

Tamarisk Coalition
Newsletter #2
January, 2003

This past year, with the drought as a predominant issue in the West, there has been a focused interest in controlling tamarisk and restoring riparian habitats. This has placed the Tamarisk Coalition in an interesting position to help individuals, organizations, agencies, and politicians understand the significance of tamarisk to the health of watersheds. The following are some of the many activities that the Tamarisk Coalition was involved in over the past six months.

- At the Federal congressional level, a proposed bill sponsored by New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici and co-sponsored by Colorado Senators Wayne Allard and Ben Nighthorse Campbell was developed to sponsor research and demonstration of tamarisk control approaches in the Four Corners states and Texas. The current Senate bill can be viewed at www.senate.gov as Senate Bill 2868. The Coalition was asked to take an active roll in developing the language for this bill. A companion House bill is currently being developed with the Coalition's help that will expand the states involved to include California and Nevada. The basic components of these bills include:
 - Funding will be at a level of \$10 to \$15 million per year over five years with funds available in fiscal year 2004 (October 1, 2003).
 - Research will include impacts on water use and availability, water quality changes, habitat restoration, biodiversity enhancements, and costs/impacts for various control technologies.
 - A minimum of two tamarisk control demonstration projects will occur in each state.
 - Biocontrol techniques will be part of some demonstrations.
 - Research will occur during the first year to fill critical information gaps and will piggy-back with demonstration projects.
 - Development of long-term management and funding strategies will be identified for each state.
 - Tamarisk and other non-native phreatophytes such as Russiam-olive will be part of the research and demonstration activities.
 - The Corps of Engineers will administer the program with active involvement by institutes of higher educational and non-profit organizations (such as the Tamarisk Coalition and The Nature Conservancy) who have been working on the tamarisk issue.
- The Tamarisk Coalition has begun working directly with the Corps of Engineers to help develop an appropriate strategy for the program once it gets authorized.
- At the Colorado state level, the Coalition worked with the joint House/Senate Committee on Water Resources over the summer months. There was unanimous support to include

the control of tamarisk as part of an over-all state water resources management structure. To this end, the Colorado Water Conservation Board has provided some matching funding to the Coalition to identify the nature and impact of tamarisk in Colorado. Representative Diane Hoppe is introducing a resolution that would be signed by Governor Owens supporting the Federal legislation. As part of this effort to provide information on the tamarisk problem, the Coalition worked directly with the State Engineer and the Department of Natural Resources.

- The Coalition was selected to work on a special Colorado Department of Agriculture committee to suggest changes to the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. These changes have been included in a draft bill that Representative Mark Larson will be introducing this year. Once introduced, the bill can be viewed on the state's web site (www.colorado.gov).
- Big Country Resource RC&D (Willa Holgate) was instrumental in getting a pilot-scale tamarisk mapping project underway this summer with principal support from the USFS Remote Sensing Application Center. The objective of this work is to compare the cost, efficiency, and accuracy of a number of different tamarisk mapping approaches. Ground truthing is currently underway to compare actual field conditions with aerial imaging interpretation.
- Principal funding sources have been identified in two programs at the Federal level: at USDA, the *Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems*, known as the IFAFS grant program; and at Interior, the *Cooperative Conservation Initiative*, known as the CCI grant program. These programs would provide critical funding for Tamarisk Coalition partners. However, with the current economic condition within the country, these programs may not receive funding until 2004. Hard times are also stressing private foundations with funds being limited and more difficult to get. Only one of the five grant applications submitted to these foundations was funded.
- One grant application that is currently in the review process is the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation *Pulling Together Initiative*. Our proposal included 12 different project sites in western Colorado and eastern Utah. It also included an educational component for the 2003 Tamarisk Symposium. The total grant request is approximately \$150,000 with a matching local challenge share at \$337,000. We have a strong chance of being awarded this grant because of the success of the Coalition's 2001 projects funded under this program.
- Potential corporate and local government sponsors have been identified and we are currently in the process of soliciting this support. If you have a direct connection with a particular organization and/or local government or individual that you think would provide financial support to the Coalition, we will work with you to solicit their support. These funds are important for the Tamarisk Coalition to continue to operate.
- The Colorado Riverfront Foundation, Inc. provided their second donation of \$5,000 to the Coalition. Mesa State College has also been providing office space and infrastructure that has allowed us to operate very efficiently. These supports are greatly appreciated.

- The membership committee developed a dues structure that is intended to support a portion of our activities. For those who have not yet signed up, a form is attached at the end of this newsletter for your use. Membership dues are important to continue our work on last year's accomplishments.
- Two educational meetings were held for Coalition members. Barney Lee of Northstar Helicopter discussed their work over the past 3 years controlling tamarisk on the Pecos River in Texas, their control methods, and changes they have seen in water yields after treatment. The second meeting presented information on the Tamarisk Coalition becoming a non-profit organization, activities over the past six months, legislative activities on tamarisk, Inventory Pilot project, *Pulling Together Initiative* Grant, and committee needs and future activities.
- The 2003 Tamarisk Symposium has been scheduled for October. Preliminary planning for this event will start in January. The 2001 Symposium attracted nearly 200 participants and we believe that we will have up to 300 this year. Coordination of the Symposium will be through Susan Rose, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Tri River Area.
- Our new web site, www.tamariskcoalition.org, is now under construction. We anticipate it should be up and running by February. It will have links to other associated sites, for posting the newsletter, membership opportunities, research activities, legislative actions, and other tamarisk related information. Let us know what you think of it so that we can improve its capability.
- An annual meeting is planned for Tuesday, February 25th between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m. in Grand Junction. An announcement will be sent out prior to this meeting with the location and agenda.

Hope everyone had a great holiday and that 2003 is starting off well for you.

Happy trails, Tim Carlson
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Become a Tamarisk Coalition Member

Please check the appropriate category ...

_____ Individual @ \$50/year

_____ Senior @ \$35/year

_____ Student @ \$25/year

_____ Discount for five @ \$200/year
people signing up at one time for agencies and organizations

_____ Sustaining membership @ \$100/year for companies

*In addition, I enclose \$_____ as a
general contribution towards the goals of
the Tamarisk Coalition.*

Total Tax Deductible Contribution enclosed: \$_____

Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Make check payable to: Tamarisk Coalition
P.O. Box 1907
Grand Junction, CO 81502

Membership Benefits – Members are involved in developing long-term solutions to control tamarisk and restore riparian lands; participate in grants; and receive periodic newsletters that include information on active programs, current tamarisk events, and opportunities for involvement.

Committees I would be interested to serve on:

Education/Publicity _____ Membership/Sponsors _____

Research/Inventory _____ Grants _____