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Salinas River Watershed Invasive Non-native Plant Management and Restoration Program

Project Overview

The Salinas River and its tributaries are threatened by invasive non-native plants, including the second-largest infestation of *Arundo donax* (arundo) in a California watershed. Arundo has overtaken nearly 1,500 acres of the Salinas River, forming enormous monocultures that increase flood and fire risk, consume large amounts of water, and provide virtually no food or habitat value for native wildlife.

In collaboration with the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County has developed a program and **acquired all necessary permits** to undertake a large-scale, multi-year program to eliminate arundo from the Salinas River watershed. Grants from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) currently provide funding for the RCD to control arundo from Bradley to the confluence of the Salinas River and Arroyo Seco.

The RCD's program complements, but is separate from, the arundo control conducted as mitigation for the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program.

Landowner Agreements

We are asking landowners to sign a 10-year agreement allowing the RCD access to river property to treat arundo and tamarisk for the first 5 years, **at no cost to landowners**. This typically involves one year of biomass reduction (mowing) and at least two years of herbicide treatment. For the remaining 5 years of the agreement, landowners are asked to assume responsibility for treating any remaining arundo if necessary. This is expected to involve no more than 1 hour of labor per acre, plus herbicide and equipment. Landowners are not held responsible for new invasions of arundo.

Scope of Work

The RCD is employing an upstream-to-downstream approach to arundo control. We are spot-treating scattered arundo patches and tamarisk plants with herbicide from Bradley to King City. Since 2014, the RCD has mowed 260 acres of large arundo stands along 10 river miles near Greenfield, and treated >100 acres with herbicide. In 2017, we will re-spray previously-treated areas and continue our mowing work downstream towards Soledad.

RCD staff provide oversight and monitoring of each project to verify compliance with permits. The primary techniques employed are biomass reduction using tractors with a mowing attachment and foliar application with aquatic-formulated glyphosate herbicide using power sprayers and backpack sprayers. All work is performed by experienced contractors. For sites with steep banks that are subject to erosion, we will use bioengineering solutions to stabilize and protect banks.

We need your participation!

The long-term success of the Salinas River Watershed Invasive Non-native Plant Management and Restoration Program is dependent on **full participation of all landowners in the watershed** who have arundo on their property. Any arundo left untreated will spread downstream and re-invade previously-treated areas. By signing our landowner agreement and allowing us to remove invasive plants, you are helping reduce the risk of flooding to your property, and the property of your neighbors!

The RCD looks forward to working with you. For more information, contact Emily Zefferman at emily.zefferman@rcdmonterey.org or (831) 424-1036 x 129.



Left: Mowing arundo to reduce standing biomass



Right: Results of stand reduction through mowing



Spraying arundo stands with a power sprayer



Left: Treated arundo patch before reduction



Right: Same site after (note remaining and new native veg)