

BIISC Field Operations Working Group
Meeting Minutes
10 DECEMBER 2002
Hawai'i Department of Agriculture Conference Room

Attended by:

Patrick Conant, HDOA
Kamakani Dencil, KS/Forest Solutions
Julie Denslow, USFS (chair)
Laura Hillis, TNC
Jim Jacobi, USGS-BRD
Tracy Johnson, USFS
Greg Santos, BIISC
Peter Simmons, Kamehameha Schools
Kim Tavares, BIISC
Debbie Ward, UH-CTAHR
Rick Warshauer, USGS-BRD
Earlene Wilson, HDOA

Introductions:

Meeting started with introductions around the table and then a brief situation report from Julie Denslow, new committee chair. Julie is taking the place of Duane Nelson, who has transferred to California and will no longer be participating in BIISC activities. Purposes of the meeting are to bring the committee up-to-date on Miconia control efforts and funding and to plan activities for 2003.

Julie will fill in as the chair of the Field Operations Working Group at least until a replacement has been selected for the FS vacancy created by Duane's departure, probably some time in the spring. Laura Hillis has accepted the chair of BIISC. Julie would like to see the committee run on a revolving chair-ship, as suggested by Duane prior to leaving. Julie expects the FS position to provide occasional leadership to BIISC.

Jim Jacobi noted that the opening within USGS-BRD created by Don Gardners' retirement, will be advertised soon. Pat Conant noted the need for a pathologist in Hawaii. Jim said the focus of this position is on biological control research and leadership and that both entomologists and pathologists would be considered.

Debbie Ward announced that she is writing a grant proposal to National Wildlife Foundation to obtain funding for an education and outreach position.

Review of Field Operations:

Miconia Control. Julie began by recounting basic questions about field control operations. Are we being effective? Is the *Miconia* population size or area of infestation getting smaller? Do we have a revisit maintenance schedule and is it being implemented? How

thorough is the work being performed? How confident are we with our detection surveys, ground & air?

A visual display of *Miconia* operations was presented to the group by Kim Tavares, using ArcView GIS and the GPS data collected from field operations. Kim displayed ground track logs from 2002 field work, and all helicopter survey tracks to date. A review of some sites followed.

The two infestations in West Hawaii were discussed. Laura Hillis conducted monitoring at Honalo and Honaunau cores. *Miconia* plants were found, but none were larger than two meters tall. Laura commented that it was time to conduct maintenance on all previously surveyed areas in Kona, and that the report at McCoy Plantation still needs some follow-up. The original report was inconclusive.

Post-EEWF (April 2002) field operations in East Hawaii were also reviewed. Highest priorities outside of the isolated sites include the infested river drainages and surrounding forests above 1000 feet elevation, and high elevation infestations on the Puna perimeter. Recent work has been at Puueo, Waiau, and Kaumana in Hilo, and Fern Forest / Eden Roc subdivisions in Puna. The rappelling crew is now certified, and rappelling was done at Kolekole and Waiau drainages.

Volunteer activities in Puna were discussed briefly. Julie commented on the need to get better locational information from volunteers. Volunteer work at Wa'a Wa'a and Hawaiian Beaches is systematic, and a high degree of confidence is placed on the work being done there by the Kubica family - Tim, Mike and Irene. Volunteer work at Pahoia, Nanawale, and Leilani Estates is led by Rene Siracusa, and those volunteers are targeting large plants, rather than systematic sweeps.

Upcoming work will continue to follow the high elevation perimeter of the Hilo-Puna infestation. Few high elevation drainage sites require rappel work. The majority of the rappel sites are below 500 feet elevation in the Onomea core. There are no plans to rappel below 500 feet elevation in the upcoming year, except at Hakalau near the bridge. After work is done at Fern Forest and Eden Roc in Puna, maintenance and extended surveys will be conducted at the forested lands along the perimeter outside Hawaiian Acres, Ainaloa, and Leilani Estates.

Crew Status: Currently BIISC has one field crew leader, five field workers, and two administrative personnel. Four more positions are currently being advertised.

The Rapid Response Team Leader position will soon be filled. It was originally intended to replace Laura's vacant Kona position, but will change slightly in duties. The new position will directly supervise all field crew leaders and will oversee all field operations island-wide and species-wide. It will relieve both Greg and Kim from direct day to day crew scheduling and efficacy and efficiency monitoring, supplies and inventories management, and vehicle maintenance needs.

Three other positions are being created to fill the vacant Kona field crew leader and crew positions. These positions will be based in Kona.

The need for a volunteer/public outreach coordinator was discussed briefly. An update on the statewide Public Information Officer position, currently filled by Christy Martin, was given by Greg. Greg informed the group that Christy's role is not going to be as hands-on with each island's ISC as previously understood. The position will be geared more towards statewide educational campaigns and legislative information presentations. The CGAPS chair, currently Earl Campbell, supervises this position. CGAPS is currently in the process of defining specific duties attached to this position. Greg and Debbie will work with the County and others to see about available resources to help fill this need.

Data Management: Julie and Duane are writing a paper on *Miconia* control efforts in Hawaii, and have asked Kim to provide field operations data and locational information. For the paper, Kim has also requested *Miconia* data from other ISC data managers in order to have statewide *Miconia* information available for review. Jim Jacobi made some good suggestions related to making effective maps. He also suggested that Julie, Greg, Kim and Jim meet again to design graphic images that effectively demonstrate the progress and status of field ops. Jim has new DRG files and will make a copy for the BIISC office. Kim circulated a questionnaire developed by Megan Laut. Megan is working with Shannon McElvaney and Philip Thomas to help the ISC's develop a powerful database. Ultimately it will be a part of the Heritage database and available to all partners.

Species Reports & Discussions: Populations of *Buddleia madagascariensis*, a sprawling shrub, were surveyed and mapped in areas from Waimea to Volcano. Information came from the USGS-BRD Highway weeds surveys by Kealii Bio and Laura Hillis, as well as other reports by Lyman Perry, Pat Conant, and Kim Tavares. Operation *Miconia* field crews are taking waypoints on *Buddleia* plants that they come across now too. Work on this species thus far consists of about 2 field days for 4 workers, applying herbicides and mapping Volcano Village and Mountain View populations. Follow-up is needed at these sites to measure the success of the herbicide treatments. Greg questions whether this species is worthy of BIISC efforts, since there is no evidence yet that it spreads by wind or birds on the Big Island. If BIISC does decide that this species is a target, the first action must be to get nurseries and garden shops to stop selling it.

The Little Fire Ant, a pest species with a nasty sting, is being monitored by Pat Conant. A portion of the USFWS grant to BIISC will go to supporting Pat's modest goal of eradication at a few sites he deems possible, and perimeter control at the larger populations where Amdro can be used without land use conflicts (cows, organic farms, uncooperative owners, etc.). The population at Papaikou is uncontained due to these conflicts. Debbie suggests BIISC look into a way to buy-out uncooperative farmers, at least on a temporary basis, so that eradication can be accomplished at key sites. Pat also noted that there has not been systematic mapping on this species, and feels that there are probably several other sites not yet detected. Larry Nakahara of HDOA is also looking

into the possibility of biological controls for LFA. Pat would like to have BIISC crews assist at the rate of about 40 worker hours per month.

Coqui work was briefly discussed. USDA-APHIS Bob Sugihara continues to lead research efforts, and HDOA Larry Nakahara and Kyle Onuma are leading the spray operations. BIISC is still recording location reports to the list, and providing updates to Bob Sugihara's database. Kim's assignment for Coqui mapping and control around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is complete. The HAVO-RM grant from Tim Tunison supported two pay periods per year for two years. Kim produced a PowerPoint presentation on the HAVO Coqui situation, and presented it at the monthly all-park staff meeting in October of 2002. Tim is looking into various ways to continue the effort.

Bocconia frutescens, a new concern for BIISC is established in Wood Valley. Two other populations are also known. Greg gave an update on activities related to *Bocconia* control. This weed tree likes dryer climates than *Miconia*, and is well established in dryland and mesic forests on Maui. It's growing in wetter forests in Wood Valley. The combined potential for spread is alarming. Wood Valley residents have a volunteer group that was assisted by BIISC/EEWF earlier this year. David Benitez of HAVO-RM will map *Bocconia* plants on the Kau border of Hawaii Volcanoes. Helicopter surveys were suggested by Duane a few months ago, but it is unclear at this point who will conduct them. One of the BIISC funding proposals included some funds for species surveys other than *Miconia*. DLNR and KS lands are also at risk. Aerial spraying might be an option in the fallow cane lands around Wood Valley. Residents of Wood Valley support this, as long as it's not done around homes.

Biological Control development: Pat Conant offered updates and information on bio-controls. Pat talked about the *Carposina* moth on *Clidemia*. He suggested that it might be good to get some research done to see if the moth can be coaxed onto *Miconia* plants as well as *Clidemia*. He said that if there is *Clidemia* at the Leilani Estates *Miconia* site on Malama Street, it might be a good idea to release moths there. The *Miconia* at this site has spilled into the Kamehameha Schools forest and papaya tract adjacent to Malama Ki.

Tracy Johnson gave his update on exploratory research in Costa Rica, and comments on the value of good research in the native range of the target weed. He is collaborating with Paul Hanson at the University of Costa Rica. A postdoctoral associate and grad students are helping them with his work.

Budget and Funding:

Greg gave an update on current account balances and expected additions. BIISC budget is smaller than it was last year, and next year is not looking much better, at least from the State and County levels. There is a clear need to re-evaluate BIISC involvement and funding commitments. BIISC needs to refocus on its original intent during slim budget years. It's important that ground is not lost on the large investment in *Miconia* containment/control. Currently, according to grant commitments, 75% of the budget is for

Miconia control, and 25% for other species. Administrative, data, and public outreach costs fall into one or other of these categories.

Planning for coming year:

We discussed the “BIISC Action Plan for 2003” especially with regard to pros and cons of diverting resources from *Miconia* control to survey and control of other species and to education and outreach efforts. The committee generally agreed that *Miconia* control was our highest priority, but that we did not have sufficient information to know how diversion of resources to other activities would affect the *Miconia* control effort or a good assessment of the effectiveness of our efforts to date. In addition we agreed that while the role of the rapid response team is important, weed risk assessments and mapping for each proposed target species will be essential prior to implementation of any control plan. We agreed that the following tasks should be completed before the next meeting:

1. Julie will make inquiries to grantors to determine their flexibility in funding *Miconia* control where the proposals have specified non-*Miconia* efforts.
2. Greg and Kim will estimate personnel and cost requirements to maintain current progress on containment of the *Miconia* perimeter.
3. Julie, Greg, Kim and Jim will propose analyses necessary to assess effectiveness of our current operation.
4. Laura will develop her suggestion that BIISC develop into a forum for public information, discussion, and outreach, leaving the design and oversight of the Field Operations largely in the hands of this Working Group.
5. Julie will forward the proposed BIISC target species list to Teresa Truman-Madriaga to be considered for evaluation under the Weed Risk Assessment process.

Kamehameha Schools, USGS-BRD, and UH-CTAHR may have additional resources to contribute to upcoming work, grant matches, and in-kind services. Jim has not matched the highway weeds survey work with any non-federal funding yet and is willing to provide the results to match funds. Debbie Ward is aware of several grant opportunities and will write proposals to support a volunteer coordinator or public outreach assistance. The first deadline is March 3, 2003 and she requests suggestions from the group on the specific direction this proposal should take. It wasn't clear whether this would be in-kind services or cash. Peter Simmons offered at least \$10K in cash or resources as well.

Next Meeting:

Date: 2003 JANUARY 30, Thursday

Time: 12:30 PM

Place: HDOA Conference Room