

MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
Friday, February 21, 2014

ATTENDANCE: Bob Hobdy, Fern Duvall, Steve Anderson, Raina Kaholoaa, Elizabeth Speith, Forest Starr, Kim Starr, Teya Penniman, Adam Radford, Mike Ade, Lissa Strohecker, Abe Vandenberg, Brooke Mahnken, Elizabeth Anderson

- The meeting was called to order at 9:05am by Lloyd Loope, Chair.
- Minutes from the December 6, 2013 meeting were approved. They will be posted on the website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Teya: there is a bill going through the Legislature to bump up HISC funding. Last year's HISC funding was \$2.55 million. This year's proposal is for \$5 million. Prospects for the bill are looking very good. According to the most recent revenue forecast excise taxes are down in the state so they may be a little more cautious in the future. There is also \$11 million proposed for watershed funding.
- Teya: there will be a Vertebrate Pest Conference in Kona in early March. Both Brooke and Adam are presenting. Adam: I will be doing a presentation on conure control building off of the Will Pitt and Doug Runde paper. There are only ~18 conures remaining and maybe only at one of the two known locations. Brooke: I am doing a poster update on the veiled chameleons. Fern: there are a lot of parrots on the Big Island and Oahu. Adam: 10-12 lovebirds were recently taken on the ferry from Maui to Molokai. Teya: Lori followed up. The birds were taken to East Molokai. They had been captured on Maui from the Kihei population. It's actually not legal to capture wild birds without a permit. Lori explained the issue to them and they will be returning the birds to Maui. Lissa: there is a Facebook page for fans of the lovebirds in Kihei. Fern: there is a proposal being submitted to the board to classify the entire Psittacidae family as invasive. That will impact transport and movement. There is a symposium on feral cats and cat management as part of the Vertebrate Pest Conference. We are expecting protests.

LITTLE FIRE ANTS (LFA): STATUS UPDATES

**Maui**

- Adam: the Waihee site is still not completely eradicated because there was a massive pile of kiawe wood on the site. It was too hard to be confident that they were taken care of because of the debris. MISC worked with the landowner and spent a week's worth of crew time to get rid of the debris by burning the kiawe pile. We are coordinating with Cas to begin monitoring the site. The site will be monitored for a minimum of one year. The volume of the debris was such that you could fill the yurt footprint head high. We had two fires going at once. We finished the project about two weeks ago. For hapuu, Cas is recommending that it be cut into small chunks, bagged, and frozen for at least three days. This treatment is only for a site where we haven't detected LFA. Teya: if there were fire ants at a site, this would not be adequate. There would need to be monitoring. We should not be telling people how to control ants. Adam: we are staying away from treatment recommendations and focusing on detection. The recommendation from Cas was for an anomalous situation.
- Adam: on Maui we have been regularly surveying for LFA. Forest: we started surveying in 2006 after they were found on the Big Island. A map showing surveys going back a decade was shown with three categories of surveys: public, MISC employee (this includes the Starrs), and Hoiike (school children). In December, an unknown number of hapuu logs arrived on Maui and were sold. LFA were found at Lowe's and Home Depot. The ultimate goal is to find where all of the logs went. So far, LFA has only been detected at one private property on hapuu logs taken to Masako's. MISC is surveying high probability

locations. Teya: HDOA is treating Masako's property. The hapuu are being treated in place and will require long term monitoring. Forest: there have been no LFA in the samples we've looked at so far. Adam: we use a minimum of 50 vials per site. At a large site we will put out 100 or more. It is really random detection. In an ideal world, according to Mach, we would put vials out every two feet, but that is not practical. From the beginning of sampling we have deployed over 15,000. Since December, we've put out 1,064 vials at 64 sites.

- Adam: we have had some input from HDOA on high probability sites and the businesses we know that bring in stuff from Big Island. We are also looking at places that have had coqui in the last year since the frogs come from the Big Island as well. Fern: campgrounds would be a good place to check. Adam: we are asking for reports from anyone who purchased hapuu in the last year. Teya: the stores called some of the people. We do know that we haven't found all the hapuu yet. Adam: HDOA did delimiting surveys at Lowe's and Home Depot and found that the ants were confined to the pallets. HDOA has received 47 calls and treated or destroyed 27 logs and the only confirmed LFA was at Masako's. We have a secondary survey list that we will be working on that includes new construction, new landscaping, parks, etc.
- Adam: There was a meeting on Maui January 27 to coordinate and make sure everyone is on the same page. Folks attending included Cas Vanderwoude, Kenneth Yamamura from the county, Mach Fukada, Rob Curtiss from HDOA, Forest & Kim Starr, Teya, Mike, Adam, Lissa, and Elizabeth. The meeting served to define roles. We made it clear that MISC is here to assist in any way possible. HDOA is dealing with the stores and MISC is doing survey and outreach in coordination with HDOA. Rob Curtiss is the lead for LFA statewide. He is the acting head of HDOA Plant Pest Control. There have been a lot of shuffles at HDOA. The coconut rhinoceros beetle was found on the same day as LFA.
- Elizabeth S.: has there been any discussion of changes in shipping hapuu? Teya: Young Brothers is voluntarily not shipping hapuu unless they have been inspected. Hapuu is not the only mechanism by which the ants are moving. It could give a false sense of hope if that was the only thing that was shut down.

## **Oahu**

- Teya: on Oahu, LFA have been found at several big box stores and a plant distributor. It has become obvious that one of those sites has had ants for at least a year. They have shipped directly from Oahu to Maui as well. There are 10-12 known locations on Oahu and initially every time they did a trace forward they were finding. HDOA is doing active control at all known sites. There have been several meetings of relevant agencies and a soft incident command system has been set up. A subgroup has been formed to focus on outreach. Oahu hasn't received many calls yet. Elizabeth S.: I haven't received any reports from Oahu, but I have gotten them from throughout the state otherwise. Teya: there is a coordinated effort now with the outreach core group working together.
- Teya: Cas's perspective on what we are looking for is that we are "looking for a needle in a haystack, but we don't know where the haystack is." We are looking for an infestation not a single ant. Cas continues to emphasize that we need public reports in order to be successful. HDOA on Oahu only has two people to work on this. OISC can help and possibly DLNR. They still aren't to a point of agreeing on a schedule and how to start, but they will be meeting every two weeks. OISC has been doing some surveys.

## **Kauai**

- Teya: none of the logs in question were shipped to Kauai. There is one infestation on Kauai. Adam: the infestation is now primarily on a cliff side. MISC may be assisting using ropes to complete the eradication. It is a very challenging site for rope work. Forest: there is a bunkhouse at the refuge close by for a place to stay. Steve: how long has the infestation been there? Lloyd: it has been there since 1999. Teya: it is amazing that it hasn't spread.

## **Molokai**

- No reports or hapuu shipments are known of.

## **Lanai**

- There were hapuu shipped to Lanai. They have found five of the seven logs that were sold. There is a response planned. Lissa: they have found LFA and controlled it. HDOA has a coqui treatment protocol with the company and they are working on an LFA protocol
- Fern: the DLNR baseyard and fire cache on the Big Island are infested. We need a protocol for how to deal if there is a fire and the crew goes elsewhere. We need to think about other venues for movement. Steve: I had an email yesterday from Hawaii Volcanoes NP looking for protocols. They are looking for guidance. There should be standard decontamination protocols. Teya: it is extremely sad that the resources on the Big Island have been so adversely impacted. We need a statewide approach. Right now we are focusing on individual islands. Raina: do we know what it takes for a colony to establish? Teya: they need a queen and maybe a couple of workers. Lloyd: genetically it has been established that one queen is the source of what we have in Hawaii. Forest: at least these queens don't fly.

## **MAUI STRATEGY**

### **LFA Outreach**

- Lissa: MISC has 1.5 outreach staff. Basically we've been trying to build awareness of LFA for a long time. Before 2009, most LFA outreach was focused primarily on schools. LFA classroom visits began in 2006 using the Hoike curriculum. The goal of the visits was to get samples. We are going to revise the existing Hoike ant activity to make it more available statewide. They want to start using it on Oahu. Abe: the thumb drives contain presentations on LFA. Students take the information home and share it with their parents.

#### ***LFA Classroom Visits***

*2013: 30 classes- 464 students*

*2012: 28 classes-814 students*

*2011: 20 classes-498 students*

*2010: 34 classes-807 students*

*2009: 11-classes-293 students*

*2008: 3 classes-41 students*

*2007: 1 class-30 students*

*2006: 28 classes-623 students*

- Lissa: a lot of our focus for community fairs has been on fire ants. We cover other topics as well, but LFA has been a primary focus. We continue trying new and different ways of marketing the message. Fern: the ant costume is great! Lissa: before 2009, there was material available related to LFA, but our displays were not focused on that topic specifically.

#### ***Events***

*2013: 7 events-5,739 people*

*2012: 9 events-2,528 people*

*2011: 11 events-2376 people*

*2010: 10 events-5,801 people*

- Lissa: the figures on MISC's [lfa-hawaii.org](http://lfa-hawaii.org) website are number of pageviews. There is a link to the new video included on the site. We are working on updating the site. The website that Cas maintains is [littlefireants.com](http://littlefireants.com). MISC's site is more outreach focused. We encourage people to go to Cas's site when they have very specific questions. Cas's site has good news updates, etc.

#### ***Pageviews***

*2014: 1,689 (to date)*

*2013: 2,363*

*2012: 1,179*

*2011: 574 (analytics enabled June 2011)*

## Recent Efforts

- Lissa/Abe: the Maui premiere of the LFA video was a huge success. We packed the McCoy Studio at the Maui Arts and Cultural Center and the Mayor attended. A lot of legislators attended the Oahu event and the Governor was there. The Mayor included information on LFA in his state of the county address and the Governor incorporated the “biological crisis” into his state of the state address.

### *Video Premieres:*

Maui: 256

Oahu: 110

Kauai: 11

- The video has been broadcast four times on KITV during primetime. There have been 7,646 YouTube views of the video as of 2/19/14 (it was posted on 1/9/14). There is a 7.5 minute version on YouTube also. The video was played twice at the Lanai Film Festival for ~200 people and it is airing on Akaku four times a day on an ongoing basis. It will begin airing on the public access station on Oahu soon.
- Since the beginning of the year we have done seven LFA presentations reaching approximately 188 people ranging from Maui Coffee Growers to the Orchid Society to teachers, etc. There have been several related TV and radio interviews including on HPR, Don Couch's radio show, KHON, and Akaku's Live at 5. In the last two months there have been 22 LFA related newspaper articles. Lissa put an advertisement on Craigslist for hapuu and received two calls.

## Upcoming Outreach Objectives

- Lissa: future plans for LFA outreach include directed outreach for target audiences where we go to places of business and start talking, drop off flyers and movie drives, etc. Potential audiences include:

### 1. Landscaping community:

- Nurseries
- Big landscape maintenance companies
- Arborists and ASPLUNDH/

### 2. Agricultural businesses

### 3. Construction companies that might use earth-moving equipment from the Big Island

### 4. Hotel staff

### 5. Veterinarians

### 6. Harbor workers

### 7. Humane Society and vet clinics

### 8. Health clinics

### 9. Pest control companies

- Lissa: we would also like to start an e-mail tree by developing a network of email addresses of influential "forwarders" to extend our reach in the community. We plan to do another "Spot the Ant, Stop the Ant" radio contest in the early summer. Teya: the ant costume could move from island to island. Fern: Merrie Monarch would be a good venue for the LFA message. It is scheduled for the week after Easter. Teya: we would like to pull together an overall plan for LFA outreach and put it out for review. Kudos to Lissa and Abe for a great job!

## LEGISLATIVE APPROACHES

### State

- Teya: there is one bill before the Legislature requesting funding for the Big Island to do control in county parks. There is also a bill that requires treatment of nursery stock. If someone can prove they bought infested material from a nursery, the nursery is required to treat. There are consequences and penalties. They are trying to remove the “intentional” concept from this bill. This is a serious attempt to address the interisland issue and has raised awareness that something needs to be done. The burden of proving you got LFA from somewhere will be difficult. HDOA resources will be needed for enforcement.

- Teya: HCF called the other day because they are concerned about the LFA issue. They may have \$25,000 in quarantine funds and may be able to find matching funds. I will be meeting with them in late March to discuss. There are bills pending to fund LFA outreach and a pilot project to bring ant sniffing dogs to Maui. Elizabeth: we have been communicating with folks from Queensland where there is a very successful program using dogs to detect LFA. A dog can detect a single ant at 30 meters and they are on their way to achieving eradication in Cairns through the use of ant detection dogs. We are in the process of working out the details of having the trainers who've trained the Queensland ant dogs come to Hawaii for a week to assess our situation and discuss development of an ant dog program for Hawaii.

### **County**

- Teya: I've met with all but two of the County Council members. There is discussion about an ordinance requiring businesses to be certified coqui and LFA free in order to do business in Maui County. All but one Councilmember is interested. Guzman is willing to carry the idea forward and get a legal opinion from Corporate Counsel as to the feasibility of the concept.

### **HTA GRANT**

#### **Objectives**

- Teya: we received \$40,000 in funding from Hawaii Tourism Authority, before the recent incursion, to look at how LFA moves and what the scale and scope of the threat is. We need to look at who the stakeholders are and what the impacts of various actions would be on the stakeholders. What resources would be needed to address the problem? Lloyd is a key contributor to the project. We want to get input from the Committee about ways to get input. As a result of the recent incursion, we are working more with HDOA and we are developing data sharing on a local level. Other information we need from HDOA includes how often they are intercepting LFA and how much volume they are inspecting. Donna Lee at the University of Hawaii recently did an economic study that will be helpful for our process.
- Teya: we need to identify other potential people we should be doing outreach to and/or getting information from – people who are either potentially moving LFA and/or would be impacted by regulations. Steve: we also need to look at who else is out there who could be helping with detection. For example, the park is doing equipment inspections for the telescope.
- ***Stakeholders to add to the list:***
  - **Government:** county, county parks, police, life guards, civil defense, USFWS, NPS, the Army, USFS, UH-CTAHR, UH Astronomy, Dept. of Health, National Guard, Dept. of Defense, Air Force, DHHL, DOE
  - **NGOs:** ISCs, TNC, watershed partnerships, Tri-Isle RC&D, Hawaiian Islands Land Trust, NTBG, Sierra Club, The Outdoor Circle, Kamehameha Schools, Pacific Whale Foundation, Maui Orchid Society, MALP, LICH, arborists associations, surfriders, Hawaii Wildlife Fund, HCA, Friends of Haleakala, The Kipahulu Ohana, tropical fruit associations, Native HI plant societies
  - **Private industry:** botanical gardens, pest control operators, resorts, flower growers, nurseries, farmers, Young Brothers, airlines, interisland cargo shippers, ferries, cruise ships, dirt bikes, car rental companies, heavy equipment/construction companies

**Next Meeting: April 25, 2014**