

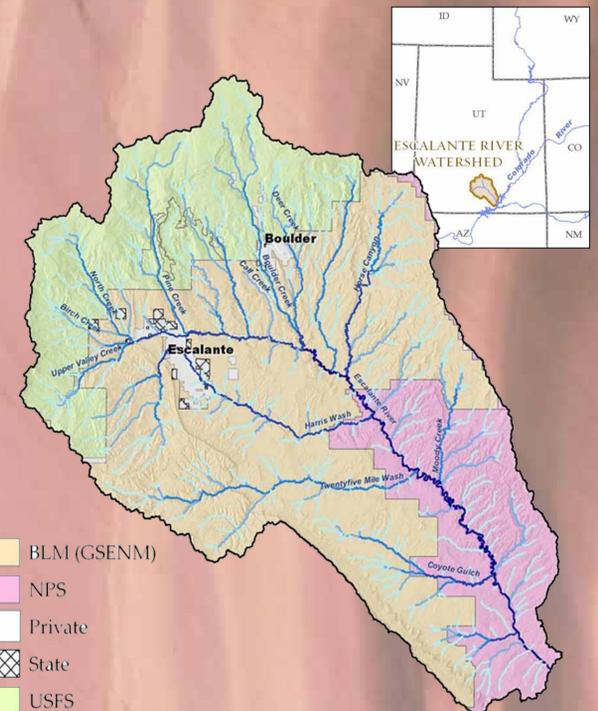
# A Wild and Changing River

## Essence of the Escalante

The Escalante River begins among aspens and sub-alpine meadows high on the Aquarius Plateau. Fed by snowmelt, occasional rainfall, and a vast network of springs, it meanders 90 miles to join the Colorado River in Lake Powell. The last river of its size to be mapped in the lower 48 states, the Escalante is one of the few remaining free-flowing rivers in the Intermountain West.

Some 1.3 million acres of land drain into the Escalante River and its tributaries. This watershed is home to more than 300 species of birds, several rare fish, and a rich diversity of other wildlife and plants.

It's also home to the residents of Escalante and Boulder, many of whom make their living from this land. And it's a sanctuary to visitors from around the world who seek the spectacular beauty, solitude, and adventure of this wild river system.



Of the 1.3 million acres within the Escalante River watershed, just 29,000 acres are privately owned and 6,600 acres are state lands. The remaining 1.26 million acres are collectively owned by all Americans and cared for by three federal agencies—U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service.



Bighorn sheep



Canyon tree frog



Yellow monkey flower



Mountain lion track



The Escalante River drops more than 7,000 feet in elevation from the upper reaches of its watershed to its confluence with the Colorado River, carving dramatic sandstone canyons along the way.

## River at Risk

In the Escalante River watershed, quality and quantity of river flows are affected by increased usage, declining beaver populations, bark beetle infestations, declining aspen forests, decreased snowpack, and hotter, drier conditions.

Invasive, non-native species pose one of the biggest threats to the health of the Escalante River ecosystem. Introduced to the Southwest for erosion control in the 1930s, Russian olive and tamarisk had overspread the canyon system by the 1990s, squeezing out native vegetation. In the river, non-native fish compete with and prey on native species.



Russian olives grow rapidly along the Escalante River. This 18-inch stump shows growth rings the width of a pinkie finger. The tree was cut in 2012. Can you tell how old it was?

### 10,000 years ago

Native people have lived in and migrated through this region for at least 10,000 years and inhabited the region when white settlers arrived.



Sue Fearon

### 1875

Members of the 2nd Powell Expedition survey and name the Escalante River. Mormon pioneers arrive from Panguitch. They settle the town of Escalante the following year.



Lefevre Collection

### 1930s

Non-native tamarisk and Russian olive are introduced to the Southwest for erosion control.

### 1980s

Tamarisk and Russian olive begin to spread rapidly through the Escalante River watershed.

### 2009

Escalante River Watershed Partnership forms.

