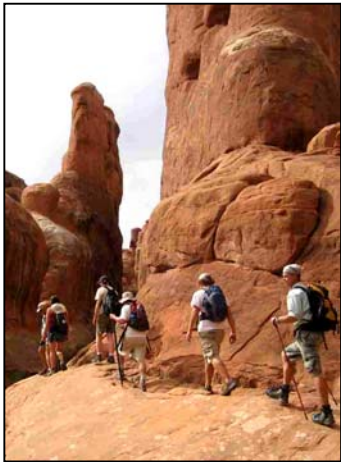


# Conservation Connections

Newsletter of Plateau Restoration from Moab, Utah

Fall 2008

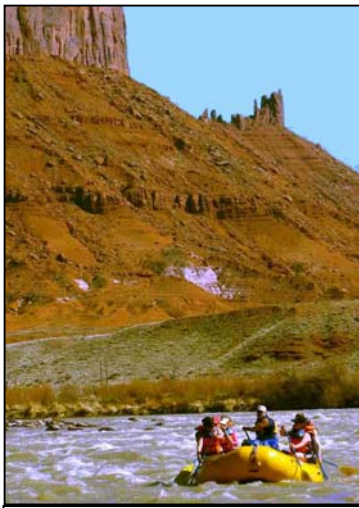
Service, Science, Education and Exploration since 1995



University students explore Arches NP after project work

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Students enjoy the Colorado River during a spring break program.

## Restoration Continues at Salt Wash in Arches NP

The Patagonia Store of Salt Lake City has underwritten a riparian restoration project for Plateau Restoration in Arches National Park near the trailhead for the world famous Delicate Arch for the past two years.

Work began in earnest, early spring of 2007 after we had obtained a National Park Service research permit to restore a 1/4 mile section of Salt Creek. The goal is to free the banks and benches of Tamarisk and other noxious weeds and to reintroduce viable bench

and riparian species. After clearing the area of tamarisk stumps and tumbleweed last year, we were able to plant this spring.

Our primary goal was to only use plants that came from within the park. Native seed, willow and cottonwood cuttings were collected in Courthouse Wash. Damaged grasses, wildflowers and small shrubs were salvaged from roadsides in Salt Valley, and the construction area for the new foot bridge over Salt Wash on the Delicate Arch trail.

Most of these materials were planted in March and watered regularly through the summer. The remainder are being rehabilitated at our gardens for planting next spring.

Almost 600 volunteer hours have been contributed to this project over the last two years, involving over 120 volunteers from our school and university groups.

We are now actively seeking additional support to install a drip-irrigation system with solar pump to enhance the restoration project over the next several years.



Students dig out tamarisk stumps last year (left); this year the area has been weeded and transplanted and is showing signs of recovery (right).

## The Beat Goes on with Alternative Spring Break

For the 14th straight year, Plateau Restoration has been a host site for alternative spring break in cooperation with the Breakaway Organization on the campus of Florida State University. Participants in these service-learning programs, who came from the College of Charleston, S.C., and the Universities of Wyoming, Montana, and Northern Colorado, contib-

uted to a number of valuable projects which included revegetation, native garden construction, seed collection and non-native species removal.

Students gathered damaged plants along the four wheel drive roadways at Arches National Park for replanting into the Delicate Arch trail head revegetation site.



*Continued on page 3.*

# Castle Valley Project Expands

Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency awarded PRI a two-year grant to PRI to help protect water quality of Castle Valley watershed through weed management. This included weed surveys, weed control,



Field studies session during a Knapweed removal project in Castle Valley. Board members Pam Hackley and Tamsin McCormick lead the discussion.

education and developing a weed management plan.

In February, we conducted a full-day Weed Workshop providing educational presentations and information about how home owners can reduce the use of chemicals in their efforts to control non-native species. Over thirty people came, and they left with field guides and packets of native seed. Presenters were professionals from Colorado and Moab.

PRI has formed a weed management committee consisting of land managers, town officials, landowners and Grand County Weed Board and three productive meetings have been held so far.

We have been working with Castle Valley Mayor Damian Bollermann, property owners and Tim Higgs of the Grand County Weed Department for several years to control the spread of Diffuse Knapweed

(*Centaurea Diffusa*). Diffuse Knapweed may be controlled without chemicals via manual and biological controls. Over the last 5 years we have seen steady progress in the decrease of Diffuse Knapweed in Castle Valley. During this time, our students have contributed over 1000 volunteer hours to this project. Gaining control while keeping our water clean is a complete winner!

We have recently obtained two additional grants for this project from Grand County and Utah Dept. of Agriculture. These partnerships will expand our efforts at bio-control (by collecting and dispersing insects) and revegetation to enhance competition by native plants. We are also hoping to expand our partnership to include Castle Valley Fire Department and start working on cheat grass (a non-native annual grass that causes extreme fire danger).

## Science Shorts

### Life Span Comparisons

Chart Toppers:

- American Box Turtle– 120 years
- Bowhead Whale– 60 to 70 years
- Elephant– 70 years
- Human– 70-80 years

### Born and Die in the blink of an eye

- Adult housefly– 4 weeks
- Worker Bee– 5 weeks
- Worker Ant– 6 months
- Opossum– 1 year
- Queen Ant– 3 years
- Rat- 2 to 3 years

### Pluto Now Called a Plutoid

The International Astronomical Union has decided on the term “plutoid” as a name for dwarf planets like Pluto. Nearly two years after being stripped of its planethood, Pluto, and other small round objects that travel highly elliptical paths around the sun in the far reaches of the solar system will now be called plutoids.

Source: *SPACE.com*

## The Growing Concern Native Plant Center

The need for locally gathered seed and native plants is becoming greater and greater with the loss of open space and habitat due to development, drought and invasive species spread. Local stock, both seed and plants, has become of paramount importance. To respond to this need, PRI and our student volunteers have developed our native plant growing center. These include plants saved from local

sites and roadways for rehabilitation and plants grown from locally gathered seed. Another major focus is on growing and saving plants that are endemic to the Colorado Plateau.

We had over 300 plants in the garden this summer. Some of these were used in a revegetation project at Utah Open Lands’ Castleton Tower climbers’ camp in Castle Valley in Fall and others are slated for Arches and Castle Valley next year.



# Interpreting the Land Workshop a success

With support and partial underwriting by Utah Guide and Outfitters Association and a greater effort to get the word out on this educational opportunity, participation in this year's gathering grew to 152 over the two-day event. The workshop has focused as a training for guides from Utah and Colorado but is open to the public and this year the attendance was strong from guides, teachers, tourists and locals.

Each day was filled with outstanding information on natural and human history. The first day session was classroom-based and featured Roy Webb, University of Utah river historian, who presented the film "Bus Hatch-River Man" and gave an evening presentation at the Moab Information Center of the film, "Call of the Colorado". Tamsin McCormick, Plateau Restoration PhD

Geologist, presented a slide show on the Paleozoic Geology of Moab and a hands on session of field identification of rocks and minerals. Dr. Ron Godin, Colorado State University Soil Scientist had two presentations, "Understanding Soil Science" and the "Land Restoration and Revegetation Process". Wright Robinson, Grand County Weed Dept. Biologist presented a lively discussion on "Tamarisk and the Beetles—Myth and Fact.". Sunday featured field interpretive techniques with all instructors and a briefing and training with National Park Service river rangers at the Potash boat ramp.

Next year, instead of this annual workshop, we plan to run two events: a River Festival in July and a River Rendezvous in November, incorporating educational presentations into these events. Check the PRI website [www.plateaurestoration.org](http://www.plateaurestoration.org) next year for a complete schedule and event details.



Seminar participants learn about Tamarisk beetles (top) followed by a hearty lunch (bottom)

## Live Green Top 10

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unplug</li> <li>2. Use less water</li> <li>3. Switch to fluorescent light bulbs</li> <li>4. Buy organic and local foods</li> <li>5. Drive less</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Choose products with less packaging</li> <li>7. Plant a tree</li> <li>8. Recycle more</li> <li>9. Switch to green power</li> <li>10. Spread the word</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

Source: Greener choices

## World's Oldest Ponderosa Pine Found in Utah

Researchers for the USDA studying fire and drought records in the rings of more than 800 trees in the Wah Wah Mountains west of Milford, found one tree to be the oldest living Ponderosa pine in the world. The sample was taken about 12 inches from the ground and the inner ring sample dates to 1075 or 933 years old. Since it took about 10 to 20 years to grow to the height of the sample, it would make the tree 950 years old!

Source: Utah State University

## The Beat Goes On...Alternative Spring Break.....(cont. from p. 1)

These plants, collected under a NPS permit, were given a good temporary home in the native garden at the PRI home office and grounds, largely built by students. The garden has a drip irrigation system and is on a timer. Students mixed potting soils, and planted seed in dozens of pots for germination.

Students were also involved in a roadside reseeding project along Castle Valley Drive that was recently

bladed. Projects also included our continuation of knapweed removal in the Castle Valley water shed which contains private, State, Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands.

Our service-learning programs continued in April, with the 7th-grade class from West Sound Academy, WA and Eastern Kentucky University. Blocking of non-legal routes in the La Sals was a high priority as this pro

ject required many hands to complete. Students helped to roll boulders, haul logs, rocks and stumps to block user-created roads with natural features.

Eleven students took advantage of Utah State University credit we offer for the service-learning program. Over thirty spring breakers and almost 30 other students including college and 7th-graders, contributed nearly 1600 hours to these projects, worth an estimated value of \$25,000!

# Members Help the La Sal Mountains

Using funds raised through memberships and donations to our Nature's Legacy Fund, Plateau Restoration completed a year-long partnership project with the National Forest Foundation to sign the legal roadways and restore closed routes in the La Sal Mountains near Moab. Without this cash match from members, we would have been unable to obtain the grant from NFF.

Staff members hiked and four-wheeled through miles of forest lands to check and GPS current sign locations and install new signs, where needed, to

provide visitors with the best possible information as they travel through the forest. Students from Eastern Kentucky University and West Sound Academy, WA, along with participants in our National Trails Day program assisted in installing signs, clearing trails damaged by flooding and blocking of illegal routes that are not part of the new Travel Plan for the National Forest. Now, proper signing is in place on nearly every legal road and trail.



EKU students wrestle with a tree stump to block an illegal route and, above right, relaxing after signing the Trans Mountain Trail

Our accomplishments should greatly assist forest managers as they begin enacting the new forest travel plan that restricts motorized travel to legal routes and trails. This is an important first step in limiting the destruction of sensitive areas that contain vegetation critical to wildlife and the overall health of this alpine environment.

To compliment the field signing project, Plateau Restoration built a website and

created a new brochure aimed at campers in the Manti- La Sal National Forest. The website provides downloadable maps of approved travel routes. The free brochure is an in-depth look at impacts of recreation along with a naturalist's view of nature, history and geology and is designed to educate all visitors to the forest about preferred travel and camping methods. The new brochure titled, The La Sal Mountains- An Oasis in the Desert, can be viewed on line at <http://www.frontier.net/~lasalforest/LaSals.htm>.

## PRI Staff News

Michael Dean Smith, PRI Board President and founder is in demand, serving both as Chair of the Board of KZMU, Moab's community radio station and as current President of Utah Guides and Outfitter's Association.

Tamsin McCormick, PRI Executive Director, has spent some time on camera this year with a Travel Channel special featuring Arches NP and a new interpretive video on Dead Horse Point State Park. She was also delighted to be the featured presenter at this year's Envirothon, an annual high school science competition. She gave both the evening slide show and designed and conducted the station on this year's topic, 'Recreational Impacts'.

To learn more about Plateau Restoration or to join or donate, please visit our website [www.plateaurestoration.org](http://www.plateaurestoration.org), or contact us:  
P.O.Box 1363, Moab UT 84532;  
[info@plateaurestoration.org](mailto:info@plateaurestoration.org)  
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This year's youngest service-learning program participants, 7th-graders from Washington State explore the wonders of the desert.

### Plateau Restoration, Inc.

A 501(c) (3) tax exempt non profit organization

#### Mission

To protect and restore native habitats of the Colorado Plateau through hands on education, landscape restoration, revegetation and research.