

Brush Busting

Reclaiming and Maintaining Grasslands on the Central Coast

Brush encroachment on Central Coast rangelands threatens native grassland ecosystems. Invasive brush competes with native grasses, reduces forage quality, fragments wildlife habitat, and creates dense fuel loads that intensify wildfire behavior. While brush control is essential for maintaining healthy rangelands, the costs of effective management often exceed what traditional livestock operations can sustain, creating a barrier to implementing necessary stewardship practices. With growing recognition of the ecological and economic importance of grassland conservation, there are tools available for brush management, from traditional mechanical and chemical methods to innovative targeted grazing strategies.

Goal: To improve brush management capacity on the Central Coast by improving attendees' understanding of effective control methods, ecological benefits, and practical implementation strategies for maintaining healthy grassland ecosystems.

Objectives:

- Attendees will understand the ecological and economic value of brush control, including benefits to biodiversity, fire risk reduction, forage production, and rangeland productivity.
- Attendees will learn about brush management methods including mechanical control, herbicide applications, targeted goat grazing, and strategic cattle grazing systems.
- Attendees will understand brush response patterns following wildfire events and opportunities for strategic post-fire management.
- Attendees will gain practical knowledge about regulatory requirements, funding sources, and community support strategies needed to implement successful brush control programs on Central Coast rangelands

8:00	Registration and Coffee
8:30	Welcome to the Meeting -TomKat Ranch and Mid-Pen Open Space District
8:40	Small Group Introductions
9:10	<i>Managing Woody Succession on Central Coast Rangelands, consideration</i> – Lewis Reed, Mid-Pen Open Space District
9:35	Prescribed fire and pre-treatments for brush management – Jared Childress, Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association
10:00	Prescribed Grazing for Brush Management - Bianca Soares Shapero, Star Creek Land Stewards
10:25	Break
10:35	Brush, Burn, Return, Post-fire vegetation change – Stephanie Larson, University of CA Cooperative Extension
11:00	Walk to field site Goat grazing for brush control- Mark Biaggi, TomKat Ranch
	Small Groups
12:15	Lunch at TomKat Barn
1:00	Carpool to TomKat Rx fire site Rx Fire for brush management field site discussion- TomKat Ranch
2:15	Carpool to Mid-Pen brush management site Mow and herbicide field site and discussion- Mid-Pen Managers and Ranchers
3:40	Wrap-up discussion and closing remarks in the field
4:00	Meeting End**