

Draft California Policy for Native Plants

The California Fish and Game Commission recognizes the following:

1. The management and conservation of California's native flora are important to the State of California, and native plants, as vital components of the State's natural wildlife communities, are held in trust for the people of the State by and through the Department of Fish and Wildlife. [FGC Sec. 711.2(a), 711.7(a), and Sec. 1600]
2. 'Native plants' are generally defined as plants that occur naturally in California without direct or indirect human actions.
3. The California State Legislature recognized the essential value and importance of California native plants to the State's history, economy, landscape, and environment, as declared in Assembly Concurrent Resolution 173 (2010).
4. The State's policies and practices regarding native plants are in need of review and updating. More than 30 years ago state law focused on transplantation as a means of mitigating for listed plant species, however experience and numerous studies document that such practices are largely ineffectual over time and often damaging to species or population survival.
5. Growing concern for the effects of wild land fires continues to raise questions and uncertainty regarding appropriate course of action on such issues as fuels management, post fire salvage and seeding, among other actions that may have significance for native plant conservation.
6. It is incumbent upon the Commission and the Department to address the differing public agency opinions and ideas regarding native plant conservation objectives, survey and mitigation standards, genetic degradation, habitat protection, and other native plant issues. Better coordination between state agencies is necessary to overcome institutional and budget constraints.

Therefore, it is the policy and practice of the Fish and Game Commission that:

- The Commission shall encourage, support, and implement, on its own initiative and with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, strategies and tools to conserve native plants as integral elements of the State's wildlife. The Commission shall consider, as appropriate, native plant conservation when carrying out duties which may have a relevant link to plant conservation.
- Incorporating and using current scientific techniques, tools, and standards in the conservation of native plants is necessary to protect the integrity of natural communities and wildlife resources, make land use decisions, and meet the needs of human communities.
- Conservation planning and management for native plants require proactive approaches that address both naturally occurring and human-induced stressors.
- Data collection and sharing among public and private entities coupled with improved data analysis is critical to successful native plant conservation. This requires adequately trained and experienced human resources being available to the Department and other responsible parties.
- Laws, public policies, and natural resource management practices of public agencies, with regard to native plants, need to be reviewed, modernized, and coordinated to ensure consistent and effective native plant conservation based on current scientific and societal needs and understanding.