



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## NATURAL RESOURCE SUMMARY



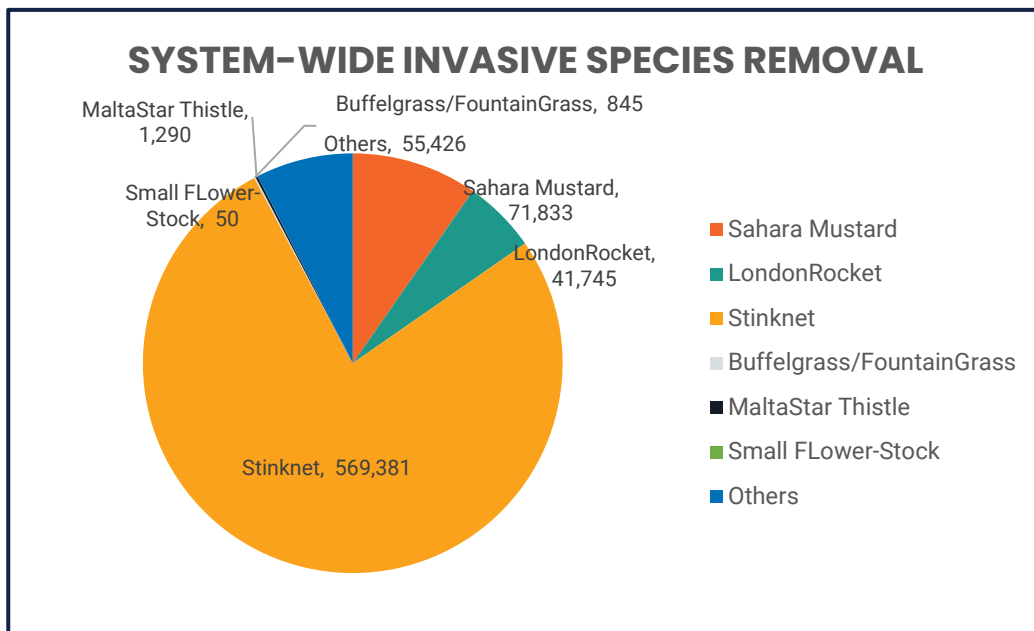
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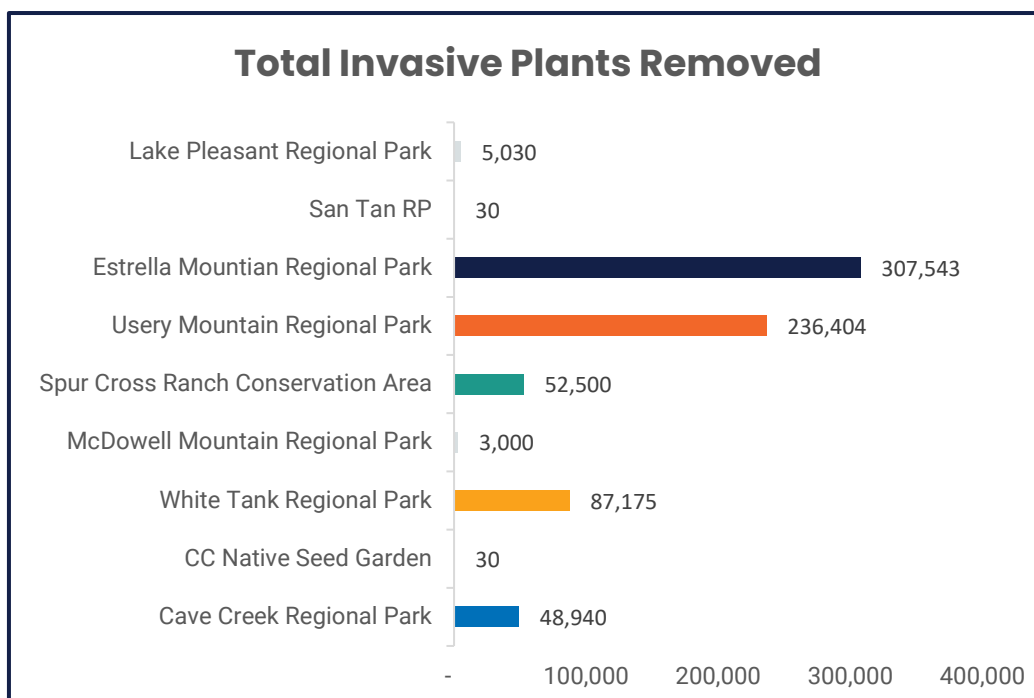
# DESERT DEFENDERS- INVASIVE REMOVAL

## Highlights

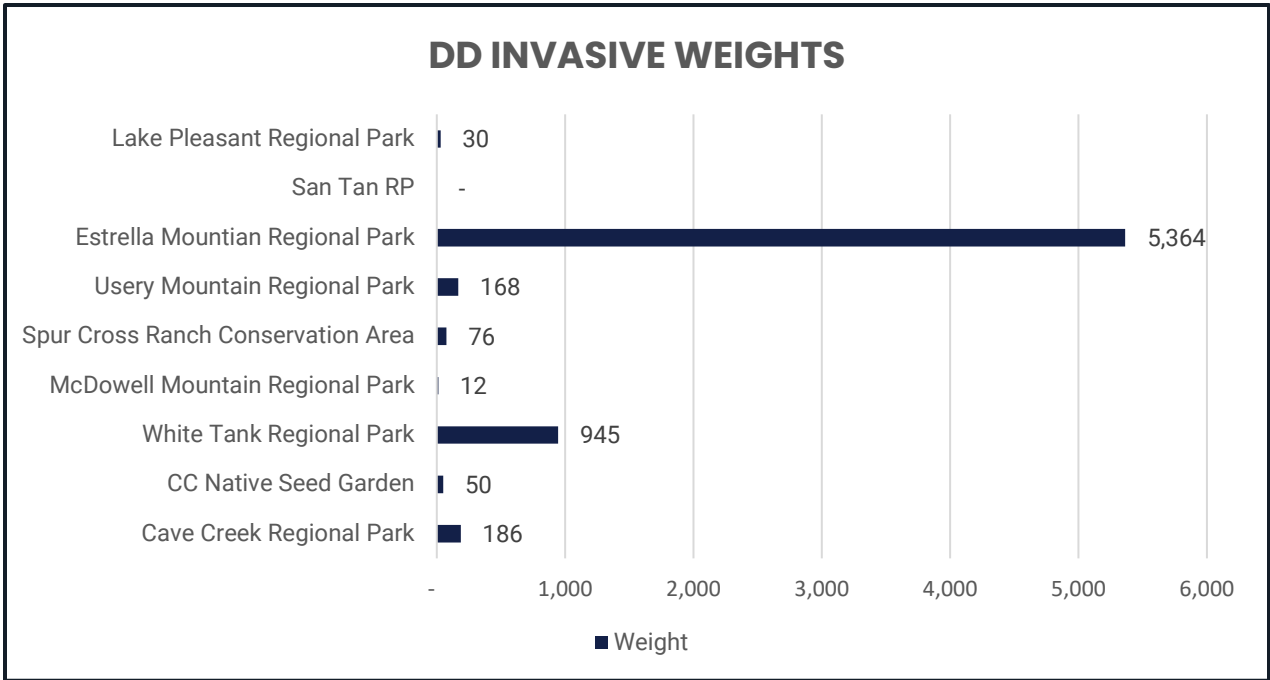
- Hosted 86 Removal Events.
- Removed 740,570 invasive plants, 6,831 pounds.
- Creating DD Communities at five parks (CC, SX, ES, US, and WT).



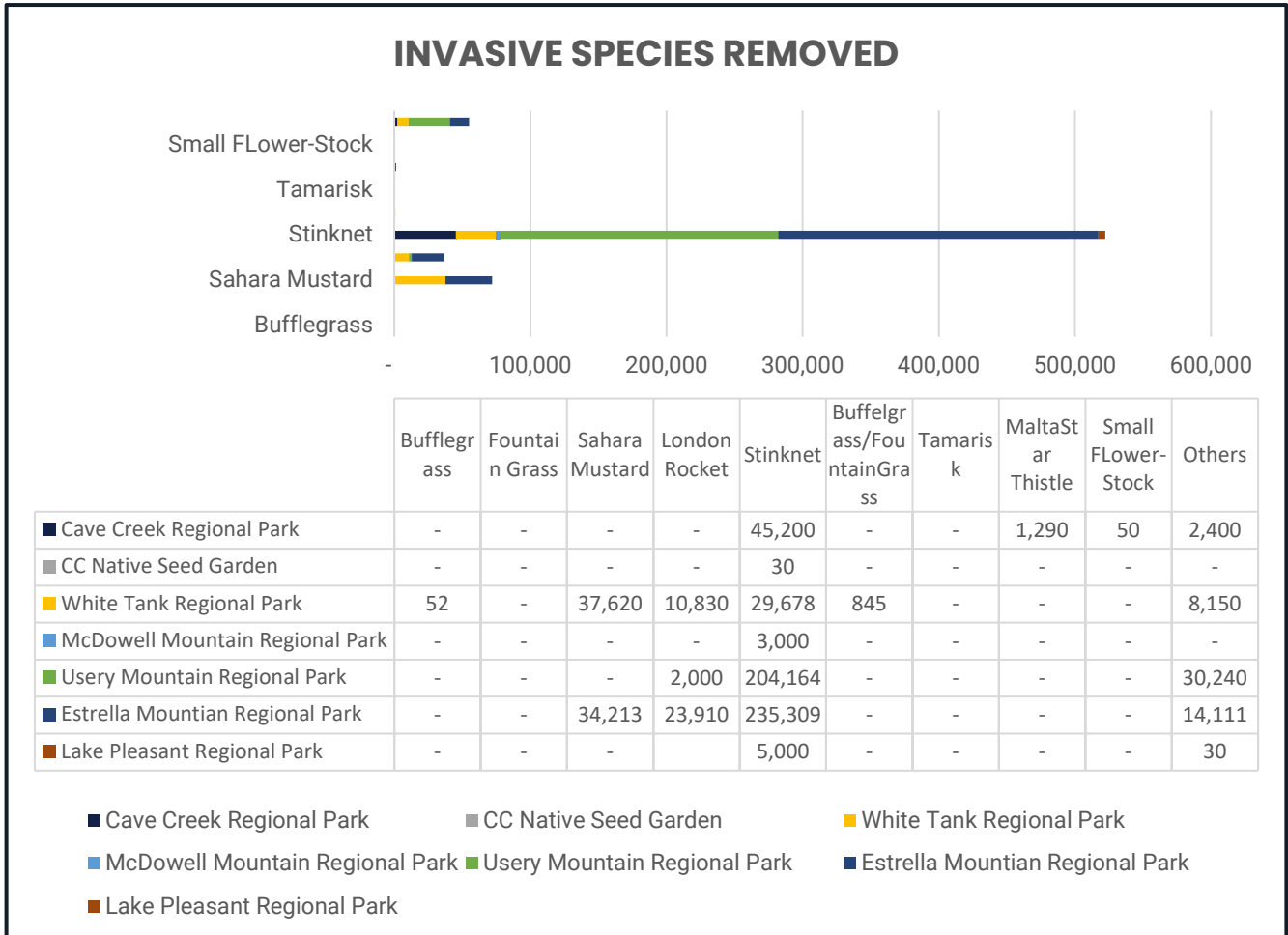
Graph 1: System-wide number of plants removed by species.



Graph 2: Total number of invasive plants removed by park.



**Graph 3 Total bag weights by each park (invasive plants)**



**Graph 4. Total number of invasive plant species removed by park.**



# DESERT DEFENDERS—CREATING COMMUNITIES OF STEWARDS



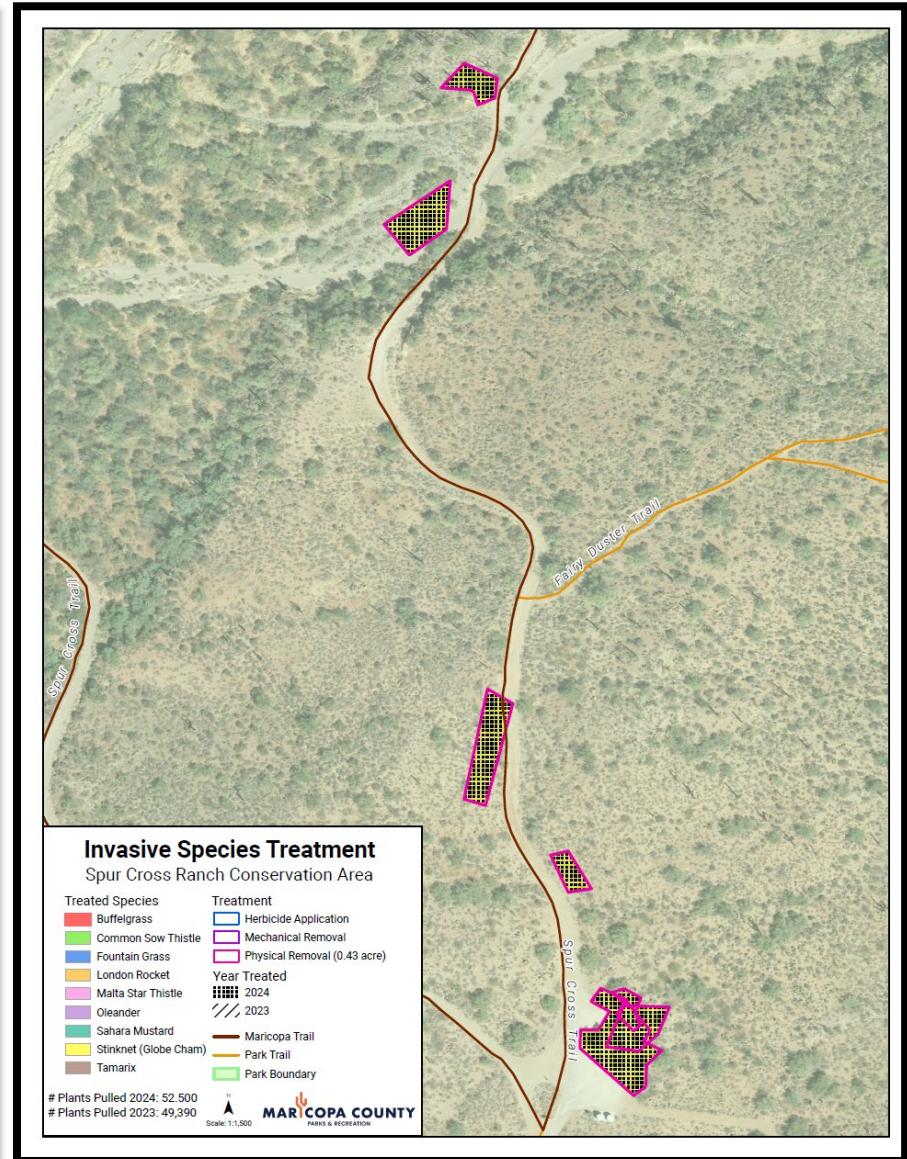
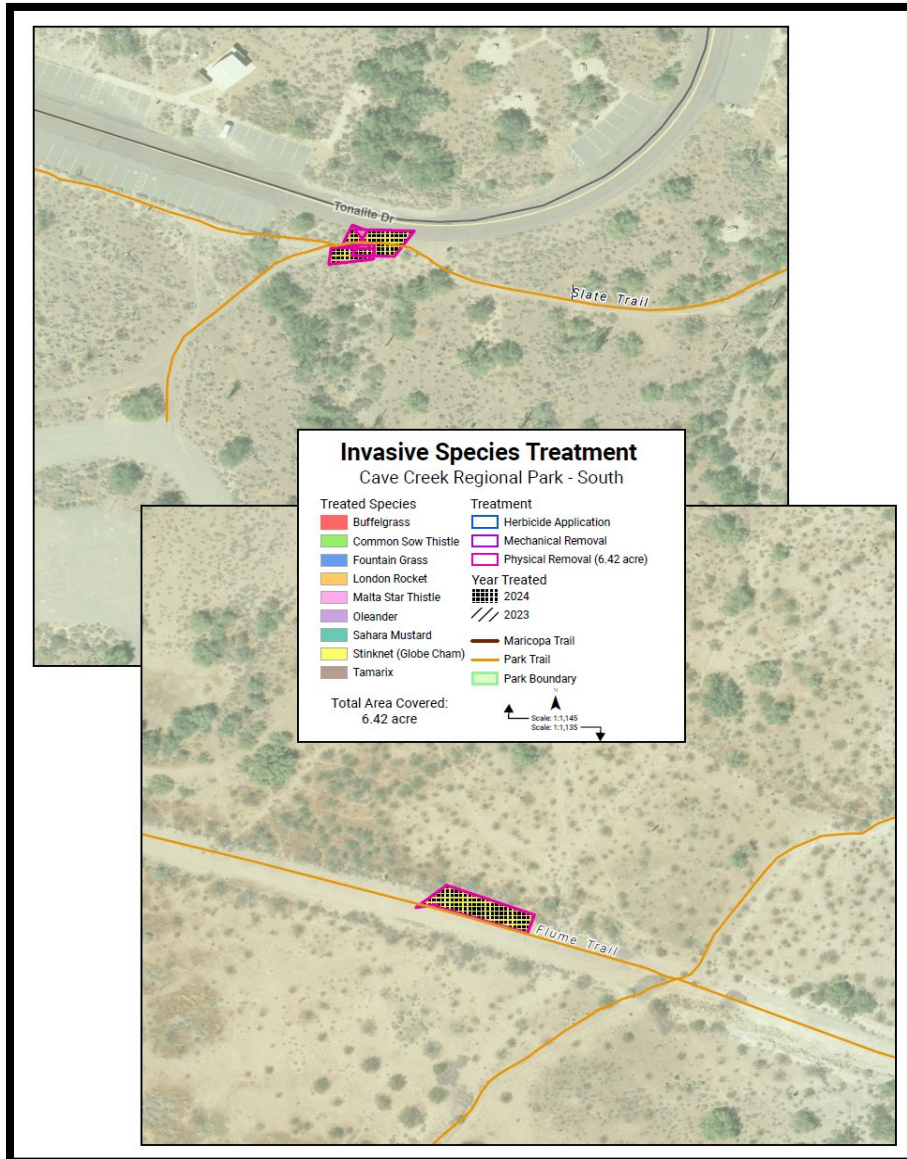
DDS: ES: Renee and Sharon, WT: Nicole, Joette & Sharon, US: Darleen, Cyna, and Mo CC: Stephanie, San Tan: Tanna



Top Row Left to Right 1. Usery MR., 2. Cave Creek RP Master Naturalists Training A., 3. Cave Creek RP with a 13K MC-Public Service., Bottom Left White Tank RP Removal, and Bottom right Estella MRP Xeric Landscape



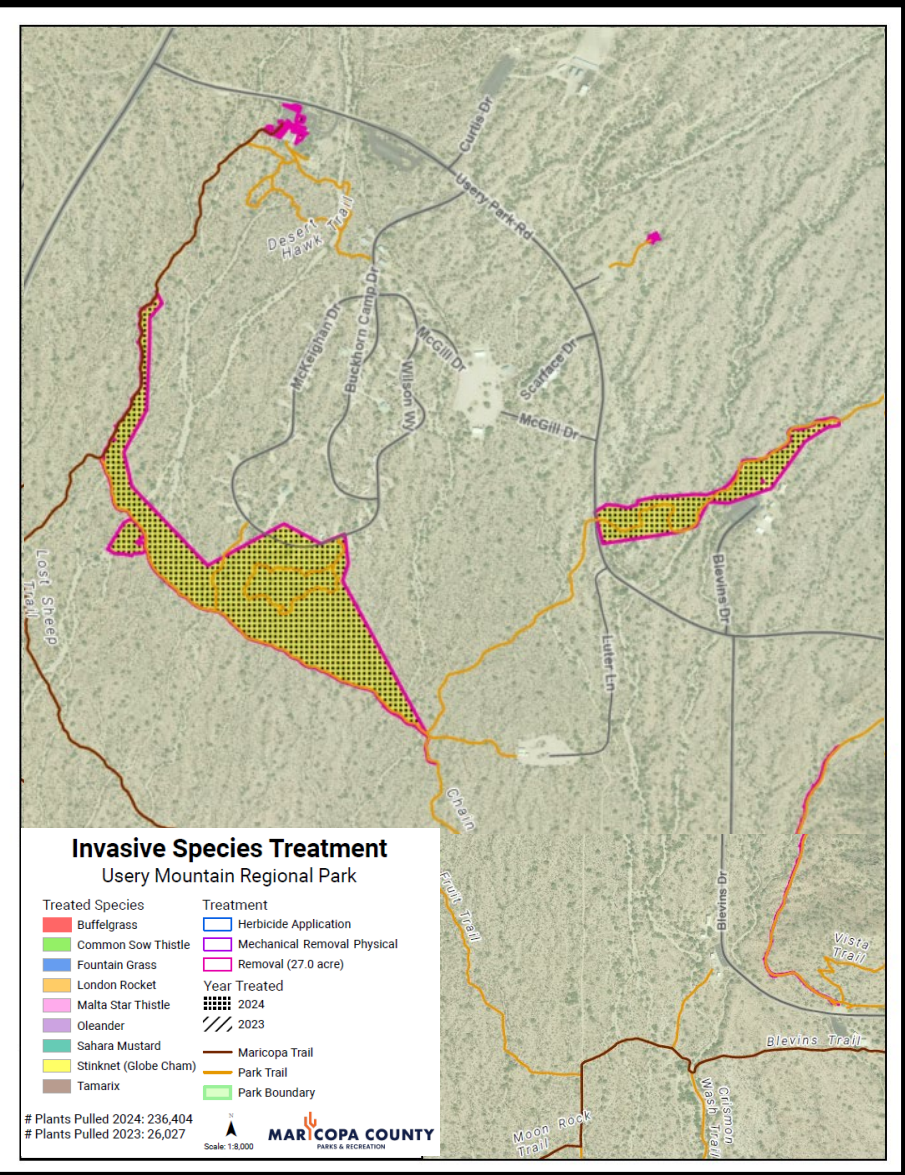
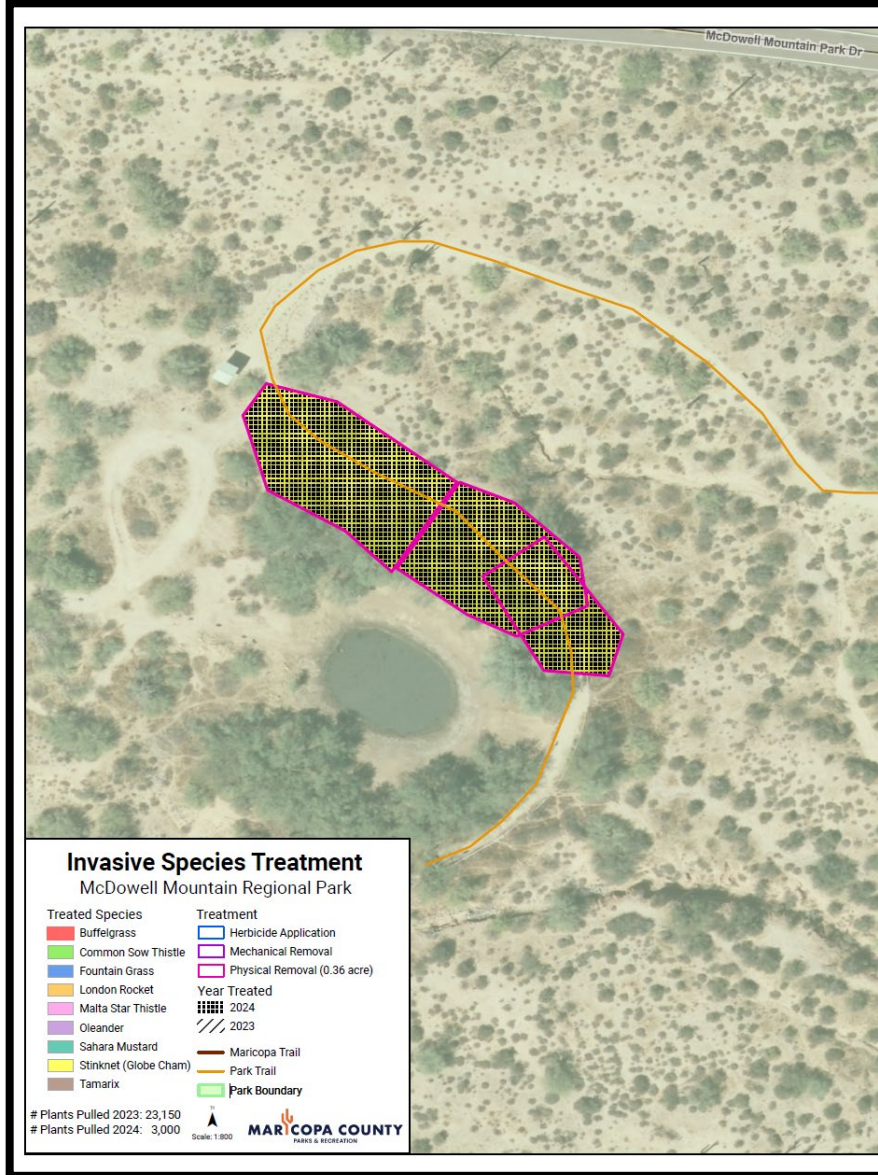
# INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL MAPS (CCRP & SX)



- CC-DD Team removed over 48,500 invasive plants within 6.5 acres.
- SX -DD Team removed over 52,500 Invasive Plants within 0.43 acres.



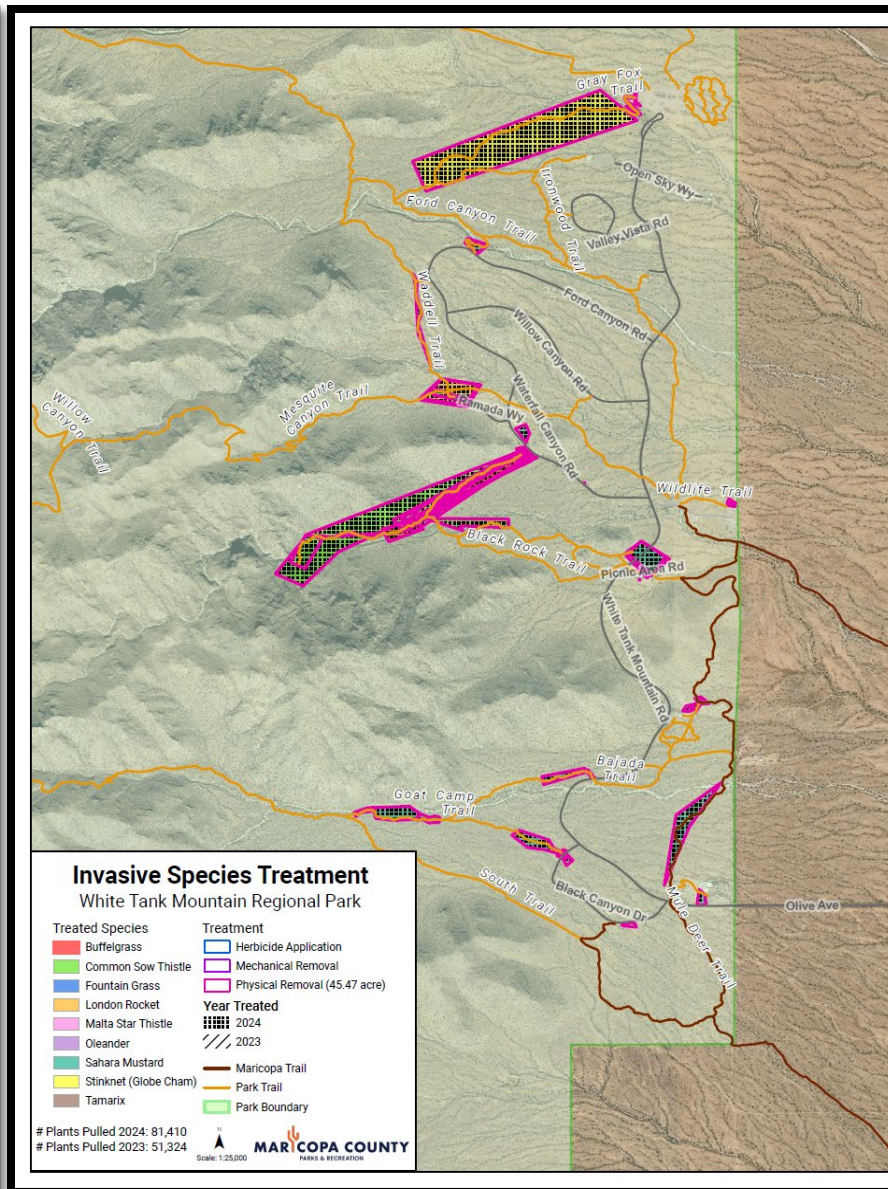
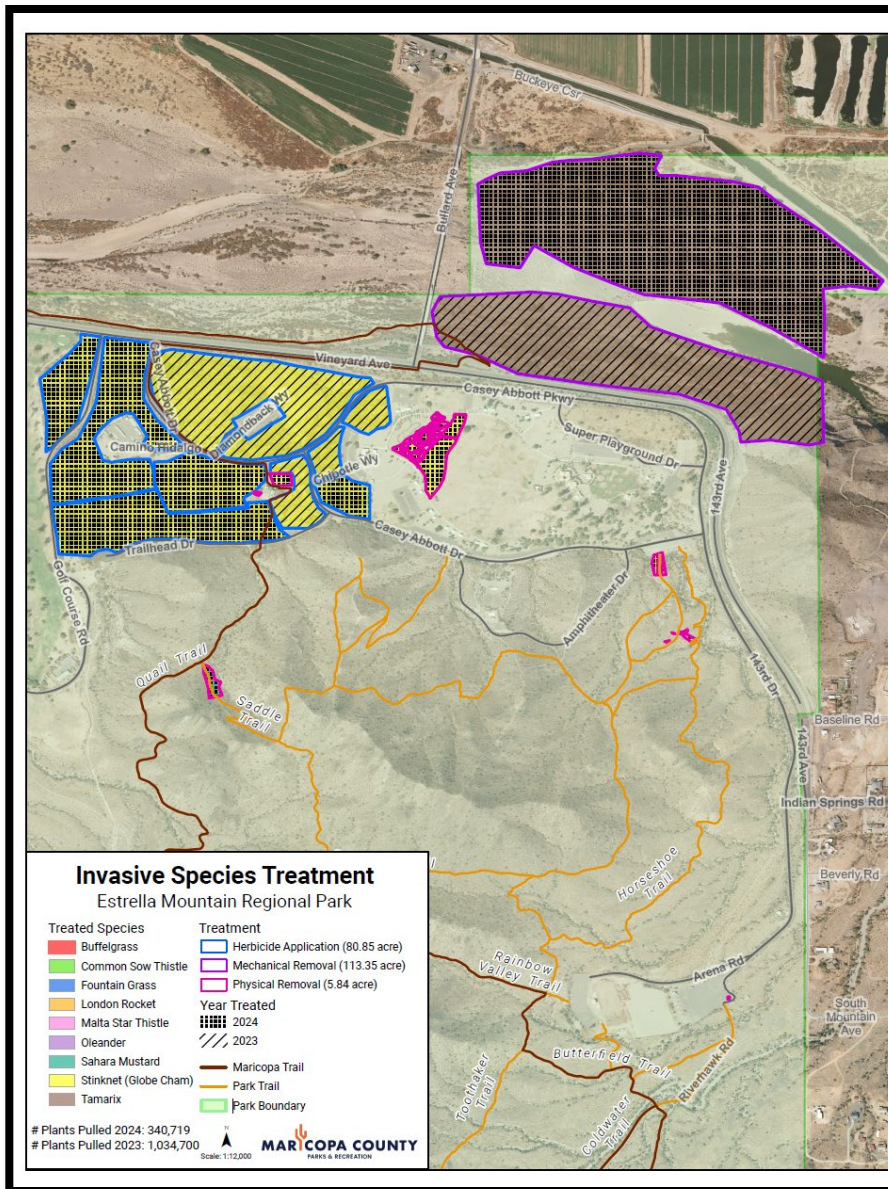
# INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL MAPS (US AND MM)



- MM -DD Team removed over 3,000 invasive plants within 0.36 acres.
- US-DD Team removed over 236,000 invasive plants within 27 acres.



# INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL MAPS (ES & WT)

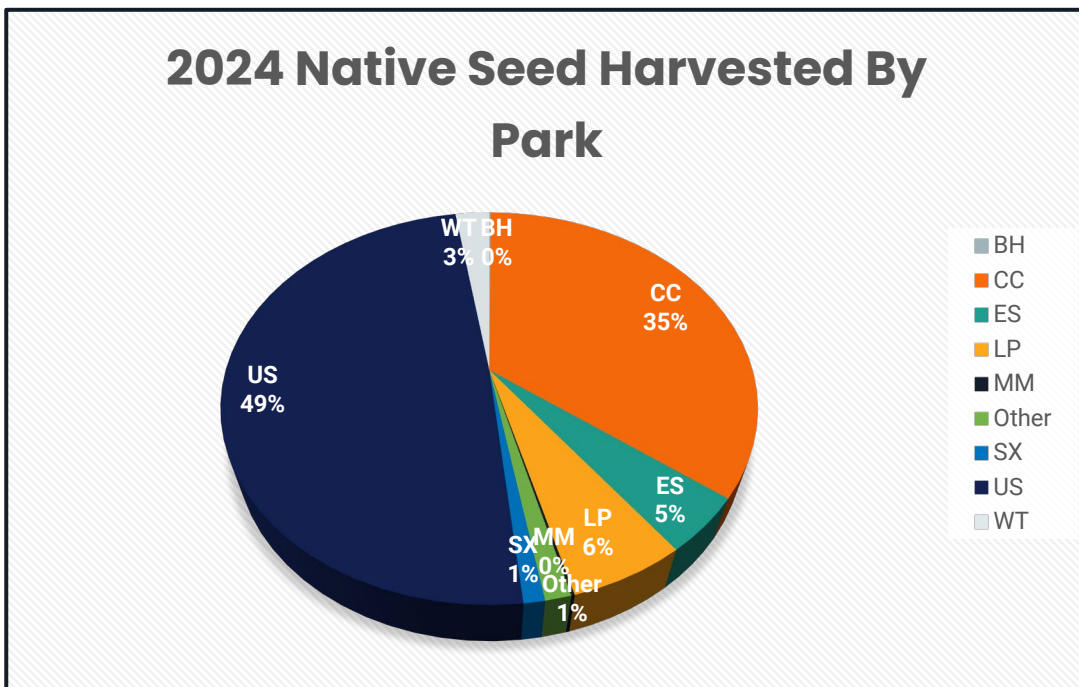
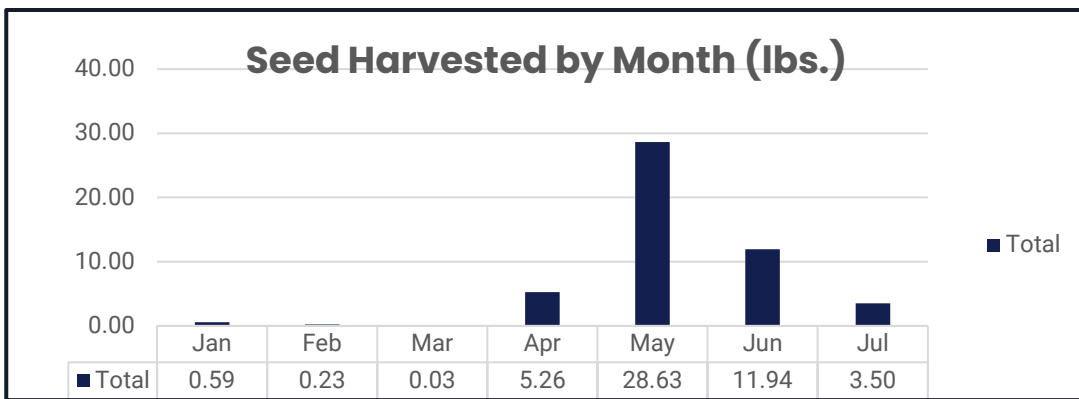
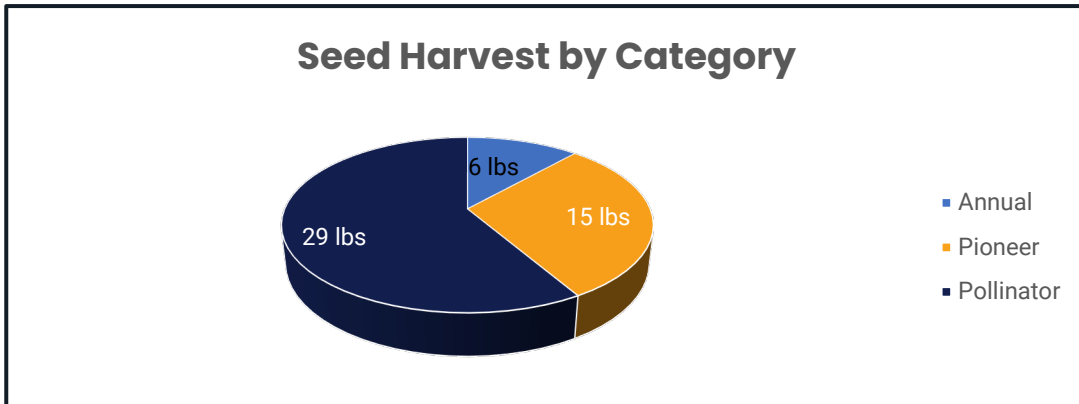


- ES -DD Team removed over 340,000 invasive plants within 5.9 acres, the contractor treated 85 acres of Stinknet, using pre- and post-emergent herbicide, and AZDFFM contractors masticated 80 acres of Tamarisk.
- WT -DD Team removed over 87,000 invasive plants within 46 acres.

# NATIVE SEED HARVEST EVENTS

## Highlights

- Hosted 26 Seed Harvest Events.
- Harvested over 50 pounds, representing over 60 native plant species.





# NATIVE SEED HARVEST EVENTS



Left and Top Right: Native Seed Garden-Cave Creek RP, Led by Ranger Kevin, Bottom right Spur Cross Ranch Dragonfly Trail Seed Harvest.



# NATIVE SEED GARDEN (CAVE CREEK RP)



Top left to right: 1. Climbing Milkweed, 2. Desert Chia, 3. Desert Marigold, 4. Desert Penstemon.

Bottom, left to right 5. Black Foot Daisy, 6. Firecracker Penstemon, with Desert Marigold. Flood Control's Asar Acosta planting wolfberry tall pots in the garden.

**July 2024 Native Seed Garden: 158 perennial plants representing 18 species (subshrub and forbs) plus 150 annuals representing six species.**



# POLLINATOR GARDEN (Estrella MRP)



**Xeric Landscape and Pollinator Garden (5 Acres) plantings: 792 plants representing 63 species. 294 Trees (10 species), 299 Shrubs-subshrubs (29 species), 140 Forbs (17 species), 18 Cacti (6 species).**



# POLLINATOR GARDEN (Estrella MRP)



**Pollinator Garden (PG) has  
280 plants representing 38  
species.**

**March 24: Water Feature  
was installed.**

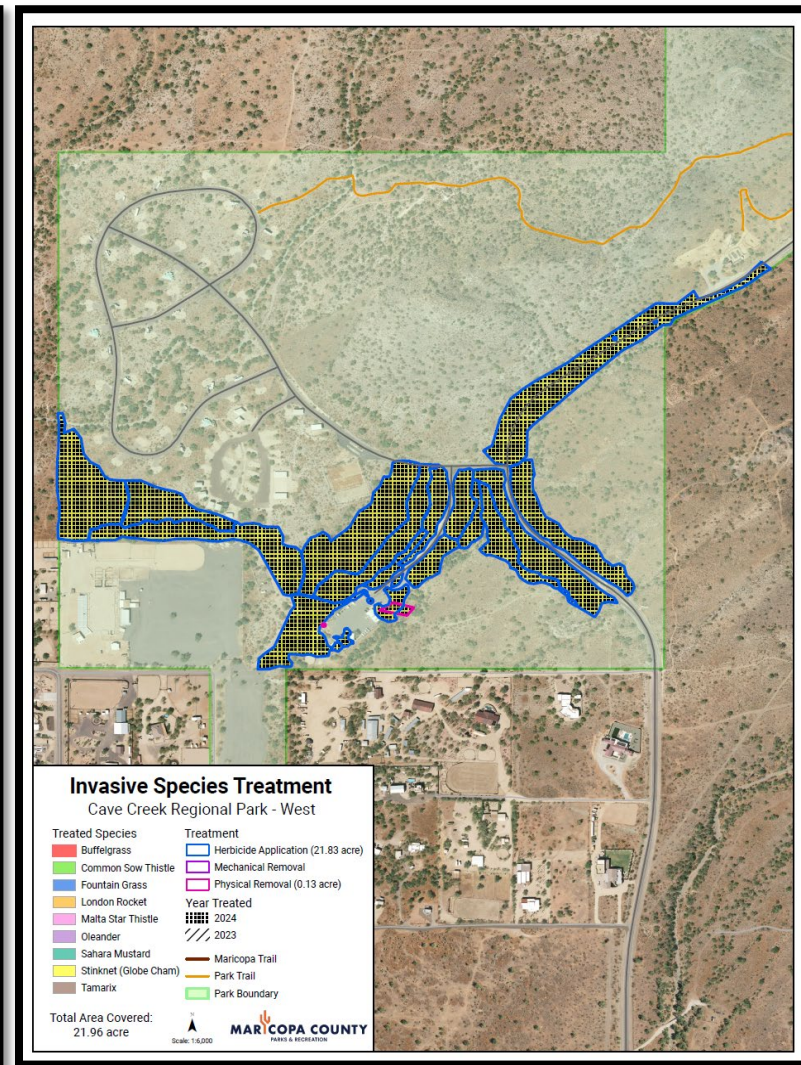
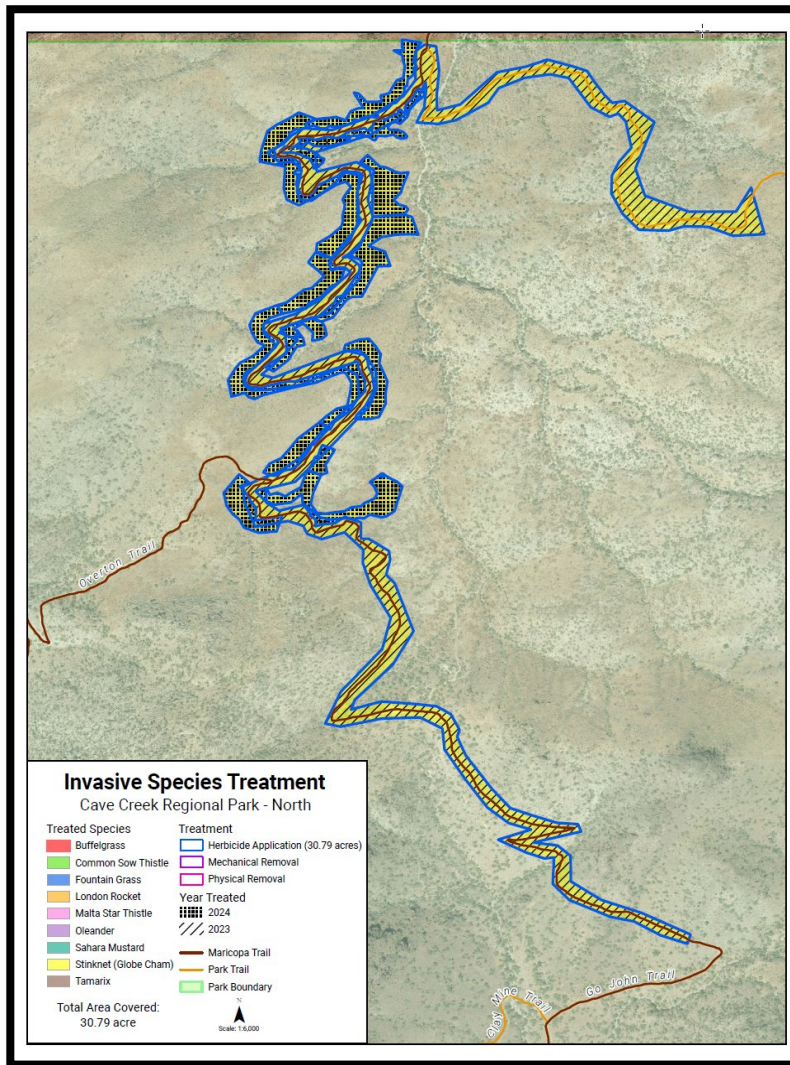
**Interpretive Signs: Coming  
Soon.**





# GRANTS- HFI GRANT (2022-2024) CAVE CREEK RP

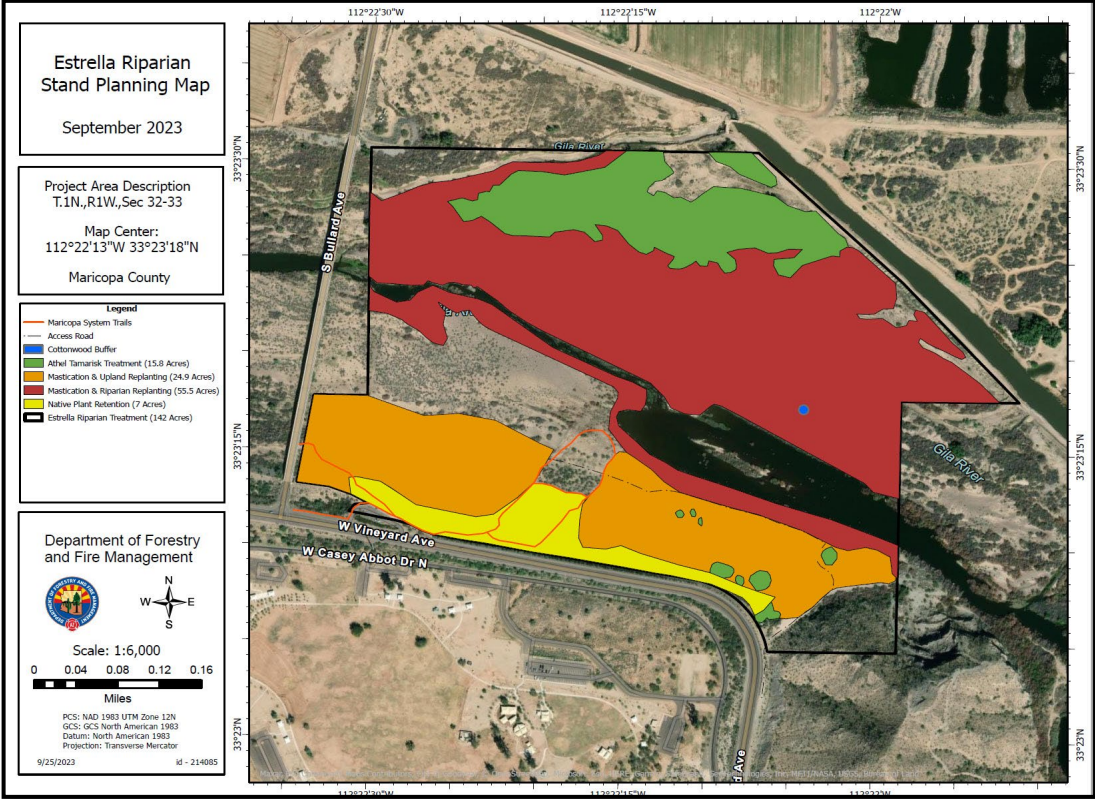
NPS Regional Invasive Plant Management Team applied herbicide applications, treating 60 acres in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, with continued treatment planned for Fall 2024.





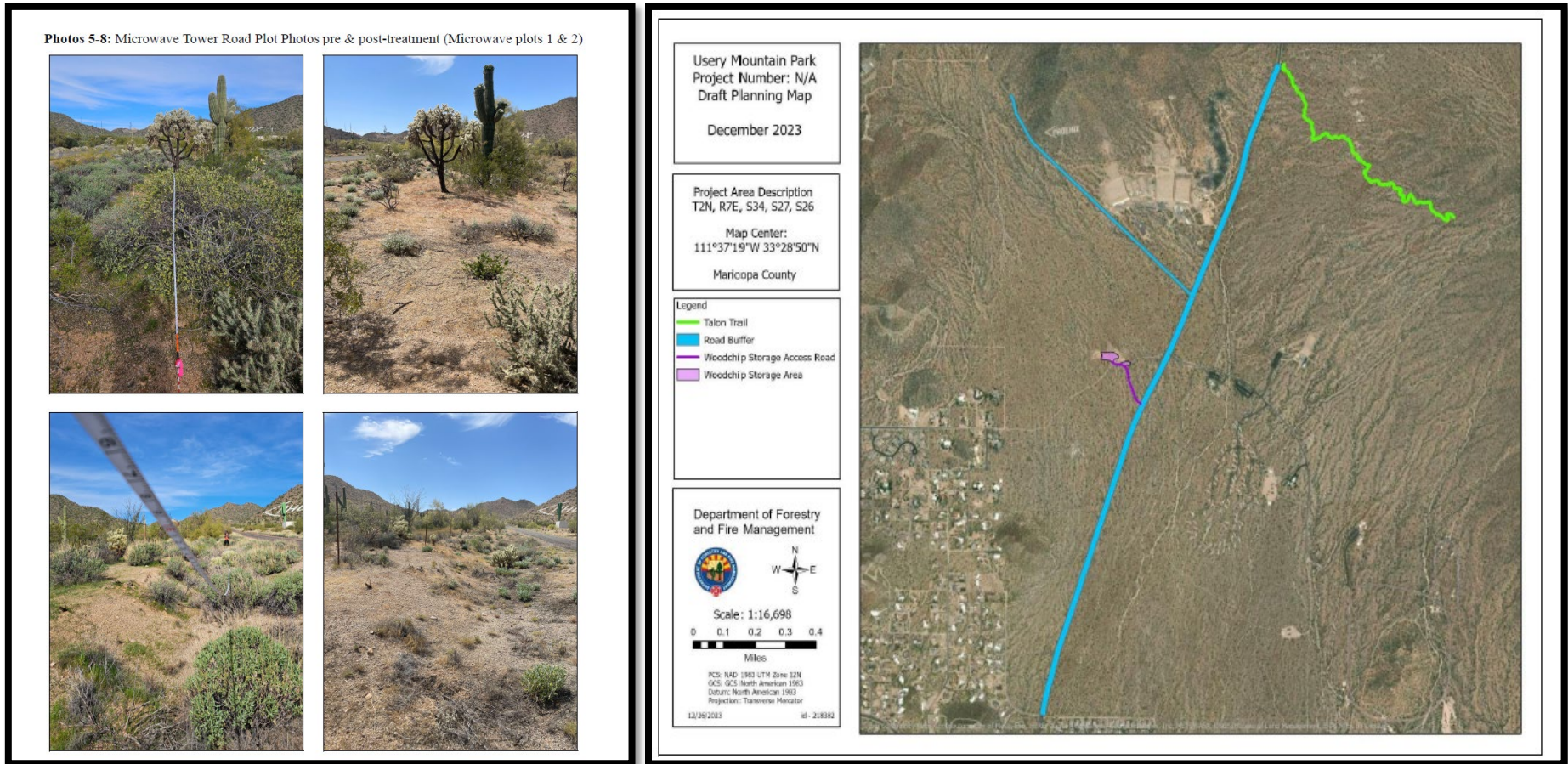
# PARTNERSHIPS: RIPARIAN HABITAT RESTORATION (ES)

- Phase 1: Dec 2023-March 2024.Masticated 80 acres of Invasive Tamarisk and planted over 1300 Native Tall Pot Trees.
- Phase 2: Fall 2024-2025 Continue Tamarisk treatment, invasive species treatment (stinknet and others), and supplemental planting.
- Monitoring: Photo Plots, Drone Imagery, Tree survivability, and Vegetation Transects



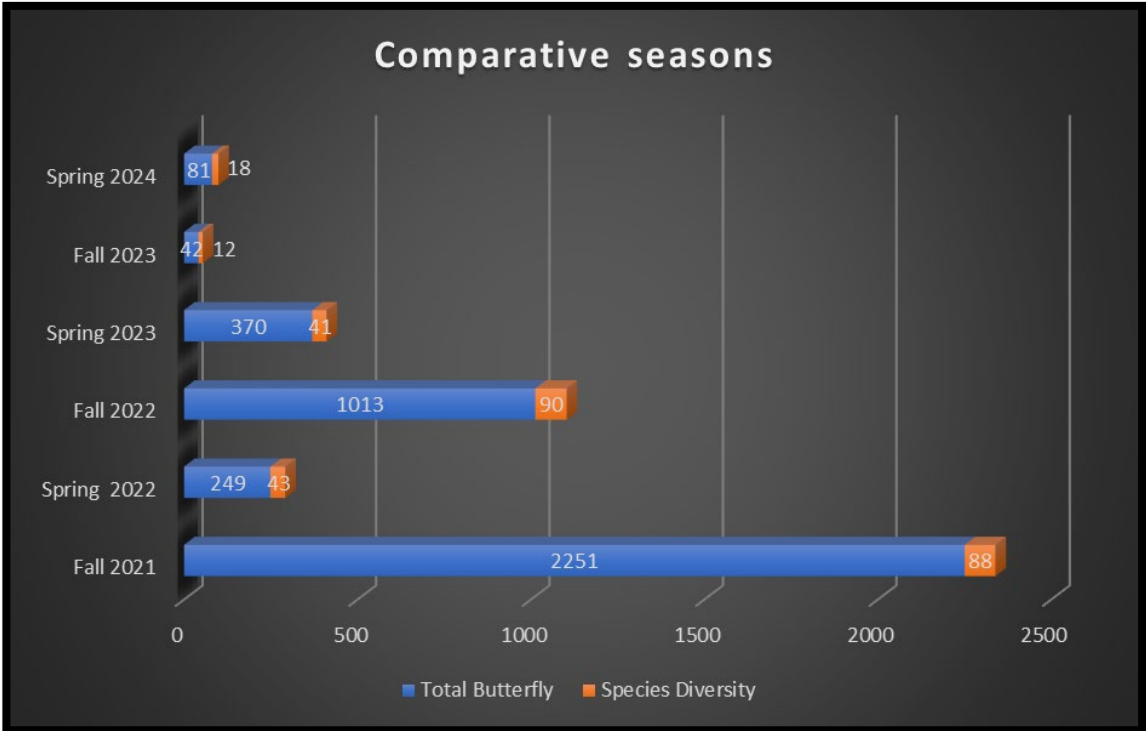


# SHADED FUEL BREAKS



- 2023 Usery MRP began in the summer of 2023, will continue to be installed in the fall of 2024, and will be maintained until 2026.
- Fire Fuel Reductions and Shaded Fuel Break Schedule: Usery MRP 2023-2026, McDowell MRP Fall 2023, Cave Creek RP 2024, Spur Cross Ranch CA 2024, White Tank and HRP 2025, Estrella and Buckeye Hills 2026.

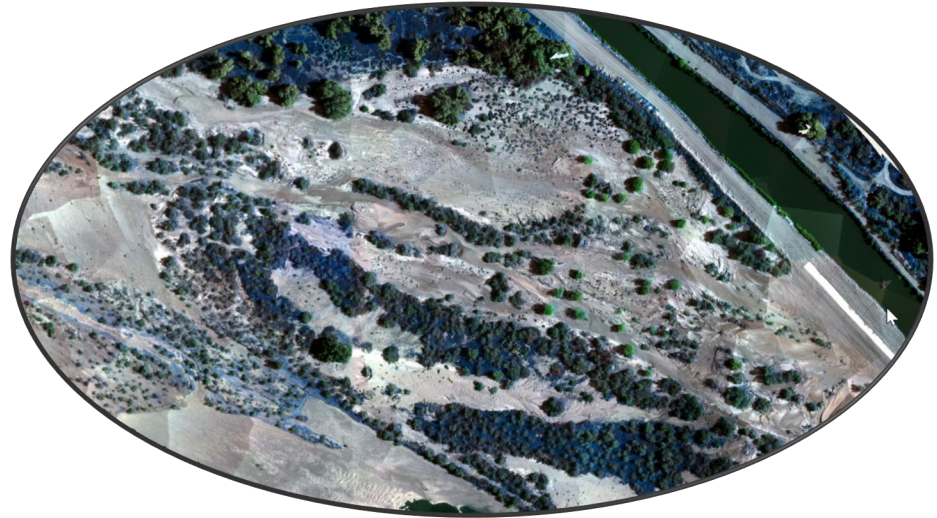
# BUTTERFLY MONITORING



- **Fall 2023:** 42 total butterflies of 12 species. It was cloudy and drizzled during the counts.
- **Spring 2024:** 81 total butterflies of 18 species. It was a cloudy day, so the butterfly numbers were low, the sun appeared late, and it was windy.
- **New Butterfly Brochures:** Brushfoot, Metalmark and Swallowtail series, and Sulphur and Skipper series



# DRONE MONITORING with OET



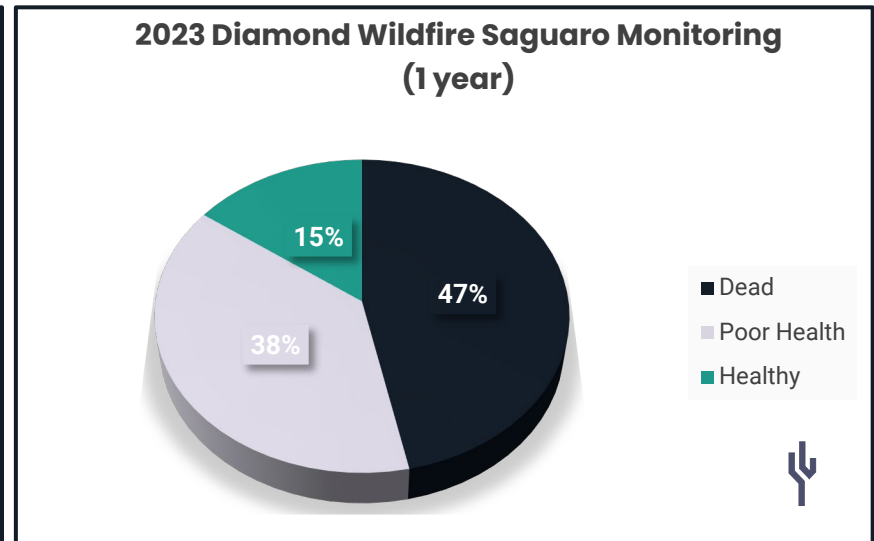
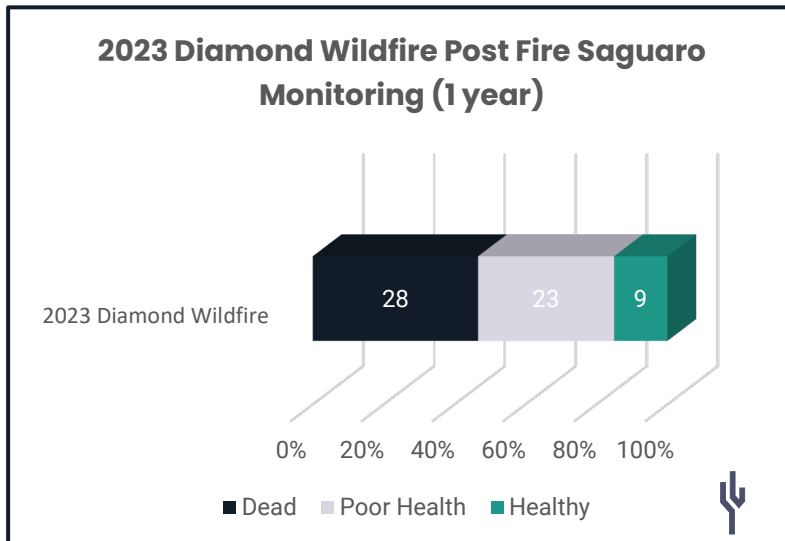
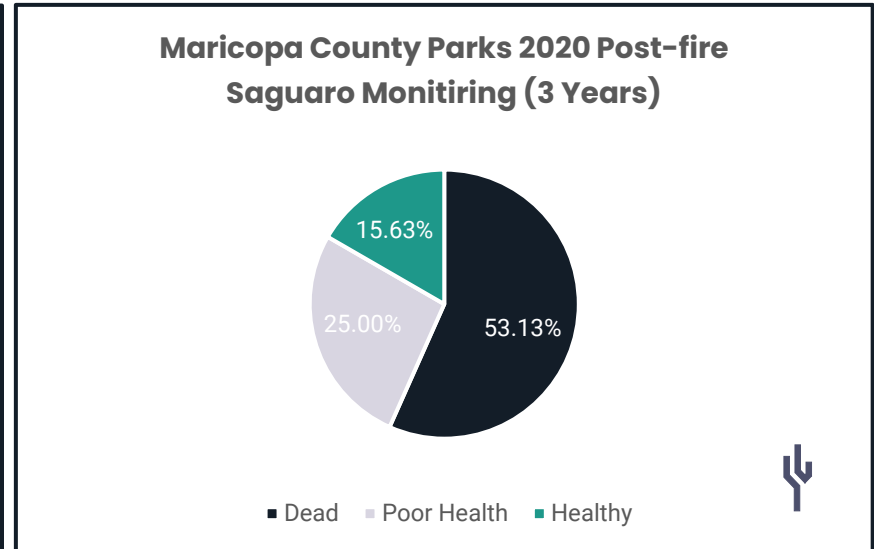
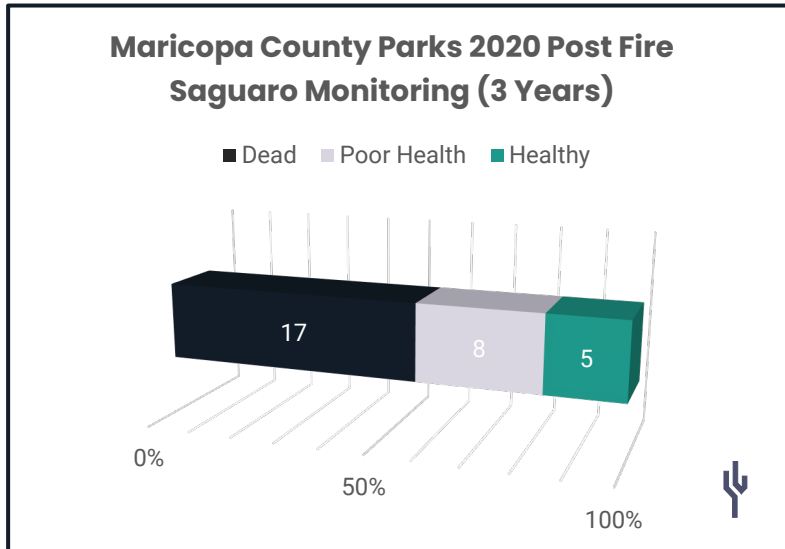
OET-GIS uses RGB and Multispectral to assist Natural Resources in monitoring and documenting invasive species, stinknet, tamarisk, and wildfire impacts.

- UMRP 2023-2024
- MMRP 2023-2024
- SCRCA 2025-2026
- CCRP 2025-2026
- ESRP 2026-2027
- WTRP 2026-2027
- HRP 2027-2028
- BHRP 2029

# SAGUARO TRANSECT MONITORING

Post Fire Effects monitoring of the 2020 wildfires at three parks, results show that 53% (17) of the Cacti are dead, 25% (8) are in poor condition, and 15.6% (5) cacti appear healthy (n=18).

The Diamond Wildfire showed similar results after one year, with 47% (28) of the Saguaro cacti dead, 38% (23) in poor condition, and 15% (9) Healthy (n=65). It is predicted that the saguaros in poor condition (30% or greater scorch) will perish in the next few years; our results represent 26% or greater scorch as we used the Braun and Blauquist classes.



# ECO BLITZ

EVENT IN PROGRESS

Maricopa County Parks Eco-Blitz

SEP 1, 2020 - DEC 31, 2024

## About

Members 121

Maricopa County Parks ECO-BLITZ Arizona

Join us for the county's ECO-BLITZ (January-December), Where you can contribute by participating in this easy and fun citizen science project. Collecting

Read More > Your Membership

Edit Project Project Journal

Overview

49,247	2,127	2,208	1,506
OBSERVATIONS	SPECIES	IDENTIFIERS	OBSERVERS

Stats

## JULY ECO-BLITZ CHALLENGE

### LONG-NOSED SNAKE

ECO-BLITZ REGISTRATION  
<https://bit.ly/3C0C38E>

LEARN ABOUT THE NATURALIST PROGRAM  
<https://bit.ly/3yHfC9r>

QUESTIONS  
[maricopacountyparks@maricopa.gov](mailto:maricopacountyparks@maricopa.gov)

### LONG-NOSED SNAKE

This month, we're learning all about the Long-nosed Snake (*Rhinocelurus lecontei*). Here are a few fun and key facts:

- Long-nosed snakes vary in appearance and are usually banded with red, black, and white.
- Their long, slightly upturned snouts enable them to burrow underground, where they spend most of their time.
- Long-nosed snakes eat lizards, small mammals, and other small snakes!

Sources:

- Snakes - Sonoran National Park, U.S. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/sonoran>
- McCoy, C.A., & Baskett, J.L. (1966). "Defensive behavior of *Rhinocelurus lecontei*". *Journal of the Ohio Herpetological Society* 5 (4): 146. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2630284>
- <https://www.fishbase.org/species/rhino>

MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

41835 N. Castle Hot Springs Rd.  
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(602) 506-2930 • [maricopa.gov/parks](http://maricopa.gov/parks)

- Over 49,247 observations, 2,127 species, and 1,056 Observers (121 are members).
- Each year, there are 12 monthly challenges. Interpretive Rangers provide input and promote the Eco blitz in their programs.