



Santa Margarita and San Luis Rey Watershed Weed Management Area: Invasive Non-native Plant Eradication Program

The Santa Margarita and San Luis Rey watershed WMA was formed in March 2000 to provide a unified and long-term approach to invasive plant control and restoration involving all landowners within the watersheds. The Mission RCD program has: completed mapping of invasive plants on the watersheds, obtained regulatory approval to carryout control, obtained funding for a significant portion of the work, & completed over 200 acres of Arundo control in the past 4 years.

Arundo donax (giant reed) is the initial focus of the WMA due to its widespread abundance (initially over 530 acres on the San Luis Rey and 650 on the Santa Margarita) and its many negative impacts including: flood and fire damage as well as degradation of riparian habitat. The WMA/MRCD program is one of the largest and longest running in the state (building on Mission RCD projects started in 1994). The program is known for its new approaches to permitting/regulatory work covering large areas and multiple landowners, its inexpensive mapping protocols which generate accurate Arundo acreage estimates, and its implementation of foliar spraying treatments followed by mowing and replanting all in a six month period. The WMA strongly encourages the sharing of information with other programs and it distributes information through its web site (smslrwma.org), public meetings, and participation in such organizations as CAL-IPC.

WMA EXOTIC PLANT CONTROL PROJECTS

The WMA has treated large stands of the invasive *Arundo* on the San Luis Rey Watershed, these are complete and there are still active (see map below). *Arundo* control work is carried out from the "top down" to stop *Arundo* propagules from re-inhabiting riparian sites.

The WMA has treated all large *Arundo* stands on the Santa Margarita Watershed above Camp Pendleton, most work on the watershed now involves treating remnant and potential populations and re-vegetating of degraded riparian habitat.



Prep and Spray Method

All SMSLRWMA Arundo control treatments are done using the "prep and spray" method. This method generates the highest initial control regarding the least amount of retreatments in following years. Mowing can occur 4 months after treatment, immediately followed by revegetation using container plants. The entire cycle: spraying, mowing, and planting is completed in 4 to 6 months, no other method allows this.

This method also fits perfectly with wildlife restrictions: spraying starts in September and all work is completed by March 15th. No intensive work occurs during the vehicle breeding season.

"Prepping" the Arundo stand involves heavy handwork: the Arundo is pushed into itself and separated from non-target vegetation (native or ornamental). No cutting of Arundo occurs as this triggers re-sprouting, which would reduce long term success of treatment.

Spraying then occurs using backpack and handheld power sprayers. Spraying in the fall is optimal as the Arundo is going dormant during this time, increasing the translocation of the herbicide. No established native trees or shrubs are killed during the Arundo treatments.

Mowing of large stands then occurs four months later followed immediately by planting. The mow then mowing and decaying processes create ideal conditions for plantings (>80% survival).



ARUNDO DISTRIBUTION MAPPING: A key in developing control program

The WMA has been active in supporting and completing detailed mapping of Arundo and perennial paperwipes. The organization supported the Carlsbad Watershed Units which has greatly aided the Carlsbad Watershed Network through San Edge League (Conservancy) in initiating its Arundo control program. The WMA has worked with the San Diego County WMA in completing mapping on San Diegoño Watershed. The WMA has been awarded a CDFW/IFFWET service grant to pull together mapping for Riverside, Los Angeles, and San Diego counties and to complete unmapped portions of San Diego County.



The WMA has updated an excellent CAL-IPC brochure which recommends alternatives to invasives that are still sold to the public. The new version is for southern CA on invasives and alternatives. It should be available in early 2005; contact the WMA/Mission RCD for orders (at cost).

Don't plant a pest!

One thing on each card they'll take an eye...

WATERWAY PLANTS

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANTS

Before After mowing & planting 2 Years later.....



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