

FINAL MEETING MINUTES
MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE

August 8, 2008

ATTENDANCE: Forest Starr, Kim Starr, Elizabeth Speith, Karl Buermeyer, Pat Bily, Fern Duvall, Hank Oppenheimer, Stuart Funke-d'Egnuff, Randy Bartlett, Patrick Chee, William Jacintho, Teya Penniman, Lissa Fox, Adam Radford, Brooke Mahnken, Elizabeth Anderson

- The meeting was called to order by Randy Bartlett, ML&P, at 9:20am
- Minutes from the May 9, 2008 meeting were approved. They will be posted on the website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Karl: we have hired a new supervisory biologist to take some of the pressure off of Earl Campbell. His name is Dan Clark and he comes to us from National Park Service in Florida. He was the NPS weed person for Florida and the Caribbean. The first round of grants to the ISCs were signed by UH just a few days ago. You should get notification soon. We had a little extra money that went into black buck and *Albizia* on Molokai. We are working with Lori on the initial planning for these. Ryan Smith will be one of the main people working on the projects.

BRIEF UPDATES

Funding

- Teya: annual pay raises went into effect July 1. Our field worker salaries were low compared to other similar positions on Maui so we did a significant pay increase for the field staff.
- Elizabeth: we are operating primarily off of OED FY08 funds at the moment with a little residual FY08 State funding for travel and supplies. We are waiting for our FY08 DWS grant to come on-line and things are a bit tight in the meantime. The NPS funds are expected to be available in Oct/Nov. The NPS heli contract has increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000 (this includes miconia, pampas, park operations, and Leeward Haleakala Watershed) and there will be \$500,000 going into PCSU (\$300,000 from the Centennial Challenge and \$200,000 from the park flexible base) mostly in support of MISC.
- Teya: we will be receiving two FWS grants - \$10,000 for the miconia conference and \$55,000 for early detection surveys at landing zones on Maui. The early detection funds will support Forest and Kim for a total of 6.5 person months. Forest: there are 180 landing zones that have been created on Maui. We will do a subset sample. Pat: TNC and EMWP have been inventorying our landing zones since 1990. Teya: we would like to get into the high elevation sites. We would also like to compile a list of the status of the different sites. Fern: the older shut down sites may be the first ones you want to do. Teya: we may want to have a meeting to plan our strategy. Pat: for TNC and EMWP our LZs are biased toward the FWS transects. Accessibility is easier. Only about 10% of our LZs are new and have had big trees cut. Many were open already so they were already weedy. Teya: we should talk to people to find out what we would expect to find. Pat: rice grass was a discovery that was unexpected. It was found near an LZ and at the campsite. It could have been brought in from the fence line as well. For TNC/EMWP there is rapid response in place. Hank: we have an inventory of LZs that is pretty standard. For a lot of the older ones you won't be able to find them or be able to land.
- Teya: we need to get our FY09 County funding contracts moving soon. I am concerned because the County is talking about an overall decrease. The HISC/state funding is in the process of being negotiated. There will be no pass thru from DOFAW this year. For HISC funding, all of the different working groups are coming up with a budget. There is \$3.5 million to divvy up this year. The Resources Working Group will meet on August 14 to evaluate the proposals. The ISCs are in the process of refiguring our proposals. We expect to see a significant cut in our state funding. Last year we received \$200,000 from the Legislature for coqui. These funds were absorbed by DLNR this year to deal with their shortfall (with the exception of \$100,000 for the Big Island). We had hoped to get \$100-125,000 for coqui. DLNR had an 8% budget restriction that is now up to 21% because of the forecasted decrease in state revenue. The economy is not doing so well and we are feeling the effect. Three out of the \$4 million HISC budget comes out of the NARS fund, which is not subject to the same budget restrictions. We do need to thank the Legislature while letting them know we didn't get the funding we needed.

- Pat: with the cutback in the Research and Technology funding, there won't be much biocontrol work done. Patrick: it is all in flux right now. Teya: some things will stay in. The Bishop Museum statewide database on invasive species will likely stay as well as the HDOA proposal for biocontrol equipment. Patrick: that went up to prevention. The Legislature passed the cargo fee, but it might still get squashed. If it does get off the ground, it will bring a lot of funding into HDOA and they will be able to pick up some of the prevention items and free up funds for other things. There is also funding for a biocontrol coordinator position.

Staffing

- Teya: three new people have joined our staff recently. Carl Polk was hired for the Hana crew from the NRCS grant we received this year. Carl has great data/computer skills and worked with the Hana crew in the past as part of the Emergency Environmental Workforce. Jared Barros and Mapuana Kowalski have both joined the Piiholo plant crew. Jared is a Seabury Hall graduate and recently completed a degree from the California Maritime Academy. Mapuana has a breadth of experience and was recently working in Kuhea's office. Two additional field workers will be starting in late September – Brad Ogle and Tricia Rodriguez. Both have worked on the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project. We plan to hire 3-4 additional crew members for Hana in the fall using the NPS funding. Russell Suzuki will be retiring from MISC at the end of August. Russ has been with MISC for over nine years (almost as long as Elizabeth). He is evidently the first person to officially retire from PCSU. His experience and expertise will be missed!
- We had two interns working with us this summer. Ian Gregg worked on both the plant and vertebrate crews at Piiholo as a YCC volunteer. He is a senior at King Kekaulike this year. He became interested in MISC after a Hoike class visit and hopes to volunteer with us during school breaks. Poha Kanakaole joined the Hana crew for the summer through the AmeriCorps program. Poha graduated from Hana High and is starting at MCC this fall studying biology. Poha became interested in MISC after a Hana High volunteer trip. We hope to have her work part-time at the MISC office during the school year.

Public Relations

- Lissa: Our Maui News column this month was on *Parkinsonia*. I will send the article out to the MISC-L. Each month the articles are posted to the HEAR website. Two months ago Chuck did an article on the Weed Risk Assessment process for our column and last month Catherine Berg did an article on invasive algae. Next month's article will feature biocontrol and the following month will be a hunter oriented article. We had a booth at the International Year of the Reef event at the Maui Ocean Center. A good mix of visitors and locals attended the event. MISC won the "Most Unusual Entry" award at the Makawao Rodeo Parade for the third year in a row. Chris Radford - dressed up as a bunny - was a real hit! The Keane Hoolaulea is coming up on August 16. Fern: poison dart frogs would be a good topic for a newspaper article. For the Keanae event, make sure you have something there that notifies people about loose parrots and suggests they report them.
- Lissa: the coqui free certification program is moving along. We are having decals, flyers, bumper stickers, and banners printed. There will be a public service announcement and a website – www.coquifreemaui.org. Our next newsletter will be printed in time for the County Fair. We are looking at recycled paper as the cost has come down quite a bit. The early detection booklets (500) have been printed.
- Elizabeth S.: we are excited to finally have the booklets. We have been doing a series of community workshops. We have reached all primary Maui communities except Lahaina, which is scheduled for next week. The community workshops have not been well attended but the people that have been coming are very responsive. We have also been doing presentations for a number of conservation organizations (DOFAW, watershed partnerships, etc.). We have received a few reports as a result of the workshops. Teya: what about utility workers, port workers, etc.? Elizabeth S.: I would love to work with those groups. I would like to shift the focus and begin talking to more people that would be incidental. We have finished up the on-line report form and started working with HDOA to make more information available for rapid response partnering. Stuart: will we make an effort to train MECO, the cable company, etc.? Elizabeth S.: yes. We also want to work with tour group leaders and county workers that are in the highway type jobs. Forest: what sort of submissions have you received? Elizabeth S.: loose birds in the neighborhood, little fire ants on Kahoolawe, and a possible *Verbascum thapsus* report in Ulupalakua. The reports are target species.

- Teya: the strawberry guava biocontrol agent is ready to be released. There was a lot of opposition on the Big Island. There will be listening sessions scheduled on each island to allow the public to express concerns and to educate people. In advance of the listening sessions, they want to meet with key stakeholders. If you have suggestions for who those people might be on Maui, please send them to me. Forest: the proposed agent is less effective in the lowlands than the highlands. It might not have that much impact in the lowlands where people are concerned, but may be very effective in the highlands. Elizabeth S.: the farm in Huelo where they do composting workshops would be a good one. Randy: they should include 2-3 Hawaiian community leaders like Charlie Maxwell and Ed Lindsey. Pat: Pat Conant said that if this biocontrol effort fails, we might as well forget it. The public mistrusts science and there was an idea that this could be sold via science. We need to help people understand the problem first. Hank: the opposition came because 80 hunters on the Big Island staged a demonstration on the side of the road. The conservation community needs to do the same thing. Teya: the Forest Service responded to the need for a tool. It is up to the conservation community to get the word out and make it happen. The Forest Service can't do that. The conservation community needs to come out in full force in the listening sessions. Randy: we need to write letters to the newspapers. Pat: there needs to be a different approach on public relations. Teya: I attended a meeting with the Mayor and the agriculture community a couple of nights ago. The meeting was well attended by a wide range of agricultural interests. The meeting focused on the difficulties agriculture is having on Maui. I raised the subject of biocontrol. Pat: the reduction of host material would decrease fruit flies and be a positive for the agricultural community. Teya: there was general support. I talked about fireweed, gall wasp, etc.
- Lissa: the deadline for our annual Malama i ka aina award is October 8, 2008. Teya: please help us to get the word out. It would be good to get an industry this year. Please send suggestions to Lissa. Forest: Wal-Mart would be a good nominee.

ACTION ITEMS:

- *Article on poison dart frogs for the Maui News (Lissa)*

Miconia Conference

- Teya: things are moving forward. Alan Holt has agreed to be our keynote speaker.

Partner Updates

- Forest: Kim and I spent two weeks on Midway recently doing a botanical survey. The two major widespread weeds are ironwood and *Verbesina*. We did a detailed survey in 1999 and mapped 23 species we thought could be controlled. We went back to document the change. We did transects through the island and covered as much area as possible. We focused on human occupied areas. We found 31 new records, mostly cultivated aliens. There are a number of Thai foreign nationals living and working in the area and they have mostly brought in edibles.

PLANTS

- Brooke presented an FY08 plant update overview. Ivy gourd is looking good. The number of nodes controlled is the only way to deal with data for a vine. There is very little fountain grass, but it still pops up here and there. We did have a new discovery in Kihei this year that was brought in with a golf bag from the Big Island. Bob Hobdy also found a new fountain grass site at the Makena wastewater treatment facility and there is a new Mokulele Highway site. We continue to find plants now and then in Waiehu Dunes and at Kahakuloa. We have a few new miconia points. One is near the main Waipio infestation in Dave McPherson's yard. There is also a new population dangerously close to Kipahulu Valley. We have a lot of pampas points in the Honomanu and Waikamoi areas and we are doing more and more work on the ground in these areas. We were able to get in to Hanaula much higher this year and we found a large flowering plant. There are a lot of new Hanaula points. West Maui is difficult to fly because of the weather and the terrain is rough. There are no new pampas plants at the golf course and we have done road surveys in Kahakuloa and Iao. There has been roadside survey work and some control done on *Pittosporum undulatum*. There are a lot of large trees in the gulch site off Kekaulike Highway. We have a new rubber vine site in Lahaina that was reported as a result of our Maui News article. There is also a new site in Maui Meadows that was found during BBTV surveys. Both have been controlled.

- William: I am concerned that tumbleweed is expanding towards Kula Highway in the old pineapple fields and between Kekaulike above Kula 200. It is getting worse and spreading. I am not sure what causes the spread - maybe deer and wind, or pineapple equipment. Is there a plan to keep it from spreading further? The little plants are easy to pull. Pat: I first noticed the problem in late 1998. The agriculture park seemed unconcerned. It was coming from the pineapple fields. Deer could definitely be moving it around. William: it may be carried by tires as well and be picked up in waterways on rainy days. Fern: game birds could be moving it too. Teya: there was an email exchange on this topic. Christy wonders if there could be an annual roundup. Would that be helpful? William: anything would be helpful especially in the new areas. Teya: first we need to know the distribution. Forest: you need to know vectors. Randy: a survey and some outreach would be good. If I can get a little write up and distribution map, I could send it to the ML&P guys. Teya: what is the available control? Pat: Roundup. Forest: Lori killed it at the dump on Molokai. Ask her how that worked. Mowing is a possibility. Teya: there is a biocontrol underway. We should get William's information down on a map and have other people let us know about locations. We can use this for a Maui News article. Pat: it is important to map it and get Maui Pineapple involved.

ACTION ITEMS:

- *Get tumbleweed location information from William. Provide map and write-up to Randy to bring to the attention of ML&P (Brooke & Teya)*
- *Solicit tumble weed data from others (MISC)*
- *Feature tumbleweeds in a Maui News article (Lissa)*

VERTEBRATES

- Adam: of the 14 known coqui population centers on Maui, all but Maliko Gulch are well in hand. Seven sites are considered eradicated and we just added Honopou to that list. The Honopou area is rugged and covers 10-12 acres. There are a number of different owners and plenty of good habitat. For this area we got a burn permit and reduced the frog habitat by burning. We have had reintroductions via plant material at previous sites. These are typically from repeat offenders – the Big Island is the issue. The new Westin condo had plant introduction of coqui with new landscaping. We succeeded with rapid response.
- Adam: with a decrease in the number of active sites we are at a place where we can put more energy and resources into the introduction pathway. One nursery that has had a problem is letting us know when they have new projects. We are working on developing our relationships with nurseries. We will endorse nurseries that are taking responsible steps. Of 117 nursery type businesses on Maui, 90 were relevant to the certification project and we are working with 31 of these to achieve coqui free status. All but one of the sites are currently certifiable. We are stepping up the treatment schedule on that one. The program is all based on positive reinforcement. If they are meeting the standard, they are included in advertising. We are not mentioning the negative. We will provide outreach and education materials. As part of the research program associated with the coqui free certification, we are doing pre and post customer surveys regarding invasive species. We've gotten good feedback. It would be nice to go statewide and have a network of nurseries that work together. Participants that meet the standards can reproduce the stickers themselves if they want to. We are nearing the end of the initial surveys. William: we have to put stickers on all of our pots. Maybe the coqui free logo could be the background or somehow associated with the stickers we already use.
- Adam: we put a coqui barrier along Kulanui Road using fine insect mesh. We buried it and there is a 90 degree bend at the top. They are using a similar method on Big Island parking lots because cars are such a dispersal agent. Randy: what about using the fixed boom on a helicopter? Adam: I talked to Don about that and he didn't like the idea because the number of passes you would need to make. The big cost for this project is going to be the pump for running the sprinkler and the nozzle. Teya: we got \$75,000 from HISC for this system. Adam: we just unloaded 85,000 lbs of citric acid (40 pallets) yesterday. We are really optimistic.

- Adam: Maliko is our big challenge now. My crew has been quite stable for three years and everyone is committed. We have been working fairly consistently in the Maliko residential area around Kokomo and Kuluanui Roads since 2006. We have not gotten into the densest areas of the gulch yet. This last winter we started hearing and getting reports further down the gulch. We have surveyed almost the entire gulch. There is only a quarter mile stretch we haven't been able to get into. It would be very difficult to work in this area. We stayed overnight in the gulch awhile back and did surveys. We are hopeful that we can deal with the gulch before they move and merge. The area they are in has water and good vegetation. We have the traditional tools. We are putting in water catchments so we can use backpack sprayers. We may be able to drop tanks with a helicopter. Hank: have you considered the bambi bucket approach? Adam: yes, we have. There are limitations. Karl: what about dropping balloons on population centers? Adam: we are putting in a large scale 100psi sprinkler system. It should give us pretty good coverage - ~37 acres.
- Adam: there are 12 conures remaining. We think that the two flocks may be congregating. There were western fence lizards found in Kula and West Maui. Fern: they are tick magnets. This is an example of a reptile that is not coming in through the pet trade. They should be screened for ticks. Adam: there was a poison dart frog turned in by a resident in Wailuku. Fern: there was another monitor lizard report in the Makena area. Adam: we are continuing to follow up on various rabbit reports.

OTHER

- Adam: BBTV has been found on Molokai. Efforts to control it are ongoing. We went over and did a comprehensive survey. It has only been found in the central area.
- Stuart: we are receiving several grants from the County's emergency environmental fund including \$10,000 for invasive algae, \$10,000 for fireweed and \$10,000 for nettle caterpillar outreach. We need to work with HDOA on the PR and outreach portion. There was also funding for completion of the turtle fence.

NEXT MEETING

- October 3, 2008, Annual Priority Setting, 9am-3pm