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July 19, 2002

Mr. Jeff Jacobsen  
Center for Invasive Plant Management  
Montana State University  
Leon Johnson Hall 733  
P.O. Box 173120  
Bozeman, Montana 59717-3120

Dear Mr. Jacobsen,

We have completed the work proposed under *Development/Demonstration of a Long-Term Management Approach to Tamarisk Control*, Sponsor Award No. GC009-02-Z1138. The funding provided by your organization was used to support a conference titled *Strategies for Long-Term Management of Tamarisk*. A conference agenda and a summary report are enclosed.

The conference was designed to help us identify potential sustainable funding mechanisms and management structures for tamarisk control. Although a number of people invited were unable to attend due to vacations or unforeseen obligations, we received many valuable insights and ideas that will help us as we further develop our ideas for solution of the tamarisk problem. We appreciate very much the support provided by the Center for Invasive Plant Management at Montana State University.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 970-248-1162 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Russ Walker, Ph.D.  
Environmental Science

# STRATEGIES FOR LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF TAMARISK

June 28, 2002  
Chateauf-neuf-de-Pape Room, Two Rivers Winery  
Grand Junction, Colorado

## Agenda

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 11:00 – 11:15 | Introductions (John Redifer)                            |
| 11:15 – 11:45 | Overview of the problem (Russ Walker)                   |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Lunch served  |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Informal discussion of progress toward tamarisk control |
| 12:30 – 2:00  | Funding issues (facilitated open discussion)            |
| 2:00 – 2:10   | Break   |
| 2:10 – 3:30   | Management issues (facilitated open discussion)         |
| 3:30 – 4:00   | Wrap-up (John Redifer)                                  |
| 4:00          | Wine reception  |

Please note:  
Wine Reception  
was funded by  
the Tamarisk  
Coalition in part  
by MSU contract  
funds.  
Cindy Kueb  
Director, sponsored  
Programs, Mesa State

*Support for this conference was provided by the Tamarisk Coalition,  
Mesa State College, and Club 20*

*Funding for this conference was provided by the Montana State University  
Center for Invasive Plant Management and the U.S. Department of Interior*

**Summary Report**  
**Strategies for Long-Term Management of Tamarisk**  
**Friday, June 28, 2002, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**  
**Two Rivers Winery**  
**Grand Junction, Colorado**

**Participants**

Catherine Robertson (Bureau of Land Management, Director of Grand Junction field office), Palma Wilson (National Park Service, Superintendent of Colorado National Monument), Steve Yamashita (Colorado Division of Wildlife, Director of Grand Junction office), Reeves Brown (Club 20), Jude Sirota (Mesa County weed inspector and Tamarisk Coalition board member), Pete Larsen (Tamarisk Coalition board President), John Heideman (Tamarisk Coalition Board member), Russ Walker (Mesa State College), John Redifer (Mesa State College), and Kathleen Bond (facilitator).

**Meeting Objectives**

- Develop a list of potential sustainable funding mechanisms.
- Identify opportunities and barriers for an overarching management structure.

**Overview**

The Tamarisk Coalition, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, was formed in 1999 in response to a growing concern of private citizens, non-profit organizations, and local, state and federal agencies about the impact tamarisk is having on riparian areas in the western United States. Research shows that this invasive species, introduced from Eurasia in the 19th century, has displaced native vegetation on an estimated 2 million acres of land in the West and is projected to spread to another 0.5 million acres over the next five years. While numerous ecological issues are associated with the proliferation of tamarisk along rivers, streams, and lakes throughout the West, the critical issue is that tamarisk uses significantly more water than the native plant species it is displacing. In a time when the West is experiencing a prolonged drought, this prolific, invasive plant species may be responsible for the loss of 2.0-4.5 million acre-feet of water per year. The current drought and its effects on both the human and geographic landscape provide the Tamarisk Coalition with a window of opportunity to link the social issues with the political issues to gain both public and political support for widespread tamarisk suppression efforts.

The Tamarisk Coalition acts as a coordinating organization for six state agencies, sixteen counties, nine federal agencies, two municipalities, eight non-governmental entities, a number of private landowners, as well as educational and research institutions. The scope of the collaborative effort includes the Four Corners states of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah that share the Colorado River watershed in recognition that “tamarisk respects no political boundaries.”

The present challenge is to educate the public and decision makers on the severity of the problem and its far-reaching implications, develop an overarching management structure, and secure a sustainable funding mechanism for eradication efforts. The organizational framework and strategies developed by the Tamarisk Coalition will serve as a model for other states and regions in their efforts to eradicate tamarisk and other invasive species.

## **The Current Situation**

### Colorado National Monument

The Colorado National Monument has successfully completed an eradication effort within its boundaries and is currently in a maintenance mode with a three-year rotation program for invasive species. (It was agreed that unless there is a coordinated effort involving local, state, and federal agencies, in addition to private landowners, the tamarisk problem is insurmountable due to the plant’s seeds being wind-dispersed across boundaries. Due to the Colorado National Monument’s location relative to tamarisk-infested areas in the Grand Valley, the Monument’s problem is not considered representative of most tamarisk problem areas.) The Monument is involved in efforts to inventory and monitor invasive species in the northern Colorado Plateau. Funding for “partnerships” is written into the Monument’s annual budget.

### Bureau of Land Management

BLM takes a broader approach to invasive weeds and has developed an overall strategy to deal with them. It was suggested that the Tamarisk Coalition think more broadly and look at other invasive species besides tamarisk in its mission, including species that impact native vegetation in grazing communities. On BLM lands, it was noted that tamarisk was “everywhere”, in all the canyons, and “not always riparian.” The Secretary of the Interior has given emphasis to conservation efforts that focus on the collaborative efforts of the private sector with local governments. Speaking to the need for public education, it was noted that “...for a lot of people, the connection between tamarisk and water hasn’t been made.”

### Mesa County Weed Control

The effort to combat invasive species is understaffed. A survey along all roads in Mesa County took three summers to complete, and by the end of the project, new species and populations were already present on the roads where the study was first initiated. Projects with landowners are on a case-by-case basis. Again, the invasive weed problem is viewed as insurmountable unless a coordinated, cross-boundary approach is taken.

## **Perceived Barriers**

### General

Unstable funding levels and staffing constraints were perceived as barriers to participating in a cooperative effort to eradicate tamarisk. Other perceived barriers included:

- Fragmentation of agency budgets
- Population at large is adverse to taxation in any form
- Turf and politics
- “We’re a country at war” (i.e., uncertainty of funding levels given more pressing national priorities)

### Colorado National Monument (NPS)

- Total budget is less than \$1m per year and there it is uncertain how much funding there will be from year to year
- Staffing for eradication is dependent on seasonal employees

### BLM

- Budget is dependent on grazing fees and the general carrying capacity
- “We have a lot of problems” (on BLM land, not just tamarisk)
- “The personality of individuals we deal with” (people who are involved must think strategically)

## **Opportunities**

Participants agreed that tamarisk is a problem on both a local and regional scale, and there was agency support for a coordinated effort. The existing period of drought in the West, coupled with catastrophic fires on both public and private lands, provides an opportunity to tie the tamarisk issue to the critical issue of water. Other opportunities include:

- Tamarisk is easily visible and accessible for demonstration projects
- “Carve out some way to demonstrate success”
- “Pick something to be successful in”
- Emphasize efficiency
- Get more scientific information on tamarisk’s water use to use an ammunition
- “Get the right people”
- An agency commitment to inter-agency/collaborative approaches to solving problems
- “Get a mandate from on high”...the personalities and commitments are inconsistent
- Take a geographic/watershed approach to garner cross-agency/multi-state support
- Use aerial photographs/technical information already available to demonstrate need
- Access information from the State of Colorado’s weed-mapper

## **Sustainable Funding Mechanisms**

(Methodology: Brainstorming)

Participants agreed that funding would be a pool of funds derived from private foundations, individuals, as well as local, state and federal agencies. Instability of funding and concurrent difficulty in committing a fixed amount of funds to the effort appeared to be a common denominator for state and federal agencies who participated in the meeting. While there is competition for funding projects within agencies, there was agreement that: 1) the tamarisk issue is significant, especially when tied to water issues; and, 2) there is a focus/directive from Washington, D.C. and regional offices on inter-agency/collaborative processes that seek solutions to local and regional problems. Participants agreed that interagency agreements were already operational as a way to move monies to fund cooperative agreements. Other ideas for possible funding sources include:

- Look at privatization of the effort
- Private foundations/non-profits
- Counties/municipalities
- “Anyone involved with water” (including downstream users)
- Enter cost-share agreements with landowners
- Help enact state legislation to get funding to give to weed control boards
- Interagency/private sector agreements
- Explore the possibility of an optional self-tax, e.g. a check-off on income tax return
- Tax for irrigation users/recreationists/other users
- Industry water users
- Entities involved in wetlands mitigation
- Look at Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) as a source of funding
- A mill levy

## **The Management Structure: What Would It Look Like?**

(Methodology: Brainstorming)

To move this project forward, it was suggested that the Tamarisk Coalition persuade a member of the U.S. Congress to sponsor a bill to give the effort legitimacy and provide possible sources of funding. It was expressed that a singular, driving force would be that of legislation. Making the effort a watershed project (and/or a pilot project) elevates the issue to a regional, ecological focus and is more likely to be viewed by the Administration as a coordinated, “holistic” effort to seek solutions. It is possible that an existing organization would assume management responsibilities, e.g., a quasi-government agency that has legitimacy, credibility and is accountable. Suggestions of such existing organizations include a Council of Governments (counties), resource conservation districts, the River District, existing weed control structures, and public works. Other ideas on the operating structure include:

- Form a team that is funded by the participants with a larger strategic basis
- Have a bipartisan, cross-agency advisory committee

- “Stay away from a government agency”...create your own organization
- Must oversee a manageable part of the problem
- Each agency drafts its own version of an agreement that reflects specific weed intergovernmental agreements
- Know each agency’s legal requirements/mandates
- Tamarisk Coalition would coordinate efforts, but agencies would still work on their own programs

Existing models of the collaborative/stakeholder process include BLM’s Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) and the Uncompahgre Plateau Project in western Colorado. In both examples, representatives recommend strategies and report back to a larger group. Using another model, there could be multiple “stakeholders” in the effort and a smaller executive or advisory board would provide oversight.

### **Looking Ahead**

Plans by the Tamarisk Coalition include expanding the conversation to other entities in an effort to educate the public and decision makers about the effort and secure funding on the local, state and federal levels. Proposals to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private foundations will be pursued by Tim Carlson, Director of the Tamarisk Coalition. The State of New Mexico has recently committed \$5 million in state funds to tamarisk eradication in an effort to increase water resources and comply with water compacts on the Pecos and Rio Grande Rivers. It was recommended that the Tamarisk Coalition pursue its contacts with individuals involved in this effort to see what ties they made between tamarisk and non-beneficial use of water.

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### **Acknowledgements**

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Additional support for this conference was provided by the Tamarisk Coalition, Mesa State College, and Club 20.