



Saguaro National Park News Release

For Immediate Release

February 1, 2010

Contact: Resource Ecologist Dana Backer at (520) 733-5179

Beat Back Buffelgrass Day

Volunteers Needed for Buffelgrass Removal from Public Lands – Saturday, February 6th

Tucson, AZ – Buffelgrass is a wildfire waiting to happen. On February 6th hundreds of volunteers will join the fight against the most urgent environmental problem facing the Tucson region – the spread of the invasive weed buffelgrass, which experts say is a threat to life and property as well as the Sonoran Desert.

Last year on Beat Back Buffelgrass Day, over 300 volunteers removed more than 15,000 buffelgrass plants from eight locations in just a few hours. This year, you too are being encouraged to join in the activities and help preserve our unique Sonoran Desert.

“Our volunteer efforts over the course of the year are truly amazing in terms of the amount of work dedicated individuals and groups can do,” said Lindy Brigham, Executive Director of the Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center. “But to succeed in overcoming this critical threat to our unique way of life in this desert, we need more people informed and involved.”

Listed as a noxious weed in Arizona, buffelgrass poses a serious threat to life and property, as well as the ecology of the Sonoran Desert. When dry, buffelgrass burns readily and far hotter than native grasses and plants. The native vegetation, unaccustomed to fire, is permanently destroyed while the buffelgrass thrives. As buffelgrass colonizes more areas, native plants and animals are displaced, increasing the threat of fire across the landscape. To view an informational video, go to www.buffelgrass.org.

“We cannot let this invasive grass destroy the reason many of us live here. Together we can reduce the threat and secure the beauty of our desert surroundings for future generations,” Brigham said.

Established in 2008 by the Pima Association of Governments to raise awareness, **Beat Back Buffelgrass Day** has enlisted hundreds of volunteers to work together in removing buffelgrass across the region. This year, the newly established Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center is carrying the program forward with the support of PAG, along with numerous other agencies involved in buffelgrass education and removal.

Individuals and groups wishing to participate may volunteer by logging onto the www.PAGnet.org or www.buffelgrass.org websites and selecting a location where organized buffelgrass removal efforts will occur. Additional information on buffelgrass can be found at the Saguaro National Park’s website at <http://www.nps.gov/sagu/naturescience/invasive-plants.htm>.