

# Tamarisk Coalition

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE



**2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

[www.tamariskcoalition.org](http://www.tamariskcoalition.org)



## OUR MISSION

Advancing the restoration of riparian lands through collaboration, education, and technical assistance.

Photo by Jon Nelson

# RESTORING RIVERSIDES

## for Wildlife and Communities

Among the greatest stressors of riparian areas (the corridors along stream and river banks, typically characterized by a distinct set of water-loving plants and trees) are invasive plants such as tamarisk (saltcedar), Russian olive, knapweed and tree of heaven.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that **80% of the natural riparian habitat throughout the U.S. has been lost or altered in part due to the presence of these species**, which rapidly crowd out native plants such as cottonwood, willow, and mesquite, and significantly reduce the suitable forage and quality of habitat for wildlife, fish, pollinators, birds, and livestock. Along with decreasing biodiversity, invasive riparian plants channelize river banks, impair natural river function, restrict recreational and agricultural access to scenic landscapes and, in the case of tamarisk, increase the risk of wildfires.

**Tamarisk Coalition (TC) has been helping people manage invasive plant species and restore riparian areas since 1999.** In the process, we help create recreational opportunities, facilitate jobs for at-risk youth and local contractors, protect water resources, revitalize natural heritage for future generations, and engage local community members as volunteers to implement restoration activities.

Learn more about the impacts of [tamarisk](#) and other invasive plants, as well as the benefits of riparian restoration, [here](#).



Photo (*before*) of Escalante River dominated by Russian olive



Photo (*after*) removal of Russian olive and native vegetation returning

Photos by Bill Wolverton

# Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Tamarisk Coalition,

This past year, the TC team had the privilege of collecting stories from a broad spectrum of Westerners on the theme of why rivers and river restoration are important. Each of the 14 participating individuals expressed their passion for, and commitment to, protecting and restoring our region's greatest asset.

I learned about Sarah Henry, a teacher in Bedrock, Colorado who spends her days instilling students with respect for the river, and how tamarisk and Russian olive control projects are central to a veteran employment program run by Gary Rideout in Cottonwood, Arizona. I was impressed by how two neighbors, Matt Mitchell and Sal Gonzales, lead the charge in preserving the riverside forests of the Rio Grande in New Mexico, and intrigued by the many personal reasons people work so diligently on, and for, rivers.

These intimate stories are inspiring and humbling. They personalize the importance of healthy rivers, and introduce us to the community of people who champion the cause of healthy rivers and riparian lands. Without these hard-working individuals, river restoration will not be successful now or into the future. TC's job is to support them.

**2016 also began a two-year, \$2.4 million campaign - Restore Our Rivers - which TC is leading in coordination with nine river restoration partnerships.** The goal of Restore Our Rivers is to invest in the organizational strength and viability of those who are instrumental in riparian restoration - to ensure that Sarah has river lessons to share with her students, to maximize the long-term impacts of Gary's veterans' efforts, and to continue funding for Matt and Sal as they conserve the Rio Grande River. We know all too well that the long-term health of our rivers rests with these leaders and their communities, with TC alongside to bolster their success!

As of June 2017, the Restore Our Rivers initiative had raised \$1,262,295 or 52% of the \$2.4 million goal! THANK YOU to everyone who has contributed so far; we commend you for taking a lead role in preserving river health. The campaign will close at the end of 2017 and, when our goal is met, we all will be one step closer to securing a positive future for rivers and communities. **Please invest in a strong tomorrow for Western rivers by giving today - your local river will thank you!**

Respectfully,



Stacy Beaugh

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**“Tamarisk Coalition is working to support these hard-working individuals; without them, river restoration will not be successful now or into the future.”**

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## 2016 STAFF



Stacy Beaugh  
*Executive Director*

Ben Bloodworth  
*Tamarisk Beetle  
Program Coordinator*



Shannon Hatch  
*Restoration Coordinator*



Kristen Jespersen  
*Funding Program Coordinator*



Julie Knudson  
*Staff Scientist*



Cara Kukuraitis  
*Outreach Coordinator*



Rusty Lloyd  
*Program Director*



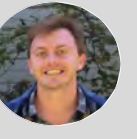
Melissa McMaster  
*Restoration Coordinator*



Lindsay Murdoch  
*Cross-Watershed Network VISTA  
Volunteer*



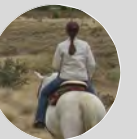
Daniel Oppenheimer  
*Restoration Coordinator*



Michele Rorhbach  
*Bookkeeper*



Shelly Simmons  
*Restoration Coordinator*



# HEALTHY RIVERS OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

TC's outreach and education program informs and inspires community members, youth, land managers, and land owners to manage and steward riparian lands.

This is accomplished by providing the following educational resources and programs:



## ONLINE LIBRARY

TC's online [resource library](#) is stocked with riparian restoration tools, best management practices, how-to videos, and lessons learned



## YOUTH & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TC leads youth and community [river engagement programs](#) such as the annual Raft the River event and interactive classroom and field-based programs with local schools



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE & WORKSHOPS

TC hosts an annual [conference](#) and workshops, sharing lessons learned and the latest science in the restoration field

## 1,828 PROFESSIONALS DEVELOPED THEIR SKILLS AT A TC TRAINING AND/OR WORKSHOP

In 2016, TC worked closely with private and public entities to design tailored workshops and training events to address riparian restoration needs and challenges.

## 115 COMMUNITY MEMBERS RAFTED THE RIVER

TC's Raft the River fundraisers brought community members of all ages out for float trips on the Colorado and Rio Grande rivers. Join us on the [next trip](#) for a unique behind-the-scenes look at the restoration work happening in the Grand Junction, Colorado area!

## 150 PRACTITIONERS CONNECTED AT THE ANNUAL TC CONFERENCE

Land and water managers, researchers, students, watershed groups, and consultants from 14 states attended TC's 14th Annual Conference in Grand Junction, Colorado. Participants discussed current challenges and innovative projects in the riparian restoration field, shared best practices, and connected with their peers in a collaborative venue.

From providing direct and individualized assistance to land managers, to leading broad-based education programs that support multi-stakeholder groups tackling riparian restoration, here are a few examples of what TC's Outreach and Education Program accomplished in 2016.

To learn more about these programs and to get involved, visit [TC's website](#), sign up for our [newsletter](#), and follow us on [Facebook](#).



## 1,067 YOUTH WERE INSPIRED TO STEWARD RIVERS THROUGH TC'S EDUCATION PROGRAM

TC's commitment includes supporting and inspiring the next generation to become stewards of riverside lands. Through interactive classroom presentations and hands-on learning in the outdoors for children and young adults, TC raises awareness and knowledge of river restoration and the impacts of invasive riparian plant species.

# SUPPORTING RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS

Some of the partnerships that TC has supported across the West in 2016 include:



1

**GILA WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP** — The Upper Gila River in AZ is critical habitat for the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and threatened Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo. The tamarisk beetle, which impacts the habitats of both birds, is predicted to arrive on the Gila River near Safford, Arizona during Summer 2017. The Partnership has been working hard to mitigate potential impacts of the tamarisk beetle and to re-establish native habitat in light of the beetle's imminent arrival. In 2016, TC assisted the Gila Watershed Partnership in securing \$95,000, refining its monitoring protocols, developing a secondary weed infestation plan, and instituting best management practices for revegetation success.

2

**SOUTHEAST UTAH RIPARIAN PARTNERSHIP** — The Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership has been working to improve the riparian health of the Colorado River and its tributaries in the Moab, Utah area since 2006. In 2016, the group began to address natural resource concerns and impacts from increased recreational use. TC assisted the Partnership in addressing these concerns through planning, facilitation, outreach, education, and private fundraising support.

3

**SOUTH PLATTE PARTNERSHIP** — In 2016, TC began working with the South Platte Basin Roundtable (part of Colorado's Water Planning Process) to help map out a strategy for funding, leadership, and resources to control weeds like tamarisk and Russian olive. TC also assisted researchers at Colorado State University on a project to assess the growth of invasive and native plants along the South Platte River in the wake of the 2013 floods.

4

**VERDE WATERSHED RESTORATION COALITION** — The Verde River in Arizona provides incredible beauty and critical habitat for threatened and endangered bird species, as well as recreational opportunities and water supply for local and regional communities. TC has served on the Verde River Restoration Coalition's steering committee since its inception and continues to provide support in the form of crew training, fundraising, grant writing, and outreach and public engagement. In 2016, TC helped the Coalition secure \$74,000 via grant writing and assisted with field crew training on invasive and native plant identification.

5

**WHITE RIVER PARTNERS** — In 2016, a formal partnership of agencies, organizations, and individuals began to form around the idea of restoring sections of the White River impacted by tamarisk and Russian olive in Colorado and Utah. TC supported this budding partnership by sharing experiences and successes of other developing partnership groups. White River Partners now holds regular meetings, informed by the work of a core team and finance subcommittee, and now is well positioned to engage in larger-scale river restoration activities in the next few years.



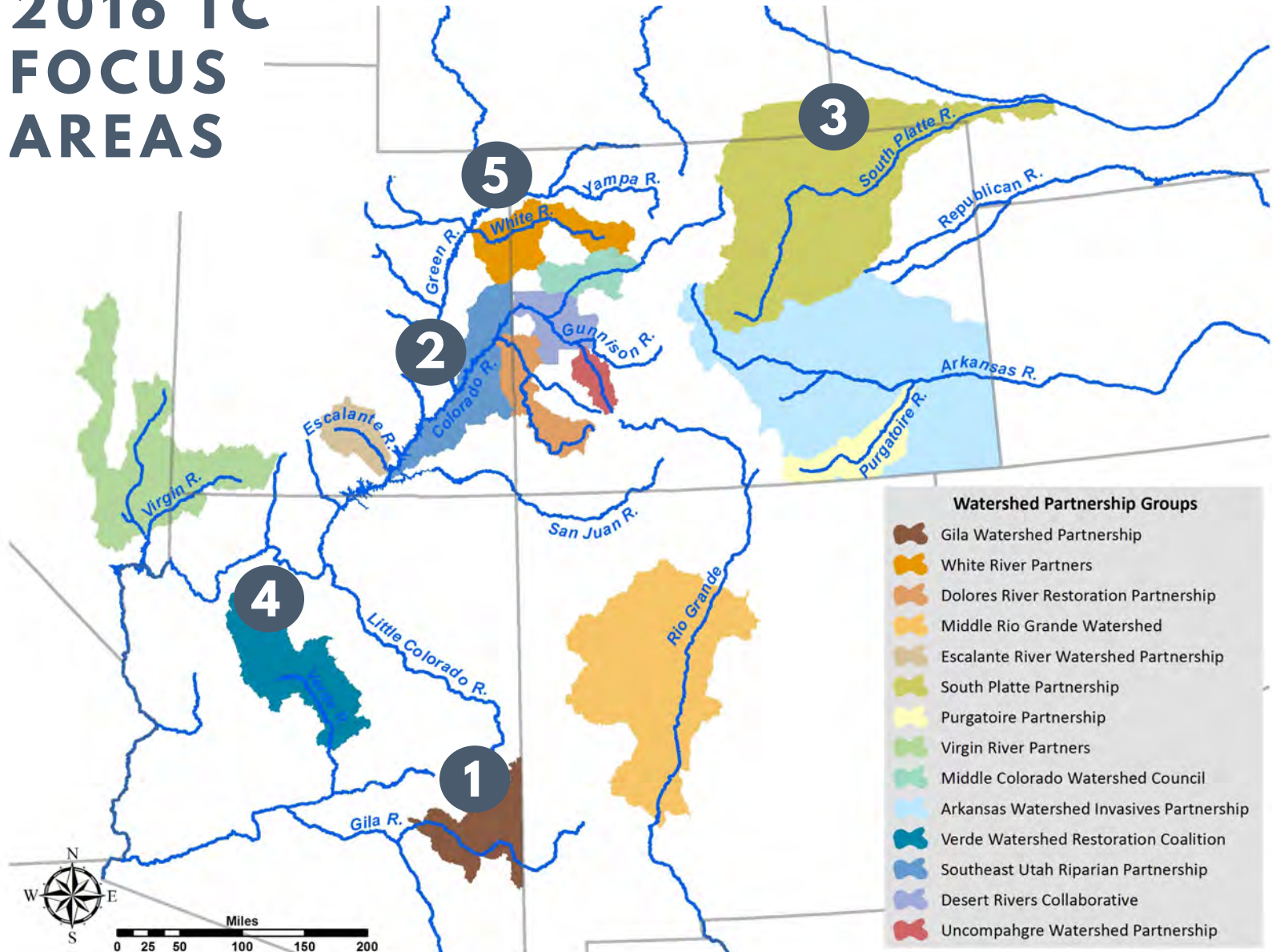
Photo of Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo by Larry Smith



Restoration partnerships (community-based groups) are working across the West to replace high priority invasives with native plants like cottonwoods and willows. Tamarisk Coalition's objective is to "prop up" these partnerships - build their organizational and fundraising capacity, while providing technical/scientific assistance and sharing information - to conduct, coordinate, and sustain riparian restoration efforts at a local level.

While TC's role and contributions vary, our dedication to helping restoration partnerships be effective and successful does not waver.

# 2016 TC FOCUS AREAS



# 2016 IMPACT

## Tamarisk Coalition-Led River Restoration Partnerships



### DOLORES RIVER

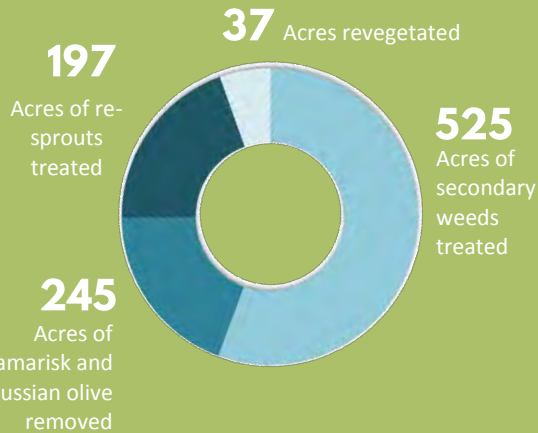
#### *Dolores River Restoration Partnership*

The Dolores River, a remote and iconic desert river running through southwestern Colorado and eastern Utah, is the centerpiece 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.

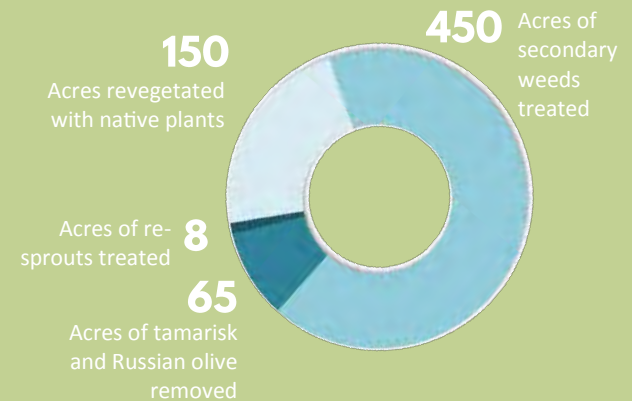
Since work began in 2009, more than 1,000 acres impacted by invasive plants have been restored back to a diverse native plant ecosystem.

TC co-leads the Partnership and, in 2016, led efforts to elevate the importance of watershed stewardship by engaging community members in projects. We also worked with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to understand the impacts of river restoration activities on birds in the area.



### COLORADO & GUNNISON RIVERS

#### *Desert Rivers Collaborative*



**\$280,000** Invested into local communities

**40** Jobs created for young adults and local contractors

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

**\$1,187,526** Invested into local communities through partnership expenditures

**46** Jobs created for young adults and local contractors

**2,059** Volunteer hours contributed to removing invasive plants and planting native grasses, shrubs, and trees



# LEADING RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS

Tamarisk Coalition is the lead coordinator for three public and private, multi-stakeholder river restoration partnerships. TC's leadership brings resource managers and communities together to address common challenges, leverage resources, build capacity, and collectively implement riparian restoration actions in an effective manner that promotes stewardship and long-term success.



## *Desert Rivers Collaborative (continued)*

In 2016, the [Desert Rivers Collaborative](#) completed a variety of projects, including tamarisk and Russian olive removal, herbaceous weed treatment, and native plant revegetation on several sites along the Colorado and Gunnison rivers in Colorado's Mesa and Delta counties.

The Collaborative also learned more about techniques to improve bird habitat and aims to broaden its future restoration impact in wetland and riparian systems utilized by multiple bird species.

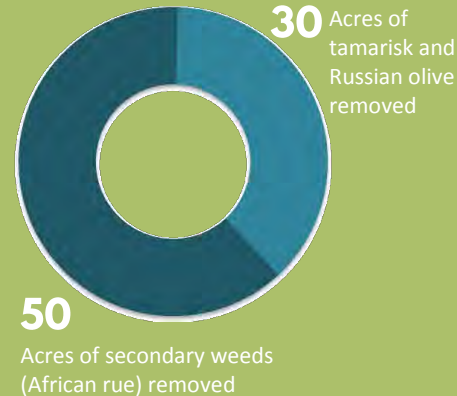
In July, two intrepid and resourceful interns, Mel Bamford and Iain Cooley, were hired to help map and monitor restoration sites on the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers throughout the Grand Valley. Data collected by the duo will enable land managers to better prioritize re-treatment and additional revegetation needs in the region.

In 2017 and with increased collaborative effort, Desert Rivers will discuss potential new treatment sites along the Gunnison River, revegetate select privately-held lands, and continue ongoing maintenance currently being coordinated for several sites.

Look for volunteer opportunities on TC's website, Facebook page, and via TC's e-newsletter in the coming months!

## PURGATOIRE RIVER

### *Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative*



**\$177,225** Invested in local communities

**30** Landowners were provided with technical assistance

In 2016, TC helped launch the [Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative](#). To get the Collaborative off and running, TC provided crucial capacity by hiring a coordinator and helping to fund landowner cost-share and youth education programs for the Purgatoire watershed.

First-year milestones include bringing on Sam Wallace, an AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer, to lead watershed health projects and educational events, and to kick-start numerous landowner cost share programs to address many weed species in the region.

Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative will continue to address invasive plant issues throughout the watershed to improve both regional agricultural productivity and the function of the riverside ecosystem.

# RESTORING OUR RIVERS

In 2016, Tamarisk Coalition kicked off an exciting initiative to invest \$2.42 million in the long-term sustainability of nine partnerships working to restore six rivers located throughout the Southwest.

## THE CHALLENGE

One of the biggest challenges local river restoration groups face is ensuring their own long-haul survival, such that their hard-fought conservation work is protected and continued.

## THE SOLUTION

To address this challenge, TC created the Restore Our Rivers initiative, a \$2.42 million fundraising campaign to support critical restoration activities that are difficult to finance via federal and state grant programs, as well as training and mentoring for restoration partnerships to build their board competency, organizational structure, fundraising knowledge and comfort, and technical aptitude for managing large-scale restoration programs.

As of June 2017, \$1,262,295 (52% of the total goal) has been committed to this initiative including commitments from all TC board members, Fire on the Mountain, Kannah Creek Brewing Company, Big Agnes, Xcel Energy, Black Hills Energy, Lawrence T and Janet T Dee Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, and numerous local contributors.

[Click here](#) to make a contribution to Restore Our Rivers or learn more.



Photo by Tom Till Photography, Inc.



# TAMARISK BEETLE PROGRAM

Tamarisk Coalition's Tamarisk Beetle Education and Monitoring Program provides information on the movement of the tamarisk beetle, educates the public about its potential ecosystem impacts, and compiles data from applied research so that land managers can effectively employ new approaches for restoration in areas affected by the beetle. We do not release tamarisk beetles; rather, we provide critical information concerning the tamarisk beetle to land managers to help them with decision making.



## WHAT IS THE TAMARISK BEETLE?

The tamarisk beetle (*Diorhabda* spp.) is the biological control option for managing tamarisk. First tested and released 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 helps to control the spread of tamarisk by reducing its reproductive viability. While it does not quickly eliminate tamarisk single-handedly, it has proven to be a significant factor in riparian restoration.



## MONITORING



TC has been the leader in monitoring the distribution and spread of the tamarisk beetle since 2007. While population numbers remained low across the Midwest and upper Colorado River Basin in 2016, surges throughout the Middle Rio Grande and southern New Mexico, as well as southward along the Colorado River below Lake Havasu, put large numbers of beetles squarely in areas occupied by the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, an endangered bird that has adapted to nest in tamarisk.

Spring of 2017 will be the first look at large-scale tamarisk defoliation in the midst of substantial tamarisk-dominated habitat of this endangered species. In light of these newly occupied territories, and the continued population spread, TC will continue to monitor the beetle and help land owners and land managers respond.

## EDUCATING



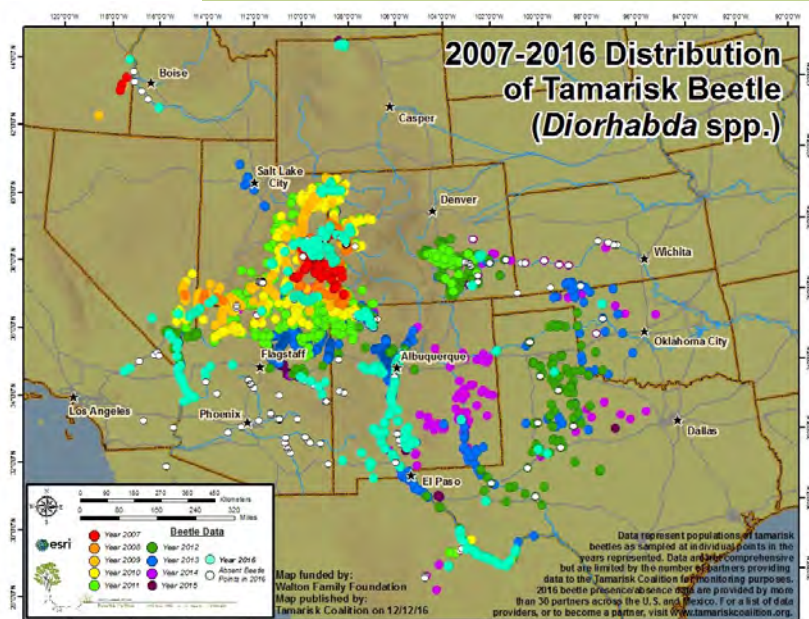
In 2016, TC brought 150 practitioners from New Mexico, Colorado, and Nevada together through workshops and training to learn from scientific experts on how to respond to the tamarisk beetle and its impacts. Topics included beetle distribution, endangered species concerns, wildfire, permitting, and restoration.

## MAPPING



TC develops annual maps that give a broad perspective on beetle dispersal and provides land managers with information to help with integrated pest management plans, restoration strategies, and funding opportunities.

In 2016, TC compiled beetle data from 43 partners in 13 states and Mexico to create the annual distribution map (pictured right).



# THE CROSS- WATERSHED NETWORK

The [Cross-Watershed Network \(XWN\)](#) is a practitioner-driven, peer-to-peer learning network to provide tools for restoration partnerships to build on the momentum of their peers working in other watersheds.

Tamarisk Coalition serves as an incubator for XWN as it grows its scope and participation.



In 2016, the Cross-Watershed Network (XWN) connected 187 watershed practitioners in five southwestern states through seven in-person, peer-to-peer exchanges. Through these connections, practitioners are building their collective capacity, more effectively managing landscapes, and improving river systems.

In 2017, Lindsay Murdoch, former AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer for XWN, will continue her support role for the Network as an official TC staff member. Practitioners can look forward to the fourth annual XWN workshop and other opportunities to engage with watershed practitioners through “cross-visits;” both are field-based opportunities to exchange information and successes. To explore additional opportunities for involvement, visit [crosswatershed.net](#) and subscribe to the XWN e-newsletter.

## RIVERSIDE STORIES

Thanks to funding provided by the Walton Family Foundation, TC created the [Riverside Stories series](#): 14 vignettes that capture the human spirit of riparian restoration, reaching far beyond the science and numbers.

The Riverside Stories series is raising awareness of river restoration by telling the stories of individuals across the West working hard to make an impact in their community.

Featured right is a [sample](#) from the series. Visit TC's website to explore them all!

### *RIVERSIDE STORIES PREVIEW* **DOUG KING**

Doug King's ranch sits right near the confluence of the Dolores and Colorado Rivers. Having lived on the land for the entirety of his life, Doug has witnessed the evolution of the river through the decades. Over the years, invasive plant species--primarily tamarisk and Russian knapweed--have taken over the river banks and choked out many of the natural grasses and trees.

Luckily, with all of the work he and the Dolores River Restoration Partnership have done on the Dolores River, things are slowly improving.



Doug cheerfully boasts that his ranch is in great shape now, and that the ecosystem is following suit.

“I have a theory that we should leave the land better than how we got it. I passed this idea down to my children, and they are passing it down to the next generation.”



# 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Vice President, Steve Woltjer**, Retired, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
**Treasurer, Tom Burke**, Burke Construction  
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**Advisor, Sue Bellagamba**, The Nature Conservancy

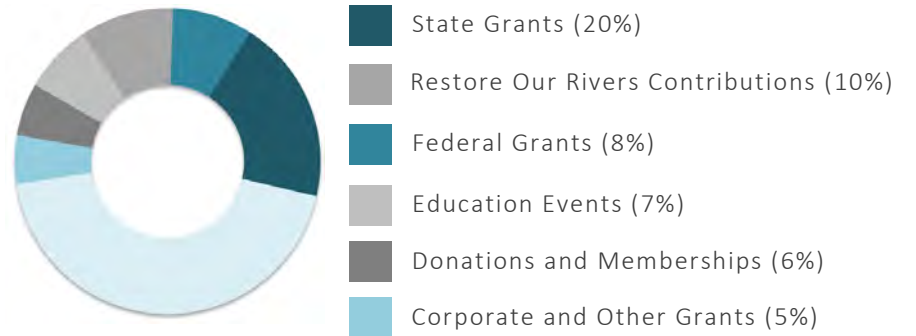
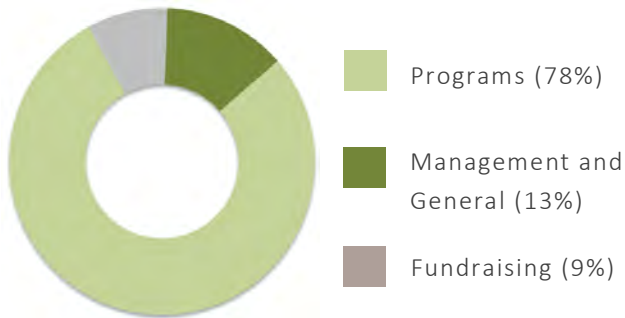
**Miffie Blozovich**, Habitat for Humanity  
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**Patty Gelatt**, Retired, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
**Adrian Oglesby**, Utton Trans Boundary Resources Center, University of New Mexico  
**Tom Ryan**, The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
**Advisor, Peter Culp**, Culp and Kelly, LLC



# 2016 TC FINANCIAL SUMMARY

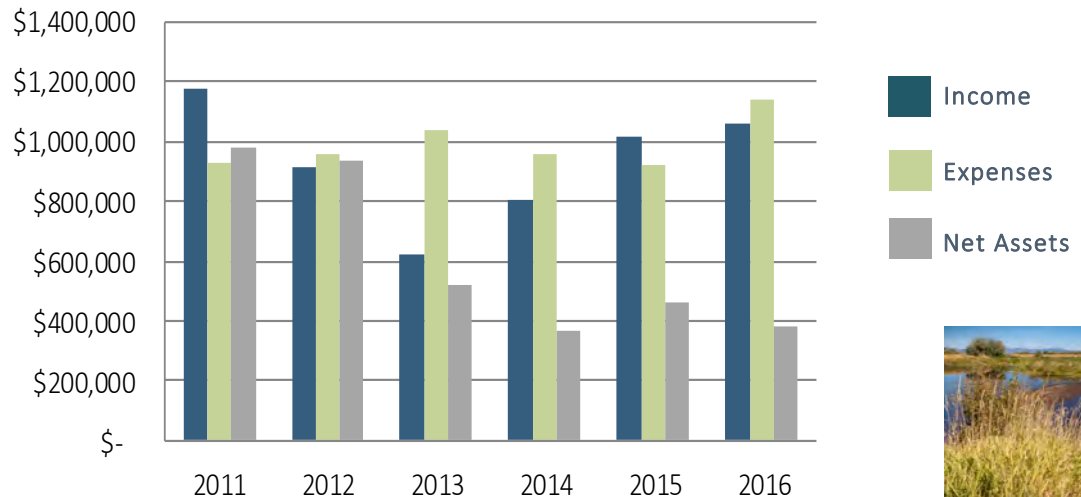
**EXPENSES \$1,138,734**

**INCOME \$1,060,130**



## 2011-2016 YEAR-TO-YEAR COMPARISON

\*Note: A multi-year pledge was received and booked in 2012, artificially lowering income figures in 2013 and 2014. Another multi-year pledge was booked in 2015, artificially lowering income figures in 2016.



# 2016 MEMBERS & DONORS

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Rachel Winston  
Dane Wood  
Megan Younker

## THANK YOU!

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 the knowledge, resources, funding, and capacity to keep moving forward.

TC welcomes and appreciates contributions of any amount. [Become a member](#), [donate](#), or call 970-256-7400 to send your financial support.

## LEAVE YOUR RIVER LEGACY

One of the simplest ways to ensure the protection of rivers into the future is by remembering TC in your will or living trust. For more information on how to include TC in your estate planning, please contact Stacy Beough at [sbeough@tamariskcoalition.org](mailto:sbeough@tamariskcoalition.org) or call 970-256-7400.

# 2016 PROGRAM PARTNERS & FUNDERS



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Colorado Legacy Coffee  
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Colorado Plateau Research Station  
Colorado River District  
Colorado Riverfront Commission

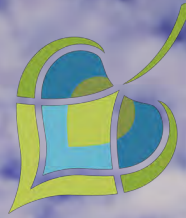
Colorado Riverfront Foundation, Inc.  
Colorado State University Extension  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Weed Management Association  
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Combined Federal Campaign  
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Fire on the Mountain  
Freeport-McMoRan  
Friends of the Verde River Greenway  
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Grand Valley Audubon Society  
Home Loan  
Homestyle Bakery  
International Boundary Waters  
Commission  
Kannah Creek Brewing Company  
Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Kansas State University  
Lawrence T and Janet Dee Foundation  
Malpai Borderlands Group  
Many Rivers Brewing  
Meredith Williams Foundation  
Mesa County, CO

Mesa Land Trust  
Middle Colorado Watershed Council  
Montana State University  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation -  
Conoco Phillips  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation -  
Developing the Next Generation of  
Conservationists  
National Park Service  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
New Belgium Brewing Company  
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish  
New Mexico State Forestry  
New Mexico State University  
Northern Water  
Oklahoma State University  
Oregon Department of Agriculture  
Pablo's Pizza, Grand Junction  
Palisade Brewery  
Patagonia  
Peach Street Distillery  
Pink's BBQ  
Private Landowners  
Pueblo of Laguna  
Quiet Waters Paddling  
Quivira Coalition  
REI  
Rib City  
Rimrock Adventures  
Rio Blanco County, CO  
River Management Society  
River Restoration Adventures for  
Tomorrow  
Ruth Hutchins Water Center at Colorado  
Mesa University  
Salvador Vitanza  
Sam's Club  
Society for Ecological Restoration  
Southwest Chapter  
Southwestern Water Conservancy  
District  
Southeast Utah Riparian Partnership  
Southern Nevada Water Authority  
Southwest Chapter River Management  
Society

Southwest Decision Resources  
Southwestern Oklahoma State University  
Spanish Peaks-Purgatorie River Conservation  
District  
Sprouts  
St. Francis University  
State of New Mexico  
Stillwater Sciences  
Sul Ross State University  
SWCA Consultants  
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U.S. Forest Service  
United Way of Northern Utah  
University of California at Santa Barbara  
University of New Mexico Utton Transboundary  
Center  
Utah Conservation Corps  
Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands  
Utah State University  
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Virgin River Conservation Partnership  
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Watershed Restoration Initiative  
Western Colorado Conservation Corps  
Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative  
Western Colorado Restaurant Group LLC  
Western Slope Conservation Center  
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# Tamarisk Coalition

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