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Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

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HAWAI'I INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL Meeting Notes

Monday, June 27, 2011

3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 312, 415 South Beretania St, Honolulu, HI

1. The Honorable Governor Neil Abercrombie called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

This is, literally, the most important issue. The natural history of Hawai'i, with nothing being here when the islands came out of the sea. In the competition for existence, choices have to be made, or they will be made for us. The fact that we have so many directors, leaders and what you can bring to bear, I'm going to work with you to figure out a broad-based plan and then act on it. Youth conservation corp operations, it occurred to me that we need to have our own future botanists, agriculturists, foresters, agronomists, they have to be out there exposed, from the time they have their first fieldtrips, until they are adults, we must be on-top of this. William and Russell will be co-chairs, department heads will work with them, and we must prevent invasive species and deal with the ones we have. I've seen the trees and ground stripped by deer and goats, it is just their nature, but we must do something to keep their populations in check. We must get more personnel for inspections, I'm going to sign HB1568 to create inspection facilities at airports and harbors.

My New Day Plan says what this administration wants to do with respect to invasive species. In addition, I would like to increase support for the arboretum, and we have tremendous capacity to move forward. You can count on me for helping you move this forward.

2. Introductions of HISC: William Aila, DLNR; Russell Kokubun, HDOA to co-chair HISC. Gary Gill, HDOH Deputy Director for Environmental Health; Sylvia Yuen, UH College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources Dean; Ford Fuchigami, Deputy Director for DOT. Participants: Alapaki Nahale-a, Director, DHHL; Keali'i Lopez, Director, DCCA; Major General Darryll Wong, Adjutant General's Office; Rep. Kawakami, Kaua'i.
3. Opening remarks by Governor Abercrombie
4. Establishment of administrative rules for managing the HISC program (History from the Overview of the HISC doc)
Paul Conry, DOFAW: Presentation of request for permission to draft administrative rules for the implementation of the HISC program. The rules would be presented to the HISC for promulgation and the public process. Included in this

would be the basic operating procedures for the council. The administrative rule would require DLNR (as the administrative agency) to work with each agency, and would not supersede other existing rules. Thus far, we have been functioning under DLNR's rules.

Lopez: When would a draft be ready?

Conry: We should be able to come back with a draft within this calendar year. The public process will take some time beyond that.

Gill: I'm wondering what sorts of power this would give agencies?

Conry: It would lay out the process for requesting permission and entering private property to control listed species. On some current lists, we do not have the ability to access private property to control species. It is a powerful administrative tool

Kokubun: It all comes down to money. I think this is one of the most important functions of a council. Through this tool, we can emphasize an area or make it all the same. It allows us to move forward.

Moved by R. Kokubun, seconded by S. Yuen.

5. Update on current invasive species issues

We will be providing an update on some of the current invasive species issues. We'll give you a bit of background, and in most cases will provide a recommendation for the council so that we can move forward to dealing with these issues.

a. Brown tree snake interdiction program

Mike Pitzler, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service--Wildlife Services: In 1993, we started on Guam working on the brown tree snake issue. In 1999 there was a federal earmark to start interdiction work on Guam. This year, earmarks were ended. This would have resulted in a program shutdown on Oct. 1. In the past day, I have been given the ability to direct-charge DoD and DOI for administering inspection costs. We are under contract to do BTS work until Sept. 30 of this year. We will submit our financial documents (with the additional costs) to DoD and DOI and see if they are able to pay. The Guam buildup has been moved back, which will give us additional time to get our inspection services on steady ground.

Yuen: Does the government of Guam assist in the inspection?

Pitzler: No, they fund Guam species protection, but transport has become a federal issue.

Pitzler: In the 7 years before we started inspection, there were snakes arriving in Hawai'i. Every year, we intercept between 9,000 and 12,000 snakes each year from the perimeter of the 5 major ports of exits (airport, seaports, and important fence lines). We get maybe 12 per year in cargo, but these are the ones that have gotten past all our other measures. The number of snakes we remove are miniscule compared to the snake population on Guam. Acetaminophen is a toxicant that can knock back the snake population island-wide, or at least in the forests around the perimeters of ports. There are no effective natural predators. It invaded the entire island within 20 years and knocked out 9 of 11 forest birds. We don't want it here.

Conry: I also worked on Guam, and I have to add that our impacts would include the electrical system, as they climb power lines like trees, and they also impact agriculture, the poultry industry, etc.

b. *Albizia (Falcataria moluccana)*

Jan Schipper, Big Island Invasive Species Committee

The issue of albizia came up as a safety concern for human welfare. Legislators were concerned that the albizia, if fallen (as albizia is prone to doing), could block emergency access and roadways, hospital access, harm utilities, and other concerns. One issue is that County government has very little ability to address this problem on private property. Agencies are not able to control or assist with anything more than branch trimming because it is not on any invasive species list.

Conry: Albizia is an aggressive invader. On Kaua‘i, it was only present in one watershed, and now it is spreading island-wide. We are requesting that Albizia be added to a HISC Invasive Species list once there are Administrative Rules for creating a list.

Gill: Where does this end? I have albizia, it grows everywhere, it has been planted purposefully for biofuel, they make canoes out of it. How many other trees that have been introduced to Hawai‘i, how is it different to any of the other ones?

Conry: If you look at the HISC-supported Weed Risk Assessment scores for albizia compared to many other plants, it is invasive and have more of a tendency to spread, more than eucalyptus. For DLNR decision on biomass plantings, we have made decisions based on the Weed Risk information. There are species of eucalyptus that do not have the qualities that make them invasive or prone to be invasive.

Gill: I’m not sure what this means. If I’m a biomass company and I’ve got albizia (or other HISC listed species) on my plantation, can agencies come and take it out?

Conry: This would need to be worked out in the Administrative Rules. It would come back to the HISC for vetting.

Gill: Biologists don’t call this albizia.

Martin: It has been renamed, this is a common name. The request is to make an invasive species list to utilize the statute, which lays out the procedure and authorities to access private property. This species is not on any control list (it does not fit the criteria or intent of the Noxious Weed List, and there are no other existing lists that species like this could be added to), and all of the existing lists do not have mechanisms for notifying and accessing private property.

Conry: (Recommendation (from text))

Council: Moved, seconded, passed.

c. ‘Ōhi‘a rust (*Puccinia psidii*)

Carol Okada, Hawaii Department of Agriculture Plant Quarantine Branch: The reason we had an interim rule on ‘ōhi‘a rust was because we didn’t have enough. It is a rust fungus that spreads short distance by air.

Rob Hauff, Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources: This disease came into Hawaii in 2003, it devastated a non-native myrtle family tree. It has moved around the world on myrtle family plants & it has different strains that affect different myrtle family plants to varying degrees. We worked with a university in Brazil and have done genetic work to look at the threat of the strains of this disease to Hawaii’s forest of ‘ōhi‘a. The potential is there for new/additional strains of this disease to come in on imported myrtle family plants poses a very real risk to ‘ōhi‘a forests.

Okada: We will be going through rulemaking this year to restrict the importation of myrtle family plants into Hawai‘i. We are starting early on outreach to get public support for the

restriction and for using low-risk locally grown alternatives. The interim rule was contentious, with a lot of push-back from florists and flower-sellers.

Gill: What is the impact to native myrtle family plants? I'm pretty happy if it only impacts the rose apple and guava.

Hauff: We see it more on seedlings of 'ōhi'a, where they have to use fungicides. It is endangering native Hawaiian *Eugenia koolauensis*, some of the last populations in the wild. We are worried about multiple strains and adapting of the existing strains with the input of new genetic materials.

Okada: We are requesting HISC support for the establishment of a rule to restrict importation of plants in the Myrtle family into Hawai'i. We also recommend that the Council support a program promoting locally grown alternatives to high-risk imports, including members of the Myrtaceae family.

Lopez: You will still go through the rulemaking process?

Okada: Yes.

Council: Yuen moved, Kokubun seconded, motion carried.

d. Mosquitoes

Okada: We would like the HISC working groups and HISC to work together to address our lack of capacity to prevent and control mosquitoes. We have 6 species of mosquitoes, there are more than 100 species that exist in the world. We would like to see how we can work together to look at what kind of capacity there is to do monitoring an emergency response.

Okada: (recommendation from text)

Gill: We used to have 35 or so Vector Control staff on Oahu to work on mosquitoes, rats, mice, etc. We now have 5 on Oahu, one worker, two entomologists, and two inspectors. By the time we discover and identify a malaria mosquito, a response won't be possible. We would like to hear more about what you are hoping to accomplish. There is a need, but I'm not sure what the likelihood of restoring 30 positions is. Monitoring program around points of entry makes sense, but is different from what we used to have.

Okada: DHS Customs and Border Protection & USDA APHIS will now let us know if they see mosquitoes, and we can take action, but this is not enough.

Kokubun: We should amend the recommendation. We want some feedback from the working groups & must do it in a measured way.

Suggested Recommendation:

The HISC supports the Working Groups to assist the HDOA & Health to develop a strategy to prevent and monitor the introduction of new mosquito species in Hawai'i.

Council: Motion to approve recommendation as listed above proposed, Kokubun, Gill seconded, carried.

e. Axis deer

Schipper: For us in addressing the situation, it is really highlighting the problem of interisland introduction of pests. We have been doing surveys and have confirmed evidence of deer on the island. We are now trying to figure out how many there are. We don't know how many were brought or where they were introduced to. It is illegal to do this, so our information is shaky to

start. The fact that it has the potential to cause great damage to agriculture on Hawai'i island, native species, and human health. We are looking into new technology to detect, but then we will need some policy issues addressed to control or eradicate it.

Conry: At this point, the staff is recommending that this be aggressively pursued as an eradication project. (text from doc, plus bring it back to the council to review)

Kokubun: We are looking at two phases, the incipient population on Hawai'i Island, and part two would be the more administrative part, statutory and rule changes. Since the legislature is not in session, would the working groups provide proposed legislation and administrative rules for the HISC to advance to the legislature?

Conry: Yes, the staff could pursue this.

Kokubun: Do you have the resources necessary to eliminate the incipient population?

Conry: No, but we are hoping that this will be brought back to the working groups and the council for additional support. DOFAW has identified \$125K to put towards this effort, but it will require more than that.

Ford: Why would you do it only for Hawai'i, not for Moloka'i, Maui, Lānai?

Conry: The other islands are beyond eradication. The Big Island population can be removed preventing the cost of damage. With widespread pests, we do manage by looking at what can be done, like fencing, and that's what we prioritize our money for.

Lopez: It is also in the culture of those islands, the community is not as engaged with this species on Hawai'i island. I think you would have a problem if you were to try this on other islands.

Ford: These deer have become a safety issue on Moloka'i, but I understand the prioritizing. I understand that

Gill: Do you have the authority to eradicate axis deer on Hawai'i?

Conry: Only on state land, not on private land.

Gill: Do you have the authority to eradicate any species on private land?

Conry: Snakes are the exception. Maybe some species on the HDOA list.

Gill: What can this council do to help? Ask the private landowners to participate?

Conry: I think the HISC could help by passing our recommendation.

Schipper: We have not yet been denied access, but there is a contingent of people that would very much like to import everything.

Kokubun: In terms of the strategy implementation, we can expect that?

Naale-a: I was on the plane and overheard people talking about how much they want the axis deer, and that the smugglers are heroes. I think our work on the HISC is important, and I would like to see this move forward.

Council: Motion to approve Yuen, Gill second, with caveat that it be brought back the council for recommendations, and that the HISC budget address these needs.

General recommendation: Staff will come back with a position paper of support.

6. HISC recommendations for statements of support and administrative actions

7. Future HISC meetings

Atwood: The Statute calls for the HISC to meet at least twice per year. (Review working group meeting schedule), At each of these working group meetings, project proposals are be submitted

for discussion. The working group chairs then meet with the Resources WG to balance the request for submittal to the HISC.

Since the next HISC meeting would be the approval of the budget, we are proposing that a briefing be scheduled to discuss the HISC, the projects and budgets so that your agencies can participate in funding requests. Alternately, we can meet with you in small group meetings.

Kokubun: Work with William, myself to schedule a briefing, and additional meetings for folks that can't make a common date.

Atwood: Scheduling a council meeting for budget.

Kokubun: that should be far enough in advance, you should try to schedule as many people as possible.

8. Announcements

9. Adjournment

For information, please contact:

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