

CALIFORNIA OCEAN  
PROTECTION COUNCIL

Staff Recommendation  
January 13, 2005

**California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan**

Developed By: **Abe G. Doherty**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Consideration of the California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan and possible 1) determination that completion of the plan is a high priority, and 2) authorization for the Council's Secretary to take actions needed to provide up to \$110,000 of ocean protection funds for its implementation.

**NEAREST OCEAN or COASTAL LOCATION:** Statewide

**AGENCY OR ENTITY RECOMMENDING PROJECT:** California Coastal Conservancy, Department of Fish and Game, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, California Coastal Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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**EXHIBIT**

Exhibit 1: Letters of Support

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**RESOLUTION:**

"The Ocean Protection Council finds pursuant to Sections 35600 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code that the California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan, as herein described, is of high priority for ocean conservation and authorizes the Secretary to take actions necessary for its completion, including the expenditure of up to \$110,000 of ocean protection funds."

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Staff recommends that the Council designate as a high priority and authorize Conservancy staff to take actions to develop and provide funding of up to \$110,000, through the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the San Francisco Estuary Project (SFEP), for completing the California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan project. These funds are needed for writing and facilitation work to complete the California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan (AIS Management Plan), ensure adequate public participation in the drafting of the final plan and to assist in the implementation of initial management actions identified in the plan. Completion of

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this plan will enable the state to be eligible for federal funding and is important to provide a framework for agency coordination on the prevention, eradication and management of aquatic invasive species.

The introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into California's waters threatens the ecological, social, public health, and economic integrity of the state's water resources. Because AIS have few natural controls in their new habitat, they spread rapidly and destroy native plant and animal communities, damage recreation opportunities, lower property values, and impact irrigation, water distribution systems and water-dependent industries.

In 2002, state legislation was passed to establish the Interagency Aquatic Invasive Species Council and require the development of a comprehensive plan for dealing with aquatic invasive species in California. This council has not been convened and the Department of Fish and Game has not had adequate staff and funding to complete the plan. The Department of Fish and Game is supportive of the Ocean Protection Council providing funding for the completion of the AIS Management Plan and intends to work closely with the Coastal Conservancy, ABAG and SFEP to oversee the completion of the plan.

Governor Schwarzenegger's Ocean Action Plan (*Protecting Our Ocean: California's Action Strategy*) identified the need for the Ocean Protection Council to determine how to complete and implement the AIS Management Plan.

California will become eligible for federal funding for implementation of the state AIS Management Plan once the plan has been completed and approved by the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force<sup>1</sup>. Approval by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force would enable the state to apply to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for federal funding for implementation of the plan. Pending federal appropriations for this purpose, the NANPCA legislation enables the Governors of States to request federal assistance for up to 75 percent of the cost incurred to implement the plan.

In order to obtain approval by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, California's AIS Management Plan must be prepared in accordance with the *Guidance for State and Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans*, developed pursuant to federal law. This document describes the requirements for the content of statewide plans, which include the following:

1. identification of the most immediate and pressing problems and concerns that can be effectively managed;
2. a rationale for selection of a subset of problems to address initially and the general plan for addressing remaining and emerging problems;
3. an implementation table that clearly summarizes the goals, objectives, strategies and actions of the plan; and

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<sup>1</sup> The Task Force implements the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) of 1990 (amended by the National Invasive Species Act of 1996).

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4. a program evaluation component to monitor progress toward achieving goals and objectives.

California's AIS Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with this guidance document, in order for the state to be eligible for federal funding.

Funding will enable SFEP to organize and facilitate several meetings in different parts of the state to provide significant opportunities for public review and input into the AIS Management Plan. The work performed under the contract will also include review and consideration of input provided by various stakeholders at meetings held in 2002 and 2003 on preparation of the AIS Management Plan.

If the Ocean Protection Council approves of this project to complete the AIS Management Plan, the schedule for completing the plan is to have a draft available for public review by the beginning of April 2006 and at least three public meetings in April and May 2006 to provide input on the draft plan. A revised draft will be submitted to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force for preliminary review in June 2006. After incorporating comments from the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, the plan will be ready for the Governor's signature and for presentation at the California and the World Ocean conference in September 2006 and for final approval by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force at its biannual meeting in the late fall of 2006.

SFEP would be responsible for completing the plan pursuant to agreements with the Coastal Conservancy and ABAG. SFEP is highly qualified to perform this work. Because the San Francisco Estuary is one of the most invaded estuaries in the world, SFEP has extensive experience in dealing with AIS issues. SFEP serves as an Ex-Officio member of the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and holds a seat on the executive committee of the Western Regional Panel, which was created by the federal NANPCA legislation to identify priorities, coordinate exotic species program activities and to advise public and private interests on control efforts in the Western United States. Members of these groups are required to consider what is good for the region as a whole, in addition to considering what is beneficial to their own programs. SFEP has been involved in reviewing state AIS plans from many other states. SFEP is experienced in organizing public meetings, distributing information, writing and editing public documents, involving the public in developing public policy, responding to comments and completing administrative tasks.

Dr. Karen McDowell at SFEP would serve as the primary technical coordinator for this project, due to her extensive experience in dealing with AIS at a state and national level. Karen McDowell has a Ph.D. in marine ecology and worked as Project Coordinator of California Sea Grant's West Coast Ballast Outreach Program (WCBOP) from 1999 - 2003, then moved to work with SFEP to expand their AIS program. While working for the WCBOP, Dr. McDowell was responsible for coordinating ballast water issues along the entire west coast of the US, and also coordinating with federal and international programs.

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**PROJECT FINANCING**

**Possible Funding Sources:**

Ocean Protection Council (Tidelands oil revenues)	\$110,000
Department of Fish and Game	<u>\$40,000</u>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>

The expected source of funding from the Ocean Protection Council is the tidelands oil revenue funds, which were appropriated to the Resources Agency for use for ocean protection purposes and are available to the Coastal Conservancy through an interagency agreement with the Resources Agency. Completion of the AIS Management Plan is a high priority for receipt of funding from the tidelands oil revenue funds, since aquatic invasive species are a serious threat to ocean resources and the AIS Management Plan will improve the management of this issue.

In addition to the \$40,000 in matching funds from the DFG, in-kind support for the completion of the AIS Management Plan includes \$125,000 in labor costs for DFG's Invasive Species Coordinator (¼ PY over 5 years, from 2001-2005). The California Department of Food and Agriculture has also contributed significant in-kind support. The Department of Fish and Game's contribution and the in-kind services provided by these agencies provides match for the Ocean Protection Council's contribution and cover inland regions of the state outside the purview of the Ocean Protection Council.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA'S OCEAN ACTION STRATEGY:** The proposed project is consistent with action item 13, identification and prioritization of issues that may benefit from coordination of the Ocean Protection Council. The Ocean Action Strategy specifically calls on the Ocean Protection Council to determine how to complete and implement the Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan.

**CONSISTENCY WITH OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL'S INTERIM PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

**Mandatory Criteria**

**1. Furthers the following statutory purposes and policies of the Ocean Protection Act:**

- **Improves management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems:** This project will result in the completion of the AIS Management Plan and will be important to developing a management approach to aquatic invasive species, to protect ocean, coastal and estuarine resources.
- **Encourages those activities and uses that are consistent with sustainable, long-term protection and conservation of ocean and coastal resources:** Completion of the AIS Management Plan will identify management actions to

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protect and conserve ocean and coastal resources by minimizing the negative impacts of aquatic invasive species.

- **Promotes aesthetic, educational and recreational uses of the coast and ocean:** Aquatic invasive species have severe impacts to aesthetic, educational and recreational uses of the coast and ocean, including by reducing the diversity of native coastal and ocean ecosystems, fouling recreational boat hulls and clogging waterways with invasive weeds.
  - **Improves monitoring, data gathering, and advances in scientific understanding of the ocean and coastal environment:** The AIS Management Plan will clearly describe existing and monitoring and detection programs for aquatic invasive species and will evaluate the need for additional monitoring and research.
  - **Improves the health of fish and fosters sustainable fisheries in ocean and coastal waters:** Completing the AIS Management Plan will result in improved coordination of aquatic invasive species detection, monitoring, control and eradication efforts, which will benefit the fish and fisheries in California by reducing the negative impacts of aquatic invasive species on fish, such as competition, reduction in food sources and habitat degradation.
  - **Helps to integrate and coordinate the state's laws and institutions responsible for protecting and conserving ocean and coastal resources:** One of the main purposes for the AIS Management Plan is to coordinate the actions of the state agencies responsible for managing aquatic invasive species.
  - **Helps to coordinate the collection and sharing of scientific data:** As required by the federal guidelines for statewide AIS plans, the Implementation Table for the AIS Management Plan will present a coordinated process for collecting and evaluating scientific data on aquatic invasive species.
  - **Benefits or furthers existing state programs or legislative mandates:** Completing the AIS Management Plan will assist in complying with SB 1573 (2002), which required the preparation of a comprehensive plan for dealing with aquatic invasive species.
2. **Consistent with the purposes of the funding source:** See Project Financing Section above.
  3. **Has demonstrable support from the public:** Funding for this contract to complete the AIS Management Plan in a timely manner, to coordinate actions to manage aquatic invasive species and make the state eligible for federal funding for implementation of the plan is supported by the Department of Fish and Game, the Coastal Conservancy, the Coastal Commission, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Invasive Plant Council, and Assemblywoman Lois Wolk.
  4. **Relates directly to the ocean, coast, associated estuaries, and coastal-draining watersheds:** The AIS Management Plan will directly relate to the ocean, coast, estuaries and coastal-draining watersheds by setting forth management actions for detecting, monitoring, controlling and eradicating aquatic invasive species in these areas. The plan also pertains to inland aquatic environments and the funds and in-kind services from the Department of Fish and Game provide match for the components of the plan that pertain to inland waters.

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5. **Has greater-than-local interest:** The AIS Management Plan is a state-wide plan for managing aquatic invasive species.

### Additional Criteria

1. **Helps implement the California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy and other priorities of local, state or federal advisory groups, or scientific or policy reports, adopted by the council:** Completing the AIS Management Plan will help to implement the California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research and Outreach Strategy, which was adopted by the Ocean Protection Council on September 23, 2005. This strategy document identifies invasive species as one of the top five information and research priorities and needs for California's coast and ocean and specifically identifies the need to:
  - Expand prevention strategies for invasive species.
  - Quantify risks posed by all vectors of invasive species.
  - Develop a state-wide invasive species detection protocol.
  - Develop a more science-based eradication approach.
  - Identify methods to control the spread of invasive species.The AIS Management Plan will advance the state's work on these priority tasks.
2. **The project would not occur without Council participation:** Completion of the AIS Management Plan has been stalled for several years, due to a lack of adequate funding and staff to work on the plan. Funding for a contract to complete the plan will result in the plan being completed in 2006.
3. **The project has an element of urgency (there is an immediate threat to a coastal/ ocean resource from development or natural or economic conditions, a pressing need, or a fleeting opportunity):** Aquatic invasive species are causing severe threats to coastal and ocean resources and completing the AIS Management Plan will improve management of the invasive species and help to quickly detect and control aquatic invasive species before they cause significant impacts to ocean and coastal resources.
4. **The project includes a contribution of funds or services by other entities:** The Department of Fish and Game has provided matching funds and in-kind services.
5. **The project is ready to implement (grantee or contractor will start and finish the project in a timely manner):** The San Francisco Estuary Project is ready to enter into a contract with the Coastal Conservancy in early February 2006. The work plan for the contract will include a schedule to complete the various phases of drafting, review and obtaining necessary approvals for the plan in 2006.
6. **The project involves a combination of local, state, or federal agencies or is a public/private partnership:** To complete the AIS Management Plan, the San Francisco Estuary Project will work closely with the Department of Fish and Game, the Coastal Conservancy, and other key agencies involved in managing aquatic invasive species, including the State Lands Commission, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.