



Tamarisk Coalition Newsletter

JUNE 2010

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Dear Tamarisk Coalition Friends,

As colleagues, land managers, researchers, and the public, we value your continued support and investment in the Tamarisk Coalition. **Because of you, we are able to provide continued assistance and education** to our partners.

Over the past few months the Tamarisk Coalition has partnered with the BLM and others to educate elementary students on the importance of our rivers; been involved in a grant program with the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Materials Center to expand the availability of ecotype specific riparian revegetation species; collaborated with numerous federal agencies and universities to provide valuable training on landscape scale tamarisk biological control monitoring protocols; engaged over 35 local volunteers in restoration projects benefiting Mesa County, CO; updated our website; began planning for the 2011 Tamarisk Research Conference in Tucson; and collaborated with four BLM Districts, two states, six counties and countless other organization in completing the Dolores River Riparian Action Plan. These are just a few of the exciting and important projects the Tamarisk Coalition is involved in.

This is all possible because of the value our partners place on our work. The **investment you make is reflected in the success of numerous projects and initiatives** that support the health of our riparian system. We know you agree that **supporting our river systems and restoring healthy habitat is a priority.**

Please make **your contribution today** and send to:

Tamarisk Coalition PO Box 1907 Grand Junction, CO 81502

Thank you for your support,
Stacy Kolegas, Executive Director

Mark Your Calendars – *The 2011 Tamarisk Research Conference will be held in Tucson, AZ on February 16 and 17, 2011. The Tamarisk Coalition is partnering with USGS and Colorado State University Extension Office to host this event.*

Welcome, Chris Ritzi to the Board of Directors!

Dr. Chris Ritzi, the newest member of the Tamarisk Coalition Board, is Chairman of the Biology Department at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, TX. He is directly involved in tamarisk control projects underway along the Rio Grande River. The Tamarisk Coalition is pleased to have Chris join the Board and is excited to see what his experience will bring to the Tamarisk Coalition. Welcome, Chris!

Meet the Staff

Stacy Kolegas
Executive Director



Tim Carlson
Research and Policy
Director



Clark Tate
Restoration Ecologist



Nate Ament
Restoration Ecologist



Meredith Swett Walker
Science and Outreach
Coordinator



New Staff

The Tamarisk Coalition would like to welcome three new summer staff, Bill Cooper, Jesse Lanci and Season Martin. They have all been hired to assist us with the myriad of projects we have during this field season. Bill, Jesse and Season will be monitoring the tamarisk leaf beetle, conducting vegetation surveys, crunching GIS data and much more. Please be sure to visit our website to learn more about their interesting backgrounds! In addition, the Tamarisk Coalition would like to welcome back Nate Ament. We are thrilled to have him back and involved in all of our projects.

Tamarisk Can Use More Water than Natives – It Depends on the Site!

By Tim Carlson, Research and Policy Director

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Reclamation recently released a report on the impacts of tamarisk and Russian olive to riparian systems. The full report, [USGS Scientific Investigations Report 2009-5247](#), is available online along with [USGS Fact Sheet 2009-3110](#) that summarizes the findings.

This information complements the [Colorado River Basin Tamarisk and Russian Olive Assessment](#) and [Evapotranspiration Peer Panel Report](#). Findings from both studies are nearly identical; i.e., tamarisk and Russian olive use about the same amount of water as native phreatophytes, cottonwood and willow. This is not new information – scientists have known this for decades. The bigger issue, identified in both reports, was that deep rooted tamarisk and Russian olive, when growing in the higher terraces of a floodplain, will use more water than dryland species (grasses and native shrubs). Cottonwoods and willows do not grow in these areas because the groundwater is deeper and is not accessible to their shallow root systems. Thus, the greatest opportunity for meaningful water savings will occur on upper terraces within the floodplain where more xeric vegetation is appropriate as replacement vegetation.

What is not known is whether any of this saved water can be recovered. The Tamarisk Coalition is in absolute agreement with USGS that large-scale demonstrations coupled with detailed research are critical to answering this question. In 2006 Congress passed legislation (PL 109-320) with overwhelming bipartisan support that authorized funding to help answer these types of questions. The Tamarisk Coalition therefore encourages states to pursue carefully designed demonstration projects that can be coordinated with USGS and other scientists.

Both the Tamarisk Coalition and USGS also found similar impacts to wildlife from tamarisk and Russian olive. Effects on wildlife are diverse and depend on the species considered, but again both reports identify that native vegetation provides superior habitat and affords greater biodiversity than do dense stands of tamarisk and Russian olive.

The Tamarisk Coalition supports this research as it can be considered along with other research and site-specific information for restoration and land management decisions.

US Forest Service Reports on Tamarisk Removal Technologies

Levi Jamison
Biocontrol Ecologist



Rebecca Carlson
Restoration Coordinator



Shannon Hatch
Restoration Coordinator



Christy Duncan
Business Administrator



Sarahlee Lawrence
Education Intern



Pat Hickey
Policy Research Intern



The Forest Service Technology & Development Center conducted a tamarisk project in cooperation with the Cimarron National Grassland in Kansas. The project proposal was to develop a means to reduce the tamarisk population with minimal herbicides. The Forest Service's Cimarron National Grassland in Kansas removes tamarisk by cutting it at the ground level with a brush saw mounted on a skid steer loader. Herbicide was used to kill tamarisk that sprouts from the stump the next year. The Missoula Technology and Development Center helped employees at the grassland test a new alternative for removing tamarisk—the JAWZ attachment by Starhill Solutions, Inc.—that was used to pull clumps of tamarisk from moist ground. When tamarisk was pulled from the ground, less herbicide was needed the following year because sprouting was much less of a problem. Pulling tamarisk and treating the sprouts the following year cost 13 percent more than cutting tamarisk and treating the sprouts. The reference for this report is below, the link is available [here](#).

Chappell, Andrew ; Brewer, Nancy ; Windell, Keith . 2009. **Attachment To Improve Tamarisk Removal**. 0922 2829P. Missoula, MT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development Center.

Tamarisk Biocontrol Monitoring 2010: Virgin River Survey

The Tamarisk Coalition has now officially begun Biocontrol Monitoring 2010! Starting with an early survey of the Virgin River, employees spent several days in the exotic Mojave Desert counting freshly emerged adult *Diorhabda carinulata*. From Zion to Mesquite, the prolific tamarisk leaf beetles have now efficiently colonized the Virgin River corridor across SW Utah and NW Arizona and are moving into Southern Nevada.

This season is full of wide ranging travel across the Colorado River Basin for the Coalition with monitoring efforts planned in the Uinta, San Juan River, and Little Colorado River basins along with typical Dolores and Colorado River monitoring trips including the Grand Canyon.

Western Colorado Native Plant Materials Grants Received!

In collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center (UCEPC) and the Los Lunas Plant Material Center (LLPMC), the Tamarisk Coalition will be using grant funding from the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund and the Central Utah Project Completion Act to increase the knowledge base about locally adapted plant propagation and survival, with specific emphasis on longstem propagation and planting methodology.

Longstem planting techniques, which were pioneered by the LLPMC, establish transplants in direct contact with the capillary fringe of the water table, greatly increasing plant survivability without subsequent irrigation.

Cottonwood nursery establishment and the collection of native plant seed to be used for future longstem development are also among the programs funded.

Re-vegetation and Training Events

Season Martin
Summer Intern



Bill Cooper
Summer Intern



Jesse Lanci
Summer Intern

[Photo Coming Soon]

As a function of both grants, **hands-on longstem trainings** will be held near **Grand Junction on November 30th and December 1st, 2010**. Participants will learn, with help from staff at the UCEPC and LLPMC, how to establish longstem products in riparian areas. Attendees will also plant cottonwood poles and willow cuttings. Interested landowners can learn more about how to establish and maintain cottonwood nurseries on their private land. In conjunction with seed maturity, native seed collection training will be also held, during a separate training, late summer-fall. **Dates for seed collection have not yet been determined** — keep an eye on our website for updates!

Are YOU Interested in FREE Riparian Restoration Training?

If you would like to learn more about
Longstem Planting Techniques
&/or
Seed Collection Training

Please call the Tamarisk Coalition @ 970.256.7400
Or email Shannon at: shatch@tamariskcoalition.org

Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP)

The Dolores River is a testament to the diversity of riparian ecosystems found on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. Winding down from its headwaters in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, the Dolores passes through deep canyons and broad valleys until it joins the Colorado River in Utah. Though a myriad of factors affect the health of the Dolores River, the invasion of tamarisk is a particular focus for land managers due to its extensive growth patterns which can displace native vegetation and affect the health and sustainability of these vegetative communities. In the spring of 2009, The Nature Conservancy and the Tamarisk Coalition began working with local land owners and managers to develop a watershed-wide tamarisk control and restoration strategy, which is embodied in the Dolores River Riparian Action Plan (DR-RAP). During these efforts, the Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) was formed.

The DR-RAP was developed by DRRP with the understanding that controlling invasive tamarisk and comingled secondary invasives while reestablishing native species are only a few components of a watershed restoration plan. Other issues that must be considered in a comprehensive riparian restoration project are being addressed by other organizations and agencies within the DRRP.

DR-RAP's **purpose** is: (1) to articulate the science-driven, tamarisk related vision, goals, and site selection criteria common to Dolores River stakeholders in both Colorado and Utah to facilitate a consistent approach throughout the watershed; and (2) to initiate and facilitate an increased level of collaboration and communication among the stakeholders to enhance information transfer, adaptive management, and likelihood of large scale, meaningful success. DR-RAP also strives to consider the social needs, economic realities, and management challenges that interact with and affect the ecological health of the watershed and to address these issues accordingly. Recognizing the ultimate decision making responsibility of landowners, most notably the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices, DR-RAP has been created as a resource to aid each BLM district in creating consistent, site specific, tamarisk management implementation plans. Currently, DRRP is working to create implementation plans for each section of the watershed, is finalizing and coordinating the field work for a pre- and post-project monitoring plan, and identifying funding opportunities to sustain this project to its completion.