
MINUTES

Forest Genetics Council—Meeting December 13, 2006

Location: Vernon – Executive Airport Plaza Hotel, Richmond

Attending

Councilors: Sally Aitken, Mike Carlson, Dale Draper (Chaired meeting), John Elmslie, Chris Hawkins, Joe LeBlanc, Bruce MacNicol, John Phillips, Alvin Yanchuk.

Regrets: Frank Gundersen, Gary Hogan, Scott King, Mike Madill, Al McDonald

Others: Roger Painter, Keith Thomas, Jack Woods,

Guests: Bill Bougeois, Dave Kolotelo, Charlie Cartwright, David Reid

Summary of Action Items

Responsibility	Action
Dale Draper	Discuss with Jim Snetsinger expectations and process regarding first nations representation on Council. Dale will also discuss with Bill Bougeois Forest Science Board experience in obtaining FN representation that is effective and provides a voice for FN as a broad group. Make a presentation on the FGC structure and program to the Forest Science Board on May 28 th
GCTAC	Develop a gene conservation plan for the March 14 th , 2006, FGC meeting that will include recommendations for operational and research activities, responsibilities, budgets, and performance measure(s).

Summary of Motions Carried

1. **MOVED** (Carlson / Elmslie): Minutes of the meeting held October 2 and 3, 2006 are hereby approved. CARRIED
2. **MOVED** (Aitken / Carlson): That Council approves the proposed UNBC Post-Doctoral Fellowship positions and the currently budgeted funding of \$150,000 for the 2006/07 fiscal year. CARRIED.
3. **MOVED** (Draper / Yanchuk): That the report entitled “*Summary of seed and seed orchard need analysis for Seed Planning Units impacted by Mountain Pine Beetle*” and recommendations in the report are accepted. CARRIED.
4. **MOVED** (Draper / Aitken): That orchard development recommendations proposed for SelectSeed Company Ltd. be forwarded to the SelectSeed Board of Directors with the recommendation that they add these new orchards to the SelectSeed Business Plan for 2007/08. CARRIED.
5. **MOVED** (Draper / Elmslie): That Council approve turning back a total of \$180,000 to FIA as soon as possible and that Council further approved \$20,000 in extra funding for breeding-program projects. CARRIED.

Meeting called to order at 9:30 A.M., December 13, 2006

1. Adoption of agenda

Agenda adopted as presented.

2. Approval of Minutes

1. **MOVED** (Carlson / Elmslie): Minutes of the meeting held October 2 and 3, 2006 are hereby approved. **CARRIED**

3. Introduction of new FGC members:

Dale Draper introduced and welcomed Bruce MacNicol, John Phillips, and Joe LeBlanc; new industry members to the Forest Genetics Council.

4. Overview of the Forest Science Program and Forest Science Board – Dr. Bill Bougeois

Dr. Bougeois provided an overview of the Forest Science Program, Forest Science Board, committee structures, and programs. This information is available at "<http://www.cortex.ca/fia-fsp/abofor.html>"

Bill spoke of the need for discussion between the FSB and the FGC on responsibilities for genetics research, and also on matters of governance. A reciprocal presentation by the FGC to the FSB is planned. (see item 14.1 under New Business)

5. Old business and action items from the October 2 & 3, 2006 meeting

- a. **UNBC genetics capacity:** Jack Woods and Alvin Yanchuk outlined final discussions with UNBC. The plan is to advertise for two Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) positions in the areas of forest quantitative and population genetics. FGC support is planned at \$150,000 per year for 3 years. Final topic areas will need to be worked out between the candidates, UNBC, and the FGC as PDF recruitment proceeds. It is impractical to narrowly define projects prior to recruitment, as the pool of people with the needed skills is very limited. Alvin and Jack will continue to work with UNBC.
2. **MOVED** (Aitken / Carlson) : That Council approves the proposed UNBC Post-Doctoral Fellowship positions and the currently budgeted funding of \$150,000 for the 2006/07 fiscal year. **CARRIED**.
- b. **Genome BC GE³LS initiative:** Alvin Yanchuk provided a status update on this Genome BC/UBC project. Survey interviews have now been completed and data are being analyzed. Contacts were made with a broad range of stakeholders, including NGO's and first nations. Some difficulty was experienced getting informed input due to the technical complexity of the issue. Further information will be provided as interview data are summarized.
- c. **CONFORGEN:** Jack Woods provided an overview of the national forest gene conservation initiative being led by the CFS from New Brunswick. Jack is on the CONFORGEN Steering Committee. Connection of this initiative to the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers criteria and indicators is considered important. BC is a leader among Canadian provinces in gene conservation. CONFORGEN is in an early stage of development and further report will be brought to future meetings.

- d. **FIA land-base investment tree improvement projects:** The FIA land-base program will no longer support tree improvement projects. A small number of projects are in this category (<\$40,000 per year), and all are associated with breeding programs. It was agreed that these will be managed in future years through breeding program business planning.

6. Seed needs, MPB, and seed orchard expansions.

Jack presented the report on seed orchard expansion needs; *“Summary of seed and seed orchard need analysis for Seed Planning Units impacted by Mountain Pine Beetle”* (report sent prior to meeting). The report, and its recommendations for the following seed orchard developments, were discussed at length.

- SPU 21 Fdi Nelson 400-1000m - 500 ramets (MoFR interest)
- SPU 39 Fdi East Kootenay 7000-1400m - 400 ramets (MoFR interest)
- SPU 41 Fdi Prince George 700-1000m - 600 ramets (SelectSeed Co.)
- SPU 50 Larch Nelson 1200-1800m - 50 ramet expansion of existing orchard (Kasdorf)
- SPU 10 Pli Thompson Okanagan 700-1400m - 4,000 ramets (MoFR interest)
- SPU 12 Pli Prince George 700-1200m - 10,000 ramets (MoFR interest for 5,000; SelectSeed for 5,000; VSOC interested in collaboration with SelectSeed)
- SPU 16 Pli Thompson Okanagan 1400-1600m - 1,000 ramets (SelectSeed Co.)

3. **MOVED** (Draper / Yanchuk): That the report titled *“Summary of seed and seed orchard need analysis for Seed Planning Units impacted by Mountain Pine Beetle”* and recommendations in the report are accepted. CARRIED.

4. **MOVED** (Draper / Aitken): That orchard development recommendations proposed for SelectSeed Company Ltd. be forwarded to the SelectSeed Board of Directors with the recommendation that they add these new orchards to the SelectSeed Business Plan for 2007/08. CARRIED.

7. ITAC update

Mike Carlson provided Council with an update of the Northern and Southern Species Committee meetings held November 1 and 2, 2006, and the ITAC meeting held November 3. Information covered included breeder progress reports and plans, seed orchard updates, and OTIP project eligibilities. Substantial time was spent discussing seed needs and possible seed orchard expansions based on information prepared by Jack Woods.

CTAC and coastal species committee meetings were scheduled for early December, but had to be postponed due to severe weather. They will be held early in 2007.

8. Gene Conservation program update and recommendations:

Sally Aitken provided an overview of the history and programs developed at the FGC-supported UBC Centre for Forest Gene Conservation. Projects discussed included cataloguing the conservation status of 50 indigenous tree species, strategies for conservation, climate change forecasts, evaluation of the ability of species and population to adapt to climate change, and characterization of the patterns of genetic variation in conifers.

Dave Kolotelo, Chair of the Gene Conservation TAC, reviewed the GCTAC meeting of November 17, 2006. The GCTAC feels that the Gene Conservation subprogram of Council has reached the point where some operational activities are warranted and needed. Discussions explored future directions

and activities for forest tree gene conservation efforts, with focus on operational activities associated with gene conservation (*in situ* and *ex situ*). A preliminary matrix of research and operational activities was presented, with responsibilities assigned to the various activities.

Two motions from the GCTAC meeting were brought forward to the FGC. One to establish an FTE in the MoFR to deal with operational Gene Conservation issues, and the other to provide a \$30,000 annual allocation for *ex situ* conservation seed collections that will be added to the provincial seed bank.

Council acknowledged these motions, and accepted a recommendation that the GCTAC should develop a plan that will address the following points:

- clearly define gene conservation
- clearly articulate conservation objectives
- suggest a performance measure(s) for gene conservation, and
- re-define the structure and delivery of the gene conservation program, including responsibilities

The Gene Conservation TAC was asked to develop the plan for the March 14, 2006 meeting.

9. FGC Mid-Year program report

The FGC mid-Year report was distributed prior to the meeting. This presentation was cancelled due to lack of time. No comments were made on the report.

10. Breeding program; project requests

Alvin Yanchuk reviewed Breeding program priorities to year end. He has asked for approximately \$20,000 to cover work between now and year-end for the following projects;

- Kalamalka spruce weevil trial thinning (\$8K),
- MPB seed pest analysis (\$4K), and
- gene archives maintenance at the Cowichan Lake Research Station (\$8K).

Based on this discussion, and on the earlier budget update presented by Roger Painter, Council agreed that \$180,000 should be released to FIA as soon as possible to give FIA administrators the opportunity to re-allocate the fund.

5. **MOVED** (Draper / Elmslie): That Council approve turning back a total of \$180,000 to FIA as soon as possible and that Council further approve \$20,000 in extra funding for breeding-program projects. **CARRIED.**

11. Western Hemlock Breeding program update

Charlie Cartwright (MoFR Research Branch breeder for western hemlock and Abies) presented an overview of the Hw breeding and genecology research program from its origins to present. Other researchers involved in Hw research have been Mike Meagher, Jack Woods, and John King. Focus has been on stem volume gains. The Hw program is at a crossroads, as annual planting has dropped from over 4 million per year to about 1 million per year. In addition, the stage of selections and progeny testing is such that activities can be reduced for a period of time without loss to either current gains or significant loss of future opportunities. Seed orchards are well established with gains of about 15% and rising. Orchards will continue to operate. Should interest in the planting and management of Hw increase,

breeding activities could be scaled up. Charlie's time will be redirected from Hw work to Abies and other projects in the next few years.

Council thanked Charlie for his work on the Hw program and for the overview.

12. FGC membership

Council reviewed a letter from Chief Forester, Jim Snetsinger asking Council to "complete a fulsome review of its membership structure with a view to the changing landscape of forest tenure holders in BC and the emerging new relationship with first nations". The time frame requested is 12 months (complete by December, 2007). Discussion ensued on the Forest Science Board approach of proactively recruiting first nations members. Community forests and woodlots are also tenure holders who may be considered. The difficulty of finding individuals who represent their constituencies, have the needed experience, and are willing to contribute their time becomes more problematic with multiple small tenures.

It was also pointed out that Council has a poor gender balance, and this is worth considering in recruitment efforts.

Action Item: Dale Draper will discuss with Jim Snetsinger expectations and process regarding first nations representation on Council. Dale will also discuss with Bill Bougeois Forest Science Board experience in obtaining effective FN representation that provides a voice for FN as a broad group.

13. Gene Resource Management Challenge Dialogue

This item was deferred due to lack of time. An update was provided with meeting handouts. The first workshop to present results from a questionnaire to the community of practice will be held in January, 2007.

14. New Business

1. **Forest Science Board:** Dale Draper will make a presentation on the FGC structure and program to the Forest Science Board on May 28th.
2. **Seed Pricing:** Dale Draper informed Council that the MoFR will be reviewing it's orchard-seed pricing, and that input on pricing is welcome. Dale emphasized that the MoFR is not seeking to be a leader pricing orchard seed. More information will be brought to future FGC meetings. John Elmslie pointed out that seed pricing needs to reflect the cost of production, and that FGC decisions can impact orchard production costs and ultimately seed costs.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:00 PM.

THE NEXT FGC MEETING WILL BE HELD MARCH 14, 2007.

Minutes prepared by:

Jack Woods, FGC Program Manager; Roger Painter, Tree Improvement Branch, and Keith Thomas, Tree Improvement Branch

