

Team Arundo Del Norte Meeting
July 10, 2002

Roundtable discussion:

Mark Newhouser, SEC
Kent Nelson, DWR
Steve Schoenig, CDFA
Bob Hass, SEC
Kim Klementowski, Chico State U
Debbie North, San Joaquin River Parkway Trust
Tony Gallegos, Lake County Flood Control Dist.
Frank Wallace, CNPS/Sac. Weed Warriors
Stuart Gray, Shasta WMA/UAP Timberland
Deanne DiPietro, ICE
Jan Lowry, Cache Creek Conservancy
John Watson, Cache Creek Conservancy
Thomas Confal, Bitterroot Restoration
Katherine Domeny, DWQ SWRCB
Jessie Smith, DWQ SWRCB
Chris Sauer, California Conservation Corps
Kristin Cooper-Carter

**** = Action Items**

NIS Workshops:

Invasive Plant School:

Organized/led by Carl Bell & Nelroy Jackson - June 18-19, 2002.

Good turnout for S. Cal. NIS workshop. Covered full gamut of weed ID, how to put together plans and strategies, various control tools. Designed to bring new folks up to speed. Covered several different weeds.

Overview – (Kristin Cooper-Carter)

- In S. Cal, debris is floating downstream and causing problems/contention between Counties.
- Use of Arundo mulch in eradicated areas is helpful in promoting regrowth of native species.
- Acting quickly on areas of new infestations is key.
- Recent research that Arundo root mass harbors non-native invertebrates.
- Herbicides application timelines on Arundo and saltcedar are longer than what some use.
- Garlon drifts a lot, no matter when it is sprayed.
(Kristin said her understanding is that Garlon will drift even if you apply it when

the temperature is under the recommended 85 degrees and it gets warmer later in the day. However, staff in the local Ag. office said that drift depends on the surfactant that is used. They believe it will not drift if a heavy oil based surfactant is used.)

- Chipping green materials is easier than dry materials—dry go through blades a lot faster.
- We need workshop/info. on restoration—not covered in this workshop.
- Also need workshop on education and outreach.

National Invasive Species Council:

Some of presentations from UC Davis symposium on invasive weeds will be on CAIN website.

NPDES Permit:

The need for NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permits is raised again. No new developments since the release of a Water Board Fact Sheet clearly noting that discharge permits only apply to direct aquatic applications.

When contacted, SFRWQCB staff stated that a permit may be required if treating Arundo that has base of plant touching water, even if herbicide is applied to vegetation above the water line. (M. Newhouser)

State Water Board: If not applying chemical directly to water, even if applying to bank and getting small amount of runoff, does not require NPDES permit (i.e., it is not considered “direct water treatment”). Probably best to take this approach—not actually applying herbicide to water. (State Water Board ruling)

**Will look into latest developments regarding NPDES permits. (K. Domeny)

The actual act of not controlling invasive weeds should be viewed as “a take.” (D. North)

If applying for the permit, may be more likely to be sued, although can still be sued in any case. (S. Schoenig)

CNPS Project - Currently going through permitting process. Not treating weeds in the water, but is hoping to develop a contact list of agency folks. (F. Wallace)

**Suggestion to begin an online discussion to come up with a strategy or suggested means by which some of these agencies can give Arundo (restoration) projects exemption to do eradication work. Please share all leads and successful exemptions. Use keywords in your subject heading, such as NPDES. (all)

Important to try and influence staff at the regional level, rather than focus on state level folks, to respond to issues that concern us.

Reduction of biomass by chipping with a Vermeer chipper. (F. Wallace)

Some weed groups are using chipper with rotary head or flail mowers—cutting and mulching in one step. Must have good access to use these types of equipment.

Once Arundo is removed, there is a great risk that other opportunistic invasives will invade eradication sites. Monitoring and follow-up treatments are required for several years. There is a real need for multiple strategies. Need a lot more input from people in the field.

**Research, compile or develop strategies for components of eradication (post on website): small and large infestation sites, small and large machinery, volunteers, slash disposal, GIS mapping, restoration, funding, etc. (all)

**Call projects and add to NRPI. Working on online updating form. (Bob, Deanne)

**Looking for trial sites for new machine, cuts and chops Arundo, moves to side, and then treats the stumps with herbicide. (Contact Stuart Gray - sgray@uaptimberland.com).
(Brown Bush monitor on 70 HP tractor, rotary blade)

Steve Schoenig – WMA Presentation

CDFA Key programs:

Pest prevention—keeping weeds out of Ca. in first place. Monitor for introductions such as delivery trucks that can bring in pests. Work heavily with county ag depts. To do detection, find weeds when they first get established (detection biologists)

Weed Eradication Program—8 biologists in state, targeting weeds such as spotted knapweed, leafy spurge for complete eradication program.

Once weeds get established, CDFA involved in biological control program to bring in herbivores that will only feed on target weed(s). Work with USDA scientists. Star thistle is big project, also brooms, and Arundo.

WMA: coordinate weed control—large region weed mgt. group, usually at county level. Interagency cooperation, put together watershed-based program, solve problem globally rather than small isolated units.

The number of WMAs in state has increased dramatically—cover practically the entire state now. WMA is only one paradigm of doing weed control.

Two other paradigms existed longer than WMAs, include:

- 1) smaller unit (e.g. National Park, one conservancy, etc.)
- 2) A program focused on one weed in a large region, such as TAdN.

Given we now have this coverage of WMA in most of state, how does a group like Team Arundo fit into that paradigm?

It may not be practical to have one weed group for every weed. Imagine a Team Yellow Star Thistle, Team German Ivy, etc. This amount of division would require too much coordination. Team Arundos currently provide a needed service, but can take away initiative to start or support WMAs. County ag commissioners can be key to effectiveness of WMAs.

WMA must be a group of people who want to work together.

Advantages of Forming a WMA:

- Pilot or coordinated projects can often get funded if they work together under umbrella of WMA (multi-stakeholder), of regional control strategy, and slow down spread.
- WMA can develop regional strategies, since weeds don't know borders or fences. (Eg.: upstream eradication of Arundo) Can put together regional mapping and data, rather than just focusing on worst area of infestation
- Awareness/education
Many WMAs have created their own outreach materials, brochures. Provide means to pool budget to get more done.
(several organizations contribute to produce brochure, print logos)

Sacramento: WMA dysfunctional.

Sonoma: partnership with Marin not benefiting Sonoma County.

Sonoma/Napa—glassy-winged sharpshooter has diverted attention from weed mgt.

Is there support to start a WMA group?

Is Team Arundo willing to support educating people about other weeds?

Should these counties have a WMA?

Current WMA Structure and Funding:

50-50 whether ag commissioner is one who finally gets WMA together and does the admin work; may be a forest service employee, RCD, Dept. Public Works/Water Dept. (Lake County)

Started with Guidelines for Weed Management Areas (Yellowstone)
CWMA Cookbook—(ask Steve S. to send so we can post or link to website.)

State Legislature passed 3 yrs. ago, set aside \$5 million to fund WMAs. Steve's job was to put together this program. County depts. of agriculture are leads for this program.

Currently have 4 contracts with RCDs rather than ag commissioners.
Coop. Ext. can be real involved or not. (E.g. Mark Horney brought WMA to higher level of coordination.) Sometimes they contract thru ag commissioner office, and then they subcontract program through another organization/gov. agency.

Jan Lowry/Cache Creek Conservancy: their WMA offers coordination and information exchange, a little \$; work with: CalTrans, Fire chiefs assn, ag commissioner office, ranchers, farmers, RCD, chemical cos. Where can we focus our energy to do the most good? Education/coordination.

K. Cooper-Carter/Tehama Co.: WMA has been good to pull people together into same room.

Steve recommends that each WMA have a strategic plan.

John Randall/Nature Conservancy's worldwide weed control expert
Another person - Colusa County expert (?)

Tendency is to find worst infestation and do battle with it, rather than finding out where the weed is likely to invade, how to keep it from moving in, and finding any isolated occurrences of it.

WMA is not supposed to be a private land welfare program. It can supply cutting edge info on how to control and eradicate certain weeds. Why are we controlling the weeds?— A big part of the strategy—fire safety, rare & endangered species, economic viability.

**Putting well-thought-out strategy down on paper is important, and on maps (Arc-View software). (All)

Brochure: "The Real Dirty Dozen: Noxious Weeds of the Central Sierra"
Tuolumne Ag Commis Office, 209-533-5691

Purple Loosestrife
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Carrie Benefield, loosestrife@cdfa.ca.gov
916-654-0768

Invasive Weeds
San Mateo County WMA
650-363-4700

There are regional meetings of WMAs occasionally. Statewide WMA meeting scheduled for Sept. 23, 24.

California Weed Mapping Handbook (Steve S., Deanne, etc. in draft version).

ERADICATION PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

CALFED Update:

- The Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) is undergoing an internal process to resolve concerns of the science and review staff.
- ERP is assigning leads for each topic area
- Kim Webb has been assigned as lead for NIS topic area.
- Kim is working with ERP and Science staff to work out venue for resolving issues and concerns
- Funding is secured for Watershed coordinator position to coordinate the workshop and continue to be liaison to the various weed projects.

Experimental vs. implementation project

Are we going to add an experimental component to the CALFED proposal? If we do, we should determine what are most important things to find out in experiments.

Ideas:

- Document the rate of spread on a reach of creek, and with different patterns of infestations.
- Correlate rate of spread with hydrological factors.
- Document the things that are already obvious to us. This will secure future funding.
- Mercury transport when Arundo is removed. (Tony G.)
- Monitoring is also a form of research. (Deanne)
- Find out from partners if they have sites in their project area that could be used in such experiments.

Need to diversify long-term funding strategy. Cannot rely only on CALFED funding. Do not know if CALFED will be funded in future, or will fund program in a reasonable amount of time. (J. Watson)

Need to be able to document your successes in order to remain competitive for additional funding.

DFG Stream Alteration Agreement:

DFG Technical Committee presentation by Mark and Deanne. Presented reasons why Arundo Eradication Program should be given statewide permit. Result: Tech. Com. willing to help come up with master agreements for each region—any new partner would be able to sign on to this agreement and would be permitted for protocols approved under the agreement. No heavy machinery would be allowed. (Partners would need to secure own permit for this.) CEQA for master agreement will push this goal to next year, hopefully in time for next fall eradication season.

Vegetation removal alone can be considered alteration and may necessitate a stream alteration agreement.

- Kristin's stream alteration agreement = cut/mulch, spray w/herbicide, use minor equipment.
- Putah Creek: obtained a CEQA exemption for Arundo removal (maintenance of wildlife habitat) and is exercising nationwide permit #27 to satisfy NEPA.

**Put in subscription to California Natural Diversity Database, so it will be available to all partners in AEP.

CALFED is urging more coordination with WMAs to organize weed groups.

Sept. 23-24—Weed Management Area statewide meeting. (Get more info from Steve S.).

WMA structure is valuable but could benefit from strengthening. Someone from AEP should get involved with Caliwac group that Steve S. coordinates (non-governmental groups interested in invasive weed mgt.).

Prop. 40 funds may be available for weed groups.

**Follow up with Steve Schoenig and bibliographic info his researcher is compiling.

Information and Data Coordination Update

Bibliographic references: 88 on TAdN website so far. Can search by keywords. Peer-reviewed literature—most is assembled and posted
Gray literature – search in process.

Access database is up and running. Program Partners can now enter all survey, monitoring and treatment data on-line.

CAIN allows creation of smaller, local/regional databases connected into one network, so you can conduct searches and pull information from all the databases. TAdN database is an “aggregator” of info in some Arundo projects in state.

AEP is setting up an ARC/IMS server, so Arundo data from projects will appear on a map.

How to estimate percent cover of vegetation? (Frank wanted to know)

Withdrawal of Partner, Chico Creek:

Steering Committee agreed to roll funds previously allocated to Chico Creek into project coordination, and use those funds to help new partners with training in use of surveying/treatment/monitoring protocol, and phone and field support.

Equipment:

Frank Wallace—info on Vermeer chippers. Info: 1-888-837-6337. www.vermeer.com. Requires highly skilled operator. Noisy.

Other equipment operation, such as a rotary head cutter on an excavator will require additional ongoing expenses, including: operator, insurance, maintenance, and transport.