

Hawai'i Invasive Species Council
Working Group on Prevention
August 6, 2004

Neil Reimer opened meeting with a review of the history of HISC, the working group structure and agencies participating in the Prevention working group.

Agenda Item two: brief review of current prevention programs.

The prevention programs discussed were Plant Quarantine Branch, ballast water and hull fouling initiatives, brown tree snake prevention, and the weed risk assessment tool.

Neil Reimer gave a presentation on the Plant Quarantine Branch which gave a brief history of the organization and reviewed current activities, including their mandate to monitor ports of entry to prevent pests and if a pest enters, to prevent spread from one island to another. The presentation also outlined the recent blitz assessment inspections at Kahului airport, which determined that the greatest threat for pest entry is in cargo. The assessment also highlighted the fact that they have inadequate staffing to meet their mandates.

Paul Murakawa addressed the ballast water program, created by legislature to control issues introduced by ballast water and hull fouling. Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources is following the lead of Coast Guard and trying to mirror their regulations, to encourage shipping company compliance. A task force is in the process of creating a management program, drawing members from the scientific, non-profit, federal and state sectors.

Mike Pitzler and Dan Vice of the USDA Wildlife Services brown tree snake program on Guam discussed the problems their vital program is facing. After a brief review of the history of program it was stated that although they are growing by 30% (necessitated by Guam being a shipping hub, especially for the military) their funding is decreasing. This means a cut of 50%, not all cargo will be inspected for brown tree snakes. The program is also being billed for what were previously in-kind services. They may lose some in-kind services totally; forcing further cut backs in staff, dog teams and leading to fewer inspections. It is noted that what happens in Guam affects the Hawai'i Plant Quarantine Branch (PQB) program, which is also under-funded.

Guam is setting up a regional invasive species council, based on HISC, which can deliver information to the other islands. A unified voice may have impact. It was suggested that a BTS update be given at the next HISC council meeting. Mike Pitzler agreed to do it.

Alenka Remec, of the Nature Conservancy, reported on the Weed Risk Assessment (WRA). The WRA is essentially a method of screening plants as high risk for invasiveness. There was general discussion on the possibility of use by HDOA to screen imported plants. There is a position funded, currently in the hiring stage, which will be doing outreach and education with various stakeholders on the uses of the WRA.

Neil Reimer reviewed the topics discussed and noted that West Nile Virus would be another area for prevention, however, no one from DOH was present to speak.

Agenda item three: a review of the proposed prevention working group task list, amend task list and rank tasks.

Began with a general discussion around the task list. It was noted that the task list is a recommendation and can be modified by the working groups.

Kim Langley introduced the request of MoMISC, which is that Moloka'i have intra-island inspections to protect their small diversified agriculture industry from numerous pests and diseases present on other islands.

General discussion ensued on how Moloka'i's request could fit into task list. HDOA initially wanted to use resources generated by HISC for new inspectors, but under current restrictions cannot hire new inspectors. The focus is now on creating a research program, doing risk assessment inspections. This would allow HDOA to determine high-risk pathways of pests entering the State. They could then use this data to prioritize their limited resources and to illustrate the need for additional inspectors. Moloka'i would be able to receive visits by blitz inspectors.

Tony Montgomery of DARS reported on aquatics. There is an effort to increase the communication strategy: a) national clearinghouse on ballast water, DARS not tied in and b) no communication with harbor traffic.

General discussion followed on the form that prioritization of tasks should take. General agreement on listing an objective with tasks underneath. A rough budget would then be attached to each objective. It was agreed that objectives, tasks and a rough budget would be given to HISC. DOH would be contacted to supply objectives for West Nile virus.

Discussion on where Red Imported Fire Ants (RIFA) would fall in prevention strategies. General agreement that RIFA could fall under the HDOA inspections to determine pathways for entry. General agreement that current resources constrain further action.

Write-up on above tasks (objectives, tasks and rough budget) must be e-mailed to Neil Reimer by August 12, 2004. PQ will be responsible for contacting DOH.

There was a suggestion that original tasks be left on list as they don't require actual money but could be relevant to upcoming legislative issues. General agreement that the tasks discussed are priorities, all other tasks will remain as proposed tasks.

Agenda item four: discussion of funding.

It was determined that this topic had been covered under previous discussion. Total HISC funding is three million, the prevention working group receiving approximately 30% of that total.

Agenda item five: public testimony.

Alenka Remec made an announcement concerning the Agriculture Industry Conference on October 21 and 22. Landscape industry is having an all day seminar on the topic of invasive species. She will send further information to the group members.

Next meeting date is September 15, 2004, a Wednesday, from 9:00 am to noon at the PQ conference room.

Agenda items should be submitted by September 3, 2004.

Adjournment at 11:10 a.m.

Tasks as listed in HISC FY05 spending plan, amended with Priority Actions for FY05.

Prevention

33% of total funding, \$990,000

Actions identified in the Hawaii Invasive Species Council Plan: 1) increased numbers of and training for quarantine staff; 2) specialists to identify new insects, plants and diseases and 3) technicians/supervisors and needed infrastructure to lead invasive species control efforts on the ground;

Priority Actions for FY05 will include: a) implementing a “blitz” inspection program to research high-risk pathways for pests entering the state, b) address issues of ballast water and hull fouling, c) continue work on implementation, education and outreach for Weed Risk Assessment, d) West Nile virus.

Proposed spending plan: This will be accomplished through a transfer of \$990,000 from the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture in the first quarter of the 2005 fiscal year (\$800,000 S 314 and \$190,000 G 042).

Requires a letter or other agreement between the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Director of Finance (currently being reviewed by DLNR – Fiscal).

Concerns include the mechanisms available to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture to expend the funding. **Recommendation** is that the funding be transferred from DLNR to HDOA and that efforts are made to develop a mechanism for HDOA to develop mechanisms to expend the funds.

Both the Hawaii Department of Health – West Nile Virus program the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources – Division of Aquatic Resources have identified prevention needs.

Recommendation is that the Hawaii Invasive Species Council – Working Group on Pests not Present in Hawaii (Prevention) meet to determine priority projects for funding.