

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

October 23, 2003

WILDLAND WEED WORKERS HANDBOOK FOR THE S.F. BAY AREA

File No. 01-113

Project Manager: Patrycja Bossak

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$19,000 to the California Exotic Pest Plant Council to prepare, publish, and distribute a “Wildland Weed Workers Handbook for the S.F. Bay Area.”

LOCATION: To be distributed and used throughout the San Francisco Bay Area (Exhibits 1 and 2)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Region

Exhibit 2: Target Groups

Exhibit 3: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Sections 31160 to 31164 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed nineteen thousand dollars (\$19,000) to the California Exotic Pest Plant Council (Council) to prepare, publish, and distribute a “Wildland Weed Workers Handbook for the S.F. Bay Area” This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to the disbursement of any funds, the Council shall submit for the review and approval of the Conservancy’s Executive Officer a work program, budget, timeline, and the names and qualifications of any contractors it intends to use for the project.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31164 regarding the Conservancy's mandate to address the resource goals of the San Francisco Bay Area.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
 3. The grantee is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code."
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

This authorization would grant up to \$19,000 to the California Exotic Pest Plant Council (Cal-EPPC) to prepare, publish, and distribute a "Wildland Weed Workers Handbook for the S.F. Bay Area." The handbook will be approximately 100 pages, staple bound, and it will be designed for accessible reference to information needed by those developing projects involving control of invasive plants. It will present background information on the issues regarding invasive plants, describe the variety of tools used to control these plants in a restoration context, and focus on 15 to 20 of the most invasive plants found in the Bay Area. For each of these invasions, the handbook will present detailed control options, including specific needs for timing, tools, and follow-up. The handbook will also include previously unpublished information derived from interviews with local field experts. A references section will point readers to more detailed information.

The handbook will be distributed through a number of channels, and will be used in workshops put on by the Aquatic Outreach Institute (AOI) for teachers and members of the public pertaining to invasive non-native species. AOI is a leader in the Bay Area with respect to watershed restoration and education, and has inspired many people to protect and restore watershed resources. The handbook will also be sent to active Bay Area volunteer restoration groups and posted online.

Cal-EPPC is a nonprofit organization that works to protect California wildlands from invasive plants through research, restoration, and education. It has been granted tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

Site Description: The handbook will be used as a resource by organizations involved in restoration projects throughout the Bay Area. In the short term it will be used on predominantly public lands where volunteer crews can assist the land-owning agency with vegetation management and habitat restoration. These include federal lands (such as Golden Gate National Recreation Area), state lands (such as East Shore State Park), or county/city lands (such as Codornices Creek).

Project History: Over the last decade, the knowledge about invasive species has grown rapidly and invasive plant control became a key component of restoration. Volunteers have become a highly effective force in vegetation management and habitat restoration. However, in utilizing volunteers, agencies and organizations have often lacked easily accessible practical information on the management of the various invasive plants.

The Council believes now is the time to pull together the most up-to-date information on wildland weed control in order to make the growing volunteer ranks more efficient and successful.

The handbook will focus on using a modified integrated pest management (IPM) strategy, including these techniques judged most suitable for organizations utilizing volunteers (no heavy machinery, fire, biocontrols, or herbicide applications).

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$19,000
Alameda County Clean Water Program	6,500
US Fish & Wildlife Service	4,000
Contra Costa County Clean Water Program	<u>3,500</u>
Total Project Cost	\$ 33,000

The Conservancy’s contribution is expected to come from the FY 2001/02 appropriation from the “Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund” (Proposition 12) for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Bay Program). Under Proposition 12, these funds may be used for Bay Program resource improvement projects undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The project is undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31160-31164), which established the Conservancy’s Bay Program. Chapter 4.5 directs the Conservancy to address the resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Pursuant to §31162, the Conservancy is authorized to undertake projects and award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that will serve to accomplish specified program objectives. Section 31162(b) describes one of these objectives: “to protect, restore and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas and other open-space resources of regional importance.” The Wildland Weed Worker Handbook will directly assist in meeting that objective by facilitating the removal of invasive vegetation and the protection and preservation of native plants and habitat throughout the open-spaces of the Bay Area. The proposed project also satisfies the criteria for priority under §31163(d) in the following respects: 1) the project will help implement many regional and local plans such as the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Restoration, Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, and Santa Clara County Plan and land management plans, 2) this project will be a useful tool for use throughout the entire Bay Area region; 3) work can be implemented in a timely way, since Cal-EPPC staff is prepared to initiate work on this project immediately; and 4) matching funds have been committed by the Alameda and Contra Costa County Clean Water Programs, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 10, Objective A** of the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan, the proposed project will assist in the enhancement and restoration of natural habitats by providing a valuable reference and guide to land managers and organizations involved in restoration.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The proposed project has community and agency support including East Bay Regional Park District, Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, Contra Costa County Resource Conservation District, Contra Costa Watershed Forum, Friends of Orinda Creek, Friends of Temescal Creek, Friends of Two Creeks, Friends of Baxter Creek, Friends of Strawberry Creek, Friends of San Bruno Mountain, Fish and Wildlife Service, and all of the nine Bay Area Weed Management Areas. Support letters are included as Exhibit 3.
4. **Location:** The proposed handbook will be used throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.
5. **Need:** Invasive non-native species are spreading rapidly, posing a big threat to high priority habitat, and require an on-going effort for their removal. The handbook will contribute to the management of invasive species by providing the knowledge necessary to effectively control and eradicate them.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project to be funded by this authorization would serve the entire Bay Area and provide necessary guidance for restoration of nearly every major habitat type found in the region.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** The research and rough draft of the handbook is completed, and the sooner it is funded, published and distributed, the sooner organizations can use it to prevent further, on-going invasive species spread.
9. **Leverage:** For every Conservancy dollar granted, the grantee is providing over a dollar of matching funds from other grants and in-kind donations.
12. **Readiness:** The grantee is ready to finalize the handbook and with the Conservancy funds will be able to publish it in October.
15. **Cooperation:** The grantee has secured the cooperation of restoration professionals, volunteer organizations, and other local groups to use the handbook in their restoration work.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL PLANS:

The project will help implement the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan, the East Bay Regional Park District invasive species control program, and land management plans

throughout the Bay Area including the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, and Santa Clara County.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed authorization is exempt from review of impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Sections 21000 *et seq.* Under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations §15378, the mere preparation and distribution of a guidebook to provide resource and reference materials will not have a physical effect on the environment and is therefore not considered “a project” under CEQA. The proposed project does not serve to authorize, fund, permit or approve any specific invasive plant eradication project. For similar reasons, the preparation and distribution of the guidebook is categorically exempt under CEQA, since it involves solely educational, training and information collection and distribution activities (14 Cal. Code of Regulations §15306 and §15322). Upon Conservancy approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption.