

Practicum Proposal

Student name: [REDACTED]

Partnering Organization (PO): California Native Plant Society, Sacramento Chapter

Project supervisor:

- Name: [REDACTED]
- Title: [REDACTED]
- Email: [REDACTED]

Anticipated start and end date of the project: January 2021 to June 2021 (or August 2021 if we continue work into summer-- will reassess next quarter if this is feasible)

Agreement for student compensation (if any) for services rendered to the PO: A stipend will be provided by CNPS and distributed by EPM to students working on this certification project.

Topline summary.

Through research and interviews, [REDACTED] and I will work as a team to determine the need and feasibility of a native plant certification program. We will work with CNPS experts for guidance and contacts. We will use our findings to present a suite of policy options and a recommended course of action. The various policy options can then be used to move forward in a certification program that will provide consumer confidence in the purchase of certified native plants.

Project and partnering organization (PO) description

1. What is the mission of the PO in general?

The mission of CNPS is to “conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants” In other words, CNPS is driven to encourage and increase the use of properly identified California Native Plants in landscaping projects, as well as providing education and clarity regarding the ecological benefits of California Native Plants. .

2. What is the proposed project? What is/are the:

a. motivation/need: To clarify for consumers what qualifies as a native plant and to provide confidence in the product through a legal certification program. Increased understanding of California Native plants will aid in the successful integration of California Native Plants for landscaping and restoration projects. Choosing certified California Native Plants for planting will help ensure that actions made in an effort to engage in landscaping does not have adverse environmental consequences and help to guide planting of native species so that efforts to conserve native species do not have unintended consequences.

b. question(s) to be answered:

1. What similar certification programs already exist and have useful aspects for our project ?
2. What definitions of “California native plant” exist?
3. Would it be necessary to develop new terminology/definitions?
4. Is there currently confusion for consumers when purchasing and working with California native plants ?

5. Is there interest and support from consumers and nurseries for a California Native Plant certification?
6. How feasible is development of a California Native Plant Certification program?
7. Who would enforce the program? What would be the cost of enforcement?
8. What kind of certification program will be the best fit for Native Plants, a label that certifies plants, growers, or nurseries? Should the certification system be binary, tiered or a gradient?

c. objectives: To research existing certification programs and identify similarities and useful concepts for the California Native Plant certification. Identify existing definitions of California Native plants and whether clarification is needed. Determine the support and need for a certification program by using survey data of relevant consumers.

3. What analytical/methodological approach will be taken (i.e. how will the questions and/or objectives be addressed)?

Objectives for this project will be met through literature review and research, informal interviews, a consumer survey, detailed analysis and presentation of further policy options and recommendations.

4. Name and describe the expected deliverables.

- a. Logging spreadsheet to facilitate an efficient joint literature review
- b. An excel spreadsheet/PDF table with summary characteristics for each certification program
- c. A brief report describing existing definitions of “native plants” and recommendations
- d. A document with draft consumer survey questions
- e. A final consumer survey to distribute to potential native plant consumers
- f. Submission of consumer survey tool to IRB for review and approval
- g. A consumer survey instrument to distribute to potential native plant consumers in April (with potential re-use of survey in the fall)
- h. A written analysis on the results of the consumer survey and major findings
- i. A set of interview questions to ask relevant certification programs
- j. Recording and notes from interviews and a short summary of main findings.
- k. Summary of findings and policy recommendations report
- l. A Powerpoint presentation to be delivered to CNPS and stakeholders as appropriate.
- m. Draft bill setting up the framework for California native plant certification for introduction in the next CA legislative session*
- n. Strategic plan document for promulgating policy recommendations, including a public outreach plan and nursery/grower plan*

* We will reassess whether these tasks will be part of this project at the end of winter and spring quarters. The underlying research is the current priority, tasks 3.3 and 3.4 will depend on availability, funding, and the results of the first two phases.

5. How does the project fit into the mission of the PO?

This project fits into the mission of CNPS by providing consumers clarification on what qualifies as a California Native Plant and confidence that comes from a certification program created by a reputable organization. The use of certified California Native Plants in landscaping projects can help further the goal of increased use and understanding of California Native Plants.

6. How will the project further your individual career objectives?

This project will further my individual career objectives by giving me practical experience working with a partner organization which will teach me valuable skills that will be used in my future endeavors. I will gain experience researching, communicating and collaborating with a team that will be applicable to many more future projects. Experience and skills gained from this project will be useful in projects and assignments that would be asked of an Environmental Scientist in a California State Department. I am also very interested in the ecological benefits to various species of using native plants in landscaping projects at both the State and local level.