

Minutes - Forest Genetics Council of BC

8:00 am – 12:00 pm, Friday, September 13, 2019

Participants

Forest Genetics Council of BC:

Annette van Niejenhuis, Bevin Wigmore, Bob Johnson, Domenico Iannidinardo, Juergen Ehling, Kori Vernier (via ph), Mark Hay (via ph), Pat Martin, and Tony Hopkin (via ph).

Regrets (Proxy):

Bill Laing (Kori), Dan Peterson (Pat), Jeff Mycock (Kori), Gernot Zemanek (), Shane Ford (Pat), Shane Berg (N/A).

Guests:

Brian Barber (FGC Program Mgr), Henry Benskin (SelectSeed), Keith Thomas (FIRM), Kevin Astridge (FIRM), Kona Van Diest (BCTS).

Proceedings

This quarterly general meeting of FGC was held in person at Cowichan Lake Conference Centre (CLCC) and via conference call. The meeting was preceded by a field tour held on Sept 12 hosted by the Ministry and Mosaic.

There being adequate notice served and a quorum of members present, the chair called the meeting to order, welcomed participants and guests, confirmed regrets and proxies, reviewed housekeeping and on-site safety.

Summary of Motions:

Motion: The minutes of the FGC meeting held June 14, 2019 are hereby approved. Annette/Bev. Carried.

Summary of Action Items:

Person(s)	Actions	Date
Brian	Update FGC on status of SelectSeed's seed orchard safety-related requirements and programs.	Dec.
Communications subcommittee	Provide update at next meeting.	Dec.
Brian	Set up Doodle Poll to identify time to discuss budget request letter for Chief Forester for the end of October, early November.	ASAP
Brian	Follow-up with FIRM re posting OTIP Project Reports	Dec.
Brian	Prepare annotated governance description and identify possible amendments to Society Bylaws	Dec
Brian	Discuss Interior Small Licensee, user rep. with Jennifer Gunter, Exec. Director, Community Forest Assoc	ASAP
Pat and Kori	Discuss ITAC chair candidates and present recommendations to FGC	ASAP
Domenico	Follow-up with Jeff re his interest in serving another term.	ASAP

Brian

Issue Doodle Poll for December conference call

ASAP

1. Agenda

The draft agenda provided was reviewed. The order of a few items was adjusted.

Motion: The Agenda for this meeting, with proposed modifications, is hereby approved.
Domenico/Pat. Carried.

2. Safety

Members were asked to report on any safety-related initiatives or concerns within the purview of FGC.

An accident was reported which purportedly occurred on a SelectSeed partner site during cone harvest a few years ago. Brian was not aware of that incident but said comprehensive safety and training procedures were implemented at that site last year and this. He also offered a brief overview of safety programs in place at other partner sites. Under the long-term agreements, each partner is obligated to abide by all prescribed regulations, including WorkSafe.

Action: Brian to update FGC on status of SelectSeed's seed orchard safety-related requirements and programs at next meeting.

3. Minutes from FGC Meeting June 14, 2019.

The draft minutes of the FGC meeting held in Vernon and via conference call on June 14, 2019 were previously circulated for review.

The minutes of the BC Forest Genetics Society and Select Seed Co Ltd's AGMs, also held on June 14, 2019, were prepared and signed-off by the organizations' respective directors for annual reporting purposes. Those minutes will be tabled for approval at their next respective AGMs

Motion: The minutes of the FGC meeting held June 14, 2019 are hereby approved.
Annette/Bev. Carried.

4. Action Items from June 14, 2015

The following action items and their status were reported

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Brian	Request the Company's and Society's lawyer to review and identify options to streamline/simplify the Forest Genetics Council, BC Forest Genetics Society and Select Seed governance model.	Completed See #15.
Brian	Prepare FGC's 2019/20 Business Plan (minus Species Plans) including the Ministry's LBIS \$ allocations by program and activity by Sept.	Deferred due to Seed Needs Forecast Project
Members	Provide Brian with written comments re Forsite's draft seed needs forecast project proposal.	Completed See # 7
Brian, Annette and Juergen	Establish a committee to oversee the develop and implement of a communications consultant contract and plan	Not started See item #8
Brian	Work with members and others to prepare an FGC Achievement Award Nomination for Jenji Konishi.	Withdrawn

Members	Confirm attendance at Sept 12-13 meeting at Cowichan Lake with Brian so accommodation and meals can be arranged in advance	Completed
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Also reported from Select Seed AGM June 14, 2019

Brian	Request auditor prepare a paragraph explaining the differences between the company's financial statements and its cash flow (accountable advance statements).	Completed See # 12
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5. Dashboard

An updated FGC/SelectSeed Dashboard was provided as a separate attachment. No significant changes to status since June 14. SelectSeed's strategic review of its long-term agreements as added. Members indicated they found the Dashboard informative and convenient.

6. Climate-based seed transfer

Kevin Astridge was appointed to the position of Seed Policy Officer, FIRM, in July. Kevin provided a verbal update on CBST-related developments. Areas of use were updated to reflect BEC version 11 release in August. It has not been determined when the geographic-based seed transfer (GBST) will be phased out.

Sabina Donnelly, FIRM, is currently offering SPAR and associated CSBT training in advance of the 2020 sowing requests.

7. Seed Needs Forecast Project Proposal

At the June 14 meeting, Brian and Pat Bryant, Forsite, provided an overview of a project to forecast future seed needs based on AAC, THLB, Stocking Standards and other criteria over the next 30 years by species and BEC variant. Results will be used to guide breeding and seed orchard planning, and be incorporated into new CBST species plans. The data will be publicly available.

Project sponsors are SelectSeed, VSOC, BCTS and FIRM. SelectSeed holds the contract with Forsite and has a cost-sharing agreement with the other sponsors. A terms of reference was shared with members and comments solicited.

Considerable progress has been made to-date, and the project is on track and budget. Brian provided members with an overview of the methods employed and initial provincial forecasts for the Province and the PG TSA (pilot) for the period 2020-2049. Government reforestation program forecasts by BEC variant (e.g. FFT, Forest Carbon) are outside the scope of this initial contract, and may be incorporated at a later date.

Next steps include incorporating more available timber supply review (TSR) data for each TSA, preparing TFL matrices and a review package for operational foresters to confirm regen. stocking standards assumptions by BEC variant.

The review package will be circulated in Oct-Nov to Regional Operational Issues Forums, Regional Stocking Standards Working Groups, and FGC TACs. An update will be shared at next FGC meeting.

8. Extension and Communication

At the June 14 meeting, FGC passed the following motion and action item.

Motion: Members request that SelectSeed provide financial support to develop and implement an FGC communication strategy. Annette/Bob. Carried.

Action: Brian, Annette and Juergen to establish a committee to oversee the development of a communications consultant contract.

No follow-up action by the committee has occurred to-date due to other priorities. Annette and Juergen will however met after this FGC meeting.

Action: Communications subcommittee to provide update at next meeting.

Over the past few months Brian has been working in collaboration with Don Pigott, and staff from the Tree Seed Centre, WFP and Mosaic to create an interactive seed display at new [Forests Forever Exhibit](#) the BC Forest Discovery Centre's located in Duncan. Over 60,000 visitors per years are expected. \$1000 donations were also made on behalf of the Forest Genetics Council of BC and SelectSeed, respectively.

The seed exhibit, including a vacuum seed sorter, will be completed soon. Members were invited to visit the Forests Forever Exhibit following the meeting.

9. 2019 Crop Report and 2020 Sowing Requests

The 2019 Cone crop is much smaller than last year's record-high orchard and wild stand cone crops. Demand for seed, however, remains high and nursery space remains at a premium.

The following summary table provided recently by the Tree Seed Centre compares the 2018 and 2019 seed orchard crops by species and hectoliters (hl).

Year	Pli	Pw	Py	Lw	Sx	Dr	Ep	Cwr	Fdc	Fdi	Hw	Total
2018	988	139	112	390	1,155	5	0	59	1,372	1,108	1	5,329
2019	770	126	34	3	187	4	1	13	216	13	9	1,376

The 2019 is approx. ¼ the amount of the 2018 orchard crop. 2018 wild stand collections (not included above) were also significant, and few wild collections have been reported in 2019.

Sowing requests for 2019 were over 308 million seedlings, including 57 million for govt programs (FFT and Forest Carbon). Seedling requests are expected to remain above 300 million for the next few years despite the recent downturn in the forest sector.

10. SelectSeed Cash Flow vs Income Statements

At the June 14 SelectSeed AGM, the following request was made:

Brian to request auditor prepare a paragraph explaining the differences between the company's financial statements and its cash flow (accountable advance statements).

Angela Harrison, Manager, Grant Thornton (GT), the company's auditor, prepared a written explanation, which was circulated with the agenda. Members found the explanation useful and will use as a reference at future AGMs.

11. SelectSeed Pli Orchard Update

In July, Brian visited Quesnel to view several potential properties and make a presentation to Mayor Bob Simpson, city staff, and several community members. Dan Gaudet also hosted a tour of the Vernon Seed Orchard, Quesnel, for a couple of interested proponents.

On Aug 11, an article on Brian's visit and SelectSeed's project was published in the [Quesnel Cariboo Observer](#). On Aug 19, SelectSeed issued a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for suitable properties for a 5000-tree Pli seed orchard through sale or lease. An EOI information package and application form is posted at www.selectseed.ca. Several applications have been received to-date.

Brian will travel to Quesnel at the end of September to view prospective sites. A Board meeting is also scheduled in Quesnel for Nov 5-6 to look at the short-listed prospects.

Henry conveyed the Board's optimism for success and acknowledged Brian's work and networking to-date. He also expressed the Board's gratitude for Dan Gaudet's support.

12. Proposed Policy re Orchard Changes

At FGC's April meeting, Pat Martin described several challenges associated with implementing changes to seed orchards under existing policies, procedures and the [Chief Forester's Seed Orchard Principles](#). Feedback was solicited in person and in writing.

A policy proposal was submitted to, and considered in, the FRPA revision process. However, the decision was made to not include it in the Phase 2 FRPA revision package. Work to develop policy options is continuing. In the meantime, the allocation of materials to private seed orchards will continue to be guided by the Chief Forester's Guiding Principles and Genetic Resource Access and Use Agreements.

13. LBIS Funding and Business Planning for 2020/21

Business Planning. As discussed at FGC's April 2 discussion, FGC's business planning process is out-of-sync with the Ministry's budget planning cycle. FGC business plans have been published several months after April 1. To properly manage the program, a business plan is needed well in advance of each fiscal year.

Pat proposed a plan to realign FGC's and the Ministry's business planning processes, clarify roles and reduce duplication of effort to enable a business plan is prepared in January.

Pat recommended FGC send an LBIS budget allocation request letter to the Chief Forester in November. The letter could identify additional needs or pressures justifying an increase to the \$2.5M allocated over the past several years.

Based on the CF's feedback and/or \$ allocation, FGC Co-chairs would set budget targets for FGC's various programs. In December, FIRM's Forest Genetics Section Manager (Keith) would prepare a preliminary plan for these target budgets, and present to FGC TACs in January-February for review and feedback. FGC would review and endorse (or not) the final plan at its March meeting.

This revised plan places the onus for budget planning with FIRM, which is accountable for this LBIS \$ allocation and expenditures. FGCs and TACs' roles are to provide advise and feedback, as well as advocate for additional funding.

Action: Brian to set up Doodle Poll to identify time to discuss budget request letter for Chief Forester for the end of October, early November.

OTIP - Over the past two decades the Ministry has distributed funds and issued contracts to seed orchards, and other proponents, based on eligibility criteria and an Operational Tree Improvement Program (OTIP) Call for Proposals, which has been jointly prepared by the Ministry and ITAC and CTAC members. Pat indicated that as a result of a legal review, the contracts will be replaced by contribution agreements. No changes to the OTIP process was identified.

Reporting out on project expenditures and success is an on-going interest. Communicating results of technical projects' results is also needed, so others can learn and avoid duplication.

Action: Brian to follow-up with FIRM re posting OTIP Project Reports.

14. Announcements and Events

Brian and several others from BC attended the Canadian Forest Genetics Association meeting in Quebec August. Brian shared a few meeting highlights and pictures of the field trip to Grandes-Piles Forest Nursery, Seed Orchards and Experimental Plantations.

Of note was reporting the first operational implementation of genomic selection for breeding and seed orchard management in NB and Quebec resulting from the [FasTrac Project](#), several presentations on the forestry genomics social-science projects (topic to be included in Dec 2019 conference call), and low seed set in Jack pine orchards located in warmer environments (same observation in BC with lodgepole pine orchards).

Brian was elected Chair, CFGA, in anticipation of BC hosting the next biannual meeting in 2021. The CFGA meeting will be held in Vernon in June 2021 in conjunction with the Western Forest Genetics Association (Nick Ukrainetz, President) and one or more IUFRO working groups.

Northern Silviculture Committee (NSC) field workshop will be held in Mackenzie on Sept 24-25. The Southern Silviculture Committee (SISCO) field trip will be held in the Okanagan the same week. The Forest Nursery Association of BC (FNABC) will meet in Sydney Oct 1-2.

The next meeting of IUFRO Seed Orchard Working Group will be held in Nanjing, China, in October 2019. Further details at: <http://seedorchard2019.njfu.edu.cn/>

15. FGC and SelectSeed Governance

On June 14, FGC requested Brian ask the Company's and Society's lawyer to review and identify options to streamline/simplify the Forest Genetics Council, BC Forest Genetics Society and Select Seed governance model.

On July 30, Lance Robson, lawyer, provided a written response and the following options:

1. Re-constituting FGC in such a way that FGC and BC Forest Genetics Society become the same entity.
2. Re-constituting SelectSeed as a company under a special Act of the Legislature. The Act might provide that the company belongs to the province but that FGC appoints its directors.
3. Dissolving SelectSeed, so that the seed orchards are owned directly by BC Forest Genetics Society.
4. Amend the articles of SelectSeed to provide that FGC appoints its directors.
5. Amend the bylaws of BC Forest Genetics to provide that FGC appoints its directors.

Lance indicated the first 3 options would be difficult to achieve, but latter two would be straightforward. Brian forwarded Lance's note to the FGC co-chairs with recommendation to not make any changes at this time as the Society records and procedures are now in good order and changes would create additional work that may not result in significant time savings.

Members reaffirmed the need of a governance description and remain open to modernizing the Society's bylaws (which have not been updated in +20 years) to improve the civility and logic of the FGC/SelectSeed governance model.

Action: Brian to prepare annotated governance description and identify possible amendments to the Society Bylaws for next meeting.

16. FGC Membership

A replacement for Gernot (Interior Seed User Rep - small licensees) has not been confirmed. Representatives from community forest agreement holders are under considered.

The three-year terms for Pat (Co-Chair), Jeff (Interior Seed Producer Rep), Kori (ITAC Chair) and Dan (Ministry Operations) expire Nov. 3, 2019.

Dan indicated he is interested in serving another term. Jeff – TBD. Kori indicated she will not be able to serve another term as ITAC chair, and thanked FGC for the opportunity to learn and serve in this role. Kori was thanked for her leadership and contributions, and hope she will remain engaged.

In the past, if a member does not wish to serve an additional term, the member's representative stakeholder "group" is solicited for replacement nominations. FGC recommends ITAC and CTAC chairs. All FGC nominations are forwarded to the Chief Forester via the Ministry Co-Chair.

Action: Brian to discuss Interior Small Licensee, user rep. with Jennifer Gunter, Exec. Director, Community Forest Assoc.

Action: Pat and Kori to discuss ITAC chair candidates and present recommendations to FGC.

Action: Domenico to follow-up with Jeff re his interest in serving another term on Council.

17. New Business

No new business identified.

18. Next meeting

The next FGC quarterly meeting will be held via conference call in early December. There may be opportunity to couple with recognition lunch or dinner for Reid Carter, who served on SelectSeed Board of Directors for 20 years and recently 'retired'.

Action: Brian to issue Doodle Poll for December conference call

19. In camera session

Guests were requested to leave at this point in the meeting.

Motion: Move to meeting *in camera* for FGC members only. Domenico/Pat. Carried

Motion: Move the meeting out of in camera. Domenico/Pat. Carried

20. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:55 pm

Motion: The meeting is hereby adjourned. Domenico/Pat. Carried

Draft Minutes by B Barber. Sept 22, 2019, Revised Sept 23. Approved Dec 11, 2019.