



# Ecological Restoration of the Prince Barranca, Ventura, CA

Recipient: Ventura Land Trust  
Project Period: 10/02/2023 - 12/31/2024  
Award Amount: \$70,000.00  
Matching Contributions: \$7,500.00  
Project Number: #8006.24.082076

## Summary of Accomplishments

The removal of these eight large, monotypic *Eucalyptus globulus* has created an extraordinary opening in this lower urban barranca. While few native plants were present in the project area due to chemical and competitive exclusion from the eucalyptus, native shrubs on surrounding slopes are now in full light with room to expand. Native seed have been gathered locally for broadcast into the newly open project area, and soil-bound native transplants will be procured and planted to coincide with the winter rainy season. This project was transformed into this lower barranca and will allow meaningful native restoration of the area that would have been impossible without removal of the dominating invasive trees.

## Project Activities & Outcomes

### Activities

- VLT staff conducted a final survey of biological resources the week of 2 – 6 September 2024 and invasive plant work in the project area
- Removal and treatment of other woody invaders like *Ricinus communis* and *Nicotiana glauca*, and herbaceous weeds in the staging area like *Hirschfeldia incana*
- The contract arborist, Newbury Park Tree Service (contractor), began work on 9 September 2024, and concluded the project on 13 September 2024
- The contractor was able to remove eight large invasive *Eucalyptus globulus* that dominated the lower barranca, and treat the stumps to prevent regrowth
- A crane was used to remove biomass, minimizing disturbance to the project area
- All woody biomass and related mulch was removed from the project site

### Outcomes

- The removal of these eight large, monotypic *Eucalyptus globulus* has created an extraordinary opening in this lower urban barranca
- While few native plants were present in the project area due to chemical and competitive exclusion from the eucalyptus, native shrubs on surrounding slopes are now in full light with room to expand
- Native seed have been gathered locally for broadcast into the newly open project area, and soil-bound native transplants will be procured and planted to coincide with the winter rainy season
- This project was transformational to this lower barranca and will allow meaningful native restoration of the area that would have been impossible without removal of the dominating invasive trees.

## Lessons Learned

The removal of these large invasive trees has been a priority for VLT for several years. Persistence, proper funding, finding the right contractor, and facilitating the right timing were all integral to completing the work. Due to the proximity of our urban neighbors, we developed informative communications explaining and justifying the work with a direct line of communication to our field team, and hand delivered it to every house neighboring the project area. We also attributed our field team leader to be a direct point of contact with the contractor and to be present at the project site for part of everyday to ensure best management practices were followed and the project was completed in the most sensitive way possible.

## Dissemination

The Prince Barranca hosts an estimated 30% absolute cover and 65% relative perennial cover of *Eucalyptus globulus* with several very large trees that are creating outstanding impacts in this mesic drainage. VLT had identified up to eight large trees in an approximately 0.5-acre area that are phase 1 priorities for removal, forming a homogenous stand. While extremely large, with a capable crew these trees and their biomass was removed in one week, transforming the biodiversity supporting potential of this area. VLT has gathered native seed locally to broadcast in the project area and will transplant locally appropriate native species in the area coinciding with the winter rainy season, including coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), California walnut (*Juglans californica*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*). In the short term, a notable reduction of invasive tree cover has occurred from direct removals and will be formative with the reduction of future propagules. Mitigating fire risk in this sensitive ecological area and the adjacent urban community is also a tangible result. In the long term, both direct and indirect ecological benefits will be achieved, with increased water availability to support riparian scrub vegetation and associated wildlife, and an associated increase in abundance and diversity of native flora and fauna in the area. We anticipate native invertebrates and birds as benefiting in particular, since removing eucalyptus should buoy native shrub and herbaceous communities and provide shelter and foraging opportunities that were absent in the eucalyptus dominated systems.

**POSTING OF FINAL REPORT:** *This report and attached project documents may be shared by the Foundation and any Funding Source for the Project via their respective websites. In the event that the Recipient intends to claim that its final report or project documents contains material that does not have to be posted on such websites because it is protected from disclosure by statutory or regulatory provisions, the Recipient shall clearly mark all such potentially protected materials as "PROTECTED" and provide an explanation and complete citation to the statutory or regulatory source for such protection.*

## Project Photos



Figure 1. Looking down the Hall Barranca at densely growing *Eucalyptus globulus* trees on 15 November 2023. Note abundance of dead wood, and dominant presence of invasive plants in view, including *E. globulus*, *Nicotiana glauca*, annual grass, and *Erigeron canadensis*. Orange fence visible on photo left through the canopy.



Figure 2. Hall Barranca taken 15 September 2024, after completion of project removing *Eucalyptus globulus*. Note dramatic opening of canopy revealing scattered *Sambucus mexicanus*, *Toxidendron diversilobum*, and *Rhus integrifolia*. Orange fence visible in pre work photo (Figure 1) is seen in photo center.



*Figure 3. Example of the size of the invasive Eucalyptus globulus trees removed, with stump adjacent to 6-foot tall residential fence. Note lack of understory vegetation growing in surrounding area due to competitive exclusion. Photo taken on 13 September 2024.*



Figure 4. Aerial view of the Hall Barranca with the project area highlighted in red.