

# Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve Buffer Zone Plant Management Prescription

## Purpose and Scope

As part of the Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve (VTNP) Standards, derived from the Conservation Easement (CE) on the property, this Prescription outlines the details for how the 8-foot Buffer Zone is to be managed. The purpose of the VTNP CE is for “conserving and forever maintaining the natural, scenic, open space, historical, biological, and cultural character of the Preserve as well as maintaining the Preserve for low impact recreational use.”

## Authority and Responsibility

- Preserve Owner (Town of Oro Valley) maintains authority over all Preserve property and amenities
- CE Holder (Archaeology Southwest) ensures compliance with the CE and approves the list of Designated Invasive Plant Species and Designated Landscaping Firms (Designated Firms)
- Adjacent landowners, residents, and Homeowner Associations (HOAs) may only perform actions specifically authorized in this Prescription and at their own expense and risk, occurring within the designated buffer zone adjacent to residential property lines
- Designated Firms: authorized by CE Holder to perform vegetation management consistent with this Prescription only within the 8-foot Buffer Zone. The 8-foot Buffer Zone does not include or extend to within 3 feet of any pathways, sidewalks or Preserve amenities, as those areas are maintained exclusively by Preserve Owner.

## Methods for Buffer Zone Management by Parties other than Owner

- **Access:** The Preserve shall be accessed only via established trailheads, sidewalks, walking paths, or other designated access points approved by the Preserve Owner (see attached map).
- **Parking:** Designated firms must park exclusively in established parking areas or other locations expressly approved by the Preserve Owner.
- **Invasive Plant Removal:** Authorized invasive species for removal include Stinknet, Russian Thistle, Buffelgrass, Goathead, and London Rocket.
- **Tree and Vegetation Management:** Trees and/or associated branches encroaching upon fences or infrastructure may be cut and removed from the buffer area; however, harvested material must be relocated and placed on Preserve property at locations specifically approved by the Preserve Owner.
- **Work Activities:** During operations, vehicles and equipment shall be positioned off trails and pathways to maintain uninterrupted pedestrian access. All paths and surrounding areas must be left free of debris upon completion of work and exit from the Preserve.
- **Equipment Sanitation:** All equipment must be thoroughly cleaned before entering and after exiting the Preserve to prevent the spread of invasive species.
- **Removal Methods:** Invasive plant removal is limited strictly to hand-pulling. The use of tools, “weed-whacking,” mowing, pruning, trimming, or herbicides/chemical treatments is prohibited. All removed invasive plant material must be immediately removed from the Preserve.
- **Protected Vegetation:** Walking or staging of equipment near the root zones of saguaros, mesquite, or other protected vegetation shall be avoided. Disturbance or excavation (“gutting out”) around plant or tree root systems is prohibited.
- **Plant Installation:** Installation of plants listed on the Town of Oro Valley’s approved plant list is permitted, provided plants are installed in a natural manner that blends with surrounding vegetation.

## Buffer Zone and Preserve Prohibited Activities

- **Ground Disturbance:** Digging or any alteration of the ground surface outside of invasive removal, including but not limited to raking, clearing, grubbing, grading, or excavation.
- **Material Import or Removal:** The addition, removal, or relocation of soils, gravel, fill, or other inert materials.
- **Lighting:** Installation of lighting fixtures on Preserve property or lighting directed onto or across Preserve property.
- **Structures and Amenities:** Installation or placement of irrigation lines, fencing, furniture, structures, or other amenities on Preserve property or in a manner that encroaches into or over the Preserve.
- **Vegetation Burning or Mechanical Removal:** Burning, weed-whacking, or use of any mechanical vegetation removal methods.
- **Liquids and Solids Discharge:** Application, discharge, or introduction of any liquids or solids onto Preserve property, including but not limited to irrigation water and discharges from swimming pools, spas, showers, washing machines, or similar sources.

### **Cost and Liability**

All costs associated with plant management requested or performed by adjacent landowners, residents, or HOAs are their own respective responsibility. These parties hold the Preserve Owner and CE Holder harmless for any injuries or damage resulting from such work. Contractors must carry liability insurance and comply with all Town permit and safety requirements. Work Authorization does not convey ownership, leasehold or management authority. The adjacent landowners, residents, or HOAs will reimburse the Preserve Owner for the full cost of any restoration or repair necessitated by actions that do not conform with this Prescription.