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Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

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Hawai'i Invasive Species Council Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 9:30 AM

Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Pukalani, Maui

Council members and participants present: Russell Kokubun (DOA), William Aila (DLNR), Carl Evensen (UH), Ford Fuchigami (DOT), Gary Gill (DOH), Senator Nishihara (O'ahu), Senator English (Maui), Loyal Mehrhoff (USFWS), Alan Arakawa (Maui County).

Others present: Chris Brosius (WMMWP), Christy Martin (CGAPS), Mark White (TNC), Melissa Tanji (Maui News), Skippy Hau (DLNR DAR), Linda Castro (DLNR DAR), Donna Sterling (Ahamoku Okahikinuu), Randy Bartlett (EMWP), Rob Hauff (DLNR), Mike White (Maui County Council), Andrea Buckman (Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership), Teya Penniman (MISC), Sarah McLane (WMMWP), Penny Levin (E Kupaku Ka'āina), Phyllis Robinsons (Board of Water Supply), Keren Gundersen (KISC), Pat Bily (TNC), Pomaika'i Kawiaupio-Crozier (Pu'u Kukui Watershed), Fern Duvall (DLNR DOFAW/MISC), Jimmy Gomes (Ulupalakua Ranch), Bruce Faulkner, Adam Radford (MISC), James Leary (UH CTAHR), Roselle F K Bailey, Warren Watanabe (Maui County Farm Bureau), Lois Whitney (Councilmember White), Rosemary Robbins, Art Medeiros (USGS), Jeremy Gooding (Dept of Interior), Pam Pague (DWS), Josh Atwood (HISC), Chuck Chimera (Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment), Kenneth Yamamura (Maui County), Rob Parsons (Maui County).

1. **Call to order:** 9:37 am
2. **Introductions**
3. **Approval of minutes:** Motion by Gary Gill, seconded by Russell Kokubun.

Passed unanimously.

4. **Mayor Arakawa**

The county fights coqui, deer, and more. Appreciates that the Council is meeting on Maui, but wishes that they had met here when the Council first formed. Maui is looking at a dry summer, the deer will be roaming. The state has a lack of capacity to handle these issues. The state needs more capacity at the Department of Agriculture and Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement.

5. **Maui County Council (Mike White)**

The County Council is trying to increase funding for environmental concerns. They are willing to put funds wherever the state decides they should go.

6. **Discussion of Axis Deer on Maui: Maui Axis Deer Working Group (Warren Watanabe, Teya Penniman)**

Warren: The deer are widespread on Maui. As a group we are trying to work on a management plan, which we would submit to HISC for preliminary funding by July. There's a lot of frustration from the farmers, the hotels, the golf courses. A big concern is public safety. We're not sure how many collisions there

are. Farmers cannot take any more loss. For food safety, you cannot harvest crops where the deer have been. We have the county's support, and we hope we have the State's support moving forward.

Russell: We've just confirmed the presence of axis deer on the Big Island. I have to ask for your help. I don't think the farmers over there grasp the problem. We see some individuals wanting the deer to flourish for hunting, but that's a misconception. I'd like the Big Island Invasive Species Committee to get in touch with you to talk about this.

Sen English: What are the impacts on Hāna? The deer have been moving into Kipahulu and Hāna. It's not only farmers on this side that are impacted.

Teya: The plan at present, while in a draft form, is working to convene a working group originally put together in 1996. The plan needs to be community based. Different communities will have different willingness to participate.

Sen English: The Big Island deer was willfully introduced. Fern Duvall caught the wording problem in statute years ago; Sen English tried to fix it. Now Kahele's bill will hopefully address the problem.

Carl: What is the situation from Moloka'i? Are they on the MADWG?

Lori: On Moloka'i we have a lot. There is no motion for axis deer on Moloka'i. You'd be hard pressed to do any control efforts. The large farmers, like Monsanto, have the government doing control for them. For smaller farmers, you can close up your property or file for crop loss. No working group, no use in creating one. Lots of people would want to keep the deer. Others would want eradication, but it's impossible. NARS does aerial shooting. That's for watershed and conservation, not crop control. Years ago they petitioned DOA because there were black buck on Moloka'i. Their numbers are now expanding past central Moloka'i. The hunters prefer the axis deer. The introduction of black back was approved by DOA. Japanese ring necked pheasants are now being released on Moloka'i by DOA.

Russell: I will look into it.

Lori: Will be filling in as BIISC interim manager. Current strategy and funding will not support eradication. They need a lot of equipment they don't have. Called the department of defense and asked for assistance. Need forward looking infrared, helicopter time. Asking the Council to petition Maj Gen Wong for assistance through a programmatic agreement, maybe at PTA. Lori can provide specifics on what kind of help they need. Need to know exactly how many deer on Big Island. Need help from federal and state. There are reports that BIISC didn't look at large herds of deer in Kohala. If we want to get rid of deer, must do it now.

7. Summary of Invasive Species Issues on Maui (Teya Penniman and Mark White)

Teya: Maui has excellent examples of unique partnerships that come together to solve problems. The county is supportive of both MISC and MoMISC. The support we get from the state isn't adequate to do what we're doing. We had more support, but when the budget was cut we went down to 60% of the previous funding level. County provides over \$1M for MISC/MoMISC. State provided \$200k last year. MISC works in Hāna on miconia, has an educational program. Work with kids, early detection, roadside surveys. Māliko gulch coqui eradication effort utilizes mixed method approach of aerial and sprinkler applications of citric. Pampas grass is a main target. This is the most active, engaged council we've ever had, had great momentum at start. Hope that is still there. The funding situation is a bit backward. There is an amount that is requested by DLNR for the year, then people come with proposals. What we're not doing is saying, what do we need to do? How much money do we need? Rather than having a fixed amount, we should have a request of how much is actually needed. If we continue to fall short for several years, we end up wasting money. Interisland quarantine is still an issue.

The LFA is going to get here. There is another pocket on Maui now. I would bet there is LFA on O'ahu and you just don't know it yet. We don't have the quarantine system we need. When we talked about it before, what we heard is that there's too much else to do. The role of the HISC is to find ways to solve those really intractable problems. We have the master of mediation, Peter Adler, available to do it. We're going to try to move forward on Maui. We would like your participation if possible.

Mark: Thanks for coming here. We have a great Mayor and Council. In the Mayor's last administration, he told me to get a plan together for axis deer. He's very supportive. The Watershed Partnerships and the ISCs have had a long history of collaboration. The ISCs tend to have a focus on incipients. But focusing on incipients alone is not a solution to the overall problem. Miconia, strawberry guava, ginger, deer, they are destroying our forests. Without the WPs and ISCs we wouldn't be as far along as we are. The HISC, when making funding decisions, needs to consider the funding situation. WPs are working site based. ISCs are working island wide. We need to work together. May need to make tough decisions between on the ground work and biocontrol. Biocontrol should be a focus.

Josh: The reason for our funding process is that we currently only receive funding from the Natural Area Reserve Fund, which collects revenue from the Conveyance Tax. Currently there is no process for saying how much is actually needed. On axis deer, the model that was used on the Big Island was that a community based group met, and BIISC created a draft management plan. Now they collaborate with the local DOFAW district office, National Park Service, USFWS, and TNC, with funding and policy support from the DOFAW admin office in Honolulu. This is a model that could work for Maui.

8. Solicitation of FY13 priorities from Council

Gary: Looking for a way that all of these agencies can do something more proactively together. From my standpoint, I'm concerned about health. Rats that bring plague, mosquitoes that carry disease. Vector Control has been decimated. We have one person at HNL, no other people at point of entry. DOA is struggling to increase their capacity for inspections. DLNR is working up in the watersheds. So what can we do as agencies to combine our efforts? We could focus on points of entry- ports, nurseries, etc. I'd like to see a program where we would have a collaborative venture between departments at points of entry. DOH can put in mosquito traps. Can support efforts to be checking for BTS or other species of concern. Would like to see an MOU or an emergency response protocol so that when something is discovered we could know who has what resources and what each person's responsibility would be. We would set up a response and drill that system. Tap the resources of the ISCs as well. Would like to see this developed and funded. Would want to see a funding priority for this from HISC staff this year. This is the time to act, since we have a governor that is supportive as well.

Sen English: What you suggest has already been done. SLH Act 3 or 4 of 2002, we created the emergency environmental workforce. Russell and I did this to make sure that the workforce stayed at the books. We just need the agencies to say that they will do it and put their moneys toward it. The plans are there, each agency would just need to contribute funding towards it. This law doesn't have a traditional defective date, it is dormant. We have come full circle. You can reenact that program and it would be available instantaneously. Has exemptions in place to make quick action possible.

Russell: That was in direct response to 9-11. The concept Gary is discussing is one modeled after federal laws, more of a formal command system. There is one for BTS. If a BTS is detected at Hickham, the group is deployed. Federal government picks up the tab. Gary is saying that this program would be across the board for multiple species. If we could come up with a more

generalized program, that would be useful. Don't know what the training regiment would be. In terms of funding, we need to find more. Need to look for a dedicated funding source. The NARF is from conveyance tax. It goes with the economy. As does the TAT. On a long range perspective, those should always go up. Even though it's a rough ride, they should eventually turn positive.

Sen English: The legislature is tasked with looking at the whole problem. Doesn't want the silo effect. For DOH, the mandate may be health, but the overall goal is general prevention and eradication. For funding, we need to come up with something new. Look at the TAT and dedicated tourism funding. We haven't gotten the buy-in from the industry here. The only time they paid attention was when there was a dengue scare, and the media said it would be billions of dollars lost. We need to create a dialogue between this council and the tourism industry. They get \$71M annual dedicated funding, and part of that should go towards this. Maybe we start by inviting tourism officials to attend council meetings and asking them how they can help.

Sen Nishihara: Sat for chair of tourism years back. The discussion always comes back to the TAT. Hoteliers say they need more money for promotions. We don't talk about the other side, what makes this a beautiful place to come to. We need to have that discussion. The counties get a certain amount, but they need it for parks, etc. The legislature can be doing more to pressure the tourist industry to come to the table. There is no other large source of money available.

Sen English: 1% of the CIP in the state goes towards the arts. It's a big pot of money. What is the biggest canvas that Hawai'i has? The outdoors. Could we get a shaving from them voluntarily? If not, legislatively?

Carl: UH can help. What is needed is eyes and ears in the field to detect invasives. CTAHR and cooperative extension can help with this. We have trained agricultural experts around the state. If new species are identified, that information can be sent out to CTAHR staff and trainees so that they can be on the lookout.

Ford: DOT hasn't been involved in a lot of invasive species issues over the past few years. DOA reps under the Abercrombie administration came to talk to us. Then I got appointed to this council, so we are more engaged. We want to be able to communicate to all agencies. We have spent a lot of time with federal agencies, DOA. Talking about the manifest program this year, trying to get people to understand the importance. Talked with Josh and Jackie about funding situation. TAT money is well spent by bringing new routes here, but protecting the environment here is important. We recently found mosquitoes, bat at airport recently. Gary's idea is good. We need a dedicated funding source.

Gary: There are very few pots of money out there that haven't been tapped. There seems to be a political principal that taxes are bad. I think we need to look at what's available, but that's not the whole picture. We may need more. Increasing current taxes, like the barrel tax, or finding new money for this, is important. In my experience, people are willing to pay taxes if it is collected fairly, spent wisely, not wasted, and there are results. We can deliver that.

Christy: CGAPS is on board and will discuss interagency Incident Command System possibilities at their May 15 meeting. Has contacted staff from a variety of agencies, and encourages council members to attend if interested.

9. HISC Project Presentation: Hawai'i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment

Chuck: Current number of species scored: 1278 (79 in 2012). Recent use: LICH has adopted WRA as part of their code of conduct for landscaping plants. Kaheawa Wind project advice on utilizing non-invasive species. Requests from the public. Maui County Planning Plan has adopted a plan to only use low risk plants in county construction. State government use by DLNR: IHOP promotion, quick turn around of WRA scores for species included in promotional bookmarks. Sheri Mann looking at low risk pine species that could be used for local Christmas tree

production to reduce the introduction of associated pests with mainland imported trees. ISCs use the WRA as well: MISC has utilized it to determine which species will be priorities. Federal govt: NRCS is interested in promoting hybrids of *Leucaena* spp. and utilized WRA in developing plans. International use: countries with similar climates around the Pacific use WRA scores. WRA scores go to the Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk project, are requested by Pacific Invasives Initiative. Website: hpwra.org. Plant Pono website is coming soon.

Russell: Do you work with the biofuel industry?

Chuck: Yes, we've worked with biofuels in the past.

Russell: What is the legal association with this?

Chuck: None. In Australia they have regulation tied to weed risk, but not here.

Josh: WRA scores could be used in the HISC admin rules, with potential regulatory impacts.

10. Public comments

Penny Levin: Chemical applicants aren't available for use on taro. Help us pull together a plan that could deal with that. Suriname cherry was once proposed for import. CGAPS requested it not be allowed but it came anyway. Grasses that have been allowed in end up in taro farms. On funding: Suggest a check box on the ballot to contribute money to conservation. Wouldn't be a tax, would be voluntary. Also could try approaching Dept of Homeland Security- food and environment are our homeland security. On apple snails: Partnering with Pacific Biodeisel. Looking at alternative uses for coal products. Invasive species could become biochar. Maui County has an environmental office. We need to make it permanent.

Randy Bartlett: Going back to how we grow the funding available. Natural Area Reserve funding for East Maui Watershed Partnership has gone from \$500k to \$100k in recent years. Due in part to there being 11 Watershed Partnerships now instead of 1. What about 1% for the environment? DLNR should get 1% of the state budget.

Phyllis Robinson, Former chair of Board of Water Supply for Maui: Asked if there been an incident worldwide where there is a state funded partnership with the venison industry to cull deer herds (no one knew of one). Wants to explore that possibility to work with USDA inspectors to FDA certify meet for public consumption. Thinking that they could cull deer, sell meat, subsidize the control cost, provide meat to food banks.

Rob Parsons: Thanks the council and audience. Thought on funding: recently participated in the TNC's Palau exchange. They have a green fee for leaving the country. We should have that so that visitors are contributing to protecting the resources they enjoy. To provide a recap of axis deer: The County Council has put forward a budget amendment for \$150k for axis deer. It didn't pass, but it's not dead. Would explore the idea of getting professional hunters and a venison program going. That plan originally pointed the finger at the state to come up with a plan, and that's the posture we've been in. Some council members have said that not one dollar of county money will be spent until the state contributes. There is still education to do on the problem.

Sen English: We cannot charge a green fee to enter or leave the state. That's a federal issue. Is it worth working with the tourism industry to do a voluntary program where guests can check a box on their hotel bill where they can contribute a dollar or two? Do we start with lodging associations, tourism boards? We could prove that it works on Maui, then demonstrate to the council that this could work statewide.

Teya: Thanks the council for coming. Does not want to complain. Your vision and leadership is necessary. DLNR took a great lead this year on trying to find new funds for watershed protection. DOA made a great effort to secure Mach Fukada and the Kahului inspector positions. We are not only here to ask, we're also here to help. Concerned about vector control. We have outreach staff that can help disseminate messages.

11. Adjournment: 12:19pm