
Saltcedar Program

The goal of Saltcedar Control Program is to eliminate saltcedar stands, to prevent the spread of saltcedar throughout the Lower Owens River and associated wetland environments, and to support a sustainable ecological recovery in the LORP.

BACKGROUND

Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) is an invasive non-native shrub or tree that is capable of competing with native vegetation and degrading wildlife habitat. Its presence in the southern Owens Valley has the potential of interfering with the Lower Owens River Project (LORP) goals of establishing a healthy, functioning Lower Owens River riverine-riparian ecosystem.

References to the importance of removing saltcedar can be found in documents that guide the saltcedar program and govern the LORP:

- The LORP Monitoring, Adaptive Management, and Reporting Plan (MAMP), notes that saltcedar may increase in some areas of the river because of seed distribution with stream flows. The MAMP states that the potential risk of infecting new areas with saltcedar is considered a significant threat in all management areas.
- The 1997 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between Inyo County, City of Los Angeles, Sierra Club, Owens Valley Committee, CA Dept. of Fish and Game and California State Lands Commission, expresses that saltcedar reinfestation in the LORP area would compromise the goal of controlling deleterious species whose “presence within the Planning Area interferes with the achievement of the goals of the LORP”
- Parties to the Long-Term Water Agreement (LTWA) recognized that even with annual control efforts saltcedar might never be fully eradicated, but that ongoing and aggressive efforts to remove saltcedar will be required.

WORK IN 2010-2011



During the 2010-2011 field season, from October 2010 to April 2011, the Inyo County Saltcedar work crew, which consisted of eight seasonals, one shared employee, and one permanent employee, cut and treated with herbicide approximately 460 acres of saltcedar within the Lower Owens River Project area (LORP).

The majority of the Saltcedar eradication effort focused on eliminating the saltcedar stands in the water-spreading basin

adjacent to the Lower Owens River. These basins, which accommodated ponds of excess melt water in 1968, serve as major seed reservoirs in the LORP. From these basins, wind-dispersed seed threatens to reintroduce saltcedar into the LORP Riverine-riparian area.

Clearing the LORP Riverine-riparian area of any residual saltcedar is another priority for the program. Every August, the LORP floodplain is surveyed to identify problems, including saltcedar, that are reported to management. During these surveys, locations of mature trees, juvenile plants, seedlings, and resprouts are recorded and mapped. The Inyo County Saltcedar Coordinator uses information from the survey to guide crews to saltcedar problem areas. Plants are then located and removed by cutting and treating with herbicide to prevent resprouting.

In 2010-2011, crews managed to respond to all saltcedar problem areas identified in the August 2010 survey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The following crewmembers are recognized for their hard work and dedication to saltcedar removal on the LORP: Bruce (Bo) Mack, David Winter, Kyle Schill, Cory Galvin, Vireo Gaines, Ben Holgate, Ken Etzel, Greg Garner, and Cody Himes.



The Saltcedar Control Program thanks the Owens Valley Conservation Camp, Calfire, and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), who together, burned saltcedar slash in the project areas.

Our current program is funded by annual payments from LADWP, as specified under the Long Term Water Agreement. The California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has provided additional grant funds. The WCB funds are matched by LADWP. To date, LADWP has provided \$1,043,953 in matching funds.

The current grant with the California Wildlife Conservation Board expired in April 2011. The Saltcedar Control Program is currently seeking funding to continue their critical habitat improvement work.