

## 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT SUMMARY

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is considered one of the most invasive plant species in the world and is now found on all seven continents. While management of gorse is occurring in many areas on Oregon's south coast, long-lived infestations continue to present the risk of spread. In addition to being a significant fire hazard, gorse rapidly invades land, impacting farming, grazing, and other land use activities.

The Gorse Action Group is a coalition of dedicated partners working to minimize the economic and environmental impacts of gorse across a regional scale. The Gorse Action Group's highest priority is to stop the spread of gorse with specific objectives to prevent new infestations, control source populations, and build capacity for coordinated efforts.

### OVERVIEW OF 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### PREVENTION OF NEW INFESTATIONS

Activities spanned working with diverse partners and landowners across the region to survey and treat public and private properties. Additionally, partners implemented best management practices on outlier and early detection / rapid response (EDRR) sites in order to reduce the spread of gorse. Specific activities of the partners include:

- Coos Watershed Association surveyed 42 acres of the Whiskey Run mountain bike trails. 20 additional outlier sites were found in greater Coos Bay, totaling 28 acres. 19 of those sites were treated in 2021.
- Coquille Watershed Association treated 18 sites, totaling approximately 5.6 acres across 5 different landowners. As a result, 98% of mapped gorse on Bureau of Land Management land in the Coquille River watershed was treated.
- Curry Watersheds Partnership visited 294 sites with gorse, including 122 new sites. In total, 272 sites were treated across 2,378 gross acres, resulting in 84 outlier sites gone.
- The Oregon Department of Transportation treated 3 acres in Curry County and controlled gorse along 5 miles of Highway 101 in Coos County.
- South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve treated 1 outlier site, totaling 4 acres.



Gorse outlier after treatment in the Floras Creek Watershed.  
Photo Credit: Dustin Williams, Curry SWCD

## ▶ STRATEGIC CONTROL OF SOURCE POPULATIONS

Activities spanned conducting on-the-ground treatment in core infestation areas. These source populations contribute to fuels loading and wildfire hazard risk, which impact the local community and environment. Expansion of new and innovative capacities for gorse treatment also continues to be a priority. Specific activities of the partners include:

- Curry Watersheds Partnership received \$314,373 for 2021 wildfire hazard reduction efforts. Funding was provided by the Legislative Emergency Board (E-Board) through the Oregon Department of Forestry. Multiple partners collaborated and provided capacity support to tackle gorse through a variety of management strategies. One project example allowed the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, and Curry Soil & Water Conservation District to partner on using a rock scaling contractor, a novel gorse removal method for steep slope work, at the Rainbow Rock cliff on Highway 101 and at Harris Beach State Park. In total, over 725 acres were treated across various project sites in Curry County. [Read more about these projects here.](#)
  - The Oregon Department of Agriculture released gorse thrips at 9 sites across 4 landowners for the first time in Curry County. A total of 600-900 individual bugs were released. Additionally, all but one of the 2019 gorse thrips release sites still had thrips present in 2021.
  - The City of Bandon collaborated with Coquille Watershed Association to control gorse in the Johnson Creek Greenway. All of the major gorse stands were cut and mulched, totaling approximately 6 acres of the 35-acre parcel. Willamette Valley Forestry followed-up with spraying and cut stump treatment for the area that had not been mulched.
  - The Oregon Department of Transportation mowed half an acre around detention ponds south of Bandon in support of Bandon's gorse compliance districting plan.
  - Windward Gardens conducted follow-up treatments on half an acre at the Highway 101 gorse demonstration site.
- K2 Grinder, Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, and 6 private homeowners in Sunset City collaborated to treat 3 acres of gorse infested land.
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is continuing gorse management at Coquille Point, where the seed bank is diminishing in treatment areas.
  - A demonstration of the Green Climber was conducted at 2 core gorse infestation sites in Coos and Curry Counties. A sales representative for RMT Equipment brought a LV600 equipped with a fixed tooth forestry flail and the LV300. A video of the demonstration is available on the [Gorse Action Group website](#).



Green Climber demonstration. Photo Credit: Erin Minster, Curry Watersheds Partnership



Gorse thrip adults are 1-2 mm long. Photo Credit: Manfred Ulitzka

## ▶ CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR COORDINATED EFFORTS

Activities spanned facilitating partnerships, seeking funds, and information sharing between Gorse Action Group partner organizations to enhance their capacity to tackle complex issues created from gorse infestations. Specific activities of the partners include:

- The Oregon Department of Agriculture secured \$50,000 of U.S. Forest Service funding to support the gorse biocontrol program through the staffing funding gap created by the pandemic and hosted 2 gorse biocontrol educational outreach events with a total of 60 attendees. Additionally, they provided gorse biological controls to two neighboring states (Washington and California).
- Windward Gardens hosted its third annual Winter Education Series in December 2021. The 2-day event had 30 participants and included a separate tutorial for 4 new apprentice licensees. Day 1 focused on Oregon Department of Agriculture laws and safety for pesticide applicators, apprentices, and trainees, and on field safety topics, PPE, mixing, storing, and transport. Day 2 focused on learning local weeds, work zones, and water protection. They also continued to assist the City of Bandon in their efforts to reach compliance within the urban growth boundary by soliciting funders and helping coordinate contractors.
- Oregon State University Extension submitted a grant application for a landowner education project focused on bio-char creation using flame-cap kilns.
- The City of Bandon budgeted \$70,000 for gorse control efforts in its Gorse Compliance Districting Plan. District 1 compliance efforts came to an end in 2021 with a high level of participation. As a result, District 2 compliance efforts began in late 2021.
- At the October 2021 virtual meeting, partners unveiled a reporting form that will be used moving forward to capture metrics for the group as a whole. The group also reviewed the Gorse Action Group containment zones GIS layer that provides insight into where gorse is, its extent, and new places to consider for EDRR focus in the Coos Bay area.



Overflight photo taken of District 1. Photo Credit: Tim Scahill, Wild Rivers Coast Alliance

**THANK YOU** to all of the contractors that did work for Gorse Action Group partners in 2021, including:

- Windward Gardens
- Willamette Valley Forestry
- Jensen's Tree Service
- Hildebrand Ranches
- Triptych
- Marsh Excavating
- Bear Creek Ranch
- WB Logging and Construction
- Swanson Ecological Services

And **thank you** to the private landowners who took matters into their own hands and/or provided project matching.

## ▶ **LOOKING AHEAD: 2022 – 2023**

Gorse remains a high priority and unrelenting threat in the state among other noxious weeds. Gorse Action Group partners continue to seek funds for preventing new gorse infestations, controlling source populations, and capacity building. Specific forecasted activities include:

- Gorse Action Group partners worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service on the Gorse Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Conservation Implementation Strategy program. It was approved in June 2022 with sign-ups now open. This 5-year strategy allocates \$210,000 in 2023 towards forest land restoration where gorse qualifies for brush management and involves a 50-75% cost share.
- Coos Watershed Association and Coquille Watershed Association will continue to work on mapping outlier populations of gorse, responding to EDRR reports, and engaging additional landowners.
- Curry Watersheds Partnership will continue working with Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, Bureau of Land Management, and private landowners to address gorse fuels in 2 wildland-urban interface priority areas (Lost Lake / Lower Fourmile & Sixes River), which are located on the edge of core containment areas. Curry Watersheds Partnership is also focusing on gorse control in the Elk River watershed within the Sixes-Port Orford core containment area with funding from U.S. Forest Service, Wild Salmon Center, and Oregon Department of Forestry. Follow-up treatments at Rainbow Rock and Harris Beach State Park will be coordinated with Oregon Parks & Recreation Department and Oregon Department of Transportation. Curry Watersheds Partnership will develop a Wildfire Risk Reduction Plan related to gorse infestation in Port Orford's drinking water source area.
- The City of Bandon will be moving on to District 2 in early 2022 and District 3 in late 2022 in their gorse compliance work, and continuing to manage the Johnson Creek Greenway.
- Windward Gardens plans to offer 15 Oregon Department of Agriculture CEHs (continuing education hours) in November and December 2022. The Education Series will focus on timing of work, fire management, and how to help in educating clients and the public.
- Pacific View management, the City of Bandon, Coquille Indian Tribe, and contractors plan to treat gorse around the Pacific View Senior Living Center in Bandon.



Triptych crew removing gorse from a cliff at Rainbow Rock. *Photo Credit: Erin Minster, Curry Watersheds Partnership*