

Meeting held by conference call**July 6, 2011**

Attendees: Dave Kolotelo (chair), Sally Aitken, Charlie Cartwright, Andreas Hamann, Tory Stevens, Michael Murray, Tongli Wang, Jack Woods, Alvin Yanchuk

1. Welcome and opening remarks:

Charlie Cartwright was welcomed to the GCTAC. Jodie Krakowski's continued roll on GCTAC was explained by Dave. Officially she is still a member of the committee, but she may have limitations on attending meetings or conference calls.

2. Ex situ seed collection update:

Don Pigott was the successful bidder on a cone and seed collection contract for ex situ conservation collections. Crops are generally low this year, but he will make collections as crops and funds allow.

3. Action item from the Forest Genetics Council:

Council has requested a draft Genetic Conservation plan for review at its September 21, 2011 meeting, with revisions and a final draft by December, 2011. Discussion on an approach and content brought out many good points, including the following:

General:

- The plan put in place in 2007 needs to be revised as a shorter and higher-level document. The 2007 plan, which provides background, can be used as a reference document.
- Focus on priorities and scope
- Needs to link to FGC goals and objectives, and possibly recommend adjustments to these goals and objectives.
- Climate-change considerations should be included (see email from Sally on July 6, 2011)

Performance measures:

- The concept of a catalogue as a mechanism for compiling information on conservation status by species and geographic unit remains sound.
- The current catalogue format needs updating and change to recognize the need for different geographic units by species
- Species/geographic unit status can be recognized as (for example) not threatened, uncertain, threatened.
- Thresholds for the status will need definition.
- Reporting and performance measures can be a compilation of catalogue status for species and geographic units.

Mandate:

- Should include forest health
- Need to define actions in an applied sense
- Should reference performance indicators
- Should broadly define applied conservation actions for species/geographic units that are not secure.

Genetic Conservation definition:

- The following definition was accepted:

The conservation of forest-tree genetic resources is the combination of policies and actions that maintain the genetic diversity of tree species to provide economic value and environmental services for the present and future.

FGC objective:

- The objectives set out in the FGC Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 was considered okay for the present time. This definition is:
Adequately conserve the genetic diversity of key populations of all forest tree species native to BC by 2015, through a combination of in situ, ex situ, and inter situ conservation
- The word “adequately” will require definition as it is key to subsequent conservation actions.
- “key populations” will require definition as this phrase leads to the geographic breakdown of the conservation catalogue for each species.

Structure within the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR)

- Tree Improvement Branch (TIB) intends to continue to undertake the conservation role and will be reviewing how to allocate responsibilities.
- Charlie Cartwright will be working through the 2011/2012 budget activities put forward by Jodie Krakowski

Genotyping work proposed in the plan put forward by Jodie at the December, 2010 meeting:

- An internal TIB committee has been set up to review and carry out this work. This consisted of Michael Stoehr and Cheng-Yi Xie.
- It was stressed that one or two external people should be part of this committee. Sally Aitken offered to join it and make contributions to methods and strategy.
- TIB staff were asked to provide some details of projects for GCTAC review, as this has not yet been provided.

Action: Charlie and Alvin will provide genotyping project details to the GCTAC when available, and include Sally on the TIB committee guiding this work.

4. Species priorities:

- Comments put forward by Jodie Krakowski on the 2007 plan are considered appropriate. This will reduce the number of indigenous tree species from 50 to about 39.
- A core list of 39 can be further added to or subtracted from as considered appropriate as the final plan develops.
- The definition used by CAFGRIS and the CFS is a good starting point for developing a new indigenous tree species definition. Consistency with these efforts is desirable.
- The current species list should be kept until the new definition and list is fully developed and approved by the FGC. This may influence this years ex situ collections.

5. Linkages to other organizations and initiatives:

- Conservation mandates fall to other organizations (M. of Environment and Parks) and it is agreed that they need to be involved. This is unchanged from the 2007 plan.
- Some associations at the FGC level may be helpful in this regard; needs discussion by the FGC
- Link to COSEWIC can be useful (i.e. for whitebark pine). Point made that we need GCTAC members who will participate. These points need discussion in the revised plan.

6. Current efforts:

- Should be summarized, with reference to the 2007 plan.
- Should not be discussed in detail, as the new plan should remain short and to the point. Referencing other reports is preferred to providing detail.

7. Missing elements/gaps:

- Discussion on the current GC catalogue brought out the following points:
 - o The concept is sound and a catalogue in some form is needed.
 - o The new plan should define issues.
 - o Development of a new catalogue method or structure should be delayed until there has been adequate time to review the method to be used for further populating the catalogue with information.
 - o The need for applied categories (i.e. not threatened, uncertain, threatened) was reiterated.
 - o Need a clear statement on how the information in the catalogue is used (Tory pointed out that this information is helpful in the MOE development of a protected areas catalogue).
- The new plan needs to have a section on gaps.
 - o *Ex situ* data being worked on by Dave; not a gap at this time, but it will require continual updating.
 - o *Inter situ* data not considered to be a gap by Jodie, as the information is captured in Technical Report 54 and it shouldn't need updating for some time.
 - o *In situ* data will be the area needing most effort.

8. Next steps:

- The following actions were agreed upon:

Action: Dave will assign section of the new plan to committee members by July 12th as appropriate based on their knowledge and background. The following people agreed to help with development of the next plan – Sally Aitken, Alvin Yanchuk, Charlie Cartwright, Tory Stevens, Dave Kolotelo, Jack Woods. Sections will be returned to Dave by August 12th.

Action: Consolidation of sections of the plan will be led by Dave and Charlie, with help from Sally.

Minutes prepared by Jack Woods