

Roadside Working Group Notes
CallPC Symposium – October 8, 2004

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Bonnie started the discussion by asking for good and bad examples of working with road maintenance agencies, including Caltrans. Discussion included:

- Difficulty between each Caltrans district and the way they issue encroachment permits for detection surveys; each district varies
- Concerns re: limited use of herbicides by Caltrans --- how can we support education about the advantage of judicious use of herbicides:
 - Get involved in the Caltrans advisory process
 - Educate the public regarding how difficult some species are to remove by hand (give “service” opportunities to understand the difficulty). This may win some over!
- How are Caltrans “sensitive areas” determined and who reviews?

Caltrans staff attending the working group session gave insight into some of the challenges that Caltrans faces:

- Need ideas for non-invasive, low ground covers to incorporate into landscapes
- It is challenging to meet all of the public's "needs" regarding what should be included in a roadside landscape i.e. fire safety, native plants, "pretty" plants, variations in climate, soils, etc.
- Caltrans is constantly challenged by lawsuits, endangered species issues and pushed to include habitat corridors within easements
- Budget constraints have affected Caltrans ability to utilize some weed control tools

How can CalIPC and individuals help change Caltrans invasive weed strategy?

- There is a need for roadside Best Management Practices (BMP)
- Weed identification training and BMP information are needed at the "on-the-ground" level for maintenance crews -- trainings video, CD and identification cards?
- The push to increase invasive weeds as a top department priority needs to come from outside Caltrans, i.e. calls from the public, letters or emails (www.dot.ca.gov has an email address for complaints) --- all of these communication methods are reviewed by staff and the issues addressed
- Caltrans upper management needs additional training to understand the issue
- New construction – monitoring period for invasive weeds needs to be longer than is commonly used in current contracts --- 5 years? 10 years?
- Encourage roadside management curriculum to be added to college courses in landscape architecture, etc. plus environmental training for engineers
- Currently there is no professional organization for roadside managers in California. A professional conference for roadside/right of way (roads, utility companies, railways, etc.) managers would be a great way to get invasive weed information disseminated and increase invasive weed training for Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) continuing education credits
- Increase invasive plant talks at PAPA seminars
- Promote the CalIPC annual symposium to more Caltrans employees – Bruce April with Caltrans offered to help get the word out for the 2005 Symposium in Chico
- Include a speaker session on roadside/right of way issues at the next CalIPC Symposium