



RiversEdge West

RESTORE + CONNECT + INNOVATE



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2028

Adopted by the Board of Directors on 9/16/2025

Photo courtesy of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership

On a MISSION



OUR MISSION

**RiversEdge West
restores riparian ecosystems
through education,
collaboration, and technical
assistance.**



As a leader in riparian (riverside) restoration efforts, RiversEdge West unites people, science, and restoration to protect and revitalize rivers in the Western U.S. RiversEdge West shapes collaborative efforts that restore riparian ecosystems and the communities that depend on them by building strong cross-sector partnerships and offering science-based guidance.

Our success is rooted in building relationships paired with decades of experience. We bring landowners, agencies, tribal entities, nonprofits, educators, and community members together across jurisdictional and geographic boundaries to plan, fund, and implement lasting riparian restoration.

Providing leadership, support, and technical assistance for riparian restoration is at the core of our mission. Whether advising on best practices in the field, securing funding, or outreach and education efforts, RiversEdge West ensures that restoration initiatives are effective, equitable, and resilient over time.

RiversEdge West cultivates the next generation of river stewards through engaging and accessible river education programs. From K-12 students to university partners and lifelong learners, we empower individuals to understand, appreciate, and care for rivers and riparian ecosystems.

A VISION

for the future



OUR VISION

Build a network of healthy riparian ecosystems comprised of native plants throughout the Western U.S., benefiting wildlife, people, and communities.

To realize this vision, RiversEdge West will continue to lead collaborative riparian restoration across watersheds, provide training and resources to increase the effectiveness of this work, strengthen local stewardship, and broaden community participation.

By providing education, collaboration, and technical assistance, we will equip communities to protect rivers in the face of increasing pressure from climate change, development, and resource demands. The future of the Western U.S. depends on how we care for our rivers. RiversEdge West's work lays the foundation for enduring partnerships and scalable solutions that safeguard the health and vitality of both ecosystems and communities.

OUR VALUES

RiversEdge West promotes engagement and collaboration among diverse people and interests to restore the function and ecological integrity of riparian corridors. As a catalyst for improving river health, we focus on riparian lands that have been encroached upon by invasive plant species.



Invasive plants in a riparian ecosystem negatively impact wildlife, water resources, recreation, and agricultural production, lessening the quality of life and threatening local economies in river-dependent communities. Extensive riparian restoration is accomplished through collaborative work that respects biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, existing water laws, property rights, cultural and social values, and livelihoods.

As a neutral, apolitical organization, we foster inclusive spaces where diverse perspectives can come together to build consensus and shared progress. We understand that rivers and the adjacent riparian lands are shaped by communities. Clean water, agriculture, cultural heritage, recreation, and economic prosperity are intertwined.

We are committed to elevating the voices of underrepresented groups and breaking down barriers to participating in restoration work. Our commitment is not only ecological but also social and generational: to build sustainable partnerships and initiatives that grow stronger and thrive over time.





DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA

As RiversEdge West continues to grow and evolve, it is essential that we remain intentional about where we focus our time, energy, and resources. With increasing opportunities and a dynamic landscape of restoration needs, having a clear framework for decision-making will help ensure we stay true to our mission and strategic direction.

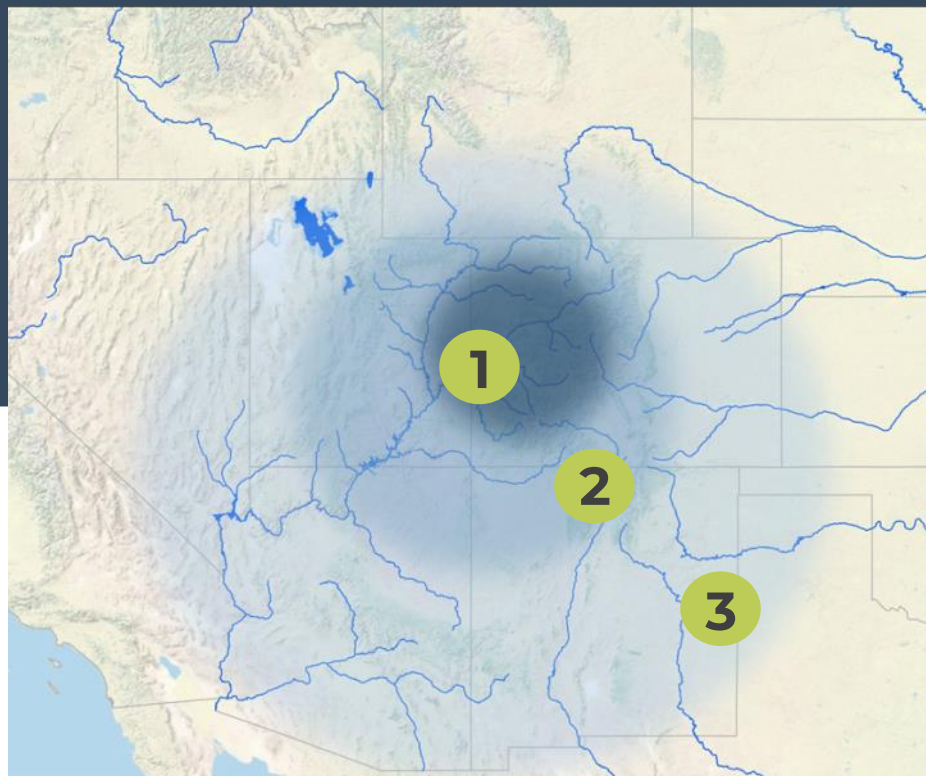
To that end, RiversEdge West has developed a set of guiding criteria to assess new opportunities and evaluate ongoing programs. The following questions help us determine whether a project aligns with our mission, vision and values:

- Will the project make a meaningful impact toward achieving the goals of RiversEdge West and our partners?
- Does it align with our current areas of expertise, or present a strategic opportunity to expand our capacity?
- Is there a clear role for RiversEdge West, and are we the best organization to fill that role?
- Are other organizations already addressing this issue, and are there opportunities for collaboration?
- Do we currently have, or can we reasonably attract, the necessary resources to take on the work?
- Will the project allow RiversEdge West to maintain a position of political neutrality?

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



Geographic focus specifies the general regions of the Western US where RiversEdge West provides programs and services. Through the work we do, relevant information and resources are available and can be utilized by many communities across the West.



1 LOCALLY

Denoted by the inner circle, Colorado and eastern Utah are RiversEdge West's home base; many of our resources and partnerships are committed to impact this region. Throughout this area, RiversEdge West provides direct leadership to riparian restoration partnerships and land managers, and engages community members and youth in restoration, education, and stewardship activities.

2 REGIONALLY

The middle circle represents where RiversEdge West connects to strategic partnerships and watersheds, facilitates collaborative fundraising and collaboration, and provides technical assistance.

3 ACROSS THE WEST

The outer circle encompasses the entire region where RiversEdge West provides workshops and webinars (including those offering data and education on the tamarisk beetle), engages in policy and legislation work, and creates a venue for peer-to-peer exchange of information, resources, and lessons learned.

Throughout the West, we bring resource managers and communities together to address common riparian restoration challenges, coordinate and leverage resources, build capacity and collectively implement riparian restoration actions, engage communities, and promote stewardship.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE



PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Lead, support, and catalyze strategic partnerships and collaboration across boundaries to implement effective riparian restoration.

OUTCOMES

- Foster long-term regional and local partnerships focused on riparian restoration.
- A network of restoration partnerships with the capacity and resources to improve riparian health on local, state, federal, private, and tribal lands.

OBJECTIVES

- Lead the Desert Rivers Collaborative, Dolores River Restoration Partnership, White River Partnership, and River Corridor Initiative to support ongoing, partner-driven restoration and stewardship along the respective rivers.
- Catalyze riparian restoration by supporting and engaging in additional partnerships beyond our core collaboratives, helping to spark momentum, share resources, and align efforts.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity-building support that encourages diverse local and regional stakeholder groups to establish ecologically resilient river systems.
- Foster collaboration, information sharing, and communication on all aspects of riparian restoration among practitioners, landowners, and land managers through various forms of peer-to-peer exchange.
- Collaborate with key organizations and foundations involved with regional and national initiatives, and high-level policy and legislation, to prioritize and direct funding to riparian restoration.
- Implement stewardship frameworks and resources to enhance the success and long-term sustainability of riparian restoration projects by leveraging youth and conservation corps, as well as local and regional contractors, wherever feasible.
- Participate in local and regional planning efforts to ensure the inclusion of river corridor values in these efforts (e.g. Colorado State Water Plan, Stream Management Planning, and Basin Roundtables).

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE



RESTORATION, SCIENCE & RESOURCES

RiversEdge West staff and partners incorporate science, technology, and best practices into riparian management strategies.

OUTCOMES

- Research, science-based, and culturally informed strategies are applied to on-the-ground practices to improve riparian restoration outcomes.
- Lessons learned and best practices are widely communicated and incorporated into current and future restoration efforts.

OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate the distribution and development of information on emerging research, technology, and practices related to riparian restoration, including:
 - Climate change impacts, adaptation, and resiliency
 - Altered hydrology and geomorphological changes
 - Human and wildlife benefits
 - Coalition and partnership development
 - Native and desirable plant materials and associated planting methods
 - Planning, prioritizing, monitoring, and mapping riparian restoration progress
 - Tamarisk beetle movement, establishment, and impacts



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

OBJECTIVES — CONTINUED

- Utilize the full suite of restoration tools and strategies, including but not limited to:
 - Initial invasive plant species removal
 - Native habitat enhancement and/or reestablishment
 - Secondary weed management
 - Floodplain connectivity and restoration
 - Wetland creation and enhancement
 - Process-based restoration approaches
- Evaluate new tools and technology to enhance monitoring, reduce costs, and evaluate the extent of invasive riparian plant impacts.
- Incorporate lessons learned into RiversEdge West's current and future work.
- Provide workshops, training, and educational events, and host a biennial conference that addresses the information needs of the riparian restoration community.
- Maintain a high-quality and accessible online Resource Center and periodically share key information, publications, and updates.
- Provide timely information regarding the tamarisk beetle, its movements, and potential impacts.
- Evaluate and draw from the River Corridor Initiative's Riparian and Floodplain Action Plan as a resource that may inform future priorities and on-the-ground efforts for the Grand Valley.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE



EDUCATION, STEWARDSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Provide education and volunteer opportunities for youth and adults.
Build community engagement and awareness to support restoration efforts.

OUTCOMES

- Awareness of the importance of healthy riparian ecosystems increases across all sectors (e.g., public, private, and nonprofit).
- Increase investment in riparian restoration from private and public sources.
- Community stewardship and volunteerism enhance the long-term viability and sustainability of riparian restoration projects.

OBJECTIVES

- Partner with schools to expand the distribution and utilization of river-focused curriculum.
- Collaborate with regional partners to provide volunteer and education opportunities for the public and youth in communities where RiversEdge West works.
- Create an internship program that engages the next generation in riparian restoration and environmental education.
- Maintain and expand RiversEdge West programs and materials to engage with communities with limited access to resources.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE



ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Invest in the longevity and growth of RiversEdge West as a leading resource for riparian restoration.

OUTCOMES

- Maintain RiversEdge West's financial health to better ensure long-term sustainability.
- Strive to deliver the highest quality and level of service in all program offerings.
- Attract and retain highly qualified, passionate, and diverse staff and board members, with employees who are competitively compensated and valued by the organization.
- Collaboratively maintain the Confluence Center of Colorado.

OBJECTIVES

- Continuously assess and ensure that RiversEdge West engages, retains, and develops well-qualified and committed staff, board members, and other volunteers.
- Provide key training and professional development opportunities to staff and board in emerging fields related to our programs to inform the operational and strategic direction of the organization.
- Maintain the Confluence Center of Colorado as RiversEdge West's headquarters and a collaborative working space for similar education and conservation organizations.
- Continue to diversify RiversEdge West's funding portfolio, annually increasing contributions from individual and corporate donors.
- Maintain a six-month operating reserve.
- Track, report, and review progress on strategic initiatives to ensure activities align with RiversEdge West's mission, vision, and values, as well as consistency in meeting established benchmarks for success.



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