

O'ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC)
General Meeting
December 3, 2008, 9:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.
Windward Community College
Akoakoa 107

Meeting notes

- I. Welcome and introductions. Rachel welcomed attendees, who introduced themselves.
- II. Partner updates
 - A. Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC). Patrick Chee said the budget cuts mean HISC will be operating at 45% next year.
 - B. State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW). Lanky Morrill introduced himself and his current projects involving invasives.

Rob Hauff: We are expecting the Forest Service (FS) funding information today, it will probably be closer to \$300,000 than last year's \$400,000, and it will continue to go down. They are shifting more of that money to the competitive grant process. Hawaii won three competitive grants: education, Leeward Haleakala Forest Restoration partnership, and a regional Pacific Island one for T&E plants.

David Smith, DOFAW branch manager: We are still working on Kawainui baseyard consolidation. Our budget got eliminated for that, so we are not able to do much with it. We do still have some federal grants, and no people to do the work. We might be able to use the wildlife federal grants to cover some of OISC's shortfall. The budget situation in the next couple of years will be very very tight.
 - C. Department of Transportation (DOT). Chris Dacus talked about working with the Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii (LICH) to get the last holdouts on board with the standards of conduct, it looks like they are almost there. Kauai (KLIC) has not yet signed on to the codes of conduct, Chris will be meeting with them soon.

DOT has been trying to contract out for a statewide invasive species program, half a million dollars for three years. OISC is a component of that program. The deadline is December 31 to have the contract signed by SWCA and the State. It is presently with Budget and Finance.

January 7 is the deadline for public comment on invasive species and other issues associated with light rail (see honolulutransit.org). They'll be bringing tons of earth-working equipment from different parts of the world that could transport invasive propagules. There will also be impacts from the construction, it will be mainly along existing roads. This is a Department of Transportation Services (DTS) project.

Rachel: Maybe OISC should go and talk with DTS instead of submitting general comments.

D. Outreach. Priscilla Billig is working with TNC and CGAPS. Her latest project is developing some radio programming concerning invasive species. An owner of multiple stations has been looking for programming. He is interested in invasive species stories in two different formats, 1 minute and 15–25 minutes with interviews with partners and experts. Priscilla is sending him a proposal. There seems to be an underuse of radio for invasive species in Hawaii. Rachel mentioned NPR's Radio Expeditions, where reporters come out in the field.

E. US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Josh Fisher of the Invasive Species Division, USFWS: The biggest thing of interest to OISC is funding for dead bird pickups. We don't have projections for FY 09 yet. FWS has been funding only dead chicken pickup, which is bigger on Kauai than on this island. Avian influenza (AI) sampling is mostly at Campbell NWR and now at Kealia and Kanaha Pond, where seasonal hires are running duck traps. Reporting mortalities of wild birds is still the best way of detecting avian influenza. FWS supports the public reporting even though it is not so important for AI, because it is important for West Nile Virus (WNV).

Rachel asked if it is possible to test for WNV on live birds. Chris said they do it at the airports. Josh said they use sentinel chickens in other states. It would take more money to do that.

Rachel: OISC's issue has been that the public reporting is unreliable as far as finding target birds. People may insist they have a target bird (often "a sparrow") but it turns out to be a dove. Maybe we should try to help people know better what the birds are.

Josh: Maybe it would help to have a designated pickup spot. It might bring the cost down. The Department of Health (DOH) needs to have a better web site, with pictures identifying the birds they want.

Next WNV meeting is the end of February.

Josh: Maybe shift away from the general public and focus on people who are more likely to be in contact with the target species.

Rachel: At the WNV meetings where these things have been decided, there hasn't been much OISC input. I'll try to be more involved from the next meeting.

Josh doesn't have funding anymore for outreach. We can still make small changes. [charges?] The radio campaign is where the larger costs are.

Lanky: There is a pretty good ad on now about pandemic flu, which is avian related. It is a public health issue, that is where the money is, not the wildlife issue. DOH is also screening mosquitoes, they have mosquito traps at airports.

Chris: There is a HISC rfp out for research and technology projects due Jan. 5.

Naomi Hoffman, Honolulu Botanical Gardens: We would like to cooperate, we could put up some pictures.

F. Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership. Miranda Smith: We have a new web site up at hawp.org. We are looking to bring Resource Mapping Group to O'ahu. On Kauai they're mapping native forests and invasive species. Here on O'ahu we want to map 20,000 acres that include areas of OISC's interest, Army, NARs, and other areas.

G. Army Natural Resources. Jane Beachy: We have made no new significant finds. We did one aerial survey for the *Tibouchina herbacea* we found at the Ko'olau summit. We thought we found a lot of it in the back slopes of Punalu'u so we went out and checked and it was *Buddleja asiatica*. None were flowering and the growth form as seen from the air was really similar. This is good news because it would have been very hard to get to some of the places we saw plants. We're still planning more ground and aerial surveys. I'll be sending out an email for volunteers at the beginning of January.

Rob: MoMISC did some early detection surveys for that species, they might have some detection tips.

Jane: We have some money for aerial surveys in our new contract. Michelle Mansker is the Army manager, she is interested in sharing up to 25 hours of helicopter time for OISC and KMWP to do heli flights.

H. Board of Water Supply. Amy Tsuneyoshi: We are going to have a work trip at Waianae Kai, outplanting at the burn site, this Saturday. It's about a 2-hour hike up there. We're going to meet at 8:00 and hope to be out by 3:00, put in a little over 200 koa trees. We can slingload the supplies and water up.

III. OISC 2008 accomplishments and work summary

We have had no major accidents this year. We had a 2-day wilderness first-aid training.

We raised \$179,000 dollars with FS money, Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) and USFWS grants. We met with FS in June and they seem pleased with our program.

Species summaries:

A. *Miconia*. We have only 150 acres left in our initial ground surveys. There is a 9,000-acre search area, so it took a long time to get here. It has taken since the late 90s to finish delimiting the known *miconia* seed bank. A lot of it is private property so we need to get access, but the end is in sight. We have been concentrating on the initial buffer, which is the most likely place to find a mature tree. It has been a full year since we found a mature tree. This is the first time this has happened.

I'll just quickly mention the ESRI award we got for Jean's modeling, which informs our surveys.

Rachel showed maps of different areas, showing ground and aerial surveys. We have some money for the aeriels remaining at the Ka'alaia summit, in native forest. We also found bush beardgrass there.

What it all adds up to is 2,877 ground acres and 1,600 aerial acres for the period January 1 through September 30, with 1,079 immature *miconia* found. We spent about 44% of our time on *miconia*. We were aiming for 47% but got distracted by new blackberry finds and other things.

Jane: How are the resurveys going, is there still a window for any of the aging resurveys?

Rachel: We have a little wiggle room since three years is maximum safety. We do have an issue with that because when we had a lot of staff we surveyed a lot, and with less staff it is hard to hit that same target acreage exactly three years later.

Susie: We also do resurveys at the same time as nearby initial surveys.

Rachel: Places that have been surveyed twice with nothing found will be put on the back burner, maybe go longer times between surveys.

- B. *Buddleja* spp. We have finished the buffer survey and monitoring for *Buddleja madagascariensis*. We helped KISC treat it on Kauai, it is really nasty when it gets big. It forms a huge tangle and smothers everything. It is hard to treat, hard to figure out where the stump is.
- C. Blackberry. *Rubus* spp. In 2007 and 2008 we expanded our delimiting surveys to determine just where the population is. Alex says it is probably not *Rubus discolor* or *R. argutis*. People aren't sure what it is. We removed 2,692 immature plants and 4 matures. It is mostly a vegetative reproducer. For 2009 we will continue delimiting surveys and control. Julia knocked on doors and gave a presentation to the Palolo Neighborhood Board about it. It was generally well received. One of the issues is that the land ownership is fragmented. The person that brought it in does not own the land he apparently planted it on. He does own land in Palolo Valley. We were pulling blackberry and he stopped and asked why we were pulling "his plant." We may not be able to get rid of the plants on his 5-acre plot. It might be okay since it is mostly vegetative. Once we are finished maybe we can get help from DOA to get it all. It requires revisits but it seems to be working. Escort seems like it takes a while but seems better than the cocktail. We will be doing more monitoring of results to understand the effectiveness of Escort.
- It would be a good experiment for an intern to look at the old records and mapping, and document the new treatments and results. Some of the old notes aren't very good.
- Chris: You really have to tag your plants to monitor success.
- Susie: It is a little scattered because we have been finding new populations.
- Josh: The low-growing ones, with the majority of material underground, are the hardest to kill.
- Chris: Pycloram and Escort worked well in the Galapagos. But we'd end up with sickly plants that just wouldn't die.
- D. Pampas grass. *Cortaderia* spp. Our outreach person, Julia, unfortunately left us for a job on the Big Island. She worked really hard on pampas grass. There are only three sites remaining on O'ahu. We got a grant from HTA to buy plants to replace it at Ko Olina golf course. They are going to test replacement plants.
- It is also at Royal Kunia golf course, and there is one homeowner Julia has talked to but this needs more outreach. As far as we know it is all *C. selloana*. We are not sure about Royal Kunia, Alex and Danielle haven't looked at it yet.
- There was one plant found by Dan Clark (FWS invasive species program), off the 4WD road to Kipapa Trail. I took the entire plant to Bishop, they confirmed that this is the first record of naturalized *C. selloana* in the state. We did a delimiting survey

and found 4 other plants. The farthest one was 25 feet away, a keiki about 14" tall. We did a 200m survey around the plant and found lots of good habitat but didn't see anything. All the ones we found were within 25 feet of the parent plant. Jason Hanley talked to the land owner. He knew the site but said he hadn't seen it on his land before and didn't have it as an ornamental.

Leilehua Golf Course at Schofield removed their pampas grass themselves, but it wasn't confirmed. Royal Kunia is within 5 miles, so when we go there we will look for keiki.

We're doing the project with FWS, they've been working at the summit for three months, and everyone is looking for it now.

Jason wants to start a volunteer weed mapping program, like with Hawaii Trail and Mountain Club, so they might help with the trail part.

Rachel: There seems to be another Army golf course besides Leilehua, does anyone know of any abandoned ones?

Jane: I will check on that.

Yard removal of pampas grass has been very successful. Most have been replaced with other plants. We removed 118 plants from January to September.

Josh: That's more than we ever thought was out there.

Rachel: A lot of it is because of the OED program, they were out there looking. Julia tracked down owners of unoccupied houses who live on the mainland and got permission for removal

- E. *Andropogon glomeratus* var. *pumilus*. Alex and Danielle were sorting the samples left on the desk of the guy who first identified SchCon. He retired, and they figured out that it wasn't *Schizachyrium condensatum* at all. One of the main reasons we were going after it is because we thought it was damaging Koke'e on Kauai. That is also this species but Alex thinks it is a different variety because its behavior is different.

SchCon is now only found on the Big Island. It is a fire hazard and is in HAVO. Otherwise it is not known to be here.

Now we are wondering how close this is to *A. virginicus*, which is widespread on Oahu and has been here since the 1800s. What we are worried about is that *A. glomeratus* and *A. virginicus* can hybridize.

Danielle found that there is no record of *A. glomeratus* being invasive anywhere but Hawai'i.

- F. Oahu Forest Refuge Project. This is a partnership with KMWP and USFWS. Three people from OISC and three from KMWP are looking for site-incipient weeds. We are mostly concerned with the summit and site-incipient species. White moho is a major one. Manuka is probably not incipient but it is bad. There is a lot along the trail, less in the north part of the refuge, we will try to create a buffer. There is also *Schefflera* in the refuge, which hadn't been found there before, just once on the adjacent property.

- G. Coqui. Brian caught a frog in Waialua back in the spring. Chelsea has gotten individual frogs at a few different sites. Most coqui calls go to the pest hotline, HDOA responds to those. When we get the info from HDOA we can report for the

whole island. We are working with nurseries, Chelsea is setting up remote monitoring. HDOA put a monitor out on the north shore and they heard several calls.

We used some coqui outreach money for coqui keychains. They were pretty expensive so we are only giving them to nursery owners and others who really need them, who are more likely than the general public to come into contact with coqui. Night concierges at hotels have a lot of rented plants.

The CTAHR site comes up first with a web search for coqui, and that page has our number on it. HDOA caught three frogs at a church in Kalihi. We have no idea where they could have come from.

Jane: We have one monitoring thing, a Legacy Program grant recipient is coming and setting up remote monitoring, they are setting up in the East Range.

Pat: Maui has a web site, coquifreemaui.org, they have a program for nurseries to get certified by MISC. The certification shows they aren't doing things that would spread frogs around the island.

Rachel: The person we know does a lot to control coqui, but we could never say he is coqui free because there are a lot of frogs. DOA may have concerns about the Maui program, we need to see how it goes.

- H. Early detection: They are about two-thirds done with their surveys, right on target. We applied for a grant for them to do early detection on military bases. If they get that funding it will slow the road surveys a little. After the last strategy meeting in November they announced they had found kudzu, and we decided we would go after it. It has become a bit of a nightmare. It is sold in Chinatown and people are cultivating it for food. Control is really time-consuming. We will have another meeting on this when we get the other target species sorted. The main threat is places adjacent to natural areas or people putting it in the forest. If it is a federal noxious weed there might be USDA money for it.

IV. Budget projections

Rachel showed maps of the miconia survey acres remaining, and a spreadsheet of the budget needed for each species to do everything we want. We estimated that to do all these aerals we would need at least 4,000 hours for miconia. In reality we would need a lot more to do the miconia air surveys but aerals are so expensive we aren't going to get all that.

With our existing crew we can do about 9,200 total field hours, similar to last year (total OISC field hours, 8124; Kipapa work, 1,080; total 9,204).

The budget: We really appreciated people going to bat for us when it looked like the governor might not release our money. It was really good for our morale. It was decided that we are actually "operations" and the governor's signature was not needed. So that was great, but it looks like next year's NAR money, which funds us, is going to be a lot less. It is based on conveyance tax. We also get FS money. There won't be as much money in the NAR fund and we have been told to expect 50% cuts in 2010 and 60% cuts in 2011. Our fiscal year operationally is more on a calendar year.

The Kipapa project will provide about \$18,000 for salaries. The HTA grant will provide about \$15,000 in salaries. And we have applied for that DOD grant for early detection.

We need \$90,000 to finish our aerial buffer.

If we can raise the extra money for 2009 we will be able to do everything on the list at 100%. If we had a 50% cut in 2010, we would have six positions.

Since we will have fewer field hours, maybe we should start putting more hours toward miconia now, which would mean dropping some of the bush beardgrass work. Those three days a month for bush beardgrass could go to blackberry or miconia. It will be easier to make decisions later if we have done the crucial work.

Jane: I would hesitate to walk away from Halawa now, it is two days/month.

Aka: We have been finding it at another site.

Jane: If it is funding we can help with surveys, that will help make the big decisions later. The Stack property is hard, it would have to be monthly and Miranda says they usually only go for a one-time thing, and it has to be really well laid out.

Susie: If we worked on the beardgrass in the backcountry it would be several days a month, and it would be really labor intensive.

Lanky suggested that a more coordinated volunteer service program might pick up some of the slack. Patti Clifford at Bishop managed a program like this. Rachel said we're going to work with her on that.

Rachel will call Michelle about the 25 hours flight time. We are going to stop going to Ahuimanu and use that money to do miconia.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Attendees

Chelsea Arnott, O'ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC)

Jane Beachy, Army Natural Resources

Aka Beebe, O'ahu Invasive Species Committee

Priscilla Billig, Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC)

Chris Buddenhagen, Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

Patrick Chee, Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

Chris Dacus, Hawai'i Department of Transportation

Joshua Fisher, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Rob Hauff, State of Hawai'i DLNR DOFAW

Naomi Hoffman, Honolulu Botanical Gardens

Mary Ikagawa, O'ahu Invasive Species Committee

Susie Iott, O'ahu Invasive Species Committee

Lanky Morrill, State of Hawai'i DLNR DOFAW

Rachel Neville, OISC

David Smith, State of Hawai'i DLNR DOFAW

Miranda Smith, Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership (KMWP)

Amy Tsuneyoshi, Honolulu Board of Water Supply