

SFCC COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 11th June 2014, 10:30
Marine Scotland Freshwater Laboratory, Pitlochry

Agreed Minutes

Present:

James Hunt (JH)	Tweed Foundation (Chair)
Simon McKelvey (SMK)	Cromarty Firth Fisheries Trust
Julian MacLean (JCM)	Marine Scotland Science
Jeff Gibbons (JG)	Marine Scotland
Jackie Graham (JaG)	Galloway Fisheries Trust
Nick Chisholm (NC)	Annan Rivers Trust
Sean Dugan (SD)	SFCC
Alistair Duguid (AD)	SEPA
Joanna Girvan (JoG)	Forth Fisheries Trust
Mark Bilsby (MB)	River Dee Trust
Chris Horrill (CH)	RAFTS
Keith Williams (KW)	Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Chris Daphne (CD)	Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trust

Actions in red and summarised at the end

Apologies for absence:

Marshall Halliday

Shona Marshall

Alistair Stephen

1. Minutes of previous meeting, review of action points and matters arising

JH commended the good turnout to the SFCC committee.

AP 4/3: JH confirmed that the current SFCC insurance policy does cover SFCC members when delivering SFCC training courses.

AP 4/4: JH is in discussion with an auditor in the Strathspey area (through Bob Laughton) to audit the SFCC accounts.

AP 4/5: Free OS data possibilities for SFCC have not been progressed due to other priorities. The possibility of using the One Scotland Mapping Agreement with SEPA needs further exploration

2. Chairman's report

JH mentioned the fisheries management review as the most significant priority in recent months. This involved consulting with committee and then the membership. JH also spent time on administrative tasks such as pursuing membership subscriptions along with general support provided to the SFCC manager. Intrelate discussions are continuing but are protracted. JH also helped to deliver the IFM/SFCC smolt monitoring workshop.

3. Manager's report

SD has spent more time on SFCC compared to BSWG activities in April and May, and as of the beginning of June will be spending a minimum of 4 days per week on BSWG in order to complete the ministerial report. Main areas of time allocation:

- Annual Report
- CEH Licensing
- Website development and feedback
- MSS Electrofishing Data Request Project
- Implementation of IFM points accreditation for all SFCC courses. (6 points for each day of SFCC training).
- Recent GIS course success and GIS E-learning
- Smolt monitoring workshop organisation

- Team leader refresher
- Scale reading online learning resource
- Collaboration with IBIS- and attendance at SCENE Opening (Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment).

JH commented that despite the increased limitations in SD time, he was still continuing to take a number of initiatives forward. Committee agreed that he is continuing to do a good job.

4. **Habitat**

SD introduced the habitat discussion by highlighting the following 3 items that must be progressed:

1. Updating and refining the SFCC habitat protocol
2. Adoption of handheld digital recording methods
3. Future SFCC training courses

AK suggested this is an opportunity to re-assess what SFCC members are doing in terms of data collection and how they are relating this data to smolt output or to assessing impacts for example. Committee agreed that SFCC need to involve SEPA and MSS. SFCC and other protocols need to be available for members to choose for their own requirements. JH suggested a tender process for carrying out this work which would be overseen by a small SFCC, MSS, and SEPA working group. CH pointed out that it will be a major challenge to get member agreement on the protocol with a need for a database to hold the data. Other committee members suggested that a database is not needed at this point in time. SM suggested limiting the number of compulsory fields in the database. Committee agreed that what is required is a document that defines the research questions for habitat surveys and the protocols needed to answer these questions. At the first meeting, clear timescales, goals, and end results need to be defined.

ACTION - AK and JGa to take forward a small habitat review working group as soon as possible (probably September / October).

5. **Finance**

JH outlined SFCC finances, including membership subscriptions and the budget for this financial year. The River Don Trust is the only outstanding member and JH has attempted to contact their chairman. He added that full cost-recovery was not successful for the recent GIS course because of a low attendance and last-minute cancellations. AD suggested allowing a grace period whereby the Trust concerned can search for a replacement.

ACTION – SD to ensure that charges to be made if participants drop out within 28 days of the course start date.

6. **MSS Electrofishing Data Request**

SD provided an overview of this request being in the context of modelling spatial variability in juvenile salmon abundance. This analysis is one of a number of options being considered for scaling conservation limits between catchments, and could potentially form the basis of an assessment tool for juvenile electrofishing data, by providing an expectation of abundance to compare with observed abundance. Iain Malcolm (MSS) is interested in all multi-pass fishing data collected by SFCC members. Committee agreed that this would be a beneficial project and expected members to be happy to share their data.

ACTION – SD to progress the provision of data

7. **University of Southampton Data Project**

The University of Southampton have recently contacted the SFCC requesting electrofishing data. The aim of this knowledge-transfer project is to build pressure and impact response models linking engineering structures and activities to the morphology of rivers and species. The university are collating data sets on fish, invertebrates, macrophytes, River Habitat Survey, pressures and water quality and linking them together to enable the production of predictive models describing the complex relationships between environmental pressures, habitats and species. This project is jointly funded by SEPA and the EA. The University require all single run fishings that are within 1km of the 900 current RHS sites in Scotland. It is intended that a tool, useable by SFCC biologists will be forthcoming from this work.

The group agreed that this tool must be made freely available to SFCC members, and the SFCC must be fully acknowledged in all published material. The group questioned whether there is resource available within this project to develop the Scottish tool, and when this may take place. Members added that failure to be involved with this project could reflect unfavourably on the Trust concerned.

SD displayed a GIS map of all multi-pass electrofishing locations held within the SFCC database and suggested the value that this information may have in showcasing member data collection and raising awareness of data availability. Committee agreed that these maps should be visible on the SFCC website at a low resolution.

ACTION - SD to launch both data requests together as soon as possible.

8. Fisheries Management Review

Committee discussed the current review, including the SFCC submission and the possible implications. JH asked committee whether there would be any objections to SFCC becoming part of the central body. The consensus view was that if the functions are engagement with members is maintained, then this would not be an issue.

SM suggested that SFCC, MSS, SEPA, RAFTS, and SNH produce a joint statement of interest in developing a national fisheries management plan. This document should focus on the rationale for a national fisheries management plan and not on the detail. With July 25th being the next management review milestone, this item is a high priority. SM outlined the need (and opportunity) for RAFTS, SFCC and MSS and SEPA to agree the broad scope of data that is required to be collected in order to deliver effective and informed fishery management in Scotland with the SFCC member Trust network as part of the delivery mechanism for this plan.

ACTION - SM and JH were actioned to lead on producing a summary document with input from other key organisations.

9. SFCC vision and memorandum of understanding (MOU) for data availability

JH reported on feedback from members who were generally positive with one or two exceptions. JG stressed that the SFCC needs to put itself out there and publicly make it known where the SFCC wants to be in the future. The group agreed that the future in Scotland will be one of a shared, transparent and accountable data landscape.

SD drew attention to the key section in the vision statement being data availability. JG added that data sharing is a two-way process and that a commitment to data availability is directly linked to future management delivery and potential funding streams. The group suggested an update of the vision to further pave the way for the MOU on data availability, which must include RAFTS, SEPA, MSS, and SNH. The group unanimously agreed that the SFCC needs to be prescriptive in brokering the MOU with its members. SD suggested writing the MOU now.

ACTION – JH and SD to progress in June / July

10. Electrofishing database

JH reported on progress with Intrelate noting that very little progress has been made since the positive meeting with Intrelate in March. There is an unresolved issue involving 8 Trusts and data exporting. The historical data (pre-1997) issue is ongoing with further discussion required. Committee agreed as a compromise for a maximum of one day's payment to resolve this issue. With £10,000 (including money from the smolt project) budgeted to develop the database now available, committee must decide where to invest this.

ACTION - Committee were in general agreement that database development should be put on hold for the time being

SD and JH reported on the river's Trust trial of the database. Tyne and Wear River's Trust were positive about the database but were unable to pay £500 per year. The group considered offering it for £100-200 per year before deciding that it is not worth pursuing at the present time.

ACTION – SD to contact Michelle Walker

11. Training

JGr provided a brief account of the successful SFCC/IFM smolt workshop.

SD reported 17/18 spaces filled on the Team Leader refresher course which will have an online exam element. Committee advised this exam to go over and above the level expected in the standard team leader exam. The recent GIS course was successful but with demand dropping, online delivery of GIS will take over. The Scale reading E-Learning resource is in development in collaboration with Ronald Campbell.

ACTION -SD to circulate strategy document and ensure an auditing process and quality control procedure is put in place for scale reading in Scotland. Potential links between SFCC and IBIS courses to be pursued with Jennifer Dodd, in particular for survey design and 'intro to stats'.

JH highlighted the GIS and scale reading courses provided by the SFCC were available to MSS but they had chosen not to attend these. MSS were invited to utilise the new online SFCC GIS course when it is launched.

12. **Biologists meeting 2015 venue selection and annual Lab meeting**

A provisional booking has been made for the Birnam Institute. SD outlined the cost as being ~ £1700 total if we have £50 attendees over the two days. Committee suggested charging £25.00 per head for attendees. SD was actioned to look for alternative (cheaper) venues.

The group discussed the suggestion of retaining the link with the Lab through an annual meeting involving senior biologists, Lab senior staff, SEPA, RAFTS and SNH. This suggestion was agreed with December 11th 2014 pencilled in the diary.

JM to continue investigating venues and speak to John Armstrong. SD to liaise with JM.

13. **AOB**

JH reported on SEPA membership with agreement that SEPA will pay the same rate as member Trusts. JH has drafted what SFCC will offer SEPA. In return, SEPA wish to upload and share all their electrofishing data to our database. SD to invoice SEPA for membership.

JH advocated for a national smolt database to be developed after publication of smolt project. Committee suggested waiting for after review completion.

Summary of actions, (including objectives) and dates for committee meetings in 2014.

September 17th, December 10th Annual Lab meeting December 11th. Biologist's Meeting: Feb 4th-5th.

14. **Summary of actions, (including objectives)**

***Action points AP1...: June meeting, AP2...: September Meeting and AP3...: December Meeting, AP 4...March 2014 Meeting... AP 5 June (Current) meeting**

ACTION POINT	DETAILS	UPDATE	LEAD
AP5/1	Take forward a small habitat review working group as soon as possible.	ACTIONED	AK, JaG
AP5/2	Charges to be made to course participants who drop out within 28 days of course start date		SD
AP5/3	SD to launch MSS and University of Southampton data requests together as soon as possible		SD
AP5/4	Display low resolution maps of electrofishing locations (by protocol) on SFCC website		SD
AP5/5	Produce a two page document detailing the broad nature of data that must be collected to deliver and inform fisheries management in Scotland.		Comm.
AP5/6	Database development should be ceased for now until at least after the management review		JH
AP5/7	Do not pursue River's Trust use of the database at this time.		SD
AP5/8	Circulate online scale reading tutorial resource strategy		SD
AP5/9	Pursue collaborative training opportunities with IBIS		SD
AP5/10	Invoice SEPA for SFCC Membership		
AP5/11	Enquire with John Armstrong about the annual meeting with senior biologists, MSS, SEPA and SNH.		JM, SD.
AP5/12	Re draft vision and publicise widely		SD
AP5/13	Draft MOU document to include RAFTS, MSS, SNH and SEPA.		JG, SD

AP4/1	Ring Melanie Smith in order to set the ball rolling again Re collaboration with UHI.	ONGOIN G	SD
AP4/2	Scale Reading Forum: SD to discuss with RC and communicate further with committee in this respect.	DISCHAR GED	SD
AP4/3	Investigate insurance cover on courses and report back to committee.	DISCHAR GED	JH
AP4/4	Get contact details for Sandra Gray from AS and progress.	DISCHAR GED	AS, JH
AP4/5	Investigate acquisition of free OS datasets and reduction in the cost of data provided by CEH. JH to provide MB with background information.	CARRIED FORWA RD	MB
AP4/6	Produce man-day estimates for each objective.	DISCHAR GED	JH
AP4/7	2020 Vision: circulate to committee members with a deadline of Tuesday 6th April for final comment	DISCHAR GED	SD
AP4/8	Canvass opinion from members on a memorandum of understanding for data provision to public bodies	ONGOIN G	JH
AP4/9	Smolt Project: enquire with MSS as to when report will be made available to contributing biologists. After MSS have read the smolt project and carried out initial data visualisation, SD to discuss with MSS about standardising future smolt data collection and related database.	ONGOIN G	SD
AP4/10	Intrelate: work with Intrelate to resolve all outstanding issues and to produce a quotation with Intrelate for consideration by committee for proposed works to improve the data entry process	DISCHAR GED	JH
AP4/11	AGM Venue change: SD to invite committee to come to a decision (including proposed 1 day Lab meeting) by Tuesday 6th April. SD to progress, including discussion with John Armstrong and JM.	ONGOIN G	SD
AP4/12	Investigate NAMAS charging for commercial database use and SD to contact RT users to find out how they are progressing with the database	DISCHAR GED	SD
AP3/1	Draft 5-year SFCC vision document	DISCHAR GED	JG, SD
AP3/2	Add risk assessment training to intro electrofishing course	DISCHAR GED	BL
AP3/3	Invite SEPA to be SFCC Members	DISCHAR GED	JH
AP3/4	Upload questionnaire feedback to website	ONGOIN G	SD
AP3/5	Produce a guide to auditing the EL database	ONGOIN G	SD, JH
AP3/6	Progress the facilitation of an inshore fish ID course for Glasgow Uni Project	DISCHAR GED	SD
AP3/7	Pursue full cost-recovery on courses in 2014	DISCHAR GED	Comm.
AP3/8	Invite MSS and RAFTS on courses	DISCHAR GED	Comm.
AP3/9	Finalise TL refresher course plan and set dates and rates	DISCHAR GED	BL, JG
AP3/10	Hold EL training meeting on 9 th Jan and discuss	DISCHAR	SD

	discounts and first aid	GED	
AP3/11	Circulate logos and finish website by end Jan	DISCHAR GED	SD
AP3/12	Submit ideas for biologists meeting	DISCHAR GED	Comm.
AP3/13	Circulate Smolt data paper to committee	DISCHAR GED	SM
AP3/14	Launch smolt project before Christmas	DISCHAR GED	Comm.
AP3/15	Progress electrofishing kit opportunities at UHI	ONGOIN G	SM
AP2/2	Draft a brief 2-year C.P.D vision document and circulate to committee	ONGOIN G	SD
AP2/3	Intrelate: Progress outstanding issues	ONGOIN G	JH
AP2/9	Invite Loughs Agency or IBIS staff to present at coming biologists meeting	DISCHAR GED	JaG
AP2/10	Approach OS about One Scotland Mapping Agreement	ONGOIN G	MB
AP 1/2	Finish preparing material for a Team Leader refresher course to run in May 2014.	ONGOIN G	BL JaG SD
AP 1/4	Web mapping portal discussion with The Rivers Trust	CARRIED FORWA RD	JH/SD/ Michel le Walke r
AP1/5	Habitat Protocol: Produce a new SFCC rapid walkover assessment method. Revise & Update current Habitat protocol and recording sheets	CARRIED FORWA RD	AK, JaG, SD
AP1/6	Produce MSS topic sheet	CARRIED FORWA RD	SD
AP2/19	Hold experimental design workshop session either at biologists meeting or as a stand-alone workshop	CARRIED FORWA RD	Comm.