

# California Native Plant Society

TO: Steve Yaeger

DATE: May 3, 1994

FROM: Karen Wiese

RE: Introduced Fish, Wildlife, and Plants in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary - Perspective Paper

One of the primary objectives of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is the preservation of our state's native flora. To this end it is vital that the CNPS actively participate in governmental procedures such as the Bay-Delta Oversight Council's Technical Advisory Committee. In response to the briefing paper *Introduced Fish, Wildlife, and Plants in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary*, the CNPS views the introduction and proliferation of non-native plants in the San Francisco/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary as a threat that disrupts and displaces native ecosystems resulting in a loss of biodiversity. The loss of biodiversity implies reduced functional values (or benefits) to the ecosystem and the region as a whole.

Currently, the CNPS Exotic Plant Pest Committee is developing specific policy and guidelines relating to non-native plants. The following policy statements have been adopted by the CNPS Board of Directors to assist in evaluating modifications to native ecosystems when non-native plants are involved. These guidelines have been taken from the CNPS policy statements *Guidelines for Chapters to Reduce Impacts to Native Plants and Policy and Guidelines on Environmental Impact Documents*, adopted September 1993.

1. Initiate and support programs to eradicate particularly aggressive and noxious exotic plants. Promote the use of native plants.
2. In general, CNPS favors the use of native plants over exotic species and deplors the introduction of species such as broom (*Cytisus* and *Genista* spp.) and jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) in any place. Other aggressive species should not be used or marketed in areas where they can spread and replace native vegetation or alter native habitats.
3. Suggestions for use of exotic plants should be avoided. Where aggressive exotics could threaten native flora, this fact should be recorded.



*Dedicated to the preservation of California native flora*

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The CNPS has worked with the California Exotic Plant Pest Council in passing legislation (AB1108) that requires plants that threaten natural areas to be listed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and assigned an "agricultural pest rating". The CNPS is working with CDFA to develop a list of target species.

The CNPS, in cooperation with the California Association of Nurserymen and the Congressional Office of Technical Assessment (OTA) has prepared a technical report titled *Harmful Non-Indigenous Species of the U.S.* This document puts a dollar amount on the biological pollution from exotic plants.

In summary, the CNPS will not tolerate aggressive and invasive exotic plants that threaten to displace and destroy native plant communities. The plants referred to in the briefing paper have had a history of detrimental effects on the native flora in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary. The type conversion (permanent displacement of one vegetation type to another) as a result of the introduction and proliferation of the non-native plants referred to in the briefing paper, as well as other invasive exotic plants listed in the technical comments provided as a separate document, have adversely altered the biodiversity of the ecosystem. The CNPS recommends that when non-native plants become aggressive and threaten to displace and destroy native plant habitat, control and eradication programs be implemented for those invasive species.