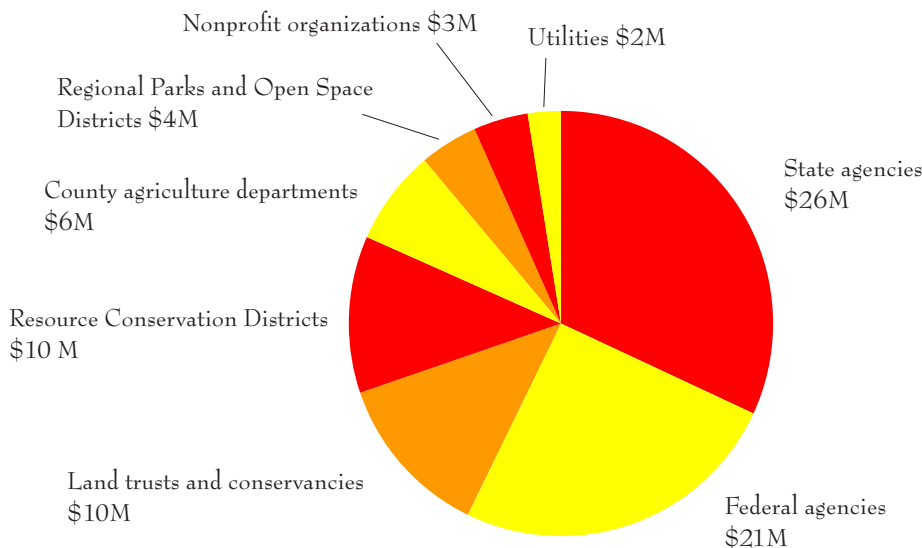


Invasive Plants Cost California \$82 Million Every Year.

At least. Estimates of actual impacts reach into the \$ billions. \$82 million represents current costs of control, monitoring, and outreach. This investment repays itself many times over by addressing major impacts. Invasive plants:

- Increase wildfire potential
- Reduce water resources
- Accelerate erosion and flooding
- Threaten wildlife
- Degrade range-, crop- and timberland
- Diminish outdoor recreation opportunities

Estimated Annual Cost of Invasive Plant Work in California



Plants are being moved around the globe like never before. A few will become invasive in their new environments, harming the environment and economy. Climate change increases the challenge of stopping the spread of invasive plants. Now is the time to support strategies aimed at addressing invasive plants. Protect California's biologically rich landscapes and provide jobs in the "green" economy to restore ecosystems.

Chart based on survey conducted in 2008 by Cal-IPC and Sustainable Conservation. Photos (top to bottom): yellow starthistle (Sally Childs); Conservation Corps cuts giant reed in Santa Barbara County (David Chang); boat trapped in water hyacinth in the Delta (Bob Case); controlling tamarisk at Fort Irwin (Brian Shomo); Cape ivy covers woodland in San Diego County (Carolyn Martus).



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California Invasive Plant Council

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CALIFORNIA INVASIVE WEEDS AWARENESS COALITION

Coalition Partners:

California Cattlemen's
Association
1221 H Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Farm
Bureau Federation
1127 11th St., Ste. 626
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Forest
Pest Council
c/o Bob Rynearson,
Chairman
P.O. Box 249
McArthur, CA 96056

California Invasive
Plant Council
1442-A Walnut St., #462
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California Native
Plant Society
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Regional Council of
Rural Counties
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POSITIONS STATEMENT

March 11, 2009

California Invasive Weeds Awareness Day at the Capitol

*Protecting California's natural resources from invasive weeds
is a critical investment in the long-term health
of the state's ecosystems and the services they provide.*

- SUPPORT making the state's new Invasive Species Council a strong and effective body.** The council, created by Secretary of Food & Agriculture AG Kawamura and Secretary of Natural Resources Mike Chrisman on Feb. 10, brings together state agencies to coordinate on invasive species management, plus an advisory committee to engage stakeholders from tribal, environmental, agricultural, academic, health and commercial sectors to participate in strategic statewide decision-making.
- SUPPORT maintaining budgets for existing state programs that form a strong foundation for invasive species work in the future.** These include programs such as CDFA's Weed Management Area program that supports on-the-ground projects planned by local collaborative groups, Fish & Game's Invasive Species Program, and State Parks' Natural Resource Management.
- SUPPORT resolving the bond funding crisis promptly so that important restoration projects can resume.** Many invasive plant management projects have been halted due to the stop-work order. Progress made on these projects can be lost as weeds grow back, and organizations working on these projects are losing capacity as jobs disappear.

California is being severely impacted by invasions of an increasing number of harmful, exotic, non-native plants, animals, organisms and diseases.

The establishment of these invasive species results in significant damage to California's agricultural lands, natural resources, waterways and our rural and urban environments, and causes economic hardship for all Californians.

There is significant interest in excluding, detecting, eradicating and controlling the spread of harmful invasive species into and within California and there is a need for a mechanism for coordination, cooperation and collaboration to achieve this objective.

The state intends to complete and implement a statewide action plan for meeting the challenges that invasive species present, and desires to engage public and private organizations to assist in the development and implementation of this plan.

The establishment and spread of invasive species can supplant native species, and can lead to unintended consequences on native species and terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

1. Today we announce the formation of the California Invasive Species Council (Council);
2. The Council shall be chaired by the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and vice-chaired by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency; and
3. The purpose of the Council is to provide policy level direction and planning for mitigating harmful invasive species infestations throughout the state and for preventing the introduction of others that may be potentially harmful. The Council shall foster coordinated, streamlined approaches that support initiatives for the prevention and control of invasive species, avoiding program duplication by building upon the core competencies of member organizations.

The Council's actions will minimize the harmful effects of invasive non-native species on California's agriculture, lands, natural resources, waterways, rural and urban environments and ensure the economic and environmental well being of the State of California and the nation by:

1. Serving as a forum for identifying and understanding invasive species issues from all perspectives;
2. Developing policies that reflect the need to minimize the economic and environmental harm posed by invasive species;
3. Coordinating the state's resources to maximize opportunities to encourage exclusion, prevention and control of harmful non-native species;
4. Identifying federal programs and other private funding sources that can leverage existing state resources;
5. Organizing and streamlining the interagency process for excluding, detecting, eradicating and controlling invasive species;
6. Considering ways to halt the spread of invasive species as well as finding possible ways to bring current problems under control;
7. Producing a state strategic plan for the exclusion, detection, eradication, mitigation and control of harmful invasive species;

ESTABLISHING THE INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

8. Integrating invasive species exclusion, prevention and control activities with other cooperating states and state associations as well as with neighboring international governments; and
9. Forming an advisory committee.

The California Invasive Species Council will include a representative from the Secretaries of the following state entities:

1. California Department of Food and Agriculture
2. California Natural Resources Agency
3. California Environmental Protection Agency
4. California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
5. California Emergency Management Agency
6. California Health and Human Services Agency

A California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC) shall be established to provide advice to the Council from local government, special districts, tribal governments and federal agencies, as well as water, conservation, and environmental organizations, academic institutions, science institutions, affected industry sectors and impacted landowners. Representatives from the following entities shall be invited to participate on the Invasive Species Advisory Committee:

1. University of California
2. California State University
3. Local government and local government organizations
4. Federal agencies
5. Tribal governments of California
6. Water, conservation, environmental and invasive species organizations
7. Public health organizations
8. Landowner organizations
9. Agriculture and nursery sector organizations
10. Scientific and academic institutions

The Council may appoint a statewide California Invasive Species Coordinator to lead the CISAC. The CISAC will report to and advise the Council. Additional members to the Advisory Committee may be added by consensus of the Council.

The advisory committee will:

1. Develop a list of the highest priority invasive species that cause or may cause the greatest economic, public health or environmental hardship;
2. Identify participants and develop a process for an invasive species rapid response plan; and
3. Identify federal programs and private funding sources to leverage state resources.

Existing state programs form a strong foundation for invasive species work in the future.

Information from the California Noxious and Invasive Weed Action Plan (2005):
www.cdfa.ca.gov/weedhome/pdfs/noxious_weed_plan.pdf

Dept. of Food & Agriculture

Regulates some invasive plants. Inspectors work to stop invasive plants and other pests from entering at border stations and in commercial shipments. Run control programs for serious weeds such as hydrilla and purple loosestrife. Works with USDA to develop and distribute biocontrol agents. Oversees Weed Management Areas, where local stakeholders collaborate, using state funds to leverage grants and in-kind contributions.

Dept. of Parks & Recreation

100,000 of its 1.4 million acres are infested with invasive plants. Restoration projects remove large infestations, while the Ongoing Maintenance Program prevents existing infestations from spreading and new ones from establishing.

Dept. of Boating & Waterways

Extensive program to control the invasive aquatic plants Brazilian egeria and water hyacinth in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its tributaries, protecting water quality, agricultural irrigation, and recreation. Water hyacinth can double in size every 8-10 days during warm weather.

California Dept. of Fish & Game

Manages 970,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat. Removes invasive plants to protect this habitat but has only one pesticide use coordinator to administer pesticide recommendations and train staff throughout the entire state. Invasive Species Branch oversees the state's aquatic invasive species work.

Caltrans

Highways are a major means of spread for invasive plants, as vehicles transport weeds or cause seeds to be blown along roads. Improved management practices reduce this spread.

Coastal Conservancy

Supports the Invasive Spartina Project to eradicate invasive cordgrass in San Francisco Bay, unclogging flood-control channels and mudflat habitats critical for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl.

County Agriculture Departments

Carry out regulatory and other weed control programs in coordination with CDFG. Agricultural Commissioners play a key role in noxious weed eradication, inspection, and prevention.

Impact of bond funding crisis on restoration projects

The bond freeze has affected 1,100 restoration and conservation organizations around the state (*L.A. Times* 1/21/09). Many work on invasive plant management. State funds are often used as a match for federal grants, which are jeopardized. Some of those impacted include:

Resource Conservation Districts (100 RCDs statewide)

RCDs assist local landowners implement practices that protect and sustain agricultural and natural resources. Many have shut down completely or drastically reduced staff hours.

Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council (Los Angeles County)

\$2 million in work and four jobs have been lost. The halted projects assisted cities with predominantly low income minority communities on restoring and revitalizing parks and streams to provide recreation, clean storm water and increase groundwater storage.

Mission Resource Conservation District (San Diego County)

\$700,000 of completed work is unpaid, and \$3.5M for projects in progress is frozen. These projects address flood and fire risk and restore habitat. Contractors waiting for payment are at risk of insolvency, while service providers release workers and hold off on supply purchases.

Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project (Santa Barbara County)

Delay on this project to eradicate tamarisk and arundo on the 90-mile Santa Ynez River risks a significant increase in cost due to an increase in the amount of plants to control.

Invasive Spartina Project (San Francisco Bay)

This large eradication project to reverse damage to bayshore habitats and flood channels is nearing completion after five years of work, but skipping control efforts for one season will set the project back several years. Ten specialized jobs have been lost.

Sonoma Ecology Center (Sonoma County)

The SEC conducts work in northern California watersheds, developing innovative tools for those in the field and conducting public education in the community. Currently the entire organization of 15 staff is in danger of shutting down.

Yolo Resource Conservation District (Yolo County)

\$500,000 Wildlife Conservation Board grant is frozen, including invasive plant removal on Cache Creek. Due to the seasonality of the work, this year's work has been lost.

Sierra Nevada

A survey of 68 organizations found that 10 have laid off staff, 26 have laid off contractors, and two have closed completely.