

Buffelgrass Bulletin

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Inside this Issue

- 1 Transportation Corridors & Buffelgrass
- 2 Buffelgrass & Fire Management
- 3 Beat Back Buffelgrass Day 2009
- 4 New Ordinances
- 5 Controlling Buffelgrass on Private Property
- 6 Volunteer Spotlight
- 7 Sustainability Expo

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arogstad@desertmuseum.org

Southern Arizona Buffelgrass
Coordination Center
Newsletter
Tucson, Arizona

Transportation Corridors & Buffelgrass

Controlling buffelgrass growth along transportation corridors removes fuel for roadside fires. The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, under the direction of Carolyn Campbell, has been working with SABCC to prepare a strategy for buffelgrass control and mitigation along highways. The proposal asks that as projects are planned and completed, buffelgrass removal and treatment should be an integral aspect. The proposal will be forwarded to the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) Transportation and Planning Committee. *✉ by Marilyn Hanson*

Buffelgrass & Fire Management

Given the advanced stage of the buffelgrass invasion and growing fire risk, SABCC has engaged leadership in the fire management community to anticipate specific threats to life, property, and natural resources.

SABCC Board members met with the City of Tucson Fire Department (Jan. 20), the Fire Chiefs of all Pima County Fire Departments (Jan. 27), and the Fire Marshalls of all Southern Arizona Fire Departments (Mar. 11). The main objectives were to solicit help for 1) public outreach; 2) labeling, classifying, and tracking buffelgrass fires, instead of lumping them as “brushfires;” and 3) developing a Community Wildfire



Photo courtesy of Saguaro NP

Protection Plan (CWPP) that accounts for ongoing buffelgrass expansion and qualifies us for federal funding to complete fuels reduction projects.

The fire management community concurs and SABCC is now soliciting funds to hire a coordinator to compile information and develop a regional CWPP. *✉ by Julio Betancourt*

Beat Back Buffelgrass Day 2009

Following the success of the Buffelgrass Eradication Day in 2008, a Beat Back Buffelgrass Day was organized by the Pima Association of Governments on February 7th from 8:00am – 12:00pm. On this day, close to 400 volunteers participated in the regional event and pulled buffelgrass from various locations including A-Mountain/Tumamoc Hill, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Saddlebrooke, Barrio Centro Neighborhood



in Tucson, Tucson Mountain Park, Saguaro National Park-West, in the Pantano/ Irvington area, and along Tangerine Road (Oro Valley/ Marana).

Approximately 25,260 individual buffelgrass plants were removed from the Sonoran Desert on this one day! *by Alix Rogstad*

New Ordinances

In response to Pima County's regional efforts to eradicate and manage buffelgrass, the Pima County Board of Supervisors approved an amendment on Mar. 17th to Pima County Code Title 7, Chapter 33 regarding removal of rubbish, trash, weeds, filth, and debris that represent a hazard to public health and safety. The amendment clarifies, and adds buffelgrass to the definition of "weeds," and creates an opportunity for property owners, lessees, or occupants in violation of the code to take corrective action by removing the offending materials.

Once the county gives notice of a violation, the property owner or occupant will have 60 days to correct the violation, and is required to notify the county of the removal or abatement efforts.

The county will make a determination as to compliance or non-compliance within 30 days of notification. Should the property owner or occupant fail to comply, the county may carry out removal or abatement at the owner or occupant's expense. After receiving notice of required abatement, the owner or occupant of the offending property may request an appeal hearing before the Board of Supervisors. The proposed ordinance along with comments from the Pima County DEQ Environmental

Quality Advisory Committee can be found on the Board of Supervisors' website. *by Travis Bean*

Controlling Buffelgrass on Private Property

If you are getting Roundup® from a local store, there are a couple of things that you should check. First, "glyphosate" should be the only listed active ingredient. Second, ask questions to make sure you are getting something with a high enough % active ingredient (AI) to do the job.

To kill buffelgrass, you will need to spray it with a solution of 2-5% active ingredient (glyphosate). Fountain grass is a little tougher and a higher solution (5% AI) is recommended. Fountain grass will also be easier to kill if it is mowed, then allowed to regrow to at least 25% of the original height (i.e., if the plants are 4 feet tall when they are mowed, let them grow back to 1 foot tall before spraying). This extra step is unnecessary for buffelgrass.

Glyphosate is not a restricted-use chemical and anyone can purchase it from vendors for their use. Marker dyes are also available that may be

mixed with the chemical before application, which assists with accurate coverage of target plants because you can easily see where you have sprayed and what you may have missed.

The number one reason people do not get good kill rates when spraying buffelgrass or fountain grass is that they spray before the plant is ready. The plants must be AT LEAST 50% green leaves. It is even better if no brown or gray material is present on the plant. The greener, and healthier the plant is, the more susceptible it will be to glyphosate.

Plants that are turning yellowish, have leaves that are crisping on the edges or have rolled into themselves, or have seeds that have already begun to fall from the flowering stalk are very hard to kill, regardless of how much glyphosate is used.

Depending on a lot of factors (temperature, cloudiness, plant growth stage) it can take 1-4 weeks to see signs of mortality. Under optimal conditions, it takes at least 2 weeks to see results. You may see a response before then, but do not be disappointed if it takes longer.

Once the plants have been killed, you may choose to pull the plants

trade name ← name product is sold under

common name → identifies active ingredient

chemical name describes the active ingredient

1.0 INGREDIENTS
ACTIVE INGREDIENT:
 Glyphosate, N-(phosphonomethyl)glycine 41.0%
 in the form of its isopropylamine salt 59.0%
OTHER INGREDIENTS: 100.0%

AVOID CONTACT OF HERBICIDE WITH FOLIAGE, GREEN STEMS, EXPOSED NON-WOODY ROOTS OR FRUIT OF CROPS (EXCEPT AS SPECIFIED FOR INDIVIDUAL ROUNDUP READY® CROPS), DESIRABLE PLANTS AND TREES, BECAUSE SEVERE INJURY OR DESTRUCTION MAY RESULT.
 2004-1
 Not all products recommended on this label are registered for use in California. Check the registration status of each product in California before using.
 Read the entire label before using this product.
 Use only according to label instructions.
 It is a violation of Federal law to use this product in any manner inconsistent with its labeling.
 Read the "LIMIT OF WARRANTY AND LIABILITY" statement at the end of the label before buying or using. If terms are not acceptable, return at once unopened.
 THIS IS AN END-USE PRODUCT. THIS COMPANY DOES NOT INTEND AND HAS NOT REGISTERED IT FOR REFORMULATION. SEE INDIVIDUAL CONTAINER LABEL FOR REPACKAGING LIMITATIONS.

out, although it is not necessary if the site might be susceptible to erosion.



Mowing the dead material with a line trimmer to reduce the fire potential may be a good idea if they are located within 30-feet of a structure. If you choose to leave the plants in place, you can expect the plants to decay on their own within one year where it is unlikely that they will carry fire. *✎ by Travis Bean*

Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers are an important part of the regional fight against buffelgrass. Steve Hansen is one of the many dedicated volunteers, and he does not let obstacles stand in his way!

Steve volunteers with the Tanque Verde Valley Weedwackers (TVVW), under the coordination of Sally Danielson. The TVVW have been removing buffelgrass from the Pantano and Irvington roadway areas for the past year. With constricted budgets, the City of Tucson does not have enough resources to spray buffelgrass following weedwacker removal, so Steve took the certification course with the Office of Pest Management and became an official Arizona certified applicator. He bought a backpack sprayer and purchased enough herbicide to control buffelgrass in the area for the next year.

Steve works closely with B.J. Cordova, Tucson Clean and Beautiful

and TVVW. The initial effort will focus on the Irvington Road corridor between Pantano and Houghton. TVVW pull mature plants and then Steve applies herbicide on the seedlings and outlier plants until the buffelgrass is fully eradicated. This is a great example of volunteers making a difference in the fight against buffelgrass. SABCC salutes his efforts! *✎ by Marilyn Hanson*

Sustainability Expo

Pima County NRPR Environmental Education staff and volunteers were on hand at a buffelgrass table and exhibit at the recent PAG Expo. Questions were answered and brochures disseminated, but mostly people were quite interested to see the live specimens of buffelgrass that were displayed on the table. Many people knew about the buffelgrass threat, but were not sure they could identify the grass. They were grateful for the opportunity to see it up close – in a dormant stage, as well as the actively growing and flowering stage. *✎ by Meg Quinn*

Board Notes

Financial Report: SABCC is growing!

SABCC is gaining financial traction. In the past few weeks, Cox Communications and Comcast each donated \$25,000 to SABCC and the Thomas R. Brown Foundation donated \$50,000. This \$100,000 has been received and is in the bank.

In addition, the Thomas R. Brown Foundation has pledged another \$100,000 to match new contributions dollar-for-dollar. This ability to double donations should be of great help in SABCC's fund-raising efforts.

Representing a good start on fund-raising, we hope these efforts will motivate others to contribute to the fight against buffelgrass.

SABCC Visual Identity

The logo and letterhead for SABCC was designed as part of a class project (ART 363B – Typography II) under the supervision of Prof. Kelly Leslie in the College of Fine Arts, Univ. of Arizona. It was challenging and fun for the Board to pick the winning logo, created by Sarah Filipelli, among the 30 unique designs.

Non-Profit Status Obtained

After a lengthy application process, SABCC received its 501(c)(3) designation letter from the IRS in March, with an effective date of July 2008 (date of organizational incorporation). All contributions made to SABCC are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

SABCC to Provide Information at National Invasive Species Advisory Council Meeting

The National Invasive Species Advisory Council (ISAC), which is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and advises the National Invasive Species Council (NISC), will meet at the Tucson Radisson Hotel, May 5-7, 2008. ISAC is made up of 31 individuals representing a broad range of stakeholders including scientific, conservation, agriculture, State and Tribal governments, and industry organizations impacted by invasive species. The meeting is open to the public, and there is a public comment period each day. On Thursday, May 7, Julio Betancourt will give the luncheon presentation. The field trip on Wednesday, May 6, is open to NISC and ISAC members only and will tour the NRCS Plant Materials Center, Agua Caliente Park, Mt. Lemmon, and Sabino

Canyon. Julio, Travis Bean, Meg Weesner, and Dana Backer will represent the buffelgrass effort during the field trip.

Federal Appropriations Request

Due to the severity of the buffelgrass crisis, SABCC submitted a federal appropriations request through Rep. Gabrielle Giffords's office in February for \$500,000. The federal funding is requested for fully staffing the Center and to provide treatment funding for the highest priority areas.

New PSA Under Development

Tucson Fire Department Chief, Pat Kelly, has agreed to work with Cox Communications to develop and film a Public Service Announcement (PSA) regarding the buffelgrass threat and associated fire risk. The PSA will be aired this spring and summer.

Buffelgrass MOU

The Buffelgrass Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a tandem document to the Buffelgrass Strategic Plan, completed in February 2008.

The MOU is currently activated with 9 signatories. The intended purpose of the MOU is to enable the tasks envisioned for SABCC (facilitate effective response actions to control and prevent invasions, restore communities through coordinated action, and facilitate funding from multiple sources for projects). The MOU is further intended to be used as a foundation document to streamline and promote the development and acceptance of various funding mechanisms.

SABCC became an official signatory to the MOU in March. Additional signatories may be added in the future.

Website Updates

The SABCC website (www.buffelgrass.org) is hosted by the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and domain names were purchased in February by ASDM as an in-kind contribution to SABCC. The domain name licenses were purchased for 10 years (through 2019).

Periodic updates are made to the SABCC website, as necessary, which is intended as a portal for buffelgrass information in the region. Questions related to the website should be directed to Alix Rogstad.

Executive Director Search Begins

SABCC announced and initiated a search for an Executive Director in March 2009. The position description was posted to multiple websites and print publications. Application reviews began immediately and will continue until the position is filled. *cs*

SABCC Mission: *To provide a regional center that emphasizes an integrated management approach to address and control buffelgrass (Pennisetum ciliare) and its associated fire risks.*

To Make Contributions
Please make checks out to Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center and mail to:

Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center
1955 E Sixth Street
Tucson, Arizona 85719

SABCC is a 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization. All donations to SABCC are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Your contribution will help us continue to coordinate efforts of regional buffelgrass management activities, including treatment, mapping, education, outreach and public volunteer opportunities.

Upcoming Events
Find more details regarding listed events on the Buffelgrass Calendar (www.buffelgrass.org/calendar)

- Various Volunteer Group Pulls – Phoenix Weedwackers, Saguaro National Park-East, Sonoran Desert Weedwackers, Tanque Verde Weedwackers, Tucson Clean & Beautiful, Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona

Wise Words
How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. – *Anne Frank*