

**San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) #5004552**

**Strategic Control of Invasive Weed Species
*3rd Quarter Report - FY 2025-26: Report 45 for Project***

January 1st, 2026 – March 31st, 2026

Project: County of San Diego, Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures –
Strategic Removal of Invasive Weed Species

To: Kim Smith
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Project:

Invasive plants are considered one of the biggest threats to endangered species and their habitats. A strategic plan for managing non-native invasive plant species in San Diego County was completed in 2012 through a SANDAG contract to the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI) (<http://sdmmp.com>). The Invasive Plant Strategic Plan (IPSP) is designed to develop a strategic approach towards the eradication and management of invasive plants in the San Diego region. The IPSP is meant to work in conjunction with the Management Strategic Plan for Conserved Lands in Western San Diego County (MSP) ([Management Strategic Plan](#)).

This Scope of Work will require the contractor to focus on the management of invasive plants identified in Levels 1, 2, and 3 of the IPSP. The following tasks have been identified as necessary to implement this effort:

This quarterly report covers work funded through the SANDAG Contract, which allowed work to occur from January 1st to March 31st, 2026.

TASK 1 – Invasive Plant Species Coordinator:

Level of Effort: (25%) of overall contract

Right of Entry (ROE) work and coordination with property owners and crews:

Coordination with property owners, land managers and AWM crew occurred throughout the quarter. This supported work this quarter and preparation for the next quarter.

The coordinator worked on multiple species at sites across the county:

Current work sites were visited and assessed to time control work (Volutaria, Ward's Weed, Yellow Star Thistle). The coordinator pulled and bagged plants at some of these sites, maps and work descriptions are presented below.

Planning for field site treatments by crew occurred. Sites were ordered by priority and field day estimates generated.

Regulatory permits:

No new work.

Report preparation:

The quarterly report was prepared and submitted.

Mapping and occurrence data:

Reviewing iNaturalist EDRR observations (confirming and correcting IDs), as well as mapping and surveying for new populations occurred. GIS coverage of all sites was updated (points). GIS coverage of all work was updated (polygons).

Work plan:

Work crew priorities by species and sites were updated.

TASK 2 – AWM: Invasive Plant Level 1 Management

Level of Effort: (<10%) of overall contract.

Level 1 Management Species are EDRR targets that were **not known to occur** in the county when the IPSP was written (2012).

Crews surveyed and treated one level 1 species this quarter: Desert Knapweed. Maps for the site show treated areas (red polygons) and surveyed areas as white lines which track pathways used by crews to survey and control plants. AWM IPC carried out optimal plant control, either hand pulling or using pesticide applications, protected the natural environment by preventing off-site movement of pesticides, and utilized Best Management Practices (BMPs) that prevented unintentional discharges to surface waters. For each site, AWM IPC followed the following procedures:

1. Identified the pest species to be treated.
2. Reviewed site conditions, such as soil texture, slope, standing water, irrigation or storm drains.
3. Identified and avoided streamside management areas and surface waters to prevent drift and application of pesticides not labeled for aquatic use onto surface waters.
4. Identified most appropriate method of control based on integrated pest management methods, designed to minimize the scale and number of pesticide applications.
5. Applied the least persistent and least toxic pesticide that effectively mitigates the target pest.

Table 1. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on Level 1 species this quarter.

Scientific Name	Common Name	# of Sites Worked	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants Controlled
<i>Volutaria tubuliflora</i>	Desert Knapweed	4	16.4	3.2	9,485

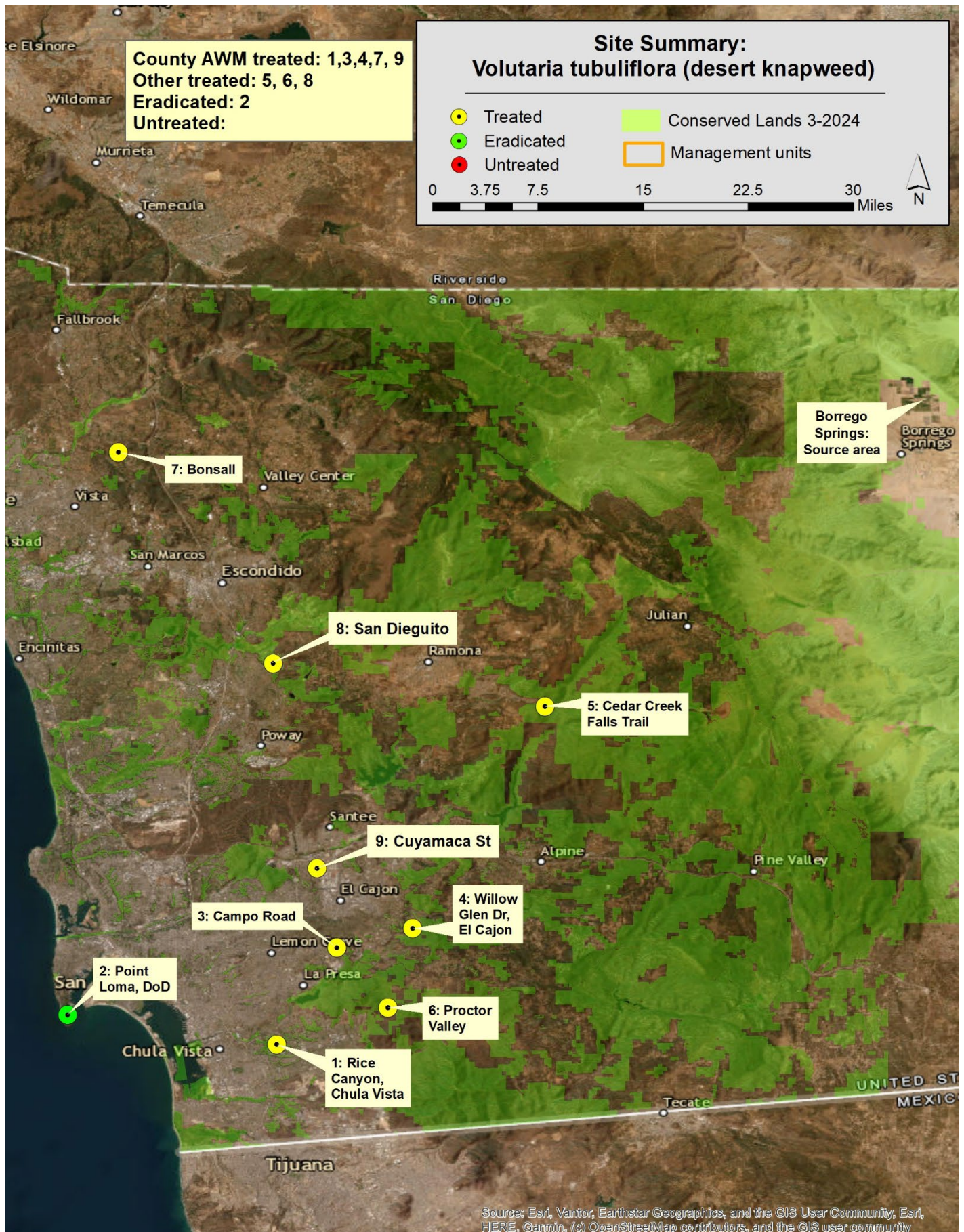


Table 2. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Volutaria tubuliflora* (Desert Knapweed).

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #1: Rice Canyon, Chula Vista	Desert Knapweed	1	8.2	0.8	2,340

One AWM worker visited the site on eight days between February 23rd and March 10th. A total of 2,340 were treated with pre and post emergent. Plants were scattered in the historic area, but more abundant in a newly treated area to the east. This work was funded through CDFA on behalf of CISAC.



Table 3. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Volutaria tubuliflora* (Desert Knapweed).

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #3 Campo Rd	Desert knapweed	1	0.2	0.1	15

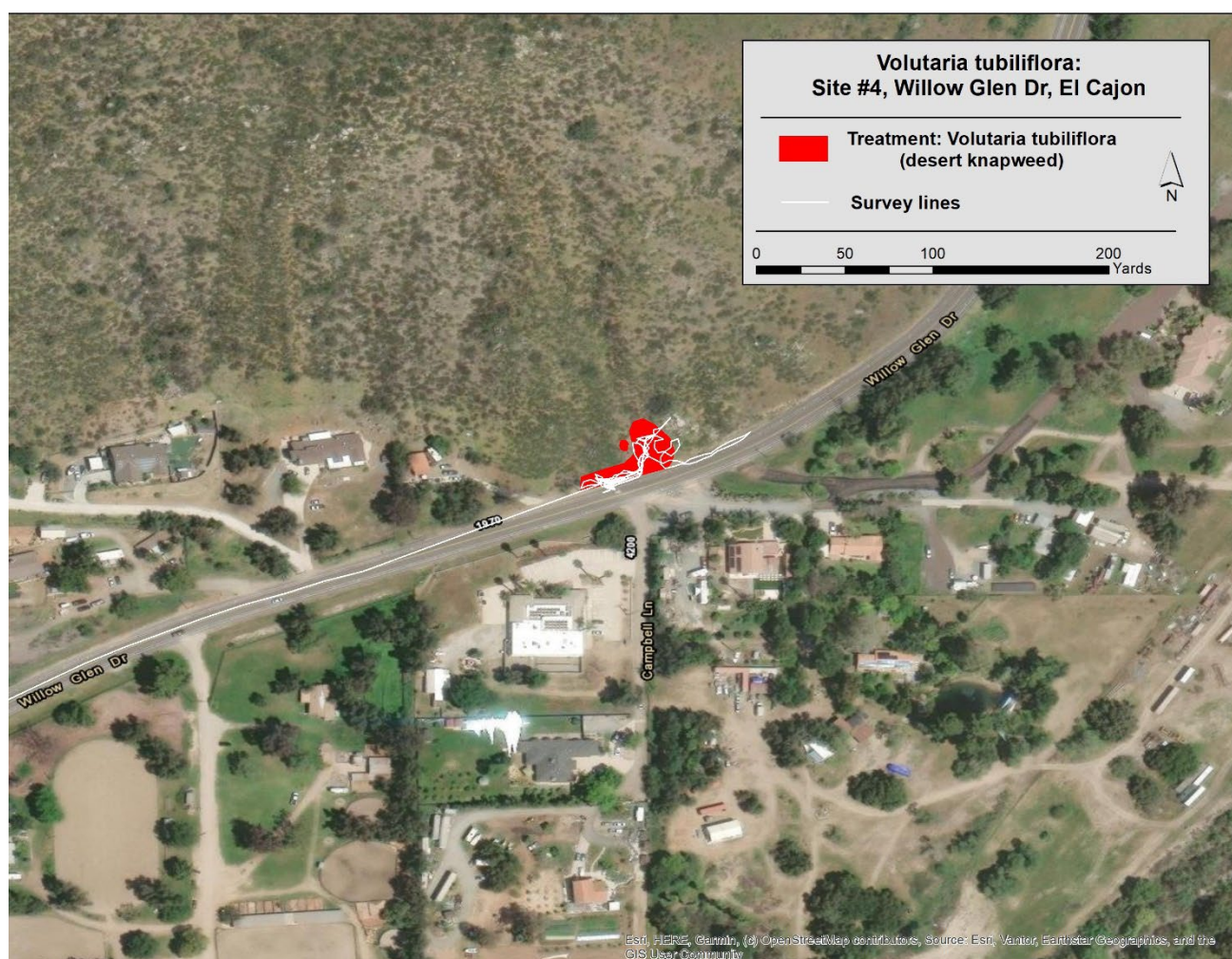
Two AWM workers visited this site on February 4th, 2026. A total of 15 plants were controlled with pre and post emergent. This work was funded through County Public Works.



Table 4. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Volutaria tubuliflora* (Desert Knapweed).

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #4 Willow Glen Dr, El Cajon	Desert Knapweed	1	3.5	1.7	1,650

One AWM worker visited the sites over three days from February 10th to March 11th, 2026. A total of 1,650 plants were treated with pre and post emergent. 450 plants were controlled at the northern Willow Glen Drive site. 1,250 plants were treated at the newer golf course site; 130 plants were controlled back in 2025. Rainfall levels were high this year, so plants were well expressed. This work was funded through CDFA on behalf of CISAC.



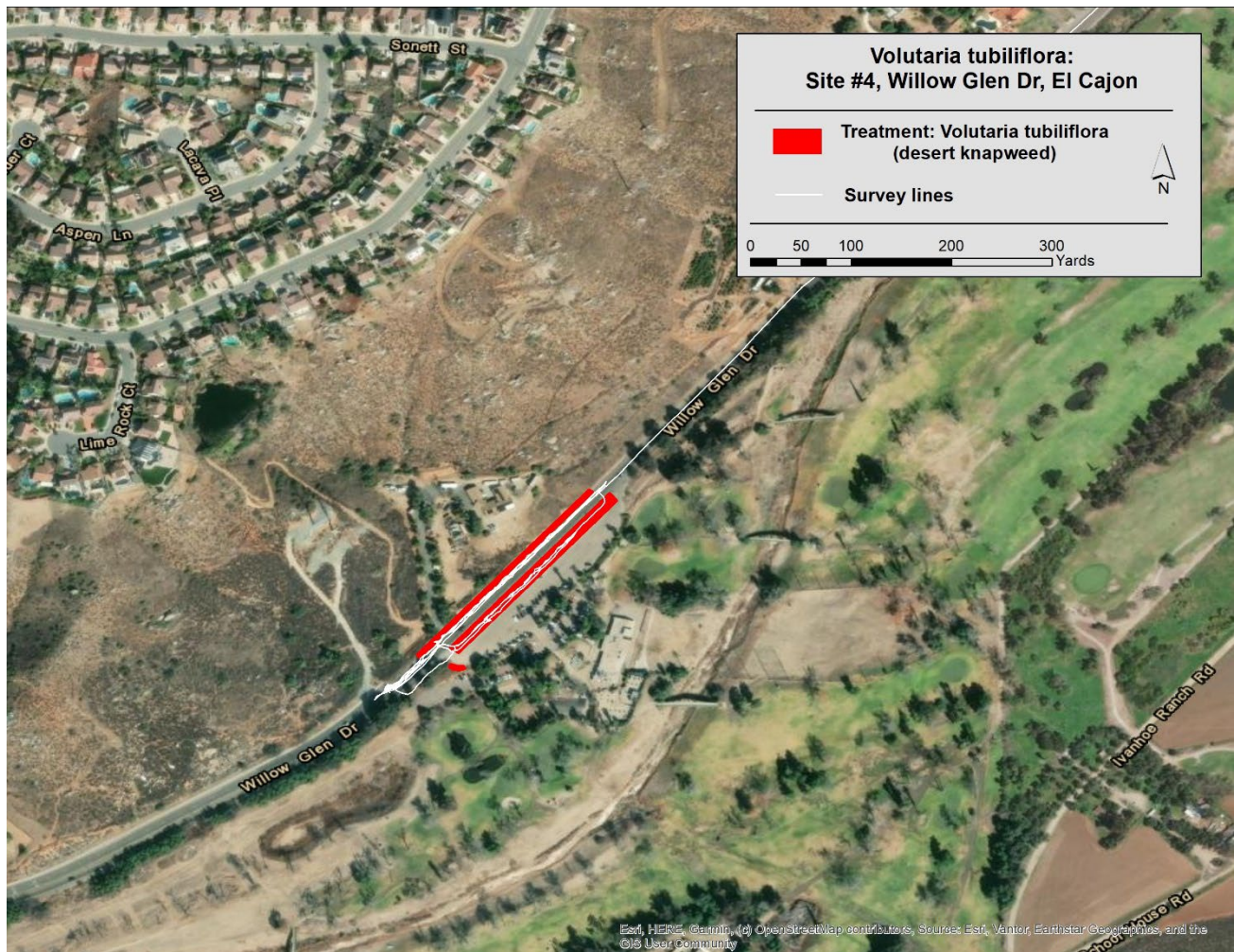


Table 3. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Volutaria tubuliflora* (Desert Knapweed).

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #7 Bonsall	Desert Knapweed	1	3.5	0.5	5,420

Two AWM workers visited the site on five days between January 16th and March 17th. A total of 5,420 were treated with pre and post emergent. This is a large site, with seedbank expression still occurring. Rainfall levels were high this year, so plants were well expressed. This work was funded through CDFA on behalf of CISAC.

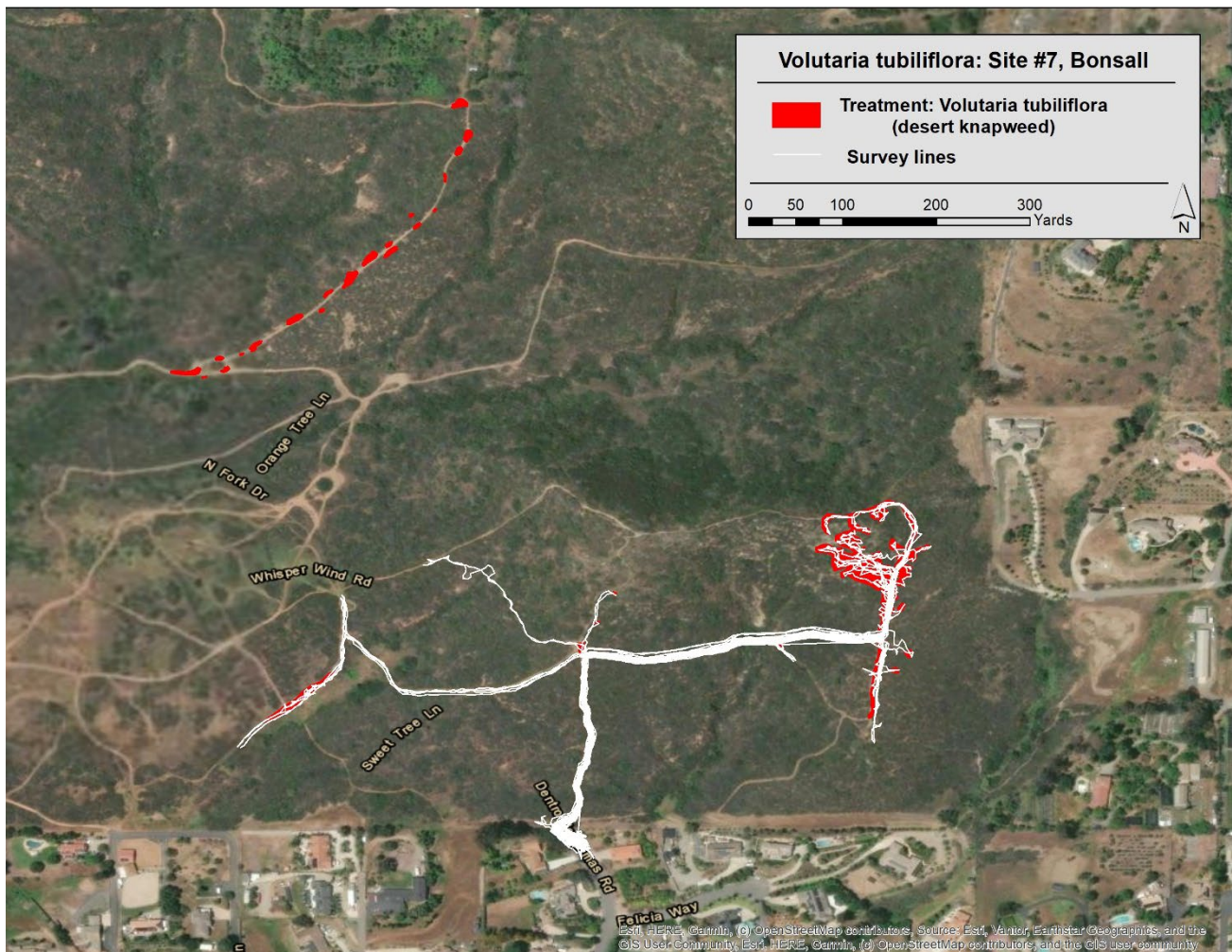


Table 3. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Volutaria tubuliflora* (Desert Knapweed).

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #9 Cuyamaca St	Desert Knapweed	1	1.0	0.1	60

One AWM worker visited the site on one day, February 10th, 2026. A total of 60 plants were treated with pre and post emergent. This is a new site, the only new site so far for 2026. This work was funded through CDFA on behalf of CISAC.



TASK 3 – AWM: Invasive Plant Level 2 Management.

Level of Effort: (>40%) of overall contract

Level 2 Management Species are EDRR targets that were of limited distribution in the county when the IPSP was written (2012).

Crews surveyed and treated four Level 2 invasive weed species (Ward's Weed and Yellow Star Thistle) at four sites this quarter. AWM IPC made optimal pesticide applications, protected the natural environment by preventing off-site movement of pesticides, and utilized Best Management Practices (BMPs) that prevented unintentional discharges to surface waters. For each site, AWM IPC followed the following procedures:

1. Identified the pest species to be treated.
2. Reviewed site conditions, such as soil texture, slope, standing water, irrigation or storm drains.
3. Identified and avoided streamside management areas and surface waters to prevent drift and application of pesticides not labeled for aquatic use onto surface waters.
4. Identified most appropriate method of control based on integrated pest management methods, designed to minimize the scale and number of pesticide applications.
5. Applied the least persistent and least toxic pesticide that effectively mitigates the target pest.

Table 4. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on Level 2 species this quarter.

Scientific Name	Common Name	# of Sites Worked	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants Controlled
<i>Carrichtera annua</i>	Ward's Weed	3	3.1	0.9	13,150
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	Yellow Star Thistle	1	4.0	0.6	1,170



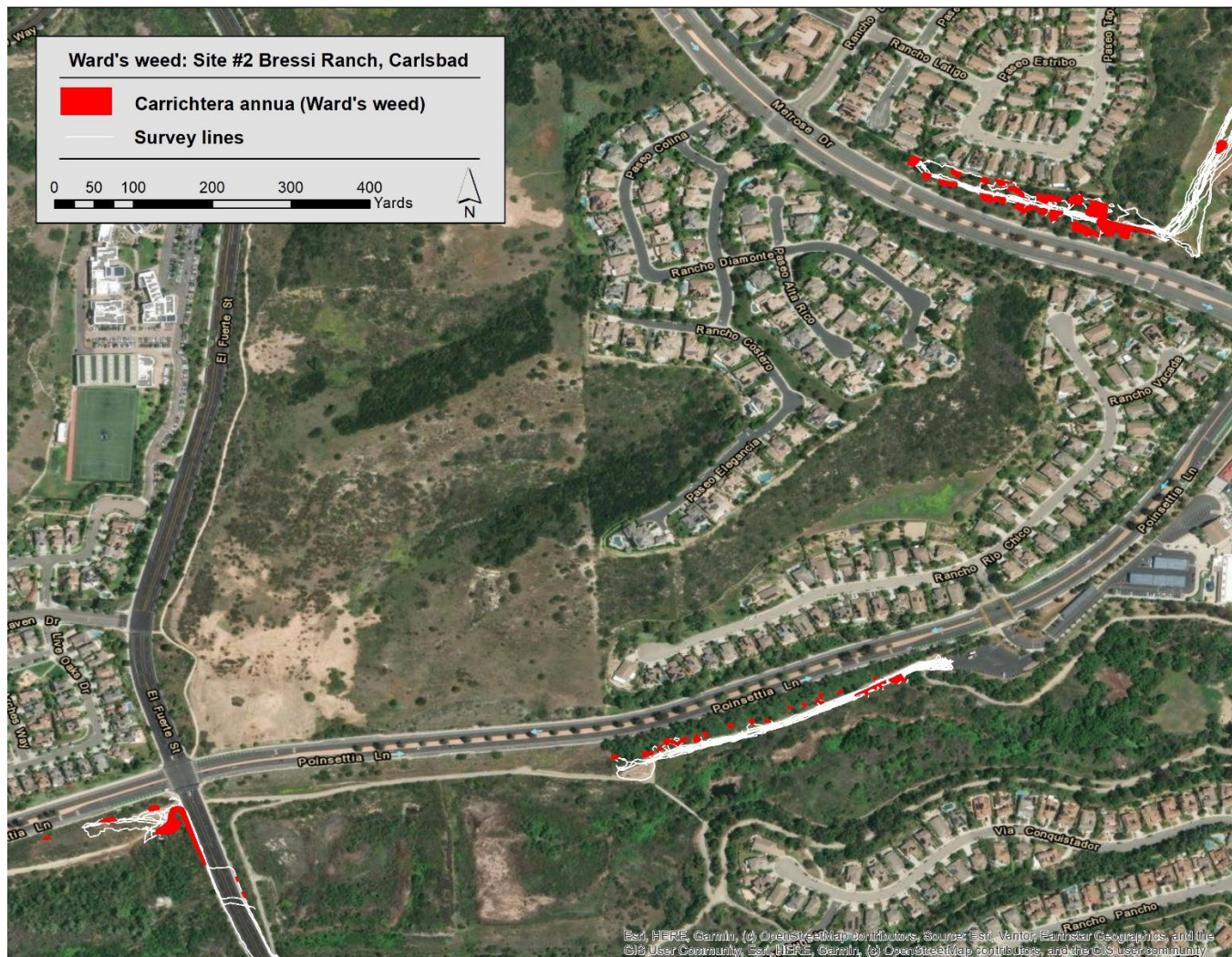
Carrichtera annua, Ward's Weed, Site #2 Bressi Ranch

Table 6. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Carrichtera annua*, Ward's Weed.

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
<i>Site #2 Bressi Ranch, Carlsbad</i>	Wards Weed	1	3.1	0.9	13,000

The Bressi Ranch (City of Carlsbad) Ward's Weed site is a very large site (>200 acres) covering rolling hills with many property owners (city, open space, and private yards). A group collaboration has been working on the site since 2019: City of Carlsbad and The Nature Collective are working on the northern and western portions of the site and County AWM has worked on the southern and eastern portions of the site. CNLM is taking the lead on the Eastern La Costa Greens site.

The County AWM crew started treatments at Bressi Ranch with application of granular pre-emergent prior to germination of Ward's Weed in November. In December three days were worked treating seedlings in a variety of areas, this work continued in January. Two crew members worked five days from January 5th February 4th, 2026. Over 13,000 seedlings were treated with pre and post emergent herbicide.

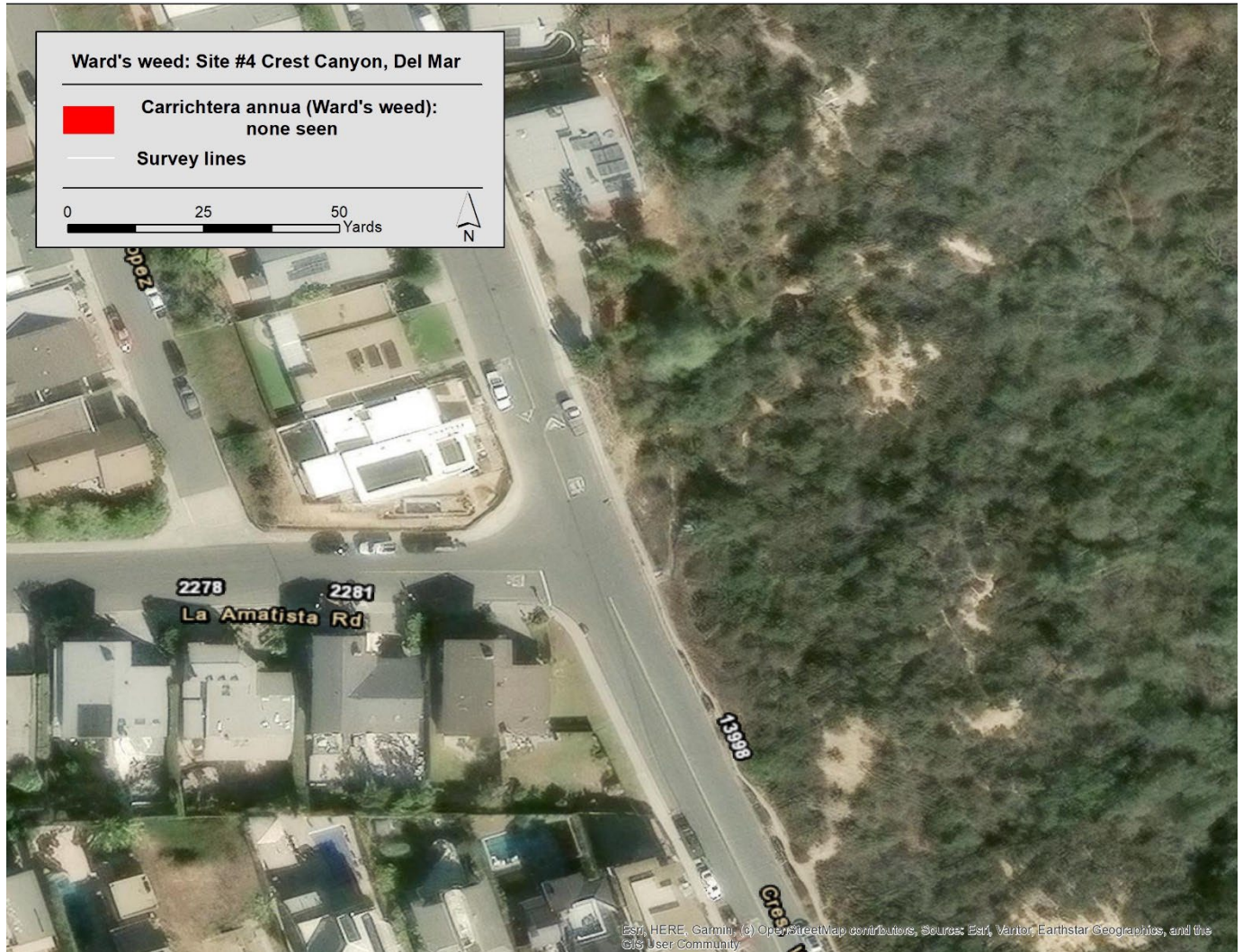


Carrichtera annua, Ward's Weed, Site #4 Crest Canyon, Del Mar

Table 6. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Carrichtera annua*, Ward's Weed.

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #4 Crest Canyon Del Mar	Wards Weed	1	0.5	-	-

The coordinator visited the site on January 27th, 2026. No plants were seen.



Carrichtera annua, Ward's Weed, Site #8 La Costa, Carlsbad

Table 6. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Carrichtera annua*, Ward's Weed.

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants treated
Site #8 La Costa, Carlsbad	Wards Weed	1	0.5	0.1	150

The coordinator visited the site on January 30th, 2026, and hand pulled 150 plants. No plants were seen last year, but rains triggered additional seedling germination.



TASK 4 – AWM: Invasive Plant Level 3 Management.

Level of Effort: (<20%) of overall contract

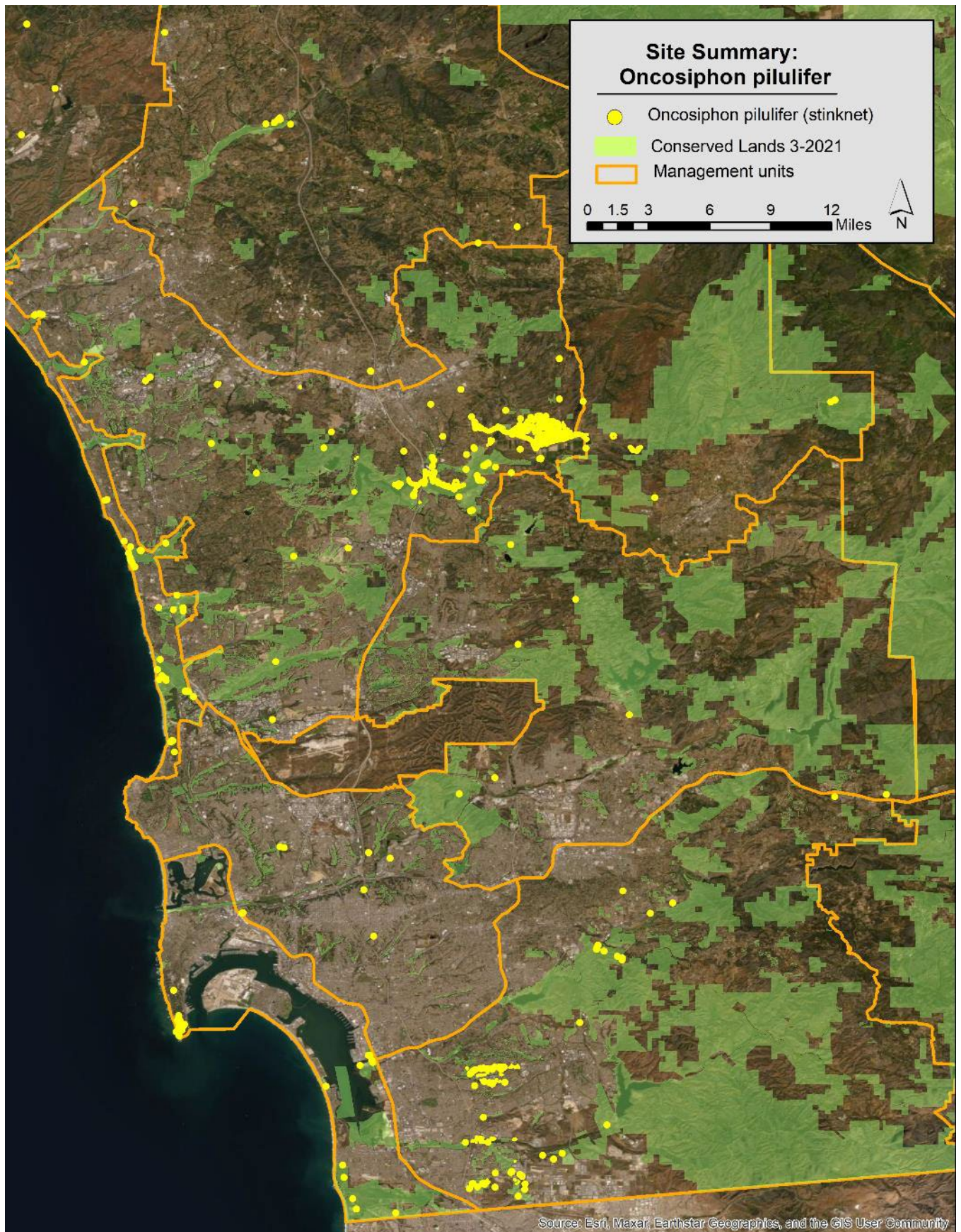
Level 3 Management Species are invasive non-native targets that of a wider distribution in the county (they cannot be eradicated) but still limited enough that they can be contained to portions of the county or they may be eradicated from watersheds or large landscape level units, when the IPSP was written (2012). These species may also be worked on to suppress them in high resource value areas.

Crews surveyed and treated one invasive weed species (Stinknet) at two sites this quarter. AWM IPC made optimal pesticide applications, protected the natural environment by preventing off-site movement of pesticides, and utilized Best Management Practices (BMPs) that prevented unintentional discharges to surface waters. For each site, AWM IPC followed the following procedures:

1. Identified the pest species to be treated.
2. Reviewed site conditions, such as soil texture, slope, standing water, irrigation or storm drains.
3. Identified and avoided streamside management areas and surface waters to prevent drift and application of pesticides not labeled for aquatic use onto surface waters.
4. Identified most appropriate method of control based on integrated pest management methods, designed to minimize the scale and number of pesticide applications.
5. Applied the least persistent and least toxic pesticide that effectively mitigates the target pest.

Table 7. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on Level 3 species this quarter.

Scientific Name	Common Name	# of Sites Worked	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants Controlled
<i>Oncosiphon pilulifer</i>	Stinknet	2	10.5	10	12,000

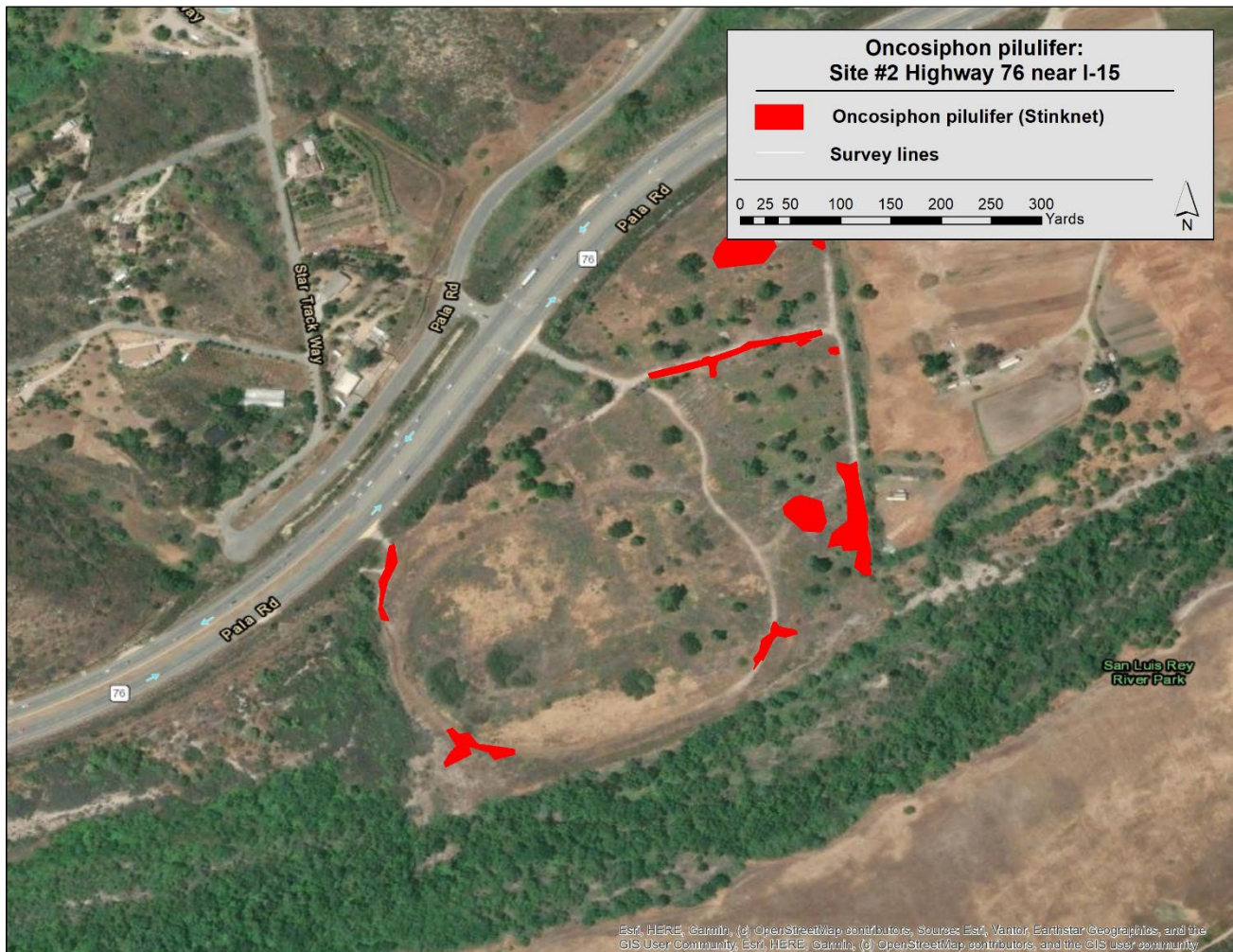


Oncosiphon pilulifer, Stinknet: Site #2 Highway 76 near I-15

Table 9. Summary of treatments performed by AWM on *Oncosiphon pilulifer* (Stinknet).

Site Name	Common Name	# of Work Cycles	Acres Surveyed	Acres Treated	Plants Controlled
Site #2 Highway 76 near I-15	Stinknet	1	6.5	6.5	12,000

The County AWM crew completed treatments at County of San Diego open space off highway 76 (ex-Faubus Farms property). Two crew members worked three days from March 20th to the 27th 2025. The site was treated with pre and post emergent herbicide.



TASK 5 – Coordinator: Tracking and Updating Invasive Species for Priority Removal.

Level of Effort: (5%) of overall contract

- Co-ordination to continue control of Ward's Weed in Carlsbad.
- Reviewing and surveying reports from iNaturalist.
- Co-ordination with San Diego Weed Management Area at the quarterly meeting.
- Presentation covering EDRR work at the Statewide Weed Management Area meeting.
- Co-ordination to survey and control European and Algerian Sea Lavender species in South San Diego Bay. Managers from FWS, DOD, SDMMP and CBI discussed expanded and coordinated surveying and treatment.

Work Anticipated for 3rd Quarter Period, April 1st – June 30th, 2026

This work will be under a new Agreement.

Task 1 – Invasive Plant Species Coordinator:

- Coordinate ROE work with AWM, update database.
- Monitor and coordinate with AWM during implementation.
- Survey and map sites as needed.
- Prepare quarterly report.

Task 2 – AWM: Invasive Plant Level 1 Management.

- Survey, map, and treat any reported sightings of target Level 1 plants: Barbed Goat Grass and Volutaria.
- Supervision of staff, provide training, guidance, and preparation for field work.
- Collect GIS treatment polygons and survey routes (lines) of targeted weeds.

Task 3 – AWM: Invasive Plant Level 2 Management.

- Survey, map, and treat any reported sightings of target Level 2 plants: Ward's Weed, Eupatory, and Limonium.
- Re-treatment of sites: Ward's Weed, Limonium, Eupatory, and Volutaria.
- Supervision of staff, provide training, guidance, and preparation for field work.
- Coordinate and finalize tracking methods for work completed.
- Initiate and continue work outlined in work plan.
- Obtain signed ROEs.

- Collect new GIS treatment polygons and survey routes (lines) of targeted weeds. Upload data to Calflora.

Task 4 – AWM: Invasive Plant Level 3 Management.

- Survey, map, and treat any reported sightings of target Level 3 plants: stinknet.

Task 5 – Coordinator: Tracking and Updating Invasive Species for Priority Removal.

- Continue coordination with: Department of Defense, California State Parks, City Department of Parks and Recreation, San Diego Weed Management Area and County of Orange CNPS EDRR invasives group.
- Continue to aggregate data and track new prospective EDRR target species.
- Present at SDWMA annual meeting, and other meetings as requested.
- Provide population status of EDRR regional targets to CDFA statewide assessment.
- Work with the Natural History Museum ‘Urban Canyons Survey Project’, provide EDRR materials to facilitate reporting of EDRR targets.