



RiversEdge West

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

www.riversedgewest.org

Photo by the Verde River Institute, 2018

RESTORING RIVERS IN THE WEST

for Wildlife and Communities

Riverside lands provide critical habitat for countless birds and wildlife but according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 80% of this habitat throughout the U.S. has been lost or altered in part due to the invasion of non-native plant species like tamarisk (saltcedar), Russian olive, Russian knapweed, and tree of heaven. These plants rapidly crowd out native plants like cottonwood, willow, and many others.

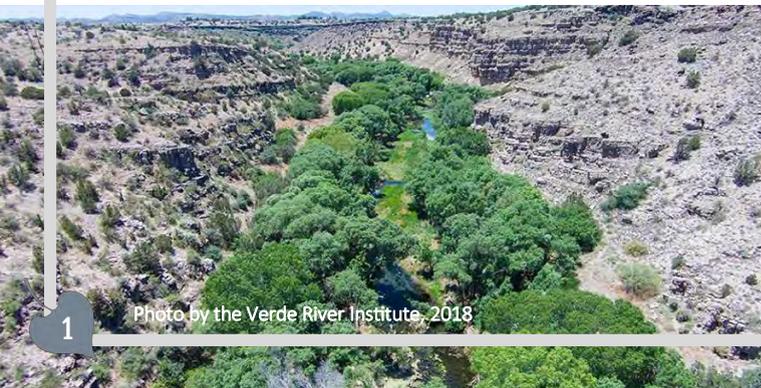
The loss of native plant diversity along rivers that results from invasive plant infestations reduces and degrades available resources (e.g. food and shelter) for wildlife, fish, pollinators, birds, and livestock. Invasive riparian plants also impair natural river function by channelizing river banks, restricting recreational access to scenic landscapes, reducing the productivity of agricultural lands, and, in the case of tamarisk, increasing the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

RiversEdge West addresses the challenges associated with invasive plant infestations, climate change, habitat fragmentation, and other stressors that result in a damaged river.

DID YOU KNOW?

Riparian = Riverside Habitat

The word riparian refers to riverside habitat or riverside forest.



Pictured above: In 2008, invasive Russian olive (trees on left bank) outcompeted native plants and dominated the riparian vegetation along the Escalante River.



Pictured above: In 2010 after invasive Russian olive is removed, a diverse array of native plants re-establish and provide valuable habitat and forage for wildlife.

Riparian areas are defined as the corridors along stream and river banks that are typically characterized by a distinct set of water-loving plants and trees such as cottonwoods or willows. Only about 1% of land in the United States is considered riparian, yet roughly 80% of all wildlife species depend on this area for food and shelter at some point in their lifetime.

Pictured left: Contrasting with the surrounding desert landscape, native riparian plants (the green vegetation) support a biologically rich riparian corridor along the Verde River in Arizona.

Message from Tom Burke | President, Board of Directors

Dear Friends and River Champions,

The culmination of 2017 marked a year of incredible achievement for RiversEdge West. We successfully raised \$1.56 million for river restoration through the Restore Our Rivers campaign and updated our strategic plan, a process that made clear to us it was time to let go of our former name, Tamarisk Coalition, and the perceived assumption by some that our organization solely focused on the control of tamarisk. We are thrilled that our new name, RiversEdge West, allows the full scope of our mission and vision to come through and emphasizes what we care about – the restoration of the river’s edge in the Western U.S.

Although [our name has changed](#), our organization remains committed to the same values and programs that have served communities and made a difference for rivers across the West for the past 16 years. We continue to address a myriad of issues facing our rivers today, including other invasive riverside plants (such as but not limited to tamarisk), climate change, habitat fragmentation, and other stressors that may result in diminished biodiversity.

As we move into 2018, we face another significant change; our leader and Executive Director, Stacy Beaugh, moved on from REW to pursue new directions, in support of her family. Stacy took the lead nearly 10 years ago as the organization’s second-ever Executive Director. Throughout her time here, Stacy hired a strong team, fostered a culture of passion and excellence, and transitioned REW to new heights of sustainability with improved organizational management practices, a greater number of engaged supporters, and a diversified, sustainable funding stream. We thank Stacy for her contributions that have helped to make our organization what it is today.

[A shift in leadership](#) can be a big challenge for any organization and one that we do not take lightly. Our talented and dedicated staff, with the support of our experienced and capable Board of Directors, will carry REW through our leadership transition and into our next phase. I am confident that this team, with support from individuals like you, will rise to the challenge and continue to bring passion, skills, and energy to create a new future for our organization in pursuit of healthy rivers.

Please stay in touch with us throughout the year as this is sure to be an exciting time for RiversEdge West.

Sincerely,



Tom Burke,
President, Board of Directors



RESTORE OUR RIVERS

RiversEdge West spearheaded Restore Our Rivers – a fundraising and awareness building campaign that supported nine restoration partnerships working on six rivers throughout the Southwest.

Restore our Rivers raised funding for underfunded, but critical aspects of riparian restoration such as planning, capacity-building, and monitoring and maintenance. The campaign also empowered the participating partnerships to build their knowledge base in private fundraising, ultimately growing their relationships with private foundations, individual donors, businesses, and local governments.

Investments to the Restore Our Rivers campaign from you and/or individuals like you were leveraged to raise a combined total of \$1.56M from January 2016 – February 2018!

For a full summary of Restore Our Rivers accomplishments, please visit our [website](#).

Restore Our Rivers Accomplishments



equivalent acres treated
(some acres were treated multiple times) for invasive weeds such as tamarisk and Russian olive, seeded and planted with native plants, and monitored for resprouts



349
seasonal restoration jobs created

\$1.56 MILLION RAISED



full-time partnership coordinator jobs were created or retained



200+
individuals and
60
new corporate, foundation and local government funders were established



Pictured left: Participants of the Restore Our Rivers campaign gather to celebrate the successful conclusion of the initiative and share lessons learned.

TAMARISK BEETLE PROGRAM



BEFORE

Pictured left: tamarisk lines the Colorado River



AFTER

Pictured right: the tamarisk beetle defoliated the leaves of tamarisk, turning the trees brown

RiversEdge West monitors and tracks the tamarisk beetles' expansion across the Southwest to inform land managers about whether the beetle should factor in to their river restoration activities. To complement the annual beetle map (see map below), REW connects people to the latest science and information on the anticipated impacts of the beetle, in order to inform management decisions and actions.

Tamarisk Beetle Training

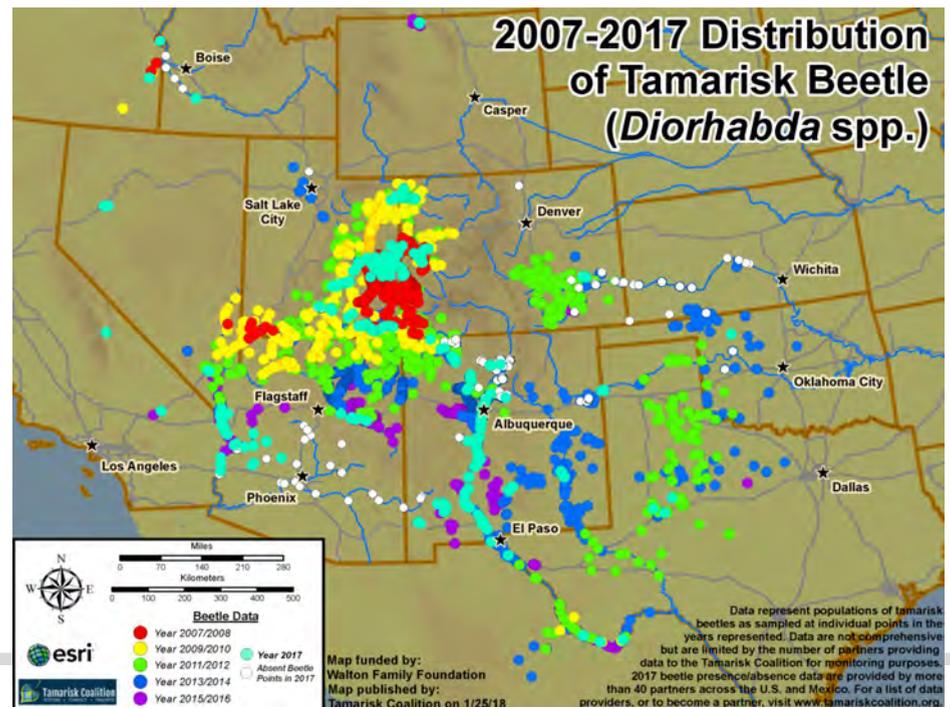
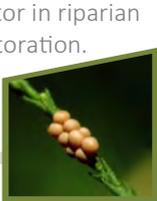
Since the tamarisk beetle has not been present in western rivers for long, the dynamics of the population are not fully understood. In 2017, REW offered four tamarisk beetle-related workshops across the West to help land managers better understand, prepare for, and respond to, the tamarisk beetle and its impacts. Workshops were held in Buckeye, Arizona; Vernal, Utah; Goodwell, Oklahoma; and Ashland, Kansas, and were attended by almost 200 restoration practitioners and interested citizens. Participants learned about tamarisk beetle history, distribution, and impacts to tamarisk, along with associated effects to native wildlife and the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. Attendees were also provided with presentations on how the tamarisk beetles' impacts effect wildfire in riparian areas, invasive vegetation removal techniques, restoration planning, and project-site revegetation.

2017 Tamarisk Beetle Map

Tamarisk beetle distribution across the landscape did not expand significantly in 2017, however, the population sizes in areas along the Colorado, Green, San Rafael, Dirty Devil and Freemont Rivers in Utah were larger than in recent years.

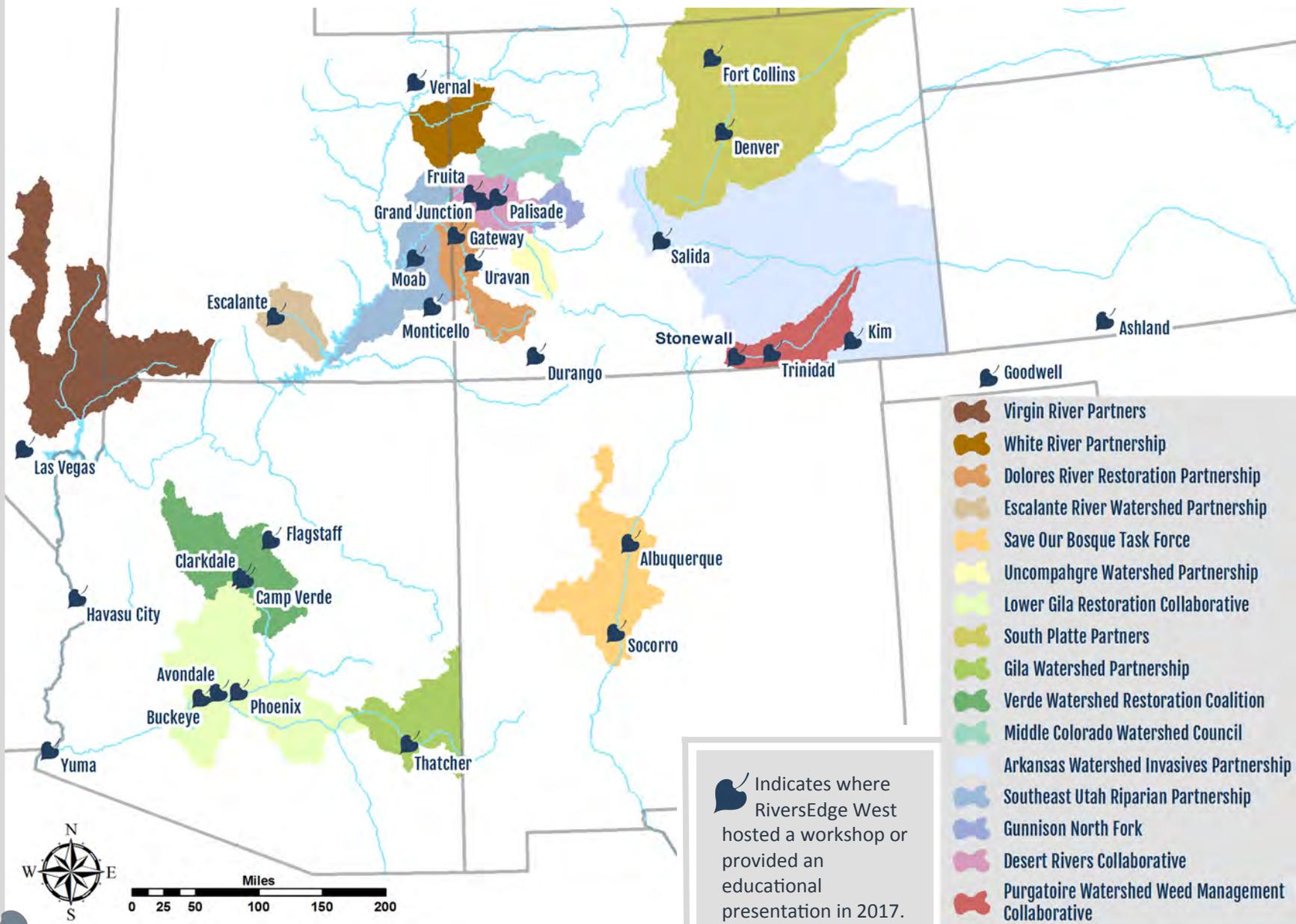
DID YOU KNOW?

The tamarisk beetle (*Diorhabda* spp.) is the biological control strategy for managing tamarisk. First approved for release by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2001, the tamarisk beetle has since become an important component of tamarisk control. The tamarisk beetle repeatedly defoliates (eats) the leaves of tamarisk and, in doing so, significantly weakens the plant so that mechanical and chemical controls are more effective. The tamarisk beetle also reduces the reproductive viability of tamarisk. While it does not quickly eliminate tamarisk single-handedly, it has proven to be a significant factor in riparian restoration.



2017 FOCUS AREAS & IMPACT

RiversEdge West works across the West; each blue leaf on the map below represents a workshop or educational presentation that REW hosted in 2017, and each of the watersheds highlighted below is a community-based restoration partnership that REW supports.



One common thread among the partnerships that RiversEdge West supports becomes their focus on revitalizing vegetation along the river's edge. REW bolsters these partnerships by helping to build their organizational and fundraising capacity for the long-haul and providing technical and scientific information that helps them succeed on the ground. A few examples of how REW supported partnerships in 2017 include:

STRENGTHENING RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS

White River Partnership

The White River flows from the Flat Tops of Colorado west onto the Colorado Plateau of Utah, harboring protected fish in its waters and nourishing a thriving riparian zone in a canyon cut through the remote desert of eastern Utah. A rising effort over the years resulted in increased participation and formalization of a partnership with Utah Bureau of Land Management and other entities to address riparian conditions in the White River corridor downstream of the Colorado border. In 2017, REW supported the partnership by hosting a riparian restoration workshop which laid the groundwork for a project focused on improving the vegetation along the White River, for the sake of native fish and wildlife habitat. REW will provide increased support in 2018, as the partnership establishes its scope, and expands its membership efforts, to include the Colorado portion of the watershed.

Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition

The Verde River flows through the heart of Arizona and sustains the incredible plant and animal diversity found in the ribbon of green adjacent to the river. The Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition, in partnership with REW, has been working to enhance those riparian areas along the Verde River since 2010. REW has been an integral part of the team ever since. The Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition collaborates with numerous partners to map, monitor, and remove invasive species along the river. In 2017, REW staff continued to support the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition, in the form of training for restoration crews, developing and enhancing monitoring protocols, fundraising, grant writing, and providing educational outreach.

Gila Watershed Partnership

The Gila River flows from east to west across the southern part of Arizona. The Upper Gila River, from the New Mexico border to the San Carlos Reservoir, provides critical habitat for the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, as well as the threatened, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The Gila Watershed Partnership works on the Upper Gila River to remove tamarisk and replace it with native tree species in order to create more resilient and sustainable riparian areas. In 2017, partnership crews removed 60 acres of tamarisk and retreated another 45 acres along the river. REW provided assistance to the group, with planting and monitoring protocols, outreach and education, funding development, and staff training.

Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership

In 2017, REW continued to support the Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership, assisting with the development and facilitation of two annual partnership meetings focused on project implementation and assessment along the Colorado River in eastern Utah. REW also provided assistance during a field trip in November that highlighted restoration successes and provided a forum for participants to discuss problem sites, lessons learned, and identify areas for development.

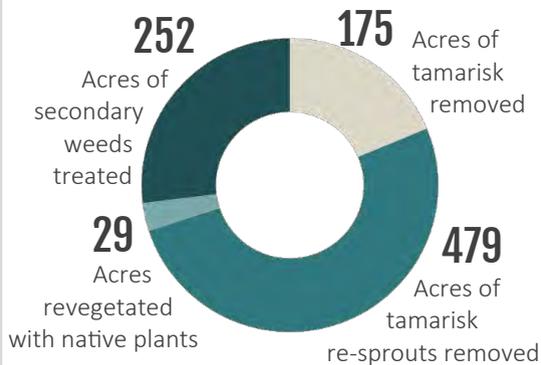


PARTNERSHIPS WE COORDINATE



DOLORES RIVER

Dolores River Restoration Partnership



\$1,075,819 Invested into local communities through partnership expenditures

32 Jobs created for young adults and local contractors

654 Volunteer hours contributed to removing invasive plants and planting native grasses, shrubs, and trees

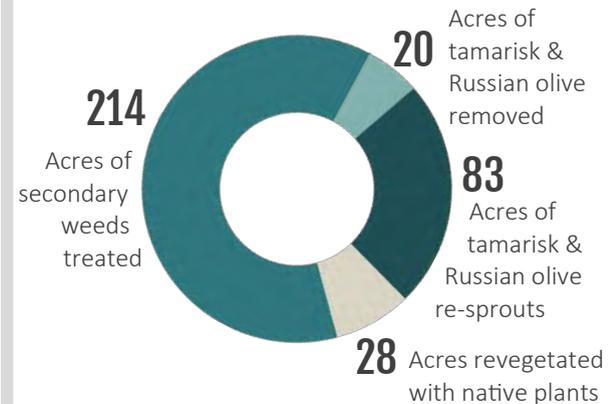
The Dolores River, flowing from southwestern Colorado through deep red rock canyons into Utah and the Colorado River near Moab, continues to be the focus of collaboration for the Dolores River Restoration Partnership. Made up of agency personnel, conservation corps crews, volunteers, local businesses and schools, and private landowners, the Partnership is working to restore more than 200 miles of the river's riparian corridor. Partners interrupted invasive plant infestation trends and restored more than 1,000 acres of riparian corridor and continue to monitor progress toward a diverse and resilient native plant ecosystem.

REW has co-led the Partnership since 2009, steering it through collaborative efforts to control invasive vegetation and establish native plants, and strengthen the stewardship bonds between the river and the communities that depend on it. In 2017, REW helped Gateway School, Bedrock School, and other community organizations during several stewardship events along the Dolores River.



COLORADO & GUNNISON RIVERS

Desert Rivers Collaborative



\$216,048 Invested into local communities

60 Jobs created for young adults and local contractors

277 Volunteer hours contributed to removing invasive plants and planting native grasses, shrubs, and trees

RiversEdge West is the driving force behind three public and private, multi-stakeholder river restoration partnerships. Our leadership brings resource managers and communities together to address common challenges, leverage resources, build capacity, and collectively implement riparian restoration actions in a way that promotes stewardship and long-term success.



Desert Rivers Collaborative (continued)

Celebrating its fifth year, the Desert Rivers Collaborative continues its efforts to revitalize and restore the Colorado and Gunnison, two rivers whose confluence serves as the namesake for the Western Slope's largest community, Grand Junction. REW is the lead nonprofit coordinator of this Collaborative.

In 2017, properties throughout the Grand Valley of Colorado were treated for tamarisk, Russian olive, and herbaceous weeds, and many sites were revegetated with native plants. Work on private lands continued, with an emphasis on fuels reduction on properties along washes with high fire risk. 2017 also saw a rise in community volunteerism, with more than 120 volunteers working with the Collaborative to clean up trash, remove invasive plants, and cage native cottonwood trees. The year concluded with the creation of the publication "Bringing Birds Home," a manual created in conjunction with the Grand Valley Audubon Society that describes how to proactively improve riparian habitat for bird species.

In 2018, the focus on restoring riparian habitat on private, state, and federal lands continues, with an emphasis on increased volunteerism, wildfire reduction, and a wetland and waterfowl workshop scheduled for September.



PURGATOIRE RIVER

Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative

The Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative focuses on noxious weed control and land restoration in Las Animas County, Colorado.

In 2017, REW continued to be an integral part behind funding for the group through the REW-led Restore Our Rivers campaign and by bringing a diverse array of funders to the table.

The Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative made great headway with noxious weed control and land restoration in Las Animas County in 2017. The Collaborative bolstered secondary noxious weed control through partnering with the local Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River Conservation District by providing landowner cost-share programs. The collaborative also established a noxious weed mapping group, which is increasing noxious weed mapping and reporting across all land management jurisdictions.

347 Acres of tamarisk and Russian olive were treated

\$370,000 Was raised for on-the-ground project work and education and outreach efforts

400 People were educated about noxious weeds

2 Landowner cost share/incentive programs were created for noxious weed control and land restoration through the local Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River Conservation District

CROSS-WATERSHED NETWORK

The Cross-Watershed Network (XWN) is a peer-to-peer learning network that creates opportunities for southwestern land and water managers to connect and share lessons. XWN expands peer-to-peer learning to enhance the depth of RiversEdge West's practitioner education programs. REW is a lead collaborator on the steering committee and houses XWN staff as the Network grows.

Collaborating at the Annual XWN Workshop

The Annual Workshop is the cornerstone of XWN's peer-to-peer learning exchanges. In 2017, the Annual Workshop was co-hosted by the Gila Watershed Partnership in Safford, Arizona. Seventy-two watershed practitioners from across the Southwest exchanged management strategies for arid lands restoration and networked with practitioners of different backgrounds and geographies.



Expanding Peer-to-Peer Learning

XWN used a thorough evaluation of its programs to inform its first strategic planning process in late 2017. In the future, expect to see XWN hone-in on state-level, cross-watershed support and increase advocacy for use of peer-to-peer learning techniques with organizational partners. To explore additional opportunities for involvement, visit crosswatershed.net and subscribe to the e-newsletter.

Pictured left: XWN Steering Committee members gathered in Phoenix to outline the XWN's Strategic Plan. Pictured below: XWN members tour a project site to share lessons learned during an annual workshop.



In 2017, the Cross-Watershed Network reached 500 participants from 19 different states!



Photo by Kaard Bombe

RiversEdge West's outreach program develops media tools and technologies that elevate awareness and increase support for riparian restoration. A few examples include:

Capturing the Human Spirit of Riparian Restoration



REW creates outreach tools that tell the story of riparian restoration beyond the science and numbers.

The Riverside Stories series, for example, features inspiring people who are committed to improving their land and rivers. The series connects our multi-faceted audience with the local, regional, and personal benefits that restoration provides and increases support for improving riparian areas and the restoration partnerships involved.

In 2018, the Riverside Stories will enter the second phase of production, with additional stories being told in the form of video. [Visit our website](#) to view the series.

TELLING A LARGER STORY

Using Maps to Tell the Story of Transformation



REW develops technology that helps partnerships to manage their restoration data and tell their story.

REW is developing a multi-partner geodatabase that stores information about restoration projects from different times and places so they can be portrayed on maps. The technology provides a way for partnerships to better manage and search through their data, track accomplishments, and tell their story. Years of past project data, as well as future project plans, can be added. And, all of this information can be displayed so land managers can see how their projects connect across the landscape and change over time.

If you are interested in getting engaged and using this useful tool, please [contact us](#).



To ensure greater restoration success, RiversEdge West trains and educates youth, community members, and riparian restoration practitioners, alike. Our educational [events](#) foster community stewardship for riparian restoration, while our professional workshops and conferences provide venues for practitioners across the West to share the latest advancements in riparian restoration.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Inspiring the Next Generation



2,529

youth and adults were inspired to steward riverside lands

REW educates and inspires the next generation of stewards and community members on the importance of improving river health, through riparian restoration. We accomplish this by delivering interactive presentations and hands-on learning opportunities in the outdoors, including our annual [Raft the River](#) float trip.



Educating About the Latest Innovations



1,222

professionals were trained and educated

In 2017, REW hosted and presented at workshops, and other training events, to address riparian restoration needs, challenges, and advancements in the field.

Connecting River Restoration Professionals



130

river restoration professionals connected at our annual conference

Land and water managers, researchers, students, watershed groups, and consultants from 14 states and two countries attended REW's 15th Annual Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado. Participants shared important resources and solutions for restoring riparian landscapes.

"Having the opportunity to attend the RiversEdge West conference was a fantastic experience. Because I work in a local watershed group, tackling tamarisk and Russian olive is a big part of my job, and the conference provided a valuable insight to the best practices and methods to reach our goals. The sessions not only covered the science of removing invasive species, but also, covered important organizational tasks like how to recruit volunteers or raise money for our non-profit."

- Sam Wallace, pictured left, 2017 Conference Scholarship Recipient

CURRENT STAFF



Stacy Beaugh
Executive Director



Shannon Hatch
Restoration
Coordinator



Cara Kukuraitis
Outreach
Coordinator



Melissa McMaster
Restoration
Coordinator



Rae Robinson
Cross-Watershed
Network VISTA



Shelly Simmons
Restoration
Coordinator



Ben Bloodworth
Tamarisk Beetle
Program
Coordinator



**Kristen
Jespersen**
Funding Program
Coordinator



Rusty Lloyd
Program Director



Lindsay Murdoch
Cross-Watershed
Network Coordinator



**Michele
Rorhbach**
Bookkeeper



David Varner
Restoration
Coordinator

FORMER STAFF
Julie Knudson
Daniel Oppenheimer

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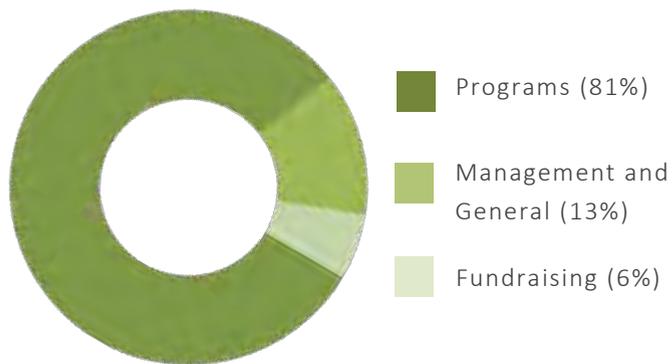
Miffie Blozvich, Habitat for Humanity

Scott Marsh, Kansas Department of Agriculture

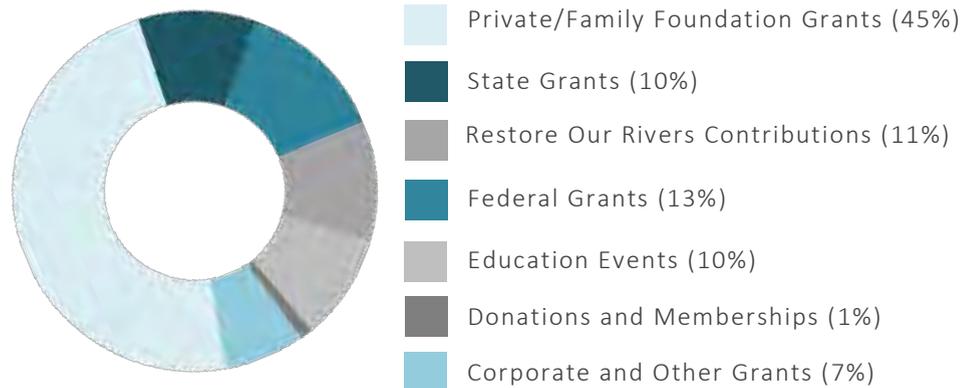
Susan Culp, Next West Consulting, LLC

2017 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

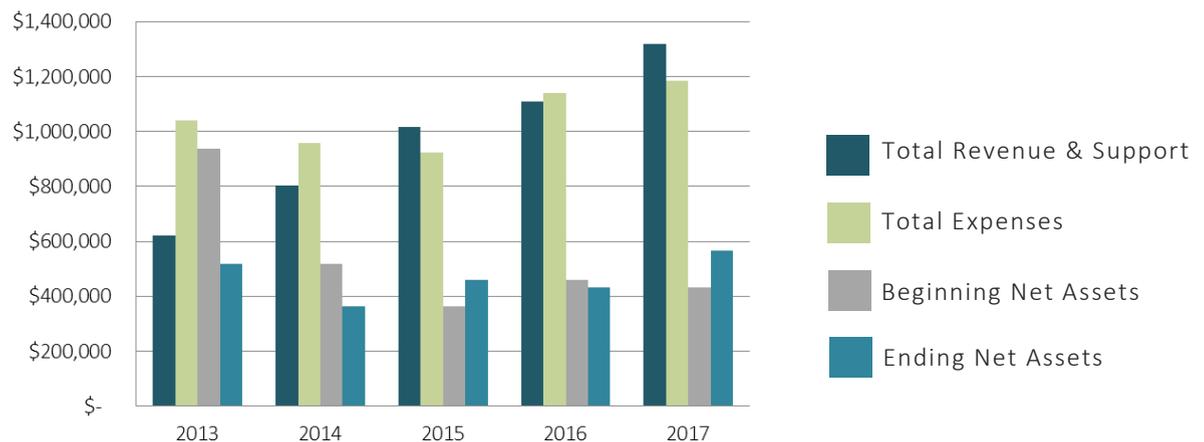
Expenses | \$1,183,426



Income | \$1,319,381



2012-2017 Year-to-Year Comparison



2017 MEMBERS & DONORS

Thanks to investments from individuals like you, we have restored thousands of riverside acres impacted by invasive plants and continue to provide river restoration professionals and watershed groups with knowledge, resources, funding, and capacity to keep moving forward. RiversEdge West welcomes and appreciates contributions of any amount. Visit our [website](#) or call 970-256-7400 to contribute.

THANK YOU

Jennie Aubert
Ann Marie Aubry
Liz Ballenger
Dave Bastian
Dan Bean
Corey & Stacy Beauth
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Kevin Bedard
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Summer Yuan

LEAVE YOUR RIVER LEGACY

Leave a lasting impact that reflects your values and sends a positive message to your family is by remembering RiversEdge West in your will or living trust. Your gift will ensure that rivers are protected now and long into the future. Contact Rusty Lloyd at rllloyd@riversedgewest.org or call 970-256-7400 to [learn more](#).

Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
Alligare, LLC
Alpine Bank
AmeriCorps VISTA/OSMRE
Arches Foundation
Arizona Department of Game & Fish
Arizona State University
Arizona State University Extension
Backcountry Vegetation Management
Bacon Family Foundation
Baron's Bar and Grill
Bedrock Charter School
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
Black Hills Energy Foundation
Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Cabela's
Cafe Sol
Canadian River Municipal Water Authority
Canyon Country Discovery Center
Carlson Vineyards
Central Arizona Project
Chelsea Nursery
Chevron
City of Fruita, Colorado
City of Grand Junction, Colorado
City of Trinidad, Colorado
Clifton Sanitation District
Colorado Canyons Association
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Palisade Insectary
Colorado Department of Transportation
Colorado Legacy Coffee
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Colorado River District
Colorado State Forest Service
Colorado State Land Board
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Colorado Water Conservation Board
Conservation Legacy's Southwest
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Dolores River Restoration Partnership
Edgewater Brewery
Escalante River Watershed Partnership
Fire on the Mountain
Forever Our Rivers Foundation
Four Corners School of Outdoor
Education Canyon Country Youth
Corps
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Gateway Canyons Resort
Gateway School/D51
GeoSystems Analysis
Gila River Indian Community
Gila Watershed Partnership
Goodwin Foundation
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Grand Junction Lions Club
Grand Valley Audubon Society
Home Loan
Home Style Bakery
Horizon Sunrise Rotary Club of Grand
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National Park Service – Exotic Plant
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Octopus Coffee
Oklahoma State University
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Palisade River Ranch
Paradox Valley Charter School
Patagonia
Pima County Government
Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
Reddy Ice
Rib City
Rim To Rim Restoration
Rimrock Adventures
Rio Blanco County
Rio Blanco County Weed and Pest
Control
River Management Society
River Restoration Adventures for
Tomorrow
Ruth Powell Hutchins Water Center at
Colorado Mesa University
Safeway
Salt River Project
Sam's Club, Grand Junction
San Miguel County, Colorado
Sky Island Alliance
Society for Ecological Restoration -
Southwest Chapter
Southern Nevada Water Authority
Southwest Decision Resources
Southwestern Oklahoma State
University
Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River
Conservation District
State of Utah School and Institutional
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Fish and Wildlife Program
UC Santa Barbara
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Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition
Virgin River Conservation Partnership
Walton Family Foundation
Western Colorado Conservation Corps
Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative
Western Colorado Wildlife Habitat
Association
Western Slope Conservation Center
White River and Douglas Creek
Conservation Districts
Wildland Restoration Volunteers
Wildland Scapes
Xcel Energy
Xcel Energy Foundation



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P.O. BOX 1907
GRAND JUNCTION, CO 81501
EIN 27-0007315

www.riversedgewest.org

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