

Big Island Invasive Species Committee



Managers Report BIISC 2007 2nd Quarter November 1 2006 – January 31, 2007

BIISC continued to have a very productive 2nd quarter. BIISC field crews have been working very hard, particularly on Miconia control activities. Miconia control focused in the Puna and S. Hilo districts. In addition, BIISC conducted fountain grass control in the Ka'u and S. Kona districts. With the addition of an Outreach Specialist, BIISC also had a very active outreach program during this reporting period. In addition BIISC initiated its early detection program for nursery and roadside survey's.

In Puna, BIISC staff worked in the communities of Leilani Estates, Malama Ki as well as the Maku'u Forest Reserve adjacent to the Ainaloa subdivision. A total of 112 acres were controlled in Puna, with a total of 3,368 individual plants removed of which 971 were mature plants. BIISC conducted aerial control in the Maku'u Forest Reserve, Malama Ki Forest Reserve and two (2) large private parcels adjacent to the Malama Ki Forest Reserve. Plants on these private parcels were located in deep pit craters inaccessible to ground crews requiring aerial operations. Aerial control was also conducted in the Maku'u Forest Reserve. BIISC worked with the private land owners to conduct aerial control on these two parcels. In the S. Hilo district control operations focused in previously controlled "blocks" in the upper Pi'ihonua area. Ground operations in this area are very challenging, with thickets of Strawberry guava and dense stands of uluhe. A total of 21 acres were treated with a total of 533 individual Miconia plants controlled, of which 110 were mature plants.

BIISC Miconia control activities are currently being analyzed as part of an efficacy study in conjunction with Forest Service personnel. This particular project was supported by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is expected to be completed by April. This report is expected to assist BIISC in reviewing its control strategies.

Fountain grass control took place primarily in the Ranchos Subdivision in the S. Kona district. Field personnel focused on immediate road side populations, especially on the primary road leading out of the subdivision to the main highway. BIISC controlled a total of 135 acres treating a total of 1,592 individual plants of which 811 were mature plants (flowering). This project is in partnership with staff from Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and the Division of Forestry and Wildlife/Natural Area Reserves.

BIISC assisted the Division of Forestry and Wildlife on coqui control operations within the Manuka State Park. BIISC provided a total of 144 worker hours to this project along with 3.5 hours of helicopter time to support air operations for aerial control. BIISC continues to support community groups in the upper Puna and Volcano area by providing cell phones for community based coqui hotline as part of a rapid response program. BIISC provided the equipment and personnel to assist the Volcano Coqui Croakers in putting up their brand new coqui signs supported by a grant from the Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB). In addition, the BIISC citric acid matching program (CAMP) continues to be very popular. BIISC provided a total of 4.2 tons to community members during this reporting period. BIISC continues to support the coqui database project by providing personnel for this program. A coqui data assistant was hired during this reporting period, and a GIS technician is expected to be hired soon. HISC has supported the database development with a \$35,000 contract to Pacific Basin Information Node (PBIN) to create the database. BIISC expects the database to be completed and online in early March. The State's Coqui Frog Coordinator Hans Sin will be overseeing this project.

BIISC held an early detection workshop to assist in developing scope of work fields for two pilot projects. One would focus on surveying nurseries and botanical gardens, the other would focus on surveying roadsides along primary, secondary and tertiary roadways. BIISC partners, biologists, botanist and resource specialist attended this meeting (notes posted at hear.org/biisc). The outcome of this meeting helped BIISC develop a scope of work for both projects to outsource to a contractor. In January, BIISC awarded the nursery contract to Dr. George Staples who recently retired from Bishop Museum, and who is one of the foremost invasive species taxonomists in the State. AMEC Environmental, based in Honolulu, was awarded the roadside survey contract to survey all roadsides in the N. Hilo district. BIISC expects to receive final reports March 15, 2007. Early detection is crucial to invasive species programs across the State, and is a priority of the Hawaii Island Invasive Species Council (HISC) who provided the financial support for this project. BIISC wishes to especially thank Dr. Lloyd Loope and Forest Starr for providing their expertise and experience on early detection, and providing baseline protocols.

Our new Outreach Specialist, Dr. Diana Greenough has been busy putting together an outreach program called "What's In Your Backyard". The project will focus on educating the public on invasive species, helping to identify invasive species targeted by BIISC, as well as educating people on making educated choices on buying, and planting plants on their property. In addition, educate people on limiting the cutting of native forest and plants they may already have on their property, which is of concern given the current pace of development in Hawaii County. BIISC is in the process of initiating a "trading" program in cooperation with students from the Hawaii Community College Forest Team Program. The idea is to support the Forest Team native plant propagation program, and get community members to remove potential invasive species they may have in their yards. If community members agree to "trade" or remove an invasive species they may have planted in their yard, BIISC would provide a native plant grown by Forest Team students in its place.

Last, BIISC will be losing Debbie Hansen after only a very short time with BIISC. Her administrative knowledge and budgeting skills will be missed. She is leaving BIISC for a very good business opportunity, but has agreed to remain on intermittent work status until her position is filled. BIISC has finally filled the Field Supervisor position after a long and exhaustive search. Dean Gallagher from Florida will be joining the team in early March managing operations, at a great relief to the Manager.