

Gorse Action Group
Conference Call
Meeting Notes
October 2, 2015

Attending:

Alexis Brickner – Coos Watershed Association
Michael Schindel – The Nature Conservancy
Mary Finnerty – The Nature Conservancy
Jim Seeley – Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
Marie Simonds – Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
Sean Hill – Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
Hannah McDonald – South Slough
Robert Franson – CFPA
Mike Murphy – Coos County
Carri Pirosko – ODA
Don Kendall – Curry County
Tim Lollar – ODOT
Erin Minster – Curry SWCD
Jim Auburn – City of Port Orford

Grant Update

Alexis reviewed the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation proposal. This grant is due on October 5th by 2pm. The grant is requesting funds for capacity building through 2017. Under this grant, the group would form a steering committee, delineate a geographic boundary, write a strategic action plan, and conduct an education and outreach campaign including the installation of a fire-resistant plant demonstration such as the gardens installed in Brookings and Gold Beach. Alexis will also include an ask for some funds to help with the mapping project, either for field data collection or additional analyses. Grant awards will be announced in December 2016.

Jim stated that he spoke with Mike Keiser who is very interested in “gorse busting”. He said that there is some funding through the parks department that has been abandoned. Parks was to receive \$60,000 per year for 5 years and only \$120,000 has been spent. The remaining funds may go to WRCA.

Jim will also meet with John Sweet (County Commissioner) to talk about the County’s affiliation with the Donut Hole – county property in the middle of Bandon that is heavily infested with gorse. This would be a great place for demonstration gorse control, close to Bandon. The group would like to understand the history of the donut hole and how it ended up the way it did. Mike Murphy stated that he could help with that. Alexis mentioned that the Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) grant will be opening soon. This could be a grant to apply to for some control funding. Alexis was working with Darcy from Go Native and The Wetlands Conservancy property outside of Bandon on a restoration, education, and gorse control project; perhaps a project within the Donut Hole could be included. Marie asked about the OSWB grant parameters. Carri Pirosko said that the RFP will be out next week. The Board looks for heavy control projects. Gorse grants have historically been for more outlying populations. It could be a tough sale for work in the heart of gorse in the Bandon area and a fire-resistant plant demonstration

garden could be a component of a larger control project. The grants focus on dollars on the ground for killing high priority weeds. We could submit a county property based control project with some restoration included.

We have just over two months before the OSWB grant due date. Jim, Marie, and Alexis will meet, after Jim meets with John Sweet on October 11th, to discuss possibilities. Jim stated that many acres in the Donut Hole are impenetrable by fire emergency vehicles. Perhaps some control (mulching) could be done on access roads in that area, on county property. This could give GAG some fire prevention notoriety. Erin said she thinks that if we were to tackle that we'd need to follow up several times. The group will talk to the Coos County surveyor who can lay roads out and get some landowner permission. Then we could do annual follow up in "duff" with herbicide and mowing the sides of the road. Jim asked the Donut Hole parcels be laid over the imagery. Erin said she can do this for the group. Jim will show this to Mike Keiser during their next meeting.

Mapping Update

Alexis has been working Michael and Mary from TNC on determining the next steps for the mapping project. Alexis stated that a need for a 2nd pilot area has arisen. This pilot area will be used to assess the accuracy of the Weed Mapper (WM) points, collect data on gorse under forest canopy, test the classification methods, and collect points in undersampled environmental strata. This area needs to be accessible, be in the 2nd flight, have a mix of canopy cover, have WM points, and be in undersampled environmental strata. Michael and Mary selected a potential pilot area that Alexis reviewed for accessibility. The pilot area is mostly in the Coos watershed and on BLM or Coos County forest land. She reviewed the roads with the road technician and they feel this is a pretty easy area to access for point collection.

Once we had more data from the field, the 2nd pilot area can be analyzed. These results can be compared to the 1st pilot area and to assess the applicability of the methods to the entire area.

Michael stated that if the WM points are accurate enough then we can use them for predicative model across entire extent. This would give us 600 data points with gorse for a fairly robust model.

Jim asked if that would add value to the entire project. Michael said that yes, it will. The main issue at this point is that 1/3 of the project area has gorse visible because of no tree canopy. The WM point analysis would allow us to do predictions within tree canopy and in open areas. This can be used in conjunction with level slice classification to remove false positives and get ratios to estimate acreage across entire area in canopy and non-canopy. Erin asked Michael if they are they looking at the WM points from a data originator standpoint? Michael said that we should navigate to WM points and where they are related to the infestation. We are looking for accuracy within 30 feet.

Marie asked that, once we can discern from the 2nd pilot area which WM points can be used, what further analysis will be need for a product for everyone to use.

Michael said that the first thing to do in the 2nd pilot area is classify it using level slice and maximum likelihood so that the field work can be used to assess multiple things.

Then Random Forest model work can begin and that will need to be funded. The Institute for Natural Resources is coming up with a cost estimate for Random Forest modeling. The imagery can be used for non-forested areas so we might need to run two separate models. This modeling can start earlier/simultaneously to field collection, as funding become available.

The next question to ask is what do we need and when?

Michael and Mary will be talking to Janet from MBG this afternoon about cost estimates for level slice and maximum likelihood classifications in the pilot area and the entire project area.

Erin asked if we needed more points in under sampled areas.

Michael said that points in high elevation, eastern margin of the project area would be helpful but the WM points will help if they are accurate.

Jim said that 5 years from now, we can look at baseline imagery and see how work is coming along on control. It will be a great visual tool.

Alexis wrote a short proposal to WRCA for funding for field work in the 2nd pilot area. The mobile mapping unit from the previous data collection initiative was provided by MB&G but Bandon Dunes has one that Alexis can use. The software has been updated to Bandon Dunes will need to work with Janet to get that updated before passing it off to Alexis.

Outreach

Alexis has set a date and time for a public presentation. It will be held at the Bandon Public Library on Wednesday October 28, 6-8pm. The goal is to introduce the public to the group and discuss progress in the mapping project. Alexis will work with the WRCA intern to create a flyer and Erin and Hannah can help post the flyer in Bandon, Port Orford, and Gold Beach.

Strategic Plan

So far, Sherri Laeir, Carri Piroosko, and Hannah McDonald have agreed to participate in the strategic action plan committee. Alexis will plan on meeting with the committee in early November to begin laying out the process for the strategic action plan.

Next Meeting

Alexis will send out a Doodle poll for a November face-to-face and ask for location preference.

Thank you!!