

Invasive Task Force Meeting

March 14, 2018, 1:00 PM

Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center

In attendance/Introductions: Briana Puzzo (Education Manager, Anza-Borrego Foundation), Joe Woods (Volutaria Volunteer, CALIPC), Jennifer Howland (Environmental Services Intern, California State Parks), Pat Matthews (Botany Society, ABDNHA, CALIPC), Don Stang (Seasonal Resident and Weeder), Sicco Rood (UCI Research Center / Website Designer), Mona Robison (on phone, CALIPC), Chris McDonald (UC Cooperative Extension, Nat'l Resources Advisor), Danny McCamish (Ocotillo Wells State Recreation Area), Mason Hyland (Environmental Scientist, CA State Parks)

- CALIPC = California Invasive Plant Council
- V = Volutaria
- SM = Sahara Mustard

Sicco Rood: Who to list as fundraising entity when soliciting donations for the project? Briana Puzzo mentioned that it might be confusing to the public if we list three entities that can accept donations toward invasive species work. CALIPC can accept donations but would pass them on to local organizations. Challenge is that CALIPC might not always be involved. The consensus is to have CALIPC serve as the clearinghouse for donations for now, and then changes can be made in the future if things change. Info online can include their tax ID number.

Susan Gilliland's written report from De Anza: We do have a number of small SM plants appearing just in the last couple of weeks. A few of them are large if they are located near a water source, but most are very small. They are already trying to bloom and set seeds as very very small plants less than 6 inches in height. I think most of them came in on summer rain run off as they are most prevalent on the Henderson Canyon side of the area and on roadside edges rather than on the golf course itself. I also walked up the lower part of Henderson Canyon where the five earthen "dams" are located. I saw only a few plants; however, most of the dams are harboring tamarisk of various sizes. There are more plants up above the highest dam and I understand from Pat Mathews that there is more SM farther up Henderson Canyon as well. I will pull as many as possible and hope that most wilt and die before they set seeds."

Minutes were approved.

Jennifer Howland: Weds. Weeding – Terry Hunefeld found a population of SM off bypass road in Coyote Canyon. More SM to clean up leading into Sheep Canyon Primitive Camp.

15 Sierra Club service volunteers spent a week in the Park, two days of fountain grass removal in Borrego Palm Canyon. No V pulled that week. 10 U of Virginia students surveyed for 1.5 days at the base of Coyote Mountain, covering about 8 miles total. Almost all areas had germinated plants, about 200 plants. 280 plants found 1.5 miles into Coyote Canyon. No invasives found along Henderson Canyon Road, not even natives.

Pat Matthews: The volunteer tally for this season is 427 hours of volunteer service by 35-40 people. We have a strong established group of volunteers to build on for next year if needed.

Mason Hyland: Seasonal park staff could work into the middle of May to continue invasive work in the park. The seed mortality study is an investigation for a different way to responsibly manage the invasive

plant material that is pulled and not use plastic bags. V seeds would not germinate so study changed to SM seeds because they germinated reliably. Some of the test barrels were left dry, others had water added. The 12-week study is complete. Dry treatment barrels germinated better than control; wet treatment had high mortality rate. Conditions were not good enough to kill all seeds in any barrel.

Study findings: for full seed mortality, make sure temperatures are higher, perhaps treating seeds in July/August timeframe and leave them in for a longer time period. Parks intends to be responsible with the seeds they pull. A cultural change is needed to not use plastic bags but instead use a cleanable, reusable container. One idea is a plastic drum that could be mounted on a backpack. As a public agency, State Parks needs to practice sustainability as much as possible. A final report and presentation will be completed later. State Parks' funding is not allowed to be used for research. This study has been more about management decisions to be made. Parks can take bagged plants that volunteers have collected and put them into the existing barrels.

Joe Woods: Plastic bags are convenient and efficient to put plants into. Make it easy to cover ground. Joe does not think that the other options are realistic for him. Best option to deal with pulled plants is to give them to the state park instead of taking them to the dump.

Danny McCamish: Tree planting bags could be used as an alternative. Agrees that State Parks would like to and should reduce their use of plastic bags.

Chris McDonald: Another option to hold pulled plants is a "seed harvester", a cone-shaped holder, made of canvas or polypro (or ?) that is worn on the hip. (From Briana: [Something like this maybe?](#)) Chris has not been on the ground in the Borrego Valley since the last meeting. He is working with the county to figure out how to prioritize their time to be in Borrego so it is the most efficient. Need to connect with Mark Martinez. Chris McDonald will talk to solar farm owners/managers.

Joe Woods: Feels the county is most effective at road-side spraying, sometimes not the most cost-effective option for other purposes. Thinks V populations are fairly slow moving.

Chris McDonald: Populations of V can continue to germinate (seeds are surviving for) even after two-four years of treatments, as seen in Newport Beach. Site is 0.5 miles long. This site has been there since 1987. It has not moved very much at all, despite prime habitat nearby. Four locations of V: Chula Vista, Point Loma, Newport Beach and the Borrego Valley.

Danny McCamish: Ocotillo Wells has little to report due to the dry conditions. He has seen minimal to no growth of SM and V.

Pat Matthews: Grid system for the Borrego Valley is now in place (showed the physical map and all reviewed). New data from the Park can be entered into an excel spreadsheet that is on Dropbox. Each grid square represents one half square mile. Out of 500 grid squares about 75 contain V. This equals about 36 square miles of V.

Mona Robison (reviewed) had to leave meeting so submitted a written report: Pat Matthews and Joe Woods are continuing to lead workdays and map the V from 2017. We have requested help from ABF on determining the landowner for the pivot field. No plans to have the County spray roadsides or other areas this year. Status of other areas: Chula Vista site was treated twice this year; Point Loma site vegetation was removed, it is in a secure area behind a fence, but it appeared clear from nearby; Cal-IPC is stepping in to help coordinate survey and removal efforts in Newport Bay. Fundraising: We are

re-convening our fundraising group soon; draft grant proposal for Wildlife Conservation Board is in the works.

Joe Woods: Found V at De Anza Gravel. More V located in BSR abandoned golf course. Leaving town about the end of April. Pat will leave in about a month. Attended the CNPS Quarterly Meeting/Dinner and talked about V with many of the attendees. Will try to stay in touch with some of the contacts he made.

Mason Hyland: Weed Manager is \$2,500 annually for 10 users/licenses. For extra \$400 you can get unlimited subscriptions. Observation form can be customized. Data manager and host would be needed. Would be functional for our task force to streamline all the data collection. Funding would need to be located but would be seen as an investment to gather data that might allow for future grant funding. All data that is currently on CalFlora could be uploaded.

Email report by Joe Raffetto, owner of California Overland Desert Excursions

I hope the meeting went well. Here's another update on the areas that I've seen up to now.

All the previous locations that I mentioned in my last email still seem virtually mustard-free. I was in Collins Valley yesterday and the valley seemed free of mustard. The wash immediately below Sheep Canyon, though, is an exception. The little cottonwood grove below the trail head has a rather significant number of plants. I managed to pull the most prominent ones immediately below the trees but there are immature plants all along the north side of the wash there. There aren't as many as last year nor are they as mature so far.

Also there were a few mature plants around the third crossing that I pulled, but for sure there are more here and there.

So that's it for now. Take care,

Joe

Joe Raffetto, owner California Overland Desert Excursions

Briana Puzzo had to leave meeting at 3:00pm

Next meeting will take place on April 4, 2018.