

Minutes - Tuesday, January 17, 2023

Participants

Forest Genetics Council of BC: Pat Martin, Domenico Iannidinaro, Annette van Niejenhuis, Bob Johnson, Gord Chipman, Juergen Ehling, Katherine Spencer, Keith Thomas.

Regrets: Bevin Wigmore, Dan Mazerolle, Kona Van Diest, Jeff Mycock, Shannon Jonasson

Guests: Brian Barber & Kerry McGourlick, (SelectSeed), Dan Gaudet (VSOC).

Proceedings

This meeting was held via MS Teams video conference hosted by Pat Martin. Agenda and attachments were shared in advance and posted on [FGC's Secure Access webpage](#).

Summary of Motions

Motion: The minutes of the FGC meeting held Oct. 14, 2022 are hereby approved. Juergen/Kat. Carried.

Motion: The Industry Representation Guidelines for FGC Membership are hereby adopted. Annette/Bob. Carried.

Motion: FGC requests the BC Forest Genetics Society adopt the SelectSeed Director Terms Subcommittees' recommendations prior to the next Election of Directors to be held at the Company's AGM in June 2023. Keith/Annette. Carried.

Summary of Actions

Person(s)	Actions	When
Brian	Enquire about applicable Worksafe rule changes at upcoming Western Forestry Contractors Association Meeting in Victoria	Feb 1-3.
Annette	Discuss topic of forest professionals and seed collections/registration/allocations with Kevin Astridge, FIRM.	ASAP
Brian	Post Industry Representative guidelines on FGC's Governance webpage.	ASAP
Brian	Request the Company's lawyer draft amendments to the Company's Articles to reflect the subcommittee's recommendations.	June AGM
Pat	Report SelectSeed Director Appointments Subcommittee's recommendation to FGC at next in camera meeting.	April
FGC Co-Chairs	Provide SelectSeed with FGC's expectations for input to SelectSeed's 2023/24 Business Plan	March 1
Brian	to confirm date and location of next in-person business meeting.	ASAP

1. Welcome & Agenda

There being adequate notice served and a quorum of members present, the Co-chairs called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm, welcome participants and guests, confirm regrets (with no proxies), and confirmed the agenda.

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

#	Time	Min	Topic	Presenters
1	1:00	5	Welcome and Agenda,	Pat/Domenico
2	1:05	5	Minutes and Actions from Oct 14 Meeting	Brian
3	1:10	5	Safety Updates	All
4	1:15	20	Ministry Updates	Pat
5	1:35	10	FGC and SelectSeed Dashboards	Brian
6	1:45	20	TAC Chair Updates	Kat, Annette, Juergen
7	2:05	10	FGC Industry Nomination Policy	Domenico
8	2:15	15	SelectSeed Director Terms Subcommittee	Keith
9	2:30	10	SelectSeed Director Appointments Subcommittee	Pat
	2:40	15	<i>Break</i>	
10	2:55	20	SelectSeed Orchard Renewal Strategy Update	Brian/Kerry
11	3:15	15	SelectSeed Business Plan 2023/24	Brian
12	3:30	10	New Business	
13	3:40	5	News and Announcements	Brian
14	3:45	5	Next Meeting	
15	3:50	10	In camera session	FGC Members only

2. Minutes and Action items from Oct. 14, 2022 meeting.

Minutes of the FGC meeting held on Oct. 14, 2022, were circulated in advance.

Motion: The minutes of the FGC meeting held Oct. 14, 2022 are hereby approved. Juergen/Kat. Carried

Action Items from FGC meeting Oct. 14, 2022:

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Bevin	Share information about self-leveling lifts with other seed orchard managers	Completed
Kat	Share learnings from MoF cone harvest ladder safety audit with other seed orchard managers.	Completed
Juergen & Brian	Schedule GCTAC extension meeting winter 2022/23.	Completed See item 6
Domenico	Convene a meeting of FGC Industry reps to discuss policy and process for nominating industry positions by the end of October.	Completed See item 7

Brian	Share the draft terms of reference for the tree improvement priority matrix project with Keith, Kat and Annette.	In progress
Keith, Annette, and Juergen	SelectSeed Director Terms Sub-committee - to examine proposed changes to SelectSeed director terms and bring recommendation to Council.	See item 8
Keith, Kona, Bob and Pat	SelectSeed Director Appointments Sub-committee - to report to Council periodically and bring recommendations to Council.	See item 9
Brian	Issue Doodle Poll for next business meeting to be held in Jan 2023	Completed

3. Safety Reports

Members did not report on any safety-related incidents or initiatives. Questions were raised regarding the new Worksafe rules restricting persons under the age of 18 from performing high-risk activities, and what rules apply to seed orchard activities (e.g. use of ladders).

Action: Brian to enquire about applicable Worksafe rule changes at upcoming Western Forestry Contractors Association Meeting in Victoria on Feb 1-3.

4. Ministry Updates

Pat provided an update on Ministry staff and initiatives. On Oct 24, 2022, Albert Nussbaum, RPF, became the Deputy Chief Forester, Ministry of Forests. Albert previously served as Director of Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch (FAIB). Alberta will be the Office of the Chief Forester's main contact for FGC. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend today's meeting.

The Ministry of Forests has a new Minister, the Honorable [Bruce Ralston](#), His [mandate](#) letter identified the priorities of government, including resolving old growth deferrals, involving First Nations in decision-making and economic activities, and implementing changes to the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) via new regulations. Also of interest is mandate to plant half a billion trees in two years so "healthy forests are here for generations and reducing the effects of climate change". Forest genetic program is well positioned to assist government with this goal. The introduction of landscape level plans also represents an opportunity.

Forest Improvement and Research Management Branch has seen a lot of staff turn-over this past year. Michael Postma, Manager, Tree Seed Centre, will retire on Jan 20.

Pat also announced he will be retiring from the BC Public Service at the end of April. It is hoped a new director and FGC Co-chair will be in place in advance to provide some overlap.

Sabina Donnelly has also taken on a temporary assignment to assist with the modernization of the Seed Planning and Registry System.

5. FGC and SelectSeed Dashboard

Brian provided an update on the progress of several FGC and SelectSeed initiatives. Discussions focused on the proposed priority investment matrix (terms of reference in progress) and the new seed planning dashboards.

6. TAC Chair Updates

Kat – Interior TAC (ITAC). ITAC extension and business meeting were held on Jan 10-11. This on-line meeting featured a range of interesting topics that align with FGC's objectives. Over 100 people participated from across BC, Canada and USA, demonstrating the interest in BC's program and the benefit of holding this annual extension event. Next year's meeting will be a hybrid as there is lots in interest in holding in-person meetings. Funding for administrative support to organize and offset costs required (e.g. sponsorships from SelectSeed and others).

Annette – Coastal TAC (CTAC). An extension meeting will be held on Tues Feb 21 at UVic, with on-line option. Details to be provided. A coastal tree breeders meeting will be held in March - date TBD.

The number of seed users/coordinators on the coast have decreased – different than the Interior. Questions were raised at ITAC about the need for forest professionals to be the use of professionals in seed collections and deployment due to risks (i.e. incorrect BEC variant identification of source and deployment areas).

Action: Annette to discuss topic of forest professionals and seed collections/registration and seed allocations with Kevin Astridge, Seed Policy Officer.

Juergen – Genetic Conservation TAC (GCTAC). An GCTAC extension meeting was held at UVic on Dec. 14, 2022. The topics included tree species conservation status and seed collections, a UBC project assessing genetic diversity at the landscape level, and screening and protection of white bark and limber pine. A recording of the presentation is available at the following private link: <https://youtu.be/WTCsvNHS848>

On the same day, the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced whitebark pine will be listed as a Threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. See ruling [here](#). Questions were asked about log and lumber import prohibitions, but this subject is outside FGC's purview.

Pat noted whitebark pine conservation efforts will be featured in upcoming OCF presentations, including the ABCFP Conference. GCTAC's efforts were also commended.

7. FGC Industry Nomination Policy

On Oct 14, a sub-committee of FGC Industry reps was convened to discuss a policy and process for nominating industry positions. Domenico presented a policy drafted by the subcommittee with some subsequent revisions (separate attachment). These guidelines may be used to identify industry representative to serve on Council.

Existing members will assist Industry Co-Chair in identifying potential candidates. A short biography and/or statement of interest from the candidate(s) will be used to support the nominations forwarded to the Chief Forester by the Industry Co-chair via the Ministry Co-Chair.

Motion: The Industry Representation Guidelines for FGC Membership are hereby adopted. Annette/Bob. Carried.

Action: Brian to post Industry Representative guidelines on FGC's Governance webpage.

8. SelectSeed Director Terms Subcommittee

On Oct 14, a SelectSeed Director Terms Sub-committee was formed to examine proposed changes to SelectSeed director terms and bring recommendation to Council.

Keith provided a short report and the subcommittees recommendations to Council. The proposed changes included:

1. Term length of 3 years
2. Number of Terms: up to 4 – unless justified for more
3. Ensure Terms are staggered so that no more than 2 directors are renewed at any given time
 - a. Review current board member Terms
 - i. A hybrid approach may be required to align director renewals so that no more than 2 directors renew in any given year
4. Conflict of Interest
 - a. No board member shall be in a real or perceived conflict of interest
 - i. BC Government/FGC Conflict of Interest policy -whichever is more stringent - must be followed.
 - b. A board member cannot be on contract or employed with Select Seed at any time during their Tenure on the board nor within 6 months following the end of their Tenure.

The first three recommendations are consistent with recommendations received from SelectSeed's directors. Additional terms may be justified in certain circumstances. For example, if a director assumes an Officer's role (e.g. President or Treasurer).

The conflict of interest guidelines are similar to those for BC Public Service employees. As SelectSeed is considered an extension of government, it should be held to same high standards.

Brian noted it is not uncommon for private company Directors to also be employed to conduct specific work. SelectSeed's Articles, boilerplates clauses, also provide for such. There will, however, be no conflicts at the time the recommended amendments are considered for adoption at the Company's AGM in June.

Motion: FGC requests The BC Forest Genetics Society adopt the SelectSeed Director Terms Subcommittees' recommendations prior to the next Election of Directors to be held at the Company's AGM in June 2023. Keith/Annette. Carried.

Action: Brian to request the Company's lawyer draft amendments to the Company's Articles to reflect the subcommittee's recommendations.

9. SelectSeed Director Appointments Subcommittee

On Oct 14, FGC formed a separate subcommittee to review the nomination and appointment process for SelectSeed directors and to report to Council periodically.

Pat report the subcommittee has solicited the interest from directors whose terms expire in June. Kerry McGourick (President), Jack Woods, and Sally John have expressed interest in serving another term. The subcommittee has also reviewed the nomination criteria previously considered by FGC and those offered by the Company's directors, can compared these to the suite of experience and attributes of the current board. The subcommittee may also consider other potential candidates.

Next steps including some asking the Company's officers some additional questions, and reporting its recommendations to FGC at its next in camera meeting. Pat indicated they are trying to remain respectful. He also requested members support the forthcoming recommendations of the subcommittee, or otherwise be disruptive. The subcommittee was asked to communicate its rationale to others to achieve buy-in.

Action: Pat to report SelectSeed Director Appointments Subcommittee's recommendation to FGC at next in camera meeting.

10. SelectSeed Orchard Renewal Strategy Update

On April 5, 2022, SelectSeed provided a report and recommendations to advance its orchard renewal strategy.

Brian and Kerry provided a PowerPoint presentation that summarized progress on next steps included in the aforementioned report. This included completion of the Seed Planning Dashboards and discussions with partners and tree breeders.

A new financial forecast was also shared with updated assumptions for a few scenarios. In brief, the Company's cash reserves will be depleted if new orchards are not established, and financial support continues to be provided to FGC and the Ministry. The model can be used to evaluate orchard agreement terminations, extensions and new orchards investments.

It was noted the timing and availability of new orchard materials from the Ministry, and future seed needs by species remain uncertain. Private companies are also reluctant to invest in long-term ventures with so much uncertainty on the timber harvesting land-base.

SelectSeed would need to apply for new orchards through a Call for Expressions of Interest issued by the Ministry. SelectSeed and Partners cannot develop a business case nor negotiate new orchard agreements without knowing the potential size (e.g. # ramets), deployment area (BEC variants) and demand (#seedlings) of a new orchard. SelectSeed also has limited leverage to negotiate extensions for the existing agreements in the absence of new orchard investment opportunities.

The following recommendations were offered:

1. SelectSeed, VSOC and Ministry (FIRM) to draft termination agreement for the two SelectSeed/VSOC Fdi orchard agreements that expire at the end of 2023 – Dec '23

2. Ministry (FIRM) to update 2010 CF's Seed Orchard Principles to clarify allocation process for new CBST-based seed orchards - 2023/24
3. Ministry to confirm breeding timelines and CBST deployment areas for Sx, Fdi and Pli programs - as soon as practicable.
4. Ministry (FIRM) and TACs confirm CBST-based orchard needs and priorities - 2023/24
5. Ministry (FSPPB) to update the Provincial Seedling Needs Forecasts to 2049 – 2023/24.

These recommendations require action on the part of the Ministry. A discussion ensued but no conclusions were reached nor were any specific actions endorsed by Council. SelectSeed will continue to evaluate agreement extension options and new orchard opportunities.

11. SelectSeed Business Plan 2023/24

SelectSeed will begin preparing its business plan for 2023/24 in the weeks ahead. FGC input on the process, timelines and Company's priorities was requested before the its April 2023 meeting.

Action: FGC Co-Chairs to provide SelectSeed with FGC's expectations for input to SelectSeed's 2023/24 Business Plan by March 1.

12. New Business

No new business was identified.

13. News and Announcements

A recognition lunch was finally held for Henry Benskin, former President, SelectSeed, on Dec. 19, 2022 in Parksville. It was attended by Jack Woods and Brian. Henry was presented with a wood carving + plaque and coffee mug.

Michael Postma, Manager, Tree Seed Centre will retire on January 20, 2023.

CFGa and WFGa will hold a joint scientific conference in Vernon the week of July 10. Co-chairs are Brian Barber, President CFGa, and Nick Ukrainetz, President WFGa. Registration opens in February. See conference website at: <https://forestgenetics2023.ca>

15. Next meeting

Next meeting was proposed for early April. A face-to-face meeting/workshop at the Cowichan Lake Conference Centre was also suggested.

Action: Brian to confirm date and location of next in-person business meeting.

15. In camera session

In camera session for FGC members only. Guests will be asked to leave at this time.

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

Motion: Move to meeting *in camera* for FGC members only. Annette/Keith. Carried.

Adjournment

Motion: The meeting is hereby adjourned. Juergen/Kat. Carried.

Draft Minutes by B. Barber. Jan 30, 2023

Approved April 24, 2023