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## VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES FOR PIMA COUNTY INVASIVE WEED ABATEMENT

### I. Introduction

- A. Pima County has a direct interest in reducing fire risks and the spread of invasive plant species like buffelgrass and fountain grass along county roadways through active control programs. Agencies of Pima County Public Works Division are working together with community volunteers to perform buffelgrass removal along roadways and public areas.
- B. Invasive weed removal projects are performed by community volunteers on an as needed or onetime project.
- C. The manual removal of invasive weeds and grasses reduces the potential for roadside fires and assists in reducing the potential for seed dispersal of the invasive weeds and grasses along roadways. Through this voluntary program, community organizations, individuals, non-profit organizations and other organized groups are encouraged to participate in the manual control as part of a broader multi-agency effort to control invasive weed infestations.

### II. Eligibility

- A. Volunteers will be allowed to perform invasive weed and grass removal on designated sections of roadway under an encroachment permit subject to the Rules and Conditions specified in Item III. Invasive weed and grass removal projects require pre-approval by NRPR and PCDOT.
- B. Permits may be granted to public groups, organizations and political organizations only for the purpose of invasive weed and grass removal for short-term or one-time project.

### III. Rules and Conditions

- A. The length of the invasive grass removal will be identified and approved through NRPR and coordinated with PCDOT. These areas are either roadway sections or dense areas of invasive weed and grass infestations. **Safety of invasive grass removal volunteers is a prime consideration.**

- B. No permits shall be granted when site conditions are unsuitable for a group's age level. No invasive weed and grass projects will be conducted on the medians due to safety concerns.
- C. No children younger than 14 years of age may participate or be permitted in the right-of-way for any reason. The group shall provide an adequate supervisor –at least one adult 21 years of age or older for every ten members under the age of 18 years.
- D. PCDOT shall supply bags and remove and dispose of filled bags. All filled bags shall be placed off the roadside so as not to obstruct traffic or emergency use of roadside shoulders.
- E. NRPR shall provide safety vests to be worn by all invasive grass volunteers when working on the roadway right-of-way. NRPR will provide digging bars and bags for invasive weed and grass removal projects. Vests and digging bars belonging to Pima County and are to be returned to NRPR at a designated location within 7 days after each use.
- F. The participating organization shall appoint a “Volunteer Supervisor” for its membership to oversee its work on the right-of-way.
- G. All “Volunteer Supervisors” MUST complete a safety course given by NRPR safety personnel before they supervise roadside work. Invasive Weed removal supervisors MUST participate in an invasive weed identification and manual removal training. One way to satisfy this training requirement is by attending one Sonoran Desert Weedwacker buffelgrass removal work session or a current list of other approved training opportunities will be presented to the “Volunteer Supervisor.”
- H. Prior to invasive weed and grass removal session, all volunteers shall be instructed in the safety precautions by their “Volunteer Supervisor.”
- I. All volunteers shall at all times adhere to the safety requirements: closed toe shoes, long sleeved shirts, work gloves, and hats for protection from the sun; First Aid kit, and water. Other safety requirements will be listed in the materials presented at the Safety Training.
- J. Organizations participating in the Invasive Weed and Grass removal may schedule multiple work sessions but are not required to return to the site for additional maintenance.
- K. Participating organizations MUST coordinate their pickup schedules with NRPR and PCDOT to prevent conflicts over the use of the roadway right-of-way.
- L. A liability insurance certificate shall not be required.
- M. Each participant (or the parent or guardian of a minor) shall be required to sign a waiver for each event before work commences in the right-of-way. See the handout entitled “Special Waiver, Hold Harmless form.”
- N. The permit shall be issued for each clean-up. Permits may be revoked at any time at the County's discretion for failure to comply with these Rules and Conditions.

- O. PCDOT and NRPR may impose additional conditions as needed.

#### IV. Procedures

- A. Groups interested in conducting a roadside Invasive weed and grass control project should initially contact Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation.
- B. NRPR will explain and discuss the Invasive Weed and Grass removal guidelines with a responsible representative of the interested organization, emphasizing the removal involves significant physical work which must be done safely, and depending on the type of project, must be done on a reasonably frequent basis.
- C. A modified encroachment permit must be completed by the applicant and approved by PCDOT. See the enclosure entitled “Application for Permit to Use County Roadway Right of Way.”
- D. The permittee must submit to NRPR a single waiver form signed by all participants at the completion of each event. NRPR will provide copies to PCDOT.
- E. Applicants arrange through NRPR to schedule their safety training.
- F. Applicants also request issuance of safety vests, and digging bars for invasive weed removal projects through NRPR.
- G. NRPR will arrange for litter pickup or invasive weed and grass removal dates and for pickup of filled bags with volunteers and with PCDOT.

#### V. Contact Information

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation  
[eeducation@pima.gov](mailto:eeducation@pima.gov)  
(520) 615-7855