
MINUTES of the Genetic Conservation Technical Advisory Committee

9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Thur., March 1, 2018
727 Fisgard Ave. Victoria and via Conference Call.

Members present:

Shane Ford (Chair), Pia Smets, Tongli Wang, Sally Aitken, Charlie Cartwright, Dave Kolotelo, Michael Murray, Alan Vyse

Member regrets:

Alvin Yanchuk, Andreas Hamann, Jun-Jun Liu, Tory Stevens

Others:

Brian Barber

Summary of Actions

1. Shane to update GCTAC on BC's response to Fed's whitebark pine recovery strategy (e.g. BC's recovery plan, CF guidance etc.), when known.
2. Tongli and Dave to update *in-situ* and *ex-situ* matrices & reports, respectively, for conference call/meeting to discuss FGC performance measure, progress and annual reporting – by end of May.
3. GCTAC meeting, with others, in fall 2018 to discuss species conservation priorities (couple with project progress reports). Suggested locations: Manning Park and Tree Seed Centre.
4. Shane to follow-up re membership, including potential rep from BC's Conservation Data Centre

1. Agenda

The agenda prepared for the meeting was review, amended and adopted.

2. Minutes Nov 8, 2017:

The draft minutes of the GCTAC meeting held at UBC on Nov 8, 2017 were circulated prior to the meeting.

Motion: The minutes of the GCTA meeting held on Nov. 8, 2017 are hereby approved.
Charlie/Sally. Carried

Review of Action items from Nov 8, 2017

1. Dave to contact Andy Bower, Pacific Forest Region, US Forest Service regarding the status of US *ex situ* seed conservation program.
Status: Dave contacted Andy. Links provided to publication *Ex situ gene conservation for conifers in the Pacific Northwest* at <https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/rmp/forest-genetics/publications/stclair.shtml> and National Program <https://www.fs.usda.gov/nsi/GeneticConservation.html> USDA Forest Service National Seed Lab (FSNSL) in Georgia. Some *ex situ* collections in Fort Collins.
2. Michael and Charlie to provide Don with a list of putatively resistant whitebark pine parents/populations to help guide future seed collections.
Status: List not complete. Dave interested if some provenances are also represented in *ex situ* collections. Michael, Charlie, Dave and Don to follow-up.

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3. Brian to post approved meeting minutes on GCTAC website
Status: Done
 4. Tongli to add National Parks and Reserves to the *in situ* gap analysis.
Status: Done
 5. GCTAC members encouraged to respond to the federal whitebark pine recovery strategy by Dec 17.
Status: Several comments submitted by members and others. BC concerns over protection of ‘critical habitat’ as the species’ habitat is not threatened, nor will species be less threatened if development activities are restricted. BC Govt will prepare recovery plan in response to Fed’s final strategy.

Action: Shane to update GCTAC on BC’s response to Fed’s whitebark pine recovery strategy (e.g. BC’s recovery plan, CF guidance etc.), when known.

5. Shane to meet with Pia to complete GCTAC chair transition.
Status: Completed. Shane and Brian met with Pia and Tongli on Nov. 29. Pia provided GCTAC records. Her leadership and contributions were also acknowledged, a ‘tree’ gift provided.

3. Conservation status report and performance measure

FGC’s conservation goal is to “Adequately conserve the genetic diversity of representative populations of all forest tree species native to BC by 2020, through a combination of *in situ*, *ex situ*, and *inter situ* conservation”.

The methodology for assessing tree species’ *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation status has evolved over time. The methodology has stabilized, so it would be timely to develop a performance measure for the FGC conservation goal, and/or propose a new goal for FGC’s next strategic plan 2020-2025.

Action: Tongli and Dave to update *in-situ* and *ex-situ* matrices & reports, respectively, for conference call/meeting to discuss FGC performance measure, progress and annual reporting – by end of May.

4. GCTAC Budget Summary and Recommendations

Pat Martin’s letter of January 12, 2018 to FGC TAC chairs (Re: Budget Targets and Business Planning Process for 2018/19) was reviewed.

This letter outlined FGC’s new business planning process and governance model that aligned TACs, budgets, and programs with FGC’s goals for conservation, resilience and value. These changes did not significantly affect GCTAC.

TACs were asked to prepare a recommended list of project priorities and budgets by Program for the two 2018/19 budget scenarios. The targets for the Conservation Program were \$200k and \$220k.

The conservation catalogue and Climate BC/WNA work conducted by Dr. Tongli Wang, which supports the Conservation and Resilience Programs, was not included in these targets as the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) was expected to continue funding this work. (Post script: FESBC did not provide funding for these activities in 2018/19. Funding was subsequently provided by the Ministry, separate from the Conservation program allocation).

The following table summarizes the actual funding in 2017/19 and projects, priorities and amount of funding requested for conservation activities in 2018/19. A third budget scenario was also included (Option C).

Details are found in the spreadsheet “GCTAC Conservation Budget 2018_19 Mar 1 (Recommended).xlsx - separate attachment to these minutes.

Table: GCTAC Recommended and Actual Allocations to Conservation Program - 2018-19

Proponent	2015-20 Strategic Plan	Actuals 2017/18	Option A \$220k	Option B \$200k	Option C
Tree Seed Centre	\$ 40,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 38,000
Whitebark Pine (Cartwright)	\$ 40,000	\$ 42,500	\$ 34,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 30,000
Whitebark Pine (Murray)	\$ 30,000	\$ 24,500	\$ 35,500	\$ 25,000	\$ 18,500
Whitebark Pine BMP (Murray)			\$ 30,000	\$ 26,000	\$ 15,000
UBC Centre for Forest Conservation Genetics	\$ 110,000	\$ 52,094	\$ 63,345	\$ 59,594	\$ 40,219
Other - Collection of Rust Resistant Seed (Cartwright)	\$ 30,000		\$ 9,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 3,000
Fall meeting				\$ 4,900	
total	\$ 250,000	\$ 164,094	\$ 219,845	\$ 199,994	\$ 144,719

Comments on proposed activities:

The funding directed to whitebark pine projects were noted. The best management practices (BMP) project supports some conservation goals but is somewhat outside the scope and mandate of GCTAC. It was also noted that applications have or will be submitted to FESBC to fund additional white-bark pine seed collections and cone induction.

Ex situ seed collections continue to fill in the conservation matrix. Contract with Don Pigott remains in place for next fiscal year. Determination of sample moisture status for freezer storage continues.

Funding for UBC’s Centre for Forest Conservation Genetics, also remains a concern. The Centre was established in 2001 with the understanding the Ministry would provide on-going support for conservation work, including maintenance of the catalogue and support for grad students (2-3 yr projects). The Centre used to receive a \$250k grant annually. Funding has been reduced substantially as Tongli Wang’s salary is now funded through FESBC, and this renewable contract is only for 3 yrs.

Initiating new conservation projects at the Centre is not just dependent on funding but finding the right graduate student. e.g. although a species is of interest to GCTAC, candidate students should also be interested in the species.

Species of interest for genealogy studies include Juniper spp. and Arbutus. Priorities setting for new species projects could be guided by the updated conservation catalogue (matrix). Potential links to the BC [Conservation Data Centre](#) – and its priorities – were also discussed.

Action: GCTAC to hold meeting, with others, in fall 2018 to discuss species conservation priorities (couple with project progress reports). Suggested locations: Manning Park or Tree Seed Centre.

Budget Option B therefore includes \$4900 for this meeting. It was assumed these funds could be found within the Option A budget.

5. GCTAC Membership

Some members are not able to attend meetings/calls. Representation from BC's Data Conservation Centre and NGOs on GCTAC were discussed.

Action: Shane to follow-up re membership, including potential rep from BC's Conservation Data Centre

Minutes by Brian Barber.

Approved Nov 22, 2018 (Dave/Sally - Carried)