Meeting Date: March 7, 2017

Meeting Notes

Attendance
Ben Bloodworth, RiversEdge West  bbloodworth@riversedgewest.org
Carrie Gudorf, Mesa County  carrie.gudorf@mesacounty.us
Deej Brown, Bureau of Land Management  debrown@blm.gov
Derek Lovoi, Colorado Parks & Wildlife  Derek.Lovoi@state.co.us
Dixie Sadlier, Bureau of Land Management  dsadlier@blm.gov
Genevieve Blecha, United Companies  gblecha@oldcastle-materials.com
Jamie Nogle, National Wild Turkey Federation  jnogle@nwtf.net
Jane Turnburke, Rio Blanco County  jane.turnburke@rbc.us
Jeff Roberts, Western Colorado Conservation Corps  jroberts@mesapartners.org
Jim Free, Uncompahgre Partnership  jcfree2@msn.com
Justin Musser, Montrose County  jmusser@montrosecounty.net
Kamie Long, Colorado State Forest Service  kamie.long@colostate.edu
Kelly Green, Town of Palisade  kgreen@townofpalisade.org
Matt Jennings, Western Colorado Conservation Corps  mjennings@mesapartners.org
Matt Lewis, Bureau of Land Management  mlewis@blm.gov
Molly Murphy, National Park Service  molly_murphy@nps.gov
Nikki Grant Hoffman, Bureau of Land Management  mnhoffman@blm.gov
Pete Firmin, Colorado Parks & Wildlife  pete.firmin@state.co.us
Ryan McConnell, Colorado Canyons Association  ryan@canyonsassociation.org
Shannon Hatch, RiversEdge West  shatch@riversedgewest.org
Stacy Beaugh, RiversEdge West  sbeaugh@riversedgewest.org
Stan Young, I & E Young  sey65@hotmail.com
Teresa Nees, Mesa County  teresa.nees@mesacounty.us
Tyra Monger, Oldcastle SW Group (United)  tyra.monger@united-gj.com
Wayne Werkmeister, Bureau of Land Management  werkmeister@blm.gov

Introductions

- **DRC webpage**
  - As a reminder RiversEdge West (REW, formerly Tamarisk Coalition) maintains a DRC [webpage](#) where you can view all meeting notes, a calendar of events, and project information.

- **Middle Colorado River Watershed CWMA meeting recap (Teresa Nees)**
  - Held hour long meeting prior to DRC meeting to attract people that may be interested in both meetings
  - The CWMA was established in early 2000s
  - Memorandum of Understanding includes signatories from the county weed management groups that border western Colorado (Rio Blanco and Mesa counties),
eastern Utah (Grand and Uintah counties), and state and federal land management areas
  o Past accomplishments include procuring boats and equipment to coordinate purple loosestrife control
  o The CWMA is not very active in terms of bringing in joint funding; however, there are several individual members that coordinate projects to leverage resources, communicate on species of concern, and provide education (e.g., reed canary grass (see handout on DRC meeting website), giant reed grass, Japanese knotweed). There is also coordination on some projects along the Dolores River.
  o If interested in being engaged in future meetings, please contact Teresa Nees (teresa.nees@mesacounty.us)

Partnership updates; recent, upcoming, and desired project work

  • Invasive Phreatophyte Control Program (IPCP) project updates
    o Grant program administered by the Colorado Water Conservation Board
    o Funds were granted in 2016; need to be spent by June 2018
    o This meeting a good opportunity to highlight work that was completed on the West Slope as part of this program, as many recipients attending
  
  • DRC IPCC grant ($200,000)
    o Mesa County Wetland Site (Carrie Gudorf)
      ▪ See presentation from Carrie
      ▪ Habitat improvement at pond at 30 Rd and C1/2 Rd.
        • Utilized local contractor I&E Young, and Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC) for tamarisk and Russian olive removal
        ▪ Coordinated with Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), who own ponds nearby
        ▪ Able to purchase tools to measure depth of pond
        ▪ Future plan includes phased replanting and building of the wetlands
          • Running into challenges with obtaining water rights per Army Corps regulations, which is influencing the uncertainty of the timeline
    o Connected Lakes and 29 Rd (CPW; Pete Firmin)
      ▪ Cleared about 20 acres of tamarisk and Russian olive at Connected Lakes and 29 Rd sites
      ▪ Recently started reclamation process
        • Recently planted about 140 cottonwoods at Connected Lakes; anticipate planting another 140-200 cottonwoods at 29Rd. Will also be transplanting willows
        • Purchased irrigation equipment to support these plantings at Connected Lakes (currently 30% survival rate). Experienced a 90% survival rate in Fruita, which was attributed to irrigation being used. Exploring opportunities to also set up irrigation at 29Rd.
• Pete also procured a CPW Wetlands Grant that is funding additional willow planting at 34Rd property. There is also funding with both grants to cover planting of sedges and rushes.
• Experimenting with a new herbicide (Esplanade) to reduce cheatgrass
  o Indian Wash (City of Grand Junction)
    ▪ 7 acres were treated by I&E Young and WCCC
    ▪ Very challenging project due to terrain
    ▪ Project along tributary
      • Great passive restoration success and good establishment of planted cottonwoods
  o Private Lands
    ▪ REW partnering with Mesa County, Natural Resources Conservation Center (NRCS), Colorado State University (CSU) Extension, and Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to work on properties, including: Rimrock Adventures, The Preserve, Monument Meadows HOA, Peregrine HOA, wash leading into Leatha Jean State Wildlife Area (which is a high priority for purple loosestrife treatment), and ranch along the Little Dolores River, which will pilot treatments.
      ▪ Great examples of landowners willing to do the work and put money and time toward restoration
  • Grants received by other partners
    o Colorado Canyons Association (CCA, Ryan McConnell)
      ▪ Project located at Horsethief Bench, right below mountain bike trail
      ▪ 1st grant for CCA for restoration activities
      ▪ Partnered with BLM, WCCC and I&E Young
        • Volunteers conducting the monitoring and smaller removal projects
    o Uncompahgre Partnership (UP, Jim Free)
      ▪ Grant funded Russian olive treatment along 8.6 miles of the Gunnison River
        • Lots of clearing among cottonwood galleries
        • Access an issue due to steep banks and islands
        • Expecting follow-up treatment for the next few years
        • Completed Russian knapweed treatment in high use areas (boat launches, camp grounds, parking lots)
        • Have been using Milestone for Russian olive sprouts; Garlon or Pathfinder (don’t have to mix) for cut stump application on Russian olive
      ▪ Partnering with BLM and River Restoration Adventures for Tomorrow, youth corps, private landowners and ditch companies
        • Advantage using the corps as they camp and efficiently access sites
        • Department of Corrections was great, but it was a short day of work
      ▪ On a side note, if anyone needs plant resources; the CSU research station is reopening.
    o Montrose County (Justin Musser)
- Project on the San Miguel River and some tributaries; also, had funds from Colorado Department Agriculture (CDA) and Partners for Fish and Wildlife
- Focus on these areas due to purple loosestrife present in the area
- Utilized Southwest Conservation Corps for six weeks of hand removal; used contractors for mechanical removal
- Continuing to work on resprouts in the area—working around a road closure

**Other partner updates**

- **Palisade**
  - Riverbend Park staff dealing with mostly Russian olive along the drainage ditch
  - Biggest challenge is Russian olive and the public response to removal
    - Curious on how we deal with the public in terms of taking the Russian olive out?
- **Revegetation**
  - Having some challenges with cottonwood establishment, must water by hand
  - Also have challenges with watering new grass; trying to manipulate drainage ditch to help establish plants, also using hydro-mulch
  - Most success seen with native shrubs, including willow plantings along the rip-rap wall
    - Per Pete Firmin – tricks for success w/ planting cottonwoods; he’s happy to talk about what they’ve been doing and share lessons learned!
      - Plant closer to the edge of the water or use supplemental irrigation
      - Soak cottonwoods ahead of planting to get root starts
      - Use rooted plants (as opposed to poles)
      - Tamping in soil and planting techniques are important too
      - Focus on smaller/prioritized sections based on feasibility to irrigate
- **Grand Valley Audubon Society**
  - REW received a grant from the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to try to promote more engagement from the public/bird interests
    - Outcome included a booklet that can help guide restoration standards for birds; should be available by the end of the month.
    - John Toolen (retired BLM/FWS) is helping with a GIS analysis to do restoration for bird habitat; also looking at areas where we’d want defer restoration
    - This partnership has also resulted in volunteer projects, including removing old caging from cottonwoods at Horsethief State Wildlife Area and planning a two-day Earth Day event at Audubon Nature Preserve
• United Companies (Tyra Monger)
  ▪ See presentation
  ▪ United is construction company located in Grand Junction that is committed to ecosystems and sustainability in their production
    • Trying to engage the public and working to be the first segment of their company to do a restoration project in the West; working through the Wildlife Habitat Council

• Project
  • Restoring riparian and desert habitats impacted by tamarisk, Russian olive, kochia and Russian knapweed along the Riverfront Trail
  • Reaching out to the community and engaging experts
    o Project WET education
    o CMU capstone projects
    o Master Naturalists
    o Volunteers for a planting day

• Hazard fuels sub-committee
  o DRC recently started a subcommittee focused on hazard fuels mitigation; group born out of a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) private lands assistance grant and work with private landowners
  o Identified high risk areas for wildfire
    ▪ Mid-channel islands by Las Colonias
    ▪ Preserve Area in the Redlands
    ▪ Glade Park in the pinon juniper
    ▪ CPW properties between 27.5 and 29 Rd.
  o Upcoming workshops/projects
    ▪ June 14 – wildland urban interface workshop for professionals (forestry board, real estate, planners)
    ▪ Summer ’18 – community based workshops
    ▪ Fall/winter ’18 – certified burner workshop
  o Next meeting March 15th at GJ Air Center, meeting monthly; let Shannon know if you are interested in being involved

• Invasive phragmites locations and treatment discussion
  o Common reed grass (*Phragmites australis*)
    ▪ Both native and exotic species present in state
    ▪ Exotic version is currently a watch list species for the state of Colorado, not regulated or mandated for control
  o Locations
    ▪ There are large infestations in Utah in Lake Utah and Salt Lake area
    ▪ Western Slope Phragmities study group
      • In 2016 Mesa County established a preliminary identification method for field-ID for exotic vs. native, which resulted in a report
• Colorado Department of Ag provided funding to do a statewide genetic testing project across over 200 sites; preliminary results are now out (contact Patty York (patty.york@state.co.us) with CDA for info)
  o 5 new confirmed exotic sites so far in Mesa County
    ▪ 2 sites on tributaries to the river
    ▪ 3 sites near the river
    ▪ 1 site on the railroad corridor
    ▪ 1 on an irrigation ditch
• This project will also truth-check field ID method
  o Discussion
    ▪ Something to think about as a group in terms of our level of concern, prioritization, planning and funding. Mesa County is going to continue to get information and solicit advice.
    ▪ Teresa is going to investigate the private landowner that planted the exotic to find out where they got it from.
    ▪ Many suggested treatment of this plant immediately, as it will only become more difficult to control
    ▪ Interesting because the plant is not easily identified except from genetic testing; can use deductive reasoning to decide where to do testing
    ▪ Colorado state law doesn’t leave a lot of room to list this species as the law isn’t written in a way that can differentiate between the native and exotic subspecies
    ▪ Maybe this is something that could be considered along with tamarisk and Russian olive treatment in terms of funding sources
    ▪ Would like reassurance on some of the sites before prioritizing treatments; don’t want to erroneously treat native sub-species
    ▪ Teresa isn’t done w/ truth checking her field ID process, however, from her memory it looks like their field tests were correct

Geodatabase introduction and usage
• Geodatabase funded by the Walton Family Foundation, managed by REW
  o Developed by DigitLab at University of Utah
  o Created to provide universal platform for reporting treatment and restoration progress across watershed groups in the Southwest
  o If your watershed is not included in this database right now – please talk to REW. This is a long-term project and there may be an opportunity to get more people engaged.
• Format
  o A river corridor file was created that encompasses all the restoration work that has been completed, or planned, in Mesa and Delta counties (save some isolated washes)
  o Several layers can be added and utilized, including:
    ▪ Invasive treatment layer
    ▪ Planned treatments
• Revegetation
• Base maps

• Partner contributions
  o All partners will be able to utilize and edit on ArcGIS Online (Shannon will send out link once it’s completed, likely next month)
  o Only as strong as the information that’s put into it – so make sure you use it!
    ▪ Rew has the master version with verified data. Since there are back-ups - don’t be afraid to add data and play around with things!
    ▪ Partners can also provide shapefiles and data to REW and we can input them
  o Easy to add/view/query polygons
    ▪ Click on edit to draw your treatment/reveg/monitoring polygon
    ▪ Pop-up menu includes drop downs to enter data, upload photos
    ▪ Can view entries in polygon or table form, customize columns you want to view using menu
    ▪ Clicking “show” will provide you the timeline/history of treatments/information for the site, can “center on selection” in the menu
  o Possible to use with Collector on tablets/phones
    ▪ Will need to generate maps from ArcGIS Online and download directly to the tablet/phone

• Great information tool
  o Geodatabase can help the partnership leverage funding and create awareness about what we’re doing – please use this! It’s accessible and REW is available to do training, etc.

Volunteerism, outreach, and training needs

• Statewide Stewardship Initiative (SSI)
  o Initiative to encourage more volunteer stewardship throughout the state
  o Statewide recommendations were made based on six workshops that were held across the state to develop:
    ▪ Best Management Practices
    ▪ Map of where stewardships organizations and projects exist
    ▪ Standardized metrics for evaluating projects
      ▪ Outdoor Stewardship Coalition will likely adopt metrics
  o The SSI is putting together recommendations for 3-5 sites to ramp up stewardship and volunteerism to augment what people are already doing
    ▪ REW submitted an application for the DRC and Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) focus areas to:
      ▪ Improve monitoring and maintenance
      ▪ Develop stronger citizen science program
      ▪ Build long-term capacity
    ▪ If accepted, REW would still have to go through full on GOCO grant application
Stacy learning that volunteerism doesn’t really happen at scale on the river (the way it does in other areas); the SSI group is excited to promote and develop a river-focused program

- **Outreach sub-committee development**
  - Teresa is researching the [Volunteer Managers Association](#) in Grand Junction
  - CCA interested in participating in sub-committee
    - Planned volunteer events
      - One thing we can do better as a partnership is to promote these events more cohesively
        - April 21st & 22nd - Earth Day Event with Audubon
        - CPW Events
          - May 4th - Ruby Canyon Engineering volunteer event
        - Aug – Colorado River Clean-Up
        - Sept – Xcel Energy Day of Service
        - Ongoing – Clifton Nature Park Clean-Ups
        - March/April/Summer – CCA events

- **Workshops and training**
  - Outstanding partnership needs? REW has funding – we need input now!
    - Feedback from the REW conference was to a training in the Grand Junction or Montrose area
    - Ideas on topics
      - Same interest from CCA as expressed at July meeting (herbicide/saw skills)
        - WCCC noted that they could help with these training events at their facility
      - March 24th and 25th, WCCC is hosting a Wilderness First Aid class for 24 people, aged 12 and up
      - Dryland Restoration Training from 2014; National Park Service (NPS) loved that!
        - Would love to see it replicated, especially due to staff turnover
      - Colorado Weed Management Association
        - Annual conference is in Grand Junction this December
          - Great opportunity to partner (we could learn from them, large demographic of that group that could benefit from stronger ties to the restoration community)
        - [Spring Training School in Montrose](#)
          - Accreditations available, including herbicide training
      - Shannon reached out to trainers about hosting a wetland restoration training in the Grand Valley
      - Timing
While winter seems to work for many, late summer is great for engaging field staff that may not be hired in winter

2018 budget and grant opportunities

- **Sources of funding**
  - Most of the partnership funding was from the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Restore Our Rivers Campaign
  - Pending grant out to Xcel Energy Foundation for 2018/2019
  - Partners brought in grants from Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Patagonia, CDA

- **Capacity and projects**
  - Sitting good in terms of capacity for 2019, but don’t have a lot of projects planned
    - Please let Shannon know about project ideas

- **Future grants**
  - Thinking about applying for the North American Wetlands small grant program
    - Developing stronger ties with Ducks Unlimited
    - Can bundle projects from across the focus area
    - Due in October
  - Watching near-by Stream Management Planning processes and will keep the group in the loop

Review action items, schedule follow up meeting

- **Number of meetings per year?**
  - Many like the twice a year format
  - Field trips?
    - Teresa would be interested in hosting a weed tour in late May/early June

- **Subcommittee development**
  - Let Shannon know if you are Interested in the stewardship subcommittee

- **Other comments**
  - Grand Valley Canopy being developed by Grand Junction Forestry Board
    - Talk to Kamie Long for more details!