

Environmental Services response to:

-detailed budget for 2025/26 for Arundo/Vegetative maintenance/removal. Because we're divided by zones, it may be best to provide the budget detail by zone. If Countywide, then so be it. Also, if this activity is capture in general Operations and Maintenance, we will need to break this component out specifically as a subset of O&M.

Coyote Creek Pilot Channel Project (Zone 1)

- The Coyote Creek Pilot Channel Project (project numbers F1176, 81175, 81176, and 81177) was funded by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP), with Ventura County Watershed Protection District acting as the local sponsor. To offset project impacts, approximately 0.61 acre of giant reed (*Arundo donax*) was removed along Coyote Creek. The initial removal was conducted by the California Conservation Corps (CCC) in October 2024. The CCC crews did not apply herbicide, they cut the giant reed stalks and disposed of them in a 40-yard roll off bin placed nearby. The crews completed approximately 2000 hours of work with varying crew sizes and dates of work between September 30 and October 25, 2024. The CCC work was completed under SB 901 funding, with the total cost estimated around \$80,000. This work occurred concurrently to the pilot channel work (WP25-01), so the biologist monitoring the project also monitored the giant reed removal efforts. The total cost of the roll-off bins was approximately \$4000, for the disposal of 19.5 tons.
- Retreatment events to keep the giant reed from growing back occur quarterly, on an as needed basis. Under a Master Agreement, Wildscape Restoration, Inc. performed four retreatments in 2025, three of which were completed in one day and the summer retreatment lasting five days: 1/25, 4/14, 7/31, 8/1, 8/4, 8/5, 8/8, and 10/17. Retreatment events consist of cut-and-daub using glyphosate and a colorant dye to treat the regrowth within the 0.61-acre work area. The contractor hauls off the cut biomass. They also foliar spray cape ivy in the vicinity to keep the invasive non-native species at bay. The total cost of retreatments for 2025 was approximately \$14,000. Retreatment work requires a biologist monitor the site and they also act in place of a County inspector, ensuring herbicide is used properly and documented for later mandatory annual reporting to the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The cost for biomonitoring was between \$2,500-\$3,000, depending on how many days the crew worked, with an estimated total of \$9,000 in 2025. As of February 2026, no retreatments have occurred because the giant reed has not grown back enough for treatment. The site is monitored by Environmental Services.

Matilija Creek Giant Reed Retreatment Project (Zone 1)

- As a portion of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project (MDERP), Watershed Protection District completed the Matilija Creek Giant Reed Retreatment Project (project no. 41652). The project began in 2007 and was completed in 2025. Giant reed and seven additional target non-native species were treated and removed across ~1,245 acres of the Ventura River and Matilija Creek. Initial removal began September 2007 and was completed April 2008, with approximately 200 work days. Retreatment events began immediately in 2008 and were completed in August 2025, for 21 retreatment events. Retreatment work consisted of cut-and-daub, with the exception of foliar application to two target species using a mix of glyphosate and imazapyr. The retreatment work was done systematically, having a crew walk transects up and down the watersheds to ensure target vegetation was removed. The contractor, working days, and crew sizes varied per annual retreatment event with the lowest number of days being 16 and highest being 90. A biologist was required for this work, especially because work occurred during bird breeding season (on average May-July) towards the last handful of retreatment years. The biologist would conduct pre-construction surveys and walk the area in front of the crews to ensure limited harm to biological resources and that no target species were missed, act in place of a County inspector, and prepare reports.
- The contractor cost was generally between \$69,000 and \$125,000. The consultant cost was generally between \$49,000 and \$65,000.
- The project was mainly sponsored by Watershed Protection District but also utilized grant funding when feasible, e.g. Proposition 40 from the CA Water Resources Control Board.

SCR-3 Project Reach 4 Improvement Mitigation (Zone 2)

As part of the SCR-3 Project Reach 4 Improvement mitigation (project nos. 82045/82047), the construction contractor has removed about 1.1 acres of giant reed from within about a 3.1-acre area (approximately 35% giant reed infestation). They did the initial cut and daub removal in December 2024 and follow up treatments in April 2025, August 2025, and January 2026. While the construction contract is active, the contractor will be responsible for retreatments, our inspector will track the work, and our biological monitor will ensure bio resources are protected during the work. When construction is completed, we will need to hire a contractor to continue retreatments and a biologist to inspect/monitor and report on the work, likely on a quarterly basis. Not sure what this costs, as it is part of the overall vegetation removal bid items, which include the original clearing and grubbing work on

both the land and river side of the project (bid items 6 & 42, for which GMZ bid \$200,000 each).

SCR-3 Levee Reaches 1-3 Vegetation Thinning Annual Maintenance (Zone 2)

SCR-3 Project Reaches 1-3 (reach nos. 42012, 42017) vegetation thinning work included giant reed removal cut and daub as well as other vegetation removal on the uppermost 20 feet of the levee over a distance of 5,669 linear feet, a total area of 2.6 acres. In addition, Victoria Avenue Drain, also known as Patterson Drain (reach no. 42704), penetrates the SCR-3 levee in Reach 1 and required giant reed removal to ensure unobstructed drainage to the Santa Clara River thalweg (600-foot-long by 20-foot-wide, or 0.28 acre). BC Trees completed this work in 17 days under a Master Agreement with O&M. Padre conducted 3 pre-work bio surveys and daily bio monitoring/inspection due to potential sensitive species presence. Padre also prepared daily inspection, daily herbicide, and weekly inspection reports. Daily herbicide reports provide the data for annual mandatory reporting to RWQCB. Padre also prepared a monitoring report for inclusion into the Annual O&M Monitoring Report. Padre invoices received so far include all the monitoring work but not the report preparation.

Cost summary:

- \$54,209 for SCR-3 Reaches 1-3 vegetation thinning by BC Trees with dump fees
- \$16,429 for Patterson Drain giant reed cut/daub by BC Trees with dump fees
- Dump fees alone totaled \$1,638 for both
- BC Trees work alone totaled \$69,000 for both
- Padre work order is \$26,675, of which \$16,950 has been invoiced so far