

Vegetation Response after Tamarisk and Olive Biomass Removal near Moab Utah

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The rapid establishment and spread of the tamarisk leaf beetle in the Moab area since 2004 has spawned a marked increase in biomass removal activity due in part to heavy recreational use and land management objectives focused on fire prevention in high use public lands, and increasing interest in large weed control on private lands. There is less information to assist land managers and owners in planning for revegetation than there is about methods to remove biomass. In the Moab area, many native plants grow in and near tamarisk and olive stands. In some cases this vegetation may provide a basis for natural regeneration. In many locations site conditions may preclude passive native vegetation recovery, and initial removal and follow up methods may be critical for establishment of native plant communities. In 2007 it became apparent that a monitoring program centered near Moab could examine the efficacy of various site treatment methods for removal of non native woody invasives by documenting the establishment of plants in these sites. Monitoring efforts began in 2007 with 14 sites located on the main stem Colorado and up Mill Creek covering over 60 river miles, and 2 side stream miles. Data collected at each site includes: line intercept vegetation transect information, nested frequency information, adjacent area vegetation, land use history, and invasive removal history. In 2010 preliminary analysis of the data collected and collection methods has been done. While still in preliminary stages of work, this long term monitoring effort does seem to be documenting some trends in vegetation response to large scale woody invasive removal and follow up activities in projects in the Moab region. RRR intends to continue to monitor these sites until at least 2013.