

White River Partnership Meeting
March 2, 2021 1:00-2:45
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Shawn Welder, John Leary, David Graf, Kristen Jesperson, Rusty Lloyd, Deirdre Macnab, Jordon Detlor, Wally Macfarlane, Cody Perry, Nathan Hall, Jeff Roberts, Jerrad Goodell, Matt Jennings, Christian Smith, Tory Mathis, Justin Jimenez, Tom Fresques, Iain Emmons, Dave Bastian, Walt Proctor, Matthew Cazier, Brook Watts, Marcus Kisner, Chris Quirin, Jane Turburke, Kenda Young, Elissa Rothman, Tildon Jones, Steve (?)

Link to WRP Restoration Plan: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KxCkMvaxE3bpGo-y0-6HgTzEehlcpy2Q?usp=sharing>

Link to Lower White River Riparian Vegetation Mapping from Wally's (USU) presentation: <https://usu.app.box.com/s/em6ya4uh516w3furpya32b9dwehyq9nx>

Conservation Corps Contacts:

Matt Jennings (Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC)) mjennings@mesapartners.org

Dave Bastian (Canyon Country Youth Corps (CCYC)) daveb@ccdDiscovery.org

Objectives:

- Celebrate our accomplishments
- Identify and discuss the resources we have and those we need to continue our progress

1:00 Welcome and Agenda

1:10 Restoration Plan and MOU

MOU: 10 entities have signed, 5 more are pending, 3 will appear on the MOU as “advisory role,” other folks will stay involved as needed/available but didn't expect their participation to warrant signing the MOU

Restoration Plan:

Link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KxCkMvaxE3bpGo-y0-6HgTzEehlcpy2Q?usp=sharing>

Asking for comments in the next week or 2 in order to submit a finalized version to Bureau of Reclamation at the end of March. Reach out to John with any comments for changes or additions. Plan is designed to be a living document that will change as technology, progress, conditions, partners, etc change.

The 2 documents have brought us together on working towards successful restoration on the White River. The goal for today is to hear from different folks in the partnership that provide important aspects of the diverse partnership and start rounding the corner and moving from what we've accomplished so far to getting work done on the ground

1:20 WRP Logo Reveal

There was some concern that there are other White Rivers in the country and in Utah. Can we put "Colorado and Utah" at the bottom?

1:25 Vegetation Mapping (Wally Macfarlane, Utah State University)

Report and Data available here:

<https://usu.app.box.com/s/em6ya4uh516w3furpya32b9dwehyq9nx>

This was just completed in Dec 2020/Jan 2021. Riparian Land Cover Classification of the Lower White River, Utah. Based on 2018 data (most recent) funded by BLM, lots of work done by Sul Ross University. Covers the CO/UT state line to the Enron takeout; primarily BLM land, some private land, some SITLA.

Can be used at the broad scale or at site-level scale. It has cottonwood, Russian olive, tamarisk mapped; highly detailed. Will be used for the Conservation and Restoration Plan, identifying reaches to prioritize for different actions. Conservation target areas could be highly dense cottonwood stands where we remove Russian olive; restoration areas could be denser Russian olive stands.

There is a separate data set of overflight data from Taylor Draw Dam to the Green River confluence.

There is interest for getting other funding together to map the rest of the extent. It would cost about \$25-\$30,000 for 77km of river length. About half the river length has been done from Taylor Draw Dam to the Green River.

Riparian vegetation change takes time, so a reflight isn't needed but every decade or 5 years. A monitoring plan for looking at specific areas that have been eradicated would be more important/useful. Changes in non-eradication areas don't need to be monitored more than every 5 or so years.

Hopefully we'll have a followup session with some more detail in the future.

1:40 Restoration Funding Process (Kristen Jespersen, RiversEdge West)

This is Kristen's first WRP meeting but is familiar with the project. She is the Fundraising Coordinator for REW and the partnerships REW works with; identify needs, resources, develop funding plans. Focuses on sustainable and diverse funding sources. REW is currently working off of a Bureau of Reclamation Watersmart Grant for WRP development to date, funded through March 2021.

We have some funding gaps for implementation, hopefully pending grants will come through. Approx. \$216,00 shortfall for implementation we are hoping for, pending grants will be announced in March and May 2021.

Grant writing is competitive; it's important to present projects that are multi-benefit, not just focused on weed abatement eg hunting access, wildlife habitat, etc.

The WRP may be ready to form a Funding Subcommittee to focus on bringing in resources. Although there is a potential budget gap, this is a normal place to be for a new partnership working towards developing a sustainable funding plan. We're in a position to wait and see how pending grants develop.

1:55 Restoration Work on the Ground (Matt Jennings, Western Colorado Conservation Corps)

Matt Jennings (Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC)) mjennings@mesapartners.org

Dave Bastian (Canyon Country Youth Corps (CCYC)) daveb@ccdsccovery.org

Matt gave an overview of Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC) and conservation corps in general. They are a legacy of the CCC from the 1930s, focused on youth employment (18-25). AmeriCorps program, provides living stipend and scholarships. Work with land management agencies on trails, invasive species, fencing, tamarisk and Russian olive removal. Also focus on education opportunities. They are a fee-for-service organization.

Schedule projects about a 1 year out. They usually average 2-3/acres/week for Tamarisk and Russian olive, but it varies widely based on site specific conditions. A long-term plan is key, like their success on the Dolores River.

Dependable funding sources also important for scheduling crews. The pandemic shifted a lot of scheduled work to 2021 from 2020. It could open doors for 2022. CCYC may have availability. CCYC is also working on outreach and they do a lot of grant writing, there are grants specific to corps that are available.

Different corps are throughout CO/UT/the USA. They all have different operating models and all cooperate together.

There are also opportunities to working with contractors with heavy equipment where needed/available.

2:30 Meeting ended