

Draft Minutes - General Meeting, April 24, 2024

Time/Date: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Participants:

Forest Genetics Council of BC:

Annette van Niejenhuis, Bevin Wigmore, Dan Mazerolle, Domenico Iannidinardo, Francesco Cortini, Juergen Ehling, Katherine Spencer, Keith Thomas, Kona Van Diest, and Leith McKenzie.

Regrets (proxy): Bob Johnson (Bevin), Jeff Mycock (Bevin), Shannon Jonasson

Guests:

Albert Nussbaum, Deputy Chief Forester; Kevin Astridge, FIRM; Brian Barber and Jack Woods, SelectSeed.

Proceedings

This meeting was held via video conference. Meeting materials were posted on the [FGC Secure Access webpage](#) in advance. Password: FGC2024

Summary of Actions

Person(s)	Actions	When
Keith	Discuss members interest serving an additional term and advance process to fill vacant industry rep positions.	June
Brian	Circulate draft terms of reference for seedling needs forecast project and solicit volunteers for steering committee.	ASAP
Francesco	Follow-up with Alvin regarding the timelines to complete the conservation strategy update.	ASAP
Domenico	Discuss First Nations engagement opportunities with Leonard Joe, Executive Director, First Nations Forestry Council.	ASAP
Brian	Attend First Nations Forestry Conference in Penticton	May 26-27
Committee	Draft SelectSeed directors' policy for FGC's approval	Prior to AGM
SelectSeed	Engage FGC on CEO succession planning	Fall 2024
Brian	Circulate Doodle poll for AGM meetings in June	Completed

1. Agenda

There being adequate notice served to members, and a quorum being present, Domenico called the meeting to order, confirmed attendees and presented the agenda.

#	Time	Min		Topic	Lead
1	9:00	5		Welcome and agenda	Keith/Domenico
2	9:05	10	A	Minutes and action items from Nov 17, 2023	Brian
3	9:15	5		Safety	All
4	9:20	10	B	FGC and SelectSeed dashboards	Brian
5	9:30	5		FGC membership	Keith/Domenico
6	9:35	15	C	CF response to FGC's Oct 12 actions & next steps	Keith
7	9:50	15		TAC meeting updates	Kat/Juergen/ Annette
8	10:05	15		LBIS budget recommendations	Keith/Francesco
9	10:20	10	D	Ministry cone and seed fee review	Kevin
	10:30			Break	
10	10:45	15		SelectSeed orchard agreements	Brian
11	11:00	20	E	SelectSeed 2024/25 business plan	Brian/Jack
12	11:20	20		SelectSeed directors' policy	Keith
13	11:40	5		Society and SelectSeed AGMs	Brian
14	11:45	5		News and announcements	All
15	11:50	10		<i>In camera</i> session	Keith/Domenico
	12:00			Adjournment	

Motion: The agenda for this meeting is hereby approved. Kat/Annette. Carried.

2. Minutes from Nov. 17, 2023 meeting

The draft minutes of the FGC general meeting, held via video conference on Nov. 17, 2023 were included as attachment A.

Motion: The minutes of the Nov. 17, 2023 meeting are hereby approved. Kona/Juergen. Carried.

Action Items from the Nov. 17, 2023 meeting

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Keith	Reconvene SelectSeed directors' subcommittee	See item 12
Kat	Add fire communications and contingency planning to the seed orchard pest management meetings Spring 2024.	In progress See item 3
Kat and Shannon	Discuss adding aspen propagation to ITAC or interior broadleaves committee meeting.	Dr. Thomas presented at ITAC

Keith and Kevin	Update the action plan, circulate to FGC for review next week, then, subject to comments received, present to the chief forester for approval/direction.	Completed
Brian	Circulate Doodle poll for FGC meeting in April 2024	Completed

3. Safety

Members are invited to report on any other safety-related incidents or initiatives within the purview of FGC. Fire planning was currently underway. Communications between seed orchard managers will be discussed at an interior meeting.

It was noted WorkSafeBC introduced new first aid requirements effective in November 2024. All orchard managers are encouraged to review and note changes.

4. FGC Membership

Domenico’s 3-year term as FGC Industry co-chair ends on May 17, 2024. Bevin’s, Bob’s and Juergen’s 3-year terms end on Sept. 9, 2024. An (interior) industry representative position remains vacant. Domenico has discussed potential candidate(s) to fill the latter position with the Community Forest Association.

Members discussed process and timelines to fill these positions, including guidance in the chief forester’s [FGC terms of reference](#) (May 2022, s. 3.2) and the [industry representative guidelines for FGC membership](#) (Jan. 2023).

Action: Keith to discuss members interest serving an additional term and advance process to fill vacant industry rep positions.

5. FGC and SelectSeed Dashboards

The FGC and SelectSeed dashboards are provided as Attachment B. Brian provided an overview of changes since November. Progress on all FGC and SelectSeed actions was noted, with the exception of FGC membership (as noted above), the seed orchard directory, and a progress report for FGC’s 2021-2025 strategic plan.

6. CF response to FGC’s Oct 12 action items & next steps

On March 20, 2024, the chief forester provided a response to FGC’s recommendations arising from its [Seed Supply Challenge Dialogue meeting](#) held on October 13, 2023 (see attachment C).

Keith reviewed the priority actions identified in the CF’s letter. These included:

1. Update seedling demand and supply forecasts using the existing tool, and to reflect changes to the THLB, fires and 2BT.

2. Develop a seed supply strategy that assesses current orchard capacity, and identifies gaps, quick wins, and longer-term needs.
3. Introduce the First Nations Forestry Council to FGC by hosting one of its meetings at the Kalamalka Research Station, and discuss the best ways to engage FNs.
4. Update the genetic conservation strategy in consideration of CC and Canada's commitments to biodiversity under COP 15.

Kevin said a draft terms of reference for the seedling needs project has been prepared. Forsite is available to update the methodology and forecasts determined in 2019 under contract with SelectSeed. Several persons have also been identified to serve on the project's steering committee.

The second priority action will follow completion of the first. Juergen reported Alvin Yanchuk has initiated an update of the forest genetic conservation strategy. Opportunities to engage First Nations were also explored.

Action: Brian to circulate draft terms of reference for seedling needs forecast project and solicit volunteers for steering committee.

Action: Francesco to follow-up with Alvin regarding the timelines to complete the conservation strategy update.

Action. Domenico to discuss First Nations engagement opportunities with Leonard Joe, Executive Director, First Nations Forestry Council.

Action: Brian to attend First Nations Forestry Conference in Penticton, May 26-27, 2024.

7. TAC Chair Updates

Juergen Ehling, Genetic Conservation TAC Chair, provided an overview of the GCTAC meeting held at UVic on March 18. Andrea Coulter, Senior Policy Analyst, WLRS, was invited to provide an update on the CBD target to conserve 30% of total land by 2030, as committed by Canada and BC. Presentation also included updates on climate modelling, *ex situ* collections, and whitebark pine restoration. Budget recommendations for projects proposed in 2024/25 were also reviewed and forwarded to FIRM.

Annette van Niejenhuis, Coastal TAC Chair, provided an overview of the coastal breeding meeting held at WFP's Saanich Forestry Centre on April 10. A motion to support the budget requested for coastal projects was also supported.

Kat Spencer, ITAC chair, provided an update on the ITAC meeting held Jan 18-19.

8. Ministry LBIS budget for 2024/25

Keith and Francesco provided an overview of the proposed 2024/25 activities and budget requested under the Ministry's LandBased Investment Strategy funding

envelope (LBIS) for tree breeding, genecology, climate change and adaptation research, and conservation.

Table 1. Interior budget 2024/25 compared to 2023/24

	Forest Health	Value	Resilience	2024	2023	2023
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ Actual	\$ Ask
Pli	130,000	90,000	-	220,000	210,000	242,000
Py	-	220,000	-	220,000	150,000	158,000
Pwi	65,000	-	-	65,000	25,000	35,000
Sx	30,000	110,000	-	140,000	80,000	75,000
Lw	-	30,000	-	30,000	85,000	80,000
Fdi	20,000	72,000	-	92,000	190,000	235,000
Cwi	-	73,000	-	73,000	100,000	115,000
*CCAR	-	-	209,800	209,800	111,000	233,000
Total				1,049,800	951,000	1,173,000

*Climate Change Adaptation Research

Table 2. Coastal budget 2024/25 compared to 2023/24

	Forest Health	Value	Resilience	FY25	FY24	FY24
	\$	\$	\$	\$ Ask	\$ Actual	\$ Ask
Pwc	12,000	-	-	12,000	10,000	10,000
Cw	64,500	96,800	-	161,300	166,300	284,500
Fdc	73,700	122,800	49,000	245,500	191,900	264,000
Ss	41,800	10,400	-	52,200	28,000	42,000
Yc	-	2,000	-	2,000	15,000	35,000
Broadl.	7,600	15,000	7,600	30,200	45,000	36,000
Hw	-	38,000	20,400	58,400	48,800	30,000
Abies	-	-	45,400	45,400	25,000	53,000
*CCAR	-	-	209,800	209,800	111,000	77,000
Total				804,800	631,000	831,500

Table 3. Genetic Conservation budget 2024/25

Proponent	2023-24 Allocation	2024-25 Recommendation	Rank	Description
Tree Seed Centre (Kolotelo)	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	2	1. Ex-situ seed collections 2. Seed bank Management / Testing
Forest Genetics (Cartwright)	\$ 43,600	\$ 44,000	4	1. Field screening of whitebark pine 2. Whitebark parent tree scion collection. 3. Maintain ex situ/ inter situ reserves (Hayley) 4. CLRS Nursery & Clone Banks
Whitebark Pine (Murray)	\$ 28,500	\$ 29,500	4	1. Seed Extraction, Stratification, Sowing at Private Nursery 2. Kalamalka Research Station (labeling, transplanting, maintenance, health assessments) 3. Travel and Supplies 4. Complete 2 new Field Trials
UBC Centre for Forest Conservation Genetics (Aitken & Tumas)	\$ 42,225	\$ 38,333	3	Genotyping 768 samples (two 384-well plates) UBC Overhead 25%
Conservation Catalogue & CC Impacts (Wang)	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,000	1	Forest Genetics Conservation - Climate BC/NA Operating funds for 1. Webhosting/computer 2. Publication fees
Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation	\$ -		6	Rootstock Grafting Seed orchard mgmt
Total	\$ 170,325	\$ 168,833		

Keith said funding expectations should be tempered in consideration of the government's recent budget and other priorities. Funding allocation decisions will be announced later in the year.

9. Ministry's cone and seed fee schedule review

In March, the Ministry issued a survey on proposed revisions to its seed prices and cone and seed processing fees. New fees were proposed to reflect significant cost increases. SPAR clients and others were invited to participate in an on-line survey. The Ministry's proposed changes and a backgrounder in attachment D.

Kevin reviewed the next steps, including approval by Treasury Board, and amendments to the [Tree Seeds and Services Regulation](#) through an order in council. If approved, the new fees will take effect on August 1, 2024.

10. SelectSeed orchard agreements

In December 2023, SelectSeed's two Fdi orchard agreements with the Vernon Seed Orchard Company (VSOC) expired. VSOC will continue to manage these orchards.

SelectSeed continues to manage 11 seed orchards under agreements with four other companies, plus two of its own orchards in Quesnel (see Business Plan 2024/25 for details). Ten of the Company's agreements expire by the end of 2026. New orchard opportunities for SelectSeed may not be available until after completion of the action items listed in agenda item 6.

In the interim, SelectSeed seeks FGC's approval to proceed with negotiating new agreements with two of its existing partners. 1) Extend the lodgepole pine (Pli) PG 237 and CP 238 agreements with Hansinger for five years, and 2) Rejuvenate a portion of Douglas-fir (Fdi) 321 orchard with PRT Growing Services.

These new agreements will help secure provincial seed supply and provide SelectSeed with additional revenue beyond the term of its existing agreements and until the Company's new Pli orchards in Quesnel start producing.

Rejuvenating a portion of the Fdi orchard will also help to maintain its vigour without compromising seed supply, and will develop orchard establishment expertise. There is currently a three-year supply of Fdi seed in inventory, and another large crop is expected in 2024. Second cycle Fdi selections will not be available from the Ministry until 2035.

Hansinger and PRT are interested in continuing their business partnerships with SelectSeed. The parties also wish to negotiate the terms and conditions for new agreements in confidence. Draft MoUs will be signed subject to FGC's approval.

The extension of the Pli agreements was considered prudent in consideration of low Class A seed supplies. However, the reduction in harvesting and reforestation should be considered to avoid creating overcapacity of seed orchards.

Suggested Motion: SelectSeed is approved to proceed with negotiating and entering into new agreements with 1) Hansinger to extend their two Pli agreements for another five years, and 2) PRT to rejuvenate a portion of Fdi orchard 321. Annette/Bevin. Carried.

11. SelectSeed 2024/25 Business Plan

SelectSeed's business plan for the fiscal year 2024/25 was included as attachment E.

Brian provided an overview of the plan, including SelectSeed's orchard operations, services and support provided to FGC and the Ministry, and budget. Jack Woods, director, responded to comments and questions. Keith recommended a few minor edits.

Suggested Motion: SelectSeed's business plan for 2024/25, as amended, is hereby approved. Annette/Dan. Carried.

12. SelectSeed Directors' Policy

At SelectSeed AGM held June 21 2023, amendments were made to the Company's articles to change the directors term length from two to three years (Article 14). Proposed amendments to director eligibility/conflicts of interest (Article 17.6) were deferred pending further review and drafting of a policy that clarifies the directors' nomination criteria and process, and maximum number of terms a director can serve, with exceptions.

Rod Willis and Jim Burbee's terms expire at the Company's next AGM. Rod and Jim have expressed interest in serving another term for up to three years. A draft directors' policy needs to be prepared prior to considering their reappointments (or other nominations) in advance of the Company's AGM in June.

Keith, Bevin, Annette, and Juergen agreed to form a committee to draft the policy. It was agreed a member of the Board should participate in this committee Jack will confirm the Board's representative.

Action: Committee to draft SelectSeed directors' policy for FGC's approval in advance of the AGM.

13. SelectSeed and Society AGMs

SelectSeed will hold its next Directors' meeting on June 3 to review the Company's auditor's report, financial statements, and annual report for 2023/24.

These reports will subsequently be presented to its shareholder, the BC Forest Genetics Society, for approval at the Company's AGM.

The proposed dates for the Company's AGM are **June 12-14, 2024**. The AGM will be preceded by the Society's AGM and followed by a general meeting of the FGC. Agendas for the AGMs will be similar to those of previous years.

Action: Brian to send Doodle poll to confirm dates for AGMs in June.

14. News and announcements

On April 15, a ceremony was held at Green Timbers, Surrey, to celebrate the planting of 10 billion trees in BC since 1930, and one billion trees planted by BCTS since it was founded in 2003. See news release [here](#).

Upcoming meetings include:

- North American Forest Genetics Society, June 10-14, Oaxaca, Mexico.
- BC Seed Orchard Association (BCSOA), June 18-19, 2024, Sidney, BC.
See agenda and registration [here](#).
- IUFRO World Forestry Congress, June 23-29, 2024, Stockholm Sweden.

Domenico was thanked for his services to FGC over the past twelve years, including two terms as FGC's industry co-chair. Domenico expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the work of Council, and expressed his wishes for its continued success. "Keep up the good work!". A recognition event for Domenico will be scheduled in conjunction with an upcoming meeting.

15. *In camera session*

Motion to move the meeting in camera. Dan/Juergen. Carried

Council wished to convey to SelectSeed that the CEO succession plan is a priority and Council is looking to support and collaborate with this. It would be appropriate for the Board to put forward an options analysis that could be part of the ongoing strategic planning work underway at Council.

Action: SelectSeed directors to engage FGC on CEO succession planning

Motion to move meeting out of camera. Kat/Dan. Carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Annette/Juergen. Carried.

Minutes by B. Barber, June 1, 2024

Approved June 12, 2024