

Gorse Action Group
Face-to-Face
Meeting Notes
April 29th, 2015

Attending:

Alexis Brickner – Coos Watershed Association
Hannah McDonald – South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Michael Murphy – Coos County Emergency Services
Debbie Simond – Coos County
Jim Auburn – Mayor of Port Orford
Jim Seeley – Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
Marie Simonds – Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
Tristan Huff – OSU Extension
Jeff Wilson – Bandon Dunes
Dawn Weekly – Coquille Watershed Association
Robert Franson – CFPA
Darcy Grahek – Go Native Plant Nursery
Erin Minster – Curry SWCD
Michael Schindel – The Nature Conservancy

Grant Writing Update & Discussion

Alexis reviewed grants that were researched and submitted in March. On March 13th, 2015, Alexis submitted a proposal to the USFS through ODF for the National Fire Plane Community Assistance grant. The total grant was for \$306,896. She has not heard back from the review committee but she will check in with her contact at ODF to see what the timeline may be.

Alexis also talked with Wyatt Williams and Jim Cathcart at ODF about the Western Competitive grant. Several ideas were thrown around including establishing some experimental plots for gorse control and trying to find a graduate student that might want to take on some of the work. After discussing the grant process and project ideas with Jim Cathcart, he and Alexis decided that the GAG might not be the best fit for this opportunity at this time. This grant will be kept in mind for the future and Alexis will start a grant spreadsheet so that we can start planning ahead for some of these larger grants. Jim Seeley said that once our mapping project is complete, we will have a much stronger argument for funding. There was some discussion about the type of forest land that this grant would fund projects for. Knowing further ahead of time about this grant opportunity will allow us to research and fully develop a plan. Jim Seeley mentioned that Wyatt has identified 6200 acres of ODF forest that has gorse on it which could provide sites for projects.

Finally, Alexis was asked by Wild Rivers Coast Alliance to submit a grant in April. Alexis wrote a proposal to help fund her in the coordinator position, to write a strategic

plan, and to conduct some outreach. Alexis has unofficially heard that this grant will be approved which will open the door for the writing of the strategic plan.

Marie asked what is missing from these grant applications and how can the group help with future applications. Alexis said that the strategic plan will be very important. She said she felt rushed with the National Fire Plan grant and the Western Competitive grant which required on-the-ground work. It was hard to contact landowners and figure out sites for control at the last minute. The strategic plan would have prioritized areas and potentially landowner contacts. The plan would provide a quick reference for starting grant applications.

Alexis said that Jeff Burns at ODF mentioned NRCS funding opportunities and had put her in touch with Misty Seaboldt with NRCS in Portland for the Conservation Innovation Grant. Dawn said that she has looked into this opportunity and thinks you need to have a set plan, not apply for funds to design an experimental plan. And she thinks that may have to fit into NRCS criteria (e.g. herbicide use). Alexis will research this opportunity a bit more; the grant deadline is May 29th which provides a little more time. Tristan will send Alexis a link to look at proposals from previous years.

Darcy talked about how she has been experimenting with gorse control techniques including adding nitrogen and acid to the soil. She has been working with her students at the Go Native nursery at Bandon High School to try and answer the question, what conditions can't gorse handle? She also mentioned that The Wetlands Conservancy owned a wetland near Devils Kitchen that had quite a bit of gorse on it. Alexis knows Esther Lev, the Executive Director, as TWC owns Matson Creek Wetland Preserve where Coos Watershed has their nursery. She will contact to Esther to see if a partnership for gorse control at their Bandon wetland could be possible.

There was some general discussion on whether experimental control plot ideas, potentially on the golf course and on the TWC property. Some techniques discussed included multiple burnings, burn/mow/herbicide, and nitrogen application. Darcy's students would be great for writing up an experimental design, determining treatments to test and how to test them. Robert mentioned that some local churches in Bandon have asked him about help with gorse control. These may be excellent starting places as well. Grants that could help students with treatment costs could be a viable option with these potential locations in mind.

Jim Seeley gave an update on the experimental wood vinegar trials that Frank Burriss at OSU Extension has been conducting. The tests began about a year ago and so far they have found that foliar application of wood vinegar caused gorse to grow more slowly but plants caught up so it was ruled ineffective. Wood vinegar may be reducing flowering and consequently reducing seed production so they are working on more testing of that. They applied wood vinegar heavily 3 times in the winter which essentially temporarily sterilizes gorse plants.

Jim Seeley also gave an update on Wall Ranch. They had a neighbor with gorse and made a proposal to lease the property. This led to a multi-year lease and so they cut and mulched gorse plants then planted grass seed after several years. They still have to control shoots with herbicide but found that lambs are eating young gorse plants. They are partnering intensive grazing and grass this field with no chemical control now.

There was more discussion of getting a graduate student on board with researching and implementing experimental gorse treatments. Wyatt Williams had thought of this and had reached out to some professors at Oregon State University. We will continue to search out professors and students that may be interested but funding for them is, of course, an issue.

Finally, Darcy mentioned that real estate agencies in Bandon are very interested in gorse from a property value perspective. They would be a good group to include in the GAG.

Field Data Collection Project

Alexis spoke with Janet at Mason Bruce & Girard about the data collection project. She is getting close to having a summary of results and suggestions for improving data collection. She said that the raster data analysis is good but a “classification and regression tree analysis” or CART would be better. However, this method is more expensive. It could be used on a localized area though. Janet said that the gorse in bloom is coming through nicely. There also need to be more sites with scotch broom in them. Finally, she is finding an error of omission: the system is over-classifying gorse, basically calling it gorse if it has nothing else and that is partly due to lack of data on scotch broom.

Michael Schindel provided his update next. Michael doesn't have data points but he will connect with Janet directly to take lessons learned and apply to their work before they get started. Jim asked if the timing was right to collect more points with scotch broom. There was not much scotch broom in the pilot area but TNC could use more for their analysis. Jim asked if we should we wait to collect more points and Michael responded that we should wait until MB&G is done and Michael gets started.

Steve Jansen (Coos County Assessor) sent information on remote sensing to Jim Seeley who passed it along to Michael. Michael said most of this was common knowledge in the remote sensing community. He said they will use a regression tree analysis to analyze the risk of gorse spread. Michael mentioned the Institute of Natural Resources, who could possibly create a model. Once Michael has a sense of the data, we can decide if we need to look into INR or stay with Mason Bruce & Girard to create more modeling. This could possibly go out to competitive bid.

Jim Seeley suggested creating a decision tree to get the next steps for helping to get grants. We could reduce the technical language for grants but this would show much we have stepped up to be fully informed before attacking gorse on-the-ground. The data will continue to be collected until the end of April at which Michael will get a copy and can

put together a summary of where we are, what to do next, and the potential costs. WRCA is still in the game from a financial standpoint and wants to get it all together technically to help the group move forward. Michael feels very positive about the endeavor and thinks we are leaps ahead of where we were 6 months. The process feels slow but is moving along!

Declaration of Cooperation

The Declaration of Cooperation is finalized and ready for signing. Alexis will send out the signature pages to individuals. She is also double checking the membership list so that we have an accurate account of who is involved. It was suggested that the DOC have an online presence. WRCA and CoosWA will create Gorse Action Group pages and post the DOC.

Outreach

Alexis stated that part of the WRCA grant was to include outreach. She thought a public presentation in Bandon in May to announce the group to the general public would be a good step. This led to a discussion of creating a pamphlet that groups could have their booths throughout the busy festival season. Darcy said Go Native has a booth at the Bandon Market in the summer and would keep pamphlets there. Many other groups are at farmer's markets and festivals which will be a good way to spread the word. Marie commented that a logo is still in the works and that can be used on a pamphlet. Alexis will create a PDF document that group members can print on their own and use at will.

Mike Murphy suggested the Bandon Prepares group to get the word out as well.

The original idea for a presentation was in May but after some discussion, it was thought that it would be better to do towards the end of the summer. This will help us get a really good message ready to send with the mapping project details, as well. Dawn suggested creating a survey that landowners can feel about with questions about types of control and their thoughts on it (e.g. for or against herbicide). It was also suggested again to reach out to the real estate industry as well as agriculture based groups. We will "bake" the concept all summer and then have a "coming out" event. Alexis will create a simple presentation and possibly present to the City of Port Orford, Coos Co. commissioners, Coos & Coquille Watersheds. All of these groups are involved but it would be good to update them.

Oregon Invasive Species Council

Jim is now a member of the council. He recalled a discussion at a previous OISC meeting. They discussed the assessment of weeds in Oregon. A statewide assessment was completed in 2009 and a strategic plan still being drafted since 2010. They have very little money to work with and have created two main lists: weeds to keep out of Oregon and top 100 weeds of Oregon. Jim recommended that gorse be placed in top 5 invasive species and they are considering it. Jim also mentioned future thinking for capacity

building for the GAG. OISC is hiring a new coordinator, what do we do when we get bigger and need a full time coordinator? Capacity to follow through is huge pressure point and funding is not always there. The council discussed *Arundo donax* (giant cane) and whether or not GAG could comment on it but Jim did not feel comfortable with that. This is a great example of how many good ideas are out there but the capacity and funds can't always keep up. We need a really strong platform and elevator speech to give to decision makers for funding, especially if they don't understand it all or don't have much time to learn and review. Hannah commented that including the triple bottom line approach will be very helpful for searching for funding from a variety of funders.

Strategic Plan

Now that some funding has come through to help Alexis with coordinating the group, it is time to work on the strategic plan. Previously the group had discussed an advisory committee to help Alexis put together the plan. This would be a smaller group of GAG members who can help write and advise. Once drafts are completed, they will be sent to the group for review. Alexis will send out an email asking for members for the committee. We will look for other plans to use as models, maybe for other weeds such as yellow star thistle. Hannah said that South Slough has a good restoration action plan. Jim mentioned that we will need to clarify the difference between an action plan and a strategic plan and decide where we are at. The group agreed we are at a strategic planning level.

This plan will need a lot of thought and consideration of various topics to include (fire, water quality, habitat, economic, soils) and the structure. Marie suggested thinking about how we are going to use it and make sure we have the necessary sections that will address various topics.

Next meeting: To be determined.