

Resource Conservation District of Monterey County Receives California Invasive Plant Council 'Wildland Stewardship Organization of the Year' Award at Annual Symposium

Monterey, CA, Release: November 9, 2018. *For Immediate Release*



Image left to right: Emily Zefferman (RCDMC Ecologist), Jason Giessow (Dendra Inc.), Paul Robins (RCDMC Executive Director)

The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC), was announced as the winner of the coveted 'Wildland Stewardship Organization of the Year' at Thursday's California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) 2018 Symposium awards ceremony in Monterey. RCDMC was recognized for their Salinas River Arundo Control Program work, which has to-date treated approximately 500 out of 1500 total acres of the invasive plant *Arundo donax* along the Salinas River. Arundo is a highly invasive weed in Monterey County that crowds out native vegetation, degrades wildlife habitat, consumes large amounts of water, and

increases the risk of flooding to adjacent farm fields and cities.

Each year, Cal-IPC honors members who have shown exceptional dedication and creativity in protecting California's wildlands from invasive plants. Cal-IPC is considered the foremost invasive plant management society in California with many highly-successful member organizations conducting critical work around the state. Public acknowledgement of the RCDMC's Salinas River Arundo Control Program is a great honor for the organization and an opportunity to celebrate their diligent weed eradication and river habitat improvement efforts. The Salinas River Arundo Control Program has involved treating the highly invasive weed on a large scale, with herbicide application and mechanical removal with mowers along much of the 90-mile-long stretch of the Salinas River in Monterey County. More work is planned for the coming years to treat the remaining 1000 acres, in an effort to completely rid the Salinas River of the noxious weed by 2030. The award was accepted by Emily Zefferman, RCDMC Ecologist and Arundo Control Program Manager, and Paul Robins, RCDMC Executive Director.

RCDMC's work could not be possible without critical partnership and funding from the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, landowner members of the Salinas River Channel Coalition, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, and grant funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

The awards ceremony proved fruitful for several of Monterey County's weed warriors. Hannah Wallis from Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office was also awarded the Ryan Jones Catalyst Award for her work in Monterey County, and Sue Hubbard of the Bureau of Land Management received the evening's highest honor for a lifetime of committed work: the Golden Weed Wrench.

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