

Texas Gulf Region Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 24, 2014, 1:00 PM-4:00 PM
Research Center Seminar Room, University of Texas Marine Science Institute

PARTICIPANTS PRESENT

Justin Bush, Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center
Mary Ellen Vega, Vega Environmental
Chad Huckabee, Interested Citizen
Michael Murphrey, Texas A&M Forest Service
Katie Swanson, Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve
Emily McCauley, Naismith Engineering
Kendal Keyes, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Mark Demesnil, The Nature Conservancy
David Hyde, City of Port Aransas
Rick Martinez, City of Rockport
Scott Holt, UT Marine Science Institute
Carolyn Grosse, Interested Citizen
Bill Behrens, Interested Citizen
Beau Hardegree, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Red = Action Item

Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting participants each provided their names and affiliated, they also identified their interest in Brazilian peppertree management.
- Justin Bush provided a short introduction for new participants of the CWMA and grant funding its creation.

Steering Committee Report

- Kendal Keyes provided a summary of the first steering committee conference call, held on March 27th. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drafted and submitted to agency officials for review.
- Katie Swanson reported that she had created a 1-page factsheet explaining what the CWMA is and what it's goals are. Beau Hardegree then modified this factsheet to create a poster for use at outreach events.
- Justin Bush shared that the steering committee had decided to host a CWMA webpage on texasinvasives.org. Justin had created this page, posting information about the group and its activities.
- Kendal Keyes shared that committee members had contacted potential new members to be invited to the second meeting of the CWMA. Justin Bush thanked the new participants for attending this meeting.
- Beau Hardegree reported that he had applied for \$25,000 to expand work on Brazilian peppertree beyond the current grant funding. The proposal was ranked

#2 by the funding review team and is likely to receive funding. The group discussed potential uses for this funding, deciding that it should be used on lands outside of Charlie's Pasture—potentially to assist private landowners.

PTI Project Updates

- Mike Murphrey summarized the outcome of the Brazilian peppertree control event held at Charlie's Pasture Nature Preserve on February 25th. He and Justin Bush visited the site on April 23rd, noting good efficacy. Over 75 volunteers assisted the event, contributing to over 20 acres of treated area.
- Justin Bush summarized the community open house event also held on February 25th, which had over 20 participants who learned about the CWMA and its goals.
- Justin spoke about the status of matching contributions for the Pulling Together Initiative grant project. Currently, \$17,533.48 has been contributed of the required \$50,000.00 total (35%). The group discussed the process of reporting matching contributions and the form developed by the City of Port Aransas. **Justin will send the match documentation form to the entire CWMA.**
- Justin presented an overview of the metrics used to document the progress of this grant project. The grant required 3 additional key partners, which has already been accomplished and exceeded. While the baseline spatial distribution is ongoing, known infestation data has been collected from CWMA partners, has been standardized and entered into a common database. Over 20 acres have been treated—this treatment has begun to be monitored for effectiveness. For outreach targets, one public event has been held, along with 2 formal presentations to targeted stakeholders, agencies or public officials. Partners have also provided CWMA information in 2 booth settings at Earth Day events.
- The group discussed the need for maintenance control to be done within the treatment area of the work event and if the next event should be in a new location or in the same area to do mop up. **David Hyde will have his staff members retreat the area from the workday so the next event would expand the treatment areas.**
- The group discussed the requirement of restoration and what could be considered restoration. The group also discussed the possibility of a prescribed fire at Charlie's Pasture. **Justin will send a Doodle Poll to the group and schedule a conference call specifically for this topic.**

Outreach Updates

- Kendal Keyes reported that she had provided CWMA information to the Mid-Coast Master Naturalists, which was available at a booth at Earth Day-Bay Day
- Katie Swanson shared that CWMA information was hosted at Earth Day-Bay Day, although the poster created by Beau was not used.
- Justin Bush reminded the CWMA that Beau Hardegree had created an excellent poster, which was printed by the City of Port Aransas. The poster is available for presentations and other outreach events. If anyone would like the poster, it

- would be available by contacting the City of Port Aransas. **Scott Cross requested the poster for use at a meeting of the Nueces County Commission.** The group discussed this upcoming resolution for Nueces County and whether the CWMA should provide comment to the commission. **Scott Cross will share a draft resolution with the steering committee. Justin will draft a letter of support for the resolution for the steering committee, who will sign the letter.**
- Katie Swanson will share CWMA information at the upcoming World Ocean's Day Event on June 7th. **Katie will email details about the event to Justin, to share with the CWMA prior to the event.**
 - Carolyn Grosse had asked Justin Bush to create a PowerPoint presentation about Brazilian peppertree, its impacts and the CWMA for use at education events. **Justin Bush will put this presentation into his Dropbox and share it with the group.**
 - Bill Behrens will be working with students to control Brazilian peppertree on the UT Marine Science Institute campus. **Katie Swanson will work with Bill Behrens, providing an introduction to invasive species and the CWMA to the students.**
 - Katie Swanson announced that the NERR will host an invasive species training at office on Thursday, July 17th from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Justin explained that this event was the Wildflower Center's contribution to the grant and provided an overview of the workshop topics. Mike Murphrey and Justin Bush will lead the training. **Katie Swanson will work with the NERR staff to finalize details of the training. Justin Bush will share the information with the CWMA when available.**
 - The group discussed holding a second citizen scientist workshop in the fall, when the winter Texans are on the island. **Katie Swanson will request a fall workshop from Justin Bush.**
 - The group discussed other potential opportunities for outreach to the community. **David Hyde will provide contact information for the CWMA to present to the local rotary chapter.**
 - Scott Cross shared that the local news station in Corpus Christi had expressed interest in Brazilian peppertrees and the CWMA. The group discussed the merits of this story and asked Justin Bush and Mike Murphrey to contact the news station. **Justin Bush and Mike Murphrey would contact the station on the 25th.**

Next Treatment Planning

- Participants discussed lessons learned from the volunteer event at Charlie's pasture and the required acres to be treated within the grant. While the group will continue volunteer events, it acknowledged that paid contractors with equipment will be needed. **Beau Hardegree and Kendal Keyes will provide the City of Port Aransas with contact information for local contractors.**
- Justin Bush shared that David Parsons had met with AmeriCorps representatives in Washington DC about assisting with future treatments. **David Parsons will update the group on this meeting.**

- Kendal Keyes will have AmeriCorps teams working on Texas Parks and Wildlife Department lands in the near future that could potentially be used for other treatments. **Kendal will connect Justin Bush, David Parsons and David Hyde with the AmeriCorps team.**
- The group discussed the potential locations for the next treatment event, deciding that a visible area would be the best candidate, such as the City land on the right side of 361. **David Hyde will speak with David Parsons about this area being treated, details will be discussed further on a conference call.**

Best Management Practice Discussion

- Mark Drumesnil suggested contacting herbicide companies to request support on the project. He explained that they may be looking to expand the label for their projects and could assist with control. **Mike Murphrey and Justin Bush will look into these opportunities.**
- Rick Martinez suggested contacting the local Sherriff to participate in the spurs program using inmates. **Scott Cross will contact the Sheriff to investigate this possibility.**
- Justin Bush suggested that the group create a control factsheet, which could be provided to landowners. **Mark Dumesil has a template document for tallowtree that could be adapted; he will send this to Justin Bush.**
- The group discussed research in Florida about control methods and products. **Justin Bush, Mary Ellen Vega, Mark Dumesnil and Mike Murphrey will work together to identify control recommendations for treatment.**
- Mike Murphrey suggested creating a video to be put on YouTube of treatments, so that landowners could have assistance in learning control methods. **Mike Murphrey will contact a fellow Texas A&M Forest Service employee to investigate this possibility.**

Wrap up: Comments and Questions, Next Meeting

- Justin Bush polled the steering committee about whether the Doodle Polls and monthly telephone conference calls were meeting their satisfaction. All agreed this was a good idea and should continue. **Justin Bush will send a Doodle Poll to identify a date and time for the call in May.**
- Justin Bush suggested that the next meeting be held on Wednesday, July 16th because July the 17th would be the Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientist Training. The group approved. **Justin will send an agenda and meeting notice in June.**