

Partnering for Weed Removal on Santa Cruz Island

*Coleen Cory, The Nature Conservancy, 532 East Main St. #200, Ventura, CA 93001,
ccory@tnc.org*

Abstract

Santa Cruz Island is the largest and most biologically diverse of eight Channel Islands off the coast of southern California. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns and manages the western 76% of Santa Cruz Island (SCI), and the National Park Service (NPS) owns and manages the eastern 24% of the 95 sq. mi. island as part of the Channel Islands National Park. The weed management program on Santa Cruz Island has many components: scouting, mapping and reporting new infestations; accessing and treating weeds; assuring programmatic continuity for long-term treatment that will result in eradication; and securing funding to maintain the program over time. Managing the weed program on Santa Cruz Island is best accomplished by drawing on the diverse skills and knowledge of many groups and directing them towards a common goal. These groups include government agencies, private organizations and individuals. A variety of techniques and personnel are involved in treating weeds on the island. TNC's weed contractor uses a helicopter to transport weed technicians to rugged, difficult-to-reach locations to treat remote weeds; volunteers and Conservation Corps members under the direction of professionals remove weeds in watercourses and along roads; National Park weed technicians fell large invasive trees; and new invasive species are prevented from reaching the island through implementation of biosecurity protocols. The Nature Conservancy works closely with local, state and federal agencies to fund weed work on the Island and benefits from all these partnerships for an effective weed management program.