



Weed Removal at Coquille Point

Why the need to remove certain plants?

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), an invasive plant species found on the Pacific coast, is not only detrimental to land managers and native habitats, but is also extremely flammable. Gorse plants contain a high amount of natural oil, which make them extremely flammable. Additionally, the seeds are resistant to fire, leaving a source for plants to recolonize in great numbers after fire.

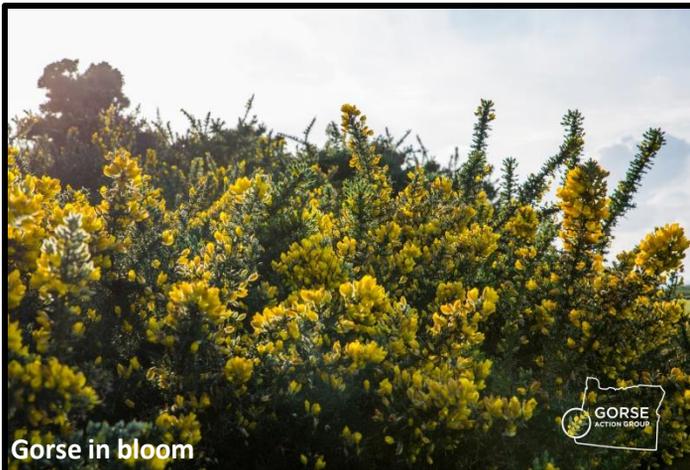
Throughout the Bandon area dense, impenetrable gorse thickets create a major fire hazard. A fire burning through gorse thickets can easily carry up cliff faces to flat headland areas, ultimately threatening homes and businesses. In Coos and Curry counties, this flammable plant poses a serious risk to over 80,000 residents and 30,000 structures. Therefore, large-scale control efforts are essential to maintaining public safety as well as habitat for native wildlife.



Coquille Point prior to gorse removal

Coquille Point

Coquille Point was acquired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1991 to protect nearby seabird nesting colonies, restore native habitats, and provide a public use area for wildlife viewing and photography. Coquille Point is the only unit of the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge that is open to the public. By removing invasive gorse and replacing it with native plants, the Point will improve wildlife habitat and serve as an educational tool for tens of thousands of visitors.



Gorse in bloom



Silvery phacelia (*Phacelia argentea*)
A rare, native coastal plant that is at risk due to invasion by non-native plants, such as gorse.

Weed Removal at Coquille Point

Weed Removal

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnered with the Gorse Action Group (GAG), a locally-led collaborative gorse management group, to remove invasive plants from Coquille Point. The project removed several invasive species from 19 acres of land including gorse, Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) and Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus bifrons*).

Operations largely consisted of mechanical removal in the fall and winter of 2016 and 2017. After removal, the area was reseeded with native grasses. In the coming years, the GAG will monitor the Point for any sprouting of new invasive plants and treat them with herbicides; this is necessary because gorse and other invasive plants can only be managed using short and long-term actions.



Mechanical removal of gorse

Next Steps

With the gorse population greatly reduced, future control is feasible with refuge staff and volunteers. Every year volunteers look to support the refuge by helping with invasive species removal. The refuge will always be willing to provide equipment and herbicide to support volunteer efforts to control invasive species.

Another aspect of the removal is promoting education and awareness of invasive species. The refuge support group Shoreline Education for Awareness (SEA) will be working alongside the GAG to promote the importance of removing invasive species at Coquille Point headland.

To volunteer, contact the Friends of the Southern Oregon Coastal Refuges at <https://sea-edu.org>



Mechanical removal of gorse

This project was made possible thanks to our partners:

