



# California Invasive Plant Council Strategic Plan 2025-2030



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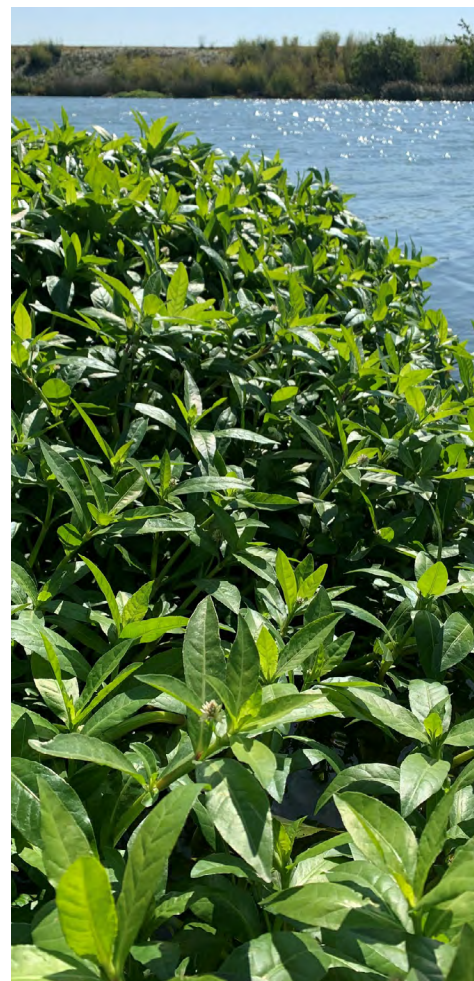
# OVERVIEW

Cal-IPC’s mission is to protect California’s environment and economy from invasive plants. We provide leadership for ecologists, professional land stewards, and volunteers dedicated to this work.

Caring for California’s lands and waters is essential to the resilience of the state’s natural and human communities, especially with the increasing impacts of climate change and other human disturbance. Invasive plants threaten California’s globally significant biodiversity as well as ecosystem services like supplying clean water, enhancing fire safety, and supporting production of food and fiber.

Our work is categorized under three key programmatic areas: generating science-based conservation information to guide effective on-the-ground efforts; training the land stewardship workforce while seeking to increase public awareness; and advocating for public policy to help stop the spread of invasive plants and reduce their impacts. In addition, we invest in the capacity and resilience of the organization itself. These areas of work are described below in this Strategic Plan.

Our work is expanding in several key directions: we are increasing an emphasis on prevention strategies, supporting continued development of new approaches for controlling invasive plants, and broadening efforts to forge partnerships throughout all communities in California.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1: CONSERVATION AND SCIENCE

The focus of our Conservation and Science work is to synthesize the best available science and practitioner expertise to strengthen land manager effectiveness and facilitate successful on-the-ground invasive plant management. Taking a strategic regional approach is essential to effectively addressing the spread of invasive plants in an era of climate change.

To support this, Cal-IPC guides priority-setting, develops analytical tools, supports regional partnerships, designs management plans, and helps implement key projects on the ground. Across the actions below, we look for opportunities to adopt new technologies, increase the efficacy of efforts to stop the spread of invasive plants while reducing their impacts and integrating diverse perspectives on conservation.

## Intended Outcomes:

- Land stewards utilize the best available science and powerful analytical and implementation tools to successfully manage invasive plants.
- Land stewards implement high quality management plans, regional partnerships set landscape-level, cross-jurisdictional invasive plant management strategies, and new invasive plants are detected early in their establishment to increase the chance of successful management.
- Effective invasive plant management projects are implemented at a pace and scale consistent with the urgent need to protect biodiversity.



## Action CS 1: Assess the impact and spread of invasive plants.

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Land stewards need to know which plants are — or are likely to be — damaging to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and values in different regions of the state. Cal-IPC strives to provide this information through our data-rich Inventory of some 300 plant species and our CalWeedMapper online atlas that documents where each invasive plant currently grows in the state.

We regularly assess new plant species to better understand their current impacts and use the Plant Risk Evaluator (PRE) tool to anticipate potential future impacts. We work closely with Calflora to improve mapping tools, enabling land stewards to map invasive plants, and track their management work. We conduct research that helps us assess the impacts that invasive plants have on native biodiversity to help prioritize management efforts. The challenges posed by climate change, ongoing invasive plant introductions, and limited funding availability make prioritization critical; we need to concentrate on the projects where we can achieve the greatest conservation benefit.

- **CS 1.1 Species assessment:** Maintain the Invasive Plant Inventory and support the PRE tool.
- **CS 1.2 Spatial assessment:** Enhance CalWeedMapper and other tools and resources to support management planning.
- **CS 1.3 Mapping:** Support development and adoption of Calflora and other tools for mapping and data collection.
- **CS 1.4 Analysis:** Conduct research and synthesize results to assess the impacts of invasive plants and track the success of management efforts.

## Action CS 2: Evaluate and compile the best ways to control invasive plants.

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Through our network of invasive plant management experts across the state, we synthesize the latest science-based knowledge about which techniques work best as part of an integrated pest management (IPM) approach. When we identify gaps in knowledge, we seek to fill them with our own research or by encouraging other partners to pursue key topics. These research areas enable us to support land stewards by compiling Best Management Practices (BMPs) and developing decision-support tools. (See the “Training and Engagement” section for more on how we share these tools with the land management community.)

- **CS 2.1 Prevention BMPs:** Synthesize information about invasive plant prevention methods.
- **CS 2.2 Weed Control BMPs:** Synthesize information about invasive plant control methods.
- **CS 2.3 Planning BMPs:** Synthesize information about invasive plant management planning to develop guidelines.

## Action CS 3: Support land stewards in designing invasive plant management strategy.

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By combining assessments of species impact and spatial distribution, we set management priorities at multiple scales. Statewide, we monitor for early detection of new invasive plants and those plants expanding their distribution. With partners in each region, particularly through county Weed Management Areas (WMAs), we develop strategic priorities and support coordinated action across jurisdictions. For specific management units, such as National Parks or National Forests, we support land stewards in designing plans for addressing invasive plants on lands under their jurisdiction.

- **CS 3.1 EDRR:** Further strengthen early detection and rapid response at local, regional, and state levels.
- **CS 3.2 Regional prioritization:** Help WMAs and others set regional management priorities.
- **CS 3.3 Management plans:** Support parks and others in designing invasive plant management plans.

## Action CS 4: Facilitate the implementation of on-the-ground projects to control invasive plants.

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Cal-IPC plays a coordination role in supporting the implementation of work on the ground for selected high-priority projects that can benefit from our involvement. These have typically been regional projects with no single entity to take the lead role. We also identify invasive plant species that need attention and organize partnerships to address them.

- **CS 4.1 Implementation:** Coordinate on-the-ground invasive plant management projects.
- **CS 4.2 Project support:** Support regional partners in planning and implementing projects.
- **CS 4.3 Identify targets:** Monitor new detections to identify high priorities for management response.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2: TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT

Cal-IPC is a statewide hub for information related to invasive plants and a point of connection for people engaged in this work. We share information on the impacts of invasive plants and the best strategies for controlling them. Our training resources serve professional and volunteer land stewards.

We provide workforce development for those new to the field. We strive to engage all Californians and foster networks to connect people from diverse backgrounds who have a passion for — or are curious about — land stewardship, invasive plants, and conservation of our natural environment. Across the actions below, we aim to strengthen capacity and networking within our membership and the broader stewardship community, develop more robust professional pathways in conservation, and better integrate invasive plant awareness through cultural connections into new communities.

## Intended Outcomes:

- Land stewards are well-trained in current conservation practices.
- The state’s ecological workforce encompasses the full range of people and communities in California.
- Californians are increasingly aware of the importance of invasive plant management to their lives and to the native biodiversity of California.



## Action TE 1: Share information on invasive plant management.

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Cal-IPC serves the community of professional and volunteer land stewards working to control invasive plants. We are the primary hub for science-based information on invasive plants in California, and we provide ways for community members to connect with each other and share information.

We recognize the varied needs of different geographic or cultural communities in California and seek to elevate and support practitioners and stakeholders from different backgrounds, while identifying common ground within the conservation community to achieve collective goals.

- **TE 1.1 Symposium:** Hold the annual Cal-IPC Symposium.
- **TE 1.2 Professional training:** Hold training events for those working in the field.
- **TE 1.3 Newsletter:** Publish the *Dispatch* newsletter.
- **TE 1.4 Website:** Maintain a website providing publications, videos, online tools, and ways for our community to connect.
- **TE 1.5 BMPs:** Create and promote Best Management Practice (BMP) manuals.





## Action TE 2: Support workforce development.

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The future of invasive plant management — and conservation as a whole — requires a strong workforce that continues to bring passion and innovation to the field. Cal-IPC works with partners to grow the ecological workforce by supporting emerging professionals and students in acquiring skills and building networks. We support development of career pathways for those from communities that are historically under-represented in the conservation field.

- **TE 2.1 Workforce development training:** Hold training events for Conservation Corps members and other early-career professionals, as well as volunteers and other relevant audiences.
- **TE 2.2 Student Section:** Support students and emerging professionals.
- **TE 2.3 Career pathways:** Facilitate professional networking in the conservation community and promote job opportunities for emerging professionals.

## Action TE 3: Educate and engage a variety of audiences on invasive plant management.

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To be most effective, land stewardship must be understood and supported by the full range of diverse people and communities throughout California. Public outreach includes direct correspondence with individuals, mass media coverage, and cultural opportunities such as community engagement through art and other relationship-building activities. We work to build stronger connections between communities and provide information to people who are curious about protecting the environment and learning more about invasive plant management.

- **TE 3.1 Media:** Generate engaging public communications through digital, print, and social media.
- **TE 3.2 Engagement:** Conduct creative outreach to communities less familiar with our work to provide opportunities and build stronger relationships.
- **TE 3.3 Inquiries:** Respond to inquiries for information from the public or media.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3: POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Cal-IPC works to build public agency leadership, vision, and coordination for a stronger, more effective approach to addressing invasive plants. We work to secure stable funding for weed management programs and support the state’s interagency Invasive Species Council and its advisory committee. We work to prevent introductions of invasive plants through horticultural pathways and emphasize the importance of early detection and rapid response activities through the statewide network of collaborative local Weed Management Areas.

We support the full suite of safe and effective tools and approaches that are available in the IPM toolbox. We work with partners at the national level to advance priorities as opportunities arise. Across the actions below, we look for innovative policy avenues to strengthen California’s response to invasive plants and to amplify voices speaking on behalf of protecting California communities and biodiversity.

## Intended Outcomes:

- Local, state, and federal agencies in California are committed to a systematic statewide approach for addressing invasive plants.
- California state agency programs and partners have steady funding to implement robust activities addressing invasive plants statewide.
- Reduced introduction and spread of invasive plants, including through horticultural pathways and internet distribution.
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM), including chemical methods, becomes more widely recognized as the best approach for wildland stewardship.



## Action PA 1: Strengthen interagency effectiveness in addressing invasive plants.

Government agencies are critical for coordinating responses to invasive plants. At the state level, we support the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Natural Resources Agency in strengthening their effectiveness. Interagency cooperation is coordinated by the Invasive Species Council of California (ISCC) and the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC), both entities formed through legislation sponsored by Cal-IPC. At the local level, county Weed Management Areas (WMAs) coordinate interagency action. The Global Biodiversity Framework's target for reduction of invasive species provides a useful metric for gauging progress in California.

- **PA 1.1 Commitment:** Strengthen state and local agency commitment to addressing invasive plants.
- **PA 1.2 Funding:** Secure steady funding for agency programs, including WMAs, that address invasive plants and other invasive taxa.
- **PA 1.3 WMAs:** Build WMA capacity and support regional coordination among land stewards.
- **PA 1.4 CISAC:** Strengthen the role of the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC).
- **PA 1.5 Legislation:** As opportunities arise, sponsor legislation to strengthen responses to invasive species.



## Action PA 2: Prevent introductions of invasive plants.

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Prevention is the most effective way to avoid damage from invasive plants. Horticulture is the top pathway for introduction of invasive plants, and Cal-IPC partners with agencies, universities, and the industry to maintain and strengthen the PlantRight program to reduce introductions. We work to support state and local agencies responsible for implementing prevention measures, such as border inspections.

- **PA 2.1 PlantRight:** Prevent horticultural introductions of invasive plants by participating in and supporting the PlantRight partnership.
- **PA 2.2 Prevention programs:** Advocate for systematic adoption of BMPs for invasive plant prevention.
- **PA 2.3 Prevention policy:** Advocate for stronger invasive species prevention policies and programs.

## Action PA 3: Advocate for effective tools and new approaches to invasive plant management.

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An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to managing invasive plants is essential, though often not widely understood. We support the full suite of techniques and approaches available in the IPM toolbox including ongoing development of biocontrol agents, innovation of new invasive plant management tools, incorporation of indigenous land management practices and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), as well as the judicious use of herbicide. We also advocate for herbicide labeling and training that facilitates their safe application in stewardship settings.

- **PA 3.1 Biocontrols:** Advocate for the screening and distribution of new biocontrol agents by the USDA Agricultural Research Service and others.
- **PA 3.2 Herbicides and IPM:** Advocate for appropriate use of herbicides as part of IPM for invasive plants.
- **PA 3.3 Innovative approaches:** Support adoption of effective approaches including new technologies, indigenous stewardship practices, and working landscape partnerships.
- **PA 3.4 DPR support:** Work with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) to better support invasive plant management by land stewards.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE

Cal-IPC works to sustain our staff and Board of Directors so they can support the organization’s mission while being resilient to the challenges faced by non-profit organizations. We continue to find ways to strengthen our membership, broaden our funding base, solidify operational effectiveness, and cultivate an inclusive work environment.

We recognize that a team comprising a variety of professional and lived experiences will be best suited to generating creative solutions to our challenges. Coalition building is critical to maintaining relevance to our mission and society, and this relevance will allow us to sustain funding and maintain effectiveness. Across the actions below, we strive to grow the capacity and diversity of the organization.

## Intended Outcomes:

- Cal-IPC has a productive Board and staff that unite diverse people and their perspectives to achieve its goals and maintain relevancy to its mission and the good of society.
- Cal-IPC secures ever more stable and flexible funding which allows us to support a broad range of strategic directions and program needs.
- Cal-IPC financial, operational, and administrative infrastructure provides a solid foundation for our mission-related program work.



## Action OCR 1: Maintain an effective team.

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Our team must have enough capacity to handle both core tasks as well as unexpected challenges, while retaining a sustainable work/life balance. The team must be proficient in a range of areas, and flexible enough to adapt to new opportunities.

- **OCR 1.1 Staffing:** *Cultivate and calibrate staff capacity, including the strategic use of consultants.*
- **OCR 1.2 Board and membership:** Recruit and retain diverse Board and Cal-IPC membership to sustain continuity of leadership and represent all Californians.
- **OCR 1.3 Culture:** Foster an inclusive, productive, flexible, and joyful organizational culture.
- **OCR 1.4 Partnerships:** Grow strategic partnerships with organizations whose mission aligns with ours.

## Action OCR 2: Secure and manage funding.

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Most of our funding comes from agency grants, and we work with agency partners to accomplish projects that align with our goals. Additionally, we seek to expand funding from private grants and donations. Unrestricted funding is critical to implementing initiatives not funded through more restrictive grants.

- **OCR 2.1 Donors:** Grow flexible funding through donor fundraising — including planned giving — and manage donor relations.
- **OCR 2.2 Grant funding:** Fully fund core program efforts through grants and contracts.
- **OCR 2.3 Contract management:** Effectively manage agreements, subcontractors, and invoicing.



## Action OCR 3: Maintain strong organizational infrastructure and practices.

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Solid organizational structure and implementing strong administrative practices, from human resources to proper internal financial controls and record keeping, forms an essential “administrative core” for the entire organization. To ensure stability, we track financial status closely and work to increase our reserve fund. We endeavor to stay current with new tools that can streamline our operations.

- **OCR 3.1 Finance:** Audit regularly, track financial health, and maintain efficient financial processes and procedures per GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles).
- **OCR 3.2 Operations:** Maintain our office, computer network, and other operational systems.
- **OCR 3.3 Administration:** Maintain robust, timely processes for payroll, benefits, insurance, human resources, and other critical administrative areas.



# CONCLUSION

As the efforts described in this Strategic Plan make clear, Cal-IPC’s work covers a lot of ground for a small organization. From humble beginnings holding a meeting for the state’s land stewards to share information in the early 1990s to today’s broad suite of program efforts, the organization has grown significantly. However, the same collaborative spirit of sharing information and inspiration is at the core of Cal-IPC’s culture.

Our ability to make progress in any of our program areas is dependent on funding. While we have an increasing amount of donor support that provides “golden dollars” to be used for our highest needs, our work is supported almost entirely by grants. We have proven adept at taking advantage of funding opportunities that arise, but so much more could be done with steady dedicated funding for Cal-IPC and, more importantly, for the hundreds of organizations making up California’s land stewardship community. We will continue to pursue the establishment of such funding.

Though “weeds” may still be seen as a niche issue, plants are a foundation for the entire natural world that supports life, including human life. As our collective awareness grows of the impacts that a “biodiversity crisis” and “insect apocalypse” will have on our lives, we hope that our collective commitment to act will grow as well. Cal-IPC has a long-range vision: a California where biodiversity and ecosystem services are not under continuous threat from invasive plants; a California where residents and decision makers recognize their stake in addressing invasive species; a California where land stewardship thrives with support and involvement from diverse people and communities. We invite everyone to join us in working towards this vision.



*Protecting California's environment  
and economy from invasive plants.*



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