



CALIFORNIA

◀ INVASIVE SPECIES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Report on Invasive Plant Funding Needs
Adopted by CISAC July 19, 2012 and
presented to Secretaries Karen Ross and
John Laird August 6, 2012**



Coordinated Statewide Invasive Plant Management in California

May 2012

Hundreds of entities across California work to stop the spread of invasive plants that damage California's environment and economy. This work protects our water supply, agriculture, forestry, threatened and endangered species, outdoor recreation and fire safety.

However, this work is underfunded and not coordinated statewide, limiting the state's ability to achieve long-term conservation goals at the landscape scale. California needs a coordinated statewide invasive plant management program in which long-term conservation goals are set and achieved. An "early detection and rapid response" approach is cost-effective even with restricted budgets.

Building such a program requires implementing a complementary set of actions. These actions support key elements of the state's *Strategic Framework for Invasive Species* as noted in brackets below.

- • Set regional strategies using mapping and prioritization tools in a standard approach statewide [Detection & Response #4, Eradication & Management #6 and #9];
- • Coordinate regional collaborations in a statewide network [Eradication & Management #2]; • Secure funding for on-the-ground surveillance and management efforts [Leadership & Coordination #1]
- • Track long-term conservation outcomes [Fundamental & Applied Research #3].

Some of the pieces necessary to build this program are in place. The California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) has historically partnered with county Agricultural Commissioners to detect and treat high-priority invasive plants, and in recent years additional stakeholders have participated through the state's network of Weed Management Areas (WMAs). This provides a framework for coordination. Meanwhile, new strategic mapping and prioritization tools have come online, such as those developed by Cal-IPC and Calflora in partnership with WMA partners, CDFA and the USDA Forest Service.

But with deep budget cuts at CDFA, statewide coordination and support for on-the-ground management has been virtually eliminated. Gains made in controlling invasive plants and mobilizing partnerships are in jeopardy.

For the near term, the minimum need is \$500,000/year for strategic prioritization, coordination and tracking and \$1 million/year for on-the-ground management of top-priority invasive plant populations. This matches the previous amount dedicated to the WMA program through CDFA, and would serve to keep the work alive at a low level, addressing some populations of top-priority invasive plants that could spread much more widely. Substantially more funding would be needed to address the full scale of the problem across California. A study should be conducted to determine the full need.

Unfortunately, invasive plant management is largely a "general fund" type issue. The CISAC Plant Sub-Committee has not been able to identify any workable "polluter pays" or "beneficiary" funding scenarios. While ranching and timber industries are perhaps most directly impacted, the major natural resource benefits—from fire safety to water supply, outdoor recreation to endangered wildlife—affect all Californians.

Though funding will be an ongoing challenge, it is critical that California agencies, industry and NGOs find a way to build a coordinated statewide invasive plant management program as an investment in protecting California's natural resources for the future.