



Texas Gulf Region
Cooperative Weed Management Area
Meeting NOTES

Thursday, February 21, 2019
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: Estuarine Research Center Meeting Room,
University of Texas Marine Science Institute Campus

See Action Items at the bottom.

Attending:

Steering Committee:

Beau Hardegree (USFWS), Kendal Keyes (TPWD), Hans Landel (UT-Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center), Rosario Martinez (CBBEP), Colleen Simpson (City of Port Aransas), Katie Swanson (MA-NERR)

Others:

Morgen Ayers (Texas Sea Grant), Bill Behrens (P.A. resident), Camille Galbreath, (Nueces County Coastal Parks), Kristy Hewitt (Nueces County Coastal Parks), Chad Huckabee (South Texas Master Naturalist), Dan McLendon (American Conservation Experience), Mike Murphrey (concerned citizen)

Welcome and Introductions - Hans

Updates on Current Funding – Katie, Colleen, Rosario

- Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) funded Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR): "Brazilian Peppertree Treatments for the Texas Gulf Region Cooperative Weed Management Area", \$40,000. Includes USFWS,
 - o primary objective of controlling Brazilian peppertree within the CWMA boundary which will enhance more than 50 gross acres of coastal grasslands and native plant communities
 - o So far we have completed the initial treatment and one of two retreatments. We have also completed a number of outreach events.
 - o Treated 13 acres
 - o Currently we have about \$4,000 remaining. We discussed how to spend it, including one day of treatment, signs for private property that declare it "BPT-free", purchase spray bottles of Roundup for residents. Decided not to do an "Eat-the -Invasives" in the Fall. Instead, decided on, in order:
 - Purchase chemicals for Colleen to stockpile.
 - Do a mail-out to all residents:
 - Post card.
 - 3 bullets on how to treat: cut, treat (within 5 minutes), replace, then monitor and repeat as necessary.

- Include link on Texasinvasives.org with more instructions. Dan will send Hans info/instructions, who will create downloadable document
- Include discount on chemicals and gloves from Ace Hardware
 - Hans will contact Monsanto and TDA-Corpus Christi pesticide person to see if we can get discounts; Dan will send Hans names of reps
 - Katie will contact Ace about discount
- Katie will get info on mail-out company and Beau will contact them
- Be prepared for pushback on herbicides
 - Question came up about the efficacy of using vinegar as an herbicide on BPT but no one knew the answer
- Kristy Hewitt of Nueces County Coastal Parks will create, with input from Steering Committee.
- Deadline: April 1 (?)
 - Place ad in newspaper, perhaps the Port A Wildlife brochure.
- CMP/GLO. \$40,000; \$5,000 + \$5,000. ACE work. Wrapping up, working on report to submit.

Update on Upcoming Funding – Rosario, Colleen, Katie

- CMP – not awarded to us
- Waiting to hear from CBBEP Habitat and Living Resource Implementation Team, \$25,000. Will hear next week. 1 year, starting next FY.
- American Conservation Experience – obtained NOAA funding for 6 months of work on the Nueces delta, UTMSI-N\Fenessey Ranch, and the Port A Nature Preserve. For next Fall. Potential for another \$150,000 for an additional crew for 6 months. Need three projects.
 - Current funding ends end of May, although there may be money for a few crew members to stay longer.
 - The Steering Committee once again stressed the top quality of the work that ACE does.
 - We discussed the fact that heat in the summer is a really big problem for the ACE crew. Is there a way to get them out of the heat after work? Trailers available?
- Soundscape Ecology Equipment – Katie mentioned. Funding from Rosario. Study the impact of BPT and guinea grass.

Future Funding Opportunities – Bill, Scott

- National Environmental Education Foundation – US Forest Service: “Health and the Natural Environment”, \$4000 (due March 1)
 - Decided against applying – just not enough time
- NFWF?

Updates on Treatment Areas/Workdays

- Private property – Colleen, Katie
 - o There's a spreadsheet of residents who would like help with their BPT. Dozen properties.
 - o Our outreach is working.
 - o Perhaps ask person at the dump entrance, who checks people coming in, to keep track of how many vehicles come in with BPT.
 - o Golf course seems to have stepped up. Have removed a lot of BPT recently.
 - o This week at the work day, we cleared at a private residence and at the Seafood and Spaghetti Works restaurant.
- Mustang Island State Park – Kendal
 - o Two more trees found, staff will be treating. There were 11 individual trees, in five acres, all in previously disturbed areas, but now cleared.
- Port Aransas Nature Preserves – Colleen
 - o 67 acres: 1-15 acres cleared. Retreated once, didn't get good results. Clay's Hill: guinea grass, BPT, white lead-tree. WLT won't be killed with same mixture of herbicide as used on BPT. Dan uses another mixture, but it isn't cheap: Milestone, 1%, \$100/qt; Transline, 3%, \$150/half gallon concentrate. There is a beetle (Larvae?) that will fell WLT – you can hear the larvae feeding: Huisache girdling beetle.
 - o ACE worked at ID McGee and MSI in June. 2 retreatments: Oct. and Jan.
 - o At the work day this week, we removed BPT from the Birding Center.
 - o Future: Shoreline of the Birding Center had a "chunk" that needs to be removed. Colleen will discuss with Dan (ACE).
- MSI/Nueces Co. Parks – Katie, Scott
 - o WEC – BPT. Will be treated by ACE. WLT will need to be retreated.
 - o Would it be possible to do a R_x burn? Issues with smoke and the Ship Canal (alike near the airport, for burns near there). Typically, the wind isn't good. But the City is still supportive, and MSI is studying the possibility.

Update on Mustang Island Prescribed Burns – Kendal

- Next week or so, when weather cooperates. Will be burning the west side of the highway.

Update on Hog Management

- Mustang Island State Park – Kendal
 - o Have newly hired police officer, who is a licensed drone operator. Drone has lights and a PA system. Found a hog wallow using the drone.
 - o Shooting hogs is complicated, so difficult to do.
- Port Aransas Nature Preserves – Colleen
 - o Use traps and cameras. Saw 10, trapped 6. Last week, behind the transfer station. The ones that escaped dug under the trap, so need to reinforce the bottom. Can't shoot them because within city limits.

Whooping Crane Festival Events – Colleen

- Held 2 workshops:
 - o Invaders of Texas citizen scientist training, Tuesday, Feb 19 – 21 attendees
 - o Chainsaw training workshop, Wednesday, Feb 20 – 10 attendees?
- Held workday Wednesday, Feb 20
- Volunteers will be at Paradise Pond, Charlie’s Pasture, Birding Center, Civic Center

Plan Fall Meeting and Outreach Event – Steering Committee

- Select Date and Time – will do later during a monthly phone conference
- Schedule workday, any workshops – will do later during a monthly phone conference
- Schedule outreach event: “Eat the Invasives” – decided not to do

Other

- Mapping. We agreed that we definitely need to re-map the area to see how we are doing. **Katie** will contact Dr. Mike Starek. There was some question about city ordinance: maybe whether the city allows drone flights?

Next Steering Committee Phone Conference: March 26, 2 pm.

Adjourned around 4:30.

Notes by HL

ACTION ITEMS

Colleen

- Discuss with Dan what needs to be done around Birding Center

Katie

- Contact Ace Hardware about discount
- Send Beau info on the mail-out company
- Contact Dr. Mike Starek with respect to mapping

Hans

- Use information from Dan to create downloadable instructions on BPT treatment
- Contact Monsanto and TDA-Corpus Christi pesticide person to see if we can get discounts

Dan

- Send Hans instructions on how to treat BPT so he can create instructions document
- Send Hans names of Monsanto and TDA-Corpus Christi pesticide rep
- Discuss with Colleen what needs to be done around the Birding Center

Beau

- Contact the mail-out company

Kristy

- Will create postcard using input from Steering Committee