



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 7/28/2020

File #: 20-893

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Agricultural Commissioner

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Approval of Cooperative Agreement No. 19-1014-000-SG, known as the 2020 Noxious Weed Grant Program with the California Department of Food and Agriculture in the amount of \$40,000

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve Cooperative Agreement No. 19-1014-000-SG, known as the 2020 Noxious Weed Grant Program with the California Department of Food and Agriculture;
2. Authorize the Chair to sign the original agreement, then return the signed original to the Agricultural Commissioner's Office for further processing; and
3. Grant a waiver from the provisions of the Nuclear Free Ordinance.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), General Fund

DISCUSSION:

The request for a waiver from the provisions of the Nuclear Free Ordinance is requested since the State of California will not modify its cooperative agreements to accommodate local ordinances. In January, CDFA offered weed control funding to County Agricultural Commissioners through a weed grant program made available through the Governor's Biodiversity Noxious Weed Management Initiative. The 2020 Noxious Weed Grant Program (NWGP) supports CDFA's cooperative and comprehensive efforts to prevent the introduction of invasive species and to facilitate cost-effective control or eradication of invasive species that have entered or have been established in the state. The NWGP awarded a maximum of \$40,000 to each California county for work to be performed from May 1, to Dec. 31, 2020. The NWGP will support implementation of county weed control and mapping projects in California that result in permanent and measurable work product (map or plan) and/or weed reductions. Cooperative Agreement No. 19-1014-000-SG provides funding to Humboldt County for the following weed control projects:

Knotweeds: In 2015, the Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) sponsored the North Coast Knotweed Eradication Project which was approved by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and

funded through their Habitat Restoration Grant Program. Under the project, RCAA, the Agriculture Department and other members of the Humboldt County Weed Management Group are working cooperatively to treat knotweed populations that occur in Humboldt County. Knotweeds are extremely difficult to control and success in reducing and eradicating knotweeds is dependent upon multiple years annual treatments and follow-up surveys.

Knotweeds are members of the buckwheat family that prefer sunny, moist areas, including riverbanks, roadsides, lawns, and gardens. The plant arrived from Asia to the U.K. and then North America in the 19th century as an ornamental landscape plant. Unchecked, knotweeds can spread very quickly and forms dense colonies that out-compete native vegetation by blocking sunlight, releasing chemicals (allelopathic) from its rhizome that suppress plant growth and germination, and robbing nutrients and water from the soil. Knotweeds pose the greatest threat to riparian areas where they spread and significantly impact waterways in a variety of ways including; alteration of stream flows, displacement of streamside vegetation, and increased bank erosion which results in lower quality riparian habitats for fish and wildlife. Knotweeds in river systems can eventually impede water flow and lead to increased risk of flooding.

Knotweeds can also cause damage to man-made structures. When knotweeds occur adjacent to structures such as bridge abutments, roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and building foundations, the rhizome can damage and even weaken their structural integrity. The rhizomes can also damage subsurface drainage, underground conduits, septic systems, etc. Three species of invasive knotweeds have become established in Humboldt County (Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, Giant

Knotweed *Reynoutria sachalinensis*, and Himalayan Knotweed *Polygonum Polystachyum*).

Cooperative Agreement No. 19-1014-000-SG reimburses the Commissioner's Office for costs associated with the North Coast Knotweed Eradication Project as the agriculture department receives no funding from the knotweed project grant. Agriculture department activities performed under the project are offered to RCAA as a cost share contribution.

Research evaluating the effectiveness of various treatment methods (mechanical, manual, herbicides) has reported that mechanical or manual methods of control (cutting, digging, mowing, polling, covering) are less effective and significantly more labor intensive (Controlling Knotweed in the Pacific Northwest, The Nature Conservancy) than pesticide applications. The Agriculture Department will treat up to 13 sites where knotweed infestations occur on county property. At most sites, infestations are limited in size to a few plants and occur in the public right-of-way adjacent to county roads. The largest single infestation occurs at the county airport and covers an area of approximately 1,000 square feet.

Applications of herbicide made to sites by agriculture department staff will be done following terrestrial weed control program best management practices. Knotweeds will be treated with applications of Arsenal (Imazapyr, U.S. EPA Registration No. 241-346) applied directly to knotweed plants during the late summer when seasonal senescence, or normal deterioration that comes with age, of vegetation increases translocation of herbicide to the roots and treatment efficacy is increased as a result. Agriculture Department staff who are responsible for pesticide applications are licensed in the

area of pesticide regulation by CDFA and considered for the purposes performing regulatory weed control activities trained to perform applications. Post-treatment, all sites will be surveyed to assess treatment effectiveness and to identify any new or previously undiscovered knotweed locations. The WCB filed a notice of exemption for the project including portions of the project covered by the County in 2015.

Tansy Ragwort: Tansy Ragwort (Tansy) is an invasive biennial weed native to Europe which is locally common in widely scattered locations around Humboldt County. Tansy can be toxic to livestock if ingested and will cause illness and death. Tansy is commonly found in pastures and along roads and trails. The largest populations of Tansy occur in the Bear River Valley, an area important to the livestock industry. Another smaller population of concern occurs on Woodley Island in Humboldt Bay. The Agriculture Department has sought to establish self-sustaining populations of two biological control organisms which feed exclusively on Tansy. These two species from different insect families (Tansy Flea Beetle *Longitarsus jacobaeae*, and Cinnabar Moth *Tyria jacobaeae*) feed on different plant parts preventing growth, development and reproduction of plants. Both insect species have been widely used in the western United States for decades to control Tansy and are already present in isolated populations in Humboldt County. Agriculture Department staff will make collections from self-sustaining populations in Del Norte County for release in Humboldt with the goal of achieving effective control of Tansy utilizing bio-control methods.

Spotted Knapweed: Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), is a European invasive that threatens wildlife habitat, pastures, and grasslands. Spotted Knapweed is a CDFA “A” rated noxious weed. The Agriculture Department has identified widely dispersed populations of Spotted Knapweed along an approximately 4.5 mile stretch of the Mad River beginning 3 miles upstream of the Mad River Fish Hatchery and continuing downstream to Blue Lake. Agriculture Department staff will survey the Mad River downstream from the original infestation removing Knapweed and other invasive weed species. Manually removed weeds will be bagged and heat treated prior to disposal.

Reporting: Grant recipients are required to submit a mid-year and final report using the CDFA 2020 NWGP Report and Mapping Template(s). Final project reports are required 30 days after project completion, no later than January 31, 2021. Final project reports should include detailed information on project results and include photos of field work showing progress (before/after photos).

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no net cost to Humboldt County for the NWGP approved under the agreement. Cooperative Agreement No. 19-1014-000-SG provides \$40,000 in funding for approved invasive weed control projects in Humboldt County performed between May 1, and Dec. 30, 2020. The maximum project term is 8 months and grant funds cannot be expended before May 1, or after December 31, 2020. All costs associated with the NWGP are billed to CDFA on a quarterly basis and payment is made in arrears to Humboldt County. Expenditure accounts to support department activities supported by the NWGP were previously funded. The \$40,000 in revenue derived from the NWGP will partially offset the anticipated loss of unclaimed gas tax revenue.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by enforcing laws and regulations to protect residents and providing community-appropriate levels of service.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

CDFA

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to approve the attached agreement. This is not recommended as the agreement would provide important services and revenue in the amount \$40,000, which partially offsets the anticipated loss of unclaimed gas tax revenue.

ATTACHMENTS:

One complete Cooperative Agreement No. 19-1014-000-SG.

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Meeting of: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

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