

MODEL RAPID RESPONSE PLAN
FOR
AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

Prepared for the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species by:
California Department of Food and Agriculture
Integrated Pest Control Branch
Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When a newly introduced species threatens to become a nuisance, it must be addressed rapidly if there is to be much hope of preventing it from spreading. This document presents instances where responses to new problems were relatively successful and other instances where the response struggled. It also identifies factors that affect the likelihood of a successful response, and problems that may preclude success. The plan also presents a model system, which functions via two organizations at the state level.

The elements that need to be addressed in a response include:

1. Authority, leadership, and organization
2. Coordination and cooperation among parties in the response
3. Funding and resources
4. Quarantine establishment and enforcement
5. Environmental regulatory compliance
6. Public awareness and education; outreach to decision makers as well as to affected property owners and parties
7. Delimitation survey and mapping
8. Review of biology and controls
9. Implementation of eradication or other management methods
10. Assessments of treatments and modification if necessary
11. Environmental monitoring
12. Restoration/mitigation

A rapid response can occur in a setting of complex and controversial issues, but in most instances a response must be initiated quickly and forcefully if there is to be a hope of eradication. Although debate and consensus building are important for public policy, if they slow the initiation of a response they may become counterproductive to the goal of eradication. A goal of this plan is a system where debate and consensus building largely occur before an introduction of an invasive species. Once an introduction occurs, the system should provide a forum where remaining issues may be resolved rapidly and a decision made to proceed with eradication or some other management option. A final goal is to put competent pest management personnel on the ground and permit them to focus on the infestation with the persistence that successful eradication efforts require.

The approach to these goals employs a two-level organization. The first level, the state council, focuses on the debate and on preparing for vigorous responses. This council must function with the support of high-level state officials and with participation of affected federal and local interests. Its decisions should provide the authority to carry out its course of action. The second level of organization focuses on the operations on the ground. It also investigates the issues and options surrounding invasive species and informs the first level about them, and uses that information to prepare for introductions. Adequate resources for responses need to be available on short notice, within this structure or through a separate fund.

In the model system, a state creates Aquatic Nuisance Species Council through legislation. The Council includes the major departments responsible for the resources threatened by invasive species, and departments that regulate control actions. Its members should be executive level officials or their designee in order that their deliberations carry weight down to staff. The

Council should include regional federal counterparts of these state officials because federal issues are often involved. Finally, the Council should include the public representation.

This Council identifies priority species, outlines general goals for each, reviews authority for actions, and broadly addresses the means to resolve environmental issues. The Council should identify and provide advice related to major policy and funding issues, and they should be available for deliberating on difficult situations.

At the level where projects are implemented, only one agency should have final authority on any given project. The Department responsible for program operations develops the details of a response to any particular infestation and plans for new introductions. It may also address the technical aspects of environmental compliance, monitoring, and, when appropriate, restoration. This Department must have experienced professional staff to check the results of control strategies on the ground and make necessary modifications.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE	1
BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE	1
LESSONS FROM RECENT RESPONSE EFFORTS	2
Caulerpa in Coastal Southern California.....	3
Salvinia in the Lower Colorado River.....	4
A Summary of the Response to Caulerpa and Salvinia.....	6
Hydrilla in California.....	6
ELEMENTS INFLUENCING SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF A RESPONSE	8
Influences on Success.....	8
The Decision to Eradicate.....	9
Factors to Consider when Deciding to Eradicate.....	9
UNDERTAKING A RAPID RESPONSE	10
OTHER RECENT EXAMPLES OF GENERAL RESPONSE PLANS	12
THE MODEL SYSTEM	14
NATIONAL INITIATIVES	16
SUMMARY	16
APPENDICES	19
Notes on Using the Contact Information Lists (Appendices 1 and 2).....	19
APPENDIX 1: SPECIALISTS IN IDENTIFICATION AND BIOLOGY	21
Index Sorted by Name.....	29
Index Sorted by Specialty.....	31
APPENDIX 2: PEOPLE IN AGENCIES THAT MAY RESPOND TO A NEW INTRODUCTION	35
Index Sorted by Name.....	51
Index Sorted by Specialty.....	55
APPENDIX 3: OREGON'S HYDRILLA RESPONSE PLAN	61