

MINUTES

Forest Genetics Council – Meeting March 21, 2012

Meeting held at Tree Improvement Branch offices, 727 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC

Attending: Brian Barber (Chair), Larry Gardner, Patti Kagawa, Scott King, Tim Lee, Joe LeBlanc, Kerry McGourlick, John Mitchell, Annette van Niejenhuis, Dan Peterson, Barrie Phillips, Raoul Wiart, Gernot Zemanek

Regrets: Rob Guy

Others: Darrell Wood, Jack Woods

Guests: Lee Charleson, Susan Zedel

Action Items

Responsibility	Action
Annette, Barrie, Jack	Revise the FGC Achievement Award criteria and send to FGC members for an email vote on the following motion: <i>(van Niejenhuis / Lee) The FGC Achievement Award criteria, as revised, are hereby accepted.</i>
Lee Charleson	Further comments on the CBST Project Charter and associated 2-page communication document will be accepted by Lee until April 10, 2012, and Lee will send a revised version of the CBST Project Charter to the CTAC and ITAC for comment and information.
Conflict-of-Interest Committee	A committee (Raoul, Barrie, Annette, Tim, Jack) will prepare conflict-of-interest guidelines for FGC review at the June 2012 meeting. These guidelines will define conflict, identify the role of the Chair of various FGC subcommittees in managing conflict-of-interest, and provide guidelines for members of the FGC and FGC committees.
Jack, Council members	Seed planning unit rankings will be updated in advance of the September 2012 FGC meeting. Jack will send out the current priority ranking table and re-populate data. Council members will provide input to Jack.
OTIP Eligibility Committee	A committee of Tim, Annette, Darrell Wood, David Reid, and Jack will review in two stages orchard redundancy, eligibility when significant amounts of seed are in storage, and the type of activities that are eligible for OTIP support. Stage 1 will be to return a discussion at the June FGC meeting of the principles related to the OTIP subprogram and how it supports FGC objectives. Stage 2 will be to develop specific guidelines to be followed in the 2013/14 OTIP call for proposals.
Jack	Prepare a letter from the FGC to Jim Sutherland by March 25, 2012 recommending LBIS Tree Improvement Program budget allocations.
Jack	Poll FGC members to find a date for the June 2012 FGC meeting.

Summary of Motions:

1. **MOVED** (van Niejenhuis / Gardner): Minutes of the meeting held December 14, 2011 are hereby approved. CARRIED.
2. **MOVED** (McGourlick / Zemanek): The FGC hereby agrees to act as a “Champion” for the Climate-Based Seed Transfer project. CARRIED.
3. **MOVED** (McGourlick / van Niejenhuis): The SelectSeed Business Plan for 2012/13 is hereby approved with a modification to increase cash reserves by an estimated \$200,000. CARRIED.
4. **MOVED** (Lee / LeBlanc): The budget presented in the following table, totaling \$3.5 million is hereby accepted and will be recommended to the Provincial Chief Forester. CARRIED.

Meeting called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Brian Barber (Ministry Co-Chair)

1. **Agenda:** Some items on the agenda were re-ordered.
2. **Old Business and Action Items from December 14, 2011**
 The following action items were reviewed and accepted as presented.

Summary of action items and progress from the December 21, 2011 FGC meeting

Responsibility	Action requested	Action taken
Jack	Request input from the Biotechnology Steering Committee on structuring of biotechnology support for FGC objectives.	Done
Jack	Lead printing of about 100 copies of the FGC 2010/11 Annual Report and distribution to interested people.	Done
Jack	Conduct an email vote by FGC members on acceptance of the revised Genetic Conservation plan on January 30, 2012.	Done; accepted
Darrell	Update FGC mailing list with email addresses.	Done
Jack	Include cost and revenue projections for the Fdi TO high orchard in the SelectSeed Business Plan to be presented to Council in March.	Done
Bylaw committee	Complete edits to draft bylaws and lead a vote by email among FGC members on acceptance of the bylaws.	Done; accepted
Dave Kolotelo	Accept comments on the new Genetic Conservation plan until January 13, 2012. A revised plan will be distributed to FGC members by January 23, 2012.	Done
Lee Charleson	Distribute the current draft of the Climate-Based Seed Transfer project charter to FGC and STTAC members for input in advance of the March 14, 2012 FGC meeting.	Done
Annette van Neijenhuis, Barry Phillips, Jack Woods	Develop criteria to use when nominating and choosing people for the FGC Achievement Award..	Underway; Draft prepared

3. Approval of December 14, 2011 minutes:

MOVED (van Niejenhuis / Gardner): Minutes of the meeting held December 14, 2011 are hereby approved. **CARRIED.**

4. Updates

a. FGC bylaws: Jack reported that new bylaws were accepted by Council through an email vote and went to Jim Snetsinger for ratification on March 1, 2012. This was Jim’s last day before retirement, however, and they were not ratified. Brian will ask Jim Sutherland, acting Chief Forester, if he will sign a ratification letter, as Jim Snetsinger had verbally approved the bylaws prior to his retirement.

b. Genetic Conservation Plan: The new plan prepared by the GCTAC was accepted through an email vote of FGC members on January 30, 2012.

c. Alberta tree improvement update: Jack made a presentation to an Alberta group that is working to set up a new organizational structure that will allow them to access funds for carbon fixation activities. They were interested in how tree improvement activities are organized in BC. This initiative continues and has the potential to substantially expand Alberta’s forest genetics efforts.

5. FGC Achievement Award Criteria – Annette, Barrie, Jack

Draft criteria for the FGC Achievement Award were presented by Annette, Barrie and Jack. Minor edits were suggested to increase the emphasis on awardees contributing to FGC objectives.

ACTION ITEM: Annette, Barrie, and Jack will revise the FGC Achievement Award criteria and send to FGC members for an email vote on the following motion: *(van Niejenhuis / Lee) The FGC Achievement Award criteria, as revised, are hereby accepted.*

6. Climate-Based Seed Transfer project charter document – Lee Charleson

Lee provided an update on the status of the CBST Project Charter. It remains in draft form, but has been revised substantially since it was presented to Council in December. The purpose of the Charter is to clearly identify CBST as a MFLNRO climate-change strategy document and to demonstrate the value of the work. This has not yet been endorsed by the Provincial Chief Forester, as there was no time available for Jim Snetsinger prior to retirement. It is currently waiting for review by a new Chief Forester.

The FGC is currently identified in the Charter as a project sponsor. However, as funding is from the MFLNRO and not the FGC it was agreed that the FGC should be identified as a Champion and fill that role as the project advances.

MOVED (McGourlick / Zemanek): The FGC hereby agrees to act as a “Champion” for the Climate Based Seed Transfer project. **CARRIED.**

ACTION ITEM: Further comments on the CBST Project Charter and associated 2-page communication document will be accepted by Lee until April 10, 2012, and Lee will send a revised version of the CBST Project Charter to the CTAC and ITAC for comment and information.

7. Forest Practices Board review of seed transfer standards – Lee Charleson

Lee provided an overview of a soon-to-be released report from the Forest Practices Board on compliance with seed transfer standards set out in the Chief Forester Standards for Seed Use. In general, compliance is very high, with only 0.3% non-trivial seed transfer non-compliance. Smaller licensees generally have more difficulty with compliance than large licensees.

Brian placed these results in the context of moving seed transfer to a professional reliance system. Professionals would still require good information on which to base seed transfer decisions. In addition, they would have the ability to make decisions outside transfer guidelines when they have a solid rationale. There would be an obligation for them to document the basis for their seed transfer decisions; particularly when they are outside guidelines that would be supplied by the MFLRNO.

8. Potential conflict-of-interest on FGC subcommittees – Annette, Scott, Tim

Given the relatively small community of people who deliver GRM activities in BC, there is often the potential for conflict of interest in subcommittees discussing budget matters. While individuals on committees and subcommittee chairs are cognizant of this issue, it would be helpful to have guidelines prepared by the FGC for reference.

ACTION ITEM: A subcommittee (Raoul, Barrie, Annette, Tim, Jack) will prepare conflict-of-interest guidelines for FGC review at the June 2012 meeting. These guidelines will define conflict, identify the role of the Chair of various FGC subcommittees in managing conflict-of-interest, and provide guidelines for members of the FGC and FGC committees.

9. Breeding program succession issues – Brian and Barrie

Tree Improvement Branch efforts to hire staff in the Forest Genetics group (breeders and technicians) was reviewed. A government hiring freeze places limits on hiring, but options continue to be developed and taken to MFLNRO senior executive. Kerry pointed out that the FGC needs to challenge the Ministry regarding their priorities for hiring. Larry suggested that the cost of not hiring new people also needs to be considered (i.e. loss of expertise and past investment in tree breeding). TIB staff will continue to work on this issue and may come to the FGC for further support if needed. Council stressed that this is a critical issue for the long-term success of the provincial forest genetics program, as tree breeders provide expertise that guides many key parts of the program and this expertise can only be developed through years of on-the-job experience following appropriate post-graduate degree(s).

10. Update on meeting with Jim Snetsinger – Brian and Jack

On January 25, 2012 Brian and Jack met with Provincial Chief Forester, Jim Snetsinger. The following items were discussed:

- FGC bylaws; Jim agreed to ratify these (see item 4a above).
- Transitioning to a new Chief Forester when Jim retires: Jim advised that messaging on how CBST is key to maintaining productivity with climate change. Also stress the need for research and expertise in this area.
- Jim advised that the 2013/14 budget will go down relative to 2012/13.
- Regarding overall tree improvement program direction, Jim advised that Council should continue on the same path, as it has provided excellent leadership for over a decade.
- Jim also advised Council to pursue any means it can to help deal with succession issues, including using SelectSeed as a means of training people.

11. Subprogram budgets and business planning for 2012/13

The overall business planning and budget process was reviewed by Jack. At this point, all Council subcommittees have completed their budget development work and are prepared to pass along recommendations to Council. Brian advised that the LBIS Tree Improvement Program allocation will be at least \$3.5 million and could be higher. Some budget decisions on any incremental amounts may have to be made after this meeting.

More information on subprogram budgets is provided in material distributed in advance of the meeting. Table 1 (below) shows budget proposals by subprogram.

Tree Breeding:

Barrie Phillips provided an overview of the Tree Breeding budget and pointed out that there was an error in the budget that was found after meeting briefing materials were distributed. The total Breeding subprogram budget proposed is \$1.062 million, not \$1.122 million. It was proposed by CTAC that red alder be moved up to a level 2 program (first generation testing and seed orchard) from level 3 (genecology only). There was agreement to accept the breeding budget at \$1.062 million, including activities for red alder, however, Council requested a re-evaluation of program rankings to better understand the priority for alder and the addition of subprograms over time.

ACTION ITEM: Seed planning unit rankings will be updated in advance of the September 2012 FGC meeting. Jack will send out the current priority ranking table and re-populate data. Council members will provide input to Jack.

Operational Tree Improvement Program:

Darrell Wood provided an overview of the OTIP business planning process and the outcomes of coast and interior proposal submissions and reviews. The total for projects recommended by review committees is \$115,600 for the coast and \$468,400 for the interior (\$584,000 total), down from \$765,000 last fiscal year.

Annette and Tim (CTAC and ITAC chairs) raised issues about OTIP subprogram funding for orchards where the overall capacity significantly exceeds orchard size requirements outlined in the FGC Business Plan, and where there is a large amount of seed in storage. In addition, the issue of the type of orchard activities that are eligible for funding was raised. It was agreed by Council that a committee should be struck to review these issues and bring recommendations back to Council in two stages; the first stage will look at broad principles related to the OTIP subprogram and how it supports FGC objectives and direction with respect to orchards operating as self-supporting businesses. The second stage will develop specific guidelines to be followed in the 2013/14 OTIP call for proposals.

ACTION ITEM: A committee of Tim, Annette, Darrell Wood, David Reid, and Jack will review in two stages orchard redundancy, eligibility when significant amounts of seed are in storage, and the type of activities that are eligible for OTIP support. Stage 1 will be to return a discussion at the June FGC meeting of the principles related to the OTIP subprogram and how it supports FGC objectives. Stage 2 will be to develop specific guidelines to be followed in the 2013/14 OTIP call for proposals.

Genetic Conservation:

Process, projects, and budget proposals were presented by Jack for Dave Kolotelo, GCTAC chair.

Total budget recommended by the GCTAC for the Genetic Conservation subprogram is \$219,720, up from \$205,000 the previous year. This budget includes support for the ClimateBC modeling work at UBC; a model that is widely used for forest genetics work and is also being used for many other forestry and non-forestry applications. The budget presented is consistent with the genetic conservation plan approved by the FGC in December, 2011.

SelectSeed Ltd. business plan and budget

Jack presented a business plan for SelectSeed Ltd that was approved by the SelectSeed Board of Directors on March 5, 2012. SelectSeed is on track with long term financial projections to date, but production from lodgepole pine seed orchards that is lower than initially expected may reduce future revenue below earlier projections. Therefore, cash-flow projections have been re-worked. These reduced expectations will be incorporated into financial statements and cost-of-sales projections. The budget request in the SelectSeed Business Plan is \$240,000, however, this is dependent upon other activities Council may assign to SelectSeed.

Extension

On behalf of Diane Douglas, Jack presented the Extension TAC budget recommendation of \$28,000. This budget includes workshops, field days and several planned publications.

Cone and Seed Pest Management:

On behalf of PMTAC chair, Jim Corrigan, Jack presented the budget developed by the Pest Management TAC. The proposed budget for 2012/13 will focus on minor use pesticide trials to develop safer and better pesticide options for cone and seed insects. It will also continue several

ongoing projects and provide support for MFLNRO pest biologists. The total budget request is for \$112,500, down from \$130,000 the previous year.

Genecology and Seed Transfer

Lee Charleson presented the process and budget developed by the Seed Transfer TAC. Budget development went very smoothly this year, with a well organized plan received from the Forest Genetics group in the Tree Improvement Branch. Two proposals were received and the review committee recommended support for both. The total subprogram budget request is for \$544,531.

Genetic Resource Decision Support subprogram

Susan Zedel presented, on behalf of subprogram chair Guy Burdikin, a DSTAC budget of \$90,000. Two projects are proposed; both of which would be led by Tree Improvement Branch staff.

Applied Tree Improvement and Biotechnology subprogram

Jack presented the process and discussion of the committee that reviewed four proposals received under this subprogram. Three projects are recommended for funding, totaling \$289,260.

Overall budget options and recommendations

Following discussion on anticipated budget shortfalls in the 2013/14 fiscal year due to a reduction in government allocations to the LBIS fund, Council considered options to have SelectSeed reduce the draw from cash reserves and modify its budget to increase cash reserves through a larger transfer of funds in 2012/13. This would, in effect, pre-pay future draws and reduce future budget pressure.

MOVED (McGourlick / van Niejenhuis): The SelectSeed Business Plan for 2012/13 is hereby approved with a modification to increase cash reserves by an estimated \$200,000. **CARRIED.**

MOVED (Lee / LeBlanc): The budget presented in the following table, totaling \$3.5 million, is hereby accepted and will be recommended to the Provincial Chief Forester. **CARRIED.**

ACTION ITEM: Jack will prepare a letter from the FGC to Jim Sutherland by March 25, 2012 recommending LBIS Tree Improvement Program budget allocations.

Table 1. Budget requests and FGC recommendation by subprogram for 2012/13

Subprogram	2011/12	FGC recommended budget
Genetic Conservation	\$205,000	\$ 220,000
Tree Breeding	\$1,156,000	\$1,062,000
Operational Tree Imp. Prog.	\$765,000	\$584,000
SelectSeed Ltd.	\$440,000	\$540,000
Extension and Communication	\$20,000	\$28,000
Cone and Seed Pest Mgt.	\$130,000	\$112,500
Genecology and Seed Transfer	\$620,000	\$544,240
Genetic Resource Decision Sup.	\$60,000	\$90,000
Administration*	\$30,000	\$30,000
Applied Tree Impr. and biotechnology	\$137,000	\$289,260
Subtotal	\$3,563,000	\$ 3,500,000
TIB risk maangement	\$63,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000

12. New Business

Brian made the following announcements:

- a. A North West Seed Orchard Managers Association meeting will be held in Saanich and northwestern Washington State on June 26th to 28th.
- b. He will be visiting China this spring from June 7 to June 21 and will be meeting with people to discuss seed use and supply.
- c. Chris Walsh (MFLNRO Kalamalka Seed Orchard Manager) will be attending an International Union of Forest Research Associations meeting on seed orchards and tree breeding to be held in Turkey in June 2012.
- d. A tree will be planted at the Cowichan Lake Research Station in the summer of 2012 in honour of Jim Snetsinger.

Next meeting

The date of the June meeting will be re-scheduled.

ACTION ITEM: Jack will poll FGC members to find a date for the June 2012 FGC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jack Woods and Darrell Wood

