



California Invasive Plant Council Strategic Plan 2025-2030 Summary



Clockwise from top left: Dawn Cunningham, Resource Environmental Solutions LLC; Drew Kerr; American Conservation Experience; Joseph DiTomaso; Adam White, Santa Lucia Conservancy

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. 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.



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. 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.



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. 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.



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. 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.



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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