



Dolores River Tamarisk Action Group

February 6, 2008

D-TAG Partners

I hope that most of you have dug you way out of the snow by now. It sure is a welcome sight. I think we can all agree it is much needed and beautiful to see!! I am already planning a canoe trip or two down the Dolores. Of course it will only be a scientific venture to map the tamarisk.

I would like to do a little summarizing of last years efforts, successes and ongoing works. Late in the summer the Dolores Conservation District began an inventory and landowner contact on the McElmo drainage basically from Hwy 491 near the Sanitation District plant, continuing up past the fairgrounds to Rd 34 by the Mesa Verde Entrance. With over 66 landowners, (private, County, State, and Federal) agreeing for treatment, a proposal was made to stump cut some lighter infestations and aerial spray as much as our grant funds would allow.

A week long cooperative effort on BLM lands was accomplished on the area above the fairgrounds up to RD 34. It was a difficult task but was accomplished just before the snows began at thanksgiving.

Simultaneously, we started a stump cut/flail mower effort on the Hawkins Preserve and adjacent lands. This is a high value area that we feel is worth the investment for our community. Unfortunately, we were not able to accomplish as much as we wanted due to various

circumstances. The aerial spraying was postponed when the contractor crashed the helicopter the week before while spraying tamarisk on the Front Range. Fortunately, the pilot was OK and we anticipate continuing this September when it is most effective. Likewise, the Hawkins Preserve project was delayed by equipment problems, difficult site conditions and weather. But we are now too discouraged. We plan to follow up either later this winter if possible or next fall.



All tolled, about 3 or 4 miles of creek bottom was stump cut on the McElmo drainage. The County also spends a considerable amount of time and effort on some tributaries at the fairgrounds in anticipation of aerial spraying the main drainage. The bright side is the near 100% cooperation of the landowners and their enthusiastic approval.

2008 - Perhaps the most exciting news is that this year we will be starting some biological control efforts here in Montezuma County. The much talked about Diorhabda beetle has shown very encouraging results on the Colorado River by Moab. They have naturally migrated up the Dolores River to several sites near Gateway. The picture above is from that area. Collection efforts in conjunction with the Colorado Insectory and the Tamarisk Coalition will be made to try and get several populations established in our area. This is another tool to be used in conjunction with mechanical, chemical and cultural methods. I have spoken with several people and agencies about the success rate of insect control. It seems to be somewhat “temperamental” and erratic. It will probably not be the cure all but can be a huge boost in some areas. I am very near “giddy” with what I have witnessed.

In conjunction with finishing existing projects on McElmo Creek, we need to begin some revegetation efforts. I am hoping to pull together interested people to help do some revegetation efforts on the demonstration plot in McElmo and Hawkins Preserve. If you have interest or knowledge in this area, please contact Jodi or myself at the DSCD office. We also need to make some long range plans to include:

- Priority areas
- Biological control site selection and monitoring
- Revegetation pilot program
- Russian Olive control
- Dolores River inventory and control program
- Grant committee
- PR committee
- Work days

We need to pull together all the various agencies, private landowners, applicators and interested parties. Our next DTAG meeting will be at Empire Electric, March 11 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Please RSVP with Jodi at 970-565- 9045 ext 118.

We will have our DSCD booth at the AG EXPO March 6-9th. Stop by to see **LIVE DIORHABDA BEETLES** as well as other information regarding DTAG and other Conservation District activities

Thanks for all your efforts,

Steve Miles
Dolores Soil Conservation District
970 565 9045 ext. 118

