

**DATE:** October 16, 2020  
**TO:** Bolinas Lagoon Advisory Council  
**FROM:** Veronica Pearson, Ecological Restoration Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Cape Ivy

**DISCUSSION**

Marin County Parks (MCP) is currently working on the designs for the Bolinas Lagoon Wye Wetlands Resiliency project. In order to implement the project and allow for the establishment of native riparian and wetland species, it is important for MCP to address the infestation of Cape-ivy (*Delairea odorata*) throughout the project area. Cape-ivy has recently become one of the most pervasive non-native plants to invade the west coast, and in the project reach it dominates the understory of riparian forest.

Numerous projects have tried to manually remove Cape-ivy with some limited success, but the costs are very high. While investigating the efforts needed to manually remove Cape-ivy, MCP has come across the opportunity to be one of the United States Department of Agriculture's test sites for the use of a biocontrol to suppress the species. The biocontrol is a gall forming fly, *Parafreutreta regalis*, also known as the Cape-ivy gall fly. The gall fly does not kill Cape-ivy, but it can reduce the vigor of the plant and suppress its growth and spread.

There are several other test sites along the coast of California where the USDA has released the gall fly. Prior to releasing the gall fly, the USDA did extensive testing and research to determine if it could have a detrimental effect on any other plant species. The testing included selecting 103 plants that are within the United States and closely related to Cape-ivy. Plants tested included both native and non-native species. In testing the gall fly did not cause any damage on any of the species or varieties of plants, while lab testing on Cape-ivy did result in the vines being stunted in growth.

After consultation with the County Agriculture Commission, Marin County Parks Integrated Pest Management Advisor, and other Bolinas Partners, MCP approved the release of the Cape-ivy gall fly within the area of the Bolinas Wye in August. The first step is to see whether the gall fly will establish. Establishment is confirmed when the following is accomplished: 1) continued presence one year after the last release; and, 2) population levels (galls/m<sup>2</sup>) increasing over time. Typically, the winter months are the most challenging for new populations. USDA will begin gall fly population surveys at Bolinas starting in Feb 2021.

Attachments: 1. Controlling Cape Ivy with an Exotic Fly (Bay Nature, Oct-Dec 2017)  
2. Weed biological control agents approved for California (Cal-IPC, Winter 2014)