



County of Santa Cruz

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OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

DAVID W. MOELLER
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER
SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES
DIRECTOR, MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL

February 5, 2001

Agenda: February 13, 2001

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Authorize the Agricultural Commissioner to Apply for Noxious Weed Management Funding

Dear Members of the Board:

Sections 7270 through 7274 of the California Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) describe the State's noxious weed management program. Within these sections the Legislature finds and declares that the destructive impact of invasive and often poisonous noxious weeds is profound, affecting California's cropland, rangeland, forests, parks, and wildlands. It further declares that these pests cause enormous losses of private, state, and federal resources through decreased land productivity, degradation of wildlife habitat, and outright destruction of crops, livestock, wetlands, waterways, watersheds, and recreational areas. These code sections also designate the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) as the lead department and describe its various responsibilities for noxious weed management.

In September of last year, Senate Bill 1740 added to and amended the noxious weed sections of the FAC by, among other things, appropriating \$5,000,000 from the State's General Fund to a Noxious Weed Management Account in CDFA. Funds from this account are to be used for managing and eradicating noxious weeds through local weed management areas.

Section 7272(b) defines a weed management area (WMA) as a local organization that brings together various interested parties for the purpose of coordinating and combining their action and expertise to deal with their common weed control problems using an integrated weed management plan. An integrated weed management plan is an ecosystem-based control strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of weeds through a combination of techniques consistent with IPM principles.

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Any interested party or organization may become a member of a WMA and members may join or leave a WMA at any time. Typically, members of a WMA are local governmental jurisdictions, such as the county and cities, native plant societies, wildlands restoration groups, and members of the agricultural community. Currently, thirty-eight WMA's have been formed or are in the process of forming throughout the state.

The primary purpose of the WMA is to bring together parties interested in managing weed species of common concern; it is not to develop a one-size-fits-all solution to a given weed species problem nor to dictate specific control methods to its members.

For us to be eligible to receive funding from the Noxious Weed Management Account for local weed control, we must form a WMA and submit an integrated weed management plan to CDFA for their review, approval and funding. For this year, CDFA has already established funding limits for each county. The maximum funding available to us from the Noxious Weed Management Account is \$15,000.

We have had two preliminary meetings with potential WMA members where we discussed the process of setting up the WMA and reviewed some proposals for various weed projects. For example, the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (RCD) is working to control Harding grass and poison hemlock as part of a habitat restoration project in one of the sloughs and a local rancher is working to control YST on his property. YST is a noxious weed that is present in several limited areas in the county but not yet widely distributed.

Our first-year goals would be (1) to educate landowners and the general public concerning the importance of the exclusion and control of noxious weeds using IPM models; (2) to survey and map certain weed species selected by the WMA members; and (3) to cooperatively plan and fund small projects to control and/or eradicate selected weed infestations using a variety of methods selected by the WMA members which are suitable and appropriate for areas under their control.

With your Board's approval, we could begin the application process by making a proposal to CDFA for establishing a WMA in Santa Cruz County. If the State accepts our proposal, then we would return to your Board with our noxious weed management plan and an agreement with CDFA for your Board's review and approval.

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It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

Authorize the Agricultural Commissioner to take the required steps to form a Weed Management Area and to apply to CDFA for funding for a noxious weed management program.

Sincerely,

David W. Moeller
by Mary L. Nivioletta

David W. Moeller
Agricultural Commissioner

Approved:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

cc: California State Parks
California Native Plant Society
CalTrans
City of Santa Cruz IPM TAC
Farm Bureau
Rancho Santa Maria
Resource Conservation District
Santa Cruz County Public Works
Santa Cruz County POSCS
Wildlands Restoration Team