

Project Year-End Summary Report 2021

Title of Project: Tamarisk Eradication on the Gila River

Begin answering in the shaded box right beside or below each question and it will expand to accommodate as you type. Use up to a total of two pages. More detailed presentations, articles or posters are welcome separately (See final instructions at the end of this form.)*

1. Organization name or Individual who received the grant: Upper Gila Watershed Alliance

2. Amount of Grant: \$ 1,500

4. Was additional outside funding obtained? (check box that applies) Yes No

Other funding source(s) if you checked "yes." The Upper Gila Watershed Alliance contributed matching funding for tamarisk eradication on the Gila River downstream of the Gila River Bird Area. In addition, we obtained funding from the National Forest Foundation and National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance to continue tamarisk eradication work along the Gila River many miles upstream in the Gila Wilderness Area.

5. Briefly, how was the grant money from the Carter Conservation Fund used?

Carter Conservation Funds were used to eradicate invasive tamarisks along four miles of the Gila River downstream of the Gila River Bird Area in the Gila National Forest. The bulk of the funding paid the contractor's time and mileage. The remaining funds were used to purchase herbicide and for minimal grant administration.

6. Write an abstract or summary of the activities performed and the progress that was made this year on your project. Save any conclusions, lessons learned, and benefits achieved for the final sections, 7&8.

For this tamarisk eradication project, the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance (UGWA) contracted with a tamarisk eradication worker who has done this work for us for the last five years. Starting at the Gila River Bird Area in the Gila National Forest, UGWA's contractor walked four miles downstream to the Gila River's confluence with Bear Canyon. Using UGWA's and the Forest Service's GPS data, he located stands treated in 2020 to determine whether there were resprouts that needed further treatment. Over a period of five days in late February and early March, 2021, the contractor searched for, located, and treated 18 tamarisk stands. In addition to checking on previously located stands, the contractor did a thorough search for mature tamarisk trees, saplings, and seedlings on the floodplains on both sides of the river.

Treatment consisted of cutting the stems and spraying the herbicide Garlon 3A on the stumps. We have had success using this method in the past few years, and use of Garlon 3A has been approved

for judicious use in riparian areas by the Forest Service. Data collection included GPS readings, pre- and post-treatment photos, size class and number of stems cut, and pertinent notes.

The contractor cut and treated a total of 194 stems: 115 stems that were <1.0" in diameter; 60 stems 1-2" diameter; 11 stems 2-3" diameter; 5 stems 3-4" diameter; and 3 stems >4.0" in diameter. The data spreadsheet is an attachment to this report, as is the map of treated tamarisks.

7. State how your project furthers a Native Plant Society mission area. Pick the best fitting area: achieves plant or ecological education, contributes to conservation/restoration of native plants and habitats, adds to botanical research, or promotes appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land and/or wildlife.

UGWA's tamarisk eradication project achieves the Native Plant Society's mission of conservation/restoration of native plants and habitats. As a result of tamarisk eradication, the Gila's native riparian flora, including willows and cottonwoods, will regenerate and increase in numbers, density, and diversity. Tackling the problem now, while populations are still relatively small and isolated, benefits the Gila National Forest's native flora.

8. State any other conclusions. Include any lessons learned that would assist others. What benefit to you, the community or the environment resulted or do you hope will result from your use of this grant?

The Forest Service is grateful for UGWA's tamarisk eradication efforts, since it lacks capacity and funding for accomplishing this important work. The larger community - both human and non-human - benefits from the preservation of riparian ecosystems and flora.

In doing this work for the last six years, we have concluded that tamarisk are tenacious trees and often require more than one treatment before they are truly dead.

After six years of collaboration with the Forest Service on tamarisk eradication, we have realized that we need to be more proactive in our communications with them. For example, we just learned this year that they have a preferred method of accepting our tamarisk data to minimize their staff time in incorporating our data into their system. Had we known this in advance, we could have accommodated their data collection system. If we receive funding for tamarisk eradication in 2022, we will upgrade our data collection method to facilitate a more seamless and less labor-intensive share of data.

It has also just come to our attention that although the Forest Service treated tamarisk in the Gila River Bird Area, they did not complete the work, and several tamarisk stands remain in side tributaries not far from the Gila River. We hope to obtain funding in 2022 to treat these overlooked tamarisk stands.