

# Restoration Outcomes – what have we learned from a decade of riparian restoration?

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# WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

In this presentation:

1. Overview of restoration program
2. What we've implemented
3. Potential trajectories from here
4. Takeaways and recommendations



Natural recruitment in the Gila

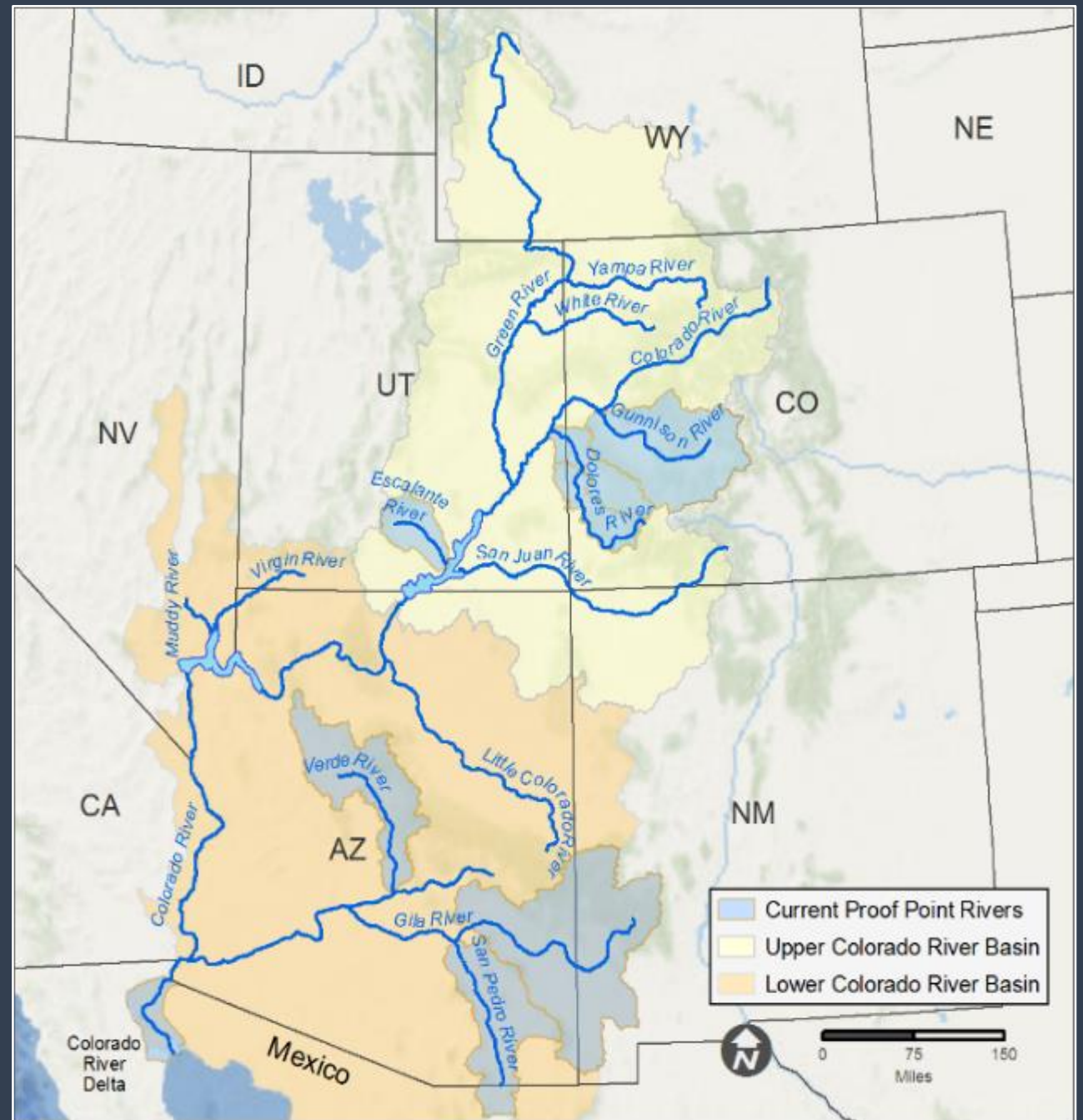




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## Colorado River Program:

To ensure healthy rivers throughout the Colorado River basin by addressing the region's overuse of water, creating a flexible market-based water management system, rewarding and encouraging water efficiency, **and restoring flows and riparian habitat in priority tributaries.**



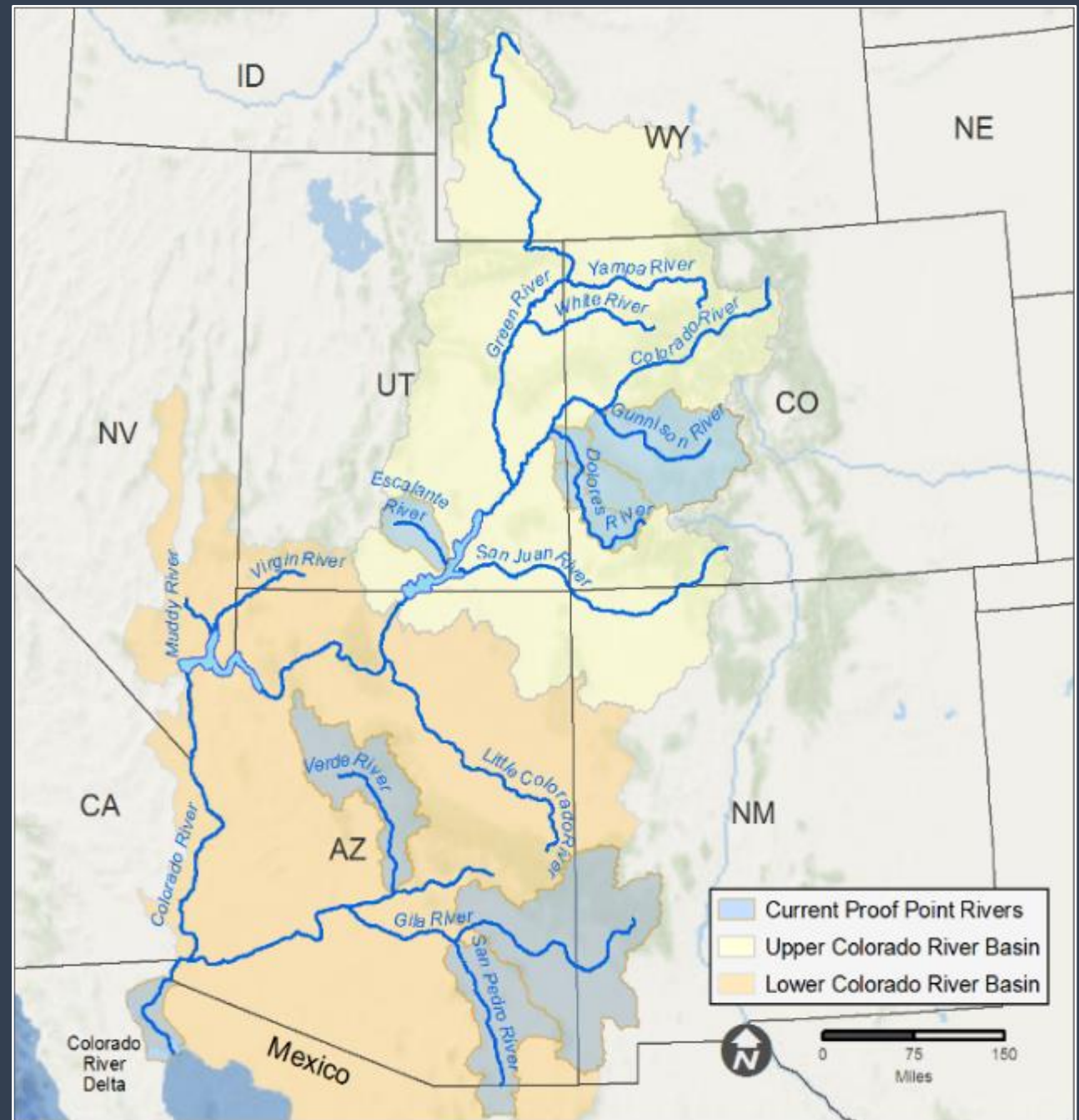
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## Riparian Restoration Goals:

To achieve healthy, self-sustaining native riparian habitat that enables resilient wildlife communities and recreational access for people.

And.....

- Effectiveness basin-wide
- Sustainable funding
- Building partnerships





**Common Goal**  
Increase healthy native  
riparian plant communities

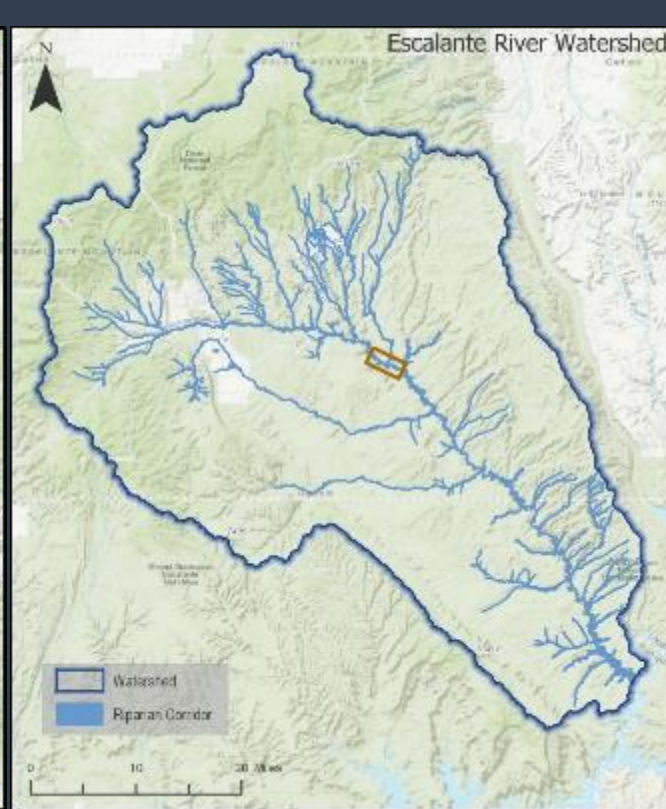


Photo thanks to GSEP

**Restoration  
Strategy**  
Remove invasive  
plants, re-establish  
native plants







|               | Began/<br>Completed | Mainstem<br>Miles | Main +Trib<br>Miles | Riparian<br>Corridor Acres | Acres Planned<br>Treatment |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Dolores River | 2010/2016           | 184               | 301                 | 12,423                     | 1,345                      |
| Escalante     | 2011/2019           | 98                | 688                 | 18,324                     | 4,666                      |
| Verde         | 2012/2018           | 137               | 662                 | 32,211                     | 8,904                      |
| Gila          | 2015/2020           | 54                | NA                  | 11,580                     | 200                        |

**\$30M**



# Restoration measures

|           | % acres treated meeting relative canopy goal | % acres treated with evidence of natural recruitment |
|-----------|--|--|
| Dolores   |  |  |
| Escalante |  |  |
| Verde     |  |  |
| Gila      |  |  |





CLINTON

57%

es

TRUMP

38%

% acres treated meeting relative canopy goal

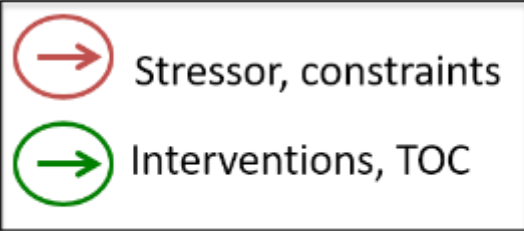
% acres treated with evidence of natural recruitment

|           | % acres treated meeting relative canopy goal | % acres treated with evidence of natural recruitment |
|-----------|--|--|
| Dolores   | 39   | 29   |
| Escalante | 4  | 27   |
| Verde     | 24   | 19   |
| Gila      | 6  | 14   |

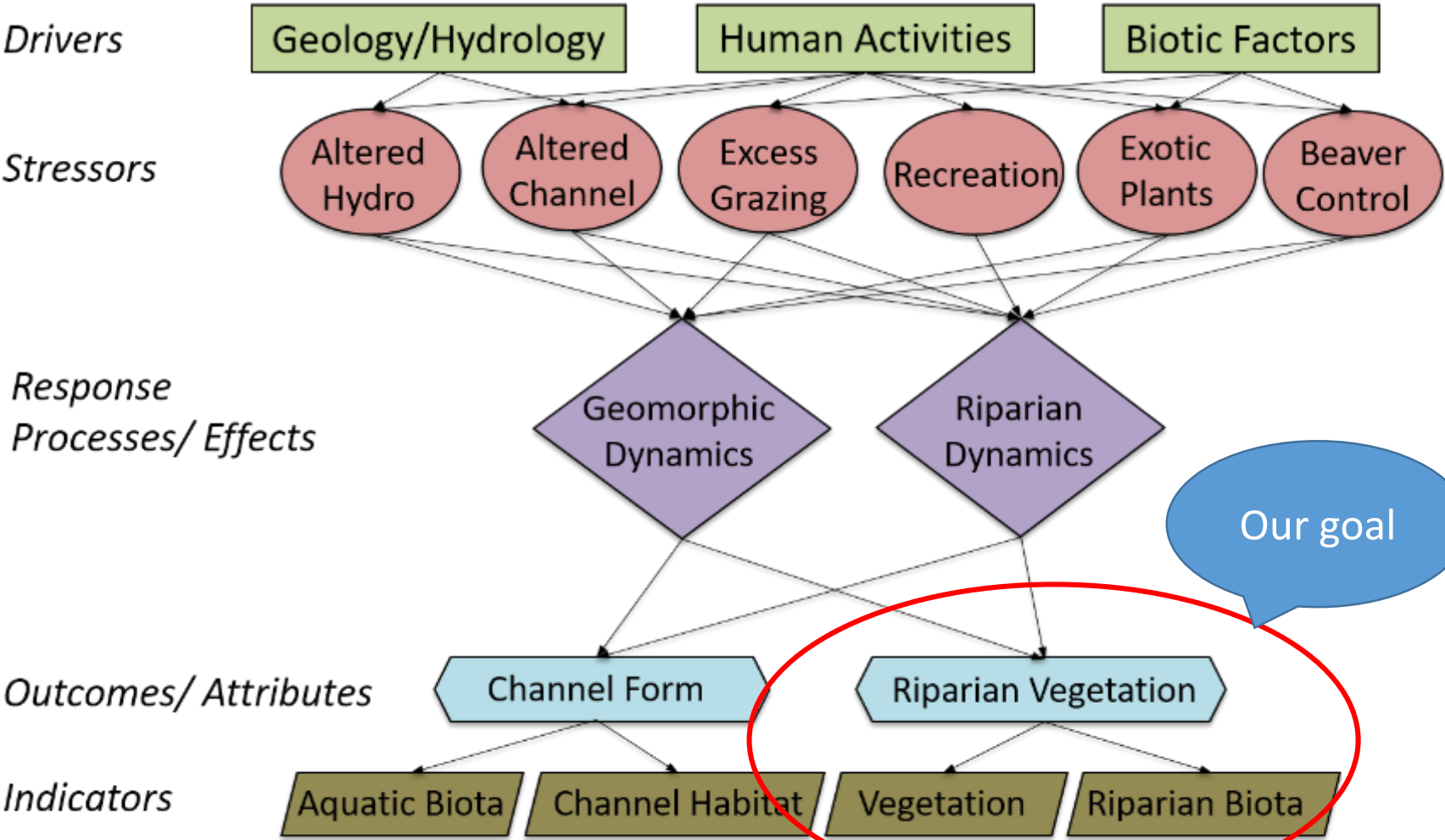




**Restoration Goal**  
 Increase healthy native riparian plant communities



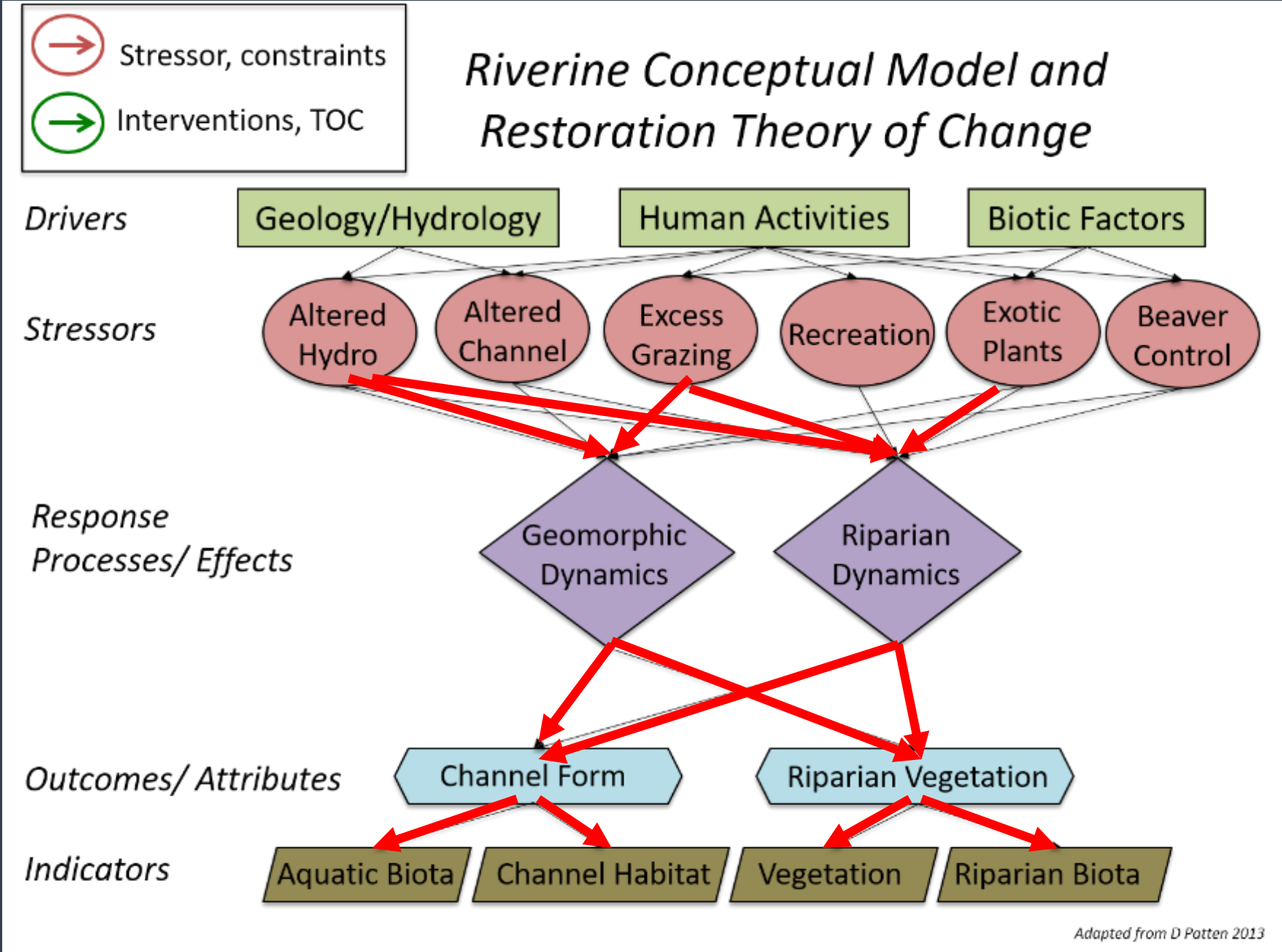
# Riverine Conceptual Model and Restoration Theory of Change



Adapted from D Patten 2013

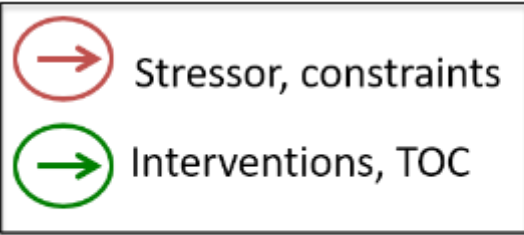


- ### Dolores River
- Regulated
  - Grazing
  - Invasives

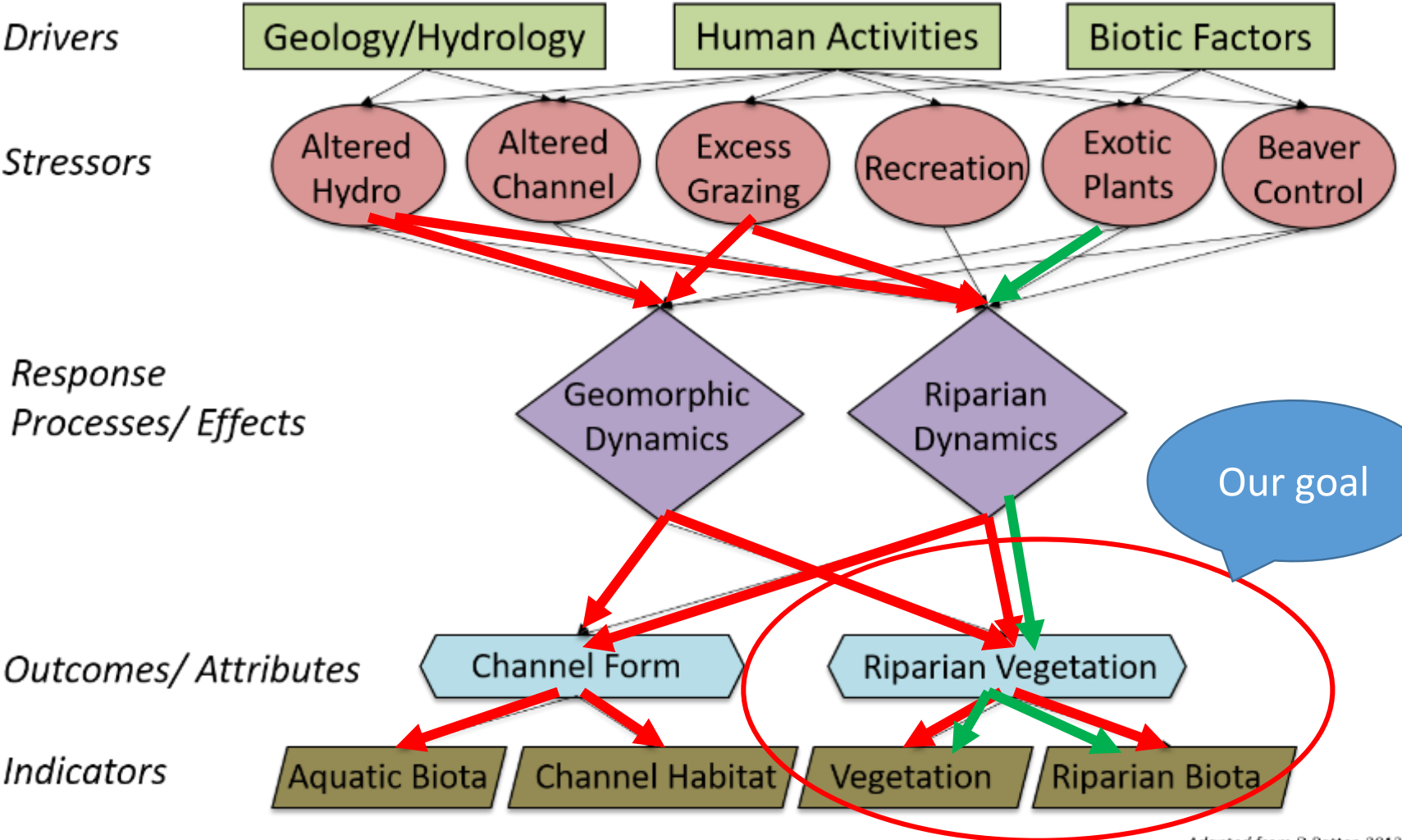




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## Riverine Conceptual Model and Restoration Theory of Change

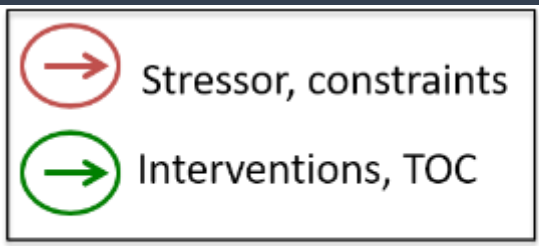


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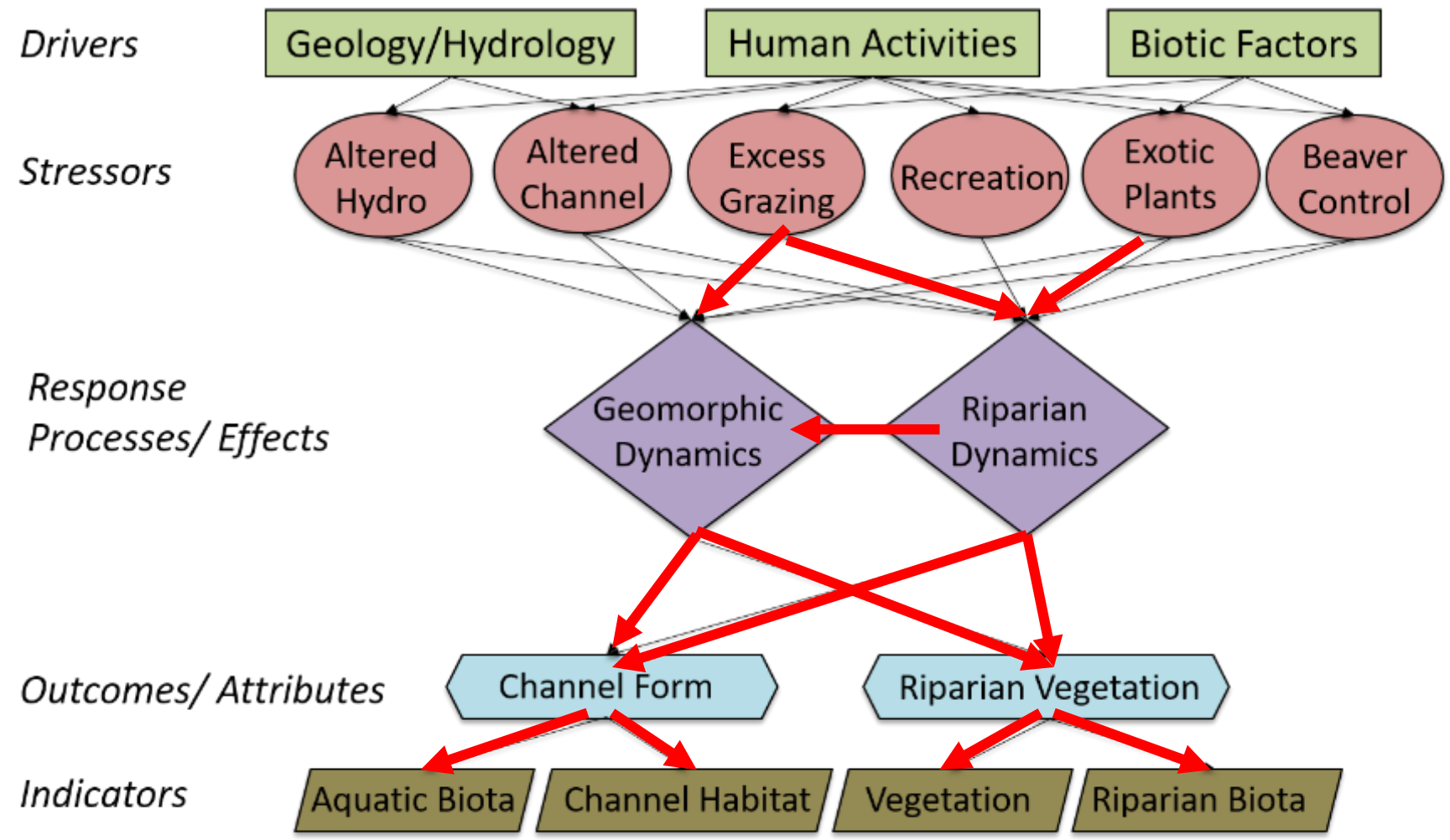


**Escalante River**

- Grazing
- Invasives

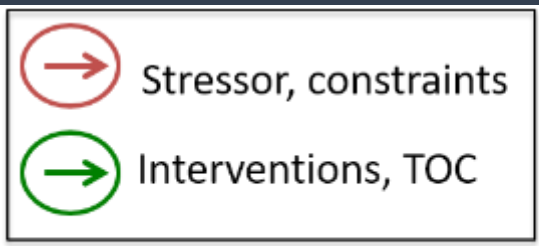


## Riverine Conceptual Model and Restoration Theory of Change

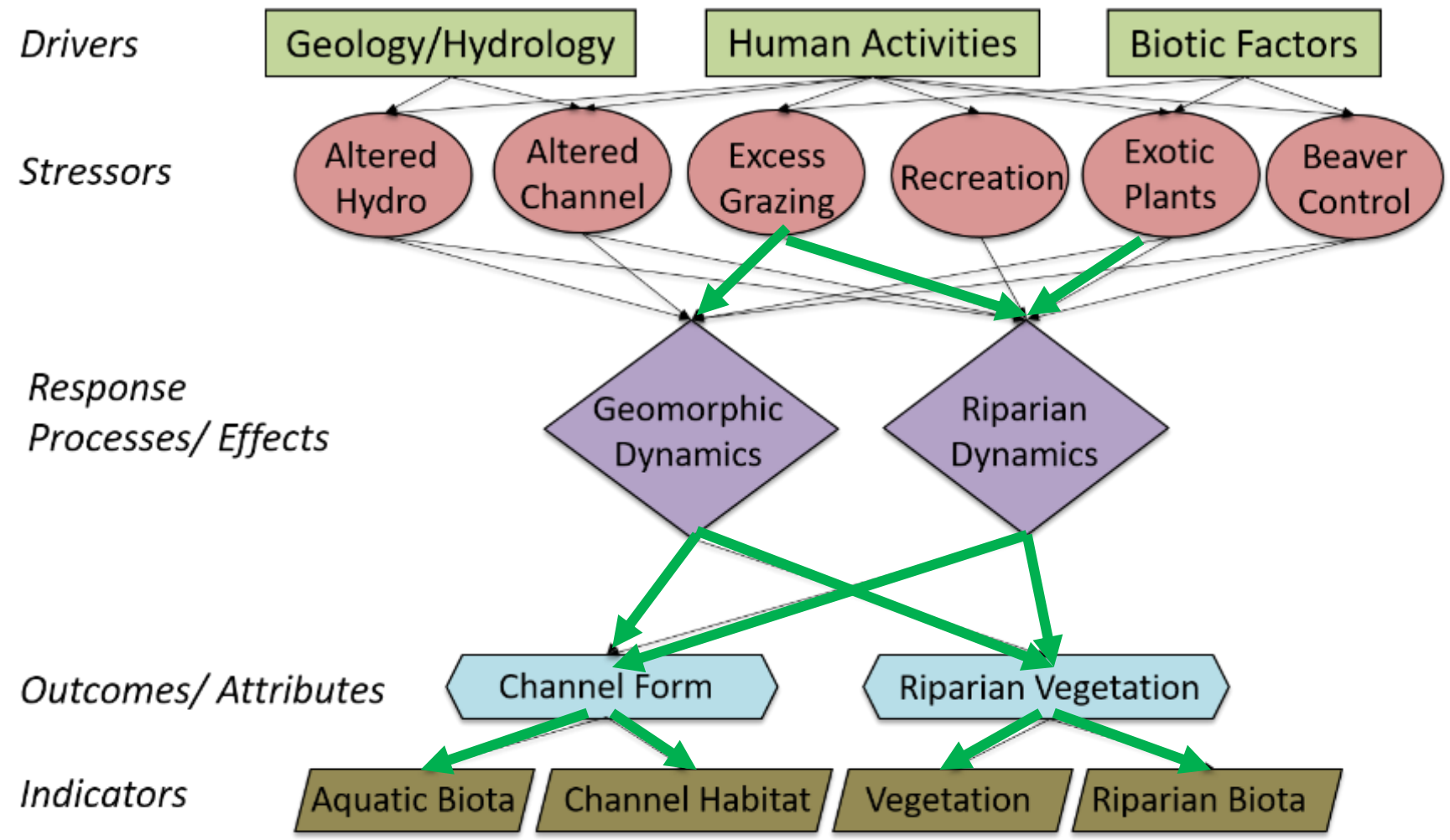


**Escalante River**

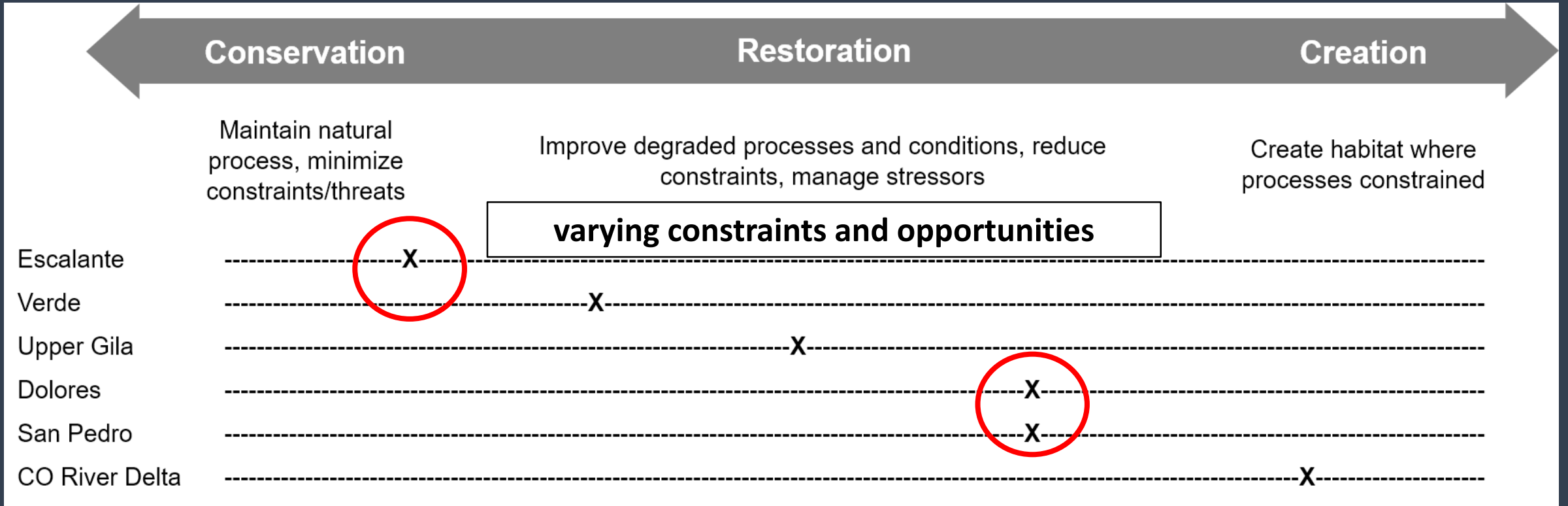
- Grazing
- Invasives



## Riverine Conceptual Model and Restoration Theory of Change







# Social benefits

Darn, ran out of time....

But in a nutshell:

- Partnerships
- Recreation economy
- Voices for the river



RiversEdge West – Riverside Stories

<https://riversedgewest.org/about-us/riverside-stories>



# Takeaways

- Gains will require stewardship
- Its not too late to assess response
- Science is ahead of practice
- Partnerships have built bridges
- Sustainable funding is elusive



Photo thanks to RiversEdge West





RiversEdge West  
Conservation Legacy  
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners  
Friends of the Verde River  
Gila Watershed Partnership  
The Nature Conservancy  
Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Thank you.

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# Proof Point Rivers granting strategies



Supporting local  
partnerships

Funding planning  
and conservation

Promote technical  
sharing and learning

Telling the people  
story

Connecting  
community to rivers

Durability and  
sustainability

**DURABLE  
HEALTHY RIVER  
OUTCOMES**