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REW NEWS

Welcome to the REW Crew!



Welcome, Francesca!

We are excited to announce that Francesca Shirley is joining the RiversEdge West Board of Directors!

Francesca is a Senior Water Resources Scientist based in Albuquerque, NM, with a decade of experience restoring riparian habitat in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. She holds a Master of Water Resources from the University of New Mexico and brings a unique perspective to water management through her work across municipal and agricultural sectors, including roles with the City of Santa Fe and Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. At the Water Authority, she focuses on aquifer storage, endangered species compliance, and adaptive habitat restoration. A lifelong lover of rivers, Francesca also enjoys mountain adventures with her dogs, gardening, and creating mixed-media art.

Learn more about Francesca here:

RESTORATION IN ACTION



Restoration Underway at Fruita Riverfront Trail

In May, RiversEdge West teamed up with the Western Colorado Conservation Corps to restore 21 acres along the Fruita Riverfront Trail near the Kokopelli trailhead. Crews tackled over 24 acres of invasive tamarisk and Russian knapweed—two aggressive species that threaten native habitats.

The project also served as a living lab for Colorado Mesa University's Restoration Ecology students, analyzing soil and vegetation in these challenging upland zones to identify native plant species best suited for long-term restoration. Next up: removing leftover biomass to reduce fire risk, continued weed control, and planting native species to help this riparian zone thrive.

Together, we're working to reclaim riparian areas from invasive species—and this project was a meaningful step in bringing native ecosystems back to life.



Native Fish Habitat on the Dolores

Restoration Coordinator Melissa Neubaum recently participated in a meeting of the Dolores River Adaptive Management Support Team (DRAMS) and the Dolores River Native Fish Monitoring and Recommendations Team (M&R Team).

The M&R Team is dedicated to improving habitat for three sensitive warm-water native fish species: the flannelmouth sucker, roundtail chub, and bluehead sucker. DRAMS supports this work by conducting research and collecting data to inform the M&R Team's management decisions and flow recommendations. [Learn more here.](#)

As part of the trip, Melissa also visited several sites along the Dolores River to evaluate potential locations for a habitat restoration project aimed at removing dense willow and invasive tamarisk from the riverbanks, with the goal of creating habitat and pool areas for native fish.

Learn more about the Dolores River Restoration Partnership here:

Dolores River Restoration

CONNECTING KIDS TO RIVERS



Helping Hands and 3,000 Seedballs on the White River

What do you get when you mix soil, clay, native seeds, and 75 enthusiastic fifth graders? A big step forward for native plant restoration on the White River!

RiversEdge West teamed up with Yampatika and Meeker Elementary School to lead a hands-on restoration activity with local students, who created and launched over 3,000 seedballs along a stretch of the White River. These seedballs—a blend of seeds from native pollinator plants and shrub encased in clay and soil—are a fun and effective way to restore habitat and support biodiversity.

The day was filled with muddy hands, big smiles, and meaningful learning as students discovered how native plants help stabilize riverbanks, support wildlife, and crowd out invasive species. A special thanks goes out to the

generous landowner who opened their riverside property for this project, giving students a real-world opportunity to be part of river restoration.

Together, we're growing the next generation of river stewards, one seedball at a time!



Children's Water Festival

RiversEdge West joined Ute Water Conservancy District for their [Western Colorado Children's Water Festival](#) - an annual event that brings water education to life for local youth. This year, over 250 fifth graders gathered at Las Colonias Park to learn about the importance of water conservation and the ecosystems it supports.

REW's Education and Outreach Coordinator, Nicole, led a "Cottonwoods vs. Tamarisk" water relay game, where students raced to collect water while learning how native cottonwoods and invasive tamarisk compete for limited water resources along our rivers. The game sparked conversations about the role of native plants in supporting healthy riparian habitats and the challenges posed by invasive species.

EVENTS



Raft the River with us this August!

Join us and Rimrock Adventures for a relaxing day on the water during our [Raft the River](#) fundraiser on August 23rd from 8:00 to 11:30 am.

Launching from Rimrock Adventures in Fruita, CO, and taking out at the Loma Boat Ramp, this river float trip offers a unique opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the Colorado River while contributing to its restoration. Our staff will accompany you and offer insights into the vital work of riverside restoration in the Grand Valley.

After the float, we'll enjoy brunch catered by [Café Sol](#) plus bloody marys and mimosas while mingling with fellow river enthusiasts. We'll raise a glass to the success of our mission and have a chance to win prizes at Rimrock Adventure's charming riverside venue.

We provide everything; just bring yourself! Tickets are \$130 and include the float trip and equipment, brunch, drinks, and entry into a prize giveaway.

[Buy Tickets Here](#)



Rivers For All Scholarship Fund

New to RiversEdge West? Curious about rivers but haven't had the chance to explore them? The Rivers For All Fund is here to welcome you. Whether financial barriers, limited access, or newness to the outdoors have held you back—this is your invitation. **Apply for a scholarship to attend Raft the River for free.**

We'd love for you to connect with the river and be part of a community that believes everyone belongs in these waters.

[Apply Here](#)

Space is limited. This scholarship fund is made possible by the generosity of an individual donor.

Priority is given to those who are new to rivers, the outdoors, and/or RiversEdge West or who have limited financial means.



Workshop Series Update - Join us this August!

Join us for our [2025 Workshop Series](#), where experts, practitioners, and community members come together to explore innovative approaches to riparian restoration. Each workshop offers a unique focus on the tools, technology, and partnerships driving successful restoration efforts across the Southwest.

Registration is [open](#) for our Riparian Restoration Technology webinar this August! See below for details.

Riparian Restoration Technology - Webinar

August 13, 2025

- Explore cutting-edge technologies shaping the future of riparian restoration at our **free** online workshop!
- This virtual workshop will feature insights into the use of GIS, satellite imaging, and other tools that enhance monitoring, planning, and decision-making for riparian ecosystems.

[Learn More & Register Here](#)

Riparian Restoration on Private Lands - Grand Junction, CO

October 2-3, 2025

- Learn how partnerships with private landowners are transforming riparian restoration efforts. Save the Date!

Thank you to our 2025 Workshop Series Sponsors!



Become a Sponsor

Support RiversEdge West's 2025 Workshop Series and gain recognition for your commitment to environmental stewardship! [Learn about sponsor benefits here](#) or email Cara at ckukuraitis@riversedgewest.org.

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS



Healthy Rivers Fund Grant Award

RiversEdge West was awarded a \$19,998 grant from the Colorado Watershed Assembly's Healthy Rivers Fund to grow its Western Slope River Stewardship program!

This funding will support riparian restoration, stewardship, and education efforts in Mesa and Montrose Counties—engaging over 180 youth and adult volunteers through hands-on projects like invasive plant removal, native planting, and student service-learning activities.

By deepening community involvement and cross-county collaboration, the grant helps ensure healthier rivers and thriving ecosystems along the Colorado and Uncompahgre Rivers. Thank you to the Colorado Watershed Assembly!

[Read the press release here.](#)



Xcel Energy Grant Award

RiversEdge West is excited to share that we've received a \$20,000 grant from the Xcel Energy Foundation to power our Grand Valley Stewardship Program! This generous support will help us restore and maintain riparian habitat, expand hands-on education for youth and adults, and grow community-driven stewardship along the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers.

With this funding, REW will lead volunteer workdays, deliver engaging environmental education programs, support collaborative restoration planning, and launch a new citizen science initiative. Together, these efforts will connect over 1,200 community members to the rivers that sustain us.

[Read the press release here.](#)

PARTNER ANNOUNCEMENTS



River Watch Training

[River Watch](#) is looking to add water quality monitoring volunteer groups in the Grand Junction area! Register [here](#) to attend the training they're hosting October 10-13 in Cedaredge to become certified in water quality sampling, learn about water resource management, and leave with the knowledge and equipment to begin sampling in your local watershed.

Reach out to bradley@coloradowatershed.org if you have any questions.



RiversEdge West

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE

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Events

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