

By Jack McCabe

Last month, Arizona Public Service (APS) initiated the first in a new generation of Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) research projects to be conducted throughout the West. This project is part of an initiative of the Utility Arborist Association (UAA) and the UAA Research Committee to conduct research similar to that performed by Dr. Bramble and Dr. Byrnes on the Pennsylvania State Gamelands. For over 50 years, those research plots have generated a wealth of scientific information on the benefits of an integrated approach to vegetation management, known as IVM.

"We believe the time is right to demonstrate how IVM can meet a number of objectives for land and natural resource managers," said Nelsen Money, President Elect of UAA. "We intend for these research projects to also provide locally based demonstration sites for people and agencies throughout the West to see the benefits of IVM first hand."

Funded by APS, the research plots were laid out and a botanical survey was conduct-

ed in three unique ecosystems throughout the APS service territory. The research is being conducted by Rick Johnstone of IVM Partners.

In each case, the research plots straddled a United States Forest Service (USFS) boundary line. Plots on Forest Service lands will act as a control since the USFS does not allow APS to apply herbicides in the right of way. An integrated approach will be implemented on the adjacent lands (either private property or State managed lands) depending upon the unique requirements of the site. The research seeks to identify the effects of IVM on biodiversity of plant species by creating an early successional ecosystem.

"It's important to demonstrate best management practices and validate the wire zone border zone method in dealing with Federal and State Agencies, especially with the critical need for compliance with FAC-003," said Mike Neal, Manager of Forestry and Special Projects for APS. "As other utilities throughout the West join in, we will be able to speak with a more united voice."



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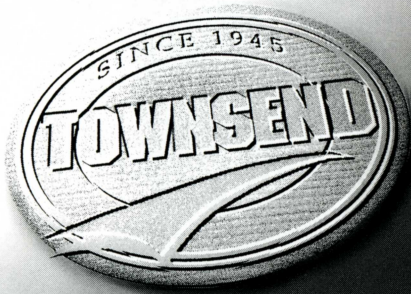
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