Buffelgrass Working Group
25 May 2010

Present:
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Agenda:
1:00-1:20 - Introductions
1:20-2:20 - SABCC Update from Lindy Brigham, Executive Director, and Sarah Smallhouse, Chair of the Executive Committee. Topics will include:
  - Update from the Congressional Field Hearing
  - Update from the First Annual Buffelgrass Science Workshop
  - Update on other projects including Federal Appropriations Request
  - Future goals and directions for SABCC and how they relate to the Buffelgrass Working Group.
2:20-2:30 - Break
2:30-3:30 - Updates from Working Group Members
3:30-4:00 - Saguaro National Park Fact Sheet, Buffelgrass draw-in map of current/planned projects, Discussion on next steps, Future projects, Areas for collaboration, and Schedule next meeting. Adjourn.

SABCC Update
For the complete update, please refer to the “State of SABCC” document.
  - The 1st approximation of the regional buffelgrass risk assessment is finished. This document is providing a basis for the development of a Decision Support System (mentioned below under workshop). Next steps are to develop the sampling protocols for data collection (mapping, treatments, monitoring) across the Tucson Basin project area.
  - An appropriations request has been submitted through 5 congressional offices. We will find out if the request is funded in mid June.
  - Grijalva held a congressional field hearing in April on buffelgrass. I’ve attached the written testimony submitted for the hearing. Grijalva’s closing points included:
1. Federal Agencies need adequate and sustained funding.
2. Buffelgrass needs to be classified at the federal level as a noxious weed.
3. Stop federal funding of buffelgrass R&D.
4. Federal agencies need flexibility and authority to deal with buffelgrass.
5. Need funding for research efforts:
   a. Biocontrol
   b. Revegetation programs
6. Elevate the public safety concern.
7. Encourage development of interagency cooperative mechanisms.
8. Tri-National cooperation critical.

- The 1st Annual Buffelgrass Science Workshop was held May 4-6, and workshop products are forthcoming. These products will include a Decision Support System to aid in the strategic planning of management actions, and a Data Cooperation and Management system that includes a central data repository.
- SABCC was originally planned with the intention of housing a minimum 5-person staff, but given the continuing economic distress of the state and country, we have decided to continue with the current configuration of a 2-person staff.
- Priority issues will include:
  o Engaging in cooperative agreements with all agencies and jurisdictions
  o Facilitating more involvement of the SABCC Board of Directors
  o Pursuing funding from select RFPs, foundations, the business community, utilities
  o Buffelgrass.org website: a new website is currently under construction
  o Others- see attached “State of SABCC” document
- Currently, funding for SABCC comes from a small number of stakeholders, and we would strongly encourage all stakeholders to consider contributing (which will be facilitated through cooperative agreements, mentioned above). Pima County currently has an agreement with SABCC that can serve as a template for jurisdictions, and Saguaro National Park has an agreement that can serve as a template for agencies.

Updates from Working Group Members

Fort Huachuca Conservation Management Branch
- No buffelgrass has been detected yet on the Fort. Any actions related to buffelgrass will focus on Early Detection and Rapid Response.
- A single fountain grass was found and removed (first record of this species in Cochise County).
- The Fort has recently completed a Draft Management Plan for Invasive Species.

Coronado National Forest
- A 1-yr Invasive Species Position will be advertised in the near future, though the longer term future of the position is unclear as it is not independently funded.
- Sharon has finished writing the Minimum Decision Guide for herbicide application in the Pusch Ridge Wilderness, which can now be approved by the Forest Supervisor.
- Pesticide Use Proposals are also being written, although these need approval from the Regional level.
- Sharon has been using Department of Corrections fuels crews to pull buffelgrass and fountain grass from Soldier Canyon to Montrose Canyon (above Romero Pools).
• A recent survey of Reddington Pass found an abundance of fountain grass.
• Sharon is seeking Secure Rural Schools funding to support the Department of Corrections crews.

**Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument**

• Sue plans to recruit new volunteers for the summer invasive species control work, and will be hiring a new GS-9 Botanist (4-yr term) to concentrate on revegetation and invasive species work.
• Border impact funds will be used to hire an SCA intern and a crew of 5 to perform invasive species work.
• Border Impact Funds will be available next year and might be a possible source of funds for a task agreement with SABCC.
• Sue noted that ORPI was not included in the latest Beat Back Buffelgrass Day statistics and would like this to be amended.
• It was a good year for buffelgrass in ORPI, with 40% of treated sites revisited having no re-invasion.

**Town of Sahuarita**

• Sahuarita currently has 1 certified pesticide applicator, though Dan plans to get certified soon.
• Sahuarita is still seeking funds through the Tohono O’Odham Nation (TON).
• Mary reported that volunteerism was up, with a successful pulling event including firefighters and boy scouts having taken place on May 1, and another event is planned for November.
• Wilmot prison will be supplying inmates for pulling buffelgrass.

**Pima County**

• All 24 sampling areas (2 for each of the 12 sites) for the aerial application test project have been revisited and individual plants re-marked as needed.
• Doug met with Bob Celaya from Arizona State Forestry and Allen White from Forest Service Region 3 Headquarters to give them a tour of the Cienega Creek buffetgrass training and control program. A conference call was held later with stakeholders to make preliminary arrangements for control and training activities this summer.
• Malta starthistle was found on 40 acres of agricultural land owned by Pima County. Plans are to burn the malta, plant sorghum for the summer season, then treat with herbicides in the fall.
• Buffelgrass treatments are underway at A-7 and 6-Bar ranches.
• Pima County Adult Probation is currently pulling buffelgrass on the west side of the Tucson Mtns. Kerry noted that TON 12% funds were used to fund probationers, but this program will not be renewed. The funds will instead be used to hire temporary staff for spray crews for the summer greenup.
• Volunteerism has also been up for the County, with 30-40 people at the last 3 Weedwacker events.
• Pima County hopes to use volunteers under the newly approved House Bill 2211, which allows volunteers of political subdivisions to spray herbicide without a pesticide
applicators license while they are under the supervisor of a licensed employee that subdivision (description of the bill is attached).

- Pima County continues to support Travis and SABCC ($100K/yr).

**Pima County Environmental Education**

- Environmental Ed currently has 10-12 volunteers trained to give buffelgrass presentations and to staff public events with an informational table.
- They had several events this spring, including Earth Day, the Desert Horticulture Conference, events at Agua Caliente Park, Firewise on Mt. Lemmon, and many others
- A buffelgrass presentation was given at the Wood Library.
- There is now a buffelgrass Roadside Abatement in effect with Pima County (similar to the adopt-a-roadway program for removing trash). Meg will work with interested parties to help them get permitted, and Pima County will supply tools, trash bags, and bag pickup. The link is [http://www.pima.gov/nrpr/eeduc/volunteers/invasiveweeds.htm](http://www.pima.gov/nrpr/eeduc/volunteers/invasiveweeds.htm).
- Meg noted that John Schuering received a national volunteer award for his work with Save to the Watermans pulling buffelgrass. The award was given to John by Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar.

**Town of Oro Valley**

- OV has received a grant from US Fish and Wildlife Service for $18K to spray buffelgrass.
- Volunteerism is up, with 40-50 people attending monthly buffelgrass pulls. The pulls will be suspended for the summer until the weather cools down.
- A new Weedwacker group is being trained in Sun City
- Phil showed us a new Oro Valley Buffel Busters hat that the Town had made. Hats are given to volunteers after 10 pulls. OV pays $5-6 each for the hats and Carmen Ryan ([cryan@orovalleyaz.gov](mailto:cryan@orovalleyaz.gov)) has all the info if you are interested in buying some.
- Phil gave us a heads up on a new Arizona Department of Environmental Quality rule that may require a 404 permit to apply herbicides near Navigable Waters of the US

**Saguaro National Park**

- The Park has extra buffelgrass t-shirts and “Wipe-out” buffelgrass stickers. Contact Dana if you’re interested.
- SNP was present at both the REI grand opening and the recent volunteer fair with an informational booth on buffelgrass and invasives
- Buffelgrass pulling has been canceled this summer in the Park in favor of concentrating resources on herbicide application. Spray staff will consist of 19 people and a 12-person crew from American Conservation Experience
- The Park is funding research on restoration post-buffelgrass removal and post-fire, and on the effectiveness of various herbicides on buffelgrass control
- Bert Frost from Department of Interior gave Saguaro National Park $50K after the Congressional Field Hearing, and $35K of this is going to SABCC to coordinate a buffelgrass mapping and removal project adjacent to the Rincon Mountain District of the Park. This is the agreement mentioned above that provides a template for agencies that are able to contribute to SABCC.
Other Business

Factsheet: Saguaro National Park Staff have compiled a buffelgrass fact sheet. It was decided that Travis Bean and Mary Reynolds would synthesize the comments/edits received thus far. We will revisit the document annually as more information (or staff time) becomes available.

Website: You should be able to find a link to a preview of the new buffelgrass.org website here: http://www.buffelgrass-org.doodlekit.com/home. Lindy asks that everyone log on and register at the new site so that we can make documents from the buffelgrass workshop and elsewhere available to you. Lindy & Travis will also be setting up a listserve for the Working Group so that members can freely share documents, news, links, etc.

Extra glyphosate: Lindy mentioned that Trees for Mt. Lemmon has extra glyphosate. Contact Lindy for more information.

Map of summer control efforts: Kerry suggested that we hold a separate meeting to incorporate planned buffelgrass control projects onto a map. We need to know how much work is going to be done and where, which should greatly facilitate collaboration. Sue mentioned that this information should also be incorporated into the Data Management tools from the Science Workshop.

Aaryn Olsson Dissertation presentation: Aaryn has offered to do a repeat of his dissertation presentation, "Ecosystem transformation by buffelgrass: climatology of invasion, effects on Arizona Upland diversity, and remote sensing tools for managers." I’ll send out an announcement once we settle on a date.