

## Texas Gulf Region Cooperative Weed Management Area Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 18, 2015, 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

Michael Murphrey, Texas A&M Forest Service

Chad Huckabee, South Texas Master Naturalist

Beau Hardegree, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Kendal Keyes, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Katie Swanson, Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve

Carolyn Grosse, Port Aransas Resident

Scott Cross, Nueces County

Scott Holt, Port Aransas Resident

Bill Behrens, Port Aransas Resident

### Red = Action Item

#### Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting participants each provided their name and affiliation.
- Justin announced the group's first birthday is Feb 24.

#### Pulling Together Initiative Grant Updates

- Justin Bush reported that \$31,500 matching contributions have been documented. 61% of the total required by the grant.
- The Charlie's Pasture prescribed fire matching contribution from the City, Mustang Island State Park workday, Nueces County Parks and Texas Forest Service mapping contributions have not been captured.
  - Justin will email reminders to Mike Murphrey, Scott Cross, David Hyde and Kendal Keyes about the documentation need.
- Justin also summarized grant accomplishments to date, including approximately 76 acres receiving treatment.
- Justin and David Parsons reported PTI accomplishments to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in November.
  - The group asked to see the report, Justin will share the document.
- Upcoming Milestones include an Oct 15, 2015 Annual Financial Report, a November 15, 2015 Interim Programmatic Report, a March 12, 2016 Final Financial Report and Final Programmatic Report.

### Community Mapping Outcomes

- Mike Murphrey summarized the door-to-door outreach and mapping event in October showing the 4' by 5' map showing the identified Brazilian peppertree locations.
- Mike also reported that two Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) foresters would be continuing the last segment the next day.
  - Mike will send documentation to Justin (and Katie) to record match for this additional effort.
- Justin Bush will work with Tara LeBlanc, Plant Conservation Intern at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to finish digitizing the locations.
- Justin will send updated shapefile data to Katie Swanson for long-term stewardship.

### Mustang Island State Park Update

- Kendal Keyes updated the group on the Mustang Island State Park Workday, reporting over 20 participants from various agencies and departments.
- Approximately 95% of all Brazilian peppertree was removed from the park, with the remaining 5% too difficult to access with high water levels.

### Charlie's Pasture Prescribed Burn Update

- Beau Hardegree reported that the City Volunteer Fire Department and City Parks Department had successfully burned approximately 56 acres of Charlie's Pasture on February 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The burned area is now accessible for the City staff or contractors to treat the remaining Brazilian peppertree motts.
- The group discussed possibly looking into grant opportunities to further train the City's Volunteer Fire Department on wildfire burning
  - Mike Murphrey will look into opportunities through the Texas A&M Forest Service

### Charlie's Pasture Contractor Treatment Update

- Justin reported that he, Beau, Kendal and David Hyde developed a draft RFP for Charlie's Pasture based upon a similar project by Nueces County.
- The group discussed potential improvements for the RFP.
  - Beau Hardegree, Carolyn Grosse and Scott Holt will improve the RFP based upon the discussion and share it with Justin and David Hyde.
- Once the RFP is complete, the City of Port Aransas will call for bids in the paper and choose a bidder to begin work.

### Additional Project Updates

- Katie Swanson reported giving 2 presentations about the CWMA in the region.
- Justin Bush reported that the group successfully submitted a stand-alone restore proposal to [restorethetexascoast.org](http://restorethetexascoast.org).

- Justin, Scott Cross and Beau Hardegree will be meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss ideas for a General Lands Office, Coastal Management Program (CMP) grant for additional Brazilian peppertree control funds.
- Justin mentioned a Texasinvasives.org small grant opportunity for supplies and equipment supporting control projects. RFP at [http://www.texasinvasives.org/resources/grants/FY15\\_Small-Grant\\_RFP.pdf](http://www.texasinvasives.org/resources/grants/FY15_Small-Grant_RFP.pdf).
  - The grant offers \$500 and will require the use of the Texasinvasives.org reporting systems for observations and treatments.

#### Short Term/Long Term Goals

- Justin Bush facilitated a group discussion to define short and long term CWMA objectives.
- Short term:
  - GLO Coastal Management Program Grant Funding
    - Causeway
    - UT/Nueces County lands
    - Private lands adjacent to public lands
  - Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife small grant support
  - Charlie's Pasture contractor treatment post-fire
  - Promotion of signs and resources (newspaper, radio, TV)
  - Development of YouTube/PSA video
  - Prescribed burn monitoring at Charlie's Pasture
  - Survey of northern CWMA area (USCG helicopter or boat)
  - Development of alternative species list
  - Development of CWMA management plan
  - Bring TXDot and TPWD Coastal Fisheries into CWMA
  - Nueces County/UT MSI workday
- Long term:
  - Long term coordination (CBBEP, AgriLife Extension, Mission-Aransas Reserve or Nueces County)
  - Comprehensive CWMA outreach plan
  - Secure wildland fire training and PPE for city volunteer fire department
  - Expand CWMA geographic area
  - Initiate a city ordinance
  - Begin a grow out operation for alternative species

#### Planning for the Future

- Justin Bush announced that he would be leaving his position at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in April and would no longer be coordinating the CWMA.
- Katie Swanson at the Mission-Aransas NERR will take over coordination, under an agreement with the City of Port Aransas.

- Katie- get agreement together and signed by UT Austin and the City.
- The group discussed various options to fund a CWMA coordinator after the Pulling Together Initiative project ends. Including, a second PTI grant, funding from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, US Department of Agriculture funding and others.
- The group also discussed what organization should coordinate the group, including the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Nueces County and the Mission-Aransas NERR.
- The steering committee will work to secure funding and long-term organizational commitment for coordination.

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

- The group discussed potential meeting dates in May, deciding to meet from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at the MA-NERR Building.
  - Katie Swanson will send out meeting information in late April.
- The group discussed potential workday and Cinco de mayo party following on May 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - Workday would be completed on UT and County land.
  - Katie Swanson and Scott Cross will coordinate to get this together.