SURP Meeting October 8, 2020
Mayberry Native Plant Propagation Center, Moab

NOTES
9 am – 3 pm meeting
Mayberry Native Plant Propagation Center, MM 15.5 (approx.) hwy 128

RSVP Attendees:
Karla VanderZanden, CFI
Mary O'Brien, Grand Canyon Trust
Rani Derasary, City of Moab
Josh Doucette, NPS
Erik Parker, UMTRA
Liz Ballenger, NPS
Nicole Nielson, DWR
Kelli Quinn, NPS
Jason Johnston, FFSL
Tony Mancuso, FFSL
Luke Mattson, UMTRA
Elizabeth Weimholt, GCWD
Rob Wood, GCWD
Gabe Bissonette, BLM
Makeda Hanson, DWR
John Leary, REW
Matt McEttrick, RRR
Josie Moe, RRR
Kara Dohrenwend, RRR
Tim Graham,
Arne Hutlquist, MAWP
Tamsin McCormick, PRI
Chris Wood, DWR
Duncan Fuchise, FFSL
Nicole Croke, UCC
Jake Deslauriers, UCC
Dave Pals, BLM
Casey Riches, GCW

Colorado River WRI projects
During the last few years, SURP has increased the acreage of treated/managed land significantly. WRI 5.0 funds could be used for maintenance of land that has already been treated and a certain percent could be allocated towards prioritizing sites with specific land uses (recreation, camping, aquatic ecosystem management, etc.). Because there is at least a 5 year delay to really see results of management, 5.0 could be used to monitor which sites have positive, zero, or negative change. After this year, use that information to decide which sites have the most need for active revegetation. Overall, use this year to monitor and do necessary maintenance and revegetation while taking a step back to assess the efficacy of previous years' work. The group approved of continuing to have Rim to Rim coordinate the WRI application, funds and projects. Kara and Matt will send out an email to those interested in helping draft the next project proposal soon.

Colorado River Herbaceous Weed Control Coordination Plan Draft
General Plan overview: Identify a list of sites and have a large polygon for each site that is constant year to year. Include pre-treatment, map plants at each site for each year and use that info to make scope for the coming year. Treat, then evaluate a few months afterward and remap if necessary. The idea is to track information so all entities working in the corridor know what work has been done and what is remaining, and also have information to plan for the next year.

COMMENTS:

Kelli- clarify which subspecies of non-native phragmites we are targeting. And asked to add Russian Thistle to the nuisance list on the outline.

Luke Mattson- showed interest in starting to monitor along the UMTRA river site.

Gabe- Once we have all the sites and polygons of interest, how do we share information amongst groups? Hopefully we can use a unified format to enter information into a database that already exists.

Mary-suggested a field tour at the beginning and end of every year at key sites?

Jake- There are additional river right polygons that aren't listed on the outline and should be added.

Ravenna and Exotic Phragmites updates

RAVENNA
Grand County Weeds has located and mapped Ravenna grass in various locations along the River Corridor and up some side canyons (some quite far up). It is classified as a class 4 noxious weed in Grand County. Estimated reduction from 20-40 acres of Ravenna grass patches to 5-10 acres as of now. Main areas of focus are Mill Creek and Grandstaff (as these are the highest concentrations) with a need to continue to monitor those far flung individuals up Hunter, Onion and along the river.

The option of use of a biocontrol against Ravenna grass was raised. Potential use for a scale insect as a biocontrol but there is potential for a spillover from target to non-target species of grasses.

In regard to how much does Ravenna grass have to be retreated: this seems dependent on where treatment is happening. While herbicide is very effective (80-90%?) there are large patches of Ravenna in places like Mill Creek where many visitors are present. In places like these- manual removal may be the better option. There is scouting being done to find the seedbanks of Ravenna. It is being found as far away as professor creek. Crews can cut seed heads and locate the plant on GPS if found.

What kind of education has been pushed about private lands and use of Ravenna grass as a landscaping plant? Handouts were given to private landowners but not much else has been done recently. In 2014 there were pamphlets given out to the community. Liz B suggested applying to CNHA for funding for another pamphlet mail out as well as some articles in the newspaper.

Phragmites australis subsp. australis
This non-native subspecies was identified in the area in 2018. It has no insect predators like the native species. Working to identify it using characteristics rather than depending on genetic testing because that is time and money intensive. Genetic testing can be used to confirm identification. NPS sampled 53 stands and found 19 suspected non-native stands (4 along the Colorado river, 1 in Canyonlands National Park, and potentially 9 in Arches National Park). Native and non-native species do not flower at the same time so hybridization between species is highly unlikely. Could test removal in the front country of Arches before moving the project further into the backcountry.

More work could be done to find if there is differentiation in preferred habitat of the native and non-native phragmites subspecies which could make locating the non-native variety easier. The non-native species of phragmites doesn't seem to be affected negatively by flash flooding and stands have been found in Court House Wash.

Monitoring Updates and Discussion: what is most useful for managers?
Discussion suggested that in depth monitoring every 5 years rather than monitoring every year may be more impactful for our needs. Is the native population overpowering the exotic population? If yes, leave the site alone. If zero or negative change- focus on this site in following years.

Discussion raised the idea that more focus should be placed on effectiveness monitoring – meaning monitoring to understand if actions on the ground are effective in increasing native populations and decreasing exotics. It was also raised to tailor monitoring, or the data analysis at least, to fit easily into WRI proposals and projects without having to convert it between formats. The value of having a system that will help us prioritize projects was also raised including streamline data collection and sharing into a format that fits easily within the group.

Premonitoring? Hasn't occurred much in the past for various reasons, but maybe with the amount of work done in the past years (cleaner work sites, less brush to get through) we can start gathering more qualitative information.

Use of the Vegetation Mosaic layers and especially the other layers in the Rasmussen Report/database that come can be especially helpful in the future. Matt, Kara, and Tony are following up on the idea of backtracking from our site assessment data to check accuracy of some of the layers.

It was suggested to use existing LIDAR more in the future. State LIDAR layers can be accessed (via Tony) for anyone who needs them for mainstem sections of the Colorado. Potential LIDAR of the whole state may be coming soon

As Grand County Weeds mentioned, they have been trying to do more pre and post monitoring to capture a more accurate picture of the area they are working with. This seems to be of interest to most parties involved. Funding for more premonitoring could mean less unnecessary overlap between treatments and reduce the occurrence of missing spots when treating.

SITE ASSESSMENT TOOL TEST and DISCUSSION
Most of the afternoon was spent testing the Survey 123 tool that Gabe made from the Site Assessment created by Duncan and Kara last summer. A separate email about this topic will be sent out shortly to everyone to make sure we get the information back to Gabe to make changes.

It was suggested that the site assessment data collected in 2019 may be uploaded into the database to help create the beginning of our collective data gathering.

2021 Plans:
Next meeting early to mid-March. People seemed very interested in another outdoor meeting at Mayberry.