

**MEETING MINUTES
MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE
Friday, December 10, 2004**

ATTENDANCE: Steve Anderson, Nathan Varns, Carter Smith, Forest Starr, Audrey Equesa, Lori Buchanan, Kim Starr, Jeremy Gooding, Aaron Kogan, Mike Ade, Adam Radford, Sam Akoi IV, Bob Hobdy, Stephanie Seidman, Stuart Funke-d'Egnuff, Joylynn Oliveira, Sam Akoi III, Elizabeth Speith, Darryl Tau'a, Lissa Pusey, Arnie Peterson, Pat Bily, Ian Bordenave, Randy Bartlett, Teya Penniman, Elizabeth Anderson

- The meeting was called to order by Steve Anderson (NPS-Hale) at 9:20am.
- Minutes from the August 27 strategy meeting and from the October 1 miconia meeting were approved. They will be posted on the web-site.
- An action item summary was sent out via email prior to the meeting and distributed at the meeting. The summary only covers the action items that have been addressed since the last meeting. If an item is not included in the summary, it is still pending.

MINOR UPDATES:

Budget/Funding

- Teya: the FY05 HISC funding (\$240,000) has not become available yet. The Legislature is already looking for results even though we have not received the funds yet. HISC also has separate pots of money in addition to the base funding. There was a HISC call for Invasive Species Outreach Project proposals. MISC submitted two proposals, both related to the Hoike o Haleakala Environmental Education Curriculum. One proposal is for the development of a video on human dimensions that teachers could use in conjunction with the curriculum. The second proposal is based on expansion of the "Finding the Little Fire Ant" baiting activity found in the Coastal Module of the curriculum. The project would expand the activity to include red imported fire ants in addition to the little fire ant and would fund implementation of the activity in schools island-wide as an early detection and data gathering tool. There is also a separate pot of HISC funding for technology. Lloyd and his staff submitted a proposal for a pilot reporting and early detection tool for Maui County. The project would include an online reporting and database system and a dedicated phone line for MISC.
- Teya: the County is working with Tri-Isle to get FY05 contracts in place. The County has also approved an additional \$45,000 for MISC to continue working on banana bunchy-top virus and there will be \$15,000 for coqui frog supplies in addition to our normal OED and DWS funding. We will also be receiving an increase in Forest Service funding in FY05. We requested and have been granted \$170,000 because we cover Molokai and Lanai in addition to Maui.
- Teya: our CDBG proposal is still alive. Stuart: CDBG has a very restrictive screening process. Originally we were turned down for having an inappropriate binding (spiral vs. stapled). We are still pursuing approval. If funded, the proposal would add three additional positions to the Hana-based miconia crew. Teya: we can't count on HISC for next year and the NPS funding for miconia will be decreasing. We need to find alternate funding for sources for miconia.
- Steve: we have had \$300,000 in Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) funding for each of the past two years that has gone primarily to Hana for miconia. When the Federal budget was passed this year, they dropped the CCI funding completely. My sources in Washington say that if CCI is not re-upped next year it will be gone forever. CCI requires a 1:1 non-federal match. We have had matching funds from MISC, TNC, and Haleakala Ranch. If we can get a statement from each of these partners as to what the loss of these funds means to them, it may be our best shot at getting the funding it back. If CCI is not reauthorized, it will leave a big hole in funding especially for the miconia operation in Hana.

- Steve: we have had a three year NRPP project specifically for miconia at ~\$300,000 per year also. We are now in the third year of this funding and we are just starting to use the funds from last fiscal year. This leaves us with ~\$300,000 for next year still to come in. We need to work on various ways to secure more funds. Stuart: wasn't there a 6% increase in the NPS budget? Steve: yes, but we won't see it in resources management. There are pay increases and cost of living increases that eat up that funding. At best we are staying even.
- Forest: has the idea of using fee demonstration funding gone anywhere? Steve: the fee demo legislation allowed parks that had never charged fees or that increased their fees to use 80% of fee revenue on projects for the benefit of visitors. There was hope early on that we would be able to use those funds to help protect the park from external threats, but the legislation specifically states that the funds may not be expended outside of park boundaries. There has been no movement on changing the wording of that legislation. The fee demo funds have helped us in funding projects inside the park and freeing up other funds for external projects. The fee demo program has been reauthorized for another ten years, but no resource related projects were included this time. Teya: Steve has done a great job of securing funding for the miconia program. We need to start looking for other sources. We are also in our last year of NFWF funding this year. The Federal Noxious Weed Bill was passed and signed by the president, but there was no appropriation associated with it. Stuart: I saw an email this morning regarding a half-million dollars set aside for invasive species work and a new bill that was signed by the President. Teya: was that new funding or the existing allocation that we already receive. Stuart: I don't know. I will forward the email to you when I get back to the office.
- Jeremy: we have secured an SCA crew for the Kona parks and Kalaupapa. This should help increase Maui's leverage on EPMT funds beginning next October. The SCA crew will be taking care of the EPMT needs for those parks. The EPMT goes in for renegotiation next year. Potentially we could get more funding. EPMT funds have played a significant role in the Hana miconia operation.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Explore alternate funding sources for miconia.*
 - *Statement from CCI partners (MISC, TNC, Haleakala Ranch) re: what the loss of CCI funding will mean for them.*

PR/Education Status Report

- Teya: traditionally Mele has prepared a summary of PR activities since the last meeting. In her absence we don't have a summary to distribute this time. We had a booth at the MALP Lawn and Garden Fair on November 13. We awarded this year's Malama i ka aina award to Arlene Taus. Arlene is a local arborist who has done a lot of work educating people on invasive plants and helping clients make good choices. She was awarded a plaque at the fair. I've also given presentations to service groups and to a geography class at MCC.
- Teya: I am very happy that we will have a new PR person on-board soon. Joylynn Oliveira has been tentatively selected for the position. We hope to have approval for her to start work in early January. Steve: we should acknowledge Teya and the MISC staff for keeping the PR ball rolling while the position has been vacant. Teya: it is important to recognize that the staff has been fielding a lot of calls and requests that I am not even aware of.
- Forest: has there been any response to the coqui blitz they are doing on Oahu? Teya: we designed a similar PSA for Maui. It aired once and then we pulled it because of bad timing (it aired while the entire staff was dealing with the Hana snake search). We will redo the spot in the future since it would no longer be appropriate for Mele to be in the PSA.

Staffing

- Teya: Adam has been officially hired as the MISC Vertebrate Technician. His first priority will be coqui frogs. We are currently recruiting for a HISC funded field worker for MISC and a field worker for MoMISC. Both recruitments close on December 15. Please help spread the word if you know anyone who might be interested. We are also in the process of filling a part-time outreach position to work with the Hoike curriculum and to begin our volunteer program. The position is primarily funded by private foundation grants raised by the Hoike Steering Committee.
- Teya: Kerri Fay left the Hana supervisor position in mid-October to take a position with the Nature Conservancy. She is happy to be out working in native forests! Kerri will be very much missed at MISC. She did an awesome job of leading the Hana miconia operation for the past 18 months. We conducted a full recruitment and interview process to fill the position, but at this point in time we are not planning on filling the position. We are instead taking a team approach to managing the Hana-based operation. Uncle Sam is serving as the crew leader, Lissa is dealing with the data, and Tanya has assumed more administrative responsibilities. Jeremy will be out in Hana more and will assume more responsibility for determining overall strategy, planning, and coordination for the ground crew. Instead of hiring a single person we have several people sharing the responsibilities and we are using the talent and skills of the existing crew. We are in a trial period and we will see how this strategy works. Kanamu: so far it is working fine. Jeremy: one of the biggest challenges has been information flow from Hana to Piihola. We are installing cable at the yurt so Lissa can do real time data exchange with Piihola. This will be a huge improvement.
- Teya: we also need to look at how to best do the BBTV project. It will probably be best to have a single person do that job rather than absorb it within the existing crew. We will likely need to develop a new position.

WEED RISK ASSESSMENT

- Carter Smith, the Weed Risk Assessment Liaison from UH, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Weed Risk Assessment program. A copy of the presentation is available at the MISC office if anyone missed the presentation or is interested in seeing it again. The presentation highlighted ways that groups like MISC can contribute to the process. Discussion after the presentation included the reliability of the scores, flexibility of the criteria, and potential uses of the system.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE / MISC MOU

- Teya: I would like to make a final decision regarding forming an executive committee for MISC. We have discussed this before and the Committee agreed it would be a good idea. How many people should be on the executive committee and who should they be? Stuart: the pattern I have typically seen is a committee made up of 3-4 officers. Randy: the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership has an executive committee of three partnership representatives and the coordinator. It can be a revolving committee that changes annually with a chair and vice-chair. The members should be from the core organizations that make up MISC. Teya: a good structure would be a chair, vice-chair, and a member at large. We can rotate membership annually.
- Pat: can you give us examples of issues that would come before the executive committee? Teya: an example would be a quick turn around on a funding opportunity or staffing issues where there isn't enough time to solicit input via the MISC-list. Typically I go to Randy with things like this and then pull in other committee members as appropriate. Pat: so, the main thing is a quick turn around. Randy: the executive committee provides guidance between meetings for the Coordinator. They meet with the Coordinator on a monthly basis and deal with issues between meetings. The executive committee can also help develop the agenda for the full meetings. The executive committee doesn't make decisions for the entire committee, but they help prioritize.

- Forest: have the other ISCs done this? Teya: not that I know of. Stuart: if things are working as they are and there is no crisis, do you need that extra structure? Elizabeth A.: the watershed partnerships are much more formal than MISC and one of MISC's strength is our flexibility. We could lose some of that flexibility with a structure like this. Arnie: maybe instead of a committee that meets regularly, you could just have a list of people to call on when you need to. Elizabeth S.: we could set up a sub-list that is private.
- Randy: another question is regarding whether we should have a MISC MOU that addresses who the official members of MSIC Committee. A representative of each organization can sign the MOU. Teya: a document like this would help clarify who the key participants are. We may be leaving ourselves open for trouble if we don't define who our voting membership is. Steve: there are times when it would have been helpful for me to have a formal document. We have a lot of entities that we show on our logo lei. We have been able to show all of those entities because we have been so informal. It could limit us if we could only show the signature agencies. Stuart: if they have to sign, some of your partners may be hesitant from a liability point of view. It may activate a lot of questions. Teya: what has been the experience with the watershed partners? Randy: it took a long time to get everyone to sign. Steve: if the MOU is gray, is there any value? Randy: let's table this one for another year.
- Teya: I would like to move on the executive committee. I would want the chair (Randy) and vice-chair (Fern) and one other person for the executive committee. Pat volunteered to be the third person.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Implement MISC Executive Committee and schedule initial meeting.*

MISC NONPROFIT

- Teya: we have discussed forming a nonprofit in the past and in general we agreed that the pros outweighed the cons. A nonprofit would allow us to raise additional funds from sources that only award to nonprofits. We would also possibly save some money on overhead. Randy: a dedicated nonprofit for MISC operations would allow us to accept private donations and give us more flexibility. Elizabeth A.: there would be headaches and the cost savings are not clear. Randy: we should keep it small and simple.
- Randy: are we ready to move forward? Teya: I already have draft bylaws and articles of incorporation. I need three volunteers for the Board of Directors. I want three people who are knowledgeable regarding invasive species and who are already bought into the MISC mission and vision. We want to keep the time commitment minimal. We won't try to bring in Federal funds through the non-profit because of the complexity. Steve: questions came up in the past regarding whether Federal employees could serve on the Board. Randy: for the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership the nonprofit board is made up of partner members. The nonprofit serves the partnership/committee to accept and funnel funds.
- Pat: Fern is quite knowledgeable regarding non-profit set-up. He can at least be advisory. Randy: I'm willing to be on the board. Teya: Bob what about you? Bob: let's talk about it some more. Pat: I'll sign checks.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Confirm board membership for nonprofit.*
 - *Submit paperwork to establish MISC nonprofit.*

MISC RETREAT

- Teya: I'd like to have an overall strategy and planning day with the Committee. We occasionally have focus meetings on miconia, vertebrates, etc. and we have an annual priority setting meeting. The retreat would be more on mission, values and strategic planning. I'd like to set aside an entire day and maybe do it somewhere off-site. We need to spend some time really focusing on the bigger picture. Randy: shall we plan on committing a day sometime in March?

- Adam: it would be nice to do something similar at the staff level too. It could be a full day or an overnight thing. It would be a good way to get to know the people we work with better. Kanamu: the crew should be involved in the other meeting as well. We are the ones who know what is going on out there.
- Teya: we need a place that could hold about thirty people if anyone has ideas.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Schedule a MISC retreat in March.*
 - *Find a venue for the retreat.*

MOMISC UPDATE

- Lori: I'd like to introduce our AmeriCorps volunteer, Audrey. Audrey is a Cornell University graduate and will be going on to the University of Hawaii. She is originally from Molokai. Our AmeriCorps interns have two projects. MoMISC has switched focus from field control to more prevention and outreach. We reached a point where we were in good shape at the field level. One of Audrey's projects was to make a series of posters along the lines of what MISC has done. We have been doing a very tedious door-to-door campaign. We canvass an area if there is a specific target associated. The door-to-door canvassing has been completed for our target species and for BBTV. Audrey's second project has been to make a native plant seed collection. We've made up packets of seeds with information on how to grow the different species. This allows us to give something back when we take an invasive species out of someone's yard. The idea is working very well. We've had a lot of good response.
- Lori: we are also trying to do one workshop per month. The workshops are targeted to people who are out working in the field (e.g. irrigation pipeline staff, ranch people, state highways people, fire and police, barge people, etc.). I approach the boss and the employees get paid to attend the workshops. We have to have community support for everything we do. We remind them to keep an eye out. We also have a kiosk at the airport that we change quarterly.
- Lori: we have two populations of gorse that are 100% controlled and we did one aerial survey for gorse. For rubber vine we have 13 separate populations over 5-6 acres. We have decided that it is not feasible for us to control rubber vine at this time. The more we survey - the more we find. Teya: we have talked about sending the MISC crew over for an entire week to help with rubber vine control. Lori: we have controlled 100% of two giant reed populations and we are continuing to monitor. There was a good sized gooseberry population in Halawa Valley that has been controlled in addition to a smaller population down-river. All known pampas plants have been controlled and we have not found any new plants in the last year. We have a single wood rose population targeted for control because of the threat to native forest. It has been treated and is being monitored. Australian tree fern is a new target for us. Control will begin in December/January. There is a good possibility we will be able to achieve eradication. There are 50-100 plants island-wide and they are mostly in residential areas. It is not naturalized on Molokai yet.
- Lori: there was an alien algae problem that was forwarded to the DLNR aquatic biologist. We are taking an assistant role on that issue with DLNR as the primary agency. We have had one bulbul report that was confirmed by photo. The bird has not been captured. There will be snake response training on Molokai on January 31. There was a letter generated to HDOA asking for an agricultural inspector for Molokai. We hope to schedule a melastome prevention meeting in the near future. Our next regular meeting will be in January. We will be hiring a full-time field technician soon.
- Teya: it is obvious how effective MoMISC is with very limited resources. The relationship with TNC is awesome in terms of work trade and office support. It is a great partnership. Lori: I work in the field with TNC and their field technicians come out and assist me. We are able to use TNC vehicles, equipment, etc.

- Pat: we really need to lobby for the HDOA inspector for Molokai. Molokai is one of the few places that does not have all the garbage that the other islands have, but without inspection service it is just a matter of time. Even just one inspector could really make a difference. Teya: at the last MoMISC meeting there was a teleconference with Lyle Wong regarding the suggestion. Pat: you need to bring the agricultural community into this debate. There is a big agricultural community on Molokai. We should bring the topic up at the Maui County Agricultural Council. Elizabeth S.: there is now a MoMISC list serve if anyone wants to subscribe.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Bring the topic of a HDOA inspector for Molokai to the attention of the Maui County Agricultural Council.*

FIELD WORK: PLANT CONTROL UPDATES

Miconia – Cost Estimates

- Teya: we are giving a presentation to the Mayor on Monday on cost estimates for miconia control. He asked us what it will take to really do the job. I wanted to give the Committee a run through on the presentation today; however, Aaron and Jeremy are still crunching numbers as we speak. The island has been divided into ground management units and we plan to revisit each unit on a 2-3 year cycle to compare what we found on the first visit and what we find on the revisit. We have not yet completed all of the areas and we have yet to actually finish defining the units.
- Teya: the Hana crew has categorized all of the units as to slope, vegetation, original infestation, etc. We can use information on plants/acre and flowering trees/acre to get an estimate of how many person-days it takes to cover a given type of unit and then extrapolate for the entire miconia footprint. We are looking at three phases 1) complete the first sweep, 2) do sweeps until there are no more mature fruiting/flowering trees, 3) monitor for at least 10 years after the last flowering tree is controlled. I have a draft of the presentation if anyone wants to look it over after the meeting. Randy and Jeremy will be with me for the presentation to the Mayor and his various department heads. Basically, the message is that we are in this for the long-term and we need continuing support to keep going. Pat: are all populations on Maui figured in? Teya: yes. When you look at the average of person days per acre, it is still going to be rough.

Pampas Grass

- Teya: we are in pampas grass season and consequently are spending a lot of time on pampas right now. We have cut back on giant reed work to free up more time for pampas work. Arnie: we have been focusing on wildland areas. Waikamoi, West Maui and Haleakala front-country are priorities. We are finding seeding plants and we are finding old seeding plants so we know we are missing things. Eradication looks feasible on West Maui. We have been doing mostly helicopter operations on West Maui. It would be more efficient if we could send ground crews up into some areas. There is a very large population in Waikamoi where Honomanu fence drops in. We have been doing a lot of flights and we would also like to try sending a ground crew into Waikamoi. We are working with Haleakala staff to try and do a better job of tracking where we have searched in the front-country below the park.
- Ian: the Waikamoi population is huge. It is like looking at the Hana Core of pampas grass. It is a hard area to get to and we often get chased out by clouds during heliops. This year the populations have already gone to seed. We really need to get a ground crew in there to deal. Sam IV: we need to plan more flights. Teya: pampas is taking more time and resources than we anticipated. Greg: we need to look at Kahikinui and above Kapalaoa. Pat: Greg brings up a good point. If there are scattered plants in Kahikinui, it is important that we take care of them. Arnie: we need to put more effort into pampas if we want to eradicate it. There are areas in West Maui that we aren't even searching. Randy: outside the known locations on West Maui, the West Maui Watershed Partnership crew, my crew, and the state crew are keeping their eyes open.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Survey for pampas grass at Kahikinui and above Kapalaoa.*

Fountain Grass

- Pat: we need to schedule Lanai. Glenn would like to know if we can help. There are a variety of accommodations possible. Peak flowering is the end of January/ early February. We may want to do an aerial reconnaissance as well. I'm not sure which should be first – aerial or ground coverage. There is a lot of area to cover. The more people the better.
- Forest: Kahoolawe needs to be looked at regularly as well.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Schedule Lanai fountain grass trip for late January/early February.*

VERTEBRATES

Frogs

- Adam: we agreed that I would start my tenure as Vertebrate Technician with a focus on coqui frogs. I am working on developing a strong coqui program and then I will move on to other vertebrates. The database has been cleaned up and we are able to see the status of incoming reports, which sites are active, etc. There are 89 active sites, 23 confirmed and active sites, and 60 that need follow-up monitoring. Getting the database cleaned up is a big accomplishment and will help to orient the program. We have a few high priority sites. The Kokomo area has an active community group. We have been working in the area and trying to push the population back to the nursery. We also have a good opportunity for success at Honopou. There is community activity and a point person who is willing to monitor and help out. I am trying build on the previous efforts for community involvement and working towards empowering communities. I have a list of people that I am cultivating to be my eyes and ears. We are planning to have staff frog training in January with our staff and participants from other agency partners. We want to do a formal training to get everyone on the same page and review our approach. We want to look at variables like humidity, temperature, etc.

Chameleons

- Arnie: we've gone out four months this year for a total of eleven nights and captured 42 chameleons. There are about 11 properties involved. We need to look at the boundary properties. There are no obvious trends that would show we are diminishing the population. We know we are missing a lot of the chameleons that are out there. Our capture success is very person dependent. Teya: we are losing permissions. We lost one due to a barking dog. We need to find a better way to deal before we lose more permissions. Fern gave a presentation on veiled chameleons at the Wildlife Society meetings in November. Fern is convinced that they are the brown tree snake of Hawaii. We need to refine our techniques and do more research. We will try to put together a proposal for the next research and technology HISC call that is due in January.
- Forest: we need to do a risk assessment for vertebrates.
- **NEW ACTION ITEMS:**
 - *Put together a chameleon proposal for the next research and technology HISC call that is due in January.*

Regular Meeting Dates for 2005:

- February 4, 2005
- April 8, 2005
- June 3, 2005
- August 12, 2005
- October 14, 2005
- December 9, 2005