



2022 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 (GAG) 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. Below is an overview of the Gorse Action Group's accomplishments in 2022.

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GORSEACTIONGROUP.ORG**

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 734 acres, cataloging 316 historic and new locations on public and private land. Over half of those locations have been treated chemically or manually across 10 sites, 7 landowners, and covering 11.25 acres. Manual treatments yielded 7,139 plants pulled. Follow-up led to treatment agreements with 6 additional private landowners slated for Spring 2023. 3.5 of those acres were the result of a partnership between Coos Watershed Association, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and a local family-owned timber company to treat gorse on an estuarine island in the Bandon Marsh.
- Coquille Watershed Association treated 9 sites across 4 acres and 2 landowners. Most treatment was completed using backpack sprayers, except for hand pulling of all seedlings. In addition, 13 individual outlier plants were pulled in their prevention efforts.



ALICE YEATES WITH SOUTH SLOUGH NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE TACKLING AN OUTLIER GORSE PLANT AT INDIAN POINT. CREDIT: ALICE YEATES, SOUTH SLOUGH NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE



GORSE SPROUT. CREDIT: ERIN MINSTER, CURRY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- Curry Watersheds Partnership visited 159 new and/or previously treated outlier sites across 410 acres. Of the sites visited in 2022, 58 sites were found to be gorse free and the remainder were spot treated.
- South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve pulled 350 plants across 2 sites, including a previously unknown patch with one seeding adult and multiple seedlings. The majority of gorse control at the Reserve was completed by just one volunteer, Jeanne Standley!
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service conducted their annual EDRR surveys on 14 linear miles of refuge property to look for new invasive species, including previously unknown gorse infestations.
- The Oregon Department of Agriculture released 1,920 gorse thrips at 6 sites across 3 landowners, covering 40 acres.

STRATEGIC CONTROL OF CORE 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:

- Coos Watershed Association hosted the Gorse Pedal and Pull competitive bike relay, resulting in over 500 gorse plants pulled from Whiskey Run bike trails.
- Curry Watersheds Partnerships conducted fuels and fire risk reduction efforts in the southern portion of the Greater Bandon Core Containment area in the Lost Lake-Lower Fourmile Creek areas, Sixes-Port Orford Core Containment with the Hubbard Creek Drinking Water Source Area, middle Elk River watershed agricultural lands, and Brookings EDRR Core Containment area. These efforts resulted in treatment of 667 gross acres, across 55 sites and 30 landowners.
- Coquille Watershed Association mulched and cut stumped 1.5 acres of gorse along Cut Creek in Bandon after being contacted by a landowner near another Cut Creek site where gorse treatment was being conducted. The treatment areas were seeded with a native coastal mix for erosion control and mulched with straw (see photos below).
- The Oregon Department of Agriculture released 1,000 gorse thrips at 4 sites, across 4 landowners, covering 40 acres.
- K2 Land Development treated 15 acres of gorse across 15 properties.
- The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) sprayed the recently cleared hwy 101 right-of way from milepost 295 to milepost 300, north of Port Orford and both sides from milepost 245 to 261, north of Bandon to hwy 42. They also pulled 40 individual gorse plants on 2 properties south of Bandon and spot sprayed at milepost 5.3 on hwy 42.
- Windward Gardens facilitated gorse treatments on 30 sites across 8 acres, including vertical cliff work at Pacific View. Multiple sites are now in their second year of follow-up herbicide treatment in District 1, as well as multiple new sites removed in District 2.
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service conducted 17.3 gross acres of gorse treatments at Coquille Point and Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.
- Oregon Parks & Recreation Department treated 601 gross acres of gorse across 9 state parks: Seven Devils, Bullards Beach, Devils Kitchen, Bandon State Natural Area (China Creek and Four Mile), Cape Blanco, Tseriadun, Lone Ranch, and Harris Butte.
- Wild Rivers Coast Alliance conducted gorse mowing at 2 sites, totaling 25 acres at Four Mile and 17 acres in Bandon.



CREDIT: IVY RANDALL,
COQUILLE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



CREDIT: TY DOWNING, WDX

PUBLIC OUTREACH & COORDINATED EFFORTS

Activities spanned educating the public and facilitating partnerships and information sharing between Gorse Action Group partner organizations in order to increase awareness and provide new opportunities to collaborate. Specific activities of the partners include:

- Windward Gardens hosted its annual Winter Education Series in December 2022. The event had 30 participants who were provided with GAG materials and SW Oregon invasive weed specific training, as well as training on fire risk, safety, and fuels reduction. The 2022 Winter Education Series garnered a more diverse set of participants than years prior and resulted in partnerships being formed between contractors.
- The Oregon Department of Agriculture presented on gorse biocontrol at the following events: Western Plant Board in Bend, OR (100 attendees), Oregon State Weed Board in Klamath Falls, OR (40 attendees), Oregon Department of Transportation Vegetation Management Conference in Albany, OR (100 attendees), and Oregon Interagency Noxious Weed Symposium in Corvallis, OR (200 attendees).
- The Coquille Watershed attended the Power's fishing Derby and the Coos County Fair where gorse was a main talking point with community members and many GAG brochures and flyers were distributed.
- Curry Watersheds Partnership gave a presentation to the Brookings area community summarizing gorse work over the last decade in partnership with Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Parks & Recreation Department. They also gave a presentation to the Port Orford community about the importance of controlling gorse within its Drinking Water Source Area for fire risk reduction. The presentation included a listening session aimed at gathering community input for a gorse infestation management plan (Wildfire Hazard Reduction Plan for Port Orford's Drinking Water Source Area), which was completed for the City of Port Orford in December 2022.
- The Coos Watershed Association hosted the Gorse Pedal and Pull (14 participants) in October 2022 and coordinated the Gorse Action Group booth at the Bandon Cranberry Festival (8 GAG members led the booth with 400 visitors to the booth over 2 days) in October 2022. The Bandon Cranberry Festival booth was hosted by the following GAG members: Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, Curry Watersheds Partnership, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Coos Watershed Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service hosted a Local Work Group Meeting (40 attendees) to determine how many people would be interested in the Gorse Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS). They also handed out Gorse CIS flyers at the Coos County Fair.



BANDON CRANBERRY FESTIVAL. CREDIT: ALEXA CARLTON, COOS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

CAPACITY BUILDING

Obtaining additional funds allows Gorse Action Group partners to enhance their capacity to tackle complex issues created by gorse infestations. Additional funds received by Gorse Action Group partners in 2022 include:

- Curry Watersheds Partnerships secured 4 grants, totaling \$171,850, one of which is a 5-year opportunity with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that has the potential to be funded up to \$485,000. Funders include Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, Oregon State Weed Board, and BLM. Partnering with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and ODOT, they have also continued the Brookings gorse containment efforts. This partnership began at Harris Beach State Park in 2011 and has expanded to include ODOT, additional sites at Lone Ranch Beach State Park and surrounding private lands!
- The Oregon Department of Agriculture secured \$25,000 of U.S. Forest Service funding to support the gorse biocontrol program. U.S. Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service also provided \$50,000 for a cooperative agreement, 20% of which will go towards gorse treatment and a technician that spent several days digging up gorse in Curry County and releasing gorse thrips.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service secured \$1,150,000 over five years for the Gorse Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS). CIS is Oregon's way of using the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to fund a strategic conservation approach. The project goal is to reduce the spread and potential for catastrophic wildfire near the towns of Bandon, Langlois, Port Orford, and Brookings, while restoring agricultural productivity on pasture, forest, and associated agriculture lands infested with Gorse. 4 Gorse removal EQIP applications were submitted in 2022. 4 additional site visits were made that did not turn in an application. Follow up contact was initiated with 3 other interested producers that did not follow through with replies.
- Coos Watershed Association secured \$15,749.40 from Oregon State Weed Board, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to conduct gorse surveys and treatment.
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service obtained \$33,000 from the Invasives Small Grant program, which was used to fund a seasonal biological technician whose tasks included treatment of gorse at Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and Coquille Point. A portion of this funding was also used to contract a gorse spray of Coquille Point.
- Windward Gardens secured a grant from Wild Rivers Coast Alliance for \$1,000 to set up a GAG educational center in Bandon City Hall.



THANK YOU

Our success would not be possible without the work of the volunteers and contractors that worked on behalf of Gorse Action Group partners. We want to thank all volunteers, big and small, that have dedicated time to gorse control. We also want to thank the following contractors for their efforts in 2022:



A big thank you also goes out to Wild Rivers Coast Alliance for their unwavering support to fund Gorse Action Group coordination and capacity efforts for our local watershed groups and partners. Their contribution helps fill critical gaps that would otherwise go unfunded.



PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

The partnership between Curry Soil & Water Conservation District and Oregon Parks & Recreation Department is one of the oldest in the Gorse Action Group's history. Due to the various hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic, their partnership's capacity was nearly dissolved. But thanks to the leadership and tireless efforts of Erin Minster (Curry Soil & Water Conservation District), the partnership and work lives on!

When GAG partners were asked if there was anyone they wanted to thank, Celeste Lebo (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department) had this to say:

"Erin Minster with Curry SWCD for her leadership and her tireless efforts to rally partners and landowners to reduce gorse populations on the South Coast. We also want to thank Erin for her support and guidance in helping OPRD staff tackle gorse within the parks. In particular, her work at Harris Butte and Bandon State Natural Area has allowed OPRD to address gorse populations that were difficult to access and treat. Erin coordinated contractors and logistics, seemingly with ease, streamlining the process for everyone involved. Thank you Erin!"

LOOKING AHEAD 2023 - 2024

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:

- Several landowners reported outlier gorse populations during the Power's fishing Derby and the Coos County Fair in 2022 that the Coquille Watershed Association is now working on treating. Going forward, Coquille Watershed Association will be focusing on Coaledo/Beaver Slough and previously treated sites such as Bullards Bridge and Cut Creek.
- Windward Gardens continues to assist the City of Bandon with implementing gorse control compliance through it's District Plan 2023, which will see the largest district (#3), which encompasses Beach Loop Road, go into the process. They also plan to host a 2023 Winter Education Series.
- Coos Watershed Association is working closely with local power companies to begin surveying powerlines for gorse. They are also surveying all Coos County forestry roads in the Coos Basin for gorse. Treatment in these locations is anticipated to begin Spring 2023. Coos Watershed Association will also be hosting another Pedal and Pull in 2023 and plans to do more extensive treatment to create a 12' buffer zone along the 40-mile network of bike trails at Whiskey Run to reduce the transfer of gorse and increase the quality of these trails.
- Curry Soil & Water Conservation District will partner with the City of Port Orford and the Port Orford Watershed Council to present an informational workshop aimed at landowners in the Hubbard Creek Drinking Water Source Area in order to present the Wildfire Hazard Reduction Plan for Port Orford's Drinking Water Source Area and ways that private landowners can help protect the drinking water through gorse control.
- Gorse Action Group Members plan to coordinate a booth at the Cranberry Festival again in 2023.
- In early 2023, Curry Soil & Water Conservation District learned that they had secured several large grants focused on wildfire and fuels reduction due to gorse infestation totaling over \$2 million for the next few years. This money will help ongoing efforts in Curry County. Funders include Oregon State Police Office of State Fire Marshal, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and U.S. Department of Agriculture - U.S. Forest Service.
- Summary findings and lessons learned from the Highway 101 demonstration plots that were started in 2018 are currently being formatted for outreach purposes and should be finalized Spring 2023.

