

TAdN Steering Committee Minutes
Arundo Eradication and Coordination Program
June 6, 2005
Davis, California

Attending were: Tracy Enhelder, Sonoma Ecology Center (SEC); Bob Hass, SEC; Frank Wallace, Sacramento Weed Warriors; Ron Unger, EDAW; Rich Marovich, Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee; Mark Newhouser, SEC; Cece Sellgren, Contra Costa County Flood Control District; Deanne DiPietro, SEC; Susan Mason, CSUC Research Foundation; David Spencer, USDA-ARS; Alex Straessle, Lake County Watershed Protection District; Jim Johnson, San Francisquito Watershed Council; Rob Hill, Butte County Agricultural Commission; Sharon Weaver, San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust; and Eric Htain, EDAW.

Program Coordination

Mark Newhouser, Program Coordinator, indicated that he expects to receive a signed agreement in about two weeks. CBDA just lost its director, which accounts in part for the delay. From new partners, we will need completed copies of all the documents on the Eradication Plan Packet Checklist. The Project Description will help partners in planning, and includes project history/background information, an eradication plan summary, eradication goals and schedule, and eradication methods to be used. Examples of the Project Description and Restoration Plan are provided on the TAdN website. Required site information corresponds to the newly redesigned WIMS database. Phase 2 subagreements end March 15, 2008, so funds must be spent by then. However, we can always request an extension. There will be a longer than normal delay in mailing the first payment to partners, so partners are advised to submit their first invoice as early as possible.

Data Coordination

Deanne DiPietro, Data Coordinator, gave a short presentation on changes in how the program intends to collect and store data. The program will be using one data methodology and standard, and will be centralizing all program support. A training workshop will be offered for all partners in the use of the TAdN WIMS database application for surveying and monitoring protocols, including the use of GPS units and hand-held PDAs for data collection. Participants will also receive training in use of the WIMS database, along with support materials. AECP support staff will be visiting partner sites, and phone assistance will also be available. The current database system on the TAdN website is now outdated, but will be changed soon. Program support staff will help partners get their field data into their own database, and then sent to us and put into one larger database which will allow us to analyze the data and look for patterns—larger use than just for each individual program. The mapserver is in the process of being put on the TAdN website. One part will be visible to the public, but without the sensitive data.

Data showing where the Arundo is will be updated each time partners do additional treatments. New data will continue to go up on mapserver. Best time to submit new data

is with your quarterly reports. Partners will simply do a simple export of new data that can be emailed to Deanne.

WIMS partner training (Weed Info Management System) [will be held in mid-August]. We are adding new information and simplifying it at the same time. Partners will need to purchase and configure PDAs and bring them to the training, or program could purchase all of them and configure them for you. Cost of package is about \$1200 (PDA, GPS, ArcPad). We are trying to negotiate bulk purchase of software.

Regional scale mapping is also part of Phase 2. We plan to identify and assemble existing data, identify gaps, fill in gaps through on the ground mapping, combine with habitat quality data for prioritization of eradication sites, and then identify those partners for the needed eradication work. May use Jason Giessow's quick method of air photos combined with driving around and drawing areas. Habitat will be ranked for its significance in order to determine priority areas for Arundo eradication. Deliverable: map showing priority eradication areas.

Website/Digital Library: Several upgrades are planned, including communication portal services, integrated library with experts, bibliography, and data catalog, Also have plans to partner with Cal-IPC on a more comprehensive invasive plants digital library.

Programmatic Environmental Compliance and Permitting

Ron Unger and Eric Htain of EDAW made the presentation. Ron indicated it takes so long and so much money to secure permitting for individual sites, that the program is trying to secure one permit for all partners. This will have the effect of streamlining the permitting process and eliminating having to get new permits for each new project. Having the permit itself is also a way of attracting new landowners to a particular project.

Ron distributed a handout that lists all the environmental compliance and permitting requirements for this program. He said he hoped to generate project descriptions that avoid damaging any natural resources. If successful, this will allow us to get a Negative Declaration for CEQA compliance.

Streambed Alteration Agreement needed if using heavy machinery, which can make eradication more efficient in some areas. Some of the newer equipment has much less impact on soil compaction.

Section 404 Permit: Nationwide Permit 27 allows work below high-water mark, and no acreage limit. We are hoping to get this permission.

401 Certification: Will probably need to get more than one to cover broad geographical areas of AECP. Must not damage water quality, or damage channel that will alter water flow, or endangered and sensitive species.

CESA Compliance: If can avoid "take" of state listed species, depending on timing of treatments, etc., may not need a permit.

It is critical in project description to include any area for Phase 2 you may eventually be working in, and especially to indicate where the sensitive species are located in your project areas, where the invasive weeds are located, and how you will avoid impacting the sensitive species. One example: invite someone from California Audubon and California Native Plant Society to do surveys in your project area (must be qualified to take the survey). It's impossible to know location of every sensitive species in your area, but you can indicate that you know how to identify them, and that this is how you intend to avoid impacting them.

Garlon/triclopyr, imazypry, glyphosate—some partners are using these.

If intend on burning any of the Arundo, will need a local burn permit and possibly air quality permit.

EDAW is asking partners to fill out four forms to guide the programmatic permitting process. Mark will send all EDAW forms to partners so they can fill them out electronically. If you have questions, you can contact Ron at: ungerr@edaw.com; 916-414-5800.

Experimental Component

Coordinating the program's Experimental Component will be David Spencer, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, whose work broadly covers applied research on problems related to agriculture. His unit now includes invasive plants in riparian zones and rangeland areas.

David passed out a handout that listed the program's three main hypotheses. The experiments to test these hypotheses will be designed to get new information to refine some of eradication techniques being used. Long-term view is toward precision weed control—to reduce impact of what we do. We hope to learn new information on how to control Arundo, and how controlling Arundo will impact the system, and new ways of revegetating the system.

Hypothesis 1: Techniques used effectively eliminate Arundo infestations.

Timing of treatments. Will look compare different summertime treatments. Plants actively growing often take up herbicide more. Plants farther away from stream grow more slowly. Part of experiment will involve treating plants at dif. distances from streambed. Maybe treat plants closer to stream later in season, and those farther away earlier in the season.

David will have to visit some sites and see which ones will be most appropriate for his experiments. Experiments will likely be conducted at 4 to 5 of the 10 partner sites. He wants to find some sites as far north and far south as possible, and as far east and west as possible. Probably will need monthly access to test sites. He emphasized that there is plenty of chance for adaptive management in the experiments which will be conducted. Will be treating individual plants in a quadrant.

Hypothesis 2: Native riparian vegetation increases after Arundo removal.

Will identify new species that occur in or around treated Arundo. Using transects, will measure changes (within treated and untreated areas)—what plants come back into the area. Will also be conducting experiments on passive vs. active revegetation sites.

Hypothesis 3: Stream channel capacity increases at Arundo sites.

David will be contacting partners to determine where will locate experimental sites.

Other Business:

There was not time to discuss the CBDA monitoring and evaluation proposal that was submitted 11/04.