

October 29, 2013

Agricultural Commissioner Stacy Carlsen
David Lewis, Marin UC Farm Advisor
County of Marin
1682 Novato Blvd.
Novato CA 94947



Re: Proposed 10-Year Invasive Weed Management Plan for Marin County

Dear Stacy and David:

Marin Conservation League acknowledges the need for a long-term commitment with multiple partners to help Marin's ranchers and farmers to address the noxious and invasive weeds infesting the county's agricultural properties. We applaud the effort by the Agricultural Commissioner and U.C. Farm Advisor to make this commitment, using IPM protocols.

We believe that funding from the Board to Supervisors to assist ranchers in controlling invasives would be an important step. That the ranchers care about doing the hard work to control invasives is an important indication of the cooperation that can be expected when the program starts. The fact that the first year is the only one well-defined will allow for needed flexibility and there appears to be enough "wiggle room" to alter how the funding is distributed over time.

We have several specific comments and questions about the first year proposal:

1. The number of outreach visits and meetings proposed for the first year should insure that groups like MCL and the landowners are able to participate fully. We are unable to sufficiently evaluate the program and its background through our issue committees in order to give the unqualified support for the 10-year program that was requested.
2. Would the pilot project's 500 acres be spread over a number of ranches, or be confined to one ranch? This information is absent and would make a big difference. Where will the 500 acres be located, and what is the rationale for selection, since both outlier populations and areas where the infestations are the worst need to be addressed in a pilot.
3. What will be the contribution of UC Ag Extension, given their considerable research expertise, which can be expected to benefit the total results?
4. A new staff position is a significant and positive step to be built into the program.
5. The \$45,000 commitment to share direct costs will benefit landowners, who have had to bear the burden of expensive treatments of invasives themselves, which many landowners cannot afford.

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6. Who will have oversight of the project and how will decisions and outcomes be conveyed to partners?
7. A small program of volunteers to help with organic control methods should be considered. This can have important benefits: people become involved and take ownership of a problem that affects our entire community, not just the ranchers. It shows people who care how extreme the problem really is.

MCL gladly supports the first year pilot program, with the understanding that there will be ample opportunity to review results. We look forward to a positive long-term relationship with our like-minded partners, knowing that the eradication of noxious weeds will take many, many years and a lot of commitment. The design of Year #1 is a good start.

Thanks for the opportunity to work together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon Elam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jon Elam, President