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Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) – Resources Working Group

Seventh Meeting

Thursday, August 14, 2008

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Hawaii Department of Agriculture
Plant Quarantine Conference Room
1849 Auiki Street, Honolulu, HI 96813

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order at 2:00 p.m. by Elizabeth Corbin, acting Resources Working Group (RWG) chair on behalf of Theodore E. Liu, DBEDT Director. Thanked all for changing schedules to attend, especially working group chairs.
2. Introductions: Allen Allison (Bishop Museum); Chris Buddenhagen (DLNR/DOFAW); Karl Buermeyer (USFWS); Patrick Chee (DLNR/DAR); Paul Conry (DLNR/DOFAW); Elizabeth Corbin (DBEDT/STB); Chris Dacus (DOT); Chris Dunn (Lyon Arb.); Susan Gray-Ellis (DBEDT/STB); Sam Goldstein (USDA/APHIS); Keren Gunderser (KISC); Fred Krans (BPBM); Tony Montgomery (DLNR/DAR); Rachel Neville (OISC); Carol Okada (HDOA); Sara Pelleteri (DLNR/DAR); Adam Radford (MISC); John Strom (Ent. HNL).
3. Old business: Corbin told group that Chris Buddenhagen (HISC), Christy Martin (CGAPS) and Susan Gray-Ellis (DBEDT) were working on a needs assessment to find out where the gaps were in the need for funding.

Approval of minutes: The minutes of the January 11, 2008 meeting were approved with no opposition.

4. Request for public comment: No public comment given.
5. Background on budget procedures and restrictions: Corbin described adoption of a revised HISC Strategic Plan by the HISC at the last HISC meeting on 7/9/08. In the new strategic plan, the Resources Working Group (RWG) was assigned to develop a balanced budget to present to the HISC each year.

Buddenhagen gave overview of the HISC budget request and explanation of expenditures by HISC.

Corbin explained that the Legislature has imposed a 4.5% budget reduction on all State departmental budgets and there is a 4% administrative restriction. Therefore, it is important to understand that State money across the board is being affected in FY 2009 and it is not only HISC money that is being affected.

6. Development of a review process: Corbin asked for suggestions and comments on what a fair and transparent budget review process should look like. She suggested that each chair of the working groups give a brief presentation, then try to look at funding at the reduced level with each chair voluntarily cutting their budgets as well as possibly cutting Research & Technology's RFP funds as one example. Then, have the group come up with a consensus, but not voting, as voting does not

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seem like a possibility with this group due to the fluctuation of member count: it's an informal group with no set membership.

- a. Conry – Each working group to give presentations, then come up with an amount to fund. However, each working group should be allowed to go back to their people and figure out how and where to make the cuts in that group.
- b. Buddenhagen – Would like the chairs of the working groups to come up with how the working group budgets will be revised instead of having more meetings because it is time consuming and we hope to have a balance budget in order to have a recommendation for the HISC by the next meeting.
- c. Montgomery – This group (RWG) is not set up to make decisions about line items in each other's budgets. Tony agrees that the chairs should go back and work with their own groups to decide how the cuts are made.
- d. Corbin – Not sure if must hold formal meetings as required by Sunshine Law. Can we empower the chairs of the working groups to make decision on behalf of their groups?
- e. Buddenhagen – Yes, open meetings not required by law. Only hold public meetings for the sake of transparency. Chairs are there to represent their groups regarding their respective budgets.
- f. Strom – How does the budget affect vacancies?
- g. Montgomery – Vacancies will be discussed when we get to Response & Control. Each group will deal with vacant positions differently.
- d. Pelleteri – No overriding group looking out for the merits of the proposals across the board. The working groups were not set up to look at that. Need a disinterested third-party to look at the budget requests of all the projects.
- e. Buddenhagen – Resources Working Group is ideally the most objective group to look at budget proposals. Proposals must look at HISC strategic plan for merit. Need to weigh new projects vs. ongoing work. The two are difficult to compare.

Historical explanation of how previous HISC budgets were determined was discussed.

Chee asked if RWG would look for other sources of funding for HISC. Corbin explained that this is being address by the needs assessment to find out where the funds are most needed. At previous RWG meetings, it was discussed that groups were already aware of federal and private grants. Grants are not always easy to obtain as they require someone to properly write the grant, some require matching funds, and someone must administer the grant. HISC cannot look toward State for more funding at this time. Corbin told group that RWG will be able to be more active now that she has staff working on this project and they will look again at finding additional funding sources in the context of the needs assessment. Chee suggested a budget be prepared prior to the legislative session, then HISC could go to the Legislature with a specific funding request. Strom explained that that approach may not work with the Legislature very well.

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Each working group was given time to go over their budget proposals:

- a. Prevention: Okada proposed to take out the ant prevention coordinator and plant pathogen detection from the Prevention budget. Buddenhagen suggested keeping the ant coordinator funding available but at a reduced level to be able to hire a person for one-year. This person would be based on the Big Island, to try to tackle the ant problem there. Okada was in agreement but wanted the ant person to receive a lower priority than other items. Corbin commented that this position sounded like a new position and the group needed to decide if a new capacity was more or less important than an existing capacity.
- b. Response: Montgomery gave group an overview of the shortfalls in funding that all the ISCs have encountered and the need to understand why the ISCs have asked for more money. ISCs hoped to have funding at the high level to be able to maintain the current levels that they are at. If funded at the lower budget level, positions will not be funded and miconia, coqui, and alien algae will not be looked after at the levels they are now. Because control has many people on the ground doing the actual work, if the funding is not available, there will be a negative impact on invasive species in Hawaii. Okada voiced concern that coqui frog was not mentioned in BISC FY09 budget request. Conry commented that pass-through funds were going to Big Island directly for coqui frog projects.
- c. Research: Dunn explained that research was an important part of keeping invasive species out of Hawaii. This year, two unsolicited proposals are in the research budget separately due to the merits of these projects:
 - i. Biocontrol international workshop in New Zealand,
 - ii. Taxonomic database & website of alien species through Bishop Museum
- d. Outreach: Dacus stated that Outreach's budget focused on the strategic plan, as well as the fact that the outreach group works well together with a lot of synergy. Buddenhagen pointed out that the Outreach RFP did not work as well as the Research RFP. Only 11 total proposals were submitted, 9 out of 11 were funded.

Corbin asked the group if a policy decision should be made to save programs with personnel positions or ongoing programs first. Dunn stated that the database was taken out of the RFP money already. Okada stated that the database was an important feature in getting more federal funds later.

Pelleteri commented that although she appreciated the RWG looking at saving positions, she urged the RWG to think programmatically and what's best for the programs. Corbin explained that it was a balance since having money and no people wouldn't work and having people and no money wouldn't work either so there was no simple solution. Corbin asked if HDOA might have another source of funding which could affect other agencies. Okada said yes, HDOA might be receiving additional funds, however, the funds were still a question mark and cannot be counted on at this time. Strom mentioned Panthera uses Federal funds and needed to look at the threats in researching their vaccine. Strom suggested HDOA look into the possibility of partnering with Panthera in the future. Okada acknowledged the suggestion.

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Corbin mentioned that there seemed to be carry-over money from HISC FY 2008 budget. Buddenhagen replied that carry-over money was impossible to count on. In reality, HISC needed funding until October or November instead of June 30th, since it takes so long to actually get funds released to HISC.

Buddenhagen proposed to cut \$200K from the Research and Technology RFP, \$47K from Prevention, \$47K from Response & Control, \$32K from the Outreach RFP, and \$5K from HISC Admin. All agreed to the HISC budget now, with a caveat that if HDOA should get another source of funding some of the other programs may receive additional funds later. Conry suggested that Research RFP funds should be replenished if additional funds should become available. Corbin suggested that Research could also do the RFP in phases, such as Phase 1 now then Phase 2 if more money becomes available later.

Improvements to the process for next year: Corbin asked how to improve the process for next year. Montgomery suggested a standard format so one can compare between the programs. Corbin stated that in the future, it would be best to have an independent panel to review the proposals. Neville suggested Jim Jacobie as a panel member and wanted the ISCs to have input on the panel members, including federal partners. Dunn asked if HISC would have the discretion for an honorarium to pay for panel members. Dunn believed that would help get quality people on the panel since we live in a small community and keep asking the same people to volunteer. Corbin said they would have to take a closer look at the budget to see if funds were available for this. Neville stated that ISCs are concerned that they would be at a disadvantage since it might seem like they are working on the same projects each year. Corbin stated that the HISC can set some overall objectives based on the strategic plan to help set funding priorities for any given fiscal year. Radford added that a review panel should look at how programs are leveraging their funds. Radford also stated that a panel should see if there other agencies are doing the same work when taking projects into consideration for funding. Corbin stated that RWG will go over how to improve the process for next year at the next RWG meeting.

Corbin asked all working group chairs to send back their adjusted budgets to Chris Buddenhagen by Friday, 8/22/08.

7. Announcement: Conry stated that a large part of the HISC money comes from the conveyance taxes and the conveyance tax is projected to go into the red for FY 2010 which will place a further downward pressure on the individual groups who rely on the HISC for support.
8. Meeting Adjourned at 4:25 pm.

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Budget requests and recommended funding for financial year 2009

PREVENTION	Requested		Funded
	High	Low	
Ant prevention and control techniques	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$30,000
Pathogen detection and ID	\$49,000	\$29,000	\$0
Apiarist for varroa mite work	\$90,000	\$65,000	\$54,200
Ballast Water and Hull Fouling Program	\$95,000	\$95,000	\$84,200
Weed Risk Assessment	\$122,440	\$108,570	\$97,700
WNV detection and suppression	\$378,104	\$318,104	\$307,300
	\$794,544	\$665,674	\$573,400
RESPONSE AND CONTROL			
BIISC	\$576,000	\$408,100	\$397,300
MISC	\$520,000	\$430,680	\$430,700
OISC	\$499,631	\$424,000	\$413,200
KISC	\$490,426	\$385,999	\$375,100
AIS	\$524,441	\$422,283	\$411,400
EA coordinator biocontrol	\$90,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
	\$2,700,498	\$2,136,062	\$2,092,700
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY			
RFP	\$424,000	\$534,000	\$330,000
Biocontrol capacity building	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Alien species database	\$256,000	\$156,000	\$160,000
	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$500,000
OUTREACH			
Staff	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$210,000
Materials/Services/PSAs	\$109,229	\$109,229	\$102,200
RFPs	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$0
Americorp Stipends	\$13,000	\$0	\$0
	\$382,229	\$344,229	\$312,200
HISC SUPPORT			
DOFAW Overhead (3%)	\$109,500	\$109,500	\$96,700
Central Services Fee (7% of 3 M)	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$210,000
Support Staff	\$135,000	\$135,000	\$135,000
Budget restriction 8%	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
	\$534,500	\$534,500	\$521,700
Total	\$5,111,771	\$4,380,465	\$4,000,000