



## Los Angeles County WMA Annual Report 2010

1. *Number of individuals that attended WMA meetings at least once in 2010:* **29**
2. *Number of people reached by 2010 programs:* **6,500<sup>1</sup>**
3. *In-kind donations of services and resources from partners: Total in-kind:* **\$31,100** [\$1,800 website; \$16,320 WMA participation (quarterly meetings); \$12,025 outreach; \$955 control]
4. *Direct matches of money for CDFG WMA projects: Total match:* **\$15,019**
5. *Number of populations eradicated (specify by weed species):* **0**
6. *Net acres of weeds controlled (list acres per species):* **8.45 total treated acres** [artichoke thistle - 0.2 acre; arundo – 0.6 acre; castor bean – 0.25 acre; Spanish broom – 1.25 acres; smilo grass – 0.05 acre; tree of heaven – 0.6 acre; yellow star thistle – 5.5 acres]
7. *Gross acres of weeds surveyed (plus acres per species):* **12 acres total weeds surveyed**

Species	Acreage	Plant Count	Area Surveyed (acres)
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	0.5	63 plus saplings	3.0
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	1.0	--	2.0
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	5.2	--	6.0
<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	.2	--	1.0

8. *Project Descriptions:* Below is a summary of projects from Los Angeles County WMA (LACWMA) participants that received State WMA funding or provided in-kind match to WMA projects in 2010. These projects are in their first year of the WMA funding cycle.

<sup>1</sup> Figure based on WMA quarterly meeting participation, 2009 fire-safe (SAFE) workshops, Cal-IPC Student Chapter outreach booth events, UCCE trainings, Mountains Restoration Trust volunteer weed pulling events, and distribution of local invasive plant outreach brochures (i.e. Don't Plant a Pest, WeedWatch wallet cards, Terrible 10 Invasive Plant Posters) through local partnerships.

## A) Control/Eradication Projects

### 1. ANTELOPE VALLEY -

Lead: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

A second year treatment of yellow star thistle (YST) (*Centaurea solstitialis*) at Wagas Ranch was a success story. In a partnership effort, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has worked with the Antelope Valley Resources Conservation District, Department of Agricultural Commissioner/Weight and Measures, and the Weed Management Area to control the invasive weeds. About 5.2 infested acres of YST were surveyed and treated with chemical herbicides Transline and Roundup two times in May and June of 2010. A follow-up survey was conducted in September of 2010 showed most of the treated areas were successfully controlled.



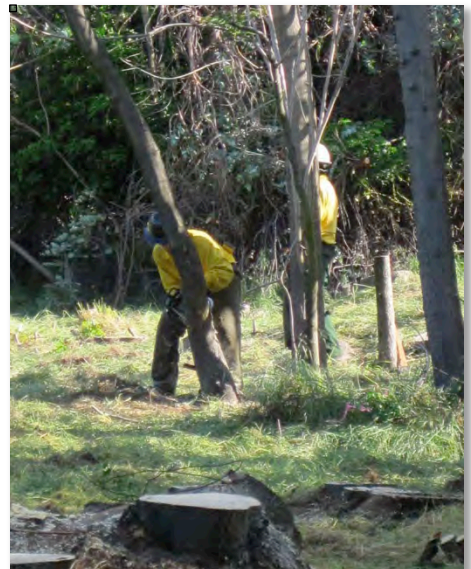
An additional 0.2 acres of newly discovered YST was also identified by the landowner and treated with the effort of NRCS working closely with the landowner on weed identification training, and information to help the landowner to control YST.

### 2. SAN GABRIEL FOOTHILLS -

Lead: City of Monrovia

This project, within the Monrovia Hillside Wilderness (HW) area, in cooperation with the City of Monrovia Fire Department, targeted a grove of tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). As an additional component, monitoring was conducted to document the level of effort to achieve the desired level of control.

Prior to the project start, the trees were felled as part of a fire academy training exercise. Sixty-three large *Ailanthus* stems (>6" diameter, 40-50' tall) and a much larger number of small stems (<3" diameter, 10-20' tall) were felled within the 0.5-acre site. The project itself



followed the felling of the trees, and was designed to suppress the predicted vigorous root and stump sprouting of the cut *Ailanthus*. A survey was performed prior to tree felling to screen the site for any nesting birds, pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No active bird nests were found during the survey or during subsequent site activities.

Treatment consisted of cutting away stems and foliage arising from the cut trees and their root systems and grubbing out of roots wherever possible. Initially, removal of foliage was accomplished using a gasoline-powered push-mower. Due to concerns regarding ignition of dry brush from use of power tools, we switched to hand-tools early in the project. Treatment was required repeatedly during the growing season to prevent the development of woody growth that would hamper continuing control efforts. Treatments ranged in effort from a high of 11 hours per month during June, to a low of 4 hours per month as the infestation approached dormancy in autumn. The site was monitored on a frequent basis to gauge the extent of resprouting of the cut *Ailanthus* and determine the need for treatment.

*Project Assessment:* The goals of treatment during 2010 were to prevent regrowth of this stand of *Ailanthus* after cutting and to facilitate future control efforts. These goals were achieved in that this season's regrowth was repeatedly cut down to ground level so that next year's expected regrowth will be susceptible to a variety of physical or chemical control measures which would not have been feasible otherwise, including soil solarization, herbicide application (including foliar spraying), and continued mowing of the site.



*Recommendations:* Continued monitoring and treatment over the course of several years will be required to control *Ailanthus* at this site. Alternate approaches to be considered are: the use of herbicide, physical control, establishment of native vegetation and a combination of these approaches. Neighboring *Ailanthus* infestations are present adjacent to this site and will need to be addressed, including several remaining large stems that were not able to be removed due to time constraints. As *Ailanthus* is reputed to be able to send up clonal ramets within a range of up to 30m, all *Ailanthus* within 30m of the site boundaries should be mapped and targeted for future control projects.

Long term success in the control of *Ailanthus* at this site will be secured due to several factors: the City's commitment to natural resource management in the HW, an ongoing program of fuel modification, continued partnership with the Rio Hondo Fire Academy, and the development of an invasive species control community within the existing HW volunteer corps.

### 3. SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS -

Lead: Riparian Repairs

Riparian Repairs performed post-fire invasive weed control work on private inholdings within Big Tujunga Canyon and on property outside Angeles National Forest in the upper portion of Big Tujunga Wash. It also includes herbicide treatment of *Arundo donax* near Devil's Canyon (at San Fernando Valley's northwest corner) that was initiated last year following the Sesnon fire of 2008.

Control work in Big Tujunga Canyon included significant infestations of *Arundo* (*Arundo donax*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). Some owners of small parcels at Vogel Flat declined herbicide treatment of their small *Arundo* clumps because they regard *Arundo* as valuable for stabilizing stream banks or providing privacy screens. However, the owner of by far the largest *Arundo* infestation on private land in Big Tujunga Canyon (at Rancho Ybarra Christian Camp & Conference Center) was supportive and in fact had removed some *Arundo* using Roundup herbicide before the Station fire.

(TOP)  
Big Tujunga Cyn  
- Rancho  
Ybarra. View  
downstream  
near boundary,  
with treated  
*Arundo* among  
dead white  
alder tree.



(BOTTOM)  
Big Tujunga Cyn  
- Vogel Flat.  
*Arundo* on  
stream bank  
behind 2436  
Stonyvale Road,  
six weeks after  
spraying on  
May 31.



#### 4. SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS -

##### **Cold Creek Canyon Hot Spots Invasive Treatments**

Lead: Mountains Restoration Trust

The headwaters of Cold Creek start half way down its canyon. The area was first homesteaded in 1919 when a Mr. Hethke homesteaded and grew celery for the Calabasas market. A single-family home was built on the hill overlooking the stream, a dam was built to provide year-round water, and irrigation lines were placed all over the hillside. The heritage of those homeowners was persistent of garden plants and invasive trees. All but a few narcissus bulbs, Himalayan blackberry and the iris survivors remain.

Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) has persisted through several years of treatment with Rodeo. When first identified in 1993, giant chain fern (*Woodwardia fimbriata*) had been reduced by the yellow flag iris crowd to a single plant with fronds less than 2ft in length. Now, the species has taken back most of the wetland formed by what was a pond until it silted in after a fire in 1993. However, there are remnant iris plants. The iris has proven its ability to expand at the expense of chain ferns, hedge nettles, stream orchids, cattails, and bracken fern. It has spread 3,000 ft downstream.



Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

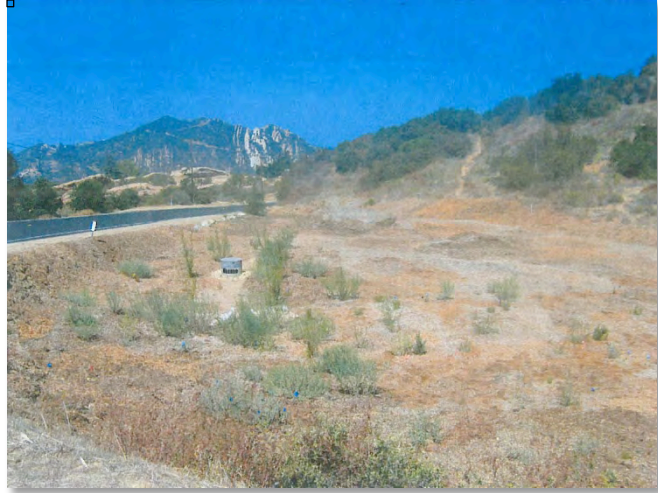
A program of cut and paint with 100% Rodeo was initiated after blooming and seed-set (mid-summer) to achieve maximum results. The iris has become scattered and was growing through natives and non-natives alike that necessitated the cut and paint method, as there would have been too much collateral damage from spraying. Previous treatments had not gone downstream to the last two sites. In those areas, iris was dense and spraying may have been an option. However, past treatments showed the cut and paint method to be more effective.

The giant chain fern and stream orchid (*Epipactus gigantean*) have spread their ranges. On the negative side, areas that had been cleared of iris now hosted bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), celery (*Apium graveolens*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and smilo grass (*Piptatherum miliaceum*). These plants were also removed to allow the spread of the wetland natives that are on-site that include cattails, tules, hedge nettles, watercress, and iris-leaved rush. The project will need monitoring and retreatment, but some areas are now 100% free of yellow flag iris.

## Cold Creek Road-fill Restoration Project

Lead: Mountains Restoration Trust

Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT) is managing a restoration site located off a sharp curve of Stunt Road in the Cold Creek drainage of the Santa Monica Mountains. The mitigation projected is comprised of approximately one-acre of land impacted by road fill to be restored with wetland and upland plant species native to the site.



Invasive species, specifically Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and smilo grass (*Piptatherum miliaceum*), infesting the chaparral slopes above the restoration site, were treated with herbicide on nine dates.

The weed control efforts have combined hand removals with herbicide applications using Round-up Pro and Pathfinder II. Prior to each herbicide application, native perennials and annuals occurring from natural regeneration were flagged to prevent incidental damage. A small infestation of yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) was removed from a slope below the roadway and above (south of) the restoration site. In addition to the weed control work, the restoration site has been covered with tree mulch in order to reduce the quantity of weeds and conserve ground moisture. Container plantings were installed at the restoration site.

The restoration work was accomplished by MRT staff in cooperation with TreePeople. In May 2010, nine AmeriCorps workers weeded, added mulch, and watered restoration plantings. MRT also used court-ordered community service workers for these restoration maintenance tasks.

## *Cynara cardunculus* Removal

Lead: Mountains Restoration Trust

The Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT) treated two populations of artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*) present on National Park Service land within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The sites include the Arroyo Sequit site (.2 acres) and the Rancho Sierra Vista site (0.01



acres). Between May 28<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup>, both infestations were surveyed, mapped, and effectively treated with a combination of manual (removing flower heads) and chemical (3% RoundUp Pro Max foliar spray) techniques. The final surveys and treatment (if necessary) by NPS staff are scheduled for February through May 2011.

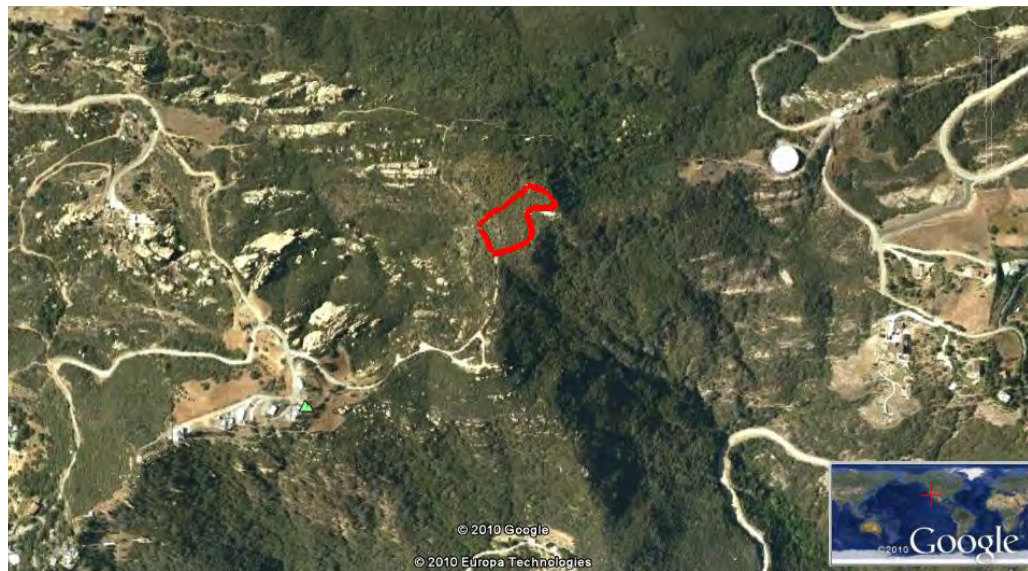
### **Spanish Broom Removal at Saddle Peak**

Lead: Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council

The Trails Council removed approximately one acre of Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) on parkland at the summit of Saddle Peak in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (Los Angeles County). This project is the first step in a long-term project to clear Spanish Broom from Saddle Peak. An ongoing effort, beyond this grant will be required to completely eradicate Spanish Broom from the area.

The size of the plants treated ranged from small seedlings up to plants with woody trunks up to 6 inches in diameter. The area was treated using a “cut and paint” technique. That is, the plants were cut close to the ground using loppers and handsaws. The cut stumps were then immediately treated with a concentrated mixture of RoundupPro. The cuttings were left in the immediate vicinity. The resulting large biomass became a problem as it created obstacles to moving around in the work area. But more important, it will complicate the follow-up work in the area. Although, not part of the plan, on an off day, we brought a chipper to the work site and chipped part of the cuttings. This improved access to the work area and will facilitate future tasks to retreat the area. We will consider continuing this process in a future effort.

The uncertainty of the availability of volunteers made it difficult to adhere to the schedule proposed in the work plan. However, two work days with larger than planned crews, allowed us to complete the objectives within the required time frame. The volunteer crews were augmented by NPS interns, which help significantly in meeting the goals of the project.



Saddle Peak treated Spanish Broom area.



Southwest corner of area – before (left) and after after (right). (Note that the large amount of biomass obscures the work accomplished in the after photos).



At work near the southeast corner of the area – before (left) and after (right)

Item	Metric	Comments
Area treated	1 ac.	
Number of volunteer work days	39	
Number of paid employee work days	20	NPS interns; 2 CSP employees
Total project labor hours	314	
Amount of RoundupPro used	754 oz.	240 oz. 3% glyphosate; 514 oz. 26% glyphosate

Project Work Details: The planned July workdays were canceled because we could not attract the required number of volunteers.

In early August, the project manager revisited the target area to survey and flag the area to be treated on the upcoming workday. On August 20, a crew consisting of the project manager, two Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council volunteers, one National Park Service employee, and eight NPS summer interns worked on the western side of the target area and treated a total of .35 acres. Spanish broom was treated with the “cut and paint” technique. Cuttings were not removed from the site, but were deposited nearby in relatively clear areas.

On September 18th, a crew of 22 workers (volunteers, NPS interns and a paid crew leader from Channel Islands Restoration) started on the south side of the target area and worked north. An area of .4 acres was treated using the “cut and paint” technique.

On September 19th, the project manager and a crew of seven volunteers worked a short workday; continuing treatments from the day before. Again, the crew used the “cut and paint” technique and treated .05 acre.

On October 12th, state park employees brought a chipper to the work site. Two state park employees and two volunteers spent about 2.5 hours chipping cuttings.

On November 13th, Channel Islands Restoration led a crew of ten volunteers and five NPS interns in a project workday. Prior to beginning work, a CIR licensed applicator conducted training for all participants on the use of the planned herbicide. Since vehicular access to the work site is limited due to surrounding private property, NPS provided a pickup truck to transport all tools and equipment through the private property to the work site. At the target work site, the crew treated approximately .2 acres of the infected area using the “cut and paint” technique. Cuttings were piled in the near vicinity. The crew worked for approximately 6 hours and at the completion of the workday, the one-acre grant target area was completed.

## **B) Educational and Outreach Materials**

Education and outreach efforts in 2010 focused on the following two areas:

### **1. GENERAL WEED OUTREACH**

Lead: California Invasive Plant Council Student Chapter at UC Riverside

The California Invasive Plant Council’s Student Chapter (SC) originally joined the LA WMA in 2009 to perform community education and outreach and also establish a system of communication and collaboration between students and professionals in the field of invasive species science. In many ways, the SC acts as the “speaker’s bureau” for the WMA. In 2010, their primary WMA contribution was to attend outreach events, work to improve outreach materials and infrastructure, expand on the local membership, and strengthen relationships within the community.

They brought their message to several public events in the Los Angeles area including Long Beach Celebrates Earth Day, the Southern California Botanists Symposium, and the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden Sale. At these events, they spoke to members of the public about responsible and fire-safe landscaping as well as invasive plants. A display (see below) was also created for these events



that educated attendees on information about different invasive plants, specimens of native and invasive plants, and suggestions for non-invasive landscaping options. Informational handouts produced by the SC and the Don't Plant a Pest and Plant Right campaigns were also made available.

The chapter was able to make improvements to presentation materials this year, including making two professional display boards and stands for the display. An effort was also made to acquire better photos, pamphlet holders, and improve pressed specimens. They also began a second line of invasive plant information sheets, with quick facts about wildland weeds for the general public.



At the annual California Invasive Plant Council Symposium in Ventura, the SC recruited more members from Los Angeles County, and started working up a volunteer project with the Catalina Island Conservancy. Additional outreach was accomplished through communicating with the news media and through a new SC newsletter. The SC provided information about invasive fountain grass to a reporter at the LA Times for a series about responsible landscaping.

Online, the SC improved their website that will allow them to operate and expand smoothly in 2011. The website was updated to give community groups direct access to SC members and materials so that the SC services are readily available. Requests that the SC services offer include PowerPoint presentations, a booth/display, an interactive display for kids, a consultation on an educational program, or direct invitations to participate in volunteer opportunities. The original species-specific Don't Plant brochures were also put up online for download.

## 2. FIRE-SAFE LANDSCAPING

Lead: UC Cooperative Extension – Los Angeles

UC Cooperative Extension efforts were geared toward reviewing and providing feedback on fire-safe landscaping guides to make sure they do NOT promote the use of invasive plants and facilitating communication among WMA members.

Accomplishments included the following:

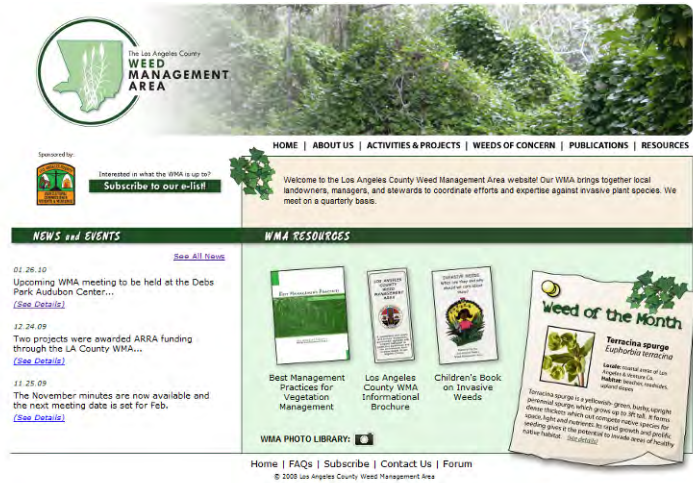
- Updated Sustainable and Fire Safe Landscapes website, with information about invasive plants - <http://groups.ucanr.org/SAFE/>
- Represented UCCE and WMA on the Regional Area Safety Task Force, a regional effort to coordinate fire preparation, recovery, and educational activities in Southern California.
- RAST Fire Summit held June 2010 in Diamond Bar, 133 participants, more information at <http://firesummit.info/>
- Represented UCCE/WMA at meetings to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the Santa Monica Mountains, draft available at [http://www.forevergreenforestry.com/smmcwpp\\_pub.html](http://www.forevergreenforestry.com/smmcwpp_pub.html)
- Participated in North Santa Monica Mountains Fire Alliance, keep invasive plant issues on the radar in fire management.
- Finalized and distributed *A Roadmap to Fire Safety in the Santa Monica Mountains*, including information about invasive plants, available at <http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/Forestry/RoadMaptoFireSafety.pdf>
- Participated in Fire Safe Council Preparing for Fire Workshop, Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010.
- Held Sustainable and Fire Safe Landscapes Workshop in Topanga Canyon, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 19 participants.
- Participated in Pacific Horticulture Society Annual Symposium, 9/23/2010 panel in sustainable landscaping, with focus on avoiding invasive plants. 147 participants.
- Coordinate these activities, and facilitate communication among WMA members. UCCE will maintain regular contact among the Weed Management Area Member agencies, including LASGRWC and the Cal-IPC Student Chapter through regular email and phone conversations, and through providing minutes of WMA meetings.
- Prepared minutes for the quarterly LA County WMA meetings in 2010. Minutes are available at <http://www.lacountywma.org/news.php>
- Participated on WMA Small Grants Selection Committee
- Chaired and prepared minutes for Santa Clara River Invasive Weeds Task Force meetings July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010



### 3. LACWMA WEBSITE

Lead: Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council

Primary work this year focused on improving the grant application and subscriber database capabilities and security. Because the co-chairs were finding a fair amount of spam being entered into the subscriber database, the Council focused on adding built-in email filters and an extra level of security when a viewer signs up to the list. In order to keep out the spam bots, new subscribers now are required to enter in a security code before they are registered. For the grant pages, the applicant submittal process was streamlined and export tools were added so grant reviewers have easier access to the submissions.



Submitted on: 1/31/11

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