

Sentinel Peak, aka “A” Mountain, in Tucson is the iconic symbol of the community. The basalt formation has stood over the ancient farmland of native peoples for over 4000 years. University of Arizona students have traditional outings to repaint the A, and thousands of families watch the annual July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks that are launched from this ancient landmark. Unfortunately, the fireworks often set the south slope ablaze. Over time this has resulted in a void of natural plant growth, replaced by the opportunistic invasive, Buffelgrass.

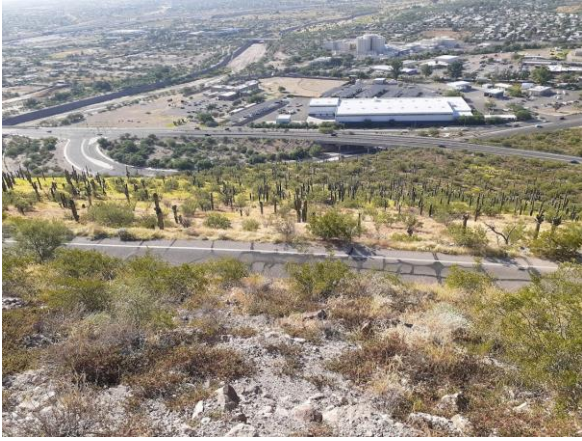
The historic rainfall of the 2021 monsoon season resulted in rapid growth of buffelgrass. Through efforts of the AZNPS Conservation Committee, removal of the invasive weed at the summit is well underway.

Generous contributions funding the initial efforts to control Buffelgrass on the treacherous south slope below the loop road have enabled the work to have a great impact on restoring the summit of “A” Mountain in Tucson.

A little more than \$21,000 was raised, allowing us to hire a spray crew to treat 37 acres of buffelgrass over a period of 3 days in August 2021. Only half of the funds were spent, so a second spray of resprouts can be made either next March or next summer.



The six-person team used backpack sprayers and a long hose and attached wand. They carefully directed the herbicide only to buffelgrass plants and avoided native plants, trees, and cacti. The glyphosate herbicide used is active only in green plant tissue, but inactive in the soil.



Three weeks after application, the sprayed buffelgrass plants were killed. Already there are small native plants emerging in areas where the invasive is no longer sucking up all available soil moisture.



The treated areas are clearly visible as the tan swathe from the far left under the kiosk to the far right. Notice the green buffelgrass fringe seen below and on the right. The green vegetation above the loop road is all native plant growth following the multi-year efforts of AZNPS volunteers to suppress buffelgrass regrowth.

As expected in this wet year with saturated soils, we already see areas of buffelgrass seedlings emerging from the considerable seed bank in the soil that has accumulated over many decades.

Thanks to many generous donations, we will be able to follow up and spray the buffelgrass regrowth when conditions are favorable in 2022.

John Scheuring

Conservation Chair

Arizona Native Plant Society