

MINUTES

Forest Genetics Council – Meeting September 22, 2010

Meeting at Western Forest Products Saanichton Forestry Centre

Attending: Brian Barber, Judi Beck, Tim Lee, Scott King, Joe LeBlanc, Kerry McGourlick (chair), John Mitchell, Barrie Phillips, Annette van Niejenhuis, Gernot Zemanek

Regrets: Larry Gardner, Rob Guy, Madeline Maley, Al McDonald,

Others: Darrell Wood, Jack Woods

Guests: Paul Bavis, Lee Charleson, Diane Douglas, Gabe Kalmar, Susanna Laaksonen-Craig, David Reid, John Russell

Action Items

Responsibility	Action
Jack Woods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• set up a meeting of the Applied Biotechnology Steering Committee to discuss terms of reference for setting up a call for proposals, and report back to FGC at the December 15, 2010 meeting.• include statistics in the Annual Report on seed-use by genetic class and class-A seed use by species.• PMTAC will be asked to recommend a new chair to the FGC by December 2010
Brian Barber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brian to write letter of thanks to former decision-support subprogram members
Lee Charleson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lee Charleson to serve as interim-lead of DSAC and, through consultation with FGC members, will recruit persons with representation from various client groups to develop a terms of reference for DSAC. TOR for DSAC to be consistent with findings and recommendations of the Decision Support Subprogram Review, and deliberations of council. Recommendations for new TOR, committee members, and a new chair (preferably an industry seed user) to be brought before FGC in December.
Brian, Barrie Phillips, Judi Beck, Jack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide recommendations to the FGC on restructuring subcommittee process for the development of a 3-year FGC business planning cycle (by December, 2010)

Summary of Motions:

1. **MOVED:** (Brian Barber / Scott King): Minutes of the meeting held June 16, 2010 are hereby approved. **CARRIED.**
2. **MOVED** (Brian Barber / Tim Lee): That the Decision Support Subprogram and advisory committee membership are disbanded, and a new Decision Support Advisory Committee (DSAC) will be created under the leadership of Lee Charleson and will develop terms of reference that will be brought to Council's December, 2010 meeting . **CARRIED.**

Meeting called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Kerry McGourlick (Industry Co-Chair)

1. Agenda:

Agenda accepted with additions under New Business.

2. Approval of June 16, 2010 minutes:

MOVED (Brian Barber / Scott King): Minutes of the meeting held June 16, 2010 are hereby approved.
CARRIED.

3. Old Business and Action Items from June 16, 2010

Summary of action items and progress from the March 25, 2010 FGC meeting

Respon- sibility	Action requested	Action taken
Jack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a letter to Jim Snetsinger and Kathy Chopik thanking them for LBIS funding support, and express concern regarding FGC and MFR ability to meet MFR Service Plan objectives that are based on the provincial genetics/ tree improvement program given recent staffing cuts in the Research and Tree Improvement Branches. Contact all FGC subprogram leaders and seek proposals for LBIS tree improvement funds that are unallocated. Response date June 30th. A recommendation will be prepared for Jim Snetsinger by July 7th. Put the three-year business planning process on the September FGC meeting agenda for discussion. Add professional reliance and climate-based seed transfer to the September FGC meeting agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to Kathy Chopik from Kerry on behalf of W. Forest Products Meeting/tour of WFP Saanich Forestry Centre; led by Kerry and Annette with Jack in attendance. Discussion of issues No letter to Kathy and Jim, pending a meeting on Sept 29th with Shelagh Ryan-McNee and a better understanding of the issues Done. Call for proposals let by MFR TIB (Darrell), with support from Jack. Review committee set up to evaluate proposals. Ongoing Done

Action items reviewed and accepted as presented.

MFR seed price schedule:

Brian outlined the current status of the MFR Tree Improvement Branch review of seed-production costs and changes to fees for seed. A comprehensive review, using GAAP standards, has been completed and new fees for orchard seed will be proposed to the Deputy Minister, Dana Hayden. These fees would ultimately have to be approved by the Treasury Board. It is expected that fees will rise for some species, remain the same for some, and decrease for one species. An request for review and response will be sent out to the SPAR distribution list (clients).

4. Report on Pli orchard support – Tim Lee, Annette van Niejenhuis, Jack Woods

Tim Lee stated that Vernon Seed Orchard Company has withdrawn the request for Pli orchard support that they previously put forward to Council. It was withdrawn because Operational Tree Improvement Program support was received to re-establish Pli orchards and this has met most of their needs. The committee believes that an across-the-board per-ramet support subsidy for Pli orchards would not be an effective means of dealing with cash-flow shortfalls in Pli orchards and may be premature given the increased seed set in the younger orchards. In addition, orchard managers have implemented cost reductions that will improve the situation. The subcommittee recommends no further action on this matter. This recommendation was accepted by Council.

5. Update on Budget allocations and commitments – Darrell Wood

Darrell provided a summary of the Land Base Investment Strategy funding allocation to the Tree Improvement Program for the current fiscal year. All subprograms and projects have received their allocations, and work is on track. The following table outlines subprogram allocations to date.

Land Base Investment Strategy Tree Improvement Program			
2010/11 by subprogram			
Subprogram	Allocation from FGC	TIB allocations to date	Comments
Genetic Conservation	\$248,000	\$248,500	Transfers to projects; work underway
Tree Breeding*	\$1,141,000	\$1,141,000	Transfer to RIKM Br.; projects underway
Operational Tree Imp. Prog.	\$684,000	\$684,434	Total of projects; work underway
SelectSeed Ltd.	\$543,000	\$543,000	Total of transfer for year
Extension and Communication	\$20,500	\$20,500	Total of budget allocated; work underway
Cone and Seed Pest Mgt.	\$162,000	\$161,894	Transf. to projects; work underway
Genecology and Seed Transfer	\$436,000	\$435,672	Transf. to projects; work underway
Genetic Resource Decision Sup.	\$0	\$0	
Administration*	\$30,000	\$30,000	
Subtotal	\$3,264,500	\$3,265,000	
Applied Tree Impr. and biotechnology (YE-K UBC)	\$122,000	\$122,000	Transf. to projects; work underway
Special call made June 17, 2010	\$143,500	\$143,500	
Subtotal	\$265,500	\$265,500	
TOTAL	\$3,530,000	\$3,530,500	

Flow of funds to projects is much improved over last fiscal year. Research Innovation and Knowledge Management Branch received blanket approval for all projects approved through the FGC procedure.

Brian stated that moving the Biotech funding to a call for proposals would allow broader participation, including CFS involvement.

Action: Jack is to set up a meeting of the Applied Biotechnology Steering Committee to discuss terms of reference for setting up a call for proposals, and will report back to FGC in December, 2010.

6. FGC 2009/10 annual report – Jack Woods

A summary of the FGC 2009/10 annual report was presented. Strategic Plan objectives are the primary focus of performance indicators, and it is recommended that the written Annual Report for 2009/10 focus primarily on these high-level indicators. The 2009/10 Projects Report will present more detail on individual projects. This change of focus was agreed to by FGC members. It was requested that graphs presented, that showed seed-use statistics by genetic class and class-A seed use by species, also be included in the Annual Report. The Annual Report will be available in late October or early November, 2010.

Action: Jack will include statistics in the Annual Report on seed-use by genetic class and class-A seed use by species.

7. Presentation on GenomeBC – Dr. Gabe Kalmar

Dr. Gabe Kalmar provided an overview of the structure and objectives of GenomeBC and Genome Canada, as well as a summary of investments to date. GenomeBC has invested significant amounts in the development of genomics technology, including sequencing equipment, as well as on forest genomics projects. Sequencing costs and time have dropped dramatically over the past decade and will continue to drop. Investments in genomics projects are shifting to a greater emphasis on applied research. Canada-wide, there are 11 projects that have moved through the initial screening of an applied call in the area of Forestry and the Environment. Several of these projects pertain to BC.

Increased collaboration with the FGC is considered desirable to assist GenomeBC as they move to a more applied research portfolio.

Dr. Kalmar was thanked for his presentation.

8. Overview of provincial seed orchard capacity and shortfalls – Jack Woods

An overview of provincial orchard capacity was presented. In general, capacity is sufficient to meet FGC objectives. The primary barrier continues to be Pli seed production, although this is increasing. Pli orchard capacity is currently below forecast needs for several seed planning units; notably Prince George. Overall provincial orchard infrastructure is adequate to meet needs, however, as some orchards are larger than needed. As seed zones are adjusted for climate change, orchard operators will need to adjust the size of some orchards to accommodate changing seed needs.

The Tree Improvement Branch is currently updating an analysis of seed supply for Pli. This may be an issue for further discussion at the next ITAC meeting.

9. Discussion of Pest Management and Decision Support subprograms

Pest Management Subprogram

PMTAC structure and mandate was reviewed. Council determined that this role continues to be relevant and appropriate.

Robb Bennett's substantial contribution as PMTAC chair was acknowledged and is appreciated by Council.

Action: PMTAC will be asked to recommend a new chair to the FGC by December 2010 (Jack).

Genetic Resource Decision Support Subprogram (GRDS)

Lee Charleson presented her report on the role and mandate of the GRDS subcommittee. Council thanked Lee for her work on the review.

Lee raised the issue that, within the MFR, priorities for all systems projects are ultimately determined by the Information Management Branch (IMB), and the ability of GRDS committee and FGC to influence these priorities may be limited. It was felt, however, that the oversight of a GRDS committee to advise both Council and the MFR has merit. The ability of the committee to influence IMB and, with Council, to allocate funding to systems projects, will require discussion with IMB. Such discussions are ongoing between the TIB and IMB.

MOVED (Brian Barber / Tim Lee): That the Decision Support Subprogram and advisory committee membership are disbanded, and a new Decision Support Advisory Committee (DSAC) will be created under the leadership of Lee Charleson and will develop terms of reference that will be brought to Council's December, 2010 meeting. CARRIED.

Actions:

1. Lee Charleson to serve as interim-lead of DSAC and, through consultation with FGC members, will recruit persons with representation from various client groups to develop a terms of reference for DSAC. TOR for DSAC to be consistent with findings and recommendations of the Decision Support Subprogram Review, and deliberations of council. Recommendations for new TOR, committee members, and a new chair (preferably an industry seed user) to be brought before FGC in December.
2. Brian to write letter of thanks to former decision-support subprogram members

Leslie McAuley's work on behalf of the GRDS subprogram was acknowledged by Council, and Leslie is thanked for her efforts.

10. Presentation: Deer Browse Resistance in western redcedar – Dr. John Russell

John Russell presented his research on differing levels of deer-browse resistance in redcedar families. Some clones have high monoterpene levels that discourage browsing. Selection for browse resistance has the potential to reduce the high establishment costs (\$7 to \$8 per planted tree) for redcedar on the coast. John is setting up a cooperative approach with licensees to implement field testing for redcedar browse resistance. John also expressed strong concerns about the impact of staff reductions in the RIKM Branch, and their ability to continue to undertake this and other tree breeding activities that support FGC and MFR objectives.

11. FGC business planning cycle

The MFR and the Land Base Investment Strategy are moving to a 3-year business planning cycle. To be consistent with this, the FGC should also move to a 3-year cycle. A subcommittee was set up to discuss process and make recommendations to the FGC in December, 2010.

Action: Brian, Barrie, Judi, Jack; Provide recommendations to the FGC on structuring subcommittee process for the development of a 3-year FGC business planning cycle (by December, 2010).

12. MFR Research Innovation and Knowledge Management Branch – Dr. Susanna Laaksonen-Craig

Susanna provided Council with an overview of the RIKM Branch mandate and of workforce adjustments that have impacted Branch staff. Staffing reductions are creating many challenges to the Branch as staff try to meet objectives set by the FGC and the Tree Improvement Branch. Council discussed options to provide support to RIKM Branch and to help inform senior MFR managers of the importance of the Branch to the provincial tree improvement program.

Susanna was thanked for her presentation.

13. Policy Issues

Forest Practices Board Review of seed transfer standards (Brian Barber):

Brian announced that the FPB is initiating a review of the level of adherence to seed transfer standards. This review will happen independently of the MFR. Results will be of interest to Council, and Brian would like to involve Council with review of the FPB report and any subsequent response.

Professional reliance (Brian Barber):

Increased professional reliance is being discussed within the MFR and with the ABCFP. Brian is leading an MFR review. A survey of ABCFP members was recently released. Brian would like to engage FGC members in further discussion of this matter as proposals come forward.

Climate-based seed transfer (Lee Charleson):

Lee outlined the current status of the development of a climate-based seed transfer system. The Seed Transfer TAC is discussing this matter, but some significant scientific work by both RIKM and UBC staff is required before policy options can be discussed in detail. The scientific work is underway.

14. New Business

Brian announced a new MFR project to prepare a report on 50 years of tree improvement in BC. Roger Painter has been commissioned to undertake this work.

Next meeting December 15th, 2010 (likely by video conference)

Minutes prepared by Jack Woods and Darrell Wood

