

# CEQA Impact Assessment

## *With Emphasis on Biological Resources*

**Dates:** October 1-3, 2019 (Tuesday - Thursday)

**Location:** Berkeley, CA

**Instructor:** David Magney

**Registration:** \$375 CNPS Members / \$395 Non-Members

**Target Audience:** Biologists and botanists who conduct biological assessments and write EIR sections, and members of the public who want to be able to adequately understand and review the biological impact assessments prepared to satisfy CEQA. Consultants, conservationists, and environmentalists are encouraged to attend.

**Description:** This workshop will focus on how to read and analyze the biological resources section of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared to satisfy the CA Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Land use decisions that affect native plants and natural vegetation are generally assessed through the CEQA review process. CEQA is enforced ONLY by the public – no agency is responsible for making sure a lead agency properly complies with CEQA. Knowing how to read the EIR biological resources section and what is required, or not required, will help the reviewer, and the preparer, do a better job of assessing the impact of a project.

This workshop will provide basic guidance on what is required to be included in a biological assessment pursuant to CEQA, how to read the documents, and how to submit critical, scientifically-based comments. A few specific CEQA documents will be used as real-life examples of poorly- and well-written EIRs. Tools that are available to the preparer/reviewer will be identified.

Homework will be assigned on the evenings of days 1 and 2. To earn a certificate of completion, participants will need to pass (72% score or higher) an optional 50-question test (multiple choice and true/false questions) covering the subject matter covered in the workshop.

### Participants will learn:

- The basics of CEQA and how it works, or doesn't work, in relation to biological resources
- How to effectively prepare a CEQA document
- How to meaningfully critique a CEQA document with the intent of improving its quality
- How to apply CEQA for improved and less damaging projects, and appropriate mitigation of significant impacts to biological resources

### Schedule (subject to change):

#### Day 1 - Tuesday, October 1

9:00 am	Meet and greet; workshop overview
9:30 am	CEQA survey: 50 questions to provide a baseline of the group's existing understanding of CEQA
10:30 am	Overview of CEQA: the law, guidelines, discretionary versus ministerial projects, lead agency, responsible & resource agencies, EIRs, MNDs, public participation
Noon	Lunch break (please bring your own lunch and water)
1:00 pm	CEQA review process: notice of intent, project description, initial study, draft EIR, final EIR, findings, certification, legal challenges
2:45 pm	CEQA bio assessment section: existing conditions of biological resources (plants and wildlife), project-related impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative) & significance, mitigating to less-than-significant levels, findings
4:00 pm	Overview of case study 1
5:00 pm	Break for the day



## Day 2 - Wednesday, October 2

9:00 am	How to perform an assessment of biological resources: project description, background research, field surveys, habitat/vegetation mapping and descriptions, species lists, special-status species
10:45 am	Discussion of case study 1
Noon	Lunch break (please bring your own lunch and water)
1:00 pm	How to review an assessment of biological resources: review example bio assessment documents, identify questions that are not answered and statements that aren't supported by the evidence
2:45 pm	Drafting comments on CEQA documents: approaches to drafting and responding to critical comments, presentations at public hearings
4:00 pm	Overview of case study 2
5:00 pm	Break for the day

## Day 3 - Thursday, October 3

9:00 am	CEQA review practicum: review biological resources section of a CEQA document, analyze sufficiency
10:45 am	Discussion of case study 2
Noon	Lunch break (please bring your own lunch and water)
1:00 pm	Review and summary
2:45 pm	Discussion: personal experiences and questions
4:00 pm	Test (optional) for certificate of completion, workshop evaluations
5:00 pm	Workshop concludes

**Venue:** This workshop will be held in the meeting room at the MIG Communications offices, located at 800 Hearst Ave, Berkeley, CA 94710. Additional details will be provided to registered participants about a week before the workshop.

**Materials Required:** Please bring a notebook and pen/pencil, lunch, snacks, and water for all three days, and a clear mind.

**Materials Provided:** CNPS will provide relevant handouts and references.

**Physical Requirements:** There is no field component to this workshop. It will be held rain or shine.

**About the Instructor:** David Magney, Manager of the CNPS Rare Plant Program and President of David Magney Environmental Consulting (DMEC), is a biologist/botanist, Certified Consulting Botanist and Certified Arborist, and physical geographer with a thorough knowledge of the flora of CA and over 30 years of field experience. David joined CNPS staff in mid-2016 after 32 years in various leadership roles as a volunteer focusing on conservation and rare plants, including serving as CNPS Board President and president of the Channel Islands Chapter for many years.

As an environmental consultant, David has worked on and managed a large variety of projects throughout the Pacific Southwest, including biological resource inventories, vegetation mapping and classification, wetland delineations and restoration, rare plant surveys and ecological studies, fisheries habitat assessment and mitigation design, fisheries monitoring, small mammal trapping and surveys, biological impact analysis and mitigation, and construction and mitigation monitoring. He formed DMEC in 1997 after spending 2 years with FugroWest, 6 years with Jones & Stokes Associates, and 3 years with Dames & Moore, as well as working with the Los Padres National Forest and UCSB Herbarium. David earned a BA in Geography and Environmental Studies (emphasis in botany) from UC Santa Barbara in 1985. He also holds an A.S. in Landscape Horticulture from Ventura College. David has taught courses and given presentations on wetland impacts and mitigation, CEQA, Clean Water Act permitting, water quality, riparian and wetland plant identification, and wetland delineation methodology. He has authored two floras in CA and presented numerous papers on vegetation and water quality, and has nearly completed a manual on the flora of Ventura County ([www.venturaflora.com](http://www.venturaflora.com)). He served on the Environmental Review Board for Los Angeles County Regional Planning, and the City of Ojai's Tree Committee until late 2016.

**Registration Information:** Visit [www.cnps.org/workshops](http://www.cnps.org/workshops) to sign up for this class. Registration fees are discounted for CNPS members; please visit [www.cnps.org/join](http://www.cnps.org/join) if you would like to become a member. Class size is limited to 20 participants. The last day to sign up for this workshop is **Monday, September 16, 2019**.

Before registering, please review the CNPS workshop cancellation policy, registration and payment policy, and participant expectations at [www.cnps.org/workshops](http://www.cnps.org/workshops). The last day to cancel your registration and receive any refund for this workshop (less the cancellation fee) is **Monday, September 2, 2019**. Contact Becky Reilly, [breilly@cnps.org](mailto:breilly@cnps.org) with any questions.