

## X. Salt Cedar (Tamarisk) (*Tamarix chinensis*; *T. ramosissima*)

### **Key Characteristics:**

Salt cedar, also known as Tamarisk, was introduced from Eurasia and is now wide-spread in the United States. Salt cedar is a member of the Tamarisk family. It is a deciduous or evergreen shrub or small tree that grows from 5 to 20 feet tall. The **bark** on saplings and **stems** is reddish brown. **Leaves** are small and scale-like and **flowers** are pink to white and five-petaled. The stems and leaves of mature plants secrete a salt that forms a crust above and below ground and inhibits native plants from establishing.



### **Locations:**

In Pitkin County, Salt Cedar has most recently been found along the river and retaining ponds at Wingo Ranch, and along Hwy 82 in Snowmass Canyon. Infestations in the Crystal River by Penny Hot Springs are believed to have been eradicated. Salt Cedar is **very** prevalent along the Colorado River. It is **extremely important** that anglers and boaters clean their waders, equipment, and boats before leaving infested areas so as not to bring this invader into the upper Roaring Fork Valley.



### **Biological control:**

The Salt Cedar Leaf Beetle (*Diorhabda elongata*) eats the leaves of Salt Cedar causing stem dieback and potential death of the plant if defoliation is consistent. Populations have been released in eastern Utah and have crossed the border into Western Colorado. The beetle is available for limited distribution. Contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture Insectary in Palisade for more information.

### **Cultural control:**

Competitive vegetative cover helps but cannot prevent spread in susceptible sites. After a Salt Cedar infestation is managed, revegetation is necessary to protect the soil resource and reduce the threat of reinvasion. Seeded grasses, willow stakes, and cottonwood cuttings can reduce the chance of Salt Cedar re-entering managed sites.

### **Mechanical control:**

For small infestations, cut-stump treatments are effective. This means felling via chainsaw or lopper, followed by an application of herbicide directly to the cambium. A bulldozer or prescribed fire can be used to open up large stands of salt cedar for access for further control. To be effective, these methods should be followed up with an herbicide treatment of the re-sprouts when they are 1-2 meters tall.

### **Chemical control:**

Contact Pitkin County Land Management Department for more specific information about herbicide products, application rates, and equipment calibration.