National Park Service
Biological Resource Division

Pre and Post Tamarisk Beetle Establishment Management Options

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National Park Service

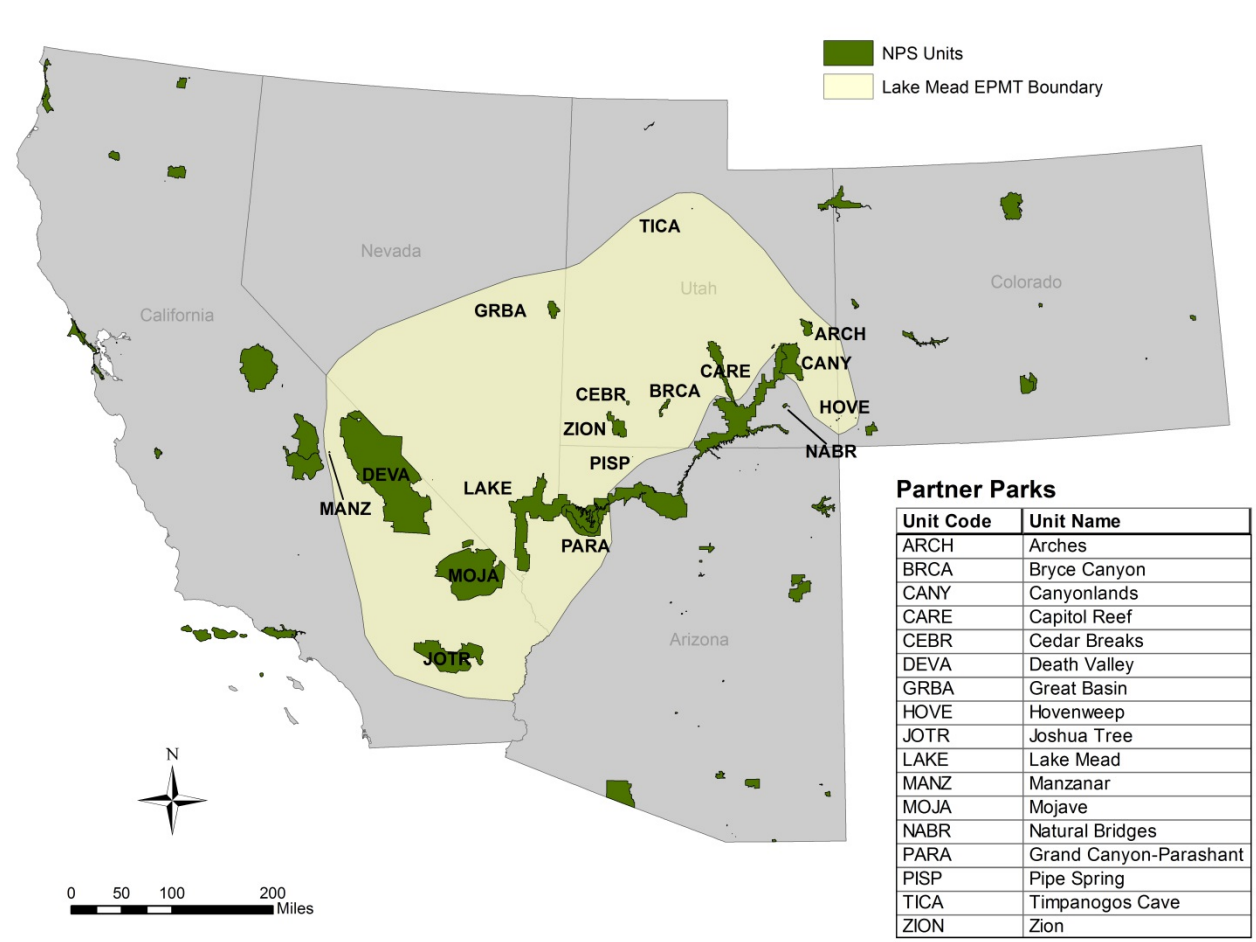
Colorado River Terrestrial and Riparian Meeting
January 24, 2017
Laughlin, NV

NPS Exotic Plant Management Teams

EPMT boundaries.

National Park Service
Biological Resource Division

Lake Mead EPMT



Partner Parks

Unit Code	Unit Name
ARCH	Arches
BRCA	Bryce Canyon
CANY	Canyonlands
CARE	Capitol Reef
CEBR	Cedar Breaks
DEVA	Death Valley
GRBA	Great Basin
HOVE	Hovenweep
JOTR	Joshua Tree
LAKE	Lake Mead
MANZ	Manzanar
MOJA	Mojave
NABR	Natural Bridges
PARA	Grand Canyon-Parashant
PISP	Pipe Spring
TICA	Timpanogos Cave
ZION	Zion

National Park Service

Lake Mead Exotic Plant Management Team

- Regional travelling crew
- Support Multiple NPS Units
- Interagency partnerships
- USFWS, BLM, BOR
- US Forest Service
- Southern NV Water Authority
- Clark County, NV

Pest Management Principles

- Prevention: keeping a pest from becoming a problem
- Suppression: reducing pest numbers or damage to an acceptable level
- Eradication: destroying an entire pest population

Integrated Pest Management

- Cultural
- Mechanical
- Chemical
- Biological

- Do not rely on one method or option

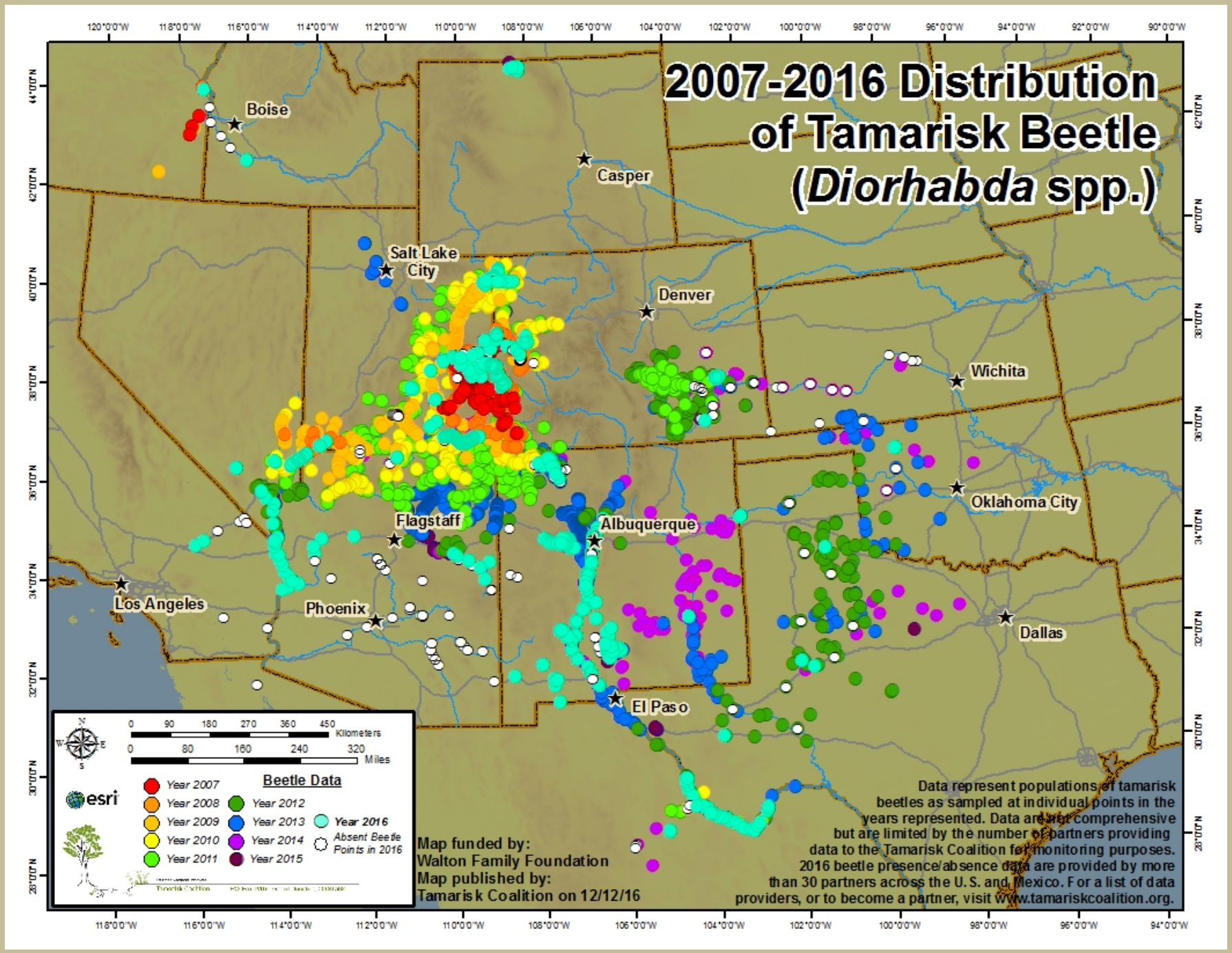
Tamarisk Leaf Beetle

Diorhabda spp

Tamarisk leaf Beetle life stages: Adult, 3 stages of larvae, egg masses

Browning/Defoliation

Lake Mohave August 2013 Defoliation

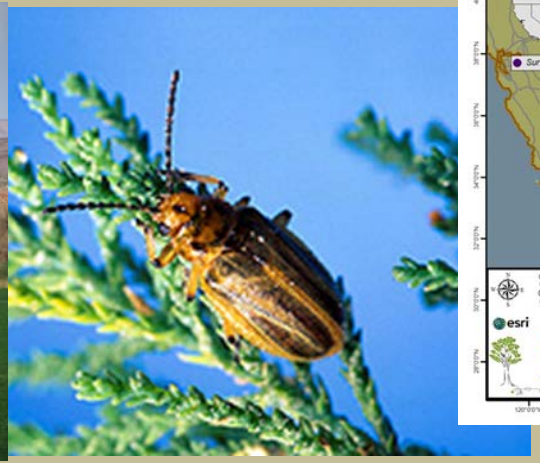

2007-2016 Distribution of Tamarisk Beetle (*Diorhabda* spp.)
Boise
Casper
Salt Lake City
Denver
Wichita
Oklahoma City
Flagstaff
Albuquerque
Los Angeles
Phoenix
Dallas
El Paso
Beetle Data
Year 2007
Year 2008
Year 2009
Year 2010
Year 2011
Year 2012
Year 2013
Year 2014
Year 2015
Year 2016
Absent Beetle Points in 2016
Kilometers
Miles
Map funded by:
Walton Family Foundation
Map published by:
Tamarisk Coalition on 12/12/16
Data represent populations of tamarisk beetles as sampled at individual points in the years represented. Data are not comprehensive but are limited by the number of partners providing data to the Tamarisk Coalition for monitoring purposes. 2016 beetle presence/absence data are provided by more than 30 partners across the U.S. and Mexico. For a list of data providers, or to become a partner, visit www.tamariskcoalition.org.

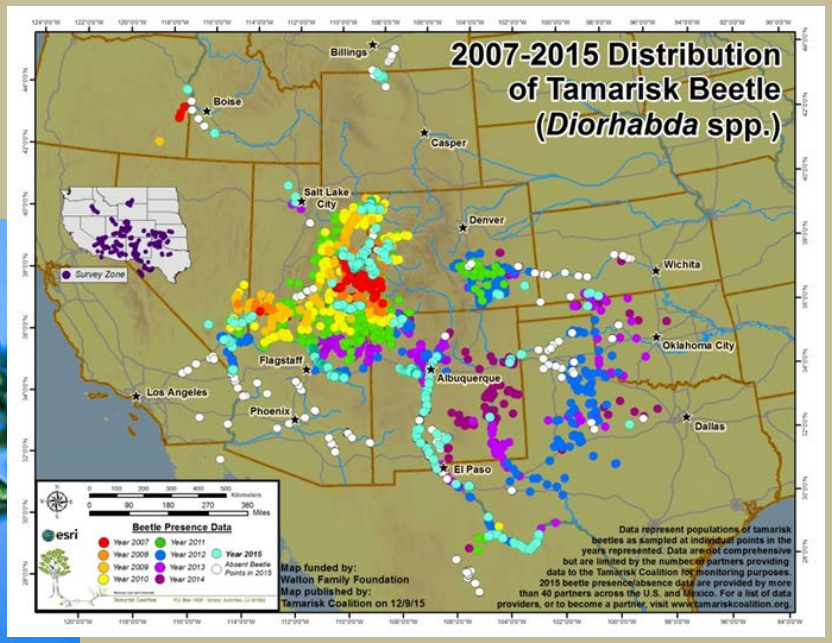
Overview of the Beetle and History

- Dr. C. Jack DeLoach, Research Entomologist, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Temple, TX. and James L. Tracy and Juli Gould.
- Probably the most scrutinized and controversial bio-control release to date.
- USDA APHIS 2010 Memo
  - Termination of tamarisk beetle program at the federal level

Tamarisk Beetle Future: A lot of Unknowns

- Active science experiment
- Equilibrium? When and what is that
- Tamarisk response
- What level of Suppression





Advantages/Benefits of the Beetle

- Large Scale: Landscape/Watersheds
- No terrain limitations
- Ignores boundaries
- Ignores funding cycles
- Long term (beyond careers and initiatives)
- Self sustaining
- Selective
- Low impact/non ground disturbing
- Defoliation reduces crown fire potential
- Subtle phased mortality/control results, allowing time for native plant response
- Much cheaper more cost effective after initial up front investment

Difference/Disadvantages between Bio Control and other IPM

- No control of location (sensitive sites)
- No control of timing (i.e. bird nesting season)
- May not meet objectives on a local site basis
  - No eradication
  - Suppression only
- Aesthetics (brown out)
- Unknown response (short term and long term)

Unexpected results of Tamarisk Beetles

- Stimulated more active management of tamarisk that previously existed at a lower level
- Bio-mass removal
- Fire management concerns (fuel breaks)
- Increased awareness/education

Summary of Pre and Post Management Options

- No action
- Monitor and Document
- Determine passive or active restoration
- Switch weed species focus
- Survey and control other weeds on site
- Implement tamarisk control at a site level
- Restoration site selection (soils,hydrology,etc)
- Prepare for revegetation/native propagule collection and nursery grow out
- Bio-mass management

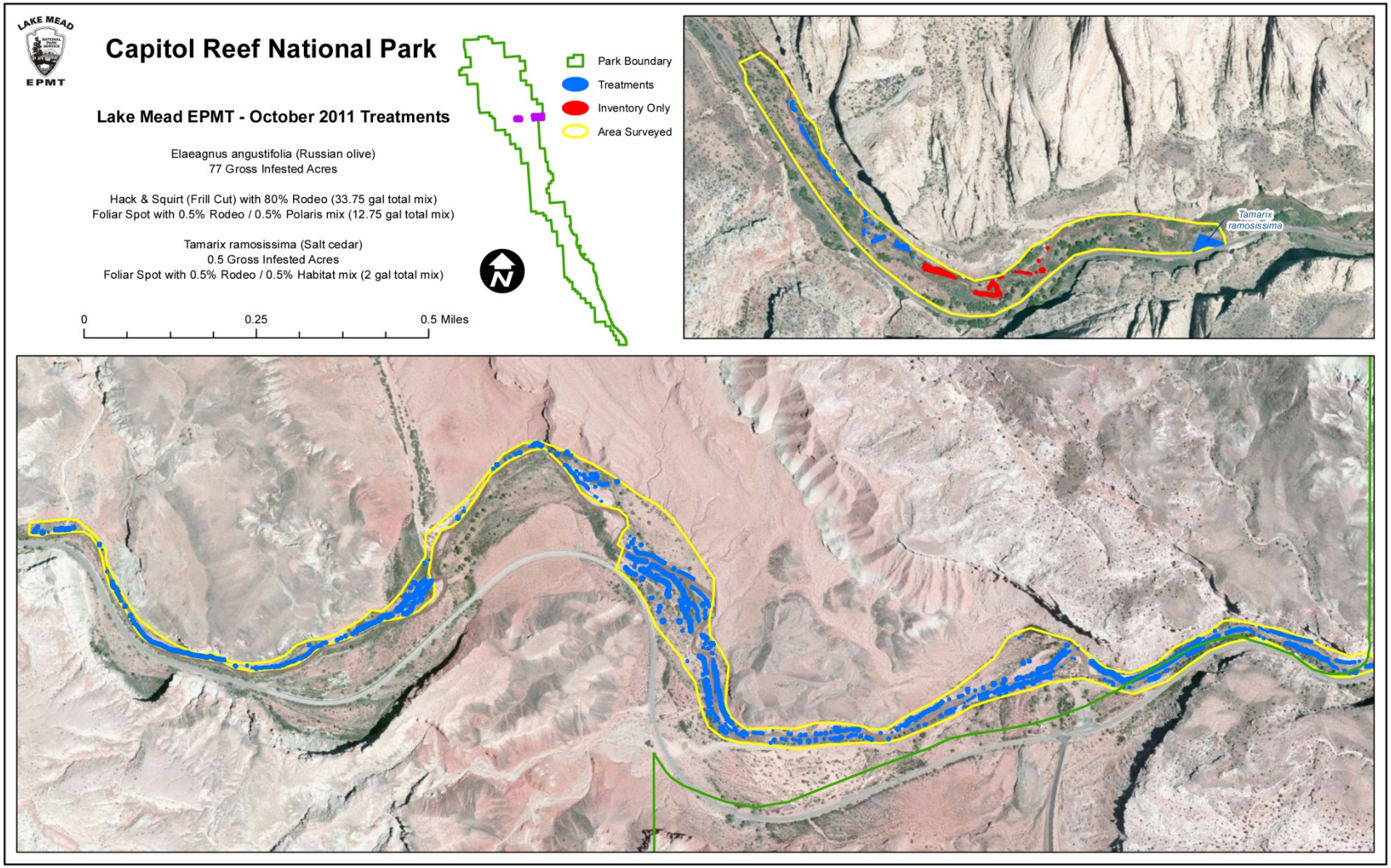
Secondary Weed Release

- Anticipate (expect) weeds that are present at lower density or cover levels to expand
- Tamarisk has outcompeted other weeds as well as desirable natives
- Re-focus active control on these “secondary” species to avoid replacing one weed for another weed

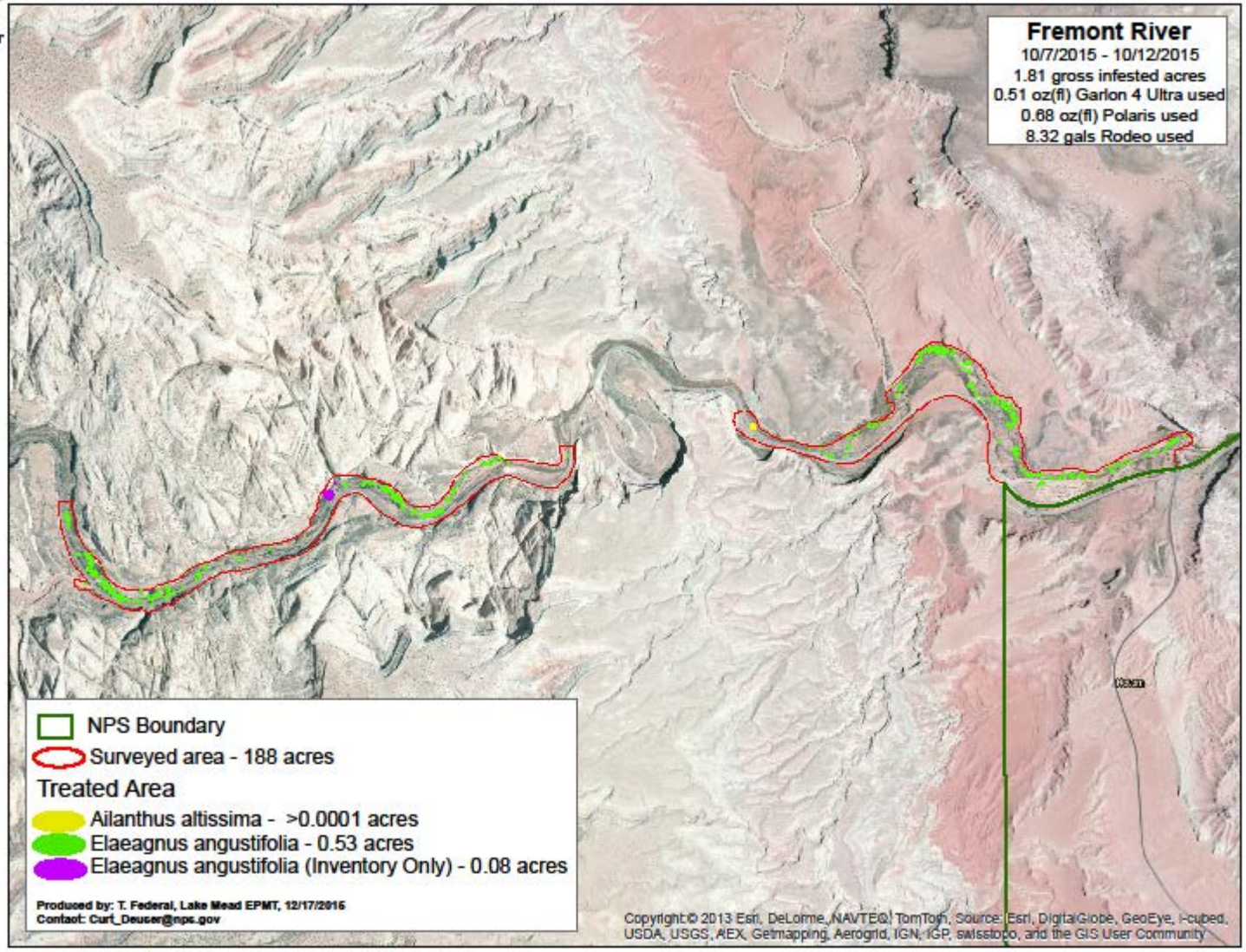
Other Common Riparian Weed Species of Concern

- Russian Olive
- Russian Knapweed
- Perennial Pepperweed
- Camelthorn
- Arundo
- Fountain Grass
- Ravenna Grass
- Athel tamarix
- Tree tobacco
- Siberian Elm
- Ailanthus
- Palm Trees

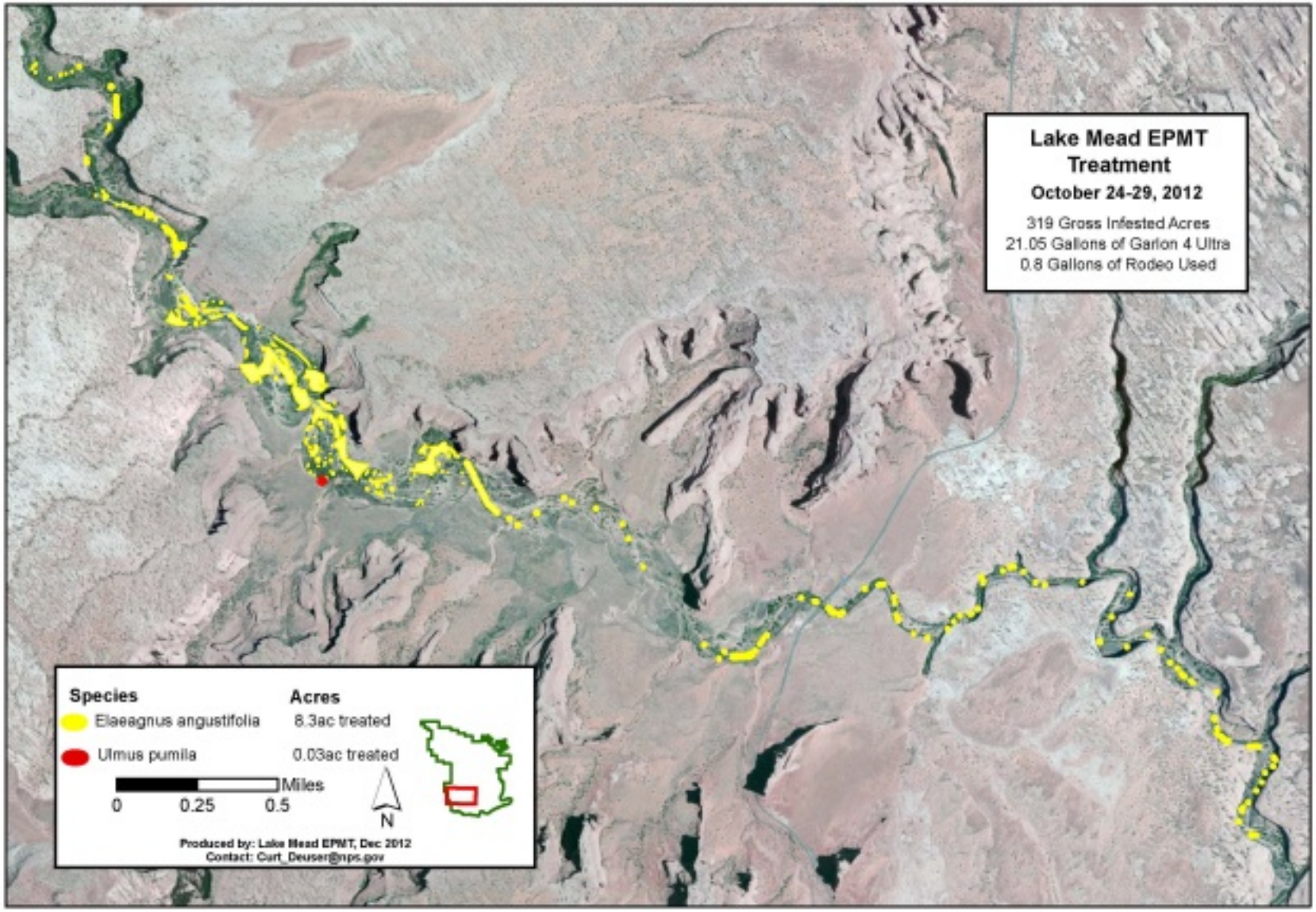
Weed Mapping: Fremont River, UT



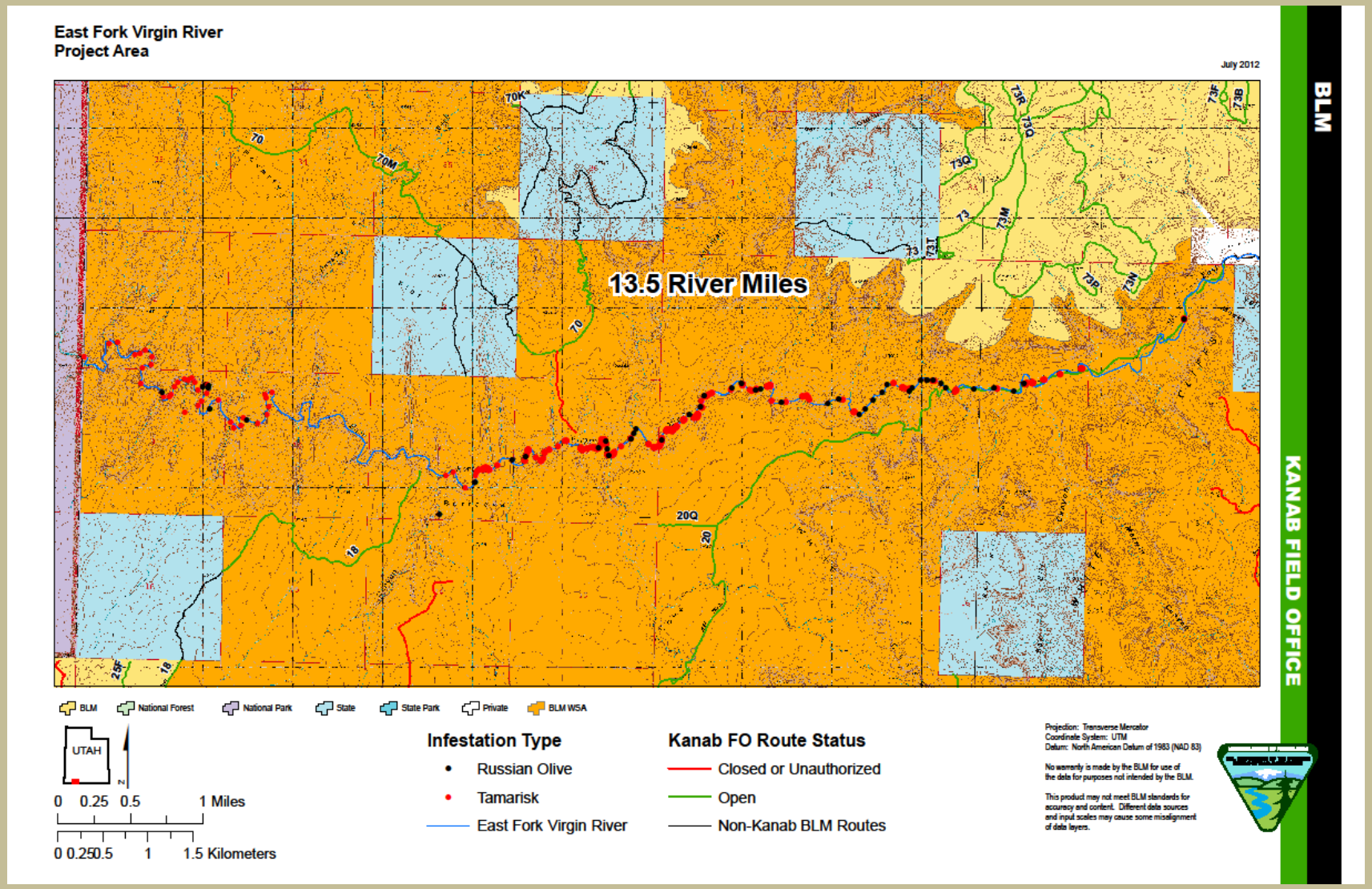
FY16 CARE EPMT Treatments



Arches National Park
Courthouse Wash

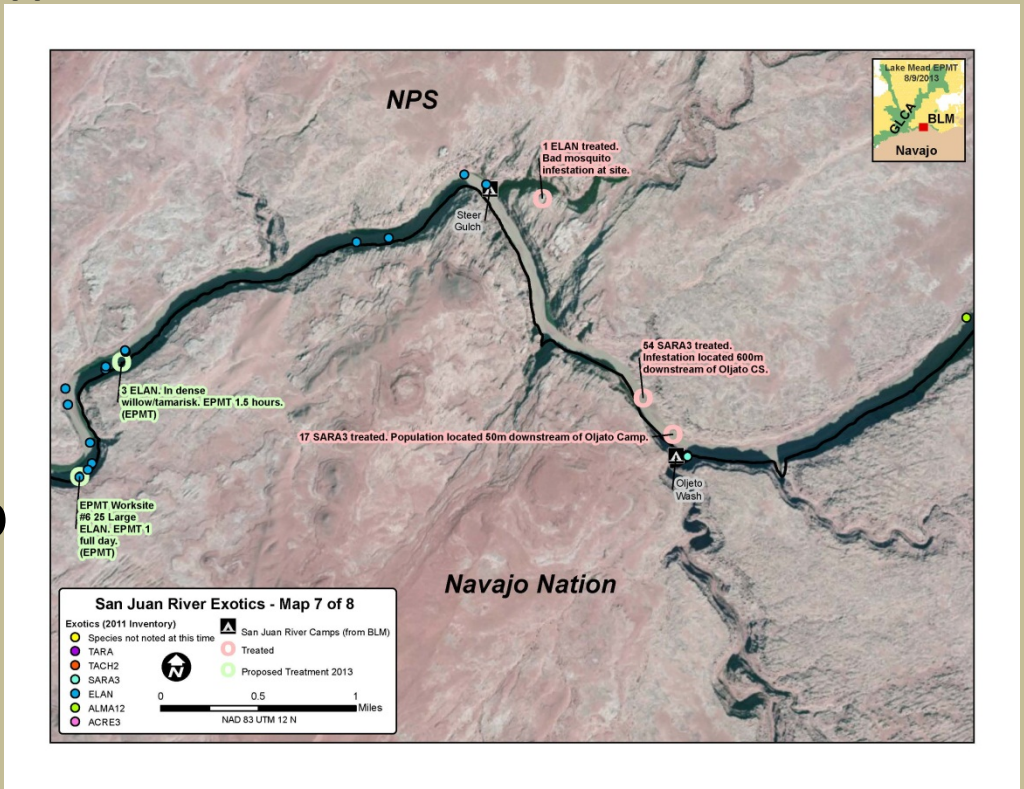


East Fork of the Virgin River, UT



San Juan River Weed Control

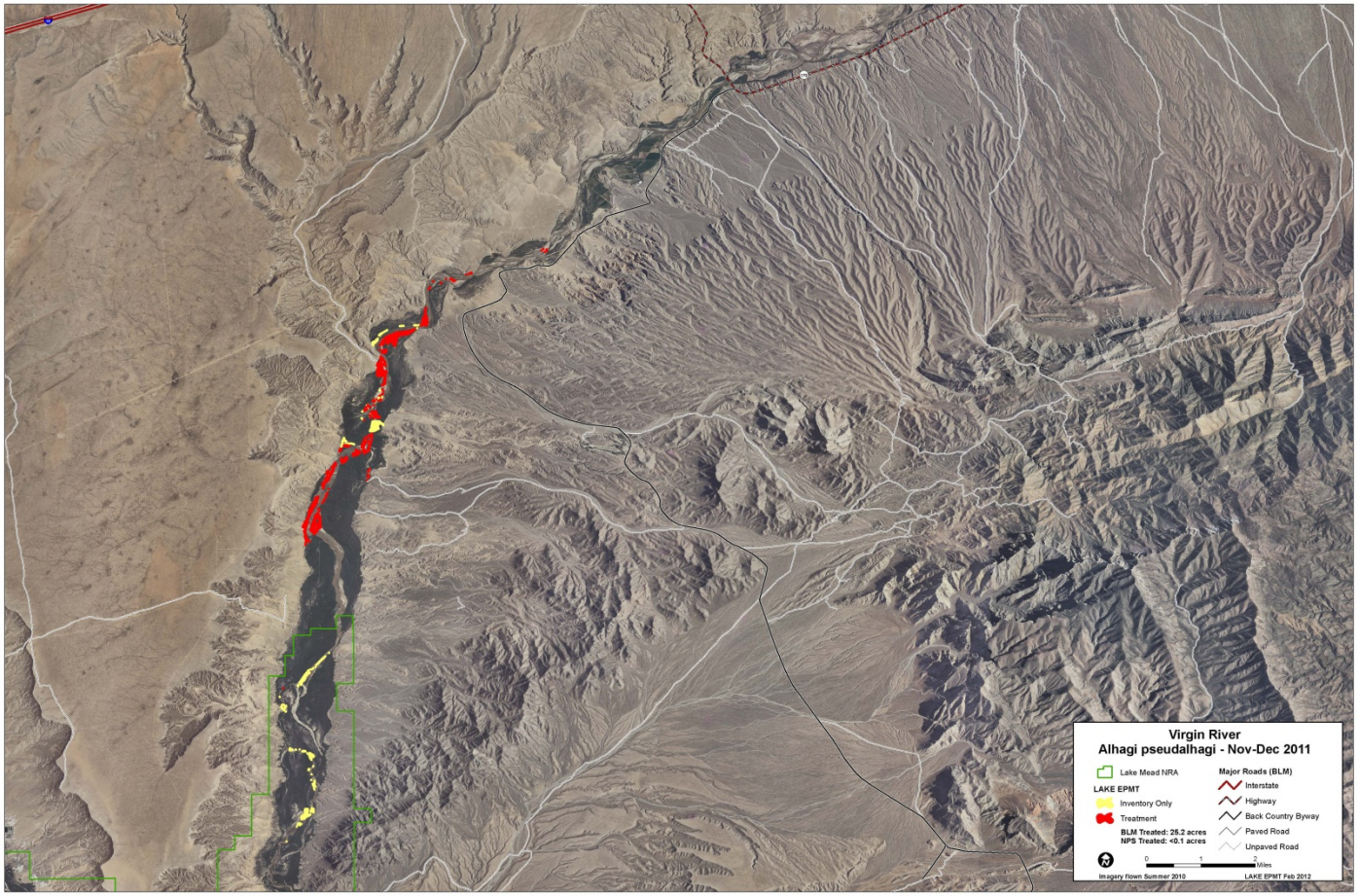
- Mexican Hat, UT down
- Ravenna Grass
- Russian Olive
- Russian Knapweed
- Camelthorn
- NPS, BLM and Navajo Nation



Camelthorn: *Alhagi pseudalhagi or maurorum*

- Legume
- Primarily spreads vegetatively
- Deep Rhizomes, underground shoots
- Floods
- Little Colorado River
- Lower Virgin River

Virgin River Camelthorn Map



Camelthorn Treatments on the Lower Virgin River

Bio-mass Management Options

- Leave to degrade on site
  - Natural decomposition
  - Vertical mulch/micro-climate
  - reduce erosion winds and rain
  - no ground disturbance
  - Bird perch sites/snags
- Prescribed Burn/Broadcast (monotypic)
  - Salt laden litter and duff removal
- Other options include cutting and slash creation

Reasons for Removal

- Aesthetics
- Fuels mgt
- Clear Space for restoration or recreation

Slash Mitigation

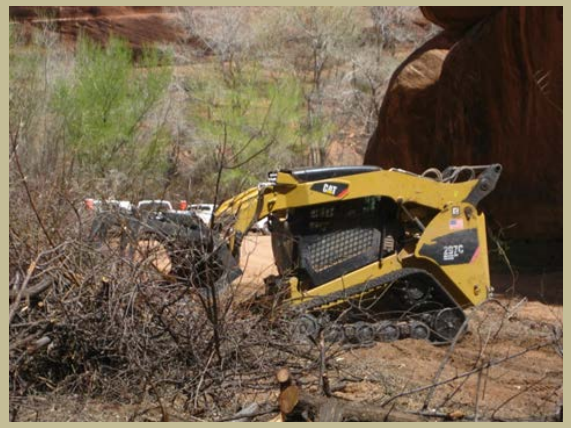
- Lop and scatter
- Pile (degrade or burn)
- Haul/Disposal
- Fire wood
- Chip/Mulch

Pile on site

Haul off site/Firewood

Trailer

Chipper/Mulch



Mechanical/Heavy Equipment

- Tree extraction, uproot plants with excavator/clam shell bucket
- Hydro-ax, grinder
- Bulldozer
- Access limitations
- Ground disturbance

Hydro Ax/Grinder

Equipment Types

Logistics/Access

Create native propagule “Islands”

- Restorable areas
- Small % of total area
- More cost effective/prohibited
- Hydrology
- Soils
- Sustainable

Restoration Active vs Passive

- Transplanting
  - Rooted
  - Cuttings
  - Deep hole container planting
- Seeding
- Supplemental Irrigation
  - Avoid sprinklers
- Selective Targeted watering

Passive Restoration

- Monitor priority weeds during early years while the site is vulnerable/critical during the first 2-3 years post disturbance
- Survey, treat and monitor weeds in adjacent areas to create a buffer around your restoration in process areas
- Survey after nearby disturbance events (floods, fires, adjacent disturbances, etc.)

Active Revegetation

- Get control of weeds first then revegetate
- After revegetation occurs make sure to increase survey of weeds to detect early to reduce potential weed control impacts
- Selectively treat weeds/spot treatment or handpull adjacent to transplants
- Use plant exclosures/shelters

Site Recovery/Restoration

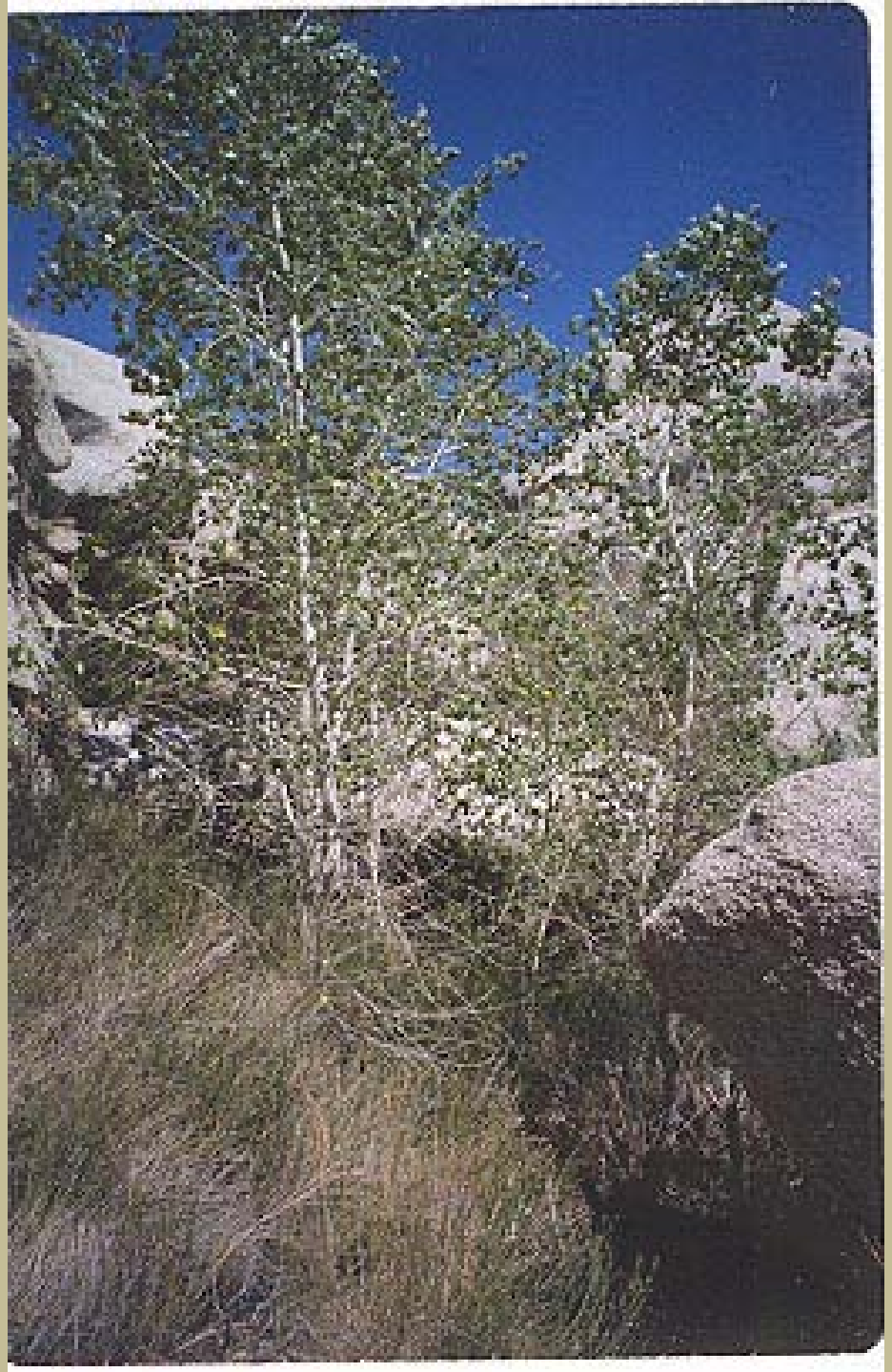
- Passive
- Active
- Site Potential
  - Soil/moisture
  - Hydrology
  - Post treatment WX Precip/Floods
- Grazers/beavers

Site Before Treatment

One-Year Post Treatment

Four Year Post Treatment

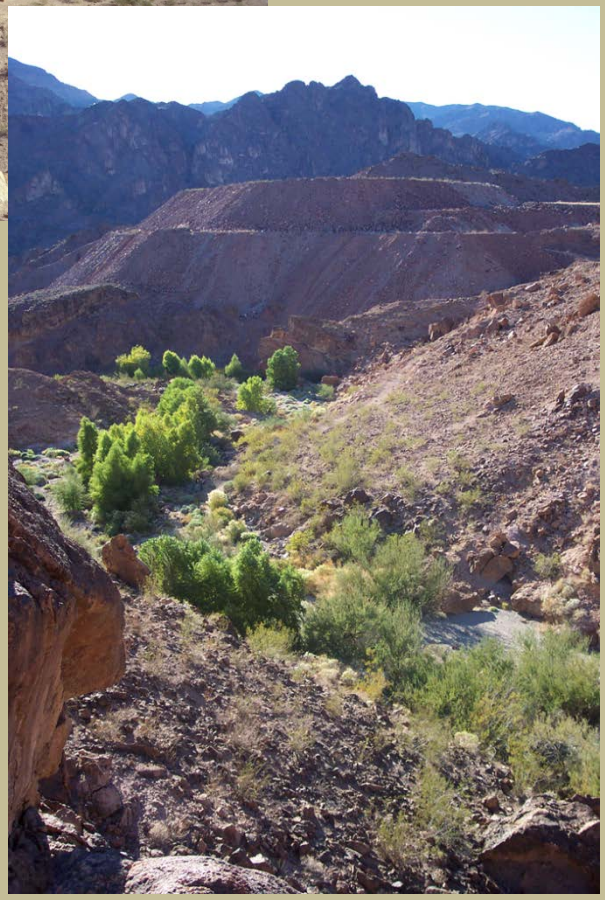
Cottonwood Regeneration
Second Year Post Treatment
Tamarisk stumps



Five Years

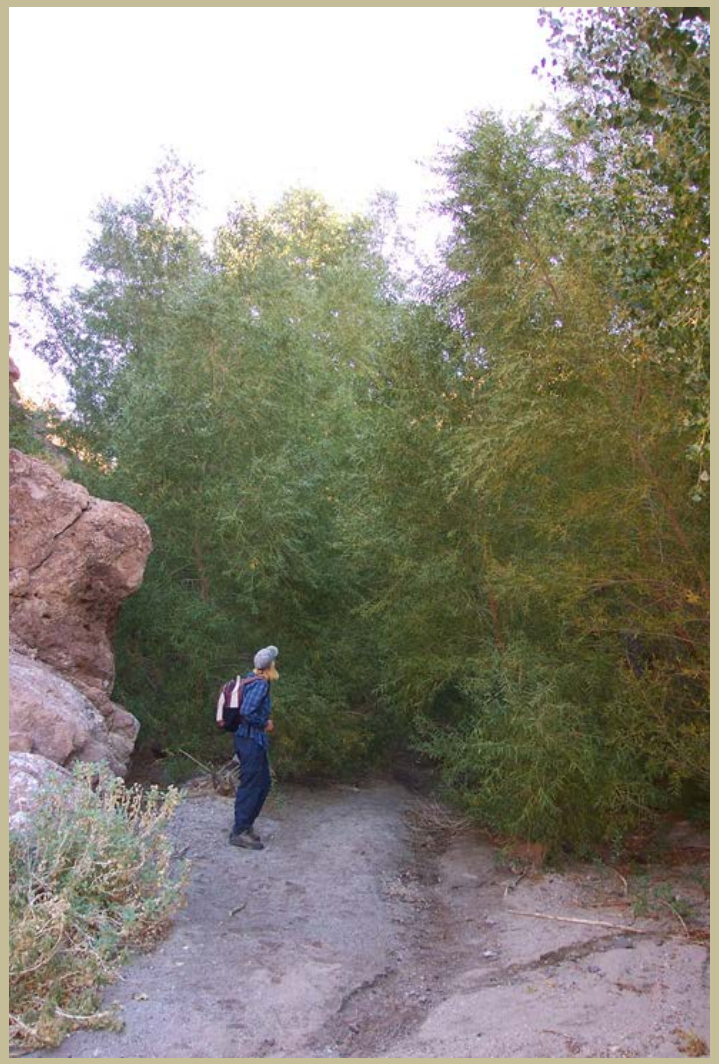
Post Treatment

Sugarloaf Spring, AZ Restoration



How Does Recovery Occur?

- Eliminate the direct competition
- **Soil moisture increases**
  - from removal of tamarisk
  - allows for native plant regeneration/recruitment
  - provides for active revegetation, seeding, transplanting, pole planting
- Tamarisk and other weed control, monitoring and maintenance is important for first 2-3 years



How long does it take and what plants come in?

- Depends on seed source plants available on site/Seed bank
- Dependent on precipitation, floods, timing
- Recommend active revegetation if trying to create a specific desirable habitat
  - act within the first 1-2 growing seasons following removal
- Russian thistle, kochia and bassia can be problematic

Dead Defoliated Tamarisk

- Transplant or seed in the dead clumped areas
- Rake salt laden duff layer if seeding
- Mortality and subsequent revegetation sites may not be uniform so we could create a mosaic of propagule islands and suppress other weed invasion during the transition phase
- Ruderals may be less of problem in beetle suppressed areas, slow and non-ground disturbing

Go with what the site is capable of…. Under current conditions

- Remnant species can help/ historical info
- Many high terrace sites (drier and saltier) may convert to quail bush, halophytic communities mesquite, grasslands or even uplands

Site Recovery

- Some places may need help to recover (tamarisk dominated sites)
- Mixed native sites readily recover naturally
- Recovery can be challenging
  - High salinity
  - Lack of precip or flooding (post treatment)
  - Previously disturbed/site history, seed bank
- Be patient, many sites took years to become degraded, so expect years to recover

Long Term Beetle Suppressed Area Recommendations

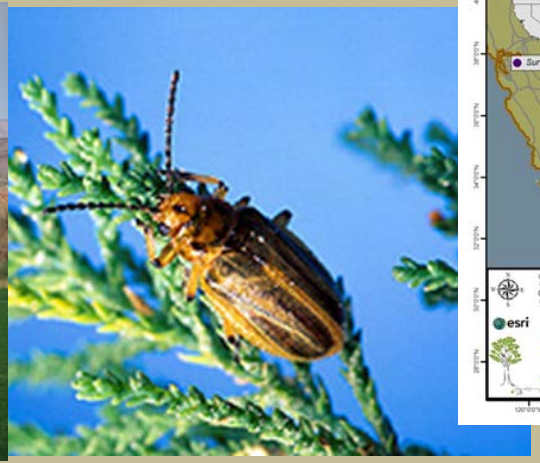
- If you plan to bulldoze the site do it now, don’t wait for beetles to kill the trees
- Allow for a subtle transition to a desirable vegetation community
- Let trees degrade on site
- Dead trees: beneficial value, wind and rain drop interception, bird perch sites, eventual soil nutrient recycling
- Vertical mulch, micro-climate site benefits (shade and moisture retention)

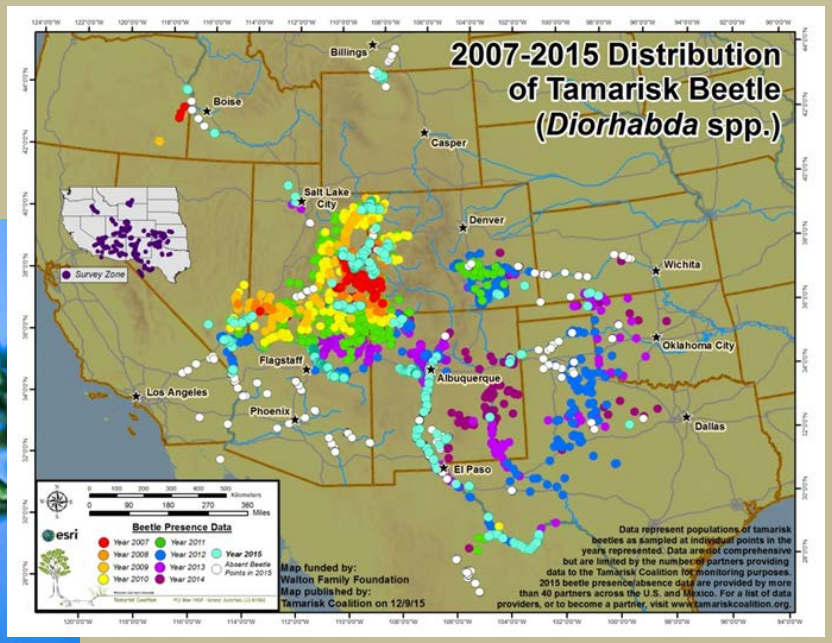
Active Tamarisk Control

- Still important
- Encroaching areas
- Less dense areas
- Early detection scenarios
- Do not over rely on the beetle to accomplish your objectives
- Successful

Tamarisk Beetle Future: A lot of Unknowns

- Active science experiment
- Equilibrium? When and what is that
- Tamarisk response
- What level of Suppression





Acknowledgements

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- Tamarisk Coalition (coordinating beetle mapping data)

Thank You

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