Texas Gulf Region
Cooperative Weed Management Area

-- Meeting Notes --
Wednesday, October 23, 2019
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Location: Nature Preserve Headquarters,
106 Cut Off Rd., Port Aransas

Attending:
Steering Committee:
Bill Green (TAMFS), Hans Landel (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center), Rosario Martinez (CBBEP), Rae Mooney (City of Port Aransas), Colleen Simpson (City of Port Aransas), Katie Swanson (MA-NERR)
Others:
Bill Behrens, (citizen) Leigh Perry (CBBEP), Scott Taylor (TPWD), Christina Marconi (MA-NERR), Chad Stinson (USFWS)

Unable to attend:
Steering Committee:
Scott Cross (Neuces County), Beau Hardegree (USFWS), Kendal Keyes (TPWD)

Began at 2:00 pm.

Updates/Discussions on Current Funding

- Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) funded Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR), USWFS: "Brazilian Peppertree Treatments for the Texas Gulf Region Cooperative Weed Management Area", $40,000.
    - How much left? – Katie Swanson (MA-NERR)
        - $3,028.51
    - Use by end of November, preferably (December deadline)
    - Purchase interpretive signs – update by Rae Mooney (City of Port Aransas)
        - $320 each
        - Katie: Can order through UT, but the Purchase Order (PO) department is backed up. Over $1000 needs PO. Katie needs lead time.
        - Rae will send size and cost info to Katie. Katie will work with that info. Katie will ask Sally (at MSI) to help. Chad Stinson (USFWS): USFWS has a bunch of graphics stuff: Wilderness Graphics. Katie and Rae will work with Chad.
        - Rae will communicate the costs to the Steering Committee when she determines them.
    - Postcard mailing, if leftover funds – Hans Landel (LBJWC)
        - Colleen made a mock-up postcard. Both a mail-out postcard and a handout card. 4"x6".
            - We looked over drafts. Changed several things.
            - Big discussion on dilution of Roundup Pro, and the wording on the card, and on using herbicides in general

        - Dan will work on wording
    - Hans still needs to contact the mailing company.
- CMP Cycle 22 project: where exactly we are going to focus our efforts so that a RFP can be drafted and distributed – Rosario
    - Funding ends in September 2020, so work must be completed by then
    - Last time was Zone 1 & Zone 2 (I.B. Magee County Prk)
        - Katie: Dunes of Zone 1 seem clear of BPT. (Just silverleaf sunflower). A little patch left by road and in the middle of Zone 1.
        - Zone 2: Large patch near jetty. Another behind amphitheater. Another by road.
        - Time allows one treatment and one follow-up.
        - We gave Rosario suggestions for treatment methods, locations.
- Chad: Rosario is working with Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Katie: "They get a few" Brazilian peppertrees. Phillipe Printo (of the Refuge) didn't seem concerned. ACE also working on the Refuge. Andy Stetter at the refuge.

Update/discussions on Upcoming Funding

- CMP Cycle 25 – Rosario
    - Submitted in October, so waiting. Should hear in Feb.

Future Funding Opportunities – none

Update on Possibility of Using Drone for Mapping – Hans

- Summary:
    1. Reginald Fletcher USDA, thought using drones would work, with IR; color works but need to rely on texture aspect of software. Will work really well in the natural areas, especially winter. Not easy in town.
    2. Hank Arnold. A possibility. Can both fly drone to capture images and write software to analyze.
    3. Obtain aerial photos and do what we did before, but who would digitize?
    4. Do we want to continue/follow-up?
- Katie: Dr. Mike Stearek will do for free. Will use Ph.D. student to analyze the data. Does MA-NERR as part of normal work/funding. Will do when available. Kate will contact Beau and Mike to plan. Ground-truthing with Katie would take just an afternoon. Free: Test-pilot program. [not sure what this means]
        a. Use Hank for the County and MSI properties?

Updates on Treatment Areas/Today's Workday – Rae

- Workday participation
    - City: 11
    - CBBEP: 2
    - TPWD: 3
    - ACE: 3
    - UT: 2
    - LBJWC: 1
    - vols: 6
    - TFS: 1

    - TOTAL: 27
    - Acres: estimated 0.75
- Port Aransas Nature Preserves
    - Current NFWF grant for Brazilian peppertree removal: Rae and Coleen were able to get permission from NFWF to use money to re-treat around and south of the Birding Center Boardwalk. $88,000 spent already. $80,000 more to spend.(!) Rae showed on the map what will be worked on. Includes guinea grass, peppertrees, castorbean.
    - Status of re-treated areas
        - 67 acres: Monitored about a week ago along the transects. Did some random sampling. Still a bunch of dead, a bunch of regrowth about 1-1.5 m tall that could be saplings and root resprout. Not much guinea grass (GG). Native plants were coming in in places, where there is not a source of GG to provide seeds to invade those places.
    - Idea: remove top 1 foot of good grass from where new apartments are going in along 361. Chad: $2.50/ cu. yd. to scrape, $$ per mile. Put down someplace where needed.
    - Success stories? Fighting in places as it grows in other places. Learned things. E.g, Clay's Hill was allowed to rebound because didn't have resources to deal with it. Other species coming back. We haven't restored, but we've been able to remove BPT, we've been able to maintain amount of prairie. Paradise Pond is a good success story for restoration.
    - Success story: Good work on public education. Public awareness if clearly better.

Update on the native tree giveaway Sat Oct 19 – Rae Mooney (CoPA)

1. 750 trees
2. 460 trees given away
3. Left those unsold in the pavilion, and several were taken, which is fine.
4. Another 15 to city staff.
5. Rae/Bill will update Arbor Foundation with numbers.

Other

- Newsletter [not sure what this was about]
- Flour Bluff. Melanie Hambrick, coordinator. Just had a workday. New stuff.

Plan Nov. Steering Committee phone conference. – Hans will Doodle.

4:00 PM Depart

Notes taken by HL.

ACTION ITEMS

Bill

- Work with Rae to update Arbor Foundation on tree give-away

Colleen

- Work with Rae on postcard if necessary

Dan

- Work with Rae on the postcard

Hans

- Contact mailing company
- Collect information for TFS report
- Set up Doodle

Katie

- Work with Rae and Chad on signage
- Work with Mike and Beau to plan drone work. Report back to Steering Committee (email).

Rae

- Work with Katie and Chad on signage
- Send Steering Committee info on costs of signs when you have it all.
- Complete postcard, with Dan's help
- Follow up on idea to move topsoil from new apartment site: work with Chad, determine feasibility, and where soil would go (maybe store it somewhere). Report back to Steering Committee (email).
- Work with Bill to update Arbor Foundation on tree give-away

Rosario

- Report back to the Steering Committee on final decision on where the Cycle 22 work will be done