

Conservation Connections

Newsletter of Plateau Restoration from Moab, Utah

Summer, 2005

Engaging the Public in the Long-Term Care of Native Habitats since 1995

www.plateaurestoration.org

Colorado and Northwestern Team Up for Sand Island Success

A wonderful week of service was completed in Bluff, Utah in late March 2005. Students representing The University of Colorado and Northwestern University camped at the Sand Island Recreation Area for a week to help continue our work on the restoration site that was established 7 years ago. Students cut and removed Tamarisk, Russian Olive and Cheat grass, built a fence around a new native plant growing area, transplanted and reclaimed an illegal roadway. Wonderful conversation, great campfire gatherings and a job well done were the highlights of the week.



Colorado students build a fence around a new native plant area

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Thanks to Linda Richmond, Summer Schultz, Brad Colin and Mark Meloy of the BLM for their assistance with this project.



Northwestern student transplanting

"Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed" - definition from the Society of Ecological Restoration

New Internship Program Begins

In June our first internship program began. We had a number of outstanding applicants and our final selections were Heather Hosterman, BA U.C. Santa Cruz, Environmental Studies and Politics, Jim Buthman MA N.A.U. Political Science and Wyley Hodgson, BA U.C.



Heather and Wyley



Jim, at home with the oars

Santa Cruz, Environmental Studies and Philosophy. They have been a real

help with river programs, grant research, writing articles, fencing projects and recreation impact monitoring. The interns will be shared with Red Rock Forests a local non-profit advocacy group working on Forest Service issues. The internship was designed to expose the students to two different non-profit experiences.

Pulling Together.....



“Knapweed Knockers” from Univ. of Pennsylvania and Northern State Univ., S. Dakota, relaxing after bagging thousands of seed-bearing plants

Controlling the continuing march of non-native species across public and private lands in the West is a huge undertaking. The scale of some of the projects is just too great for any single agency or organization. This spring, we teamed up again with the Town of Castle Valley, the Castle Valley Property Owners Association and the Grand County Weed Department to control the spread of Diffuse Knapweed in critical water collection areas in Castle Valley, Utah. These partners provided funding, while Plateau Restoration brought in students from the University of Pennsylvania, Northern State University, South Dakota and Wild Rockies Field Institute to be the on-ground control teams.

Students and leaders put in over 500 hours of volunteer service (worth over \$6000 in-kind value). Work crews collected over 30 large bags of seed heads and dug up thousands of basal rosettes, an early growth stage for this species. The project produced a match of well over 2 to 1 for the value of the support money received. Partnerships such as this can make great contributions to the reclamation needs of key areas when little money is available. There was a significant visible difference in the control area upon completion.

Monitoring of this site will continue for several years to see if more hand crew work is needed. Biologic agents (insects) were released in this area several years ago to control these weeds and evidence of their contribution can now be seen for over a mile down the drainage. Their success will also be monitored. Thanks to Damian Bollermann (Town of Castle Valley, Road Department), Pam Hackley (Castle Valley resident) and Tim Higgs (Grand County Weed Department) for all their help in making this project a success.

Taking out the Babies in Arches

Students from Northern State University went to Arches National Park for a Tamarisk removal project along Courthouse Wash during part of their Spring Break project week. Their task was to remove Tamarisk seedlings growing in or close to the water by hand-digging. Park resource specialists were conducting a large-scale Tamarisk control project in the Wash at the same time using a chemical treatment on the larger trees growing on benches high above the water.

Nearly 1000 Tamarisks were removed and photos taken so the success of the project can be monitored. That's 1000 Tamarisk that we don't have to chain saw in the future! The seedlings, many of which were five or more years old, had already trapped sediment up to 15 inches deep. Their removal should contribute to a more free-flowing system. Thanks to Gary Salamacha, Jeff Troutman and Superintendent Joss for helping us get started on this project.



Tamarisk Terminator, Shauna from Northern State tugging in Arches



Plateau Restoration

A 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit, licensed, insured and permitted with the BLM.

Mission:

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

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Women on the Rio, Pam and Lannette paddle their way down the Colorado

Our first ever women's trip went off superbly this year. Our group paddled inflatable kayaks from Cisco to Moab carrying enough comforts for the three-day trip. They also encountered a display by Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) drying their wings on a beach near camp (see box below).

More Messing About in Boats

Our founder was invited on a private trip on the Green River in July. He captained his first paddle boat through Lodore and they aced the trip! He also shared much about our organization with the group and is delighted that several folks later become members and donors. Thanks, Andy!

In mid-July, the Kidwell-Tobin Family from Grand Rapids, MI, joined us for a private trip down the San Juan River. The river was crystal clear for the entire trip – very unusual for the San Juan. The weather was really hot but the wind was calm and everyone had a great time together. Group organizer Dave Tobin had a "run for the ages" in Government Rapid. Thanks to all and please come visit anytime!

Presidents Corner

What a great experience this spring and early summer with the students and leaders of University of Pennsylvania, Northern State University, Northwestern, University of Colorado, Boulder and Wild Rockies Field Institute! These alternative break programs only come around once each year and I have to wait another year to remember how much I enjoy them. The conversation alone is worth every minute of time we put into setting these up. Add to that, the sense of accomplishment we share together after a project is complete. Something we can show our friends, our family and our fellow citizens for years to come. It gives me hope. That's when I know our mission and our program works. It's why we're still around after 10 years. The great experience and the vital information we share about the natural world are priceless. We all come away with a better understanding of each other, of problems and possible solutions for our public lands. I walk away from these ready to do more. Work on the ground more, write more letters, and be more involved in the management process. These trips are not only enjoyable but they are important too. One of these students could be the next Director of the Department of Interior! I hope so! I think they understand the problems from a field perspective and management perspective. I'm so glad they come to help, to share, to enjoy and to care. It gives me hope. – M.S.

But it's just the Daily!

What a season on the daily! Lots of high water and it never ceases to amaze us the height of the wave in White's Rapid. Many of us have numerous Grand Canyon and Cataract trips but when you encounter that wave in a kayak it is always impressive. We witnessed quite a few private boat "aerial displays"!



Turkey vultures sunning themselves in early morning

Turkey vultures are early risers, compared with Black Vultures, but still need to wait for thermals to develop before they can start flying. They spend time sunning their outspread wings to warm the body and dry off dew from the night before flight. Later in the day, this posture may be displayed to realign flight feathers that can become misshapen from soaring.

Membership and Fund Raising Update - New Conservation Team Members:

Andy Shuckra, Arlington, VA,

Paul Zilis, Boulder, CO

Marian Ottinger, Cedarridge, CO

Herm and Val Hoops, Jensen, UT,

Bob Lillie, Philomath, OR

Jill and Jim Strub, Litchfield, CT

The Williams Group, Grand Rapids, MI

BECOME A CONSERVATION PARTNER

Join our organization for any amount from \$5 to \$25 and show your support. Memberships are good for one year. You may also take advantage of lifetime membership for \$295.

Member benefits include: our quarterly newsletter in the mail, first opportunity to sign up for trips, programs, events, invitation to "members only" trips, discounts on outdoor "Plateau" clothing, discounts on native plants and seed through our members purchase program, and outdoor rental equipment.

SPONSOR A VOLUNTEER, SPONSOR A PROJECT

Friends who wish to help further can directly sponsor our volunteers and restoration projects. Contributions over the \$25 membership are applied towards our Nature's Legacy Fund, inspired by our former BLM advisor, the late Linda Siebert. Plateau Restoration uses this fund to identify, plan and implement conservation projects and to underwrite our student service-learning programs. As a token of our gratitude, we offer a Plateau Restoration baseball cap or T-shirt for contributions of \$50 or more.

Your donation not only offers a powerful learning opportunity for our future leaders, educators and land managers, we stretch your dollar by contributing volunteer labor to direct conservation work on our public lands. For example, \$25 sponsors a student volunteer for 1/2 day, providing a \$50 value in labor, a 2:1 match.

Plateau Restoration is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible. To make a contribution, please fill out the following form and mail it, along with your check payable to Plateau Restoration, to: Plateau Restoration, P.O. Box 1363, Moab, UT 84532

Feel free to contact us by phone at (435) 259-7733 or toll-free at 1-866-202-1847 or by email at info@plateaurestoration.org. Also, visit our website at www.plateaurestoration.org and contribute on-line.

Yes, I'd like to join or renew my membership. Enclosed is my contribution of: \$_____ (amount)

I want to sponsor volunteers and conservation projects at the following level: _____(amount)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____



Specify (for contributions of \$50 or more, including membership):

Cap Brim Color: green blue black

or Visor Brim Color: green blue

or T-shirt: Size: med. large X-large Color: sage sand granite