



# Weed Removal at Harris Beach

## Why the need to remove certain plants?

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), an invasive plant species found on the Pacific coast, is not only detrimental to land managers and native habitats, but is also extremely flammable. Gorse plants contain a high amount of natural oil, which make them extremely flammable. Additionally, the seeds which are viable for decades are also resistant to fire, leaving a source for plants to recolonize in great numbers after fire.

Areas of dense, impenetrable gorse thicket exist in northern Curry and southern Coos Counties creating a major fire hazard. In Coos and Curry counties, this flammable plant poses a serious risk to over 80,000 residents and 30,000 structures. Therefore, large-scale control efforts are essential to maintaining public safety as well as habitat for native wildlife.

Prior to treatment the Harris Beach infestation was the largest contiguous infestation in southern Curry County. The Brookings area has numerous small infestations which make it a priority for treatment efforts



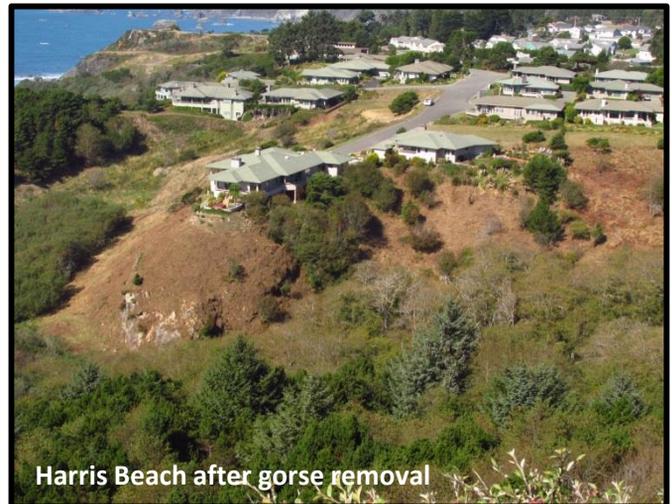
Gorse in bloom

## Harris Beach



Harris Beach prior to gorse removal

Harris Beach State Park borders a subdivision on high bluffs above the ocean where home values approach 1 million dollars. Over the years, the slopes up to this subdivision became infested with gorse. This habitat change created a very tangible fire risk to these landowners. In 2011 Oregon State Parks prioritized work on the five-acre site and began work.



Harris Beach after gorse removal

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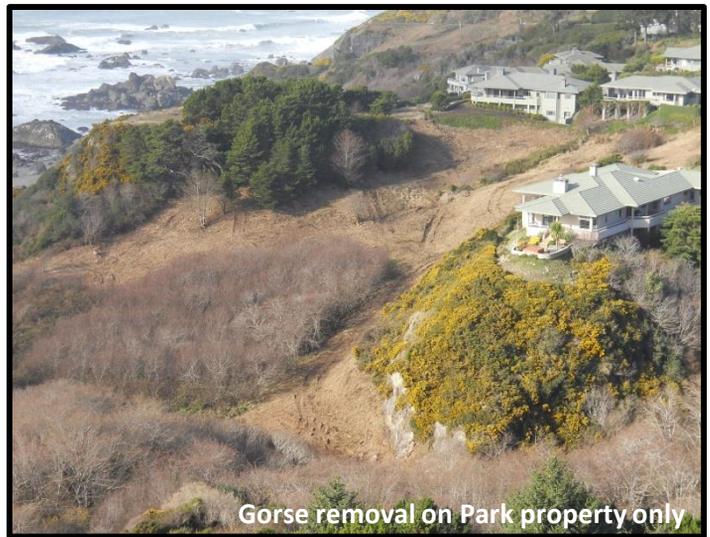
## Weed Removal

With funding from a National Fire Plan grant and a State Weed Board grant, Curry Soil and Water Conservation District and OR State Parks, the gorse is nearly gone and native grasses, shrubs and trees have filled in. Not only has this reduced the fire risk for these landowners, but it has improved the view considerably. Once neighbors saw the success we had on the State Park property, many joined us to remove gorse on their property. Curry SWCD was instrumental in working out partnerships with individual land owners. Controlling gorse on these adjacent properties assured success on State Park property.

Operations largely consisted of mowing and mulching gorse in winter 2011. Treatment with herbicides began in fall of 2012 and continued each year until present. The area was reseeded with native wild blue rye grass. After 5 years of management, the area is relatively gorse free.



Native grass seeding



Gorse removal on Park property only



Healthy habitat in 2016