

Tub Canyon residents rally to fight mustard

Tub Canyon neighbors gathered forces on the last weekend in March and removed more than 750 large garbage bags of non-native Sahara mustard from along Tub Canyon Road, in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and on private property.

Led by resident David Garmon, who said he was moved by the destructive impact Sahara mustard has had on Henderson Canyon Road wildflowers and who wanted to avert the weed's spreading in Tub Canyon, the volunteers were joined by 25 paid workers.

The neighbors pooled donations to cover the cost of paying the workers to pick mustard and de Anza Country Club provided lunch for the crew. True Value Hardware gave the Borregans a discount on trash bags.

"Dealing with the mustard can be overwhelming when you're just one person. But if you get 20 to 30 people tackling the problem, you can make headway," Garmon said.

The volunteers took the bags to Colorado Desert District headquarters where they had been told mustard volunteers could dump the weeds. The effort overloaded the commercial trash bin brought in for the effort.

Garmon said next steps for pro-



Courtesy photo

BAGS and bags of Sahara mustard collected in Tub Canyon on a single weekend overflow the Colorado Desert District's dumpster on March 28.

tecting Tub Canyon from the invasive weed will include the formation of a Tub Canyon Conservancy that can accept donations as a nonprofit organization.

"It is clearly going to take money to fund the effort," Garmon said.

An accounting of the effort showed that labor alone amounted to \$2,500.

Garmon said he's hopeful that the Sahara Mustard Eradication

Task Force can extrapolate the Tub Canyon model and apply it elsewhere in the valley with trained volunteers and work crews.

"I can see the whole valley being divided into areas, with people taking responsibility for their areas and organizing to hire workers, train volunteers, and make plans to pick," Garmon said. "Otherwise, this entire, beautiful valley could in short order be gone."