

**DRAFT BIISC Meeting Minutes**  
**December 10, 2004**  
**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Meeting attended by: Rob Culbertson, René Siracusa, Mindy Wilkinson, Matthew Wung, Kyle Onuma, Jim Jacobi, Eldndye Naboia, Steve Skipper, Kim Tavares, Melanie S. Wassman, Julie Leialoha, Laura Nelson, Jeff Burgett, James Glynn, Rick Warshauer, Kim Langley, Mike Robinson, Christy Martin, Anne Marie LaRosa, Kama Dancil

**I. Approve previous meeting's minutes from June 6, 2004**

Anne Marie reminded everyone that the minutes are posted on the website. The group was given the choice to either approve the minutes from the last meeting at the present time or to have a chance to look at it on the website and approve it at the next meeting.

**Kim Langley moved to accept the minutes as they are written and Kim Tavares seconded the motion.**

Julie mentioned that the easiest way to get to the BIISC website is through HEAR.ORG.

A suggestion was made to distribute the minutes by email, but everyone has access to the minutes through the website and it is preferred that people individually check for the meeting minutes and the agenda online.

Anne Marie briefly talked about what took place at the last meeting.

**II. Agency Updates**

**HDOA – Kyle Onuma**

Kyle Onuma from HDOA gave an update on the little fire ant. Every week a new site is reported, and they currently know of over a dozen nurseries with these ants in the ground. They are using AMDRO baits but are trying to get other baits because of the label on AMDRO, which indicates that it cannot be used at crop sites such as lychee, rambutan, and macadamia nuts. This poses a problem for crop sites with these ants.

They deal with over 350 acres in East Hawaii. Early next year they plan to release something in the media to spread awareness.

Kyle said that a goal is to have people drop sticks in for us instead of our people going out there. Kyle has spoken with the entomology department at the University of Hawaii to get students to help with identification. He would like to follow up on suspects and positive, to get a better idea.

**USFWS – Jeff Burgett**

Jeff added more about the little fire ant. He said that they are working on the revision of flyers and submitting a proposal to NRCS. They've been funded for one position to work with DOA and BIISC to fill in on the Kona side, looking at nurseries. This will help the USFWS to get a better picture of where we are regarding the little fire ant, particularly in Kona Coffee growing areas.

Jim asked if the work would be just documenting the extent, or if it was worthwhile pursuing. Jeff said that the survey of nurseries is the first step, determining which ones have it and which ones don't. This will give them a starting point to work from and then they can concentrate on reducing the spread.

### **USGS – Jim Jacobi**

Jim said that USGS is finishing up the results of the roadside surveys down Saddle Road. The data will be used to come up with basic parameters that measure the distribution of invasive species. They are at the last stages of hiring two people with high level analysis skills. **Applications of the position could include invasive species “Iconus creekburg”**. The USGS is working with Arizona to get digital images for a type of sampling for invasive species.

Anne Marie asked how much of the island is covered in the survey. Jim responded that the roadside survey is to code parameters for potential distribution. Less than 1/3 of the island is included in the scope, though they want to do more. Through the survey, new grasses were found as well as a number of unexpected distributions that triggered immediate response. Information from the surveys can be used to pull together data for modeling surveys in the future.

Jim said that Rob Anderson is continuing to work with bacteria to use on kahili ginger in Volcano and they are in the process of continuing biocontrol.

### **TNC – Laura Nelson**

Laura Nelson said that TNC currently has two preserves, one at Kona Hema and the other in Kau, both primarily concerned with reducing ungulates. In Kona Hema there are zero pigs, goats and sheep. Kau is the newer preserve, focused primarily on ungulate control. Some of the species in Kona Hema are strawberry guava, Japanese anemone, and alien grasses. There are strawberry guava and Japanese anemone at the Kau preserve as well. Both preserves are near Miconia sites.

### **KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS – Kama Dancil**

Kamehameha Schools is doing work in Puna on ungulate control on Hualalai. Anne Marie added that we finally got the NFWF Grant and Kamehameha Schools is matching it. Kama has taken the position that was occupied by Peter Simmons.

### **Mindy Wilkinson – HDLNR - DOFAW**

Mindy told us that Mike Pixler of Wildlife Services is reviewing the CCC grant for coqui frogs. The Governor of Hawaii supports Hawaii's efforts to control coqui frogs. A letter from OMB & USDA was received saying that they recognize that we have a problem. Sandra Kuamoto drove Bill Hox, from Washington, out to where the frogs are and made him listen to them so that now there is someone in Washington who has actually heard them. Also, two sets of grants just closed, Research and Technology and Outreach. Several Research and Tech grants were received from the Big Island and the Kohala Community Association has applied for Outreach grants. Another round of Research and Technology grants is coming up on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Let Mindy

know if you'd like applications. Applicants of the first round will receive a letter whether they get a grant or not.

### **FOREST SERVICE – Anne Marie LaRosa**

The Forest Service got its funding allocation and it is basically the same as last year. Last year BIISC got \$200,000 and this year it is \$192,000, due to a surplus last year from being shut down for a while. The Forest Service submitted four proposals to HISC on: biocontrol, pigs, fountain grass, and carbon cycling. People are actively involved in invasive species and restoration. In February there will be an event in Washington D.C. for national invasive species week. It would be good for Hawaii to be represented there and Anne Marie asked the group if they wanted to put in a poster for all the ISC's together or to do separate ones.

### **MALAMA O PUNA – René Siracusa**

René informed the group that Lowes is selling strawberry guava in their nursery. She wrote to them to urge them not to sell it and suggested that they get a weed list. Julie said that Pat Conant gave them a Noxious Weed List for the state. The list is available online at the HDOA site and at HEAR.ORG (471). Laura added that Walmart still has Australian tree fern.

Efforts at Miconia control in Leilani Estates are lagging. For the last three months René was the only one that showed up. René suggested that the board get in touch with Julie Leialoha and get things going again. In the past school groups have helped and that was successful. Meanwhile, the miconia are proliferating.

Mangrove have spread makai of Vacationland (Wai Opa) in Puna and there are thousands of seedlings, some on trees 15 feet tall. The whole ecosystem has changed from a coral garden to a mangrove swamp. Botanical growth patterns of mangrove show that there are three parts of the pod. If the pod is broken in half, the roots will die without the top. Just breaking the pods as they are pulled up might help to kill the plants. We need to get to property owners and urge them to destroy their mangrove. We should also provide them with alternative plants. René and others pulled out 10,000 plants, working on a 300 acre parcel, targeting the mangrove growing on the coast. They want to contact realtors to do a disclosure on mangrove. Wai Opa is now mandated. To get permission from Aquatic Resources to conduct the eradication, call Bob Nishimoto. Julie said that Kaloko & Honokohau were collecting information on mangroves. Anne Marie said that a wetlands team based in Honolulu knows a lot about mangroves and she offered for anyone to get with her to talk about it.

### **Steve Skipper, NRCS, RC&D**

Steve said that RC&D has been involved. The key is really community support because without the community on board, things become difficult and problems arise. RC&D is the Big Island Research Development Council. They assist community projects in a number of things. Basic applications go to a council that reviews it and if the application is approved, RC&D will help the group look for funds. The council is

made up of all volunteers that provide technical assistance to write grants. They are somewhat of a project coordinator for projects.

### **BIISC – Julie Leialoha**

Julie came on board BIISC on October 1. There are three positions currently posted: Outreach Coordinator, Field Operations Supervisor, and Botanical Data Specialist. Hiring a field operating team is a long process. The operational budget has been extended to June 2005 and there are still 2003 funds that need to be used.

The second biggest concern is the moving of the base of operation. They are looking for somewhere else to use for the base yard operation. We have a verbal agreement and are working on a written lease agreement for BIISC to use the CTAHR facility above Panaewa zoo for at least five years. Having the entire BIISC at one location would be good and this place looks to be the best. Once the agreement is in place BIISC can start development of the site. The infrastructure improvement would be in lieu of rent.

Julie said that the account with PCSU is still open and, the Division of Forestry accounts are the ones that need to get spent. Steve said that RC&D could serve as a conduit. Anne Marie said that RCUH does our personnel, insurance, etc.

The annual work plan is to get cooperative agreements and a general agreement with DOA for '04/'05 activities such as:

- a Coqui operations hotline for on the ground control efforts
- help with little fire ants with Jeff, DOFAW & DOA
- miconia, a large amount of funds has been allocated for Miconia control
- Rapid Response, getting an agreement with DOA to utilize our team when there is a request for Rapid Response, an example being snakes.

Mindy (DOFAW) informed us about Rapid Response, which encompasses things such as snakes, West Nile virus (Department of Health), and dead bird monitoring. Beyond that it is up to the agency responsible. On the Big Island, chrysanthemum white rust has had a huge long term biological impact. Hopefully, BIISC will be able to participate in Rapid Response. It is difficult because currently there is no emergency fund. Funds were pulled from other projects to fund the snake response. There is no funding protocol or structure. On private land we rely on the DOA. All snakes are illegal to possess, but a search warrant is required to enter the home. For plants on private lands such gorse, they normally try to work with the landowners so that they can go in and eradicate it before flowering. For plants more insipient than gorse, odds are they won't be on the noxious weed list, though the HIISC list was supposed to fill some of the gaps. It has been over a year since the lists combined. It's a good idea to incorporate injurious wildlife list into their own protocol. If there is a new plant not on any list then there is no legal hammer, but most of the time people are cooperative, especially when a state representative asks them to cooperate. In the past, non-confrontational methods have worked.

### **III. Where does BIISC want to go? (Julie Leialoha)**

Regarding miconia, we want to get the known populations mapped. We need an updated plan, it is open for discussion. A data team will be coming onboard to do an assessment of Miconia. Incipient populations need to be identified.

Regarding the miconia survey we agreed to survey 40-60 big blocks to see what's happening with miconia and if the control strategy is working. Julie is recruiting for the positions now and the work will start as soon as the new folks come on board. Hopefully there will be a team by the end of December, but it will more likely be mid January. Anne Marie said there will be four regular miconia positions. There are qualified people out there to fill these jobs. Jim asked if the sites are stratified by being most recent and Anne Marie said that they haven't selected blocks yet, but Jim and Julie should sit down with the board to do so. Jim said that plants that were treated need to be looked at to see if the treatment was successful. Some felt that the most recent should be the highest priority. Jim said that the treatment is the same across different blocks. Steve asked if it is a single treatment and if there is any follow up. Is once accurate or do you go back? Jeff replied that where we're going and what we're doing is the main focus rather than the technicalities. Julie said we need to figure out how to best utilize the team while funding is good and that she really needs help with this analysis.

Mike Robinson asked if this agenda talks about what we're currently doing. The latest thing is to prioritize where to invest meager funds. Kim Langley said that Maui is looking at "are we being effective", and considering future funding too. The phases involved are part of a long term goal and we need data that we don't currently have, in order to do this efficiently. Julie said that we will measure effectiveness at the next meeting. This is a huge topic and we need to be specific.

Anne Marie said that we do have a strategic plan that was developed by many people here at the meeting. The plan was posted and it lays out short term priorities. After those are established, then we can look at the bigger picture. In next six months we have money already obligated. After everyone has read the strategic plan then we can be more focused on where to go with it.

**BREAK**

### **GORSE UPDATE – Mike Robinson**

Gorse has been around for a long time, people have been working on it since the 60s, publicizing what it is. Recently it has been of concern to Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). They will eventually be homesteading their land.

Gorse is one of easier invasive species, very tenacious but if one thinks long term, it is possible to be successful. We are trying to look at land use changes. We want to replace gorse with native forest cover. Koa could possibly take care of gorse but we're also looking at non-native species. Surface and subsurface analysis is being done by DHHL. With a multiple year attack on gorse the goal is to bring it under control. The population has been going down in recent years. Kyle said that it's popping up in Ahualoa due to land use change, ATV use, seeds sprouting, and cattle. Six figures per year is being invested to get a handle on gorse. More help is needed and we should put

out more posters to get the public aware so that they know to report to us if they see gorse.

The directive of DHHL is to get rid of gorse. New Zealand said it wasn't possible to eradicate it. Mike believes that it can be done in 200 years. There is proof that gorse can last 200 years, but with multiple rotations of Koa forest the problem could be fixed. An estimated 5000 acres is affected by gorse. It's in patches that can be identified by helicopter. It is possible to knock gorse out even in existing koa forests. A big concern is that even though we go through this effort, there's the possibility of an unknown patch that could all too easily become a new source. This is all the more reason for a poster.

Steve brought up the point that we tend to live in a fiscal or political realm that does not see past 4 to 8 years. This is evolutionary biology, it will take 50-100 years to get it done, and we really should be looking way out there.

Mike said that gorse can be used as a poster child for how *not* to do it. In the past they felt like they succeeded after pulling out, but the seed bank was still there. People need to be informed that it's a long term effort. When we get an outreach person onboard they can work on it.

### **COQUI UPDATE – Rob Culbertson**

Rob passed out a flyer to show that there is still a frog fan club out there, and they are very organized, with a website even. We want to create a buffer zone around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and part of Kau through a continued public outreach program and with the cooperation of park staff. There is an estimated 300-600 frogs in this zone. Downhill in lower Puna and the Hilo area, coqui exist in denser regions. Practical workshops are given at the Shipman Boy-scout Panaewa center to empower people to help themselves. BIISC needs to provide expertise on site assessment to help volunteers. We are looking to find an efficient/cost effective method. BIISC is likely to be seen as flagship enterprise. Damage control should include the prevention of frogs hitching on vehicles. The political leadership is taking it seriously now because of the situation involving hotels on Maui. Millions of dollars have been lost in real estate sales on Big Island.

Regarding fan clubs, perhaps those are entities taking on fan clubs. Some of us think we should be keeping a low profile. The toxin used for frog control isn't harmful to anything else. It's actually a food additive. However, we don't know what individuals are using to kill frogs and we can't take responsibility for everyone's methods. A lot of money from HISC is implicitly targeted at coqui abatement to provide action sooner rather than later. Each funding source that BIISC receives has its own set of funding criteria (use). Coqui endanger agriculture and we need to target coqui frogs using HISC funding. The effort takes more resources than we have to contain them. They're in roadless areas now! Two of the most influential members of ways and means live here. We need to get support to address needs, calls, attack outliers, and provide citric acid. Citric acid is expensive but supporting communities seems like the right thing to do. They are bagging citric acid to use in a sprayer that comes with instructions. Rob warns that we must be careful how we use language. The phrase "the state accepts these frogs" gives the message that we should get used to them. We do not want to make prevention seem foolish. The Big Island needs more resources for containment. We need to figure out what it will take to stop the spread. Kyle said that approval to use hydrated lime was

verbally turned down. The pesticide branch may allow certain uses, but we're unsure until we get a written answer. Hope is not dead yet, it would be so much cheaper than citric acid. The use of caffeine has been banned, so the barrels were shipped to St Louis. A few barrels were given to Bob and Dr. Akoh. Genetic research is very expensive. Dr. wants to plan a trip to Puerto Rico. There are 32-33 species of non-native reptiles in Hawaii. BIISC will upgrade the half time coqui position to a full time position with other collateral duties. There is a disagreement as to the amount of time BIISC is asked to perform for DOA. At least one person will be allocated to do primarily coqui work. The outreach person will be a big part of it. Kyle said that an educational video was put out on NaLeo and copies were sent out to groups. Generally these types of things are more trusted when they come from government sources. Mindy said that CTAHR has a great website on this issue. It is a good one to refer people to, to get them connected with the university.

Mike had to leave at 11:07, and Julie moved to cut off the coqui discussion to move on to more pressing items.

### **RC&D – Steve Skipper**

RC&D council is available help with grant proposals and as a conduit for grant funding (administrative). They are providing assistance for fire ant work. All of RC&Ds work with the county that the office is in and there is an office in every county. Steve doesn't approve anything, and RC&D has no direct funds so there is no money to give to anyone. They help people look for money for good community projects for people willing to carry them out.

### **SENATE BILL 144 PASSED**

Anne Marie said that senate bill 144 passed that will provide up to \$15 million per year for noxious weeds. There will be no money in it until 2006. The bill sat in congress for a while and the original amount was reduced, though they hope to amend it later for up to \$50 million nationally. The Department of Agriculture will administer it, either the Forest Service or the NRCS. Senator Craig (Idaho) was the main voice for it but Akaka was a co-sponsor.

### **IV. Memorandum of Agreement**

A memorandum of agreement was sent out for signing. Only one cooperator has signed the agreement to date (thanks to the National Park Service!) Anne Marie asked if people could follow up with their agencies regarding the status of the agreement? The agreement commits no funds, and it is expected that entities will have issues, but for now we are wondering if there are any fatal flaws? It was hoped that six months down the line the memorandum would build momentum after it got so many signatures. Anne Marie asked if there were any major objections to the memorandum. It wasn't intended to try to create a bureaucracy. It's not making people obligated, but rather formalizing partnerships, Kim Langley said. Anne Marie said that they'll continue with it unless there appear to be fatal flaws. She encouraged everyone to move the agreement along in their agency. Once we have six signatures we have a valid agreement to which others can join. One issue is individuals who want to sign. A possibility is that they could be

affiliated or a number of individuals could form an affinity group based on their focus, coqui frogs, for example, like a committee.

Action needs to be taken, there is no committee actually writing letters and getting approvals. Anne Marie said that we need to talk about our operating procedures as a group. She suggested doing a consensus and tabling it if a consensus was not reached.

**ACTION ITEM:** Look at the Strategic Plan and send comments back to Julie.

Jeff asked where we hoped to get with this today. Anne Marie said that she put the Strategic Plan on the agenda to remind everyone that it's out there. We haven't gotten any comments back. So, before the next meeting everyone should review the strategic plan. It focuses on the first year because we're shifting, looking towards early detection and rapid response. The other ISCs have lists of species. They've prioritized. Ours has just been Miconia. We haven't pulled together all of the information.

Steve said that we need a mapping effort, a resource inventory, GIS. Then we will be able to see where the problems are and where are they the worst. Otherwise we're stuck doing reactionary stuff. Mapping will be a major task. We need to get people aware, and after we do a mapping project we can make a decision on how to deal with our issues/species.

Julie said that BIISC is operational for the next few months. After that, it will need direction, but right now the main concern is getting the operation up and running. Jim asked when we would be deciding our course of action. Julie said that what we have now looks good for the year. At the next meeting we will adjust to new language.

As of now, it is unclear who is actually sitting in and making decisions but eventually the MOA will become core of our decision making process.

Steve brought up that there are mainly agency people at the meetings and not enough community people. Anne Marie said that through Rob's work and with an outreach person we can get more community involvement. Steve again emphasized public involvement. He has seen lots of issues resolved by broad based community involvement. The public can get into it in partnership with the agencies. It is a critical element in deciding how we intend to continue and who benefits.

Julie moved to accept the Strategic plan as written then come back in April and revise it as necessary because the Strategic Plan is her work plan. Mindy agreed to incorporating the revisions starting in April and Jeff seconded the motion.

Going back, Anne Marie talked about operating procedures and rules of conduct assuming the MOA gets signed. The operating procedures for BIISC were very simple, mainly to encourage participation in protecting the island from invasive species. A challenge is maintaining a diverse membership and having members from all places of the island. Julie got six calls from people in Kona interested in attending this meeting. Anne Marie said that we need more staff time on the Kona Side, as a start we should have at least one meeting on that side. Jeff agreed and is in favor of the travel road show aspect. If we're going to do a circuit, and going to have to drive we should also have Kau/Naalehu on there. We should also consider day vs. night meetings. Steve said that other organizations meet every month with presentations and handouts. Having someone from BIISC at those meetings would be a way to get information out. Districts are looking for people to speak on issues. It is a way to let people know who we are.

Anne Marie said that we have to decide how to elect a chair. We could either rely on an executive committee or wait for a meeting. Julie should be able to make most decisions. Anne Marie said she thinks we should give her the power to do that. Most ISCs don't wait and make day to day decisions through a committee – the committee decides priorities and a general plan of action. Kim Langley said she thinks we need a committee to give Julie support. In terms of decision making, a lot of responsibility has been placed on Julie so we should give her as much authority as we can. Julie said that she likes the idea of having an executive committee because she prefers to work with oversight.

A suggestion was made to take advantage of email to discuss issues before the executive meetings. Most ISCs don't do emailing, rather, the members subscribe to the list serve. Issues are posted on the list serve and people check it out. Anne Marie asked if there was any objection to the list serve being our method of communication. Kim Langley said it isn't possible to post every little thing on the list serve. There's a limit to what can get posted. Anne Marie stressed the importance of a list serve because a lot of emails bounce back. People can get input in by email.

Anne Marie asked if the group wanted to reach decisions by consensus or majority vote. It is a commitment to do consensus and great things come out of it but it slows down decision making. Anne Marie said that we were going by what the BIISC charter says, and that if we don't want to be a consensus group then the charter should say so. Kim Langley suggested that we strive for consensus but a majority vote will do. Laura said that the objective should be that no decision is made, and then later people wonder who made that decision. Jeff brought up that our decision making process is not clear now. We have been using the word consensus casually and not appropriately. Anne Marie asked what kinds of things come up for decisions, one is personnel. Jim asked if the strategic plan is something that is decided on by the larger group. It would be useful to build a list on what kinds of decisions will be made by whom.

**ACTION ITEM:** Anne Marie will work on that list and think of other discussion items. She will draft a suggested Rules of Operation and we'll do a yay or nay next meeting.

Laura suggested that the operations group should meet ahead of time to talk about the miconia evaluation people are hired. That meeting will be on a Wednesday morning, January 19, 2005 in the DOFAW Library from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. People can call in and participate.

**The next general meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 22, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., site to be announced.**

Jeff said that if this organization wants higher public participation, we need to have evening meetings on week nights so community members can attend. Jim said that venues are necessary for what we are trying to do. Anne Marie said that groups that used to come aren't coming now. Steve has a contact list of early participants. Jeff said attendees should include representatives from community associations. Anne Marie said we should have meetings be more focused. Kim Langley said soon you'll have an

outreach person that can attend their meetings after you've got outreach going is a good time to have meeting in Kona.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Draft