

Invasive Weeds Beware! BAEDN Is Here! **“EARLY DETECTION” PROGRAM LAUNCHED TO MARK CALIFORNIA INVASIVE WEEDS AWARENESS WEEK**

SF BAY AREA, CA JULY 20, 2009: Regional land managers and invasive species experts today announced the launch of the **Bay Area Early Detection Network (BAEDN)** in conjunction with California Invasive Weed Awareness Week, July 20-25th. BAEDN has built an Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) system designed as the first line of defense in preventing the spread of invasive species. The network includes the entire nine-county San Francisco Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma counties; and proactively deals with new outbreaks before they can grow into large and costly environmental threats.

The California Invasive Weed Action Plan (2005), produced by the California Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition and the California Department of Food and Agriculture, identifies EDRR as “the single most important element” for coping with invasions. “Whether we are protecting humans from swine flu or protecting ecosystems from sudden oak death, EDRR is the most effective and cost-efficient approach for coping with biological invasions,” said Daniel Gluesenkamp, Director of Habitat Protection & Restoration at Audubon Canyon Ranch, and one of the developers of BAEDN. “The creation of BAEDN encourages broad participation, knowledge-sharing and reporting of invasive species so we can work together to most effectively manage invasive species throughout California, enabling native species to thrive.”

The Future BAEDN will unite and coordinate the EDRR efforts of dozens of agencies, hundreds of professional land managers, and potentially thousands of volunteers. BAEDN partners will work together to develop a scientifically rigorous list of the most harmful invasive plants, train each other in detection techniques, make detections and report them to the online website, and then prioritize individual patches so that the most dangerous outbreaks can be removed before they spread and cause harm. BAEDN will prioritize the smallest and most harmful populations first, while removal is cheap and before ecosystems have been harmed. **It’s simple, it’s sensible, it’s about time.**

Initiated in 2006 by Audubon Canyon Ranch's Director of Habitat Protection and Restoration Daniel Gluesenkamp, National Park Service’s San Francisco Bay Area Network Inventory and Monitoring Biologist Andrea Williams, U.S. Fish & Wildlife San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Biologist Giselle Block, and numerous colleagues throughout the Bay Area, BAEDN has recruited partners and

built the core structure of the network. Calflora has built BAEDN's user-friendly online occurrence reporting database, with a clickable Google map interface and picklists to make it highly user-friendly. In addition, BAEDN has hired Jennifer Stern to serve as BAEDN's Coordinator, thanks to support from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and US Fish and Wildlife funding. ACR's Partners in Conservation, the NPS, and the Rocky Fund of the Marin Community Foundation have also supported BAEDN. BAEDN also helps broaden efforts such as the NPS's Weed Watchers program, which trains volunteers in early detection at Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and builds on more targeted efforts such as The Invasive Spartina Project.

What you can do There are several ways to participate. First, you can detect and report unusual or harmful invasive plants; go to the website (<http://BAEDN.org>) and test out the Google-maps-driven reporting tool! Second, we hope you will help to spread the word; tell your friends and let us know if you think of groups or newsletters that we can contact. Finally, we hope you will help us to build a BAEDN which is truly collaborative by becoming a partner; please go to the website and subscribe to the BAEDN Partners email list, come to the annual meeting to help refine the system, and please let the Coordinator know of any individuals or groups who should learn about the network and participate.

Invasive weeds are important, not because they are out of place but because the worst of them can destroy the biodiversity of places we love, and cost California hundreds of millions of dollars in control costs and lost productivity annually. We have the opportunity to protect California's precious natural resources. Please join us in this effort! Your help can really make a difference.