

MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE
Friday, December 2, 2016
FINAL MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Lloyd Loope, Forest Starr, Kim Starr, Bob Hobdy, Woody Mallinson, Jeremy Gooding, John Frostad, Chuck Chimera, Marshall Loope, Adam Radford, Teya Penniman, Aja Akuna, Nico Garvin, Iban Garvin, Monte Tudor-Long, Heather Wade, Mike Ade, Lissa Strohecker, Bryan Berkowitz, Allison Borell, Aut Fleming, Abe Vandenberg, Elizabeth Anderson
Remote: Randy Bartlett

- The meeting was called to order at 9:10 am by Lloyd Loope, Chair.
- Introductions were made around the room.
- Minutes from the last meeting were approved. They will be posted on the website

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Marshall: the coffee berry borer (CBB) has been found in Hana in wild coffee. We don't know the full extent yet. Randy: the property owner has actually written articles on CBB and then she looked at her coffee and contacted HDOA. John: there is still commercial production on Maui, especially in Kula.
- Adam: Lori Buchanan was invited to Washington D.C. by the National Invasive Species Council to represent Hawaii during meetings on indigenous people's perspectives. She is headed back to D.C. this weekend for a second round of meetings. Lori found it interesting to sit at the table with other native peoples and hear their perspectives. There is an Innovation Summit being held in D.C. at the same time and Dr. Duffy and James Leary are both attending. James will be giving a presentation. Teya: the task force on indigenous people that Lori is a part of is hoping to present a white paper to the incoming cabinet. Adam: this is a great opportunity to engage on the federal level from a different perspective.
- Chuck: Josh Atwood has been hosting a series of monthly brown bag lunches. The presentation yesterday was on how a bill in Hawaii becomes law and the steps that must be navigated. It was very informative – an interesting and complicated process. There are slides from the talk that will be posted for viewing at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/news/hiscbrownbag2/>

STAFFING CHANGES AT MISC

- Adam: we recently added five more people to the coqui crew. This quadrupled the size of the crew from where it was at its low point. MISC has close to 40 FTE at this point. We are about at our maximum carrying capacity in terms of logistics. Abe has been officially promoted to the MISC Coqui Control Coordinator position after serving informally in that position for quite a while now. We want to recognize Aja for really stepping up and taking on more responsibility with the larger crew and keeping staff on point and moving forward. Iban Garvin and Mike Ferguson have both been given temporary promotions into leadership roles. We want to reach a point where we have multiple teams working and we need leadership within each of those teams.

- Adam: we are in the process of hiring an ant coordinator. This is a much needed position. We have completed the interviews and we have good candidates. We hope to have someone on soon. Our new Operations Manager, Adam Knox, will start on January 3. Adam worked on the plant crew from 2008 -2011. He left MISC to pursue a Master's degree and has been with USGS in Guam running the brown treesnake (BTS) program for several years. Adam revamped the program in Guam and led the largest BTS response in the Pacific. He has managed complex responses with challenging logistics and worked with culturally diverse groups. The BTS trainer for the state will now be on our staff. We are very excited to have Adam coming on board and feel like he will be a great fit. Aut Fleming will be leaving MISC at the end of the year. He has been one of our primary helicopter spotters and he will be missed.

LITTLE FIRE ANT

- Adam: Unfortunately little fire ants (LFA) were found in Kapalua about a month ago. Someone from Kapalua called HDOA. HDOA sent out three inspectors and did a quick survey. They were confident it was LFA. MISC was notified after the coarse survey and immediately did a rough delimitation. This infestation has been there a while and is about 12 acres in size. Response has been coordinated with HDOA. MISC staff went out on a Monday, which was the first day of work for our new coqui hires. The Maui Nui Seabird project and Puu Kukui staff also helped with surveys. A large number of uau kane nest in the area. Luckily the ants aren't out on the point where the burrows are. Twenty-two people assisted with the initial survey. The vials all went to Forest and Kim for identification. There were ~2,000 vials collected. The Starrs count the number of ants per vial, which ultimately helps us gauge progress. Adam was very happy with the response. The work flow was good and within seven days we had a map that pretty much showed what was going on. Full delimiting took a while to finish. This was a good example of rapid response.
- Adam: I met with the Community Association twice and then yesterday Cas and Michelle came over from the Big Island and we met with 25-30 people including owners, landscapers, and association representatives in Kapalua. It was a very positive meeting. There is a need for a green waste site for West Maui. The infested area is very well manicured and accessible. Control should be quite doable. There are seven different landscaping companies operating in the area and they all take their green waste elsewhere. That is the biggest concern. We have surveyed most of the places that we know green waste has been going. They move green waste off the site every Monday. The population has been there for a while. Marshall: the initial caller had known about the ants for a while and she was concerned about chemicals. Adam: we haven't encountered any resistance so far.
- Teya: we need to make sure we don't write off any reports of "beach ants" as tropical fire ants. Adam: if someone reports a small red or orange ant, we should follow-up. We should not assume tropical with reporters on the phone. We are working toward designing a rapid response program that is Maui-based. There is obviously a need for MISC to step up. We will continue to use the Hawaii Ant Lab's (HAL) expertise, but we need to implement with Maui-based staff. HAL is going to divide up Maui into east and west. Michelle will be the lead for East Maui and Ersel/Cas will handle the west side. MISC will be taking a more active role in control. John: we need to upgrade education and outreach. Last week we had folks with LFA in their cooler. Adam: we really don't reach the west side communities much. We need to do more outreach over there. Lissa: a teacher at Maui Prep has volunteered the school for a public outreach forum. It seems like we have been getting more reports during the airing of the LFA PSAs. It is a community we aren't real familiar with, but we will be doing more.

- Abe: is there something that can be done in Hilo? It would be helpful to have more knowledge and outreach in Hilo. Marshall: we recently found a queen in pineapples from the Big Island. Fruit is not regulated because it is a plant part, not a plant. That is why we monitor coolers, etc. coming interisland. Adam: how frequently is an inspector at baggage? Marshall: typically an inspector is there for the daytime Big Island flights, but not at night.
- Adam showed a map of the Kapalua map infestation. There are three condominium communities in or near the infestation and 8-9 individual properties. They all have different landscapers. Forest: it is important not to try to make the identification call in the field and it is very important that every vial is labeled. Adam: the crew did a great job on data this time. HAL will start control in January in Kapalua. They will go one property out from the edge and control. Control will be every six weeks for a year. There will be six months of monitoring and they will monitor the edges first in order to know where the ants aren't. The community has empowered managers so it has been easy to get permissions. We don't have to go to each owner. The community keeps offering resources, but we are not sure what to ask for.
- Adam: MISC has no legal authority. We operate from cooperation. In Huelo, we had an instance where a renter became belligerent and problematic. The relationship deteriorated we decided we weren't comfortable putting our staff in that sort of situation. In the meantime, HDOA decided it was a huge problem and they stepped in. They have the authority. HDOA got a court order and went in and surveyed and treated. The Sheriff was brought in while they did the treatment. Ultimately the individual was evicted from the property for an issue unrelated to ants. The overall outcome was positive and there was a lot of excellent media coverage. There is a lot of support for control. This was only the second time that HDOA has invoked that power. The other time was for BBTV on the Big Island.
- Adam: Waihee was considered eradicated and then LFA were found again. We can never monitor for too long. They were found beyond the three year monitoring standard used by HAL. We went back four years later and found ants again. They were found in a big pile of woody debris. We burned the debris. The high canopy trees became a point source for the population. We need to keep the three-dimensional perspective in mind. Ants were found again the spring of 2016 and then worse in June 2016. Treatment is ongoing every six weeks.
- Adam: the situation in Huelo is encouraging. Overall things are looking good. It seems like there may have been some movement with all the rain. We need to do a little more survey work. The number of ants per vial is way down. HAL is getting ready to change from general to focused spot treatments and we seem to be on track. We are starting from ground zero on the contested property.
- Adam: in Nahiku there has not been much change, but we may be changing our approach. This is a huge and complicated situation with over 20 acres of very challenging topography and vegetation. There is a network of waterways and the ants are all around and down the drainage. The main limitation is that there is no product to treat in or near waterways. Until we can comprehensively treat the entire area there is no point in treating other than in the areas where people will interact with the ants. This is a phased project 1) manage where people are and 2) treat everywhere else. Cas is moving forward with getting a special local needs label for Hawaii for a product for use in water and possible aerial application. There are huge eucalyptus trees in the area so aerial application as an option is important. Hopefully there is more help coming down the pipe. Additional funding will be needed to make this happen ultimately.

COQUI

- Adam: as I mentioned earlier our crew size quadrupled. We have been working on coqui since 2006. We have had 12 successful eradications and lots of successful random removals. There is a four mile stretch of Maliko Gulch that has really hit a maximum carrying capacity in the last couple of years. The surrounding communities were very vocal and as a result the County gave us \$1.2 million in funding. Since then we have been trying to get people and equipment in place. The County Council committed to a long term effort. We are learning as we go. There are a lot of logistical challenges. We are building more infrastructure at the back of the property for storage. We will have funds coming in this year to support the additional staff and then the following year we will need to go back to the county with a big ask. We are in the process of buying additional trucks and a forklift. The Big Island donated two sprayers. One has been retrofitted and we are looking at retrofitting the second.
- Adam: our vision is to have a team approach to control with multiple teams operating. There would be one team on a systematic schedule, another team or teams roving and responding to reports and a team managing habitat. Community empowerment is another aspect of the program. In the past we have encouraged people to call and we have tried our best to respond. Now we are asking the community to step up. We can't get everywhere. We have 24 nine gallon battery operated sprayers that are out in the community. In the new year we hope to fill a part-time position to do community outreach. We are giving out citric acid to community members and fostering relationships. The biggest challenge with that program is getting data back from the community. There is a lot of follow-up required. Abe spends a lot of his day on the phone. We are buying a 1,025 gallon trailer for water and or citric. We should be able to run the giant sprinkler off of it. We are also in the process of doing a huge citric acid order- 516,000 lbs. The crew can go through 10,000 gallons a night. The price of citric is currently down from over \$1.00 per pound to \$0.58.
- Abe: technology is really helping us and we are evolving in ways that will allow us to increase our scale. We are using Android applications and creating more data. I have been working with Brooke to devise a way to upload data wirelessly. This allows quick adaptation and changing directives. Adam: we have also been doing staff pushes with the Hana and plant crews helping for a week at a time and we hope to have the Molokai staff come over for a week in the near future. Iban: the work can be really overwhelming. Things are going smoothly and we have a lot of good hires this time. Aja: we are getting to a lot more sites and we are able to go back more frequently. We can actually hear the difference and that is great! We are able to respond to the folks we haven't been able to get to.
- Adam: we also have funds allocated for habitat work. We are equipment and capability limited for this kind of work. We are looking at contracting a heavy equipment operator to do some of that. We need someone with the equipment and expertise to do really dense habitat reduction including along the edge of the gulch. Adam: DLNR is pitching in to help. Gary recently spent four days hauling gravel for us. We are working through some access issues for Giggle Hill right now. We have a right of entry agreement pending.

GENERAL UPDATES

Legislature / County Council

- Adam: the county budget cycle is coming up and we need to focus on educating funders about what we are doing.

Funding

- Adam: for the upcoming cycle we are up ~\$100,000. So, in the near term we are doing well. For the longer term I am concerned. We will not be getting anything from the Forest Service in FY18. Although they are a small funder, this is still a loss. Federal funding is very low and disappointing. We need to diversify.

Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD)

- Chuck: there was a ROD Summit two days ago at the Capital. All the major players from the Big Island attended. A strategic response plan is being developed to prevent spread. The associated budget for the next three years is over \$10 million. The prospects for actually getting it funded are uncertain. The funding pool we are all drawing from is likely to get smaller. There is no ROD confirmed on any island other than Big Island. There are two species of the fungus that are being newly described. ROD is spread by spores that can be carried on the wind from wood boring particles. Once it is established, it is very hard to stop the spread. The plan is available on-line. All the talks from the summit were streamed on-line. The next steps involve coming up with more operational response plans and protocols for if/when ROD arrives on the other islands. The response is being refined and is evolving. One big question is what happens to these forests if the majority of the ohia die. Infected wood and plant parts are the biggest way to spread this. The long-term prognosis is not optimistic, but we at least have a plan. The quarantine just became permanent. We are in the prevention and surveillance phase. Aerial surveys were completed across Maui. Several suspicious trees have been identified on Maui, but none have come back positive. Teya: an important point is that the fungus enters through a wound. Keeping the forest healthy and keeping deer, etc. out is important. Chuck is heading up the Maui ROD working group. The group is being very proactive. Adam: MISC is the data repository for Maui.

2017 MEETING SCHEDULE

Feb 17, 9-12 General Meeting

April 21, 9-12 General Meeting

July 21, 9-2 Priority Setting

Nov 17, 9-12 General Meeting

Dec 15, Christmas Party