

**MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

February 6, 2009

ATTENDANCE: Kim Starr, Forest Starr, Stuart Funke-d'Egnuff, Randy Bartlett, Jeremy Gooding, Lloyd Loope, Fern Duvall, Joshua Fisher, Sheila Conant, Chuck Chimera, Philip Thomas, Teya Penniman, Wendy Swee, Adam Radford, Mike Ade, Elizabeth Anderson, Brooke Mahnken

- The meeting was called to order by Randy Bartlett, ML&P, at 9:10am. Introductions were made around the table.
- Minutes from the December 5, 2008 meeting were approved. They will be posted on the website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Stuart: Nathan is moving to the mainland. He has been instrumental in making things happen and we hope we get a good replacement. He has been with Tri-Isle for a long time. Nathan starts his new job March 31. He will be going to Portland and will be closer to family. The Farm Bill implemented RC&Ds around the country. NRCS pays for a coordinator for each RC&D. They are government employees and hence are somewhat limited in what they can do. Stuart is the staff person for the non-profit associated with the RC&D. The non-profit can do things the government can't do, but in coordination with NRCS.

PARTNER UPDATES

- Teya: we would like to spend part of this meeting hearing from our partners. We want to give our partners a chance to fill us in on what is happening with their organizations.
- Stuart: there is a lot of talk about funding these days. I thought things might slow down a bit as a result, but we are still going full speed hot and heavy. We are being asked to do more and more unique things and it is exciting. The world is moving, things are happening, and there is a lot of enthusiasm. Tri-Isle is gearing up to be ready for the next growth spurt. NRCS will have more funding available for agricultural development and alternative energy. We are working with many different types of funding. There are many changes being made in the administration of funding. New rules are being applied. NRCS had an audit recently and as a result they pulled back some grants that were already awarded.
- Forest: our "Plants of Hawaii" website is still going strong. The National Invasive Species Council used a number of our pictures in their 2009 invasive plants calendar. We get a quarter of a million page views a month with 60,000 unique visitors each month. Eighty percent of the hits this month were new visitors. It might be a place to advertise if we got desperate. The latest round of images we've added are from the wet forest. We are working on a landing zone survey for MISC right now. We are collecting data on the status of the landing zones and compiling species lists. The goal is to see what sort of movement is happening. We have completed a couple of surveys. Platforms and tarmacs are much better than a weedy area for landing zones. We have no control over where else the helicopter goes between drops and pickups. Landing pads would definitely minimize the weed issue. We found a single *Juncus effusus* plant at West Camp in Kipahulu. It was right in the spot where you would take your boots off. We will be working full-time on this project through February. Please let us know if you have any operations we can hook up with.
- Lloyd: for the past month I have been working on the rust issue. I want to get the regulations changed. The process has been challenging, but I am making progress. Early reviews are underway now. The process has felt like writing a college term paper. One mutation could make the difference as to whether the rust wipes out ohia or not. The emphasis on creating resistant strains has been for crops. Of course, we can't do this for ohia. I have stated that this is the most important pest in HDOA history. There was a temporary rule, but it expired. We need to get the info out there to HDOA and the Forest Service. This is the most important thing I have done in my life. Teya: in terms of CGAPS, should we continue to push this? Lloyd:

Christy Martin came up with the list of the 10 most important CGAPS issues. Interception is what HDOA focuses on.. This rust is important and hopefully it will serve to fully educate many people. Fern: It would be nice to get HDOA to regularly participate in MISC meetings again. Maybe Anna Mae or Mach would attend. At least we could do that much locally here on Maui. I can talk to Anna Mae. Lloyd: the coqui situation would be a good connection as well as the BBTV issue. Fern: it would be worth a try.

- Teya: I did meet with Neil Reimer a while back regarding the relationship between HDOA and the ISCs. It was a frank discussion. He was open to meeting with all the ISCs and trying to think of joint projects on each island that we could work on together to build relationships, data sharing, etc. Their budgets and staffs are small. Lloyd: you might request a tour of the quarantine facility. See how many people could be accommodated. Teya: Lissa did go on a tour of the biocontrol facility on Oahu. Lloyd: the quarantine facility is impressive. We could highlight it for one of our monthly columns. Ninety percent of statewide interceptions are made on Maui. The reason Maui got the facility was because of Don Reeser. Myrtaceae is a perfect example of something that could be regulated. Randy: we could take the story, get a good article written, and use that as leverage to push the issue. Look what HDOA can do if given the proper tools. This expensive facility shows us that our current rules aren't working. We should help push for funding for HDOA. There is an impression that the ISCs get all the money. HDOA has a huge job to do. We can use this as an opportunity to put a positive spin on things, increase knowledge, and press for a change to regulations. The inspectors have no control over the rules. They have some leeway within the rules regarding what to do with a shipment. We need to choke off the pathways. Fern: we should remember that we have Mindy in Washington. That may be an avenue for getting the regulations changed. A number of papers have shown that many ohia species are more like varieties rather than true species. Based on current research, the rust could be devastating. Lloyd: ohia has been here as long as the silversword alliance. It hasn't speciated. It is amazing that one species can exist under so many conditions. There is a great deal of plasticity, which is great for global climate change. Chuck was involved with evaluating the HISC research proposals. There was one proposal on economic analysis of the Myrtaceae trade in Hawaii and what would happen if the ban were removed vs. completely shutting down the trade. To make a permanent rule there needs to be an economic analysis.
- Joshua: we have funding for duck and coot trapping at Kealia and Kanaha refuges. Oahu and Molokai coots are showing up on Maui. This hasn't really been documented before. The birds captured for the study are also swabbed for avian flu.
- Elizabeth: Steve is continuing to be a fundraising-aholic. He isn't here today because he is working on stimulus package materials.

Action Items:

- *Invite local HDOA staff to MISC Meetings (Fern)*
- *Arrange a tour of the Maui HDOA quarantine facility for MISC Committee/staff (Teya)*
- *Highlight the Maui quarantine facility in monthly Maui News column (Lissa)*

LEGISLATURE

- Teya: I have been working to submit MISC testimony in support of HDOA related bills. Frequently they come up fast and furious and I don't always have time to run my testimony by the Committee before submitting. There are a couple of bills related to the HDOA cargo fee. The Governor's version decreases the fee and exempts certain things. The fees apply to both shipping and air traffic. There is concern that the cargo fee bill shouldn't apply to certain large quantity industries. There is also a bill that would impose penalties for people who don't pay the fees. There is a snaring and trapping bill that would make it illegal to use snares or bait to control wild animals. The bill includes predators and could even impact rat traps. Fern: this one has come up each of the last five years.

- Teya: there are also a number of relevant funding bills. One bill is to allow money from the special land development fund to be used for invasive species. There is a bill for coqui funding for the counties. I don't expect there will be extra money for that bill. There also is a bill to establish an Emergency Environmental Workforce (EEWF) housed at RCUH/PCSU. The EEWF would be for three months. There is a bill for tourism funds for East Maui projects - invasive species, stream flow and DOCARE. I don't know if any of these will get a hearing.
- Stuart: some of the stimulus funding will come to states and will help the states fund their projects, which should free up other monies. Teya: DLNR put together a \$71 million package for Inouye's office. A number of the ISCs worked with David Duffy and the watershed partnerships to put together a summary package for \$ 9.5 million. I haven't seen anything connected to those projects in the House version yet. There is stimulus funding under the USFS for wildfire and forest health. I am hopeful there will be some invasive funding out of that. We hope we can at least get enough stimulus money to make up for our shortfall. The ISC coordinators have been visiting the Legislature to provide information about our situations and point out the impacts. We want to make sure they are informed about what the DLNR budget cuts mean for the ISCs. We are fortunate that we will be getting an additional \$87,000 from DLNR this year for early detection work. The funds will be used to allow Forest and Kim to do another round of roadside surveys on Maui, which we had identified as a priority.

FUNDING / BUDGETS

Funding

- Teya: today we will take a look at where we are, what our overall budget looks like, and how that relates to the amount of time we spend on different species. We are in the middle of state FY09 right now. Our FY08 expenditures were close to \$2 million. The largest percentage is for personnel. This does not include ~\$300,000 from the NPS aerial contract. Jeremy: we also had NAR funding in 2008. Teya: there is a bit of a disconnect between years. The funds don't always come in and get spent in the same year they are awarded. For example, in FY08 we spent ~\$250,000 of FY07 DWS funds because of a time lag in contracting. We have a little bump up in funding for FY09 primarily due to the NPS Centennial Challenge and flexible base funding (courtesy of Steve).
- Teya: in FY10 we expect several decreases. Our Forest Service funding may go down 20% and we are assuming a 50% cut from the HISC. Because the other ISCs don't have the breadth of funding sources that MISC has, a 50% cut could make them dysfunctional. We may receive a little less from DWS next year and we expect our OED budget to be flat. Stuart: the \$100K for environmental response will be cut. We need to make sure we spend it this year so we show them it is needed. It is a use it or lose it situation. Teya: given our proposed budget for FY10 and existing personnel and operating costs, we will have a ~\$400K shortfall. This doesn't include continued early detection work in the long-term. Fern: any stimulus funds you receive could be used to address that difference. Josh: Dave Smith mentioned that he might have wildlife funds that could cover some of OISC's shortfall in exchange for work for the next couple of years.

Costs / Species

- Teya: we looked at the total amount of field time for each species and calculated a percentage out of our total field time for species-specific activities. We applied this percentage to our total budget (less the big-ticket items like heliops and citric acid) to determine the amount spent on each species.

Total Budget (Less aerial for pampas, citric, MoMISC) = \$1,704,277

Work on Target Species

	% Time		With Aerial / Citric
	Maui	Cost per Species	
Miconia	0.47	\$796,832	\$1,096,832
Pampas grass	0.12	\$207,969	\$ 267,969
Ivy gourd	0.04	\$ 70,464	
Fountain grass	0.01	\$ 14,566	
Eradicables & Others	0.01	\$ 23,530	
BBTV	0.07	\$ 115,718	
Conures	0.01	\$ 12,948	
Chameleons	0.03	\$ 48,304	
Coqui frog	0.24	\$ 405,792	\$ 485,792
Other Vertebrates	0.00	\$ 8,154	

- Teya: about 6-7% of our field time is spent on Lanai. Most (76%) of our fountain grass effort is on Lanai and 27% of our ivy gourd effort is on Lanai. Lloyd: this is very useful information. Fern: the time spent on chameleons should come down in the near future. Adam: there will be a chameleon push before the next MISC meeting – March 31, April 1 & 2.
- Teya: the cost for Molokai per year is small in relation to what we get. Their budget last year was \$127,000. The big project on Molokai right now is *Albizia*. We will be sending a crew over to help with that project in March. Lori is coordinating a big hui partner effort for the *Albizia* work.
- Josh: what is the situation with HDOA and BBTv? Why are we tackling that? Adam: there is an oversight committee on Maui for BBTv. HDOA has limited resources for survey work and the cultural value was a motivator. Teya: initially the County put \$15K towards education. We used those funds to hire Adam. We gave a presentation on those results and they asked us how much money we wanted. It is a suppression effort. There is no way to get rid of it completely. Adam: we are working toward containment and suppression. Right now we are holding steady. It isn't getting any worse. BBTv is definitely a bit of a stretch for MISC. Lloyd: why is it a stretch for MISC? Forest: it is a straight agricultural target. Lloyd: we pride ourselves on dealing with more than just conservation-related weeds if it is worthwhile socially. Randy: MISC formed to fill the gaps and this was a gap. Our bias is towards conservation. Adam: it has been good for community relations. Everyone in Pukalani knows MISC and we look for other target species while we are doing BBTv. Wendy: it is a good rapport building activity. You are saving something rather than asking to kill something.
- Stuart: Tri-Isle is continuing to get \$150K per year for fireweed control. The rains are wrecking havoc this year. MISC should keep track of in-kind contributions. Some grants are requiring matching. We can include in-kind contributions from our partners. Teya: on another agriculture-related note, I have been attending the Maui Cattlemen's Association meetings at the invitation of William Jacinto. We have said we will do a tumbleweed delineation.

Priorities

- Teya: this is an opportunity to look at where our resources are going. This is something to think about in terms of any need to make adjustments especially if we end up with a shortfall. Fern: if we don't find any chameleons during the March search, your time/money commitment for chameleons will go down. Conures may increase if you get the go ahead for firearms use. Those two species may balance each other out. Stuart: we have the ability on our website to accept Pay Pal donations. Elizabeth: it would be nice if there were a way to link from the ISCs site to the Tri-Isle donation page. Stuart: you can reference Tri-Isle as a partner and provide a link.
- Philip: the cost isn't as important as how close are you to achieving what you are trying to do. I want to know if you are getting closer or not. Lloyd: we need to know trends. I don't believe that we will eradicate any of those things. Teya: cost per plant should go up if we are being successful.

Action Items:

- *Explore adding a Tri-Isle link on the ISCs page for donations (Elizabeth, Philip)*

NEXT MEETINGS:

April 3, 2009 – PR/Outreach

June 5, 2009 – Other Islands

August 7, 2009 – Priority Setting

October 9, 2009 – Vertebrates

December 4, 2009 – Miconia