

<https://enewspaper.chicoer.com/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&pubid=ad94a392-3a89-4c1b-b460-612416b8adea>

10/27/23, 11:50 AM Enterprise-Record

CHICO STATE

Professor receiving award for work with prescribed fire.



Prof. Don Hankins of the Chico State Geography and Planning Department holds a torch to ignite a prescribed fire in Chico on Oct. 24, 2022. Hankins will pick up the Ryan Jones Catalyst Award during the 32nd annual California.

ED BOOTH

[EBOOTH@CHICOER.COM](mailto:EBOOTH@CHICOER.COM)

CHICO >> Eradicating the “bad stuff” growing in the state’s lands is the theme for a professional organization meeting at Chico State this week.

Approximately 600 people, including 300 watching the proceedings online, are attending the California Invasive Plant Council’s 32nd annual Symposium at the Bell Memorial Union Auditorium in a four-day affair that concludes Saturday. The event convenes land managers

from local, state, and national agencies, along with land trusts, as well as conservancies that control invasive plants to protect the state's biodiversity and natural resources.

Berkeley-based Cal-IPC is a nonprofit organization "dedicated to protecting California's environment and economy from invasive plants," its website says.

Several attendees are set to receive recognition for their work toward eliminating invasive species. The ceremony will take place during today's awards luncheon in the auditorium.

Leading the list is Prof. Don Hankins of the Chico State Geography and Planning Department, who will pick up the Ryan Jones Catalyst Award, which honors its annual recipient for work that advances the stewardship community.

The organization will honor Hankins for his work in bringing indigenous land-management practices — cultural burning— as a method of stewardship. He has also worked to acquire state funding to support tribal land management through the new Indigenous Stewardship Network.

As part of the symposium, Hankins will lead a field trip to the Big Chico Creek Ecological Preserve Saturday, discussing how prescribed fire's important role in the stewardship of California lands.

Hankins' research in this area is what earned him the award, said Doug Johnson, the Cal-IPC executive director. Even so, the organization seeks to provide networking opportunities for its members, while sharing intelligence on plant species and methods to control them.

"The organization serves the land managers of the state who are serving natural areas," Johnson said. "Back in the day, before the internet, (the annual symposium) was the way to exchange information about plants and techniques.

"Knowledge about invasive species is evolving all the time. We make a lot of this information available on our website" — [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org) .

Despite advances in electronic sharing of information, Johnson said, "the event is still super important for the synergy of people being together and exchanging knowledge.

"The networking is super important," he said. "In particular, to be effective in managing invasive plants at the landscape level, people need to coordinate their efforts. Weeds don't respect borders or fences, so we need to be strategic on where we work."

Two other award recipients today will be Allison Sanger, a botanist for the Lassen National Forest, and John Malpas, programmer for Cal flora, a nonprofit group maintaining a database to provide information on wild California plants. Sanger will receive the Ken Moore Wildland Restoration Award; Malpas is set to receive the Jake Sigg Award.

Johnson said managing invasive species also helps efforts to achieve a state conservation initiative.

“This whole movement on land stewardship supports the state’s ‘30×30’ goals,” referring to Gov. Gavin Newsom’s executive order that the state conserve 30% of California lands and coastal waters by 2030. “That requires taking care of lands for long-term conservation outcomes,” he said.

In addition, Johnson said, “There’s a new biodiversity framework, from the United Nations, with the target of reducing the introduction of non-native species by 50% by 2030.”