



GTM Invasive Plant Task Force



A multi-departmental coordination effort to address invasive plants within the Watershed of the GTM Research Reserve.

Mission

To map, monitor, control, and increase awareness of invasive plants within the watersheds of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, prevent the establishment of invasive plants on GTM NERR publicly managed lands, and to facilitate open communication between departments on such work.

Department Roles

Ecosystem Science

- Mapping and monitoring component
- Compile and share data
- Use data to augment public mapping programs. i.e. FNAI and EDDMapS

Stewardship

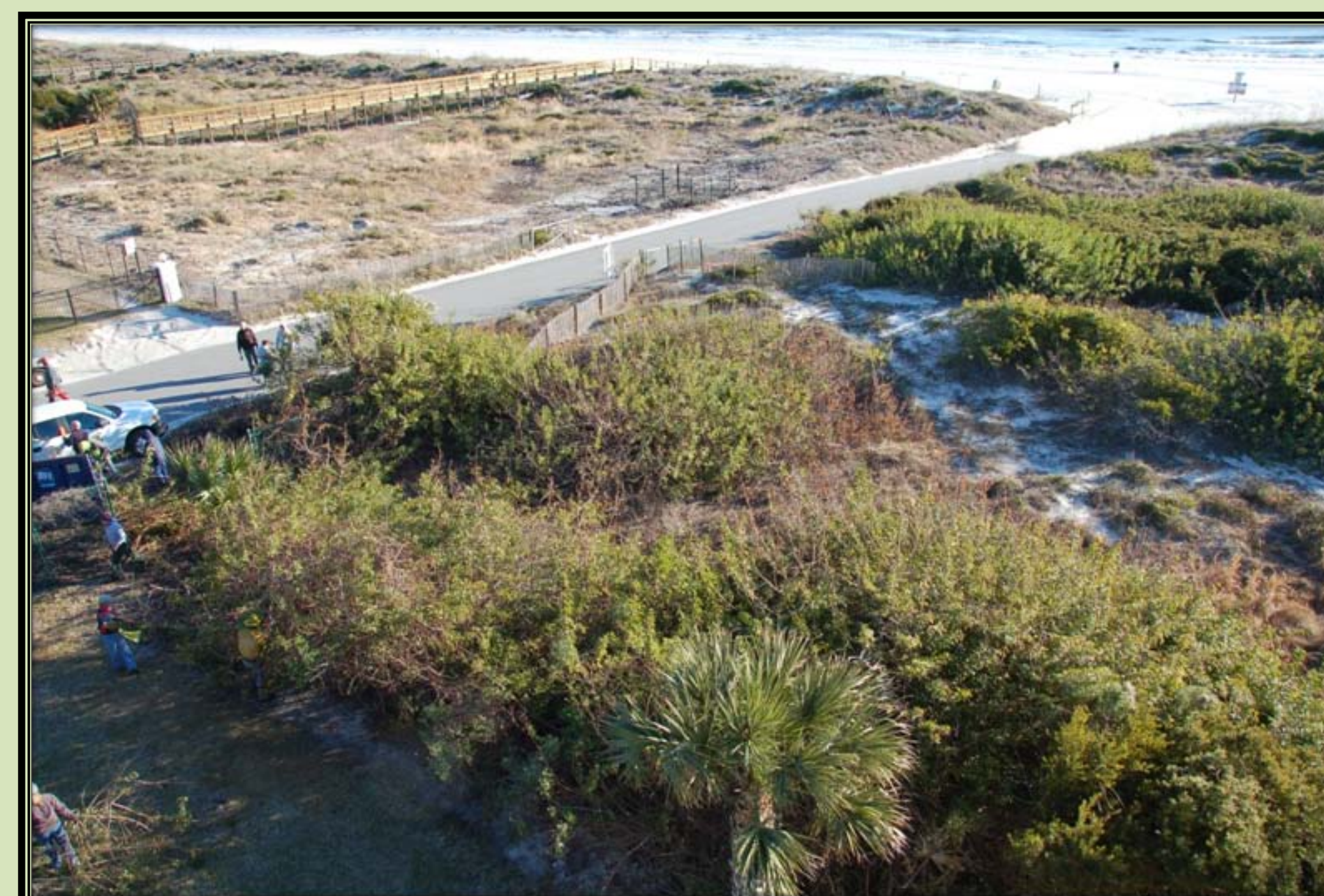
- Control component
- Actively working in the watershed
- Using information from ecosystem science to prioritize worksites
- Point of contact for the public interested in help controlling invasives
- Management of volunteer workforce

Volunteer

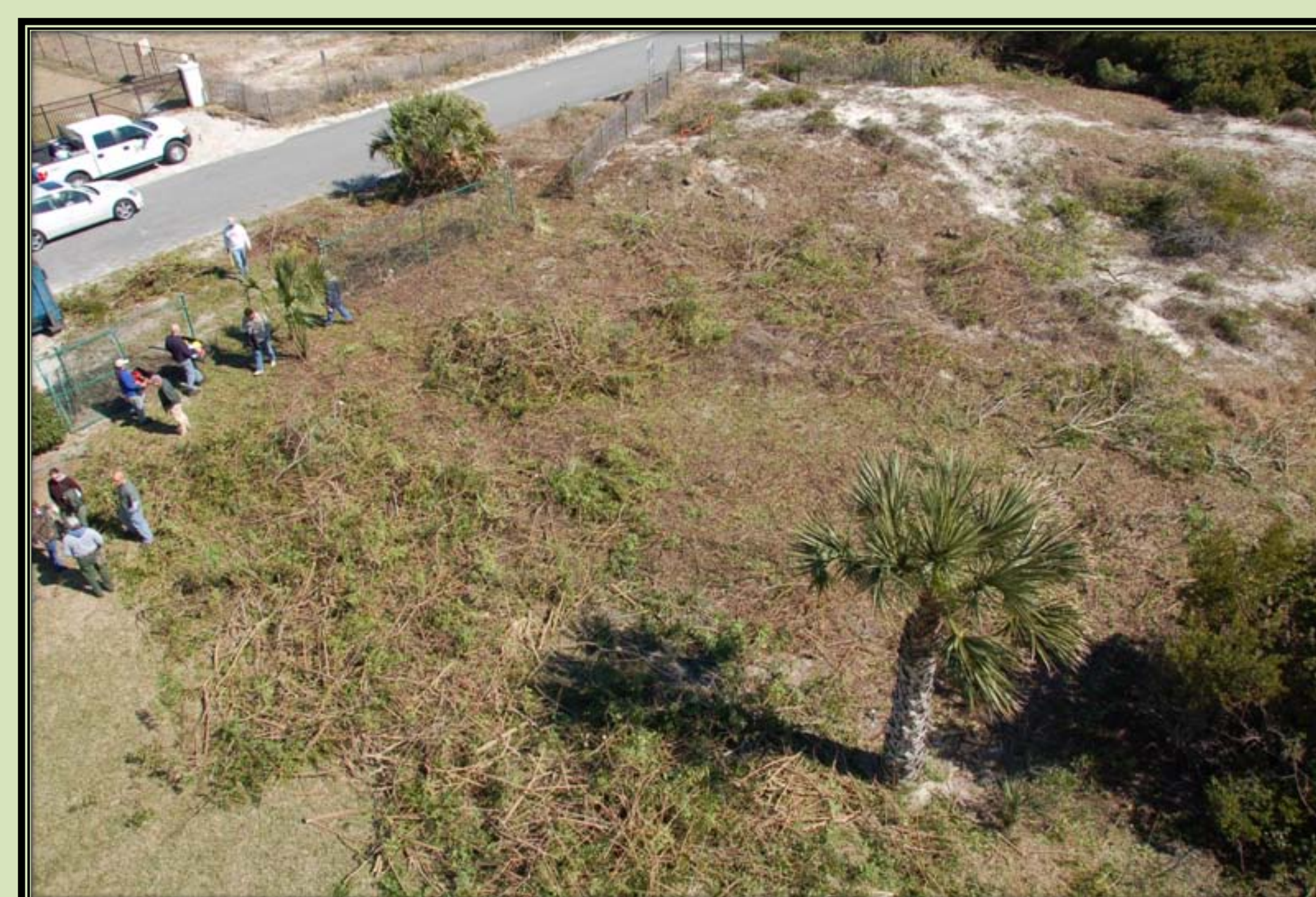
- Help with management of volunteer workforce program
- Tie task force into our current strong volunteer core

Education

- Coordinate the general business of the task force
- Provide educational opportunities for public and professional sectors
- Work with public land management partners



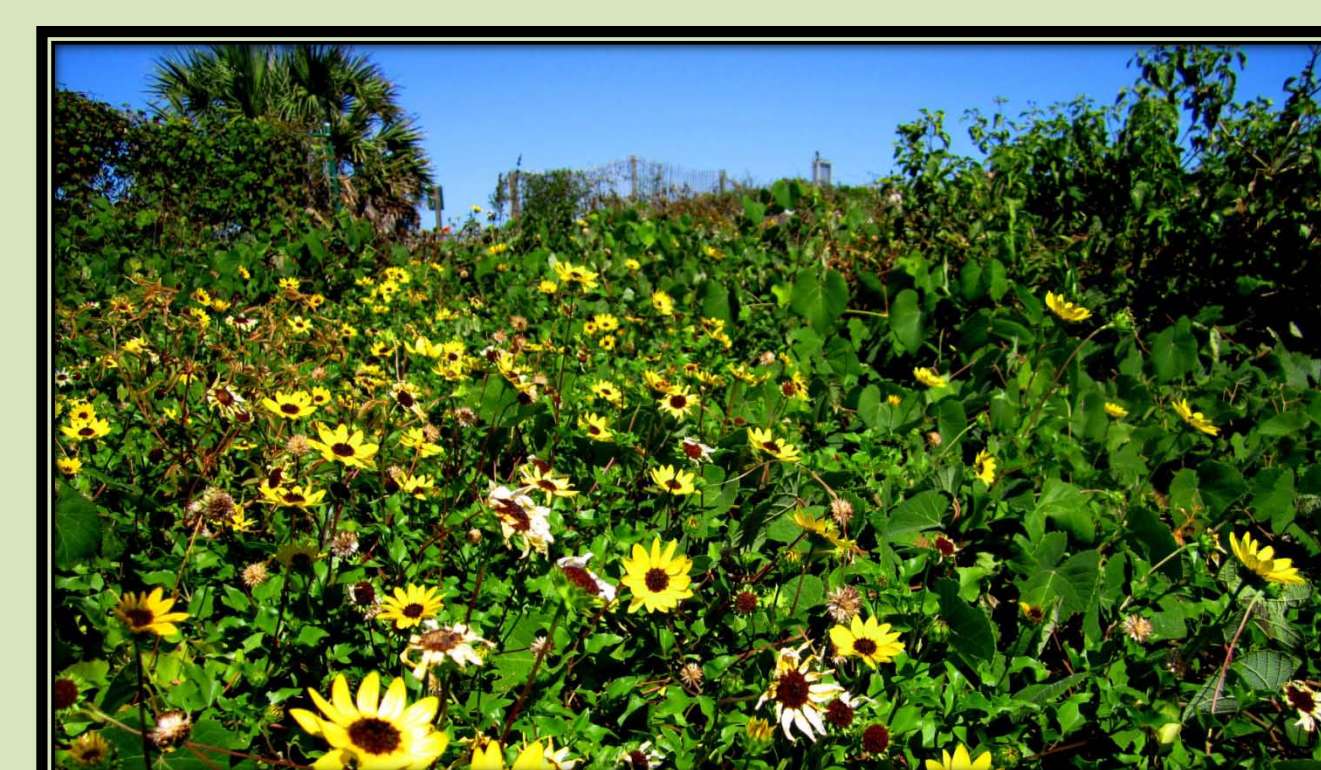
Brazilian pepper infestation in the dunes of St. Augustine Beach



Brazilian pepper has been removed



Native plants begin to re-establish in the dunes including dune sunflower and blanket flowers



Past and Current Projects

- Development of public and private partnerships resulting in the removal of 210+ acres of invasive plants.
- Public workshop for homeowners including Invasive Plants 101 and control options. 60 participants.
- Development of a volunteer workforce to go out and remove invasive plants, working on public and private lands.
- Working to remove Chinese tallow from private lands adjacent to the Matanzas State Forest. This work is the result of a partnership with the Division of Forestry and a private land owner.
- Ongoing project to map and identify the presence of invasive plants on the spoil islands located within the GTM Research Reserve.
- Active member of the First Coast Invasive Working Group.

Success Story

- Our Stewardship team developed a partnership with 3 Condo Associations in St. Augustine Beach adjacent to Dondanville rd.
- With their participation and the help of volunteers from many organizations we removed large infestations of *Schinus terebinthifolius* (Brazilian Pepper) from the dunes.
- Native vegetation is recovering and creating better habitat for gopher tortoises, marsh rabbits, and other native wildlife.

Why is this important?

The Nature Conservancy considers invasive species to be one of the top threats to global biodiversity. We have a responsibility to address this issue and work to protect the integrity of our public lands. Because invasive species know no boundaries it is imperative that we work across property lines and with the support of government, private and public landowners, local business, and the communities. Protecting our valuable natural resources benefits us all!