Macnab (White River Alliance, Rancher); Jake Deslauriers, Ben Borgmann-Winter (Utah Conservation Corps); Jennifer Wellman (The Nature Conservancy); Alden Vandenbrink (Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District); Tildon Jones (Upper Colorado River Recovery Program); Halie Cunningham (Yampatika); Jo Foster (BLM); Cody Perry (National Parks Conservation Association); Tristan McGee (White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts); Tom Fresques (BLM Colorado State Office); Phaedra Budy (Utah State University); David Graf (USFWS); Stephen Hampton (BLM Colorado Northwest District)

**12:10** WRP background

- Mission
- REW’s role:
  - Coordinate efforts to improve riparian health
  - Support ecological, management and socioeconomic goals
  - Improve communication and collaboration
    - Identify opportunities to leverage funding and share resources/expertise
    - Forum for project planning and collaboration

**12:15** Project and Partner Updates

**12:15** White River Management Plan (David Graf, USFWS)

- Phased approach- focus on Phate 1 depletions
- Describes significance of the White River to listed fish
- Evaluates effects of existing and Phase 1 depletions

- Evaluates effects of climate change scenarios
- Flow recommendations in critical habitat
- Identifies management actions
- New: Kenney Reservoir feasibility analysis, flow spike and sediment release experiment, identify flow protection strategies that are physically and legally available
- Approved by planning team in May

**12:30** Yampatika Youth Water Education Program (Halie Cunningham, Yampatika)

- Halie's position primarily funded through the YWG Roundtable
- Environmental education to support the CO Water Plan
- In- class programming, field trips, classroom resources, expert speaker coordination, teacher resources

**12:35** The Nature Conservancy (Jennifer Wellman, TNC)

- TNC has been working with the Recovery Program and many other partners in various capacities
- Recently formed a partnership with the BLM through Aquatic Resources, Sage Brush Sea Initiative, 5-year project, hiring a new Colorado Restoration Project Manager, looking to hire someone with experience in process based restoration
  - [Job link](#)
- Hosted a workshop in coordination with REW, American Rivers, White River Alliance, and others focused on process based techniques

**12:40** Restoration Projects in Colorado (John Leary, REW)

- Restoration project west of Rangely
- Seedball project in coordination with Yampatika, BLM, 4H
  - Made about 1000 seedballs
  - Having some germination success
  - Ongoing monitoring happening on the site
- Work on private land to help with erosion issues, planted willows
- Yellow Creek- working with the Conservation District
  - Dealing with very large tamarisk and washed out roads
  - Planted 40 native plants
- Beetle herding workshop in partnership with the Palisade Insectary
- Going to be working in the Big Trujillo area
  - Going to utilize both conservation corps and local contractors- share any contractor information with John

**12:50** Restoration Projects in Utah (Jake Deslauriers, Utah Conservation Corps)

- This spring started working on WRI funded lower White River project sites

- Did a trip this spring to try and find access via floating river which proved challenging so switched to road access
- 63 acres of habitat improved at walk in sections from Bonaza bridge, down
  - Treatments were primarily point bar treatments, removing all vegetation in hopes of allowing the river to meander
  - Treatments very dependent on waterflow
- Looking to do a new project proposal through WRI
- Received a NFWF grant in partnership with REW, BLM, ...

**1:00** Process-Based Restoration Workshop (Deirdre Macnab, White River Alliance)

- 2 day workshop with 40 people from 7 counties
- Beaver dam analogs are good for streams that flow year round

**1:05** Other updates

**1:10** Next steps for White River Partnership

- What is working well?
  - Meeting twice a year or quarterly
- What can be improved?
- Opportunities for projects and collaborations
- Other thoughts
  - John will send out information on a potential float trip and can share out email list for partners
  - Do we have data on how fast tamarisk and Russian olive are colonizing to look at future efforts and measure how we are doing?
    - REW has looked at this on some level in the past in the CO River Basin, but we probably need to check back into this

**1:30** Adjourn