

Big Island Invasive Species Committee



MANAGERS REPORT BIISC 2007 1st Quarter Report July 1, 2006 – October 31, 2006

BIISC has had a very busy 1st quarter. With field operations suspended during a portion of the quarter, it gave the office and data staff time to work on data management issues while working with RCUH to fill vacant field positions. BIISC wants to welcome a number of new staff members to its team. In September, BIISC hired Deborah (Debbie) Hansen as our new administrative assistant. Debbie retired from the Forest Service, and comes to BIISC with an enormous amount of experience in office management, as well as fiscal and budget management. At the Forest Service, she was known as the “go-to” person. She also comes with RCUH experience which is a great asset.

Also joining our team is Diana Greenough Ph.D as the new Outreach and Education Specialist. She has been on board since Oct. 15, 2006 and has hit the ground running attending meetings, writing press releases and creating an outreach program that we are calling “What’s in your backyard”, as well as working on the overall State issues. Diana has spent most of her career working in the Mariana’s and Samoa as an educator. She returned home to Hawaii last year, and had been working with CTAHR prior to being hired by BIISC.

BIISC has been unsuccessful in filling a key Field Supervisor position after four separate postings, including a job fair held for BIISC by the Hilo Work Force Development Program. Open recruitment for this position will continue until it is filled. Initially vacant crew positions were to be filled once this key position was filled. However, after discussions with PCSU and RCUH, it was agreed that BIISC could fill critical vacant crew positions, given the difficulty of filling the Supervisor position. The new team will join BIISC November 1, 2006. The team consist of: Field Crew Leader – Shannon Karratti who recently left the USFWS Hakalau Forest Reserve; Field Assistants Clyde Calib, who has extensive experience with dealing with BBTV; Robert Parsons (no, not the Kauai mayors liaison) who is currently the invasive species field leader for Kualoa Ranch’s environmental program; and last Ashley Shaw who worked on the Hawaii County coqui frog eradication team. Welcome all to BIISC.

**23 East Kawili Street
Phone: (808) 933-3326**

**Hilo, Hawaii 96720
Fax: (808) 933-3339**

**Website: www.hear.org/biisc, www.bigislandisc.org
Hotline: (808) 961-3299**



During our personnel transition, our lone Field Assistant Mike Long, has been assisting partner agencies on multiple projects. He has been working with Hawaii County on coqui control operations; DLNR-Natural Area Reserve staff with coqui aerial operations, fountain grass, lantana, and Christmas-berry control, as well as goat eradication efforts. With the Olaa-Kilauea Partnership program, Mike assisted with weed control; and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park with fountain grass survey on park boundaries. In addition, he has been working with our data technician on ensuring data quality of all field activities.

During this reporting period, BIISC has completed its scoping sessions for creating its “Early Detection and Rapid Response” program. Given the enormity of this project, BIISC has decided to break roadside surveys by districts. BIISC will be creating three separate contracts for conducting roadside, nursery and botanical garden beginning with roadside surveys in South Kona and North Hilo (882 miles total). A much larger contract will cover the Ka’u district, the largest of all the districts. Surveys will concentrate on major, secondary and tertiary roads only. The third contract will deal with nursery and botanical garden surveys. It was decided that for the initial nursery survey, only 50 will be surveyed along with all botanical gardens. Given an extremely lengthy list of nurseries, the list was reduced by selecting “certified- export-only” nurseries, and a sub-sample of 50 nurseries will be selected from this list.

In late October, the Oahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC) assisted BIISC with a 10-day control operation of coqui, miconia and fountain grass, as well as Little Fire Ant surveys across the Big Island. The combined effort was a great success, and we wish to express a heartfelt mahalo to the field crews for working ten very long, and very hard straight days. The following is an excerpt into the ten day operation.

With assistance from State Parks, the team spent two days spraying the Kalopa State Park for coqui. The new DLNR Coqui Coordinator Hans Sin also joined the operation as his first field assignment. He barely had time to land on his feet after just arriving from Utah and we whisked him off into the field to work on control efforts at Kalopa State Park. Thanks for being a trooper Hans.

BIISC and OISC crews, were joined by members of the Hawaii Community College Forest Team Program, along with Junior Forest Team members, and community members of the Waa Waa subdivision that border the Nanawale Forest Reserve on a joint miconia control effort within the Helepua’a region of the Nanawale Forest Reserve. With a combined team of 24 participants, we were able to cover a large section of the reserve and remove over 500 miconia plants. BIISC wishes to thank Ann Kabosa from the Waa Waa community and Cathy Rodriguez from HCC Forest Team program, along with all the participants for helping to make this a successful event.

BIISC also conducted its very first aerial spray operation of Miconia in lower Puna within the Maku’u Forest Reserve and Malama Ki areas. We decided to try a different type of nozzle head on the spray ball to minimize over spray, and it worked very well. We were able to cover approximately 2 acres in the Maku’u Forest Reserve in an area that has been extremely difficult and hazardous for ground crews to get to. However, this particular population is much larger than we had initially surveyed from a higher



altitude, that will require multiple visits to maintain containment. With approval from private property owners in Malama Ki, we were finally able to spray some very large miconia “trees” that are completely inaccessible from the ground as they sit in large craters. We have known about these plants for sometime, however, the only way to reach them is by air. BIISC wishes to thank Roger Imoto and staff at Division of Forestry and Wildlife for their assistance in making this happen.

BIISC and OISC conducted roadside control of fountain grass in the Ranchos Subdivision in South Kona. This area is of particular interest to both Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (HAVO) and the Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) who border the subdivision. As part of a joint effort with our cooperators, roadside control programs have been on going in Hawaiian Ocean View Estates just mauka of the Ranchos subdivision by HAVO personnel and community volunteers, as well as in the Manuka Natural Area Reserve by NARS personnel. The Ranchos subdivision was the next logical step to expand this effort. The crew worked for two days and was able to cover a large area of roadside to control fountain grass within the subdivision.

Last, BIISC and OISC assisted Merrit Walsh on her Little Fire Ant (LFA) survey project in the Kona and Waikoloa areas. The team split up into five roving teams to set out peanut butter laced chopsticks at golf courses, hotels and condominiums in Kona and Waikoloa to survey for LFA. Ants that were found are currently being identified. This project was a joint effort with HDOA and NRCS.

Finally, our data technician Jean Franklin has been working incredibly hard on a multitude of data issues. With the assistance of a temporary hire Peter Graves, they were able to work through some of the more problematic data issues, as part of the assessment of miconia control in Hawaii grant received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). With assistance from Julie Denslow and Jonathan Price of the U.S. Forest Service, they have begun the difficult task of miconia analysis.

BIISC thanks everyone who assisted us for making this a very productive first quarter for 2007.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING