



Tamarisk Coalition Newsletter

February 2007

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Next Issue

Our April newsletter will concentrate on the biological control *Diorhabda elongata*.

2006 Tamarisk Research Conference

If you were unable to attend please visit the following website to download presentations and abstracts:

http://www.weedcenter.org/tamarisk_conf_06/conference_home.html

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Wishing you health and happiness in 2007!

We are off to a busy start in 2007 working hard to provide education, technical assistance, and coordinating support to you and your organization for the restoration of riparian lands.

Legislative Update

Federal:

As you are probably aware, the *Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Act* was signed into law on October 11, 2006. It is referenced as public Law 109-320 and can be viewed at the Library of Congress site <http://thomas.loc.gov>. The Act authorized \$80 million for tamarisk and Russian olive control, revegetation, and research. We and others are working to have Congress fully appropriate funding for the Act.

State:

New Mexico – The state legislature is working on House Bill 617 which will provide \$10 million over a two year period for non-native phreatophyte removal and riparian restoration. This bill would direct expenditures to be in accordance with the State's 2005 strategic plan for tamarisk control and restoration (see www.nmda.nmsu.edu).

Colorado – House Bill 1038 has been introduced and has passed, with strong bipartisan support, through two committees. The bill will appropriate \$1,000,000 per year for four years from the Severance Tax Trust Fund to the noxious weed management fund administered by the Department of Agriculture. Funds would provide cash matching required by many federal grants and would primarily focus on riparian restoration. The track record for matching contributions for this competitive grant program has averaged \$4 for every \$1 contributed by the state.

We want to know what is going on in your state as well and how the Tamarisk Coalition can help (send info to: tcarlson@tamariskcoalition.org).

Meet the Staff

Tim working hard



John points out the San Juan watershed



Clark on a tamarisk scouting mission



Christy clicking away



Elyse all smiles at the office



Volunteer Projects

On Saturday the 24th we completed our first volunteer day for 2007 and are pleased to say that we had 18 volunteers with us and many already want to come back for more! We are ramping up our volunteer schedule for 2007 and have projects planned for every other Saturday through June 30th. Our volunteer days are a great way to help control tamarisk infestations, meet new people, spend the day in a beautiful area, and have fun while we're at it. There is a lot of tamarisk annihilation to be had! We are continuing our work in the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) in Fruita, Colorado. After 4 volunteer days last fall we have controlled tamarisk in Devils Canyon, and are now working in Flume Canyon. It is our goal to control tamarisk in roughly 40-50 miles of canyon in the MCNCA in the next two years. It may be a pretty hefty goal, but we like to aim high!



Below, we have outlined a few simple steps that are beneficial for a smooth, successful, and enjoyable volunteer program. Feel free to take these tips and create a tamarisk removal program in your area. We also want to hear what you are doing where you live, and any lessons you have learned from volunteer efforts. This information will be available on our website in the near future with volunteer projects listed by location. Please email Elyse at ecadogan@tamariskcoalition.org with any information or suggestions.

Six Steps to a Successful Volunteer Project

Step 1: Obtain Local Support

We do this by simply asking. This involves going around to local businesses; be it restaurants, breweries, movie theaters, bowling alleys, bookstores, coffee houses, outdoor stores, grocery stores, wineries, or nurseries, and asking for help. We ask them for raffle prize donations or food and beverages for our volunteers. Most of the time, businesses are happy to help, and we are happy to acknowledge their generosity through thank you letters, publicity, press releases, etc. Our volunteers appreciate the "great schwag" we give away and this keeps them coming back for more. Or maybe it is just the sheer joy of contributing to the numerous death blows to a horrid plant. Either way, community support is key to get the word out and keep costs down for each project.

Step 2: Don't Overwork 'Em

Volunteers are doing just that, volunteering their time. And as a result, volunteers can't be worked as hard as if they were getting paid. It needs to be fun and enjoyable, and not too strenuous. It would be easy to spend an entire day tackling an extremely heavy infestation, only to clear a 100 foot strip of stream bank with 20 volunteers. Not only would this be exhausting, but the volunteers wouldn't get a feeling of accomplishment, only a feeling of being overwhelmed and discouraged that a day's work didn't go very far.

Meet the Mascots

Chewbacca



Ghoti



Step 3: Picking the Site

Location is also important. When choosing sites for volunteer projects it is usually a good rule of thumb to start upstream and in the tributaries of a major river corridor. This method follows the “wildfire model” of weed management and can be an effective approach for tamarisk control by eliminating the seed source upstream. There is also nothing more gratifying than staring upstream and not seeing a single tamarisk - compliments of your hard work.

A different approach is to choose a highly visible site that can act as an educational or demonstration site to the public. We don't try to tackle the incredibly dense thickets with volunteers. We are anticipating the biological control, *Diorhabda elongata*, to play a crucial role in our overall control strategy. If the bugs can help with the dense thickets and we continue taking care of the more sporadic plants and trees that the bugs may not find, we just may have a recipe for success. In addition, this approach allows us to work in beautiful canyons, hike around, and contribute to a worthy cause.

Step 4: Feed ‘Em Well

Everybody likes eating good food, especially when it is free. We try to feed our volunteers simple, yet delicious meals. Some meal ideas include chili for cooler months, or sandwiches, fruit, cookies, etc, for those warm weather projects. Again, businesses may be willing to donate some aspect of your meal. You won't know if you don't ask. But regardless, you wouldn't want to eat a lousy meal after working hard all morning, and neither would your volunteers.

Step 5: Be Safe

Safety is the most important aspect of a volunteer project. One way to ensure that all goes well is to address the issue first thing in the morning. By giving a brief safety talk, you highlight potential dangers and increase awareness of safe practices. Make a “Safety Briefing Checklist” that you can follow to address each important issue before you get started. An example checklist might include these topics:

Environmental Factors (as apply):

- ✓ Heat: Stay hydrated! Hard work in hot weather means consuming 1 quart of water per hour. General rule is 1 oz. of water for every 2 lbs. of body weight for the day (more if it is hot).
- ✓ Cold weather: Stay hydrated! You lose more water than you think in cold weather (dehydration is common at ski areas).
- ✓ Sun protection: Protect yourself from the hot sun with sunscreen, hat, etc. Rest in the shade.
- ✓ Bugs: Use a repellent to fight off biting insects (good luck repelling gnats).
- ✓ Flash floods: Be especially wary in canyons! The weather may be clear where you are and pouring rain up canyon. Check weather conditions before heading out and climb to safety in a flash flood!
- ✓ Rough terrain: Take your time. Wear shoes/boots with good support. Pair up with a partner in case someone twists an ankle, etc.
- ✓ Getting lost: Pair up with a partner. Carry some basic survival supplies (water, matches, emergency blanket, first aid kit, etc).
- ✓ When on the river, wear a lifejacket AT ALL TIMES.

Work Area Factors:

- ✓ Keep good spacing when using tools (saws, etc). Whack the tamarisk, not your buddy.
- ✓ Follow the herbicide label for applicators.
- ✓ Use certified sawyers and applicators if chainsaws and/or herbicide are used. This may have a cost, but you don't want the liability.
- ✓ Provide safety equipment such as gloves, protective eyewear, etc.

In Case of Emergency:

- ✓ Keep calm. Establish a chain of command for every project. Designate an EMT/First Responder if you have one. Use a cell or satellite phone to call 911. Carry walkie-talkies if you have separate crews.

Having a plan prior to an accident will guarantee the best response and subsequent action. It is a good idea for someone to be trained in First Aid/CPR and for the group to know who these people are. We also suggest having participants fill out a waiver outlining potential risks.

Step 6: Don't Overextend Yourself

It is easy to over-commit and spread yourself too thin. Not only would it be daunting to run volunteer projects all over the state, but focusing your energy on your local volunteer program allows you to perfect it. Later you can transfer this knowledge to other organizations interested in starting a volunteer program. It is also a good way for communities to take ownership of their work and gain a sense of pride in their local volunteer program.

We Want to Hear From You!

Let us know of any tamarisk volunteer programs you are working on and tips/suggestions you have for us. We are hoping to have volunteer projects listed state-by-state, and region-by-region on our website in the not-too-distant future. Please email Elyse at ecadogan@tamariskcoalition.org and let us know what's going on in your area.

Youth Corps Leverage Funds to Fight Tamarisk

By: Jennifer Freeman of Colorado Youth Corps Association

Several years ago, the Western Colorado Conservation Corps (WCCC) started to make a name for itself in the weed world. It didn't hurt that the Corps is headquartered in Grand Junction, the geographic center of the nation's tamarisk infestation.

Now known as the premier tamarisk control labor force on the Western Slope, the WCCC has year-round tamarisk control crews trained in the use of chainsaws and chippers. The Corps even operates a Timber Ax for mowing down large stands of tamarisk and uses rafts to access stands along the Colorado River. More interesting than the methods the crews use to beat back the tamarisk are the methods they employ to leverage funds to support the crews' work.



In 2005, GOCO in cooperation with the Colorado Youth Corps Association granted the WCCC \$12,000 to complete a two-week tamarisk control project along the banks of the Colorado River in partnership with the City of Grand Junction.

The Corps leveraged the GOCO grant with an additional \$4,500 from the City, the River Front Foundation, Mesa County Partners, Inc., and the Tamarisk Coalition. A local private foundation stepped up with another \$4,500 to purchase equipment for the project. Because of the crew's initial success, the City supported the Corps' work at \$24,000 in 2006, another \$24,000 in 2007, and has made tentative commitments beyond 2007.

The goal is for the Corps' leveraging ability to spread faster than the tamarisk. Regardless, the end result is that the citizens of Grand Junction can now see the banks of the Colorado River, which hasn't been seen in years in some areas of the city.

Stay Tuned

Our April Newsletter will concentrate on the biological control *Diorhabda elongata*.

Funding the Tamarisk Coalition

As a non-profit, the Tamarisk Coalition continuously strives to fund its efforts to restore western river ways. We are hitting our stride and need **YOUR help** to continue our efforts. Please take the time to send in your membership dues if you haven't already. Membership forms are available on our website (www.tamariskcoalition.org) under the "Join Us" heading. Your continued membership is essential for the **Tamarisk Coalition to facilitate tamarisk control efforts and the long-term reestablishment of native vegetation along the West's rivers and streams.**

Happy trails,

Tim Carlson

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