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**BACK TO NATIVE'S ANNUAL BATTLE AGAINST YELLOW STAR THISTLE ENTERS ITS SIXTH YEAR**  
*Back to Natives returns to Elsinore Peak taking action against invasive species.*

**IRVINE, Calif., June 8, 2016** – **Back to Natives Restoration**, in cooperation with the United States Forest Service, will conduct hands-on habitat restoration events in the Elsinore Peak region of the Cleveland National Forrest. This is the sixth year that Back to Natives will host volunteer events in the Cleveland National Forrest. Every Sunday morning from 7:30 AM until 1:00 PM during the month of June, Back to Natives staff with the help of community volunteers, will focus on removing Yellow Star Thistle, (*Centaurea solstitialis*) an invasive plant species not native to Southern California.

Yellow Starthistle is native to Eurasia and was introduced to California during the late 1800s via South America. This plant forms dense infestations which rapidly deplete soil moisture preventing the establishment of other species. This in turn displaces the wildlife that depend on native vegetation for survival, further damaging the ecosystems it infests. This weed not only impacts wildlife, it impacts ranchers who depend on rangelands for grazing. Yellow Starthistle reduces forage yields and quality increasing costs for ranchers and consumers alike.

Volunteers will be educated on the impact Yellow Star Thistle and other non-native invasive species have on habitats. Volunteers will also gain hands on experience on how to identify and remove this rapidly colonizing weed. Participants will help the area's biodiversity, as they spend time in the beautiful setting of the Cleveland National Forrest.

"The best part about this volunteer opportunity is watching first time volunteers gawk in amazement at the beauty surrounding them," said Back to Natives Director of Education Lori Whalen. "They are always surprised to find a place so close to the city where you can stand and turn in a complete circle and see nothing but nature in every direction."

For more information about this program and other habitat restoration events, visit [backtonatives.org](http://backtonatives.org)

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.