

Invasive Task Force Meeting

January 9, 2019, 1 PM

Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center

In attendance/Introductions: Pat Matthews (Botany Society, ABDNHA, Cal-IPC), Chris McDonald (UC Cooperative Extension, Nat'l Resources Advisor), Syd Magner (ESI Botany, California State Parks), Joe Woods (Volutaria Volunteer, Cal-IPC), Sicco Rood (Research Associate at UCI Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center), Steve Schoenig by phone, (Cal-IPC), Larry Hendrickson (Senior Park Aide, California State Parks), Don Stang (Seasonal Resident and Weeder), Mary Jo Churchwell (Volunteer Park, SDCNHM)

- CAL-IPC = California Invasive Plant Council
- V = Volutaria
- SM = Sahara Mustard

Approved minutes.

Sicco Rood: Will the county take care of the extensive SM growth on S22 between mile 28 and mile 32. It is spreading away from the berms. County should be able to grade it, need to do a grading request to county. Gretchen missed the weed manager meeting, and any other folks, how can they learn how to use weed manager. Suggest youtube or other type tutorial on how to use Calflora and weed manager. Joe brings up issue with identifying plants online, or 2D learning, that it really makes a difference to do it live in 3D in the field and is willing to show folks who can't make it to the volunteer events. Larry is having issues with Calflora and his iPhone, where it doesn't let him stay logged in when he's offline, thus making it hard to do observations. Joe woods mentioned new app updates for iPhone. Ask Kesel or Calflora about issue staying logged in to Weed manager. Larry also said KML will not import into Weedmanager. Chris says with regards to volunteers pulling weeds based on brochure or online learning, that it's better for volunteers to pull the wrong one to eventually get the right weeds. David Garmon wrote in the following question, which was brought up in this meeting:

"I am writing to see if there are individuals or organizations who are a part of the Task Force who might be interested in helping to make sure that Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDE's) are included as Beneficial Users of water in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) currently being drafted by the Borrego Water District and the County of San Diego.

The Nature Conservancy has put together an incredibly informative and helpful website (<https://groundwaterresourcehub.org>) for basins such as ours that are creating GSP's and that must take GDE's into account as they determine who and what will have water allocated to them under the GSP.

From my perspective, GDE's are the "canaries in the cavern" when it comes to the health of our aquifer. The GDE's that have so far been identified in our basin are the mesquite bosque near

the Borrego Sink, and various plant assemblages in the recharge corridors of Coyote, Palm, and Tubb Canyons.

Certain members of the team that is creating our GSP are under the impression that our GDE's are "already dead" and therefore do not need to be considered as the GSP is created. The mistaken idea that our GDE's are dead has created the need for individuals who are familiar with botany to do a survey of our GDE's and present that information to the GSP team.

Thus my question: Are there individuals or organizations who are part of the Task Force who might be interested in taking this on? If so, please let me know and I will put them in touch with members of the Advisory Council who are also concerned about this issue."

Additional notes by David Garmon:

Anything that was dead before SGMA was enacted on January 1, 2015 is outside the purview of SGMA. Anything that was/is alive after that date is required by SGMA to be considered a Beneficial User of water.

The Nature Conservancy is the organization that has been leading the charge re GDE's. They have put together an incredible website to support this effort.

What we need is help in the community to drive the effort to document the existence of living GDE's in the Borrego Basin.

(Sicco will share the information gathered with Diane Johnson, who is a member of the Advisory Committee to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan)

The following ideas came up during discussion:

- Terry Gerson from the park may have data to support GDE's in the sink still being alive, we'll confirm this and see if he is permitted to make public comments on this.
- Joe Woods (Cal-IPC) mentioned he will start collecting spot observations of mesquite that's alive in the sink and post them on Calflora. (Note: The Vegetation map by USGS is not intended for regulatory use, and should not be used in place of ground level survey work required pursuant to environmental laws or regulations.)
- Steve Schoenig (Cal-IPC) made the point that even if they are dead, the goal of conservation is to prevent further subsidence. So he thinks CNPS should be very interested in helping out.
- Nick Jensen has been following/involved in the Cadiz Inc.'s groundwater pumping from the Mojave Desert issue, so they should at least be interested to help provide a letter of support.

- John Randall of the Nature Conservancy in San Diego would be another support person. They have been talking about impacts on plant communities by water issues.
- Larry Hendrickson from the parks says he's seeing a smoke tree die-off in some washes, but was unclear though whether that was related to groundwater subsidence.

Pat Matthews: Started up weed walks into coyote canyon on Wed weed walk, 10-18 people. Found 50 V in lower Coyote crossing. Little SM at 3rd crossing. Concentrated their efforts on the 3rd crossing for SM last year during dry year, and it is working this year. Found V, ranging from 10" to seedlings. Rain event at New Year's is probably responsible. Plenty to do this year.

Syd Wagner: wants to set up GpS units to digitize, better sense of data collection. In terms of V had a hard time distinguish with Chicory. Larry says spectacle pod is easy to mistake (more grey green), V is more dark. leaf lobation similar. Pat asks if park is using weed manager. Larry still hasn't gotten it to work on his iPhone. Says Austin can do it. Joe says we should all be using Observer Pro, so we're all on the same page. Pat says there's a parallel effort off park and on park. Ideally, we should all be ultimately on Calflora Weed manager. All data should be visible to everyone. Joe wants State Park to use the Observer Pro. State Park might get some additional android phones. Steve says people could be fine just using Observer Pro, but weed manager is more the Mercedes version, whereas the Observer Pro is the Honda Civic version. We really need to Observer Pro for tracking the observations, and weed manager was really designed for tracking billing, volunteer hours, and herbicides to keep track for the county. Steve says Weed Manager is high maintenance, and you almost need a data manager to keep track. But hopes that Parks doesn't have to upload data from different source in GIS and into Calflora. He's not really the right person to do training. Chris is going to a Calflora training and will bring up these issues with Cynthia Powell, whereas Rachel is with Mt Tam.

Joe Woods: as far as V throughout the valley not much germinating yet, but still hot spots in abandoned golf course BS resort area. Apparently enough rain to get things going, plus there's broken irrigation lines. Pat says she went bird watching, and went to same area, walking to the pond, but still found 2 V. Big surprise is finding a site east of Pegleg, west of Rockhouse canyon road where water pools from Coyote mountain. No other sites close by. Eastern edge of spread is south of Pegleg, but Joe thinks there's spread east from the pivot field, but not yet. Next couple of weeks is going to start moving fast. Tocalote is related to V, there's a patch right along Palm Canyon, beyond Elementary school, another patch on Di Georgio road. He's hoping when the county comes to spray the roads, they can take that legally. The plot on Palm canyon is a bit further from the shoulder. County right of way varies says Larry. Steve was going to find out how big the right of ways are. Larry says do we want them spraying in the interior beyond the shoulder. What is the county using, Joe thinks round-up and milestone. Says it wasn't an issue two years ago when they did it. Joe has also been down to Old Kane Spring Road, but also Borrego Mountain, Tom Chester has been doing a lot of trips there, found no sign of V there, which is positive. There is a bunch of SM in the San Felipe Wash area. Tom and company found Astragalus (small flower and non-descript), hasn't been vouchered in SD county before, found at least 600 plants on the north side of San Felipe wash. Ton of SM would be a good project from that Astragalus site. It is not endangered, but somewhat rare. Joe is trying to get more out into the surrounding area to get a better

feel. No one else has found V in the badlands area. But millions and millions of plants in the Borrego valley area. Locally limited distribution species is Larry's own local designation. The parks people will weed around rare plant habits that is one of their strategies. Maybe setting up park weeding sessions with their volunteers apart from the Wednesday weed walks. Fountain grass is an issue, so they worked on the African fountain grass very labor intensive in BPC. So what they've been able to do, so when their resources crew work on it manually and with herbicide, now in Henderson canyon. But don't want to disturb the Bighorn sheep. Still looking for buffer grass.

Chris McDonald: October storm is really germinating the SM 90 days from germination to flowering. Perfect hand pulling stage right now. Even at Salton Sea Mecca is all over, perfect time to pull and another crop right up could have a really long weed year ahead. We'll have at least 3 crops of weeding, and maybe 4 crops this year. This year much more rain than last year. Season is starting now. Good news is Orange County is working on their V populations are getting ready for treatments. They keep finding, they have enough to spray, couple hundred plants. It was still worth it to spray it. Lot of turnover in OC as well. No one running things in OC according to Steve. Biggest thing to learn from OC, is how long it takes to get a population down, whether 3 years or 5 years of work. We know it is at least 3, with 10K plants. Hoping to get good news from OC, that the older populations are down. Sounds like we need a chart of things that look like V, asks that folks to send their pics that look similar to V. Then Chris will make a chart. V not seen in Palm Springs area. Joe says Tocalote looks pretty similar, London Rocket have issues, and Chicory. Don't have seedling photos. Larry will also send some photos. Tocalote is all over SoCal, terminal leaf apex just stands out to Chris, not as a small plant though. Syd says he saw *Colanthis Halleii* (SP?). Field experience makes a big difference says Larry and Joe and Chris, field makes all the difference..

Mary Jo Churchwell: has been collecting for the plant atlas.

Larry: has been collecting with Syd, and Austin. Will be setting up other weed walks with their volunteers. Did a fair amount of weeding in the Thimble trail area. Ton of SM in that area. Hardly any on the north side of the road.

Steve: Reminds that in 2015 when Cal IPC had heard about V there was about 100 plants at that time. Doug Johnson wrote a grant to NFW. Now 2 years on this grant, up to June of this year. Funding Joe for some of his work to keep exploring new areas. Can we still actually eradicate it? With a certain effort we can, but we just don't know yet how much. There is money left in the contract with SD AG dept. Either roadside or backpack spraying. We will determine high priority areas. For the pivot field (abandoned palm farm), we have a separate set of money from the Nature Conservancy, \$5000 dollars to do treatments there. Adjoining solar farm, getting permission to spray. Given the rains Steve would guess there's going to be a fair amount of germination, but that's the tail end of the grant money. Steve is writing a new grant from the Wildlife Conservation board, for ½ million dollars. It's interesting whether we can even use the word eradication in the grant. It's going to be eradication / containment. So that hopefully we'd then have money in place for early next year. San Diego RCD may be lead on grant. Their executive director is Sheryl Landrum. Hoping to come down to BS to look at V, and also meet with Chris to visit the OC population, and the V population in Chula Vista in February.

