



RiversEdge West

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE

Taking Riparian Restoration Efforts to the Appropriate Scale

Shannon Wadas, Associate Director

An aerial photograph showing a complex network of winding rivers and streams in a reddish-brown, textured landscape. The water bodies are a vibrant blue-green color, contrasting sharply with the surrounding land. The rivers meander across the terrain, creating a dense web of waterways.

Scale: A Meaningful Approach

Geography:

- Western United States

RiversEdge West envisions a network of healthy riverside ecosystems throughout the Western U.S., benefiting native species, wildlife, people, and communities



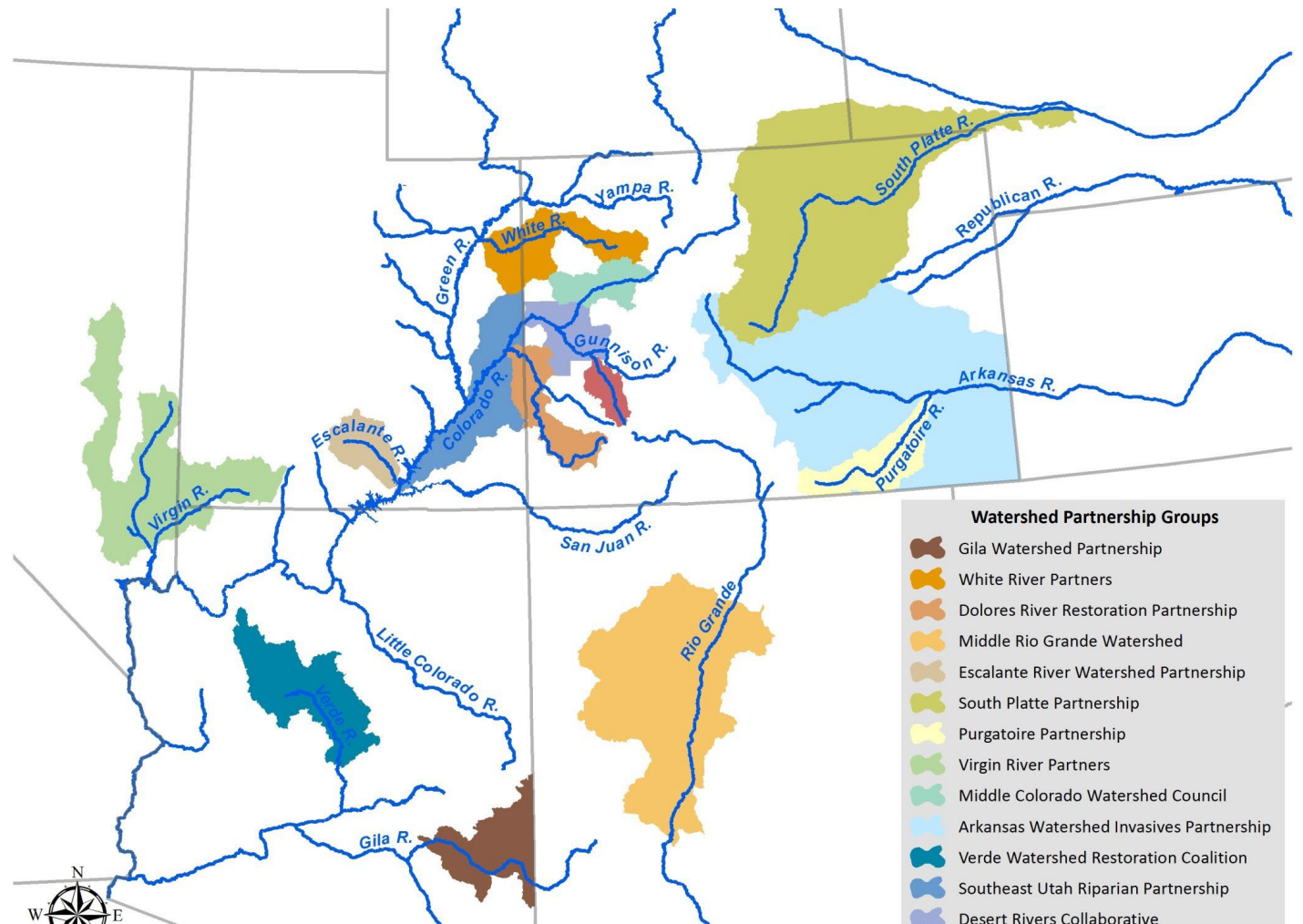
Broad Level Support

Collaboration Evolution:

➤ Staff in:

- Grand Junction, Colorado
- NW and SE Colorado
- Arizona

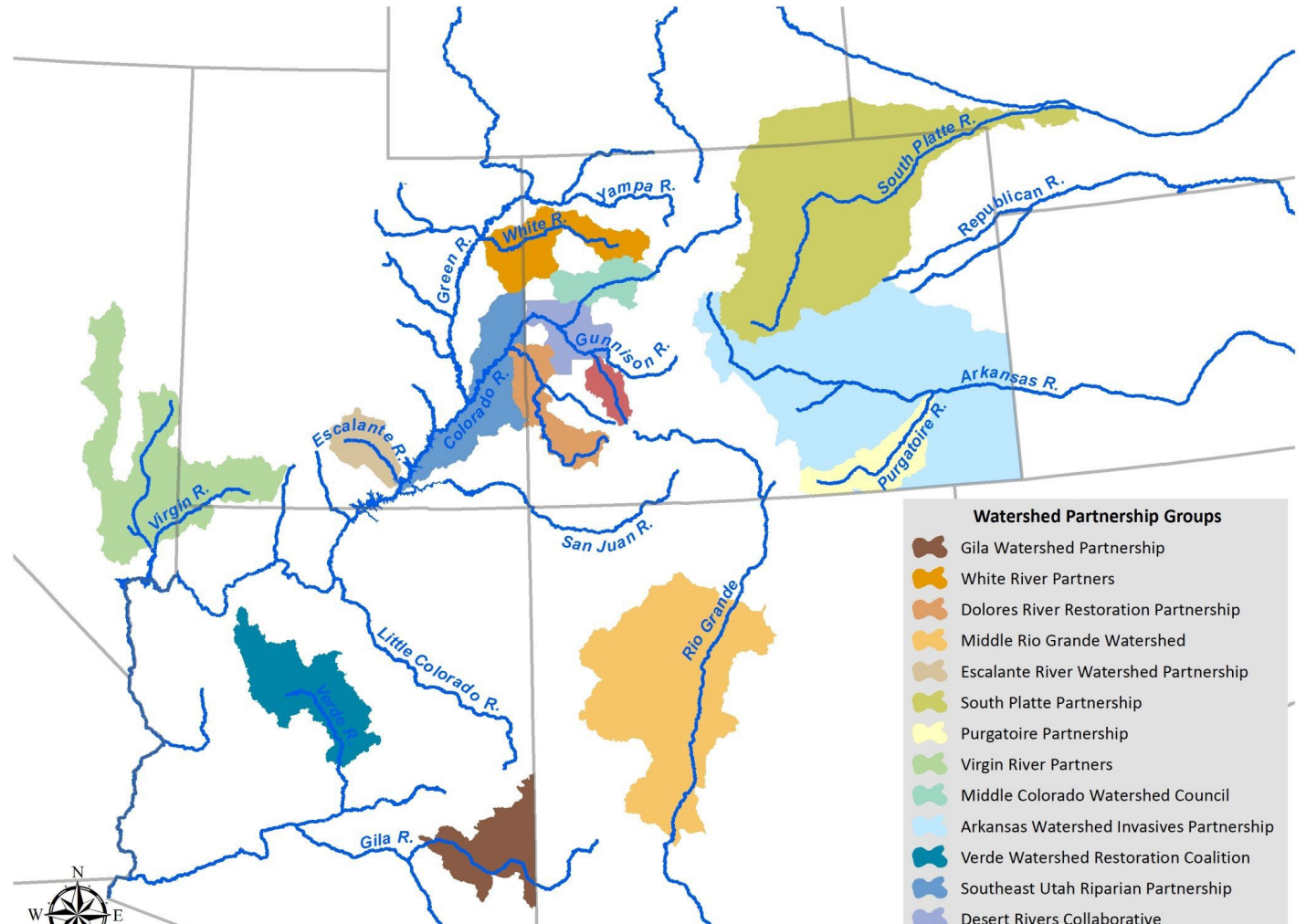
➤ Mighty 9 in Grand Junction



Broad Level Support

Education Evolution:

- Annual rotating conference
- Biennial local conference
- Annual place-based workshops/cross visits across the SW
- Biennial workshops



Evolution a Function of Change...

In Partnerships:

- Partnership sustainability
- Goals were achieved
 - Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative



Key Take Away:

Celebrate success and fill gaps appropriately

Current strategies:

- Topic specific workshops
- Technical assistance as needed
- Online resource center



Evolution a Function of Change...

In Funding:

- Funder priorities change
- Funder fatigue
- State and watershed scale focus



Key Take Away:

Stay nimble and ask the hard questions

Current Strategies:

- Reassess how to maintain core values and carry out the organizational mission
- Diversify funds / collaborative fundraising
- Long term planning for sustainability



Evolution a Function of Change...

In Social
Dynamics:

- Mode of operations
- Flexibility a must not an option



Key Take Away:

Continuous assessment of relevancy

Current Strategies:

- Stay competitive within the workforce
- Experimentation
- Uphold the value of in person connections but take advantage of technology when appropriate

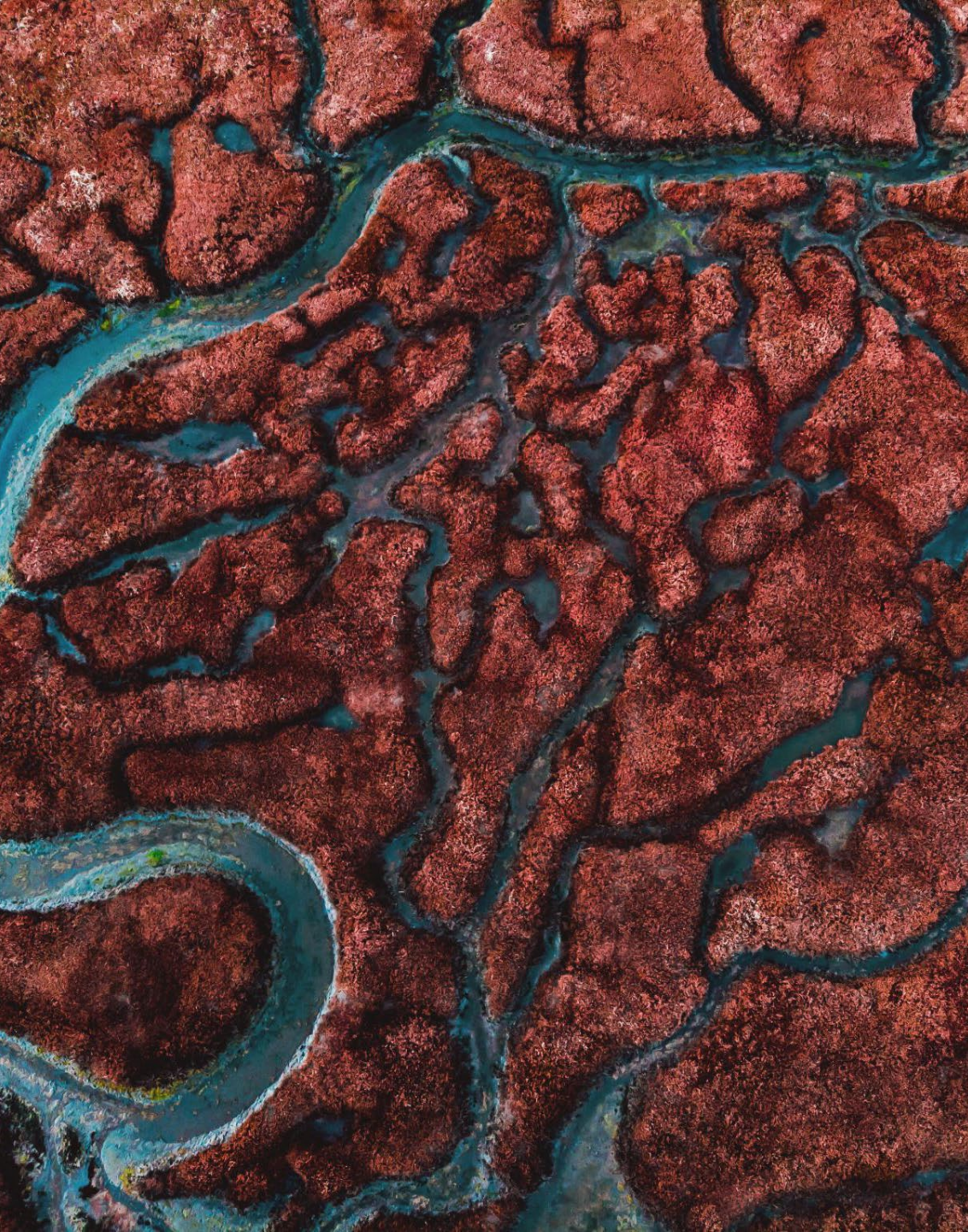




Staying true to our values:

~ promoting **engagement** and **collaboration** among **diverse** groups of people to restore the **quality** and **ecological integrity** of riparian lands critical to the **well-being** of communities ~



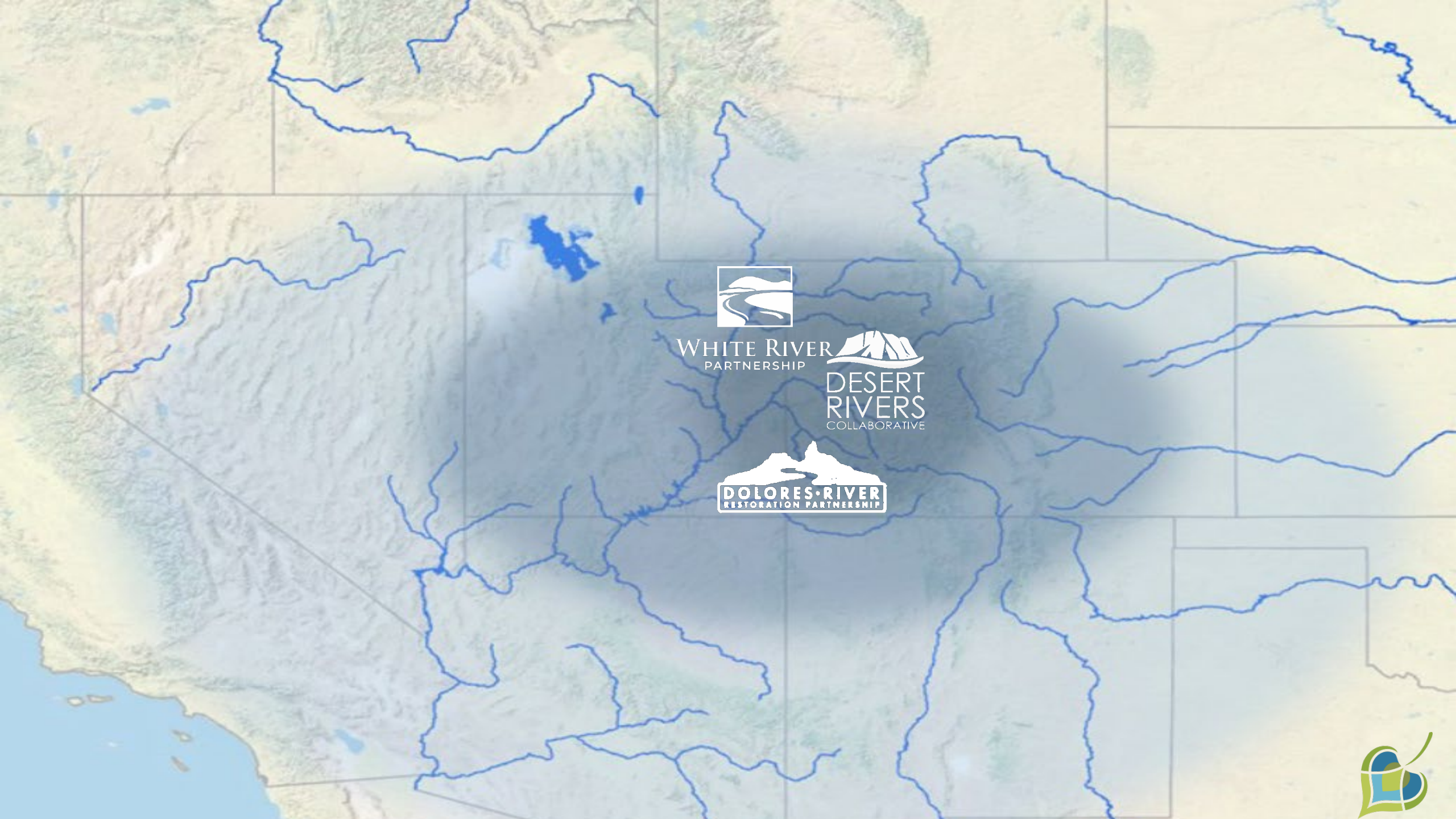


Scale: A Meaningful Approach

Geography:

- Watershed scale
- Western Colorado / Eastern Utah





WHITE RIVER
PARTNERSHIP



DESERT
RIVERS
COLLABORATIVE



DOLORES RIVER
RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP



**Every
partnership is
unique...**

but collectively they
have similar
challenges and
elements that lead to
success and
sustainability

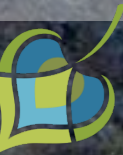


An aerial photograph of a river winding through a canyon. The river is dark blue and flows from the top center towards the bottom left. The canyon walls are made of reddish-brown rock. The surrounding landscape is covered with dense vegetation, including many trees with bright yellow and orange autumn foliage, interspersed with some green shrubs. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and rugged terrain.

Challenges

“It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see”

Henry David Thoreau



Challenges with a Changing Environment

DROUGHT

- Increased wildfire risk
- Unpredictable flows
- Weeds out the wazoo



Seeing the Opportunities

- Reassess expectations
- Redefining success
- Setting realistic timelines
- Consistency
- Welcome, encourage and share new knowledge





What About Partnership Funding??



Think Creatively

- Partner positions
- Unique collaborations (filling gaps)
- Stay connected
- Be honest
 - Trust Based Philanthropy
- Be effective storytellers



The Scale of a Valued Landscape

- Places motivate people and inspire leadership and long – term participation
- Operating at a watershed scale leads to ecological success
- Boundaries based on the ecosystem and landscape features



Relationships

~It takes
many
villages~

Trust

Vulnerability

Commitment

Accountability





Collectively, we are making a huge impact at a meaningful scale

Over 125 organizations
represented here today

Leveraging our experience,
knowledge and drive to make a
difference



Thank you!

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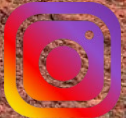


Photo Credit: Tom Till Photography