

MEETING MINUTES
MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE
Friday, February 4, 2005

ATTENDANCE: Fern Duvall, Kim Starr, Forest Starr, Arnold Hara, Adam Radford, Mike Ade, Bob Yonahara, Kyle Onuma, Steve Anderson, Glenn Shishido, Cora Puliatch, Joylynn Oliveira, Stuart Funke-d'Egnuff, Bob Hobdy, Sky Harrison, Elizabeth Speith, Pat Bily, Lloyd Loope, Arnie Peterson, Philip Thomas, Nilton Matayoshi, Rob Parsons, Mindy Wilkinson, Nathan Varns, Teya Penniman, Elizabeth Anderson

- The meeting was called to order by Dr. Fern Duvall II (DLNR) at 9:15am. Introductions were made around the table.
- Minutes from the December 10, 2004 MISC meeting were approved. They will be posted on the web-site.
- Teya: a summary of progress on MISC action items was sent out in advance via email and distributed at the meeting. The action item summary only covers items that have been taken care of since the last meeting. At our last meeting there was a decision made to form an advisory Executive Committee. Randy, Fern, and Pat agreed to be the initial members of the committee. I am glad we made the decision to move forward on the Executive Committee and I have already called on them several times. Funding from the HISC has allowed us to add two new field positions plus retain the vertebrate position and another field position that was only partially funded. Sam Akoi IV has left MISC to work for Wildlife Services. The new job should be a good fit for him with his snake expertise. We have also had some additional turn-over in our field crew. We are in a recruitment mode right now. We appreciate the help from different committee members on interviews. MoMISC is also in the process of hiring a new position and we may be hiring more temporary positions to ramp up for miconia and coqui frogs over the summer.

MINOR UPDATES

Budget/Funding

- Teya: there has been an addition of one million dollars to the statewide HISC funding. Mindy: the Governor has released one million dollars in restricted general funds. There will be \$100,000 of those funds directed to MISC. MISC will need to send a proposal for the additional funds to PCSU. Teya: we plan to use the additional funds to really ramp up for a short time period over the summer. We need to show strong results quickly. Our plan is to hire four or five temporary, 4-month positions to work primarily on coqui and to do some miconia work as well. Mindy: it will be important to expend the funds as quickly as possible, but they can be extended past June 30, 2005.
- Mindy: we just found out that there will be \$20,000 in funding to continue snake training on Guam. We would like to send two additional people to Guam – possibly one person from Kauai and one from Molokai. The remainder of the funding will be used to send previously trained folks back for a refresher. HDOA also has received funding. Fern: I recently learned that HDOA travel is being restricted to coqui and brown tree snake. Mindy: that directive is not from the HISC.
- Teya: our initial HISC allocation was \$240,000. This addition brings our total up to \$340,000 for this fiscal year. I also want to underscore the continued high level of support we receive from the County. Mayors Arakawa and Kim have both made a big pitch for continued invasive species funding. Invasive species are one of Mayor Arakawa's top three priorities. We also owe a big thanks to Rob Parsons for his support. Rob: the presentation you made for the Mayor made a big difference. He is using the information you presented.

- Teya: we also want to thank Glenn for alerting us to a possible source of funding through the Forest Service for fountain grass. We receive funding from the Forest Service every year for control work; but this funding is more for assessment and detection. These funds would help us assess the infestation on Lanai. We requested \$20,000 for next year for fountain grass.
- Teya: we have three new contracts in place with OED through Tri-Isle: \$200,000 for MISC general support (FY05), \$15,000 for chemicals for coqui, and \$45,000 for banana bunchy top virus. We are still waiting for this year's DWS contract which will be for \$250,000. We also will be receiving ~\$8,000 in HISC outreach funding for a fire ant early detection project related to the Hoike curriculum. Mindy: an experimental early detection database for Maui was also funded for \$34,000.
- NEW ACTION ITEMS
 - *Draft a proposal for the additional \$100,000 in HISC funds.*
 - *Initiate additional recruitments for HISC funding (temp hires for coqui/miconia).*

Legislative Update

- Teya: there are a number of important bills active right now. This is an area that Randy usually covers. Mindy: Mark Fox from TNC covers issues related to watershed partnerships and invasive species. Bills that we are tracking include a suite that would continue HISC funding, direct funding to counties for coqui, direct funding to HDOA for invasive species, and an HDOA increase via port fees. There is also a related bill that would allow us to turn away uninspected cargo from Guam and a suite of bills related to toxicants. Our DLNR focus this year will be on continued HISC funding. Either Mark or Mindy are sending notes out on the list-serves as appropriate. If anyone wants a current list of bills, they should contact Mindy. Elizabeth S.: we need to be careful when posting this sort of information to the lists as they are federally funded. Make sure you aren't making any promotions.
- Teya: MISC is putting together a graphic that shows the areas that make up the Watershed Partnerships on Maui and MISC's activity sites. We want to help the decision makers understand that the work of the Watershed Partnerships and the ISCs is collaborative and supplementary.
- Forest: is there any possibility of a conveyance tax increase? Mindy: yes, that has been brought up. The affordable housing tax is up for an increase. There are various proposals to change where the conveyance tax distribution goes and also a possible overall increase. Teya: thanks to Mindy for shepherding all these things for us. She also spent two and a half hours testifying at a joint hearing on invasive species. Mindy: Nilton was there backing me up.
- Pat: can you give us any information on SB 1893, which was hoping to bypass the conservation use permit process to get access for removal of invasive trees? Mindy: at this time there are no ISC targets that would fall under this program. We don't have targets that would fit the criteria. The bill is targeted more at landowners. Important Federal legislation to keep in mind is the federal Noxious Weed and Control Act, which was passed in 2004. The program was authorized at \$100 million, but no funds were appropriated.

PR/Education Status Report

- Joylynn: a summary of public relations activities was sent out via email prior to the meeting and distributed at the meeting. I have had a chance to experience a little bit of everything since I started last month. Please send any suggestions my way. Teya: we are delighted to have Joylynn on our staff.
- Bob H.: tomorrow at the MACC from 11am to 1pm there will be a panel discussing the pictures on display in the gallery from *Remains of a Rainbow*. There are six people involved including Randy, Fern, Art, and Bob.

EARLY DETECTION

Early Reporting System

- Elizabeth S.: I would like to give a brief overview on the proposed early reporting system that PBIN would like to create for Maui County. The development of the model system is being funded via a HISC proposal. The system would provide a unified method for input of invasive species reports and ensure that all reports receive a rapid assessment and referral to the appropriate agency. The system would include a predominately online reporting tool and would have phone numbers of all appropriate rapid response agencies. The web-site also would include information on walk-in locations for drop-off, a mail-in form, and a simple online form. The site would be open to the public and to agency personnel and would be connected to a centralized location. All reports would be assessed and validated and then disseminated to the appropriate responding agency. It would provide a unified source of information for the responding agency and consistent information for the public on who to call to respond to invasive species reports. In addition to this reporting tool, we will be providing support for early detection efforts and promoting early detection for a suite of ~20 species. We will provide a search image and basic information on selected targets. The focus will be on existing targets and targets for early eradication. We want to solicit questions and cooperation from the MISC Committee and employees. We will need input regarding the target species and appropriate contacts.
- Fern: rapid assessment and early detection for plants is very different than for insects and vertebrates. For these there must be an instant response, one place to call, and one message (kill or apprehend). It is really important that we sit down and figure out which animal groups the new system would be appropriate for. I'd rather have a call ten minutes after the detection than later. Elizabeth S.: I am not suggesting we will be promoting a series of phone numbers or that we would impede a system that is already in place. We need a unified face. The online form will include a reminder that a phone call should be made immediately when appropriate. We want to support the system that is in place. The 643-PEST number is not in place yet. There is an HDOA number that is manned ~20 hours per day. Teya: we don't know about the calls we don't get. In the survey that Christy Martin did, 31% of people said they would call Humane Society regarding a snake.
- Elizabeth S.: the system will not be able to accommodate anonymous reports. We are hoping to work with agencies and entities to help provide a means of recording calls. The form will be simple with only five fields and will provide a record of invasive species reports. Sky: the issue of privacy and system access has been brought up. Only key agency staff would have access to the reports. The information from the reports would not be made public. Nilton: that is important because people may not want everyone to know they have a problem on their property. If, for instance, we let the public know that a certain nursery has coqui, we could be sued. Forest: if a report is of a known target with an agency that can respond, they will be connected. If it is an unknown species, it will be another process. If a report turns out not to be a target, we may give the reporter an identification and that would be it. The unknown species are where Forest and Kim's assistance will kick in. Stuart: you need to be sure to consider differences between user types. Some people are not as Internet literate as others.
- Sky: I attended an Oahu meeting recently regarding the phone-in number for pests. Christy plans to start publicizing in June. I presented our proposal at the meeting and we tossed around ideas regarding how this might work in the future on a statewide level. They are still looking into options with Verizon for the pest number. It may even be possible that calls can be routed back to island of origin.
- Fern: the details are something we need to discuss at a small group meeting. Elizabeth S.: as a wrap up, I would like to solicit input from individuals after the meeting. Teya: I think this is a great project and it will dovetail well with what we need to do with some of our HISC funding. Mindy: this was the top priority from this funding pool. It fills some important gaps.

Plants

- Teya: one component of our HISC funding is for us to increase emphasis on early detection. We address the species that are our targets, but given the eyes and ears we have we can do a better job of looking for other species. We need to consider what else we should be looking at and also how to best use the eyes and ears of others that are in the field (e.g. utility workers, Sierra Club members, etc.). What can we do to include other people? We should consider what criteria we would use for selecting species for early detection. We are also looking for input on who might be available to help us train people to be added eyes and ears, who those people might be, and how we assess our effectiveness.
- Kim: in New Zealand they have active and passive surveillance. For the public you want a finite group of easy to identify targets. You don't want to give them too many targets. The active category is professionals that are trained and know their plants. You should start with the existing MISC targets, HDOA targets, etc. Forest: the MISC staff can help with things they know. Teya: based on your work how would you prioritize the passive activity? If you develop teams, would you prioritize the areas you send them to? Forest: high priority would be ports of entries where things come in. Upper Kula plants seen to escape more readily. High traffic areas and areas close to the National Park would also be high priority. Kim: anything that has been eradicated in the past should be included.
- Stuart: you could also consider the speed with which something is likely to spread. Lloyd: we need to have a workshop on this topic. It would be good to make an effort to target the agricultural community if possible. We need to pull in the agricultural community. We have been criticized for not taking on agricultural targets. Teya: the targets we pick for early detection don't necessarily have to be things we will control or take action on. There may be species where it is important to know the distribution. Stuart: you may want to have a MISC representative attend at the Mayor's agriculture meeting. This increases your spectrum. Teya: we have attended some of those meetings. Stuart: the meetings are the last Wednesday of every month at 2pm. Rob: MISC will be receiving \$15,000 from the emergency environmental fund for coqui supplies. They are looking at trying to get funding to send someone back to Madagascar for fireweed bio-control research.
- Arnie: we should probably add species that other related organizations are concerned with. Fern: the MISC crew needs to know what is supposed to be here so they are aware if they see something that is different. Pat: I see a dangerous assumption that any plant that naturalizes is a threat. It is important to distinguish the areas you are trying to protect from these species and base criteria on that. If you are talking about agricultural or disturbed land, it is a different set of species than for natural areas. It is also important to put emphasis on the behavior of a specific species. A key criteria is habitat modification. Arnie: if public is reporting things, they are going to want a response. Teya: we need to hold a small workshop for target selection.
- Sky: in your regular business would you incorporate early detection into daily operations? Teya: for the MISC crew we would like to enhance their ability and capacity to detect species of concern. In addition, I envision interested members of the public that would be trained to look for specific targets. Steve: are you envisioning a system where you have folks that are trained on a specific list of species and then when they cover an area of ground, we get negative data for that area? It is important to record the negative data so that you know areas have been surveyed. Teya: that is an important component.
- Stuart: can you design a card with pictures of target species like the fish identification cards they have for divers? You could give the card to workers at various utility companies, etc. Teya: that is a great idea - a little reference card they can carry around. Forest: in New Zealand they use a "have you seen this plant" concept. We have started with MISC targets and are patterning a handout similar to New Zealand. "Have you seen this plant on Maui?" The flyer has a picture and who to call.

- Mindy: for animals, we often get calls on something that is fairly widely distributed. There is a low level of awareness as to what is already here. A regular newspaper column that would help people become more aware of what is already in their backyards would be helpful. If people don't know what is already here, they aren't going to know if something new shows up.
- Nilton: survey work has become a key point of HDOA and we don't have enough money for a statewide weed survey. MISC has been very active. Are you confident that your data on distribution will standup? I would like to use Maui as a starting point for the process of getting more species on to the noxious weed list. Can you provide documentation for the five criteria? Forest: for Maui we have a good idea for the MISC targets. Nilton: it is tough to get stuff added to the list. I think Maui can be used as a starting point to get this going. Teya: we would be delighted! Nilton: we don't have enough staff to do the survey work. That is where you would come in. The time is now for us to start this rolling. Forest: there are species where the only reason they aren't eradicated is because of recalcitrant landowners. It would be very helpful to have additional species listed. Nilton: we can't get more funding, but at least the listing may help you. Lloyd: the restricted list is very important in stopping things from coming in.
- Philip: I'd like to recap a couple of points regarding the criteria. You are going to take existing targets that are listed by various organizations and make a special effort to include agricultural things. Don't forget to include scary things that aren't here yet like red imported fire ants. You also need to consider who you are trying to protect. There are three lists that need to be developed 1) the general public, 2) professionals/semiprofessionals looking incidentally, and 3) professionals that are specifically looking for these things as their job.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- *Schedule a workshop to discuss Early Detection funding/program/species selection.*
- *Attend the Mayor's monthly agriculture meetings, as the schedule permits.*

VERTEBRATES

Snakes

- Fern: we had a report this week from Pua'aka'a. I went out with Jay Penniman. The report was of a snake shed and came from the same lady that reported a snake in Iao Valley a few years ago. It turned out to be leaf skeletons. It would have been an extremely difficult search area.

Frogs

- Fern: I spoke with the Board of Realtors this morning. They are concerned about when and how people need to disclose the presence of frogs when they are moving especially in light of the losses on the Big Island. They have a government affairs committee that has already discussed the issue. I think we should show the video to the government affairs committee and then we should meet with the Board of Realtors and give a presentation. They also want to talk with the Mayor regarding coqui funding so we don't become a Big Island situation.
- Mindy: we were able to get Federal funding for Hawaii County because Mayor Kim declared an emergency. Mayor Arakawa has been discouraged from doing the same thing because of the tourist ramifications. Rob: Mayor Kim felt that it was important to get the Governor to declare a state of emergency rather than just the County. I think it could be argued that Maui isn't as bad as the Big Island. Teya: getting the Mayor to declare an emergency for Maui has been on our action item list. What is your recommendation Rob? Rob: I need to consider that. I would like to get a sense of the bills in the Legislature right now and see if we need to go that route. TP: the declaration would be more for Federal funding than for State funding. Philip: it makes more sense to declare an emergency on Maui than on the Big Island because of the nature of the biological risk. Declaring an emergency when a species is still incipient makes more sense than when it is too late. Fern: Dr. Hara said last night that the Big Island is just not doable. On Maui we can still do it, but it will take a lot of funding.

- Nilton: when I attended the Big Island Coqui Working Group meeting, they were very concerned about the negative impact on tourism. Are the hotels on Maui concerned? Fern: yes, and they are paying their own money for pest control. Last night we discussed the huge public outcry on the Big Island. On Maui we don't have that outcry, but we are at the point where funding would do the most good. People scream most when the least can be done. Lloyd: it is important to get various sectors of society working together on this (e.g. the Tourism Bureau). It is time on Maui for outreach to the tourism community. Fern: the video we have from Dr. Hara should be shown to those groups.
- Fern: Adam put together and conducted an excellent coqui training workshop yesterday. Is there going to be a statewide training? Mindy: no, there is no statewide training planned, but we have been having experienced folks travel to help with control on other islands. We are planning to have a statewide planning meeting. Fern: it would be nice to have everyone on the same page with information. Mindy: there is so much variability by island that I am not sure it would be useful. Adam: when I set up this training, I got a lot of interest. As far as community outcry goes here on Maui, there is a direct correlation by decibel level.
- Nilton: I have been wondering about the usefulness of further development and training/information on the use of hot water treatment. Mindy: unfortunately the voluntary draft protocol for nurseries doesn't include hot water treatment. Adam: the protocol is still open for comment. We should provide comment on the use of hot water treatment.
- Adam: a summary of recent vertebrate activities is being passed out along with a map of reported coqui distribution on Maui. The map is constantly being updated. The time reflected on the summary is low and doesn't really reflect all of my time on the phone, etc. We survey sites where something has been heard or seen. We do three revisits per site for 30-45 minutes each. The sites labeled active are where we know there are coqui at the location. They have been confirmed and they are still there. A monitor site means there was a confirmed frog that has been caught or controlled. An inactive site indicates we have done the three visits and have not heard anything.
- Adam: development of a PowerPoint presentation on coqui for the Mayor was a big accomplishment. Another big accomplish was the 6-hour staff training that Fern mentioned. Folks from the Big Island and Oahu joined us. It was a good opportunity for sharing information. One of the messages that came out of the training was that there is an interest in more information exchange on a statewide level. We have initiated a coqui email list-serve for information dissemination.
- Adam: we have a new opportunity in Wailea. There was one frog calling in the Wailea Maluhia development that was caught. The manager of the complex is also associated with security and landscapers throughout the Wailea area and she suggested that it would give us a great network to do training with all those type of staff people. She is already talking with security guards, etc. to help us set something up. The frog was from a Maui nursery that got plants from the Big Island. Mindy: on Oahu we have an issue with infected nurseries spreading frogs around. Adam: that is a huge issue. As long as we don't deal with continued distribution, the control isn't going to help. Philip: inspection is useless. The shipments need to be treated. It isn't possible to detect frogs reliably in shipments. There must be treatment. Nilton: the problem lies in the system itself. There are certified and uncertified nurseries. When a shipment arrives, they look and listen. We need each nursery to have a program of treatment. The Department can't do it. Fern: it is important to comment on the protocol now.
- Teya: would more resources help? Philip: it has to be dealt with at the point of shipment. Treatment must happen then. Forest: that deals with inter-island not intra-island transport. Lloyd: it is great that there is political interest. The Mayor needs to be advocating these measures. Our leaders must take a position on these tough issues. Fern: that is where folks like the Board of Realtors come in. We need to be smart about which groups will be most effective in addressing the issue. Lloyd: these problems are so complex. Invasive species have so much of an edge - controlling pathways, requiring owners to do something, etc. It is coercive, but that is the message. Adam: what if there was a treatment center at the transportation ports?

At least that would minimize one vector. The Big Island does have a couple of hot water facilities. The beauty of hot water treatment is that it kills a large number of things. The entire plants is sprayed and the eggs are killed.

- Adam: I have completed a draft strategic plan for the MISC coqui program. I also attended snake training on Molokai. It was very informative. Mindy: Molokai has the best chance of controlling incipient vertebrates. Teya: I want to say we are lucky to have Adam in our vertebrate position and we are very pleased with the work he is doing.
- Rob: I would like to have a discussion regarding methods of dealing with infested nursery owners and convincing them to do the right thing. I continue to get calls regarding the same nurseries. Given that the nurseries are the number one vector on the island, what methods can we use to get them to take responsibility or what can we do to require them to deal the problem? Adam: we need to have repeated and frequent contact with the nursery managers - what are you doing and how can we help you? Many of them are not opposed, they are just complacent. Nilton: on Oahu HDOA has no vertebrate statutes. We can't go onto private property. Everything must be voluntary. We are charged with doing more testing and research. We have been relying on voluntary compliance. I have always been cautioned to not step over into control because there is no statutory coverage and there are liability issues when treating someone's plants. On Oahu, they have been spraying citric and have had no problems with plants dying. The nursery situation here requires regular follow-up.
- Rob: MISC and Bob Y. went to Kihei and did treat the nursery there. It knocked them down, but they are back now. Teya: the owner was receptive at the time. What we need is agreement that states we are willing to help, but we expect the owner to commit to doing certain things. If they make that commitment, we will go in and help them. Can we develop statutory authority to go in and document which nurseries are infected – maybe at the State or County level. Fern: MISC could go to a nursery and do the initial knock-down and the owner signs a contract saying they will be responsible for continued follow-up. There needs to be some teeth that makes them do it. Mindy: the HISC Legislation contained a provision for access to control invasives, but it puts the control work all back on us.
- Forest: we could provide a list of frog free nurseries on the web. We could have a MISC certified nursery program. Joylynn: instead of concentrating on the nurseries that are bad, we could concentrate on the ones that are good. Teya: I don't think we want to take something like that on. It would take a lot of resources in terms of monitoring. A voluntary certification could work - if you are self-certifying, you have done the following items...
- Arnie: if we want to eradicate coqui on Maui and we allow nurseries to continue moving them around, we can never win. We need legislation. Philip: I like Adam's idea of continuing externally initiated contact. That way they always have a point of contact. A good way to do this is to have Rob talk to MALP and get them concerned. MALP is within the industry and would probably be very receptive. Can we initiate some form of ordinance at the County level? Pat: legislation is a great idea, but realistically the time between launching a legislative tool and its effect will be too late. Money is the driving force. We need an economic means of getting them to deal. There must be an economic impact to them for having frogs. Philip: I agree, but still need the legislation even if it is a ways off. Fern: we need a statewide discussion. The situation with chameleons and parrots is similar and we aren't even going to get to them today. We have Vertebrate Subcommittee meetings, which are often very poorly attended, to go into detail on issues like this and work on solutions.
- Rob: there has been a group (which includes Elizabeth S., Shannon, & Lloyd) that has been working to draft an invasive species ordinance for Maui. It has just been submitted. We think we have a framework that can be fine-tuned and presented to the Council. Hopefully the ordinance could give us the opportunity to go onto the properties of recalcitrant landowners.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- *Give a presentation to the Board of Realtors on coqui frogs*
- *Provide comment re: hot water treatment not be included in the voluntary nursery protocols*

WEST NILE VIRUS

- Fern: the question has come up as to whether MISC staff would be available to assist with control of mosquitoes for West Nile virus. Mindy: there was a presumed positive for the virus on Maui. The test was not clear and at the time it took 7-10 days to get results back from the CDC. DOFAW was told we would be cited if we did not control mosquitoes in the area around Kanaha Pond. MISC is being asked to provide labor - four people for four hours per week. Fern: the idea is to do year-round mosquito control to knock down the population and reduce the likelihood that West Nile virus will take here. The feeling is that it will show up on Maui and it is important to deal proactively. Is it appropriate for MISC to make the commitment to help? Lloyd: in an emergency yes but not otherwise. Mindy: it is a dangerous precedent. The Department of Health is an important partner and preventing this disease is very important. It is a slippery slope. The HISC does have West Nile virus on its list. We need to figure out where the ISCs are going to fit in. Arnie: once you have a bird die from West Nile virus, you are too late and it can't be eradicated. Teya: I see the potential for a MISC role if there is a confirmed case and you need every available body to go out and do control under a well-thought out plan, but we cannot take on the commitment to do ongoing control work.