

# CALIFORNIA INVASIVE WEEDS AWARENESS COALITION

## *NGO Partners:*

Regional Council of  
Rural Counties

California Cattlemen's  
Association

California Invasive  
Plant Council

California Farm Bureau  
Federation

California Forest Pest  
Council

California Native Plant  
Society

## *Corporate partners:*

Dow AgroSciences

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Resources Secretary Chrisman and Agriculture Secretary Kawamura To Address State's Invasive Weed Legislative Conference**

Sacramento Event Will Stress Environmental and Agricultural Losses

SACRAMENTO, CA, March 7, 2005 – Invasive weeds, with their severe environmental and economic impacts, have been making headlines. On Wednesday, March 9, top individuals working to control these plants across the state will gather in Sacramento to speak with legislators and the agencies responsible for addressing the growing issue. Mike Chrisman, Secretary of the Resources Agency, and AG Kawamura, Secretary of the Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA), will describe their agencies' efforts and the needs for the future as they pertain to this issue.

Long the focus of ecologists, invasive species are getting increasing attention. National Geographic, for instance, published an article in their latest issue, and produced an hour-long television special that will be shown in April. In California, plants like yellow starthistle, giant reed, and saltcedar cause significant damage. Losses to so-called "ecological services" like water resources, crop pollination, and wildlife habitat are difficult to quantify, but the costs are high. Yellow starthistle infests 12 million acres of California rangeland. Giant reed, or Arundo, forms dense thickets along waterways, increasing flood damage and fire danger. Saltcedar, or tamarisk, is a scourge of the Southwest, drying up precious desert water sources.

The secretaries will address ways in which their agencies work to control invasive weeds. One of the fastest growing tactics is through county-based groups, called Weed Management Areas (WMAs), that implement on-the-ground control projects based on local priorities. More than forty of these groups have formed in California. "WMAs are the most effective way to get a lot of this work done," says Bob Pickard, Supervisor in Mariposa County. "They bring together all the local players—public and private—so that decisions have full support. You need that collaboration with weed control efforts, because infestations almost always cross property boundaries." Funds to support the WMAs were approved by the state legislature in 2000, but these ran out in 2004 and have not yet been renewed. A recent bill signed by President Bush will, if funds are appropriated, support the work of

The day's activities are organized by the California Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition, which includes industry and nonprofits representing agricultural and environmental concerns. Presentations begin at 9:00 am, with the Secretaries scheduled to speak at 10:00 am. The event will be held at the offices of the Regional Council of Rural Counties, 801 12<sup>th</sup> St., suite 600, in Sacramento.

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## 2005 Invasive Weeds Day at the Capitol

**Wednesday, March 9, 2005**

Regional Council of Rural Counties  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
801 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento  
and  
California State Capitol, Sacramento

- 8:30 a.m. Check-in and coffee**
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome**  
**Bob Pickard, CALIWAC Chairman**
- 9:10 a.m. Weed Control Case Study**  
**Peggy Olofson, S.F. Bay Invasive Spartina Project**  
*After several survey seasons and their first treatment season, this Coastal Conservancy-funded effort presents an excellent model for a major eradication project. Spartina in the bay degrades important mudflat habitat and poses a flood control threat.*
- 10:00 a.m. State Government Briefings**
- 10:00 a.m. **Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources**
- 10:15 a.m. **A.G. Kawamura, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture**
- 10:30 a.m. **Ted Jackson, Deputy Chief, California State Parks**
- 11:00 a.m. Meeting with Legislators – How to Get Your Message Heard!**  
Rich Mason, Director of Legislative Affairs, RCRC  
NIWAW Team – just returned from National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week  
Wendy West and Doug Johnson – Meeting Preparation
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch (provided) and walk to State Capitol**
- 1:00 p.m. Appointments with Legislators**
- 4:00 p.m. Debriefing - Capitol Room 447**
- 5:00 p.m. Social Hour at Pyramid Brewery & Restaurant, 1029 K Street**

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## Position Statements

### ***2005 Invasive Weeds Day at the Capitol***

- SUPPORT:**      **County Weed Management Areas (WMAs)**  
WMAs undertake crucial projects at the local level by implementing on-the-ground weed removal, conducting public education, and mapping weed populations. Previous state funding (\$5 million through SB 1740 for 2000-2004) leveraged a 4:1 match in local funding and participation, but this funding has not yet been renewed. WMAs are structured to also accept future federal funding (such as PL 108-412 / Senate Bill 144, the Noxious Weed Control Act, which is currently awaiting appropriation in Congress). These groups are extremely effective at building collaborative efforts to control weeds, and need to be fully supported.
- SUPPORT:**      **California State Weed Plan**  
Drafted at the request of California Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition by the California Department of Food and Agriculture with the participation of over one hundred weed experts statewide. The plan lists immediate actions and lays out a blueprint for future goals. The plan has been endorsed by industry, commodity, and conservation groups.
- SUPPORT:**      **California Invasive Weeds Awareness Week**  
This event set for July 18-24, 2005, builds awareness through local public events. Consider meeting with your local Weed Management Area and visiting some of their projects.

#### **Contact:**

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