



WHITE RIVER PARTNERSHIP

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

A RECAP OF RIPARIAN RESTORATION
ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE WHITE RIVER BASIN





WHITE RIVER

PARTNERSHIP

The White River Partnership (WRP) is a collaborative group of stakeholders in the White River Basin of northeastern Utah and northwestern Colorado consisting of federal and state land management entities, local and county governments, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations.

MISSION

The WRP is committed to restoring and maintaining healthy riparian areas along the White River in northwest Colorado and northeast Utah through collaboration among public, private, and non-profit entities.

VISION

The White River is a dynamic riverine ecosystem where the threats from Russian olive, tamarisk, and related invasive plant species have been mitigated and native, resilient vegetation communities reflect a healthy river system beneficial to fish and wildlife habitat that supports the ecological, social, and economic sustainability of the multiple land uses found along the White River corridor.

2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT A GLANCE

35 acres

of invasive tamarisk and
Russian olive removed

16 acres

of revegetation with native
plants and seed

225 native trees

planted

1,000 seedballs

made and dispersed on
restoration sites

160 acres

monitored to track progress
and inform next steps

40+ young adults

engaged through
partnering with
conservation corps

12 4-H club students

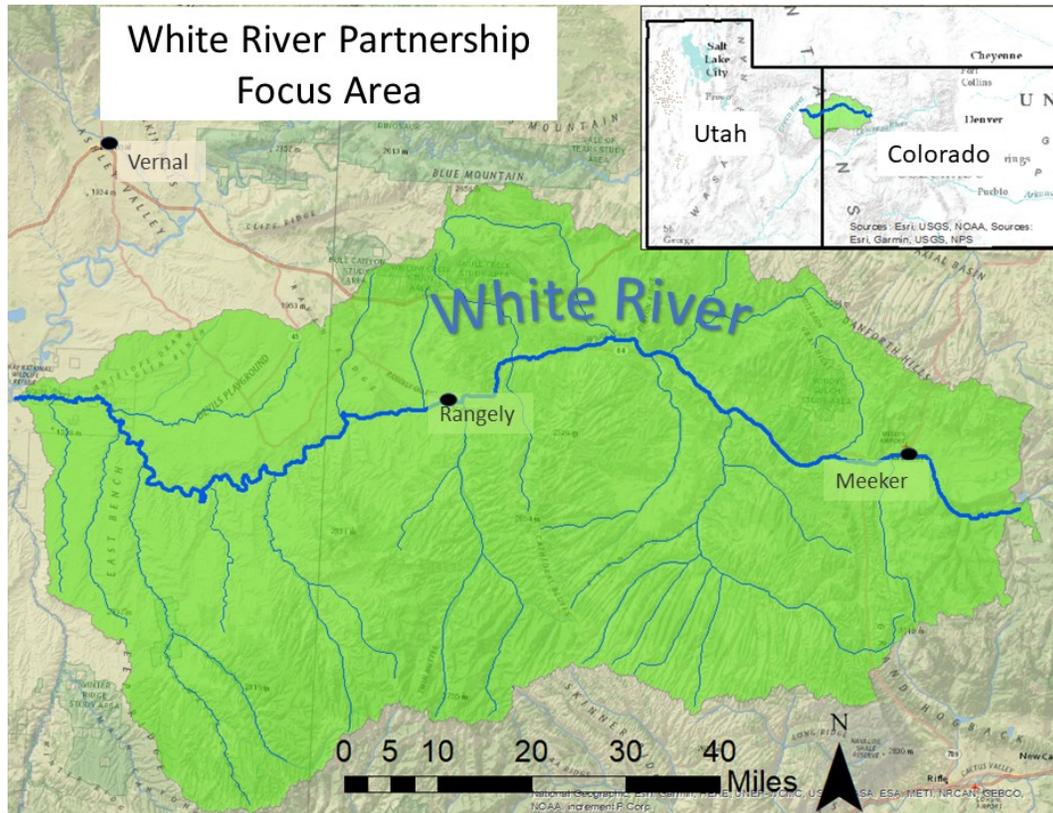
educated about riparian
health

12 college students

volunteered for restoration
projects

WHITE RIVER PARTNERSHIP FOCUS AREA

The WRP's focus area is the White River and its tributaries that are impacted by tamarisk and Russian olive. In 2022, projects were implemented on the White River on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management's Vernal and White River Field Offices and the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration. Project work also took place on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office and privately owned properties along Yellow Creek.



2022 PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

- > Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office
- > Bureau of Land Management Vernal Field Office
- > Bureau of Reclamation
- > Canyon Country Discovery Center
- > Colorado Northwestern Community College
- > Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- > Colorado Water Conservation Board
- > Colorado Watershed Assembly
- > George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation
- > Lawrence T. Dee & Janet T. Dee Foundation
- > Meeker, CO
- > Private Landowners
- > Rangely, CO
- > Rio Blanco County 4-H Club
- > RiversEdge West
- > State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration
- > Uintah County, UT
- > United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- > Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- > Utah Conservation Corps
- > Utah State University
- > Western Colorado Conservation Corps
- > White River Alliance
- > White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts

INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL

Infestations of invasive tamarisk, Russian olive, and other non-native weeds have come to dominate areas of the White River. These noxious plants damage the ecological and socio-economic well-being of the White River basin and its communities in myriad ways, by reducing wildlife habitat, increasing the risk of wildfire, and impeding access for agriculture and recreation. They also impair natural river functions and eliminate habitat for native endangered fish species by channelizing the river and armoring river banks, and disconnecting the river from the floodplain.



Top left: Western Colorado Conservation Corps members removing Russian olive from the river bank

Bottom left: More Russian olive has been removed

Bottom right: The same area cleared of Russian olive. For comparison, the far river bank is what this area looked like before invasive removal. Later in the summer, this treatment area was seeded with native plant seed. Photos by Western Colorado Conservation Corps.



INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL



Top: Before-and-after photos of clearing tamarisk in Yellow Creek.

Bottom: Before-and-after photos of a riparian area that was being colonized by invasive tamarisk and Russian olive. Photos by Utah Conservation Corps and Western Colorado Conservation Corps.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RiversEdge West, Rio Blanco County 4H Club, Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office, and Colorado Northwestern Community College made over 1,000 seedballs made of soil, clay, and native plant seed that were dispersed across a restoration site west of Rangely, CO. They also planted over 200 willows to stabilize a river bank on a private ranch.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Western Colorado Conservation Corps and Utah Conservation Corps are two WRP partners that provide trained crews to remove invasive plants. Crews consist of 5-10 young adults aged 18-25 who are trained in chainsaw operation, herbicide application, wilderness first aid, and other job skills.

Upon completion of their term, members also receive AmeriCorps Education Awards to pay student loans or tuition at colleges and trade schools. Many build on their corps experience by continuing to work for federal and state land management agencies .



PROJECT MONITORING

Utah State University and RiversEdge West teamed up to monitor 140 acres of riparian habitat managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Utah. These areas were a mix of previously treated sites and future restoration sites. They floated the White River for four days to access remote sites that have not been assessed in years. In addition to providing a snapshot of current riparian vegetation conditions, this monitoring information will inform the next steps on restoration sites and act as baseline data for new sites. [See the full monitoring report here](#), or [view all WRP restoration data here](#).



Top left: Paddling the White. Top right: Utah State University and REW staff monitoring a site where invasive tamarisk and Russian olive have been removed and native cottonwood trees dominate the canopy. Bottom left: A Russian olive treated with the “frill cut” method that was uprooted by wind. Bottom right: Kayaks parked at a monitoring area.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

The WRP will:

- > Expand restoration opportunities with new partners and private landowners
- > Coordinate with other White River management plans
- > Seek out opportunities for outreach and engagement
- > Identify strategies to continue site maintenance and expand restoration impacts
- > Focus on increasing local employment, internship, and educational opportunities in restoration
- > Encourage collaborative restoration across jurisdictional boundaries
- > Explore opportunities to share information about process-based restoration



Photos by Western Colorado Conservation Corps



GOODBYE AND THANK YOU!

Jerrad Gooddell and Casey Pennock have taken new positions outside of the White River basin.

Jerrad led and managed White River riparian restoration projects from the Bureau of Land Management Vernal Field Office for many years.

Casey, as a post-doctoral researcher at Utah State University, supported project management and monitoring needs, and is the lead author of the [Conservation, Restoration, and Monitoring Plan for the Lower White River, Utah.](#)

Thank you both for all of your work on our rivers and best of luck in your new positions!



WHITE RIVER PARTNERSHIP



Western Colorado Conservation Corps members cutting and treating invasive tamarisk along Yellow Creek. Photo by Western Colorado Conservation Corps

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The WRP maintains a publicly available map to track treatment areas, monitoring data, and other geospatial information relevant to riparian restoration. Check it out here: <https://arcg.is/10bujL>



RiversEdge West coordinates the White River Partnership. Visit riversedgewest.org/partnerships/white-river-partnership or call 970-256-7400.