

**Annual Vegetation and Noxious Weed Management Report
Santa Felicia Project**

Santa Felicia Project FERC P-2153-029

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Prepared by:



UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Environmental Planning and Conservation Department

1.0 Background

United Water Conservation District (United) owns and operates the Santa Felicia Project (Project) on Piru Creek in Ventura County, California. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a new license (License) to United for the operations of the Project on September 12, 2008 (FERC Project No. 2153-012). Article 405 of the License required United to file a *Vegetation and Noxious Weed Management Plan* (Plan) for lands within the project boundary that incorporates provisions of United States Forest Service' (USFS) 4(e) Condition 18(b). United filed the Plan on October 12, 2010 and FERC filed approval of the Plan on February 14, 2011.

The Plan requires United to produce an annual technical report. The Plan states that the first report will focus on the results of the initial inventory and subsequent reports will focus on the results of annual monitoring and control efforts. The Plan specifically identifies that the report must contain the following components:

- Summary of target noxious weed populations including existing and new populations in areas tied-to Project actions or effects;
- Project area map depicting point and polygon data for target noxious weed populations as recorded for the Noxious Weed GIS Data Layer;
- Description of control areas and treatments used over the past year;
- Brief evaluation of priority treatment areas;
- Recommended control measures for each population/treatment area including proposed chemical controls;
- Description of revegetation efforts conducted during the reporting period;
- Evaluation of revegetation efforts conducted prior to (within 3-years) and within the reporting period;
- Summary of proposed revegetation areas.

This document is United's first annual report. It, therefore, primarily focuses on the results of the baseline inventory. It also describes other activities that have occurred since the Plan was approved by FERC and addresses expected activities for 2012.

2.0 Vegetation and Noxious Weed Management Activities

The approved Plan requires United to commence management practices within the first full year following FERC's approval or before ground-disturbing activities are scheduled to occur. No ground-disturbing activities occurred within the designated Vegetation and Noxious Weed Management Plan Area (Plan Area) (Figure 1 in the Plan) during 2011.

United performed a baseline inventory survey of targeted noxious weed species within the Plan Area. The inventory survey was conducted in April of 2011. The only targeted noxious weed that was observed during the baseline survey was *Tamarix ramosissima* (tamarisk). The Plan required that United finalize, in consultation with the LPNFS, the priority infestations and treatment methods based on information obtained from the baseline inventory survey. United consulted with the LPNFS for a second time on February 2, 2012 and presented results of the baseline inventory. Following guidance from the LPNFS, United developed a draft "Strategy for Treatment and Eradication of *Tamarix*

ramosissima” (Eradication Plan) based on a draft model developed by the LPNFS for the purpose of eradicating tamarisk from Piru Creek, Lockwood Creek, Cuyama River, Santa Ynez River, Sisquoc River, and Arroyo Seco River. United has provided a draft of the Eradication Plan to LPNFS for review.

2.1 *Summary of target noxious weed populations including existing and new populations in areas tied-to Project actions or effects*

A summary of existing target noxious weed populations is presented in the attached “Baseline Inventory of Targeted Noxious Weeds” dated February 2012.

2.2 *Project area map depicting point and polygon data for target noxious weed populations as recorded for the Noxious Weed GIS Data Layer*

Project area maps depicting point and polygon data for identified target noxious weed populations are presented in the attached “Baseline Inventory of Targeted Noxious Weeds” dated February 2012.

2.3 *Description of control areas and treatments used over the past year*

Activities during 2011 were associated with identifying target noxious weed populations and developing strategies for treatment and eradication. No treatments were performed during the year.

2.4 *Brief evaluation of priority treatment areas*

Activities during 2011 were associated with identifying target noxious weed populations and developing strategies for treatment and eradication. No treatments were performed during the year.

2.5 *Recommended control measures for each population/treatment area including proposed chemical controls*

Recommended control measures for identified target noxious weed populations are presented in the attached “Strategy for Treatment and Eradication of *Tamarix ramosissima*” dated March 2012.

2.6 *Description of revegetation efforts conducted during the reporting period*

No revegetation activities were conducted during 2011.

2.7 *Evaluation of revegetation efforts conducted prior to (within 3-years) and within the reporting period*

No revegetation activities have been conducted within the last 3-years.

2.8 *Summary of proposed revegetation areas*

Following eradication activities planned for October 2012, United will monitor the treatment areas to evaluate the effectiveness of the control measures and consult with LPNFS to develop future strategies. If appropriate, additional treatments and/or revegetation activities may be proposed.

3.0 *USFS Consultation*

USFWS section 4(e) conditions 2 and 18(b) and the Plan require that United consult annually with the USFS on issues related to implementation of the Plan, including presenting the annual report. The first annual consultation between United and the Las Padres National Forest Service (LPNFS) occurred on February 2, 2011. The consultation occurred prior to FERC approving the Plan so no annual report was required. However, United provided an update to LPNFS of the vegetation and noxious weed management planning process and anticipated future management activities.

The second annual consultation occurred February 2, 2012. At this meeting, United presented the results of the baseline inventory and discussed the content of the eradication plan.

4.0 2012 Activities

In consultation with the USFS, United expects to finalize the Eradication Plan and file it with FERC. Currently, the draft Eradication Plan calls for United to implement measures to eradicate tamarisk in October 2012. The results of the baseline inventory indicate that some of the identified tamarisk plans may occur on a portion of Piru Creek that is habitat for at least one federally endangered species, the arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*), and perhaps several others. This issue will need to be addressed before United can implement the Eradication Plan. United intends to work with FERC to determine the appropriate steps to address this issue.