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**BACK TO NATIVES RECEIVES \$5,000 GRANT FROM USFS  
FOR HABITAT RESTORATION IN THE NATIONAL FOREST**

**IRVINE, Calif., October 9, 2010** – **Back to Natives Restoration**, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit public charity has received a \$5,000 grant from the United States Forest Service for Habitat Restoration in the Cleveland National Forest. The funds are in support of Back to Native's Elsinore Peak Star Thistle Removal Project. Back to Natives volunteers gave over 600 hours of their time over the summer to remove the noxious weeds along 3 miles of the South Main Divide Road.

Back to Natives Restoration, in a cooperative agreement with the United States Forest Service in the Cleveland National Forest, leads a hands-on training course for restoration volunteers each year. Participants learn how to remove invasive non-native plant species using tools rather than herbicides. They learn how to keep themselves and others safe in the field, how to manage restoration volunteers, and how to identify native and non-native plants. Graduates are eligible to lead volunteer groups in the National Forest.

Ecological restoration is a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and reestablishing healthy ecosystems. Successful habitat restoration ensures that native species are protected while non-native species are removed with minimal impact. Nationwide, invasive plants cost us an estimated \$33 billion per year. Invasive plants degrade wildlife habitat – they are the second-greatest threat to endangered species, after habitat destruction.

Individuals interested in attending the next series of classes which begin on December 2, 2010, can email [restoration@backtonatives.org](mailto:restoration@backtonatives.org) or call 949-509-4787. More information can be found at <http://www.backtonatives.org/usfs.shtml>. Volunteers and staff from all wild land agencies, organizations and non-profits are welcome to participate, and then share their new knowledge and skills with others.

Back to Natives strives to involve the community in the process of ecological restoration and conservation because it believes that a little "ecological enlightenment" and a chance to "get your hands dirty" is the best way to improve relations between people and nature.

About Back to Natives

Back to Natives Restoration, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to the restoration and conservation of Orange County and California wild lands, through education and restoration programs featuring native plants as a centralizing theme. For more information, please visit [www.backtonatives.org](http://www.backtonatives.org) or call 949-509-4787.

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