

## National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Pre-Proposal

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| <b>Project Name:</b>   | Inland Mendocino County Weed Management Area ( CA) |   |              |
| <b>Organization:</b>   | Mendocino County Resource Conservation District    |   |              |
| <b>Organization Type:</b>  | State or local government                          |   |              |
| <b>Primary Contact:</b>  | Ms. Janet Olave                                    |   |              |
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| <b>Organization's Internet Address:</b>  | www.mrcd.ca.nacdn.net                              |   |              |
| <b>Total Funds Requested from the Foundation:</b>  | \$ 40,000  | <b>Total Matching Funds:</b>  | \$ 46,000    |
| <b>Salaries and Benefits:</b>  | \$ 4,000   | <b>Matching Salaries and Benefits:</b>  | \$ 0         |
| <b>Equipment:</b>  | \$ 0   | <b>Matching Equipment:</b>  | \$ 0         |
| <b>Other:</b>  | \$ 36,000  | <b>Matching Other:</b>  | \$ 46,000    |
| \$6,000 for Coast WMA contractual services<br><br>\$30,000 for Inland WMA<br>\$25,500 contractual services<br>\$20,500 WMA coordination<br>\$5000 weed survey coordination<br>\$3000 materials and supplies<br>\$1000 printing<br>\$500 travel |  | \$12,000 in-kind from Coast WMA partners<br>\$34,000 in-kind from Inland WMA partners |              |

## Sources of Matching Funds

| Name of Source(s)                             | Amount    | Status            |
|---|-----------|-------------------|
| California Department of Water Resources      | \$ 6,000  | Applied for       |
| California Department of Parks and Recreation | \$ 6,000  | To be applied for |
| Inland Mendocino WMA partners                 | \$ 34,000 | To be applied for |

## PROJECT SUMMARY

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| <b>Summary:</b>           | Initiate a Cooperative Weed Management Area Partnership to serve inland Mendocino County. The Mendocino Coast WMA will mentor the Inland WMA in its formation.  |
| <b>Project Site:</b>      | The Russian and Eel River watersheds in Mendocino County, California, including Lake Mendocino, and portions of BLM's Cow Mountain Recreation Management Area and Mendocino National Forest.  |
| <b>Conservation Need:</b> | <p>Inland Mendocino County is a sparsely-populated region characterised by the rugged terrain of North Coast ranges divided by rich valleys supporting orchards and vineyards with extensive systems of rivers, lakes and streams. Short-term conservation needs are to preserve biodiversity, slow or reverse the decline of oak woodlands, and reduce erosion into fish-bearing waters. Long-term needs are to improve water quantity and quality, reduce impacts from wildfire, restore salmonid habitat, preserve and enhance local agricultural, and preserve the unique beauty of the landscape.</p> <p>Home to many endemic plant and animal species, the rare Northern Vernal Pools, serpentine habitat, and riparian habitat supporting threatened coho and steelhead salmon are evidently in decline. A common thread in resource degradation is the combined pressure of human disturbance with the introduction of invasive species. Purple loosestrife is undergoing control by a NFWF-sponsored California Department of Food and Agriculture project. Yellow starthistle and non-native annual grasses are widespread, occupying areas formerly dominated by native oaks and perennial grasses. Numerous invasive plants have establish in riparian forests, increasing sediment load and water temperatures. Wildfires pose a significant risk to human life, property and natural resources. Invasive plants increase the combustible fuel load, and change the season and location of fuel loads, compared to native vegetation. Aquatic weed infestations displace native vegetation, degrade habitat for wildlife, and provide habitat for mosquitos carrying West Nile virus. Plants used in Native-American ceremonies and for basket-weaving are threatened in part due to displacement by invasive plants.</p> <p>There is an urgent need in this region to establish prevention and early-detection/rapid response programs to avoid severe and irreversible impacts including human health impacts, species extinction, irreversible degradation of habitats, and wildfire damage, and to reduce future control costs.</p> <p>In 2005, a PTI project was approved to initiate a WMA in coastal Mendocino County. The inland region is not presently served by a WMA, but stakeholder interest in such a partnership is high. Because of differing biogeographic and</p> |

demographic characteristics between coastal and inland regions, it is preferable to create a second WMA, rather than extend the coast WMA. Indeed, a County-wide WMA was attempted in the past, but was unsuccessful. Different partners will be active in the two WMAs. The major coast partners are State Parks, Fish and Game, CNPS-Dorothy King Young, and State Forestry and Fire. In contrast, potential inland partners include BLM, Corps of Engineers, US Forest Service, California Native Plant Society (CNPS)-Sanhedrin, and Mendocino County Farm Bureau. With less average precipitation and greater temperature variations, the areas supports different vegetation types and weed species; wildfire is a more significant issue inland.

The Coast WMA will serve as mentor to the Inland WMA during its formative stages, and joint efforts to develop educational materials and share equipment will allow the two groups to serve respective stakeholders efficiently. The Memorandum of Agreement and mapping protocols developed by the Coast WMA will serve as templates for the Inland WMA. The two WMAs will continue to explore joint funding opportunities. The Coast WMA has participated in a California Proposition 50 grant proposal to create an Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan, jointly with the Mendocino County Water Agency. The Inland WMA will coordinate closely with local watershed management plans and the general plan adopted by the County.

**Objectives:**

1. Identify, maintain and expand weed-free zones to increase biodiversity and improve ecosystem functions in Mendocino County.
2. Increase awareness and community participation in weed prevention and control.
3. Increase the use of native and non-invasive plants in restoration and landscaping.
4. Identify and eradicate weed species new to Mendocino County before they have established large populations.
5. Reduce weed dispersal from materials (gravel, hay) and equipment.
6. reduce weed populations at key dispersal sources, such as roadsides.
7. Develop WMA infrastructure to support long-term weed management.

| Activities  | Project Output  | Post Project Outcomes   |
|---|---|---|
| Conduct a coarse-scale weed survey to guide strategic planning. | Weed distribution maps, leading edges of infestation identified for priority species, Weed-Free-Zones identified.         | Increase in awareness and community participation in weed prevention and control; Identification of weed species new to Mendocino County before they have established large populations |
| Develop a Weed-Free-Zone monitoring program.                    | Monitoring records will be maintained in WIMS, the Weed Information Management System. An annual report will be prepared. | Increase in awareness and community participation in weed prevention and control; Identification of weed species new to Mendocino County before they have established large populations |
| Develop a Weed-Free-Zone control program.                       | Treatment records will be maintained in WIMS, the Weed Information Management System. An annual report will be prepared.  | Increase in biodiversity and improved ecosystem functions in Mendocino County; Eradication of weed species new to Mendocino County before they have established large populations       |
| Conduct public meetings.  | Incorporation of public input into the Strategic Plan. Increase in WMA partners and active volunteers.                    | Increase in awareness and community participation in invasive plant prevention and control  |

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| Develop educational materials.                         | Brochure. Kiosks.   | Increase in awareness and community participation in invasive plant prevention and control  |
| Support native plant propagation educational programs. | Curriculum on native plant propagation techniques appropriate for a high school or extension course, specialized to local conditions. | Increase in the use of native and non-invasive plants in restoration and landscaping  |
| Outreach to materials suppliers                        | Educational materials. Best Management Practices (BMP) guidelines for materials suppliers.  | Reduction of weed dispersal from materials (gravel, hay) and equipment; Reduction in weed populations at key dispersal sources, such as roadsides |
| Roadside control projects                              | 10 miles of treated roadside.   | Reduction in weed populations at key dispersal sources, such as roadsides.  |
| Develop MOA, Strategic Plan                            | MOA, Strategic Plan   | Effective long-term invasive plant management in Mendocino County   |

**Methodology:**

## A. Weed surveys

A coarse-scale weed survey to guide strategic planning will be conducted, following the procedures developed for the Coast WMA. In particular, current distributions will be compiled from agencies and other local experts. Local knowledge on weed distribution will be tapped at public meetings. Gaps will be identified, particularly to identify leading edges and weed-free zones. A weed mapping coordinator will be contracted to coordinate volunteer and student surveys, train volunteer surveyors and conduct additional surveys as needed.

## B. Weed-Free Zone monitoring program

A Weed-Free-Zone program will be developed. Guidelines for identifying and monitoring weed-free zones will be developed jointly with the Coast WMA. Each WMA will be separately responsible for identifying the zones and initiating monitoring programs using CNPS, Audubon Society, school programs and other local resources.

## C. Weed-Free Zone control program

To maintain Weed-Free Zones, rapid-response procedures for eradication of new introductions of high-risk invasive species will be developed jointly with the Coast WMA. The necessary actions for rapid response will be similar for both WMAs but the resources available will be different.

## D. Public meetings

A series of public meetings will be conducted, following the format of the public meetings now being conducted by the Coast WMA. Lessons learned from the Coast meetings will enhance the effectiveness of these vital opportunities to engage the public. This is especially important in the inland WMA, where public awareness of the invasive plant problem is low.

## E. Educational materials

Educational materials explaining the impacts of invasive plants and methods to reduce or prevent those impacts will be developed, using materials developed by the Coast WMA as well as other WMAs. The emphasis will be on supplying information tailored to the inland Mendocino climate and weed issues.

## F. Native plant propagation programs

To increase the supply of native and non-invasive landscaping plants from local sources, the Inland WMA will coordinate with and support the Mendocino College Agricultural Department in their plant propagation program.

## G. Outreach to materials suppliers

To minimize the dispersal of weeds in materials, including gravel for road construction and hay or straw used in restoration projects, an outreach program

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|   | <p>will be developed, in collaboration with the Mendocino Coast WMA. Best management practices will be developed cooperatively with suppliers, and voluntary compliance will be encouraged.</p> <p>H. BMP development<br/>In addition to BMPs for materials suppliers, the development of BMPs for other key factors in the introduction, establishment and dispersal of weeds will be initiated. This long-term effort will be guided by prioritization of the factors with regard to contribution to impact and feasibility of improvement of current practices. Horticultural and landscaping practices, back-country and roadside equipment cleaning, and recreational dispersal, among others, will be considered.</p> <p>I. Roadside control projects<br/>Select roadside weed control projects will be developed in collaboration with the Mendocino County and California Departments of Transportation. Support will be provided to the ongoing CNPS adopt-a-highway broom control project. New control activities will prioritize control of dispersal sources and educational benefit.</p> <p>J. Administrative Documents<br/>To establish the Inland Mendocino WMA as an entity, an MOA will be developed, as a modification of the MOA prepared by the Coast WMA. To guide the programmatic development of the Inland Mendocino WMA, a Strategic Plan will also be drafted, with the Strategic Plan now being developed by the Coast WMA serving as a template.</p>  |
| <p><b>Organization Qualifications:</b></p>          | <p>The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District has been serving landowners and managers of working and wild landscapes since 1945. The RCD manages a annual budget of almost one million dollars, and has conducted projects in riparian and upland habitat through CA Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife, CA Department of Water Resources, Integrated Waste Management Board, State Water Resources Control Board, NOAA Fisheries, and Coastal Conservancy funding. Projects successfully completed by the RCD, include: the Garcia River Basin Plan, Garcia River Effectiveness Monitoring, Navarro River Watershed Restoration Program, Phase 1, Tomki Creek Restoration Project, and the Forsythe Creek Restoration Plan.</p> <p>The project staff will include:<br/>Tara Athan, Coordinator, Mendocino Coast Cooperative Weed Management Area. 18 years experience in education, research and management, including 6 years experience in environmental restoration of DOE nuclear waste sites. Researcher in quantitative decision analysis for invasive species. BA (Chemistry), Indiana University, PhD (Applied Mathematics), California Institute of Technology.<br/>Geri Hulse-Stephens, member of Mendocino County RCD Board of Directors, Vice-President of CNPS-Sanhedrin.<br/>Chuck Williams, President of CNPS-Sanhedrin and Environmental Supervisor of Pinoleville Rancheria, a Pomo tribal reservation. 30+ years as a Mendocino County naturalist.<br/>Ray Harrie, Mendocino County Department of Agriculture botanist.</p> |
| <p><b>Region where your project will occur:</b></p> | <p>Pulling Together Initiative</p>  |