

COQUI FROG WORKING GROUP

Minutes to meeting on Oct. 7, 2002, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Komohana Agric. Complex, Hilo HI

1. ATTENDANCE (see attachment)

- Coordinator: Arnold Hara
- Facilitator: Francis Benevides, Jr.
- Recorder: Chris Jacobsen

2. INTRODUCTIONS [Group]

3. OLD ACTION ITEMS:

- Invite a state parks representative to discuss what they plan to do to control coquis on their lands [F. Benevides] **Status: OPEN**
- Contact Invasive Species Committee's Christy Martin as potential Public Relations person for all coqui inquiries [M. Craig] **Status: OPEN**
- Invite a political representative to discuss legislation [B. Kenoi] **Status: OPEN**

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5. Public Education [W. Kenoi, County of HI and B. Mautz, UHH]

- W. Mautz discussed visit of English film crew
- T. Ohashi gave 2 presentations to community groups and declined on a 3rd invitation. There is much interest.
- M. Craig: Maui County Fair has an educational booth , Los Angeles Times has done a story.

6. Research [A. Hara, UHM and R. Sugihara, USDA]

- A Hara updated group on H. Ako's (UH-CTAHR) research
 - * 16% citric acid solution can be lethal to coqui frogs especially when applied as a spray in ample amounts (200 micro-liter of liquid).
 - * Acid pH may be a factor; pH of citric acid is similar to stomach acid, which sterilizes much of the food as we eat.
 - * The toxicity of citrate suggests that it is a chelator.
- Vapor heat treatments have been completed; studies of refugia have started with installation of bamboo traps at the Puainako makai site; initial assessment of Lave Tree State Park coqui frog population will take place over 4 consecutive nights this week
- F. Benevides: UHM and USDA did an initial assessment of Manuka State Park and found coqui infestation over at least 6 acres (initial presence at the park is estimated at 1.5 years ago). SPL readings were relatively low (about 61 dB at 7:30 pm) which might be due to the relatively dry climate in the area. An effective abatement effort is still possible if we act soon (F Benevides).
- B. Sugihara: DOA did not seek renewal of their Section 18 emergency use exemption of caffeine. USDA Wildlife Services (M. Pitzler) has applied for their own Section 18 label. Vocal critics of its use have contacted various offices/organizations (Governor and EPA). Non-target impacts of caffeine spray on arthropods are short-term, with community recovery within 10 days post-treatment Dead frogs were found; in a group of ferns, 14 were found in 30 ft² area. There was also a noticeable reduction in coqui calling after spraying. His research found that 15-16% concentration will kill frogs. Field trials and phytotoxicity tests are planned to also look at improving spray techniques (hydrostatic/fogging, etc.) with HARC (formerly HSPA).

7. Nurseries [J. Runnells, Big Island Association of Nurserymen] D. Fell
 - J. Runnells: There was a meeting last Tuesday attended by industry with presentations by A. Hara and L. Nakahara, among others. Industry is concerned with cost and time for vapor heat treatment. Nurseries on the Kona side need someone to speak to them as well.
8. Quarantine [M. Enriques, HI DOA, Plant Quarantine] V. Kashiwamura, D. Cravalho
 - M. Enriques: “Why does Hawaii have so many invaders?” is a recurring question. A factor is the limitations of inspection staff. A study that inspected 100% of products determined that a normal crew catches 25% of the pests. With current staff, 100% inspection is not feasible. It disrupts the flow of commerce too greatly. There were complaints to the Governor’s office during the study. Trying to get funding for more staff/inspectors.
9. Legislative [G. Santos, BIISC]
 - G. Santos: Working for new laws with “teeth” for invasive species (not only coqui frogs). Law needs to coordinate and determine jurisdiction. Hope to have O`ahu legislators appreciate that it is not just a Hawaii or Maui problem and not one that can satisfactorily be solved with a quarantine against those islands.
10. Tracking Funding & Resources [T. Ohashi, USDA]
 - T. Ohashi: He e-mailed a request to a list of people to divulge information on their sources of funding. Only A. Hara responded. People either afraid to give the info or don’t take the committee seriously.
11. Public Relations (see action item regarding Christy Martin)
12. Operations [S. Veriato, USDA; G. Santos, BIISC, M. Craig MISC]
 - Maui was mainly collecting non-target data but did try to kill frogs as well.
 - Eventually a way to prioritize the list of sites for spraying will need to be developed.
 - What is holding back our use of citric acid? A label still needs to be developed for citric acid. The distributor will need to draft the label. Spraying in parks will likely require an experimental use permit.

13. AGENDA ITEMS

- 1) Invite a legislator to speak to the group.
 - The concern is legislators will come up with a knee-jerk solution under pressure. Nursery is concerned with potential knee jerk reactions (i.e., quarantine of Big Island). D. Fell: Do we need to take a punitive approach to this problem?
 - It was decided to come up with a plan and then tell legislators how they can help us. The action item is tabled until a later date when we are ready with a plan.
- 2) Plans for Lava Tree State Park (LTSP)
 - Working on a large project for LTSP that might include land clearing. Ideally this would serve as a demonstration and park improvement project.
 - D. Fell questioned whether the cure is worse than the problem. Group seems to have a biased viewpoint when it comes to “alien plants”. Will the resources be committed to see this through? What about when the frogs return? Cutting down trees or land clearing will be initially very unsightly and will be opposed by many people.
 - Need to determine what critics oppose. CHIRP seems to be motivated more by opposition to the use of caffeine rather than a great love of the frog. Animal Rights

Hawaii will likely oppose injury to the frogs. In our favor we have the vast majority of the people who want something done. Might need to get county support for security for operations. The Outdoor Circle might not oppose the removal of the albizia trees in the park. Endemic reforestation could be included as part of replanting.

6. NEXT MEETING

- Monday, November 4, 2002; 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.; UH Manoa CES, Komohana Agricultural Complex, 875 Komohana Street, Conference Room A (upstairs), Hilo, HI