

**Middle Colorado Watershed Council  
Riparian Restoration Advisory Group (RRAG) Meeting  
February 27, 2019 – 3:00 to 4:30 PM  
Rifle Library, Rifle, CO**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Seth Mason, Lotic Hydrological

Carla DeYoung, BLM

Dave Erickson, Aspen Valley Land Trust

Sara Wilson, RiversEdge West

Steve Anthony, Garfield County

Sarah LaRose, Garfield County

Charles Ryden, Bookcliff Conservation District

Angela Ryden, Colorado Farm Bureau

Laurie Rink, MCWC

**I. Introductions and old business**

Laurie welcomed the group and reviewed what we intend to accomplish at this meeting. This includes a review of the riparian health assessment approach, obtaining feedback on data sources, identifying stream reaches of particular interest or of special concern, and reviewing results from the mental modeling exercise from the December meeting.

**II. Mental Model Review**

Seth worked with each of the focus groups to develop a “mental model” of different sectors of water use in the middle river. He passed out a [“distilled” version of the model](#) that the riparian focus group developed last meeting. The mental model will be used as: 1) a check to ensure the assessment work can adequately address, at a macro-scale, the key relationships identified by the group, and 2) for purposes of assessing the feasibility of future identified projects and processes. The committee pointed out a couple clarifications for Seth to incorporate.

**III. Discussion of Riparian Assessment Work**

Seth described the purpose of the assessment work which is to: 1) characterize the current condition of riparian systems along the mainstem of the Colorado River, 2) determine how the functioning condition has changed over time, 3) determine how the current conditions affects the delivery of ecosystem goods and services, 4) identify which sections or parts are at risk, and 5) use the results to inform the selection of mitigative measures to offset negative effects or future risks.

Seth shared a map of the middle river (Glenwood to De Beque) that illustrated riparian and wetland vegetative mapping derived principally from a Colorado Parks and Wildlife data set. Other present-day data sets available as mentioned by Seth include:

- Tamarisk Coalition (maps from 2008 CHIP report illustrating Tamarisk and some Russian olive (TRO));
- USFWS Wetland Inventory;
- CNHP maps completed for Garfield County;
- NRCS soil survey.

He described the next step of utilizing historic mapping to compare with existing conditions as a way to determine trajectories of change. Aerials are available for the general periods of 1950, 1970, 1990, and

2000. The analysis will also evaluate changes in land use that have affected vegetative patterns (e.g., construction of I-70 that narrowed the riparian zone in places).

Other data sources identified by the committee include:

- BLM – Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) point data on the mainstem that could possibly be extrapolated to other or adjoining reaches;
- CDOT data;
- Tamarisk Coalition beetle distribution data;
- CNHP mapping (2000 work may be more comprehensive than 2015 work?);
- EDDs maps (contact Sarah Wilson for reference on these);
- Colorado Department of Ag creates a list of invasive weeds for mapping each year – this year Russian olive is on the list – John Rose from the Conservation Districts (CDs) should be mapping along the mainstem;
- CDs mapping along Divide and Mamm Creeks;
- Note that BLM has been performing extensive TRO control in the Colorado River headwaters down to Dotsero (control of upstream seed sources!);
- Check for old photos that pictures of riparian areas – see about construction photos from development of I-70; and
- Audubon member photos.

Creation of a current photographic record might be a useful output from this evaluation.

Seth asked committee members to add notes to the mapping regarding any areas of particular interest or concern.

#### **IV. Next Meeting**

The committee will be reconvened after the consulting team has assessment information to share for group input.