

## Texas Gulf Region Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 2, 2014, 1:00-4:00 PM

Estuarine Research Center Seminar Room, Mission-Aransas NERR and UT Marine Science Institute, Port Aransas, Texas

### Participants Present:

Justin Bush, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Kendal Keyes, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Mike Murphrey, Texas A&M Forest Service

Carolyn Grosse, Volunteer Participant

Beau Hardegree, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Diana Iriarte, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Scott Holt, Volunteer Participant

Nancy Sandoval, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Bill Behrens, UT Marine Science Institute Emeritus

David Hyde, City of Port Aransas

Katie Swanson, Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve

Rosario Martinez, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program

Ron Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service

### Red = Action Item

#### Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting participants each provided their name, affiliation and experience with Brazilian peppertree.

#### Steering Committee Reports

- Katie Swanson read the Aug 27 committee call notes.
- Kendal Keyes read the Sept 18 committee call notes.
- Beau Hardegree read the Sept 24 committee call notes.
- The group discussed sharing steering committee call notes with the entire group.
  - Justin will share monthly call notes with the entire CWMA in the future.

#### Pulling Together Initiative Grant Updates

- Justin Bush updated the group on the contribution to date.
  - To date, 51% of required match has been captured and approximately 60% of target accomplishments have been met.
- Justin reported that he will be working with the City of Port Aransas in late October to submit an Annual Financial Report and Interim Programmatic Report to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Due October 31 and November 14<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

### Community Outreach and Mapping Event Recap

- Mike Murphrey summarized the Steering Committee's door-to-door outreach and mapping event.
- An estimated 600 residences received information.
- Brazilian peppertree at all 600 residences were also mapped, to be input into a spatial database.
- The group discussed who would be tasked with digitizing the observations, **Justin will task a UT student in November or Invasive Species Intern in January.**
- The group discussed replacement planting ideas, Scott Cross shared a list Nueces County had developed.
  - **Scott will send this information to Justin Bush.**

### Future Outreach Planning

- Scott Cross suggested creating a Brazilian peppertree factsheet for real estate agents to share with new landowners.
- Mike Murphrey told the group that the Texas A&M Forest Service would be paying fees to host a booth at the Feb 19-22 Whooping Crane Festival.
- Mike requested assistance staffing the Whooping Crane Festival outreach booth.
  - **Justin and Mike will develop a staffing calendar and share it with the CWMA group.**
- A previously designed poster will be on display. Mike Muphrey, Beau Hardegree and Bill Behrens updated the group on the status of the YouTube video and that a script had been created.
  - Scott Cross informed the group that the General Land Office could not create the movie, but that we could apply for a grant from the GLO to develop one (CMP Grant Cycle).
  - Rosario Martinez offered assistance in creating a video from the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program.
  - **Beau and Bill would request assistance from CBBEP and Jace Tunnell.**
  - Kendal Keyes suggested showing the video on a loop at the Whooping Crane Festival.
  - Suggested a movie series: 1.) Intro to Brazilian Peppers, 2.)PPE and chemical mixing, and 3.)Restoration and plant replacements

### Contractor Treatment/Prescribed Fire Update

- Beau reported that he met with the City of Port Aransas and identified the process for initiating the prescribed burn with the City Volunteer Fire Department.
  - **Beau will work with the City and TCEQ to obtain a permit covering 90 days between November and January.**
  - **Beau and the City will set potential windows of treatment, issuing the Volunteer Fire Department specific potential dates.**

- Depending on weather conditions, Beau and the City will signal a go-notice to the Volunteer Fire Department.
- David Hyde will notify The South Jetty to let the community know of burn plans.
- Scott Holt voiced concern about the native plants and trees in the prescribed burn area.
  - Beau will tour the area with Scott Holt and identify any areas that should receive site prep before the burn is initiated.
- Beau and David Hyde reported discussing the process for bringing in invasive plant treatment contractors.
  - Beau, Justin and the Steering Committee will develop a scope of work, the City will issue a RFP for bids.

#### Additional Grant/Project Updates

- Scott Cross updated the group on Nueces County's plan to submit a large proposal for RESTORE Act funding, which would include Brazilian peppertree components.
  - Justin, Beau, Mike and Katie told the group about the sub-proposal they had drafted and would be submitting to the County on behalf of the CWMA.
  - The steering committee approached Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program about acting as the fiscal agent, who agreed.
  - Beau and Justin explained that they would ask for 2.1 million dollars over a 5-year period, which would provide control, replanting of non-invasive trees and provide maintenance to private landowners.
  - Scott Cross asked for a letter of support, **Justin will draft a letter.**
- Dr. Ron Billings with the Texas A&M Forest Service provided the City with an agreement for \$7,500 in additional funding to support the control efforts at Charlie's Pasture.
  - **The City will sign both copies of the agreement and mail one hard copy back to the Texas A&M Forest Service.**
  - **David Hyde will send the steering committee a copy of the executed agreement.**
- Rosario Martinez reported that the City had been awarded \$24,000 in funding for supporting treatments at Charlie's Pasture.
  - **Rosario, Beau and the City will finalize a scope of work and initiate an agreement.**

#### Other Items, Roundtable Discussion

- Scott Cross outlined the Brazilian peppertree issue he had controlled at Packery Channel Nature Preserve.
  - Scott reported excellent efficacy, with no regrowth.

- Scott Cross shared a resolution passed by the Commissioner's Court in Nueces County, supporting the movement to eliminate Brazilian peppertree and targeting the trees on County Coastal Parks lands.
  - The group thanked Scott for his efforts.
- Texas Tri-County CWMA
  - Katie Swanson attended a recent Tri-County CWMA meeting and updated the group on their progress.
  - The group is interested in hosting a CWMA page at [Texasinvasives.org](http://Texasinvasives.org).
  - **Katie will connect their leadership with Justin Bush, who can work with the CWMA to develop the page.**
  - The group would like to collaborate on projects, specifically by sharing outreach materials like videos and signage.
  - The CWMA members discussed this potential partnership and agreed it was a great idea.
- Brazilian peppertree free-area signage
  - David Hyde and Katie Swanson unveiled the new signage for private landowners to post in their yards after removing their Brazilian peppertree.
  - David reported that he has 12 signs and frames, to be stored at the City Parks and Recreation Office. Any person wishing to borrow the signs may request them from his office.
  - **Katie will revamp the sign to include Nueces County's logo**

#### Wrap up: Comments and Questions, Next Meeting

- The group discussed potential meeting dates in February, deciding to meet from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at the MA-NERR Building.
  - **Justin will send out meeting information in late January.**