

PROGRESS REPORT to CA LCC and USFWS

Grant Recipient: California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC)

Project Title: This agreement covers two active projects:

1. "Setting Regional Strategies for Invasive Plant Management Using CalWeedMapper" (\$94,706 from CA LCC)
2. "Developing an Accessible Tool for Prioritizing Management of Invasive Plant Populations" (WHIPPET, \$50,000 from USFWS I&M)

FWS Agreement Number: 80250-B-J122

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Project 1 - Setting Regional Strategies for Invasive Plant Management Using CalWeedMapper

Task 1: *Design process and materials for developing regional invasive plant management strategies. Coordinate with CDFG Wildlife Action Plan process.*

85% complete. In working with pilot regions, we developed a standard process and materials for regional prioritization. The process involves two stakeholder meetings to use CalWeedMapper to determine top eradication and surveillance priorities for a region and to scope projects to address those priorities. These collaborative regional priorities are encapsulated in a simple strategic plan document. For eradication, we work with each region to scope the cost for eradication of identified species and identify funding sources for implementation. For surveillance, we work each region to produce materials to train those in the field to identify species selected as early detection targets.

Due to changes in the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife's timeline, participation in the Wildlife Action Plan was delayed. In March 2013, we provided "Lego blocks" linking the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife's Key Ecological Attributes and stressors for invasive plants, and participated in meetings for the desert ecoregion. We began surveying invasive plant experts in the ecoregion for species information to plug into DFW's Miradi decision support software.

Task 2: *Complete strategic plans for two regions. Incorporate climate uncertainty measure into regional approach.*

100% complete. We have completed regional strategic priorities and eradication workplans for the Central Sierra (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, and Tuolumne Counties) and the Central Coast (Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties). We held 2 partner meetings in each of these regions. We integrated an assessment of projected climate change impact on suitable range into the process for selection of priority species. We helped the Central Sierra secure a National Fish & Wildlife Foundation grant to eradicate three priority species, and we hope to find funding for the Central Coast partners to implement top priority projects there. A presentation was given at a regional meeting in the Central Coast on the regional strategy process and another on the surveillance species therein.

Task 3: *Complete strategic plans for two additional regions. Complete “regional strategies” webpage in CalWeedMapper.*

100% complete. The regional strategies webpage has been created in CalWeedMapper (<http://calweedmapper.calflora.org/regions>) and all regional documents can be found there. We completed strategic plans and eradication workplans for the Northwest and North-Central regions. We held two meetings in each of these regions. The Northwest presented an overview of their plan and identification materials for surveillance at their annual outreach meeting (we plan to post this presentation on the regions page). The Northwest group is now working on a worksheet of potential funders, while the North-Central region is drafting an early detection species guide for distribution within their region and through our regions page.

Quotes from participant in the North Central Region: “You should be proud of your efforts. For me the Cal IPC model is helping me be reinvigorated about the noxious weed work. It has helped get our Trinity County WMA back on track and if we are able to pull off prioritizing our Trinity County weeds then we should be able to better focus on priorities.”

Task 4: *Complete strategic plans for two additional regions. Hold statewide meeting or conference call for regional partners. Complete standardized process and materials.*

40% complete. We are in the beginning stages of planning for three regions: South-Central Coast, Bay Area and Northern Sierra. In the South-Central Coast, we held our first meeting and have begun drafting a strategic plan. In the Bay Area we have absorbed the work of the Bay Area Early Detection Network. They have identified priority populations for eradication. We are coordinating with Bay Area partners to track progress on eradicating these populations, while laying the foundation for revisiting priorities through our regional approach. In the Northern Sierra, we are currently organizing our first meeting.

We now have a standardized regional process using the information in CalWeedMapper to work with regional partner to determine priority species, develop a strategic plan for eradication and surveillance species, and design an eradication workplan to scope the work necessary to eradicate priority species. We have also developed a template for species identification presentations to train people on “early detection” for new invaders in the region.

Project 2 - Developing an Accessible Tool for Prioritizing Management of Invasive Plant Populations

Note: task list updated to reflect cooperative agreement of June 2012.

Task 1: *WHIPPET Evaluation: the WHIPPET tool is evaluated and adapted for applicability at a local land manager scale to prioritize invasive plant eradication or control efforts.*

95% complete. We interviewed previous WHIPPET users on their experience and recommendations. We met with WHIPPET developers to determine model variables and flexibility and how to incorporate these into online WHIPPET. The original desktop WHIPPET was tested on a USFWS refuge, although the test is not complete. Information and questions raised during the test are being applied to the development of online WHIPPET.

Task 2: *WHIPPET Development: the WHIPPET tool is adapted (if needed) for use by local land managers or a new tool is developed.*

75% complete. After meeting with current and potential users of WHIPPET, we have determined the changes that are needed to make it more applicable at a local (refuge) scale. These changes will be incorporated into the online tool in development and tested.

Task 3: *The WHIPPET tool (or an adaptation of WHIPPET) is made accessible on-line.*

10% complete. This task will be the focus of 2013 Q2. We have identified data sources and defined changes to variables from the original WHIPPET. We have built a database for information in the Cal-IPC Inventory, which will provide data to WHIPPET. We have secured our contractors, and they have begun to develop the online tool. The database portion for scoring management criteria has been completed. Cal-IPC is preparing GIS layers that will be used to score geographic proximity criteria. We have determined how to connect WHIPPET with the Calflora database.

Task 4: *4. The WHIPPET tool (or an adaptation of WHIPPET) is implemented on at least two National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) invasive plant datasets to prioritize eradication targets.*

5% complete. San Diego will likely be one of the USFWS refuges used, to compare results of online WHIPPET to original WHIPPET.

Task 5: *5. Report on project findings: individual refuge reports and project report*

0% complete.