

White River Partnership Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, February 2, 2022 10:30-12:00 MST

Meeting Minutes

Objectives:

- Share and discuss
 - 2022 riparian restoration project implementation
 - Planning and assessment updates
- Upcoming project opportunities and ideas
- Identify information gaps for project prioritization and planning

In attendance:

- John Leary – RiversEdge West
- Everitt Merritt – RiversEdge West
- Rusty Lloyd – RiversEdge West
- Elizabeth Chandler White River IWI
- Georgia Foster BLM Vernal
- Jeff Roberts WCCC
- Katie Miles
- Marcus Kissner WCCC
- Roger Bankert BLM Vernal
- Mary Taylor BLM WRFO
- Brook Watts Ute Tribe Fish and Wildlife Dept
- Shawn Welder, WRA
- Jerrad Goodell BLM Vernal
- Matt Breen UDWR
- Deirdre Macnab
- Nathan Hall Utah
- Tildon Jones USFWS
- Tory Mathis UDWR
- Wally Macfarlane – USU
- Town of Meeker
- Kristen Jespersen - REW

10:30 Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda (John, RiversEdge West)

- Deirdre- importance of utilizing biological controls along the White. Is working with town and county to try to incorporate to an IPM approach for mosquito management.

10:40 2022 Riparian Restoration Implementation

- **Colorado** (John)
 - 3 sites on the main stem near Rangely; Yellow Creek
 - Tamarisk and Russian olive removal; Native planting/seeding where needed
 - Work will be likely based on two treatment methods, both using hand-crews: Stump-cut treatment method and/or Frill cut method
 - Marcus– WCCC secured funding for a second chipper. Could use chips for multiple purposes.
- **Utah** (Jerrad, BLM Vernal Field Office)
 - \$59,500 to conduct treatment with youth crews
 - Anecdotal – increasing recreational use on Utah side
 - Seed Mix – forb plants, choke cherry, pollinator species
 - Pending application for additional treatments next FY following USU’s plan

11:00 Lower White River (UT) Conservation, Restoration and Monitoring Plan (Wally, Utah State University)

- Using Vegetation and Channel Mapping to Help Develop a Restoration Plan for the Lower White River
- Current conditions of the Lower White
 - Relatively natural flow regime, Relatively stable “three species” fish populations
 - Changes in riparian vegetation
 - Tamarisk and Russian olive
 - Russian olive invasion since early 2000s
 - Study reach: UT 45 Bridge near Bonanza to BLM Enron boat ramp
 - Strong veg gradient from upstream to downstream
 - This informed where to restore
 - Channel narrowing and simplification-
 - 17% reduction in channel width in the white
 - Large focus should be on reducing the narrowing of channel width on the White in the future.
 - Objectives
 - Reduce further channel narrowing
 - If back to back dry years, remove veg from bars.
 - Whole tree removal with excavator
 - Promote recruitment of large wood into active channel
 - Cottonwood recruitment river-wide
 - Protect cottonwood gallery forests
 - Regain channel width locally
 - Questions:
 - Dierdre: how to prevent growth of unwanted invasives after initial treatment?
 - 1st step remove trees, then you need return treatments to manage invasive recruitment. Removing underground biomass is important as well.
 - Plan is helpful for project management, long term planning, grant applications because of identified sites and actions

11:15 White River (CO) Integrated Water Initiative and Riparian Assessments (Liz, White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts)

- <https://wrcd-dccd.colorado.gov/projects/white-river-integrated-water-initiative>
- White River IWI PAC consists of representatives of different groups-agriculture, water management, environmental
- Diversion assessments
 - Performed in all reaches of the White River
- Riparian assessments
 - Using PFC assessment to evaluate whether riparian areas are in proper functioning condition in terms of bank stability, type, quantity of vegetation, and Rosgen stream score.
 - Does not differentiate between native and non-native vegetation.
- Tildon–

- Recovery Program's main interest is downstream of the dam.
- Need to work together to find places there may be issues and address those.
- Elizabeth Chandler - Below Taylor draw, there's not much of an issue with entrainment or fish passage.

11:30 Upcoming projects, opportunities, ideas, and interests (John/all)

- WRP is non political, non advocacy
- Need 8 months – 1 year lead time in order to fund/plan projects
 - Looking at recent front range fires – healthy natural native vegetation can act as a fire break
 - Increasing recreational demands on the White – how can we tie in recreation and restoration?
 - Need to plan a site visit for the near term.

11:40 Information gaps and needs/interests (John/all)

- Tamarisk beetle presence or tamarisk beetle impact monitoring
 - REW has a protocol we can share with partners
 - Dierdre – has kept track of where she's released beetles
 - Palisade Insectary may do a site visit in July
 - July is the time to inspect how they're doing.
 - Are beetles in Utah?
 - BLM has released in Dinosaur.
 - Majority of tamarisk on lower White have been impacted by the beetle.
- ecohydrological assessment on the upper Gila
 - identified sites most likely to be successfully restored based on a variety of data. Eg depth to groundwater, habitat needs
- Vegetation data and aerial photos for Upper Basin White River (ie Colorado section) rough cost estimate-\$60-70,000. Lower White cost \$30-40,000.

11:50 Additional Comments/Updates

- Bob Timberman – USFWS private lands funding in Colorado– potential increase in funding.
- Shawn – would be interested in sharing aerial video and photo footage from White River Alliance.

12:00 Adjourn