

General Meeting - Minutes

9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Friday, January 24, 2025

Participants:

FGC: Annette van Niejenhuis, Bevin Wigmore, Bob Johnson, Dan Mazerolle, Juergen Ehling, Leith McKenzie, Katherine Spencer, Keith Thomas, Kona Van Diest, Lise van der Merwe.

Regrets: Dan Gaudet, Shannon Jonasson

Guests: Albert Nussbaum, Deputy Chief Forester; Kevin Astridge, FIRM; Brian Barber and Sally John, SelectSeed; and Kathy Swift, Forsite.

Proceedings

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

Summary of Action Items

Person(s)	Actions	When
Keith and Annette	Discuss the vacant industry and CTAC chair positions.	ASAP
Brian	Brief Dan and Lise on FGC & SelectSeed governance.	ASAP
Keith	Discuss TAC reviews of Ministry genetics section budget and plans with Annette and Juergen.	ASAP
Brian, Kat, Annette and Kevin	Discuss process and timelines to review seed supply gaps and opportunities prior to completion of seedling needs forecast project.	Before March 31
Lise	Provide updated breeding program Gantt charts	April 9
Kat, Lise and Bevin	Review ITAC request for an economic benefits of tree improvement report and recommend next steps.	April 9
Keith, Annette, Kat, Lise and Brian	Develop plan for reviewing FGC's current strategic plan and preparing the next one.	April 9
Keith, Annette and Dan M,	Convene a directors' nomination committee and invite a representative from SelectSeed.	End of Feb.

Brian	Seed orchard crop projection reports for seed users issued early summer	tbc
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1. Agenda

There being adequate notice served to members, and a quorum being present, the chair called the meeting to order, confirmed participants and reviewed the agenda.

#	Time	Min		Topic	Lead
1	9:00	5		Welcome & agenda	Keith
2	9:05	5		FGC membership updates	Keith/Annette
3	9:10	10	A	Minutes and action items from Oct & Dec 6 meetings	Brian
4	9:20	10		Safety updates	All
5	9:30	15	B	FGC and SelectSeed dashboards	Brian
6	9:45	15		Ministry budget and updates	Keith/Albert
7	10:00	15		Seedling needs forecast project	Brian
8	10:15	15		ITAC meetings Jan 15-16	Kat
	10:30	15		<i>Coffee break</i>	
9	10:45	30	C	Extension	Brian, Kat, Annette, Juergen
10	11:15	25	D	FGC Strategic Plan 2021-25 Review	Brian/Keith
11	11:40	5	E	SelectSeed AGM and director elections	Brian
12	11:45	5		News and announcements	All
13	11:50	5		Next meetings	Brian
14	11:55	5		<i>In camera session</i>	Keith
15	12:00			Adjournment	

Motion: The agenda for this meeting as amended is hereby approved. Kat/Bob. Carried

2. FGC Membership

Dan Gaudet, General Manager, Vernon Seed Orchard Co., was appointed to council for a three-year term on November 8, 2024. Kona was re-appointed for another 3-year term.

Keith reported Annette will be appointed Industry co-chair, and Lise van der Merwe, new Manager, Forest Genetics Section, as a Ministry representative. The appointment letters are currently in the chief forester's office. Two industry positions remain vacant.

Action: Keith and Annette to discuss the vacant industry and CTAC chair positions ASAP.

Action: Brian to brief Dan and Lise on FGC & SelectSeed governance ASAP.

3. Minutes and Actions from October 17 and December 6 meetings.

Draft minutes from the meeting held at Cowichan Lake held on October 17 were included as attachment A.

Motion: The minutes of the Oct 17, 2024, meeting are hereby approved.
Dan M./Bevin. Carried

Action Items from Oct. 17, 2024:

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Kat	Share a Kalamalka seed orchard incident report with orchard managers	Kat to check
Keith, Annette, Bevin and Bob	Discuss the vacant FGC industry positions.	In progress
Keith	Report on Ministry budget allocations to the forest genetics program for fiscal 2024/25.	See # 6
Keith	Provide direction to TAC chairs with expectations re reviews of Ministry business plans, projects and budgets	In progress*
Francesco	Share link with several recent Ministry videos	Completed
Brian	Set up an extraordinary meeting in December to develop an FGC extension plan.	Completed See # 9
Brian	Send out doodle polls for proposed FGC meeting dates in 2025	Completed see # 13

***Action:** Keith to discuss TAC review of Ministry genetics section budget and plans with Annette and Juergen ASAP.

Action items from FGC extension meeting on Dec. 6

No minutes were recorded for the extraordinary FGC extension meeting held on December 6. An extension map, produced by Kathy Swift, Forsite, under contract with SelectSeed, was reviewed, updated, and included the following action items:

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Kat, Brian, Annette, Jurgen	Review draft forest genetics posters	In progress See #9

Kat	Check status of Ministry tree seed poster and forest carbon & tree improvement paper	Under review
Brian	Update FGC's conservation panel with photo of Clark's nuthatch	Completed see below
Co-chairs	Add extension initiatives as a standing agenda item	Completed See #9



FGC's new display banners

4. Safety

Members were invited to report on any safety-related incidents or initiatives within the purview of FGC. No news or incidents were reported.

5. FGC and SelectSeed Dashboards

The FGC and SelectSeed dashboards were provided as Attachment B.

Brian reviewed changes since October. Noted were FGC's strategic plan reporting (see #10) and delays in completing SelectSeed's strategic plan, partner negotiations and property subdivision. Also noted was SelectSeed's projected deficit for fiscal 2024/25 due to a poor Pli crop and a significant drop in seed sales.

The deficit could be partially mitigated if the ministry does not invoice SelectSeed for the full \$110k provided under their MoU and if BCTS/FIP purchase additional seed before the end of fiscal. Keith and Kona will consider these respective options.

Members also confirmed their interest in maintaining these dashboards.

6. Ministry budget and updates

Keith reported that the Ministry's land-base investment strategy (LBIS) is no longer internally managed as a separate account. LBIS funds were re-allocated to ministry and branch base budgets. The (former) LBIS allocation for FIRM's forest genetics section operations, excluding salaries, was reduced to \$1.7M in fiscal 2024/25.

In addition to its base budget, FIRM manages a cost-recovery account for its seed orchard and tree seed centre (non-stewardship) operations and receives additional funding from the ministry's forest carbon/climate change programs.

Albert provided an overview of the premier's Jan 16 [mandate letter](#) to Hon. Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests. The minister's direction includes program reviews in collaboration with the ministry of finance. The letter also includes an annual harvest target of 45M m³, which is different from and lower than the current AAC of 61M m³ and higher than last year's actual harvest of 32M m³. Albert estimates this harvest level, plus the ministry's forest investment program (FIP), could sustain a provincial planting program of 300M seedlings/year, same # as the government's election promise.

7. Seedling needs forecast project update

As of January 16, approved seedling requests for 2025 sowing were ~200M, plus an additional 12M in pending status for 212M total. The current total is 20M seedlings fewer compared to the same period last year. Source: Tree Seed Centre.

Brian provided an update on the seedling needs forecast project, which will estimate annual seedlings requirements by species, BEC variant, MU, and funding source to 2054. The following steps will be completed by March 15, 2025:

- Review and clean data inputs, fill in MU gaps with expert reviews
- Add BCTS and FIP forecasts
- Add CCISS sensitivity analysis
- Compile, prepare report and provincial spreadsheet

The analysis is being done by Forsite Consulting under contract with SelectSeed. Total cost is projected to exceed the \$55k budget by ~\$8K. Brian will discuss funding contribution options with the ministry.

Following the completion, FGC can advance challenge dialogue priority #2... “Develop a seed supply strategy that assesses current orchard capacity, identifies gaps, quick wins, and longer-term needs.” This review will be undertaken in collaboration with ITAC, CTAC and others.

Action: Brian, Kat, Annette and Kevin to discuss process and timelines to review seed supply gaps and opportunities prior to completion of seedling needs forecast project.

8. ITAC extension and business meetings – Jan 15-16, 2025

Kat provided a summary of the ITAC extension meeting, which was attended by ~230 persons from across BC, Canada and the US on-line each day. The presentations over the 1.5 days included a mix of operational forestry and genetics research. Recordings of the presentations, with the exception of those by FIRM’s genetics section staff, will be posted on the ITAC webpage later. Lise will provide a summary report of the ministry’s breeding programs later in the spring.

Kat reported several changes to ITAC membership. Discussions at the business meeting included need for clarification regarding setting priorities and the Ministry’s process for releasing new materials and seed orchards. This request was passed along to the Ministry’s policy group.

The following motion was also approved at the ITAC business meeting: FGC to produce a report on the economic benefits of tree improvement. It was subsequently noted there are few recent papers on this topic are available, including “Economic gain of genetically-selected coastal Douglas-fir” by Isaac-Renton et al, [Forest Policy and Economics 171 \(2025\) 103397](#).

Action: Lise to provide updated breeding program Gantt charts for the April 9 meeting.

Action: Kat, Lise and Bevin to review ITAC’s request for an economic benefits of tree improvement report and recommend next steps.

Action: Brian to post article “Economic gain of genetically-selected coastal Douglas-fir.” on FGC website ASAP.

9. FGC extension – subcommittee report and priorities

Kathy Swift joined the meeting for this agenda item. She reviewed the latest version of the FGC extension map, which identifies target audiences, existing extension products/services and gaps/needs.

Action items from FGC’s Dec. 6 meeting above, with additional considerations and ideas:

- First nations - listen, understand values, needs and concerns first
- Invite FNs to upcoming FGC/TAC meetings and field tours (ongoing)

- Podcasts vs videos for wide outreach
- Products: forest genetics calendar, bookmarks
- Provide links to relevant initiatives & publications to FGC e-Newsletter
- Provide video to explain Dashboard use (following review & updates after seedling needs forecast report completed) early summer
- Seed orchard crop projection reports for seed users issued early summer

It was also recognized that many persons in the forest genetics community provide extension services as part of their regular duties e.g. hosting tours at seed orchards and research stations, interviews. Collecting these statistics may be useful, but onerous.

Kat, Annette, Juergen, Kathy and Brian met several times to develop a new forest genetics diagram. A draft concept was shared at the meeting. Further improvements are required before a draft is ready for review by FGC and others.

Except for advancing FN engagement, they recommended the forest genetics diagram be completed before FGC pursue other extension initiatives.

10. FGC Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Keith raised the need to review FGC's 2021-25 strategic plan and prepare another plan for the next five years. See [Strategic Plan](#) attachment D. It was recommended FGC's goals, objectives and performance measures should be reviewed and progress reported before commencing work on a new strategic plan for the period 2026-2030.

It was recommended that broad input, including from Canadian Forest Service, be solicited while preparing the next plan to improve buy-in and success with implementation.

Action: Keith, Annette, Kat, Lise and Brian to develop plan for reviewing FGC's current strategic plan and preparing the next one – by April 9.

11. SelectSeed AGM and director elections

The SelectSeed Directors Policies approved by FGC on May 28, 2024, require a nomination committee be struck four months in advance of the AGM. See attachment E.

SelectSeed's AGM is scheduled for Thursday, June 19. Jack Woods' and Sally John's terms as the company directors end on this date. They will confirm their interest in standing for re-appointment before the end of March.

Action: Keith, Annette and Dan M. to convene a directors' nomination committee and invite a representative from SelectSeed before the end of February.

12. News and announcements

Dan M. announced the Canadian Wood Fibre Centre (CWFC) will be dissolved effective April 1, 2025. CWFC staff and programs will be integrated into the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) and its regional offices.

The CFS, SelectSeed (on behalf of FGC), VSOC and PRT are sponsors of the IUFRO 7.03.11 Resistance Mechanisms and Breeding workshop to be held in Vernon, June 1-6. See link below.

13. Meetings in 2025

FGC-related meetings are noted in bold font. Confirmed attendees at other meetings are noted in brackets.

- Jan 29-31 Western Forestry Contractors Association, Victoria (Leith, Brian)
- Feb 5-7 Forest Professionals BC, Victoria (Annette, Brian, Lise)
- Feb 19-20 [Northern Silviculture Committee](#), Prince George (Frederik Vroom, Nick U.)
- Feb 19 [Coastal Silviculture Committee](#), UVI, Nanaimo (Bob)
- Mar 3-5 [Southern Interior Silviculture Committee](#), Kamloops (Leith)
- Mar 5 [Inland Empire Tree Improvement Cooperative \(IETIC\)](#), Coeur d'Alene, ID
- TBD CTAC and GCTAC meetings
- April 9 FGC business meeting: SelectSeed's 2025/26 business plan
- June 1-6 [IUFRO 7.03.11 Resistance Mechanisms and Breeding](#), Vernon, BC
- June 10 Open House, SelectSeed Quesnel
- June 19 SelectSeed and BC Forest Genetics Society AGMs
- Aug 11-15 [Canadian Forest Genetics Association conference](#), Ottawa

14. In camera session

No motion to move meeting in camera was made.

15. Adjournment

The meeting is hereby adjourned at 12 pm. Annette/Bevin.

Draft minutes by Brian Barber, Jan 28, 2025

Approved April 9, 2025