

Site-Specific Work Plan, Honda Valley Park

Santa Barbara City Fire Department and Parks and Recreation
Department

Fire Resiliency Project



Existing Conditions

Honda Valley Park is regionally located within the City of Santa Barbara on the southern coast of California. Honda Valley Park totals 48 acres and is located in the coastal interior zone of the High Fire Hazard Area, approximately 0.5-mile southwest of Highway 101, and includes Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Vegetation Management Unit (VMU) 17. (Figure 1). The Park is bordered by Miramonte Drive to the North and La Coronilla Drive to the South. Land use of the surrounding area is residential development. Honda Valley Park is located within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Santa Barbara topographic quadrangle in Sections 21 and 28 of Township 4 North and Range 27 West, and Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 035-040-028, 035-040-014, 035-040-019, and 035-040-021 (SummitWest 2023).

Honda Valley Park is centered at approximately 34.407894 latitude and -119.712925 longitude, and elevation of the park ranges from 130 to 400 feet above mean sea level (msl) with approximately 5-10% slopes. The majority of Honda Valley Park soil is made up of Arnold loamy sand 15-30% and 30-50% slopes, which is eroded, somewhat excessively drained, and derived from Residuum weathered from very soft sandstone (USDA, 2023). This park is composed of a dense mix of native and non-native vegetation communities. The native coast live oak woodland and forest community makes up a majority of the park space, followed by the semi-natural eucalyptus, tree of heaven, and black locust groves. Honda Valley Park is an open space park with a trail system running throughout.

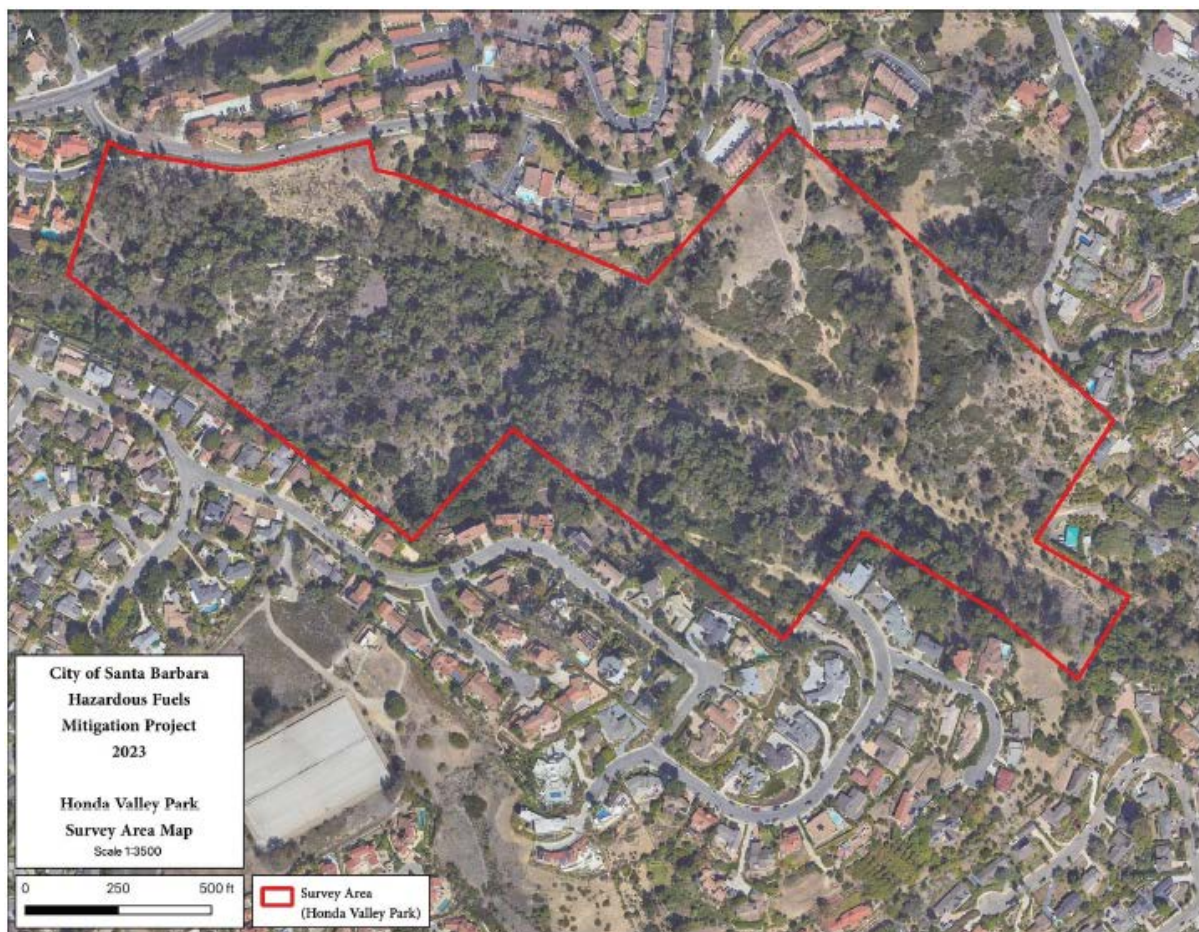


Figure 1: Honda Valley Park

Approach

Vegetation management work will be performed by a City Fire Department seasonal crew, starting October 3, 2023. In accordance with the CWPP, associated Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), and Honda Valley Biological Resource Assessment (BRA), a biological evaluation/pre-activity survey will be conducted on site within 10 days of scheduled work. Limits of work and environmentally sensitive areas will be delineated on site prior to work commencement; following site mark-out, photo points will be established for before and after photos to be included in the After-Action Report. An Environmental Awareness Training for all crew members will be held by a qualified biologist prior to commencement of vegetation management activities. A biological monitor will be present for project activities around sensitive natural resources, as needed, in accordance with the Honda Valley BRA recommended avoidance and mitigation measures.

Crews will be targeting deadwood and invasive species to reduce fuel loads in the park through weed whipping, hand cutting, hand pulling, chainsaw work, chipping, flattening, raking, shoveling, and bucking existing woody debris; details on each target area are described in the photo document included below. Targeted invasive species include mustards, non-native annual grasses, pampas grass, eucalyptus, bigleaf periwinkle, Peruvian pepper, onionweed, nasturtium, English ivy, cape ivy, tree tobacco, French broom, thoroughwort, cotoneaster, bullthistle, African asparagus fern, and Victorian box.

Crews will also focus on removing vegetation from trails, also known as trail brushing, to maintain clear site access for emergency crews and vehicles in the event of a fire.

All tools shall be sanitized before use at the work site. Weed whipping will not be used on bigleaf periwinkle, onionweed, nasturtium, English ivy, or cape ivy as not to further spread the invasive plant. All invasives will be removed by root, or stump ground, when feasible. When not feasible, the City will seek an exemption from the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Advisory Committee to treat stumps with herbicide to inhibit regrowth. Invasives in seed, or at risk of spreading due to rhizomes / vegetative debris will be disposed of off-site. If needed, fiber rolls and/or mulch will be deployed on the slope(s) where vegetation was removed for soil stabilization.

This Site-Specific Work Plan will function as a working document. Work areas will be marked out and surveyed ahead of crew progression. This allows for all work to stay within the confines of a biological evaluation/pre-activity survey, and for adjustments to on-site conditions to be made, if needed.



Figure 2: Honda Valley Park Work Areas 1-24.

Safety Plan

Designated work zones will be marked out on site. All crew members will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times. Crew members using mechanized tools (chainsaw and weed whippers) will be properly trained. Work will not occur during rain or other unsafe weather conditions.

Work Activity Schedule

Work schedule will be between Monday and Thursday, between the hours of 8a.m. to 4:30 p.m., primarily from October 2023 – January 2024. No weekend work is allowed unless an emergency necessitates it. Work is dependent on weather conditions.

Proposed Materials / Tools

- Weed whippers
- Chainsaws
- Tarps
- Loppers
- Pole saw
- Hedge trimmers
- Pulaskis
- Shovels
- Burlap-wrapped waddles and wooden stakes (if needed)
- Portable restroom/wash station
- Roll-off dumpster (trash, not green waste – for invasive species disposal)

Work Site Contacts

Mark von Tillow	Mike Lopez	Monique O'Conner
Wildland Fire Inspector	Fire Services Specialist - Crew Lead	Open Space Planner / Biologist
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805-331-5406	805-448-1091	805-560-7576

Pre-Activity Biological Surveys

Pre-activity biological surveys were conducted in Work Areas 1-24 within 10 days of scheduled crew work. The pre-activity surveys were conducted by either the City's internal staff biologist, Monique O'Conner, or by Rincon biologists Kendra Bonsall or Kaitlyn Weaver. During the pre-activity surveys, Work Areas were assessed for presence of sensitive biological resources, and were flagged to guide crew work. The purpose of the survey was to confirm the location and presence of sensitive biological resources that were documented and mapped in the park's Biological Resources Assessment (BRA), and to flag invasive plant species that will be removed during project activities. All pre-activity surveys were conducted in accordance with the requirements in the City's Community Wildlife Protection Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and Honda Valley Park BRA, to protect sensitive biological resources.

All pre-activity biological surveys were not protocol level for special status species with potential to occur; additionally, the surveys were conducted in fall, outside of the identifiable/blooming period for some plant species. Negative results do not guarantee species absence from the survey area.

Survey 1

The first pre-activity biological survey was conducted on site by Monique O'Conner (City biologist/arborist) on September 27, and September 28, 2023. This biological survey area focused on Work Areas 1-5 included in this work plan, including a 150-foot buffer, on City property.

The first survey area was composed primarily of the native coast live oak woodland, native sycamore/coast live oak woodland, and non-native eucalyptus woodland semi-natural stand vegetation communities. The ephemeral drainage was also surveyed for the presence of surface water. All special status plant species identified in the Honda Valley BRA were flagged for avoidance. The following wildlife species were observed during the first pre-activity survey: red-tailed hawk, acorn woodpecker, California scrub-jay, spotted towhee, white-breasted nuthatch, northern mockingbird, blue-grey gnatcatcher, American crow, wren, yellow warbler, northern flicker, house finch, and California towhee. No special status wildlife were observed within the Work Areas during the survey. A biological monitor shall be utilized in a portion of Work Area 1, where work activities will come within 50 feet of documented rare plants, and in Work Area 3, which involves a haul route within an ephemeral drainage.

Survey 2

The second pre-activity biological survey occurred on October 4, 2023, by Monique O'Conner. This biological survey area focused on Work Areas 6-7. The second survey area was composed primarily of non-native eucalyptus woodland semi-natural stand, and patches of oak woodland / disturbed coastal sage scrub along the trail easement. No special status plant species were identified in Work Area 6 or Work Area 7, consistent with the Honda Valley BRA. Wildlife species observed included scrub jay, California junco, California towhee, Anna's hummingbird, rock dove, red-tailed hawk, northern mockingbird, bushtit, acorn woodpecker, scaly-breasted munia, and oak titmouse. No special status wildlife were observed within the Work Areas during the survey.

Survey 3

The third pre-activity biological survey occurred on October 18, 2023, by Monique O'Conner. This biological survey area focused on Work Areas 8 through 14. No special status plant species were identified in Work Areas 8 through 14, consistent with the Honda Valley BRA. Species observed included

American crow, Anna's hummingbird, monarch, yellow-rumped warbler, California towhee, scrub jay, acorn woodpecker, dark-eyed junco, and northern flicker. No special status wildlife were observed within the Work Areas during the survey.

Survey 4

The fourth pre-activity biological survey occurred on October 20, 2023, by Monique O'Conner. This biological survey area focused on Work Area 15, starting at the southeastern end. The southeastern 1/3 of Work Area 15 was surveyed. One additional Plummer's Baccharis (*Baccharis plummerae* ssp. *plummerae*) not included in the Honda Valley BRA was observed and recorded in FieldMaps. Wildlife species observed included white breasted nuthatch, Anna's hummingbird, spotted towhee, scrub jay, dark-eyed junco, yellow-rumped warbler, monarch, acorn woodpecker, scaly breasted munia, house finch, cottontail, mourning dove, and California towhee. No special status wildlife were observed within the Work Areas during the survey.

Survey 5

The fifth pre-activity biological survey occurred on November 3, 2023, by Monique O'Conner. This biological survey focused on a continuation of Work Area 15, and Work Area 16. No special status plant species were identified in the mid-portion of Work Area 15 and in Work Area 16, consistent with the Honda Valley BRA. Species observed included white-breasted nuthatch, scrub jay, white-crowned sparrow, hermit thrush, house finch, dark-eyed junco, yellow-rumped warbler, orange-crowned warbler, oak titmouse, acorn woodpecker, ruby-crowned kinglet, black phoebe, monarch, red-breasted nuthatch, brown-headed cowbird, Anna's hummingbird, blue-grey gnatcatcher, American crow, California towhee, wrenit, chipmunk, cottontail, red-tailed hawk, and northern flicker. A detailed check of all eucalyptus stands on site was performed to check for presence of overwintering monarchs. No special status wildlife were observed within the Work Areas during the survey.

Survey 6

The sixth pre-activity biological survey occurred on November 9, 2023 by Rincon biologist Kendra Bonsall. This biological survey focused on Work Areas 15 (western portion), 17, 18, 19, and 20. The results of this survey are included in a pre-activity survey memorandum attached to this Site-Specific Work Plan (Attachment 1). A biological monitor shall be utilized in a portion of Work Area 17 and 18, where work activities will come within 50 feet of documented rare plants.

Survey 7

The seventh pre-activity biological survey occurred on November 17, 2023, by Monique O'Conner. This biological survey focused on Work Area 21. No special status plant species were identified in Work Area 21, consistent with the Honda Valley BRA. Species observed included acorn woodpecker, Anna's hummingbird, Northern mockingbird, Northern flicker, scrub jay, and American crow. No special status wildlife were observed within the Work Area during the survey.

Survey 8

The eighth pre-activity survey occurred on November 22, 2023, by Rinon biologist Kaitlyn Weaver. This biological survey focused on Work Areas 19, 22, and 23. The results of this survey are included in a pre-activity survey memorandum attached to this Site-Specific Work Plan (Attachment 1).

Survey 9

The ninth pre-activity survey occurred on November 30, 2023, by Rinon biologist Kaitlyn Weaver. This biological survey focused on Work Area 24. The results of this survey are included in a pre-activity survey memorandum attached to this Site-Specific Work Plan (Attachment 1).

Conclusions

The proposed work methods stated herein are feasible, and no significant environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project. A biological monitor will be present for project activities around sensitive natural resources, in Work Areas 1, 3, 17, and 18, as noted below, in accordance with the Honda Valley BRA recommended avoidance and mitigation measures. An After Action Report will be written following completion of all Project related work activities.

References

- City of Santa Barbara (City). 2021. *Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)*. February 2021.
- City of Santa Barbara (City). 2021. *City of Santa Barbara Community Wildfire Protection Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)*. January 2021.
- SummitWest Environmental, Inc. *Biological Resource Assessment for Honda Valley Park, City of Santa Barbara Hazardous Fuels Mitigation Project*. September 21, 2023.
- United States Department of Agricultural (USDA). 2023. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey. *Soil Survey Area: Santa Barbara County, California*. <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. Accessed August 2023.

Work Area Descriptions

Work Areas will be finalized ahead of crews progression, following pre-activity survey / site mark out.
Green shaded Work Areas have been finalized.



Work Area #: 1

Work Description: Maintain vehicle and fire engine access route by pruning vegetation to maintain vertical/horizontal clearance. Remove temporary fencing along road. Chip/buck large fallen eucalyptus across road and fallen, dead oak. Two herbicide treatment points in work area. **Bio monitor required around fallen eucalyptus.**



Work Area #: 2

Work Description: Remove vinca via hand pulling, removing all stems, root nodes, and stolons; haul out using tarps or wheelbarrows for disposal off-site. First priority, as this work cannot occur once water is present in ephemeral drainage.





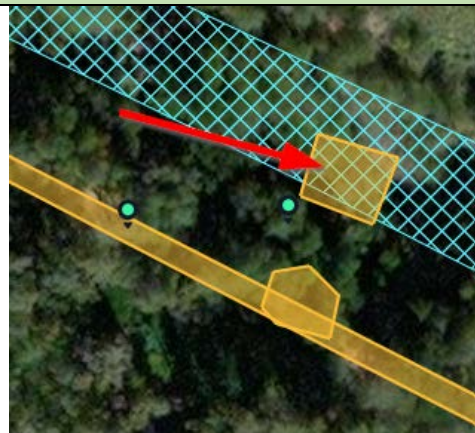
Work Area #: 3

Work Description: Remove vinca, nasturtium, and castor bean via hand pulling, removing all stems, root nodes, and stolons; haul out using tarps or wheelbarrows for disposal off-site. Young eucalyptus / suckers in vicinity to be removed. First priority, as this work cannot occur once water is present in ephemeral drainage. Bio monitor necessary to establish haul route.



Work Area #: 4

Work Description: Remove Pampas grass. Pampas grass seed heads to be cut and bagged for disposal off-site prior to removing rest of plant. Break down adjacent fallen tree fine fuels / deadwood. First priority, as this work cannot occur once water is present in ephemeral drainage.





Work Area #: 5

Work Description: Remove young Victorian box and pine (orange flags). Take stump out 4-6" below ground and bury remainder. First priority, as this work cannot occur once water is present in ephemeral drainage.



Work Area #: 6

Work Description: Trail brushing along City trail easement. Create ~3ft of clearance for trail. Pull iceplant back from trail where it encroaches into 3ft tread. 2 locations with dropped/dried oak branches directly adjacent to trail - buck up or haul to chip. Use cut oak logs from site to line switchbacks at eastern start of trail.





Work Area #: 7

Work Description: Weed whip non-native annual weeds, clear out dry understory litter, remove young/sucker eucs. Remove interior iceplant to the greatest extent feasible; all iceplant to be disposed of off-site.



Work Area #: 8

Work Description: Young eucalyptus / suckers to be removed. Eucalyptus deadwood and shedding to be removed from ground only. No dropping of mature, alive trees. Young eucalyptus to be removed by root when feasible. Stump grinding to occur for one large re-sprouting eucalyptus stump.

Removal of iceplant invasive polygon to the greatest extent feasible via hand pulling, removing all stems and rhizomes; dispose of off-site.





Work Area #: 9

Work Description: Weed whip non-natives grasses and clear out dry understory litter.



Work Area #: 10

Work Description: Remove all African asparagus fern via hand pulling, removing all rhizomes. Remove cape ivy to the greatest extent feasible – focus on removing climbing ivy from oaks and lemonade berry. Cape ivy can be cut at ground level and rolled up like a rug. Dispose of off-site.





Work Area #: 11

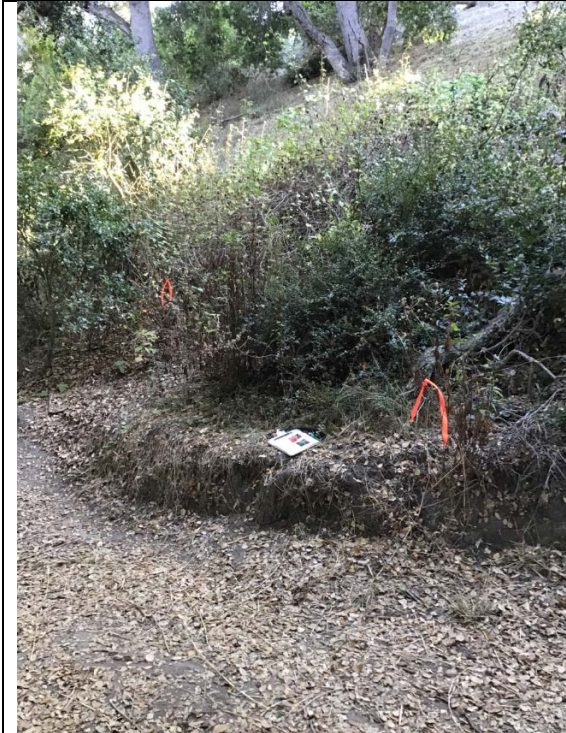
Work Description: Remove iceplant to the greatest extent feasible via hand pulling, removing all stems and rhizomes; dispose of off-site. Remove one pampas grass, if feasible (on steep slope).



Work Area #: 12

Work Description: Remove single Pampas grass, dispose of off-site.





Work Area #: 13

Work Description: Remove Thoroughwort via hand pulling, removing all stems and root system; dispose of off-site.

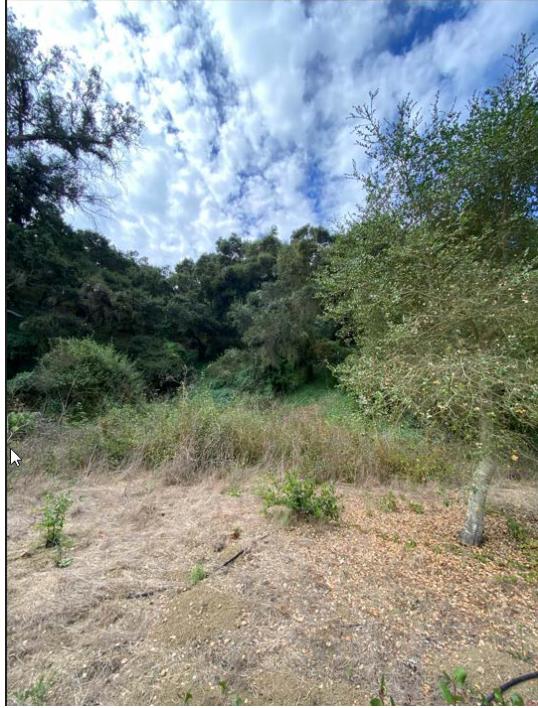


Work Area #: 14

Work Description: Remove all tree tobacco and small patches of iceplant via hand pulling. Iceplant to be disposed of off-site, small enough patches to fill 1 garbage bag; pulled tree tobacco can be left in place.

Clean up all loose eucalyptus debris along windrow. Remove all deadwood feasible. Lift lower branches to the extent feasible.





Work Area #: 15

Work Description: Understory clearing focused on deadwood, cape ivy, garden nasturtium, and English ivy climbing vines that create ladder fuels and strangle oaks. Tree tobacco invasive polygon to also be removed. Young eucalyptus to also be removed. Live cape ivy can be cut at ground level and rolled up like a rug – to be disposed of off site. No work to exceed across access road / into restoration site. One herbicide treatment point in work area.



Work Area #: 16

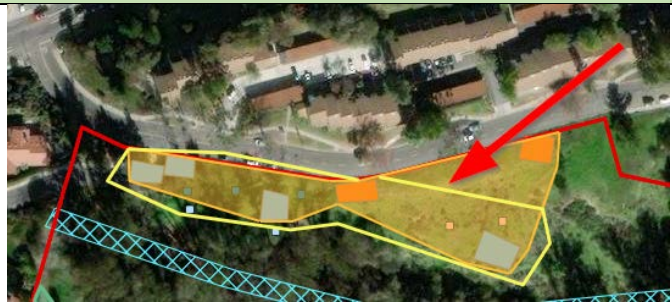
Work Description:. Remove pepper tree, deadwood, and asparagus weed. Weed whip adjacent grasses. Pepper tree in work area to be treated with herbicide to prevent resprouting.





Work Area #: 17

Work Description: Remove all tree tobacco, castor bean, bull thistle, and iceplant (invasives groups 1 and 2) to the greatest extent feasible. All invasives to be removed by root when feasible. Iceplant to be disposed of off-site. Castor bean seed heads shall be bagged and disposed of off site prior to hand pulling. Tree tobacco, bull thistle, and castor bean vegetative debris can be left on site. **Bio monitor required around rare plants (yellow outline).**



Work Area #: 18

Work Description: Invasive removal focused on pampas grass, English ivy, olive, and African asparagus fern. Pampas grass seed heads to be cut and bagged for disposal off-site prior to removing rest of plant. All invasives to be removed by root when feasible. **Bio monitor required near rare plant population (yellow outline).**





Work Area #: 19

Work Description: Brush trail to 3 feet wide. Remove any young eucalyptus/ eucalyptus suckers, pine, deadwood that are accessible. Remove all tree tobacco in tree tobacco polygon. Cut down stumps 6" into soil and bury whenever feasible to prevent resprouting. Remove 1 cotoneaster plant in cotoneaster polygon – absolutely bury this stump 6" into ground. Do not drag or chip cotoneaster – buck up and leave in place to not spread seed.



Work Area #: 20

Work Description: Young eucalyptus / suckers to be removed. Eucalyptus deadwood and shedding to be removed from ground only. No dropping of mature trees, dead or alive. Remove pampass grass. Remove ice plant, focusing on hillside. 7 eucalyptus trees flagged in blue for treatment.





Work Area #: 21

Work Description: Remove all pepper trees, onionweed, ash, pride of maderia, canary island date palm, oleander, and olive trees (invasives groups 1 and 2). All invasives to be removed by root when feasible. 10 IPM points marked for treatment.



Work Area #: 22

Work Description: Remove all onionweed and olive trees (invasives groups 1 and 2). Onionweed to be bagged for disposal off site. Olive stumps to be cut down 6" into soil and buried to prevent resprouting.





Work Area#: 23

Work Description: Remove any young eucalyptus / eucalyptus suckers that are accessible. Remove all lantana in lantana polygon - pull out by root. Veg debris can be left on site.



Work Area#: 24

Remove all olives. Cut and bury stumps 6" below soil surface.

