

US Forest Service

San Bernardino National Forest

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AmeriCorps crews help restore Sheep Fire burn area

San Bernardino, Calif., July 1, 2010 – AmeriCorps crews working with the National Forest Association - Urban Conservation Corps are removing invasive species as part of the ecological restoration of the Sheep Fire burn area.

The Burned Area Emergency Response Team identified “invasive species” removal as part of the recovery efforts from last October’s fire. The crews have been working on removing tumble mustard, Russian thistle, and other invasive plant species in Sheep Creek and Lone Pine Canyons as part of rare plant habitat protection and improvement.

The Sheep Fire area supports Forest Service sensitive plant species such as “Plummer’s mariposa lily” and “short-jointed beavertail cactus”, as well as “Humboldt’s lily” on the Forest Service watch list species. Early growing and aggressive non-native plant could crowd out these rare species. The weed removal work will also protect habitat for a flush of native wildflowers that have appeared in the burn area since the fire removed much of the canopy of shrubs that shaded them and suppressed their growth. In these newly opened areas native wildflower species took advantage of recent winter rains and have bloomed in profusion.

Crews removed the weeds before they could spread by the wind. Their strategy was to remove the plants that were most likely to start new infestations. The crews removed as much as 80 large bags each day from bulldozer lines, canyons, and the sides of the roads in the Sheep Fire area. This project will resume next spring and early summer to remove additional invasive species as well as other follow-up work.

The National Forest Association - Urban Conservation Corps is a local workforce development program that offers young men and women the chance to serve at the National Forest and become employable citizens through hard work in environmental conservation. Under the program, young people build workforce skills by participating in meaningful conservation projects that promote greater stewardship for our natural world. In addition to increasing job readiness in a way that prepares them for a more successful entry into the workforce, these young people also help the National Forest Association in its work to create a healthier forest. More Information on Urban Conservation Corps:

http://www.sbnfa.org/conservation_corps.php

AmeriCorps is an opportunity to make a big difference in your life and in the lives of those around you. It is a chance to apply your skills and ideals toward helping others and meeting critical needs in the community. Each year, AmeriCorps offers 75,000 opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups. Whether your service makes a community safer, gives a child a second chance, or helps protect the environment, you will be getting things done through AmeriCorps! More Information on AmeriCorps: <http://www.americorps.gov/>

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