

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" (\$143,706 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

Date of Report: October 30, 2013

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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.*

100% 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 available here: <http://calweedmapper.calflora.org/strategic/>. 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. We will be assisting with the preparation of a chapter on invasive species for the Wildlife Action Plan, at DFW's request.

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). Both the Northwest and North central groups have completed a worksheet of potential funders and been invited for a full proposal for the NFWF grant. Both regions are also drafting an early detection species guide for distribution within their region and through our regions page. It will need refining and improving in LCC3.

Quote 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.

100% complete. We are working on three regions: South-Central Coast, Bay Area and Northern Sierra. In the South-Central Coast, we have drafted a strategic plan and are working on the eradication workplan. In the Bay Area we have absorbed the work of the Bay Area Early Detection Network. We have identified 9 priority populations for eradication in Western San Mateo. We are coordinating with Bay Area partners to track progress on populations identified by BAEDN as eradication targets, while laying the foundation for revisiting priorities through our regional approach. In the Northern Sierra, we held our first meeting in September and are drafting a strategic plan. Feedback from that meeting:

“The big upside of our North Sierra meeting was interacting with regional partners that we haven’t teamed-up with before. Instead of our various boundaries acting as an impediment, I was encouraged with the possibilities for new collaborations [between USFS/State Parks/RCDs/DWR and County Ag]. Great job yesterday Dana—Thanks!”

Ed King
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, Placer County

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 are developing “early detection” outreach for new invaders in the region. In total, we have had 90 individuals participate in our regional meetings around the state. We held a statewide conference call for our regions in September where each region gave updates from each region and we talked about submitting and preparing grant proposals to actuate region’s eradication workplans (NFWF-PTI & WCB).

Update from previous project: Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park increased their efforts to control orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*) populations in the backcountry based on Cal-IPC’s models.

Additional tasks from new LCC funding in 2013:

Task 5: Hold workshop and discussion groups at Cal-IPC Symposium

50% complete. We will hold a workshop on “Climate-Smart Land Management” at the Cal-IPC Symposium on October 2, focusing on giving attendees a process they can use to determine which invasive plants on their site are the most important to address. There are no existing guidelines for this so we surveyed and adapted guidelines for other land management activities. Speakers will address “Making land management decisions in a time of rapid change”, “Guidelines from leading organizations”, “Scenario planning”, and “Making ecological restoration climate-smart”. Attendees will participate in an exercise using a case study of invasive plants at the Starr Ranch Audubon Preserve. We will hold two discussion groups at our Symposium, one on Novel ecosystems (following on a plenary session) and another on tools for prioritizing weed management. We are developing these with a land manager at Starr Ranch and a professor from Santa Clara University. Nathaniel Seavy of Point Blue (PRBO) is confirmed as a speaker on scenario planning.

Task 6: Create surveillance outreach guides

50% complete. We have created a template power point presentation. Three regions are using this to present their priority species to their region. We are also working in partnership with State Parks to develop standardized guide content and structure for early detection training.

Task 7: Hold interagency landscape-scale collaboration summit

75% complete. This meeting was held on June 26 in Sacramento with 20 attendees from agencies including US Forest Service, National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, California Dept. Of Fish & Wildlife, California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, Caltrans, California Dept. of Water Resources, California State Parks, California Agricultural Commissioners & Sealers Association and UC Davis. We received comments on a “Blueprint for Landscape-Level Invasive Plant Management” and sent it to partners for a second review.

Task 8: Develop mapping support materials

10% complete. We have drafted instructions to help managers and citizen scientists make their data public.

Task 9: Share data to display on Calflora

0% complete.

Task 10: Other improvements

25% complete. We have improved the Regions page on CalWeedMapper and made new pages for regions on the Cal-IPC website that will provide space to post more materials (example: www.cal-ipc.org/WMAAs/regions/region_northwest.php). Our Spring Cal-IPC Newsletter (pg. 10) gave an update on the regional process (www.cal-ipc.org/resources/news/index.php). We have also improved CalWeedMapper by making it more secure from outside hackers and closing down the private data feed that exposed Calflora to potential hacks.

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

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.

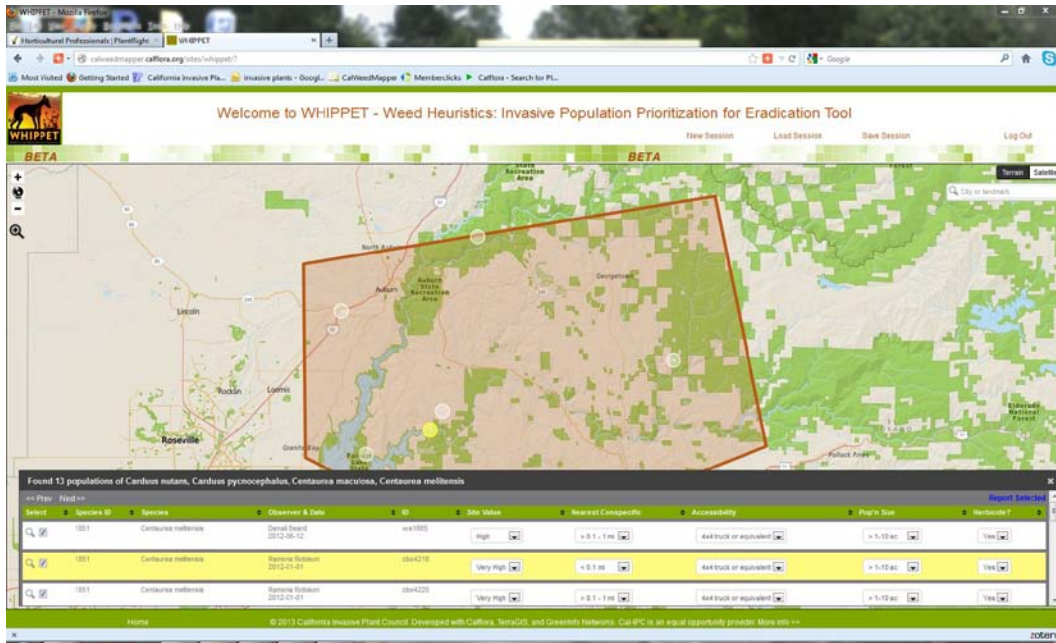
100% complete. We interviewed previous WHIPPET users on their experience and recommendations. We met with WHIPPET developers to determine model variables and flexibility and how to incorporate these into online WHIPPET. The original desktop WHIPPET was tested on a USFWS refuge, although the test is not 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.

100% complete. After meeting with current and potential users of WHIPPET, we determined the changes that are needed to make it more applicable at a local (refuge) scale. These changes were incorporated into the online tool in Task 3.

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

80% complete. The website has been developed with functions that produce a ranked list of populations based on locations and species variables. Users can download a spreadsheet or map. The spreadsheet includes coordinates that can be imported into GIS software. We are testing the system with data provided by partners and have sent it to a small group of users for feedback.



Task 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 NWR has provided data. San Pablo NWR is a likely second refuge.

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

0% complete.