



RiversEdge West

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

www.riversedgewest.org

MISSION

RiversEdge West advances the restoration of **riparian*** lands through education, collaboration, and technical assistance.

WHY RESTORE

Invasive plants degrade rivers and collectively reduce the ecologic, economic, and social values that rivers provide.

Roughly 1% of land in the United States is considered riparian, yet 80% of all wildlife species depend on this habitat for food and shelter at some point in their lifetime.

Invasive plants such as tamarisk (salt cedar) and Russian olive invade natural areas along rivers and streams, degrading essential habitat and resources for humans, fish, and wildlife.

The dense growth patterns of invasive plants block river access for recreation and agriculture, create hazards for river runners, invade popular campsites, channelize waterways, and increase the frequency and severity of wildfires.

Along with displacing native vegetation, the water usage by these plants can also be substantial; most notably in areas where these species displace less thirsty plants, such as sagebrush and rabbitbrush.

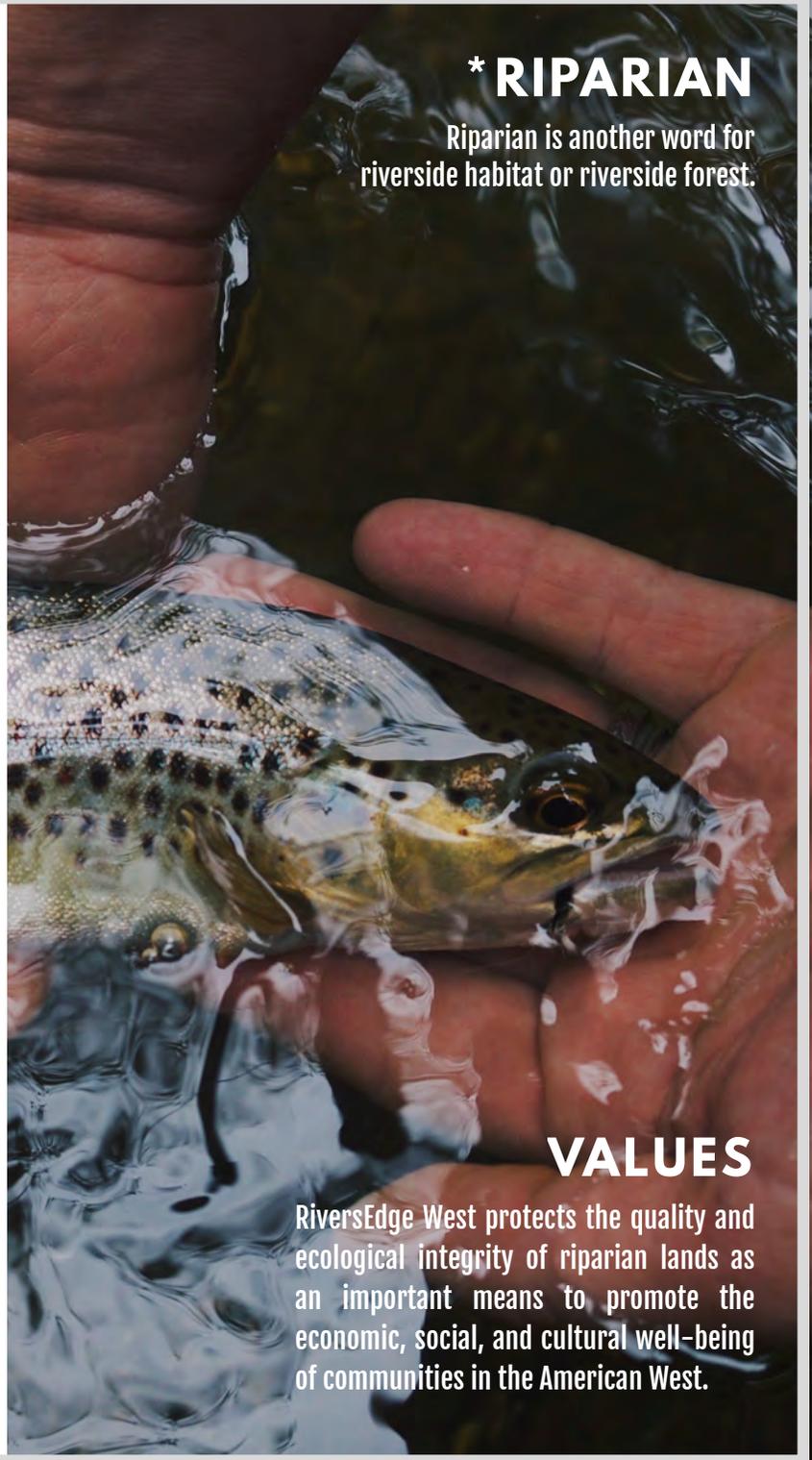
While invasive plants may never be completely eradicated from riparian areas, RiversEdge West works to keep them at a manageable level so native plants can thrive.

* RIPARIAN

Riparian is another word for riverside habitat or riverside forest.

VALUES

RiversEdge West protects the quality and ecological integrity of riparian lands as an important means to promote the economic, social, and cultural well-being of communities in the American West.



RIVEREDGE WEST RESTORES RIPARIAN AREAS BY:

Planning &
fundraising for
riparian restoration



Leading & supporting
invasive plant
management



Conducting &
promoting
research of native
plant restoration



Educating, evaluating,
& sharing lessons
learned



Inspiring
communities
to be stewards
of the land
and water

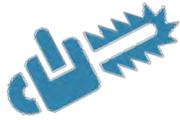


2018 IMPACT



\$3,998,680

Raised for river restoration



1,931

Acres of invasive plants treated



142

Acres of native plants planted



652

River restoration professionals trained & educated



57

Jobs created for young adults & local contractors



1,254

Youth & adults inspired & engaged in river restoration



HELLO FROM RUSTY LLOYD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2018 RiversEdge West (REW) Annual Report. This was a year of transformation for our organization as we witnessed changes to our name and leadership. Despite these changes, our focus and progress towards healthy rivers remained strong.

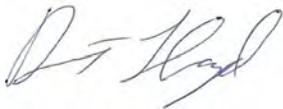
This past year also marked the beginning of a new 5-year road map as presented in our [2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan](#). In this plan, we set newly defined goals but stayed true to our central pillar of achieving healthy and sustainable riparian areas across the West. Through meaningful partnerships and collaboration many positive changes were made, but many challenges remain as we continue to see impacts from invasive plant species, persistent droughts, and damaging wildfires to riverside lands.

As we enter 2019 with new staff, REW remains faithfully committed to safeguarding the integrity of riparian ecosystems for wildlife and humans alike. Our work is dedicated to ensuring future generations will have river systems that support the well-being of communities in the West.

To that end, REW stays mission-focused by providing robust education and restoration programs by working across state lines and watersheds, and with local communities, to share best practices and the latest restoration science with our partners and the public. One of our most cherished values is working collaboratively with diverse groups of people. To all of you doing your part, whatever it may be, to help our rivers...keep up the good work!

Our efforts would not be possible without the generosity of our friends and partners. Thank you for your continued support and please stay engaged with us as we forge ahead!

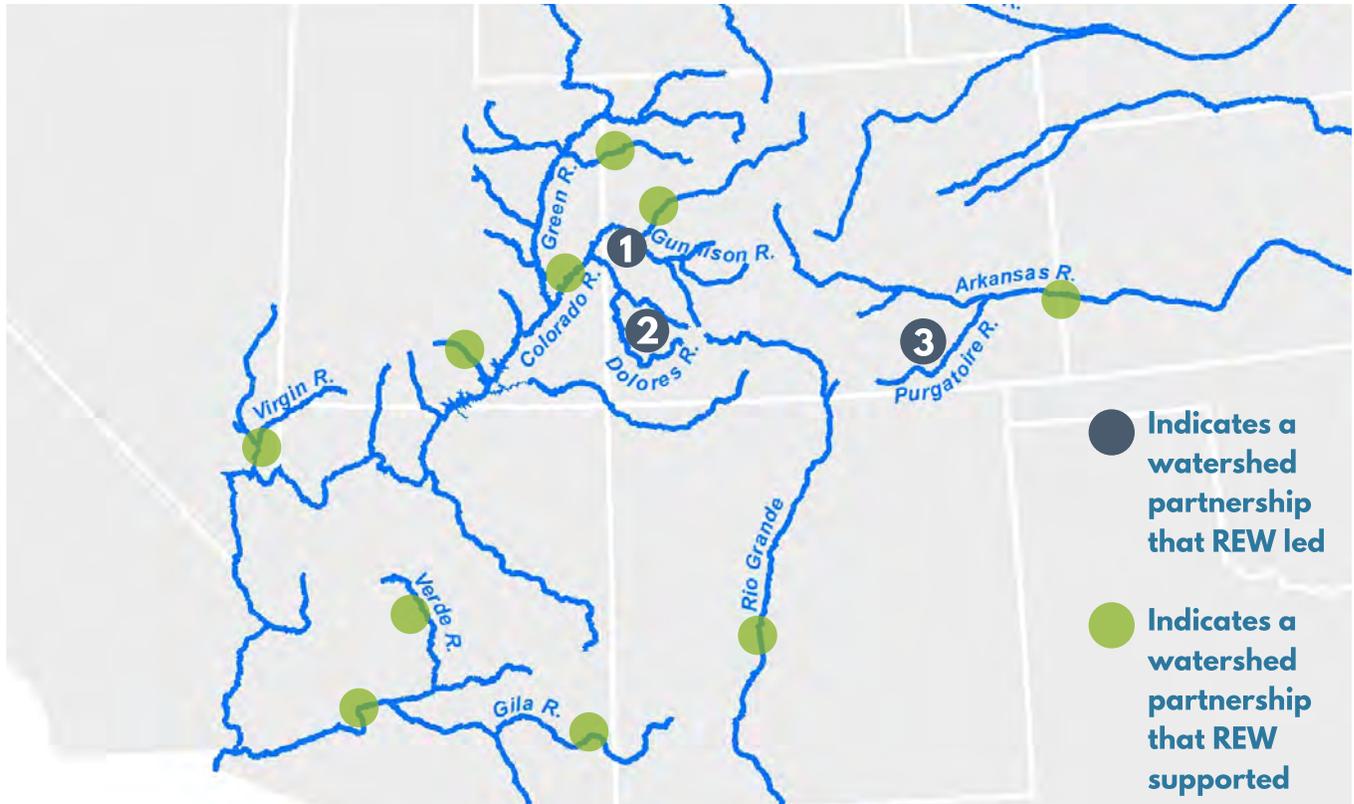
Sincerely,



Rusty Lloyd
Executive Director



WHERE WE WORKED IN 2018



SUPPORTING ● WATERSHED PARTNERSHIPS

RiversEdge West bolsters community-based partnerships across the West by providing technical advice, organizational and fundraising capacity, strategic planning support, facilitation, and practitioner education.

In 2018, RiversEdge West supported the following partnerships:

- › [Arkansas Partners](#) | Arkansas River, CO & KS
- › [Escalante River Watershed Partnership](#) | Escalante River, UT
- › [Gila Watershed Partnership](#) | Gila River, AZ
- › Lower Gila River Partners | Gila River, AZ
- › [Middle Colorado Watershed Council](#) | Colorado River, CO
- › [Save Our Bosque Task Force](#) | Rio Grande, NM
- › [Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership](#) | Colorado River, UT
- › [Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition](#) | Verde River, AZ
- › Virgin River Coalition | Virgin River, NV, UT & AZ
- › [White River Partnership](#) | White River, CO & UT

LEADING RIPARIAN RESTORATION ●

RiversEdge West leads three riparian restoration partnerships that are interrupting invasive plant infestation trends and returning riparian corridors to diverse and resilient ecosystems.

1

Colorado and Gunnison Rivers
DESERT RIVERS COLLABORATIVE



2

Dolores River
DOLORES RIVER RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP



3

Purgatoire River
PURGATOIRE WATERSHED WEED MANAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE



In its 6th year, the Desert Rivers Collaborative focused its efforts on reducing invasive plants on public and private lands as well as addressing **wildfire risks*** in urban and rural areas of Mesa and Delta Counties. This effort gathered momentum after several wildfires in 2018 swept through the Colorado River's riparian corridor.

Looking ahead, the Collaborative will continue to focus much of its restoration efforts on recovering these recently burned areas, protecting existing ecological assets from wildfire, and reducing wildfire fuels in areas with heavy infestations of invasive plants.

After 10 successful years of removing invasive plants from the banks of the Dolores River, the Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) has shifted its focus to maintaining the work they have accomplished.

As the DRRP moves into the next phase of restoration, building resiliency back into the disturbed ecosystem begins with follow-up on previously treated sites to clear **secondary invasives*** and plant native species.

The partnership is also strengthening the stewardship bonds between the river and the communities that depend on it by hosting educational and volunteer events with local schools and community groups.

First formed in 2016, the Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative continues to strengthen and grow the noxious weed program in Las Animas County, CO.

REW champions the collaborative by employing its coordinator, supporting its programs, and bringing technical resources to the partnership; elevating and moving PWWMC forward toward its goal of creating a stand-alone noxious weed program.

*Wildfire Risk

Historically, riparian areas have been barriers to fire by acting as a natural fire-break. With invasive plants now densely populating most river corridors in the Southwestern U.S., riparian areas have instead become pathways for fire to spread; making invasive plant management even more important. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about the ways that invasive plants increase the potential for fire in riparian ecosystems.

*Secondary Invasives

River restoration is a multi-year process. Once woody invasive plants such as tamarisk and Russian olive are removed, continued care is required in order to prevent secondary weeds such as kochia and Russian knapweed from invading before native plants have the chance to regenerate in the ecosystem.



FUNDING RIPARIAN RESTORATION

For watershed partnerships that are tackling riparian restoration, one of the most challenging aspects is acquiring and maintaining consistent funding to support the staff positions needed to effectively organize, conduct, and follow up on restoration efforts.

To support riparian restoration in the long-term, REW's Funding Program helps to fund watershed partnerships' staff capacity and provides training on how to successfully develop diversified funding portfolios.

One example of how REW helped practitioners overcome the challenges of securing various sources of funding and long-term support was REW's [Restore Our Rivers \(ROR\) campaign](#). After successfully raising a total of \$1.56M in private funding, REW invested the ROR monies into nine watershed partnerships that now use the funds to support these hard-to-fund components of restoration work (e.g., planning, staff capacity, monitoring, and maintenance).

Since the conclusion of ROR in March 2018, REW works closely with the partnerships that participated in the campaign to ensure that the activities and capacity they were able to develop continue to grow and be successful.

In the coming year, REW will build on the success of ROR by:

- › Providing direct fundraising support to at least 12 restoration partnerships/organizations.
- › Training practitioners in fundraising best practices and connecting them with funding networks and opportunities.
- › Increasing awareness about the importance of riparian restoration—especially as it relates to changing climate conditions—among foundations, federal agencies, and states in the Southwest.

RESTORING PRIVATE LANDS

Private lands contain a great deal of river frontage in the arid west due to the better soils and easy access to water for agricultural use.

Recognizing the importance of these lands, **REW teamed up with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) under the United States Department of Agriculture in 2018 to create a Private Lands Biologist position.**

The new position provides access to funding and technical assistance to private landowners conducting riparian restoration, while also helping landowners to navigate the incentive programs available through the NRCS. Learn more about restoration on private lands [here](#).



TRACKING THE TAMARISK BEETLE*



REW's [Tamarisk Beetle Program](#) monitors and tracks the tamarisk beetles' expansion across the Southwest to inform land managers about whether the beetle should factor into their river restoration activities.

In 2018, REW worked with over 40 partners across the Western U.S. to create its annual distribution map and presented information at numerous workshops across the Southwest on tamarisk beetle movement and its effects to the ecosystem. To get involved in the tamarisk beetle monitoring program, visit our website.

*Tamarisk Beetle

*The tamarisk beetle (*Diorhabda* spp.) is the biological control strategy for managing tamarisk. First released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2001, 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 beetle also reduces the reproductive viability of tamarisk. While the tamarisk beetle does not quickly eliminate tamarisk single-handedly, it has proven to be a significant factor in riparian restoration.*



Pictured above: tamarisk lines the Colorado River



Pictured above: the tamarisk beetle defoliated the leaves of tamarisk, turning the tamarisk brown

EDUCATING PROFESSIONALS

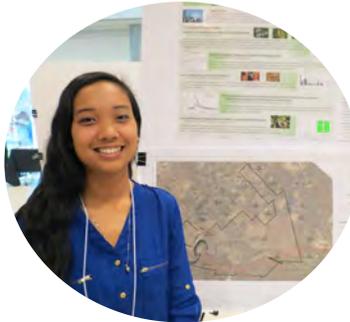
RiversEdge West's professional workshops, annual conference, and involvement in the Cross-Watershed Network provide venues for practitioners across the West to share the latest advancements in riparian restoration.



PRACTITIONER WORKSHOPS

REW's workshop series is quickly becoming a cornerstone of its outreach programs. These tailored, educational workshops increase the understanding, knowledge, and technical capability of those implementing restoration activities on public and private lands. This is accomplished through experiential, hands-on training and presentations that are designed to make technical restoration information and tools readily available to practitioners, land managers, and landowners. To view upcoming REW workshops visit our [event board](#).

REW's objective is to get state-of-science information into the hands of people working on riparian lands to enhance management decisions and restoration practices.



RIPARIAN RESTORATION CONFERENCE

REW's Annual [Riparian Restoration Conference](#) provides a collaborative venue for hundreds of riparian restoration practitioners from all across the U.S. to gather, share lessons learned, and discuss the latest science and innovations in riparian restoration.

In 2018, over 200 land and water managers, scientists, students, tribal representatives, watershed groups, and consultants from 14 states and two countries attended the sold-out conference in Grand Junction, Colorado.

"The Riparian Restoration Conference is one of the most informative and useful conferences I have ever attended in my career in that it brings together scientists, resource managers, and practitioners with ample opportunity to share and discuss information, goals, and methods across a broad range of relevant topics." -Conference Attendee



PEER-TO-PEER NETWORK

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

In 2018, the Network hosted workshops and cross-visits across the West and helped to initiate a state-based network in Arizona that will serve as a model moving forward for other state initiatives that want to utilize the XWN framework.

This state-based network model allows states to hone in on specific issues and potential funding opportunities while co-existing within a larger, regional network.

EDUCATING YOUTH & ADULTS

RiversEdge West fosters community support and stewardship for riparian restoration through storytelling, classroom education, and opportunities for the community at-large to learn about and experience the river first-hand.



INSPIRING YOUTH

Inspiring the next generation to care for riparian habitat is key to ensuring long-term support and engagement in riparian restoration.

To that end, REW developed an interactive River Education Curriculum in 2018, aligned with current academic standards, that engages students in riparian restoration topics and projects. Contact REW to schedule a classroom or field visit with your students or [learn more here](#).



Photo by Lee Gelatt Photography

SHARING RIVERSIDE STORIES

In 2018, REW added five videos to its [Riverside Stories](#); a storytelling series that connects its audience with the personal experiences of individuals that deeply care for, and are involved in, riparian restoration.

Discover the 18 different stories from across the West for yourself!



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Equally important to inspiring youth is connecting the community at large to the value of riparian restoration. REW's yearly [Raft the River](#) event and donor appreciation float trips provide an opportunity for all to experience the river, from the river; fostering a deeper connection to riparian restoration as a result. REW also hosts free "Lunch & Learn" presentations to members of the public, as well as presentations to interested businesses and organizational clubs.

2018 STAFF



Ben Bloodworth
Tamarisk Beetle
Program
Coordinator



Shannon Hatch
Restoration
Coordinator



Kristen Jespersen
Funding Program
Coordinator



Cara Kukuraitis
Outreach
Coordinator



Rusty Lloyd
Executive
Director



Melissa McMaster
Restoration
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Lindsay Murdoch
Cross-Watershed
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David Varner
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Shannon Wadas
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Sarah Wilson
Private Lands
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FORMER STAFF Karen Etter Stacy Beough Michele Rohrbach

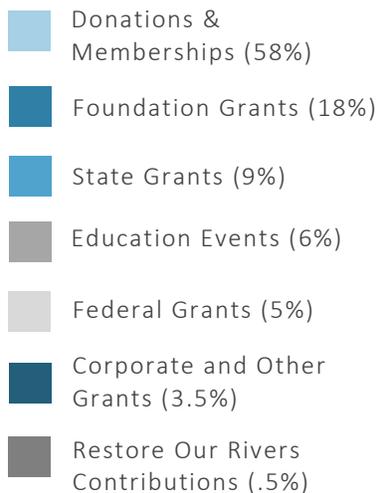
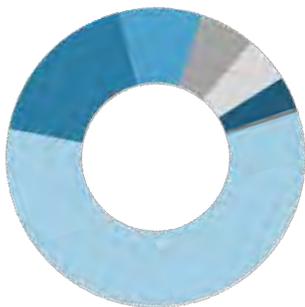
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2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME | \$1,695,120



EXPENSES | \$1,009,049



2018 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.

T H A N K Y O U

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LEAVE YOUR RIVER LEGACY

Leave a lasting impact that reflects your values and sends a positive message to your family 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 rlloyd@riversedgewest.org,
call 970-256-7400 or [learn more here](#).





RiversEdge West

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P.O. BOX 1907
GRAND JUNCTION, CO 81502
EIN 27-0007315

www.riversedgewest.org