

Current Management

& Future Plans

Several groups are pioneering gorse treatments on lands along the Southern Oregon coast. For example, Oregon State Parks and Bandon Dunes Golf Course have spent countless hours mowing, mulching and planting alternative species with the hope of converting gorse infested areas to healthy, working landscapes. Along with these efforts, the Gorse Action Group is creating a management plan to provide a game plan for gorse reduction on a regional scale. With the help of aerial mapping and a model to help predict the areas more susceptible for invasion, the GAG hopes to tackle this terrible invader with a community-wide front.

The Economics of Invasion

In a recent economic assessment of 25 noxious weeds, the Oregon Department of Agriculture stated that gorse stands to have the third highest negative impact on the economy:

- Substantial cost of removal
- Poses a costly fire threat
- Ravages arable farmlands
- Reduces property values
- Jeopardizes healthy habitats that provide innumerable ecosystem services.

GAG Members

- City of Brookings
- City of Port Orford
- Coos County Emergency Services
- Coos County Forest Patrol
- Coos Watershed Association
- Coquille Watershed Association
- Curry County
- Curry Soil & Water Conservation District
- Oregon Dept. of Agriculture
- Oregon Dept. of Forestry
- Oregon Dept. of Transportation
- Oregon State Parks
- OSU Extension
- South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
- The Bureau of Land Management
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Forest Service
- Wild Rivers Coast Alliance



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GORSE ACTION GROUP



Improving regional ecology, public safety, and fire defense using economically viable solutions to control gorse

The Gorse Coast

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is a highly flammable, invasive plant on the southern Oregon coast. The plant was first introduced to Oregon from Ireland in the late 1800s. Gorse has the ability to grow in a variety of soils, under a diversity of conditions which allows it to outcompete many native plant communities. Gorse plants produce an incredible amount of seeds each year, which have an explosive nature when exposed to heat. You can identify the plant by its green spiky spines and vibrant yellow flowers. Like Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), gorse is an evergreen plant that can grow to over 10 feet tall, but gorse's thorny nature is an easy way to tell it from other invasive shrubs. Currently, gorse flourishes throughout Curry and Coos counties, especially on cleared landscapes.



Large golden monocultures, sometimes over 50 acres in size, are a common sight in the early spring and a looming threat to local residents. This flammable weed poses a serious risk to the communities on the southern coast, an estimated population of over 80,000 urban and rural residents and 30,015 structures. This population can double during busy tourist (and fire) seasons.

Gorse Action Group

The Gorse Action Group (GAG) is a collaborative group of representatives from Federal, State, and County agencies and non-profit organizations in Coos and Curry Counties. The GAG is an excellent example of multiple groups pooling resources and working towards a common solution. Our current objectives include:

1. Map the extent of gorse in Coos and Curry Counties
2. Enlist committed partners in both counties to coordinate and work together in controlling gorse
3. Write a strategic plan and research and write grants for gorse management activities



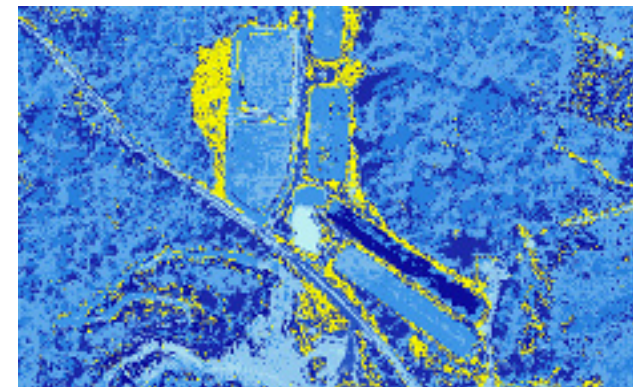
The Oregon Department of Forestry flew over 300,000 acres in Coos & Curry Counties to test out a mapping program called Sketch-mapper. They mapped 6200 acres of gorse and took photographs that really show the extent of large gorse patches in relation to the surrounding landscape.

Mapping Project

The GAG partnered with several consulting firms in Portland to take high resolution aerial photographs over 1.6 million acres in Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties. This information will be used to create a model to estimate gorse cover. Additional data were collected in the field to inform the model, which can also be used to predict the spread of gorse based on environmental factors. This is a huge first step in understanding the extent of gorse on the Oregon coast and will aid in guiding a strategy for large-scale gorse control.



1. High resolution aerial imagery showing gorse



2. Classification of aerial imagery to show cover of gorse