

Working Group: Field Operations
Meeting Minutes
20 March 2003
Hawai'i Department of Agriculture Conference Room

Attending: Kealii Bio (USGS-BRD), Patrick Conant (HDOA), Julie Denslow (USFS, chair), Laura Hillis (TNC), Jim Jacobi (USGS-BRD), Greg Santos (BIISC, Field Ops), Peter Simmons (KS), Kim Tavares (BIISC, Field Ops), Debbie Ward (UH-CTAHR), Rick Warshauer (USGS-BRD), Earlene Wilson (Gorse partners project).

1. Minutes of the last work group meeting, approval

Julie collected comments for correcting the minutes of the previous meeting. Julie will update the minutes and distribute by email for approval. The committee would like to encourage the attendance of representatives from DOFAW and NRCS.

2. Field work progress (Greg and Kim)

Greg provided a written brief on recent and upcoming work.

Ninole (Hamakua, exterior site): A mature tree was found at this northernmost exterior population. Access to the center of this satellite site has been denied by the landowner. Frequent surveys around this parcel should monitor new plants to assess the magnitude of the problem.

Hakalau (North Hilo, formerly exterior, now perimeter site-merged with Akaka falls): Physical access to area under the highway bridge requires skilled rappellers. More helicopter reconnaissance is needed around this site that is nearly a mile inland of the last known mature trees in the Hakalau drainage.

Akaka Falls (Hilo, high elevation perimeter site): An access problem similar to that at Ninole may be developing at this site. A parcel that provides access to the back of Kahuna falls and the forests between the two drainages changed ownership, and the new owners are not familiar with the project. Besides the plants within the parks' trail area, a satellite population was discovered downstream. Rappelling will be necessary to treat plants at this site, and helicopter surveys are efficient for detection

Makuu-Ainaloa (Puna-800-950 ft elevation perimeter site): This lower elevation forest line site has been neglected and is overdue for surveys both air and ground Crew is about 40% through the bad terrain within the 500M radius.

Field work general discussion:

The use of decontaminated vs. contaminated gear was briefly summarized. Miconia gear should not be used at Bocconia sites, since Miconia is not known to occur in these areas to date.

3. Upcoming field work (Greg)

Miconia: KMR Keaukaha Military Reservation conservation workers have asked BIISC for crew help in sweeping lands swept once before by their staff and EEWf crews. BIISC will be reimbursed for crew salaries for the work that is expected to take a week. There may be an additional week or two in the future, after safety issues have been resolved. Jim offers that Penny Levin is now working with this group.

Miconia: Honaunau and Honalo, Kona Miconia work plans were announced. Peter noted that work might be delayed beyond July if details were worked out properly with fiscal people. Laura voiced concerns over the Hilo crew's use of contaminated gear.

Bocconia: Wood Valley, Honomalino, Manuka A partnership is building on the Bocconia problem. Residents continue to search and destroy at the core. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park has funding to initiate mapping. Greg and Phil Motooka initiated herbicide tests on Bocconia in Wood Valley. As soon as the results are analyzed, a prescribed method for treatment will be available. BIISC will discuss its proposed role in Bocconia mapping and control at a later date.

4. Current budget status (Greg)

Julie and Greg worked out a draft budget status report and table. Discussions related to use and deadlines for the current budget followed. After hiring the new crew, calculating monthly overhead through June, and deducting amounts committed to overhead and helicopter reconnaissance, the balance will be used to carry operations until grants are received.

Steve Lohse is working with David Duffy to develop a good system to track and monitor funds from several sources with different timetables.

Distribution of use of USFWS funds (\$25k less overhead) was clarified to be 50% Miconia, 25% LFA, 25%Coqui. Greg calculated the number of worker hours involved. Pat said he appreciated whatever help he can get; he is also attempting to get Dept. of Health involved in support for LFA control.

5. Personnel update (Greg)

Greg asked whether the Team Leader position could be filled before Cheyenne leaves in August. The committee agreed that it should be advertised as soon as possible and filled as soon as the right candidate is found.

The committee wanted to know how rappelling was progressing. There was some confusion about whether or not BIISC crews, or all RCUH crews can rappel. The committee was reassured by Greg that BIISC crews are approved to rappel at this time.

Jim asked if other crew issues were resolved. The response was that they are not. There was not enough time to address this issue in detail.

6. Progress on plans to assess impacts of *Miconia* control (Julie)

Julie led a discussion on *Miconia* work assessment. She proposed that 3 to 5 % of the work done within 500 meters of flowering plants at exterior and perimeter sites over the last six months, be re-surveyed. The information gathered would address the issue of whether our methods are effective in containing the spread of *Miconia* and whether surveys and treatments effective and thorough. Julie sent a copy of the rough *Miconia* data to USFS statistician Jim Baldwin for guidance. Kim is repairing records for which there is no block information; otherwise these will be dropped. Few records are actually incomplete, and the loss of that data will be of minimal consequence.

The surveying team will count plants on foot surveys. Control work will not be conducted by the sampling team at the time of the survey. If plants are found the block will be revisited for treatment. We discussed the best way to accomplish this and minimize lost time controlling plants. The data also will provide information on the distribution of *Miconia* across different terrain and vegetation types, and offer new ways to strategize the control effort. Earlene and Julie will discuss Earlene's informal findings on seed resurgence and growth rate studies she's been conducting.

Jacobi noted the need to do both short term evaluation of crew efficacy as well as long term assessment of the containment strategy. The priority should be to evaluate crew efforts first, for which we can also use the above protocol. Julie requested suggestions for stratification of the sampling regime, for example to target gulches or abandoned ag land. Do we need to take sweep timing into account or sub-sample only the oldest sites?

7. Funding for revisits to Honaunau (Greg, Peter)

Peter explained his budget, time line, and legal requirements on funding invasive species projects. Limitations placed on non-profits require that work be done by contract, rather than as cash donations. Peter noted that BIISC had been instrumental in the expanded interest of KS in solving invasive species problems on its lands.

We discussed the use of outside individuals or companies to manage invasive species. Now there are few small companies, may grow to provide quality, trained professional teams to bid for upcoming work. Most agreed that this could be a good thing, and that BIISC field teams might be used increasingly for quality control. Jim and others would like to take part in discussing this concept further.

Peter has about \$20K now that must be spent on invasive species work before July 1. Peter is willing to use these funds where the group agrees is most appropriate, either to Miconia or split with Bocconia. The Unresolved.

8. Plans for proposal development (Greg)

Greg requested guidance in strategies for proposal development. To what degree to we diversify or concentrate on Miconia? Most agreed that Miconia is the most important island-wide project to be funded at this time. Costs incurred for rapid response include both crew time, administrative support and overhead. BIISC can not afford to peel away Miconia resources to support other species and actually needs additional funding to meet the objectives in Miconia control and containment. There is a rapid response pre-proposal on the table now to USFS for \$50K and another at \$100K for Miconia. All proposals should fully reflect all costs of the work proposed. Laura recalled the most recent minimum dollar figure BIISC agreed was necessary for Miconia control. Perhaps it could be refined by the assessment Julie is working on.

How does BIISC define or justify a species as rapid-response qualified? Daehler's weed risk assessment is a useful tool. Another important factor is current distribution of the target species. The database we are building will help, but we will need a good assessment of the size of the population before determining whether eradication is possible. Perhaps BIISC at-large could help provide distribution information. Julie offered a study example that was done on Oahu. Operation Miconia has experience in community interviews and collecting baseline data that can be used in similar ways on other species. Posters, presentations, phone interviews and door to door contact are valuable to info gathering and mapping. It is clear that population assessments of rapid response targets may require considerable effort.

Building partnerships: How do we bring more partners to the table? How can we get willing participation from the County, DLNR, NRCS, National parks (not just HAVO), and other private land managers? Debbie tried to contact NRCS. Laura will call Steve Skipper. Julie will talk with Jon Giffin.

Bocconia frutescens is a species of concern to some BIISC members. In many ways this species is much like Miconia. But do these ways justify rapid response and resources pulled away from Miconia containment & control? How many species can be handled effectively? What kinds of situation are amenable to control?

A Bocconia partnership is developing. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park has funding to begin a mapping project. David Benitez is leading the project. Kim and Cheyenne met with David to discuss the plans. He stated that the project is funded to \$10K and that most of that will go to helicopter recon before and after ground surveys. There are no HAVO funds for field crews to do the ground mapping or herbicide for treatments, as this is a mapping project at this time. David asked for ground support from BIISC through the Rapid Response portion of the BIISC budget. He would like to conduct ground surveys

before July, but the timeframe may be in conflict with Kona Miconia work, and logistics will take some time.

The BIISC working group should address its role in *Bocconia frutescens* operations. Field operations leaders will need to make a counter-proposal to Dave Benitez of Hawaii Volcanoes very soon. Julie and Greg will work with David Benitez and David Duffy on the details. Additionally, it should be noted that some of the plants detected and mapped early on, away from the core population, have not been destroyed yet. Laura and Kealii maintain that rapid response is justified now.

9. Database discussion: Deferred to next meeting.

10. BIISC and the upcoming meeting re: Public Outreach

Laura expressed the need for a BIISC at-large meeting to re-develop public interest on invasive species issues. Christy Martin, public information officer for CGAPS will attend to explain public outreach on a state-wide scale. Outreach in the form of island-wide public BIISC meetings is valuable in many ways.

The distinction between BIISC at-large and the Working Group was discussed, and participation and connections were re-established. The working group maintains its interest in participating in both public outreach and field ops working group BIISC meetings.

In addition to educating the general public and each other about common and newly detected pests, Laura would like to see this group share data on a regular basis with the invasive species database. Individual data contributors could be polled, or would contribute useful distribution data in some other way. The information could then be shared by all partners, via the internet on the BIISC web page and at the PBIN site.

Other BIISC products such as the BIISC brochure and the weed ID cards should be finalized and made readily available to students, hunters, hikers, and anyone interested in invasive species control on this island. It would be nice to have some to distribute at this summer's Conservation Conference. An annual poster project would be good too. Christy proposes to design the statewide section on the ISC's. BIISC might also produce its own poster along the lines of the "Who is BIISC and what do we do" brochure. The HEAR internet page could be used to distribute material.

Upcoming Earth Day Fair Debbie asks whether BIISC will have a booth at the Earth Day Fair. Soon after this meeting Greg confirmed that BIISC does desire booth space for a display at the Fair.

Next Working Group Meeting:

Date: May 9, 2003, Friday

Time: 12:00 PM, HDOA Conference Room