



# RiversEdge West

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE



## STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2024

Adopted by the Board of Directors on 12/16/2021

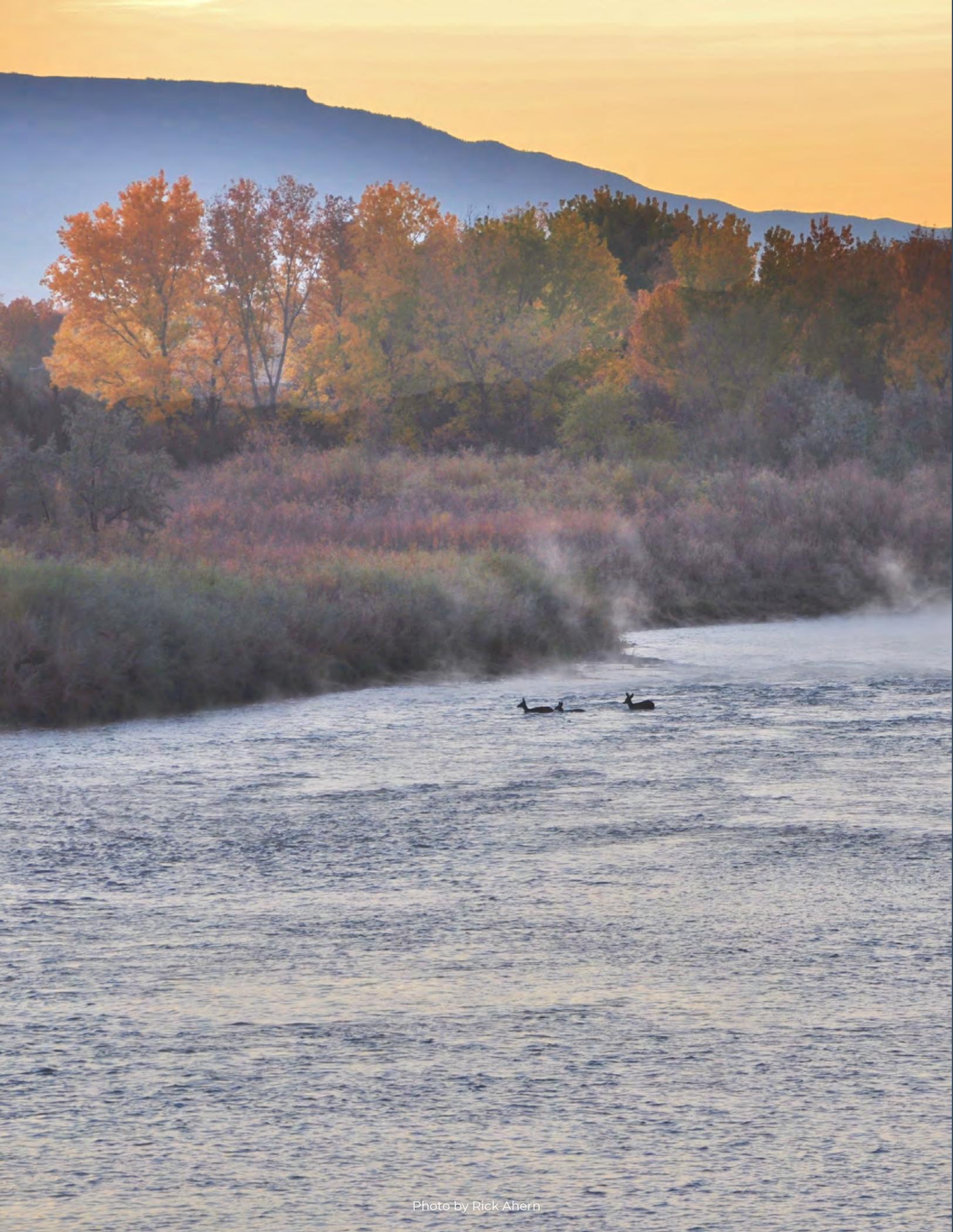


Photo by Rick Ahern

# On a MISSION



**RiversEdge West  
restores riparian ecosystems  
through education,  
collaboration, and  
technical assistance.**



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RiversEdge West (REW) is a leader in collaborative river restoration efforts. Our success comes by connecting a diverse set of stakeholders and utilizing decades of experience to foster long-lasting relationships. In turn, this leads to successful and sustainable partnerships and restoration outcomes across boundaries.

Providing support and technical assistance to partner organizations is a top priority for REW. Whether it is providing feedback on restoration techniques in the field, securing funding for projects, or leading public outreach and awareness events, we work to ensure restoration efforts are successful, supported, and sustainable.

Additionally, RiversEdge West excels in educating the community, including younger generations. By providing clear and concise information on managing invasive riparian plants and reestablishing native plant communities, REW is creating long-lasting river stewardship for generations to come.

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# A VISION

*for the future*



Photo by Tom Till Photography

## OUR VISION

**A network of healthy riparian ecosystems throughout the Western U.S.,  
benefiting native species, wildlife, people, and communities.**

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Through expansive and diverse community engagement and participation, RiversEdge West will realize lasting change to achieve sustainable and healthy river systems.

Increased pressures and demands will continue to impact our rivers. RiversEdge West's work will establish and grow a community of local stewards to advance the resiliency and sustainability of native riparian and wildlife habitats across the Western U.S.



# *Rooted in our* **VALUES**



## **OUR VALUES**

**RiversEdge West promotes active engagement and collaboration among diverse people and interests to restore the quality and ecological integrity of riparian lands critical to the well-being of communities.**

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Invasive plants in a riparian ecosystem negatively impact wildlife, recreation, and agricultural production, lessening the quality of life and threatening local economies in river-dependent communities.

RiversEdge West understands the close relationship between people and rivers, and sees clean water, agriculture, development, recreation, and cultural heritage all being integral considerations in planning for, restoring and managing riparian systems over a prolonged period.

Extensive riparian restoration is accomplished through collaborative work that respects biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, existing water laws, property rights, cultural and social values, and livelihoods. REW fosters collaboration as a neutral, apolitical organization that works across diverse groups. We are committed to engaging traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations in its work by being aware of the barriers that previously prevented these communities from participation.

# GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



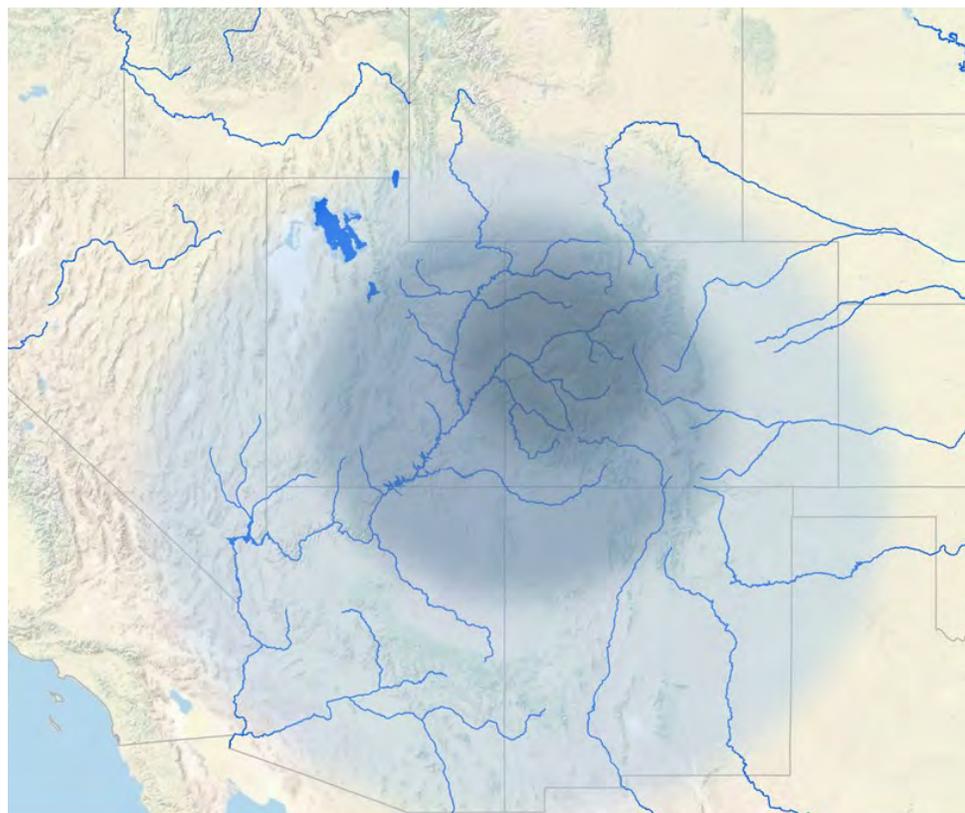
The geographic focus indicates the general regions where RiversEdge West provides programs and services. Through the work we do, relevant information and resources are available to and can be utilized by many watersheds across the West.

## LOCALLY

Denoted by the inner circle, Colorado and eastern Utah are RiversEdge West's home base; many of our resources and partnerships are committed to impact this region. Throughout this area, RiversEdge West provides direct leadership to riparian restoration partnerships and land managers, and engages community members and youth in restoration, education, and stewardship activities.

## REGIONALLY

The middle circle represents where RiversEdge West connects to strategic partnerships and watersheds, facilitates collaborative fundraising and collaboration, and provides technical assistance.



## ACROSS THE WEST

The outer circle encompasses the entire region where RiversEdge West provides workshops and webinars (including those offering data and education on the tamarisk beetle), engages policy and legislation work, and creates a venue for peer-to-peer exchange of information, resources, and lessons learned.

Throughout the West, we bring resource managers and communities together to address common riparian restoration challenges, coordinate and leverage resources, build capacity and collectively implement riparian restoration actions, engage communities, and promote stewardship.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1/5



### PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Lead and support strategic partnerships and collaboration across boundaries to implement effective, efficient, and lasting riparian restoration outcomes.

#### OUTCOMES

- ◆ Regional and community partnerships are initiating and sustaining riparian restoration work in the long-term.
- ◆ An expanded and strengthened network of self-sustaining restoration partnerships have the capacity and resources to improve riparian health on local, state, federal, private, and tribal lands.

#### OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Lead the Desert Rivers Collaborative, Dolores River Restoration Partnership, and White River Partnership to ensure continued partner-engaged restoration and stewardship activities along the respective rivers, until long-term resources are established to support ecologically resilient river systems.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance and capacity-building support that strengthen diverse local and regional stakeholder groups to help them become self-sustaining.
- ◆ Foster information sharing, communication, and collaboration on all aspects of riparian restoration among practitioners, landowners, and land managers through various forms of peer-to-peer exchange.



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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2/5



### EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Provide training and educational opportunities for riparian restoration practitioners, youth, and community members. Ensure accessibility to current information on restoration practices, management strategies, and research.

#### OUTCOMES

- ◆ A diverse community of river stewards comprised of educated and informed community members, scientists, practitioners, and students is committing time and resources to improving river systems.
- ◆ Members of the public have a broad understanding of the importance of healthy riparian areas, system stressors, impacts of invasive plant species, and what can be done to actively manage these impacts.

#### OBJECTIVES

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- ◇ Provide workshops, trainings and educational events, and host an annual conference that addresses the information needs of the riparian restoration community.
- ◇ Partner with schools to expand distribution and utilization of riparian restoration-based information and curriculum.
- ◇ Work collaboratively with regional partners to provide volunteer events and education to public and youth in communities where REW is conducting riparian restoration.
- ◇ Establish an internship program to engage a diverse future generation in riparian restoration.



Photo by Lee Gelatt Photography

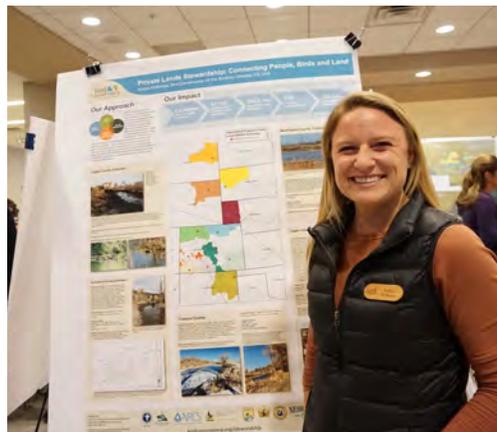
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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2/5

### OBJECTIVES—CONTINUED

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- ◇ Expand DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) components into REW documents and materials.
- ◇ Maintain a high-quality and accessible online Resource Center containing restoration research and management publications.
- ◇ Provide timely information regarding the tamarisk beetle, its movements, and potential impacts.
- ◇ Distribute key information for practitioners, land managers, and landowners.
- ◇ Work to expand the scope and focus of the riparian restoration community to include representatives and issues concerning underrepresented communities.



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3/5



### RESTORATION SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

Incorporate emerging science and technology into recommended riparian management strategies. Encourage innovation by supporting key scientific research.

#### OUTCOMES

- ◆ Science-based information is used to inform on-the-ground practices, as well as policy decisions, to maximize riparian restoration outcomes.
- ◆ Technology, tools, applied research, and culturally-informed strategies are utilized to improve riparian management and restoration actions.
- ◆ Lessons learned are widely communicated and incorporated into current and future restoration efforts.
- ◆ Active stewardship is enhancing the long-term viability and sustainability of riparian restoration projects.

#### OBJECTIVES

- ◇ Facilitate the distribution and synthesis of information on emerging science and technology for use by those conducting and managing riparian restoration including:
  - ◇ Climate change effects on riparian ecosystems and related adaptation and resiliency strategies.
  - ◇ Changing hydrology and impacts to riparian ecosystems.
  - ◇ Ecosystem services provided by healthy riparian areas.
  - ◇ Native and resilient plant materials and associated planting methods.



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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3/5

### OBJECTIVES — CONTINUED

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- ◇ Monitoring of riparian restoration progress.
- ◇ Movement and establishment of the tamarisk beetle.
- ◇ Use of remote sensing, mapping tools and databases.
- ◇ Incorporation of technology-based tools to enhance riparian restoration.
- ◇ Highlight new and emerging research, riparian management strategies, tools, and techniques at RiversEdge West's annual conference; provide an annual publication and direct access to recordings of the presentations.
- ◇ Release a periodic announcement of publications containing key research and management resources available via REW's online Resource Center.
- ◇ Foster the development of new tools and technology to enhance monitoring, cut costs, and evaluate the extent of riparian invasive plant impacts.
- ◇ Support the continued development of standard methods for monitoring and evaluating restoration progress, and data repository and sharing.
- ◇ Utilize an adaptive management framework to incorporate lessons learned (e.g. successes and failures, restoration techniques, decisions, partnership building, and fundraising strategies) into REW's current and future work.
- ◇ Implement stewardship frameworks and resources (e.g. youth/conservation corps, community and volunteer engagement) to improve riparian restoration projects' success and long-term sustainability.
- ◇ Evaluate impacts of changing climate conditions on riparian restoration work and integrate information into restoration practices and research.



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4/5



### BUILDING AWARENESS AND RESOURCES

Inform and educate decision makers to ensure riparian restoration is considered in policy conversations at local, regional, and national levels. Advance and build community awareness and support to secure resources for restoration efforts.

#### OUTCOMES

- ◆ Policy makers are informed and develop well-crafted policy and legislation that supports long-term riparian restoration and overall river health.
- ◆ Increased investment in riparian restoration from private and public sources.
- ◆ Heightened awareness of the importance of healthy riparian ecosystems exists in all sectors (e.g. public, private, and nonprofit).

#### OBJECTIVES

- ◇ Collaborate with key organizations and foundations involved with regional and national initiatives, and high-level policy and legislation, to direct funding to riparian restoration.
- ◇ Pursue calculated opportunities to work with and inform relevant decision makers to prioritize riparian restoration into policy and legislative actions.
- ◇ Craft and pursue targeted outreach to public, private, and nonprofit sectors to cultivate funding for riparian restoration.
- ◇ Participate in local and regional planning efforts to increase the inclusion of river corridor values in these processes (e.g. Colorado State Water Plan, River Corridor Initiative, Stream Management Planning, and Basin Roundtables).
- ◇ Build strategic partnerships with other nonprofit organizations to elevate the importance of riparian restoration.



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5/5



### ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Invest in the longevity and growth of human and physical capital to sustain RiversEdge West as a leading resource for riparian restoration.

#### OUTCOMES

- ◆ REW delivers the highest quality and level of service in all program offerings.
- ◆ REW recruits and retains highly-qualified, passionate, and diverse staff and board members; employed staff are competitively compensated and valued by the organization.
- ◆ REW is housed in a financially sustainable and highly functional facility that allows for the implementation and growth of its programs.
- ◆ REW continues to improve its financial health to better ensure long-term sustainability.

#### OBJECTIVES

- ◇ Continuously assess and ensure that REW engages, retains, and develops well-qualified and committed staff, board members and other volunteers with sufficient time and expertise to successfully pursue all strategic initiatives.
- ◇ Provide key training opportunities in emerging fields (e.g. climate change, DEI) to staff and Board to inform the operational and strategic direction of the organization.
- ◇ Engage in facility design and construction activities resulting in a permanent home site for REW operations and an appealing working space for similarly-minded and -missioned conservation organizations; plan and implement a capital campaign to secure funding for facility construction and outfitting.



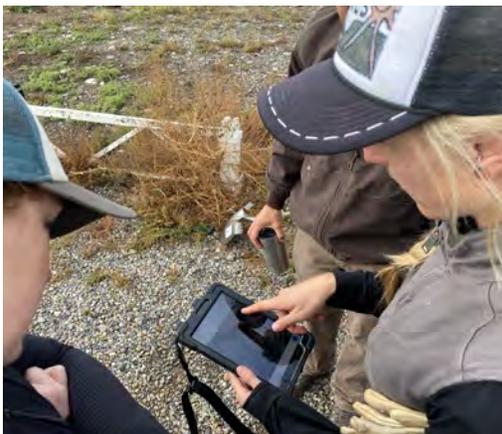
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## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5/5

### OBJECTIVES—CONTINUED

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- ◇ Continue work to diversify REW's funding portfolio, annually increasing contributions from individual and corporate donors.
- ◇ Establish a six-month operating reserve by year-end 2022; maintain the reserve at a similar level thereafter.
- ◇ Maintain an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion working group comprised of Board and staff that informs and evaluates REW's progress in this area.
- ◇ Track, report, and review progress on strategic initiatives to ensure activities align with REW's mission, vision and values, and consistency in meeting established benchmarks for success.



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Photo by Kamie Long