

Minutes - General Meeting

9:00 am – 11:30 am, Thursday, December 9, 2021

Proceedings

This meeting was held via GoTo video conference. An in-person meeting and luncheon for Henry Benskin was cancelled due to the Provincial State of Emergency. Meeting materials were posted on FGC's secure website for members (password required).

Participants

Forest Genetics Council of BC: Annette van Niejenhuis, Bevin Wigmore, Bob Johnson, Dan Mazerolle, Domenico Iannidinardo, Jeff Mycock, Katherine Spencer, Keith Thomas, and Pat Martin

Regrets: Gord Chipman, Juergen Ehling, Kona Van Diest and Shane Berg.

Guests: Brian Barber, Kerry McGourlick & Sally John (SelectSeed), Marilyn Cherry, (Tree Seed Centre), and Stephen Joyce (FIRM).

Summary of Motions

Motion: The minutes of the FGC meeting held October 15, 2021 are hereby approved. Keith/Annette. Carried.

Motion: It is recommended SelectSeed sponsor the 2022 BCSOA meeting up to \$5,000. Annette/Bevin. Carried.

Summary of Actions

Person(s)	Actions	When
Councillors	Comments and edits to the draft FGC Terms of Reference (ToR) to Brian with cc's to Pat and Domenico by January 5.	Jan 5
Pat	Discuss draft ToR, and proposed membership changes, including First Nations and Ministry representatives, with Diane Nicholls.	Jan
Councillors	Review next version of draft FGC ToR at next meeting.	April
Brian	Follow-up with BCSOA 2022 organizing committee regarding sponsorship.	ASAP
Pat, Domenico and Brian	Prepare FGC letter to Ministry re its funding allocations to forest genetics programs ASAP.	ASAP
Brian	Brian to discuss next steps in provincial orchard seed supply and demand analysis with Kat and Annette.	Jan
SelectSeed	Prepare a summary of the Company's orchard contract extension and management options, including financial scenarios for next meeting.	April
Keith, Annette Bevin	Review dashboard and provided recommendations on prioritizing items.	Next Mtg

1. Welcome, Intro & Agenda

There being adequate notice served and a quorum of members present, the Co-chairs called the meeting to order and welcomed participants and guests.

Kona Van Diest, RPF, Seedling and Reforestation Specialist, was recently appointed to Council as BC Timber Sales' representative but was unable to attend today's meeting.

Motion: The Agenda for this meeting is hereby approved. Annette/Bob. Carried.

#	Time	Min		Topic	Presenters
1	9:00	5		Welcome, Intros and Agenda	Pat/Domenico
2	9:05	5	A	Minutes and Actions from June 14	Brian
3	9:10	5		Safety Reports	All
4	9:15	5	B	FGC & SelectSeed Dashboard	Brian
5	9:20	35	C	FGC Draft Terms of Reference Membership & Appointments	Brian
6	9:55	10		SelectSeed Board Appointments	Pat
7	10:05	10		Seed Use Performance Measures	Brian
8	10:15	15		Update from Tree Seed Center	Marilyn Cherry
9	10:30	10	D	Funding request for BC Seed Orchard Assoc	Kat
10	10:40	10	E	Budget and Planning for 2022/23	Pat
11	10:50	10		SelectSeed Projections for Council	Kat & Annette
12	11:00	10		News and Announcements	All
13	11:10	5		Next Meeting	Brian
14	11:15	15		In Camera Session	Pat/Domenico
	11:30			Adjournment	

2. Minutes and Action items from Meetings held Oct 15, 2021.

Draft minutes of FGC's October 15, 2021 meeting were circulated in advance.

Motion: The minutes of the FGC meeting held October 15, 2021 are hereby approved. Keith/Annette. Carried.

Action Items from FGC Meeting held October 15, 2021:

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Brian	Share photos of FGC field tour with participants and FGC members	Completed
Brian	Share Pat and Domenico's reappoint letter to Kerry with Members.	Completed
Membership Committee	Convene to draft FGC membership policy to inform nominations for vacant positions on Council.	In Progress See item 5
Brian	Draft letter of endorsement of NRCan's research report for FGC Co-chairs to send to Dan Mazerolle.	Completed Nov 5 ¹
Pat and Brian	Send email to members prompting a review of FGC's Strategic Plan in advance of the next meeting.	Completed Oct 29 ²

Brian	Issue Doodle Poll and/or confirm date with Domenico for Dec meeting and luncheon in Nanaimo	Completed
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¹ Dan thanked FGC for its letter of support. Michael Stoehr will reconnect with Pat and FGC TAC members in Jan to develop the next steps, including establishment of a scientific committee to help identify research priorities.

²The review of FGC's 2021-25 Strategic Plan is deferred to a subsequent meeting.

4. Safety Reports

Members did not report any health or safety issues resulting from COVID-19, or the recent floods and landslides.

5. FGC & SelectSeed Dashboard

Brian reviewed the dashboard (Attachment B) with updates on FGC's and SelectSeed's projects and targets. Completion of the FGC Progress report is, again delayed, although seed production and use statistics have now been compiled and will be presented in agenda item #7.

The dashboard and regular updates are useful to Council. (See in camera action item).

6. FGC Draft Terms of Reference

Pat, Domenico, Gord and Brian met to discuss FGC membership on Nov. 22. There are currently three vacancies on Council, based on the Membership positions described in the [FGC Bylaws \(2012\)](#). These include representatives from Ministry Operations, Interior Seed Users - North, and LBIS (*ex officio*). Several potential additional groups were also identified.

Updating the FGC membership and nomination process, including criteria for identifying suitable candidates, would require amendments to the 2012 FGC Bylaws. Other sections of the Bylaws also require updating and clarification.

Brian subsequently offered to update the Bylaws as a straw dog renamed Draft FGC Terms of Reference (Attachment C) for Council's consideration and discussion. The proposed changes have not been discussed with the Provincial Chief Forester.

The merits of adding additional groups to Council were discussed. It was concluded that Councillors should represent groups with a vested interest or responsibility for managing BC's forests, including First Nations.

Genome BC's significant contributions to forest genetics research was recognized. It could best serve on Council in a *non-voting* capacity. Other groups such as silviculture

contractors, nurseries, stock coordinators, and private forestland trusts, and others involved in reforestation, would best contribute at the TAC level. Representatives from these groups should be encouraged to attend TAC meetings, as appropriate.

Action: Comments and edits to the draft FGC Terms of Reference (ToR) to Brian with cc’s to Pat and Domenico by January 5.

Action: Pat to discuss draft ToR, and proposed membership changes, including First Nations and Ministry representatives, with Diane Nicholls.

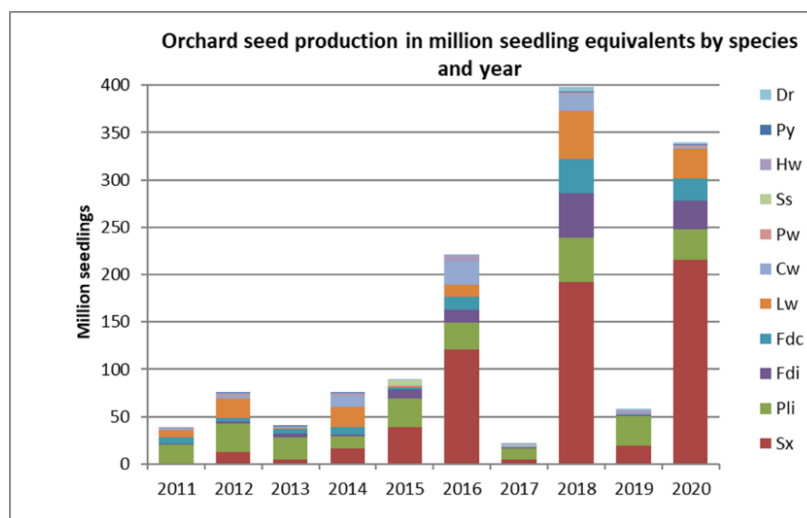
Action: Council to review next version of draft FGC ToR at next meeting.

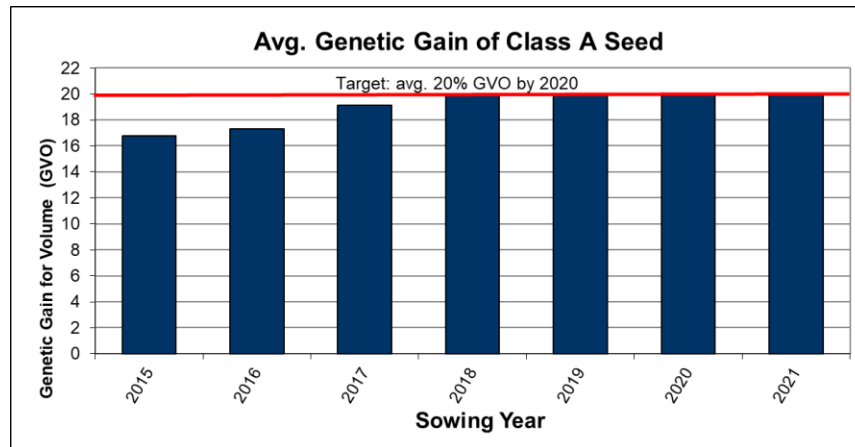
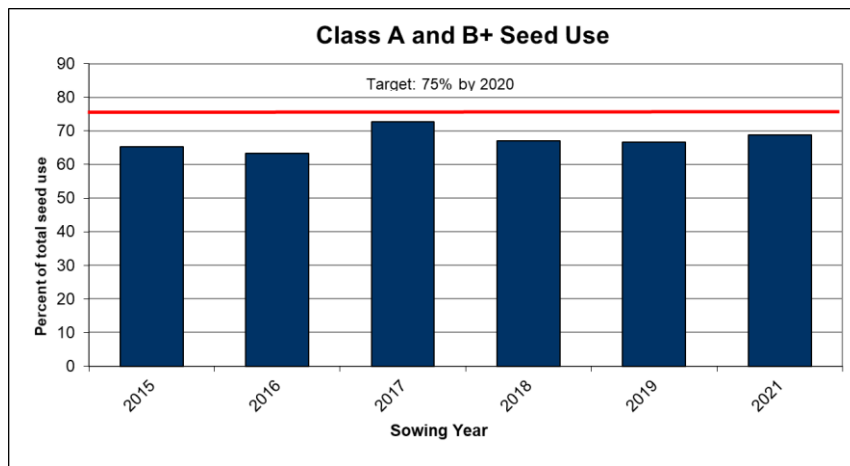
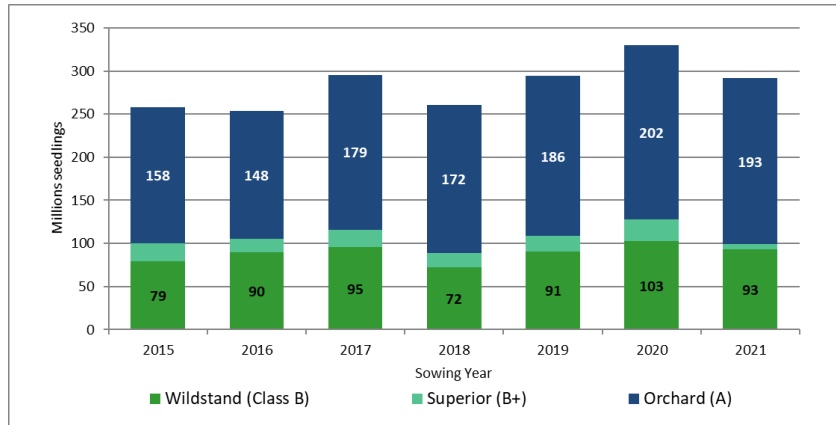
7. Seed Use Performance Measures

Brian presented the following data and graphs associated with FGC’s goals for seed production and use. Data was derived from the Seed Planning and Registry System (SPAR) and Mosaic (private forestland seed use not included in SPAR). The graphs will be included in FGC’s Progress Report 2018-2021.

The first graph depicts orchard seed production between 2015 and 2020. The 2021 crops are not included). The annual variability and increase in total seed production (esp. in 2018 and 2020) were noted. The latter has implications for cone processing and storage capacity.

Interior Spruce (Sx) represented 63% of the 2020 orchard crop. The other top producing species that year were: Lodgepole pine (Pli) 9%; Interior Douglas-fir (Fdi) 9%; Western Larch (Lw) 9%; and Coastal Douglas-fir (Fdc) 7%.





The amount of select seed (A and B+) as a percent of the total seed requested for sowing in 2021 was 69%, which is short of the 75% target. The shortfall is attributed to limited availability of orchard Pli seed relative to needs (42%), and overall increase in seed demands (~300M seedlings/year) due to government programs and the reforestation of large areas denuded by wildfires.

The total amount of orchard (Class A) seed – as measured by # seedlings requested - has, however, increased over the past 5 years. Furthermore, the average genetic gain for volume of orchard seed used is +20%. Combined, the use of this seed will result in significant additional cubic meter of timber available for harvest in 60-80 years (or less).

These metrics help convey the benefits of the forest genetics program and the importance of maintaining provincial funding.

8. Update from Tree Seed Center

Marilyn Cherry, Supervisor, Cone and Seed Office, Tree Seed Center (TSC), provided an overview of this year's cone and seed processing results and other TSC updates.

Over 3200 hl representing 79 seedlots have or will be processed in 2021: 44 Class A seedlots (2240 hl) and 35 B Class Seedlots (970 hl). Most Class B seedlots were Ponderosa pine (Py), half of which were priority processed. Other priority processed seedlots included Class A Fdi (40 hl) and Pli (800 hl).

Harvest of orchard seedlots was completed in late Aug and Sept. The seedlots were received at the TSC between September 2 October 27. Processing for the last priority seedlot was completed on Nov. 24. Germination testing continues.

Following FGC's review of seedlot processing challenges, a new table was added to SPAR to allow seed producers to track the processing status of seedlots. Feedback on this new service has been positive.

Recent flooding impacted residences and travel of several TSC staff. A cone shipment from the Ministry's Bailey Road orchard has also been delayed until the new year, but seed shipments to nurseries have not been adversely affected.

A large seed orchard crop is expected again next year. Orchard managers should therefore be prepared to store cones on-site longer, as storage capacity at the TSC is limited.

9. Funding request for BC Seed Orchard Assoc

The BC Seed Orchard Association will hold an in-person meeting June 28-29, 2022, in Vernon. The host committee sent a letter to the FGC requesting \$5,000.00 funding to offset the cost of bus transportation to tour sites and meeting room rental. See attachment D.

Kat indicated the sponsorship would help reduce registration costs and attract more participants. The BCSOA organizing committee followed the precedent of a letter submitted to FGC in 2014, which requested \$4,000 sponsorship for its conference. (PS. The amount was subsequently included in FGC's [2014/2015 Business Plan](#)'s in the LBIS budget for the Extension and Communication Subprogram, p. 11).

FGC does not hold funds but can recommend the Ministry and SelectSeed support such requests. Brian indicated SelectSeed often sponsors meetings and conferences on behalf of FGC, if and when they support FGC's mandate.

In 2021, SelectSeed sponsored the WFGA/CFGA Forest Genetics Symposium, IUFRO Tree Breeding Conference, and BCSOA's virtual meeting. SelectSeed also recently paid for updates to the [BCSOA webpage](#) attached to the FGC website.

Council was supportive of assisting BCSOA with its meeting. SelectSeed requested opportunity to discuss meeting costs & revenues including registration fees with the organizing committee before committing to a specified amount. Some clearer guidance for responding to funding requests would also be helpful (include in review of draft FGC Terms of Reference).

Motion: It is recommended SelectSeed sponsor the 2022 BCSOA meeting up to \$5,000. Annette/Bevin. Carried.

Action: Brian to follow-up with BCSOA 2022 organizing committee regarding sponsorship.

10. Budget and Business Planning for 2022/23

In Jan 2021, FGC submitted a letter to David Muter, ADM, outlining the benefits of the provincial forest genetics program and encouraged the Ministry to adequately fund it. The letter was well received and helped secure some additional program funding.

Although there is uncertainty over pending Ministry changes and its 2022/23 budget, Pat recommended FGC prepare a similar letter to assist the Ministry's with prioritizing its funding allocations. Council recommended the letter be accompanied with a presentation to Ministry Executive.

Pat also recommended that TACs and FGC build a plan using the same cycle and process as last year. This includes TACs reviewing project proposals and budgets, and the Operational Tree Improvement Program remaining restricted to technical projects.

Action: Pat, Domenico and Brian to prepare FGC letter to Ministry re its funding allocations to forest genetics programs ASAP.

11. SelectSeed - Planning and Financial Projections for Council

Over the past year Council has asked SelectSeed for plans and financial projections related to the upcoming expiry of orchard contracts. Concern was expressed regarding the uncertainty of potential impacts on the Company's financial viability and provincial seed supply.

To support SelectSeed in developing its plans and projections for Council, it was proposed that the ITAC and CTAC chairs work directly with SelectSeed.

This support would assist with developing a common language and an understanding of the risks and benefits to provincial seed supply. Council also reaffirmed its wish for SelectSeed to remain successful.

Brian explained the next step in SelectSeed's analysis will involve the TAC chairs and others developing the new on-line 'species plan' dashboard. Production forecasts for all seed orchards, confirmed by TACs in the summer/fall, are currently being uploaded to the dashboard by Forsite (under contract with SelectSeed). The seed production forecasts will be compared with future seedling demands to identify potential seed supply surpluses, gaps and opportunities. The methodology should be agreed upon by TACs.

This analysis combined with timelines associated with the selection and release of new parent tree materials by Ministry tree breeders will help inform how long the existing SelectSeed orchards are required.

Kerry said the SelectSeed Board has also reviewed the Company's financial forecasts based on a few potential contract extension scenarios. These forecasts need to be updated along with the above seed supply and needs exercise.

Jeff reminded Council the [seedling needs forecast to 2049](#) were compiled two years ago and are subject to change due to the recent large fires, old growth harvest deferrals, and other pending changes to forest tenures and forest management policies. A significant reduction in seedling demand could result in an over-supply of orchard seed, and inability for producers to recover their past investments.

Action: Brian to discuss next steps in provincial orchard seed supply and demand analysis with Kat and Annette.

Action: SelectSeed to prepare a summary of the Company's orchard contract extension and management options, including financial scenarios, for next meeting.

12. News and Announcements

Kat – ITAC. ITAC reviewed applications for a new Comandra-resistant Pli orchards in the Spring. It also reviewed and updated seed orchard production forecasts for all interior species in the summer. ITAC will hold its next extension and business meetings on-line on Jan 19 & 20, respectively. Notifications and agendas were recently distributed.

Annette – CTAC. CTAC also reviewed coastal orchard production forecasts in the fall. A proposed extension meeting in December has been deferred. Species meetings are required to examine seed deficits in several BEC variants.

Brian for Juergen – GTAC. GCTAC held an on-line meeting Dec 1 for project updates, including Tongli Wang's work on forecasting species ranges using new climate data, *ex situ* seed collections, whitebark pine rust-screening and two new seed orchards, and a landscape-level genetic diversity study led by Hayley Tumas, UBC.

Pat announced **Stephen Joyce**, Manager, Seed Orchards, will retire at the end of January 2022. Stephen's 30+ year career included managing WFP's Lost Lake Seed Orchards, working in Fort Nelson for the Ministry, and overseeing BCTS' Seedling Services section. He also served on ITAC for many years, including as ITAC Chair. He is a well-respected manager who has set-up the Ministry's seed orchards and staff for continued success. Stephen offered Council a few parting words of sage advice. Thank you and congratulations Stephen. Formal announcements to follow.

13. Next meeting

Next meeting will be held in early April. Brian will issue a Doodle Poll to identify suitable dates.

14. In camera session

In camera session was for FGC members only. Guests left the meeting at this time.

Motion: Move to meeting *in camera* for FGC members only. Kat/Dan. Carried.

Action: A subcommittee of Keith, Annette and Bevin to review and prioritize items on the FGC dashboard.

Motion: Move to meeting out of *in camera*. Keith / Kat. Carried.

Adjournment

Motion: The meeting is hereby adjourned at 12 pm. Keith/Bob. Carried.

Draft minutes by B Barber, Dec 15, 2021

Approved by FGC April 6, 2022