

## BLM CONTINUING EFFORT TO RESTORE NATIVE PLANTS ALONG THE COLORADO RIVER

During October and November, the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM), Moab Field Office will be continuing its long term effort to remove invasive tamarisk and Russian olive and restore native vegetation along the Colorado River. The BLM will also be working to re-construct popular campgrounds in the treatment areas.

The reduction of tamarisk and Russian olive, in coordination with state and local agencies, has been underway for several years along the Colorado River and nearby areas. Multiple methods have been employed to remove the invasive species which have degraded wildlife habitat, blocked access to the river, and created other problems. Mechanical treatments, prescribed fire, and hand cutting followed by herbicide application have been the most commonly used methods to remove tamarisk and Russian olive.

The invasive plants in high priority sites along the river have been successfully removed and the area is ready for planting and reseeding. This fall, approximately 200 acres will undergo revegetation efforts. Young adults from the Southeast Utah Youth Corps, a local contractor, and volunteers will be assisting BLM crews in the revegetation efforts.

In October, native cottonwood trees and willows will be planted along stream banks where the tamarisk and Russian olive have been removed. Other sections of the treatment areas will be reseeded in November with a mix of native grasses and shrubs. Special efforts will be taken at the Negro Bill and Goose Island campgrounds along State Route 128 and Kings Bottom along the Kane Creek Road. At these locations, larger containerized cottonwood trees will be planted and watered to restore these popular areas more quickly. Additionally, dormant native willows from adjacent areas will be "pole-planted" in the late winter to provide additional ground cover and campsite screening. This activity follows BLM's pole-planting of willows at the Goose Island Campground in April which achieved a nearly 100% survival rate.

At the Negro Bill and Kings Bottom camping areas, BLM is taking the opportunity created by the clearing of tamarisk and Russian olive to re-grade the sites to make them more useful and build safer access from the adjacent roads, and install individual campsites at about the same numbers before the project. These areas, which are currently closed for camping, will be re-opened in the spring.

The vegetation project is one portion of the BLM's larger effort to reduce invasive tamarisk along the Colorado River following the introduction of the tamarisk leaf eating beetle (*Diorhabda elongata*) by state and local agencies. These efforts are part of the long term fuels reduction and vegetation restoration project in the Moab Field Office. Treatments are being coordinated and implemented with many partners including the City of Moab, Grand County, the Southeast Utah Tamarisk Partnership, The Tamarisk Coalition and the Utah State Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands.

For more information about this project, call Brian Keating at 435-259-2194 or visit the following website: [www.utahfireinfo.gov](http://www.utahfireinfo.gov).