

2023 Cal-IPC Symposium Discussion Group #6 Notes

Communicating about herbicides

Communicating the need for controlling invasive plants remains a challenge with some audiences. Ideally, communicating across different perspectives can yield positive results — how do we move contentious conversations in a productive direction? How do we prepare staff for difficult conversations? What are the salient points that may help someone understand the work we do, the tools we use, and the nature of risk? Discussion Group Lead: Rachel Kesel, California State Parks

NOTES:

Above and Beyond existing regulation authorities

- Increased PPE.
- F5 Risk Assessments.
- Public Liaison.
- Inviting Ag Commissioner inspection.
- Posting – show before and after photos.
- Prioritization.
- How much does your audience realize the above?

Strategies

- Having something to hand to a concerned citizen.
- Listening (NOT justifying).
- Being able to talk about the benefits.
- Take off your pack and lift up your glasses to talk.
- “USFS pesticide management” – risk assessment specific to forest/restoration applications.
- Own the decision. Take responsibility.
- Introduce scale.
 - Time.
 - Money.
 - Urgency of the problem – fire, flood, climate.
- Increase your confidence.

Building confidence (for you and for staff)

- Read the label.
- Pesticide information sheets (can be from the manufacturer, for each active ingredient).
- Slow down your applicator days & socialize the steps.
- Acknowledge the risk.
 - [EPA has a risk communication document.](#)
 - [Cal-IPC glyphosate FAQ.](#)
 - [Cal-IPC wildlife management BMP.](#)

- Framework to address employee concern.
- Train your staff and also practice by role playing. Expect a positive interaction.

Responding to inquiries from groups and policy makers

- Be concise.
- State the facts.
- Find something to show you've heard them – realize their concern.
- Believe in your response. Don't be insincere.
- Align at multiple levels.
 - Staff.
 - Contractors.
 - Leadership.
- Have high self-awareness and know your audience.
- Emphasize the short-term duration of using herbicides.