

For Immediate Release

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GORSE ACTION GROUP COMMITTS TO SOLUTIONS TO CONTROL INVASIVE GORSE AT DECLARATION SIGNING

Bandon, Oregon.... On December 4, 2017 over 30 organizations and individuals signed a Declaration of Cooperation demonstrating a commitment to manage and control gorse in the Southern Coast region. Cooperators represent both public and private interests in response to Governor Kate Brown's designation of gorse mitigation as an Oregon Solutions Project.

Gorse is a noxious weed often found in dense thickets along the coast of Oregon. It is highly invasive, extremely flammable, and is one of the most difficult weeds to manage in the world.

Gorse has fueled catastrophic fire, one of which burned the entire city of Bandon in 1936 and notable subsequent fires in 1980, 1999, 2007, and 2015. While you find patches of gorse popping up along the Oregon Coast, it is notable that dense gorse thickets currently cover approximately 60% of a 250-acre area of largely undeveloped land surrounded by urban development inside the City of Bandon's Urban Growth Boundary, posing a significant fire threat to residents and the City of Bandon.

In addition to being an extreme fire threat, gorse rapidly invades land reducing economic and ecological value and impacting operations including farming, grazing and forestry.

"Gorse is a pressing, everyday issue affecting the people, places and industries of the South Coast. I am committed to supporting the Gorse Action Group in finding solutions for the control and eventual eradication of gorse," says Representative Caddy McKeown, a leader in Oregon's Legislature to address invasive species threats to the state's economic and environmental health.

For nearly a year, co-convenors Jim Seeley, Director of Wild Rivers Coast Alliance and Representative McKeown led a public and private collaborative group who outlined a set of solutions ranging from establishing Firewise communities in the region; coordinating diverse partnerships to remove gorse along roads, railways, trails and waterways; to providing education, training and technical assistance to assist people working to manage --and hopefully eradicate-- gorse infestations.

"Long-term progress is not achievable by one organization or person alone," points out Jim Seeley, "the Gorse Action Group is an example of a diverse group of organizations,

public officials, and individuals coming together to pool resources, expertise and strategic vision to work towards a common and achievable set of solutions.”

The Gorse Action Group will continue to work towards the solutions identified during the Oregon Solutions project. For more information or to get involved, check out GorseActionGroup.org.