

Earth Grant

An Experience with the Audubon Invasive Plant Program

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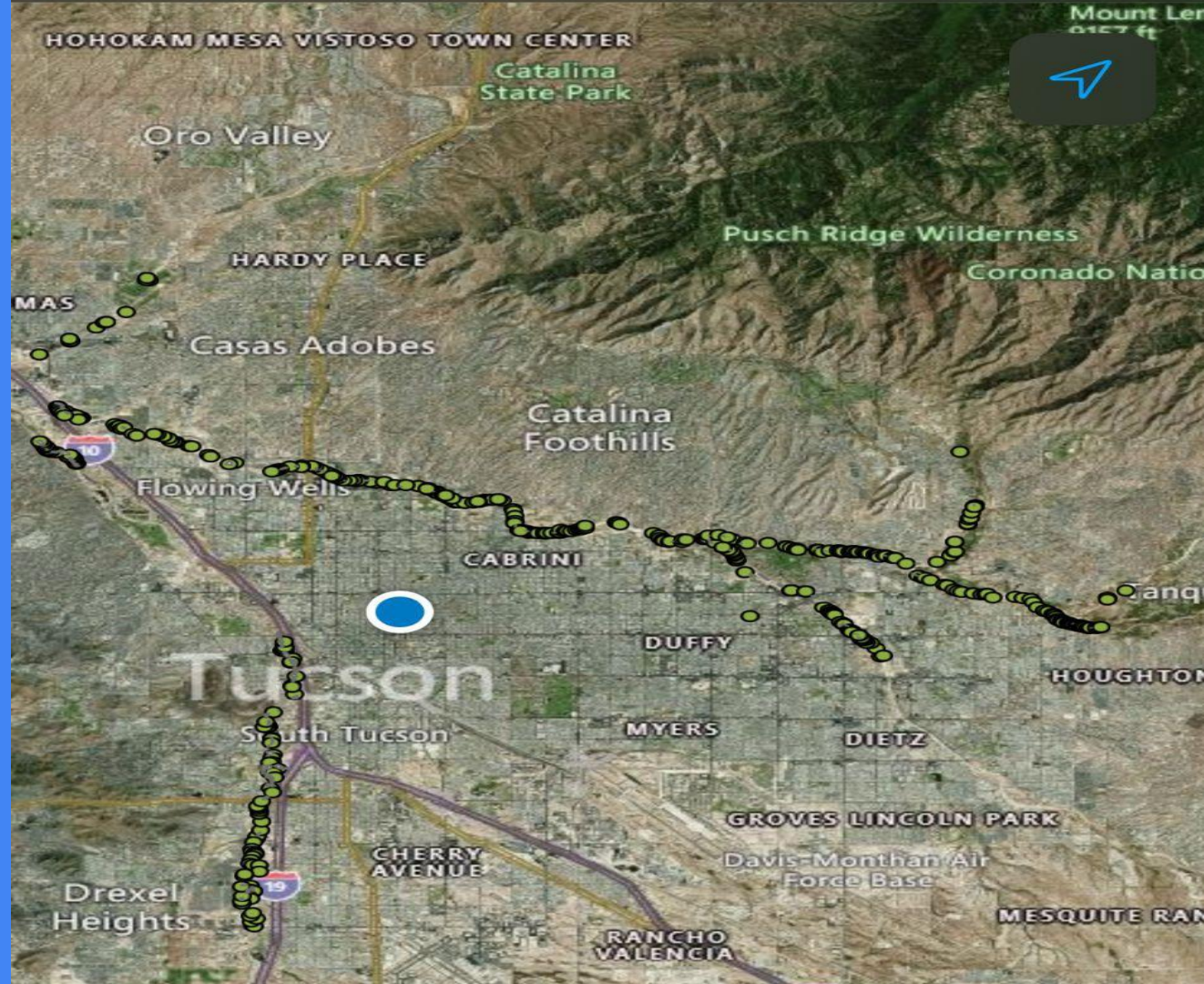
The Invasive Plant Program

- This program is ultimately focused on restoring Tucsons diverse landscaped like riparian habitats, residential and industrial areas
 - It also improves community involvement through partnerships with other local organizations and neighborhoods
- The program director, and my mentor, Tony Figueroa manages a crew of dedicated employees who physically remove invasive plant species
- With two new interns, we searched the city's habitats for invasive species to help the strike team know where to look

My Role

- As an intern with the Tucson Audubon Society, I was tasked with identifying and mapping the location of invasive species around the city
- From fall to winter, I walked through Tucson's main river systems mapping a variety of species
- With the help of a fellow colleague, together we mapped over 1000 species covering approximately 30 miles!
- After mapping, a strike crew is dispatched to those locations and can physically remove the plants and apply herbicides using sustainable and eco-friendly methods

*Each dot represents an
invasive plant species*



Stinknet

- From spring until the end of the internship, another important task was to identify and map the exceptionally damaging species called Stinknet
- This species has the ability to out-compete native species over vast areas which poses an increased risk of wildfires and reduces biodiversity



Stinknet.org

- This website was created by the Audubon Society and asks the community to help tackle this issue
- Any individual can mark a location on the map where stinknet is believed to be
- As interns, we went through those points made by the community and confirm whether or not the points were accurately identified.

Community Involvement

- Stinknet.org allowed me to go to neighborhoods around the city, speak with residents and spread information about stinknet. And ask that they keep an eye out!
- I also participated in community outreach programs where the Audubon Society and other non profit organizations around town could educate community members on invasive plant ID. This event also improved a local neighborhood park by reducing invasive species

What I've Gained

- An opportunity to spend time outside and explore different parts of the city
- Plant Identification skills
- Sustainable removal and treatment practices
- Improved relationships with the city of Tucson, its beautiful landscapes, and the people within it
- An understanding of how non-profit organizations navigate the field of conservation