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**For immediate release**

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## **Volunteers needed to help remove buffelgrass from parks, public land across the region on Feb. 7**

*Beat Back Buffelgrass Day* is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 7. The second annual volunteer event, coordinated by Pima Association of Governments, will be held across the region. Last year, over 200 volunteers removed more than 4,000 buffelgrass plants in just a few hours.

"Volunteer efforts throughout the past year made a real difference, and a few areas that were choked with buffelgrass are now clear," said Dennis Dickerson, PAG's Environmental Planning Coordinator. "Despite that progress, the extent of buffelgrass will require continued effort."

PAG established *Beat Back Buffelgrass Day* to raise awareness of the threat of buffelgrass and to remove as much buffelgrass as possible on a single day.

Individuals and groups wishing to participate may volunteer by logging onto [www.PAGnet.org](http://www.PAGnet.org) or [www.Buffelgrass.org](http://www.Buffelgrass.org) and selecting a location where organized buffelgrass removal efforts will occur.

Listed as a noxious weed in Arizona, buffelgrass poses a serious threat to the ecology of the Sonoran desert. When dry, buffelgrass burns readily and at a temperature exceeding 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. As buffelgrass colonizes more areas, the threat of fire increases. The Sonoran desert environment is not adapted to fire, and buffelgrass fires will destroy native desert species.

"The desert environment that surrounds us makes Tucson so special that action is needed now because this invasive weed will, if unchecked, destroy the desert," Dickerson said.

*Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, air quality and water quality. PAG's staff gather and analyze data, provide accurate information, and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote good decision-making for the region. Please visit [www.PAGnet.org](http://www.PAGnet.org) for more information.*

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