



SFCC COMMITTEE MEETING

**Wednesday 17th September 2014, 10:30
Marine Scotland Freshwater Laboratory, Pitlochry**

ATTENDEES

**James Hunt
Jeff Gibbons (VC)
Jackie Graham
Nick Chisholm
Julian MacLean
Sean Dugan**

Agreed Minutes

1. JH welcomed those present and acknowledged the following apologies for absence;

Mark Bilsby, Simon Mckelvey, Alistair Stephen, Marshall Halliday, Alistair Duguid, Shona Marshall.

2. Minutes of previous meeting were approved by committee

JH added that the Scottish fisheries management plan was drafted in the context of the management review, but was met with no interest from other parties, so has not been taken forward. SFCC has not engaged further with the fisheries management review process since its submission.

3. Chairman's report

JH outlined a busy 3 months of field work commitments with Sean also limited in his time allocation due to BSWG commitments, so outputs were less compared to earlier in the year. JH noted that SFCC outputs will increase towards Christmas, particularly with careful planning, a review of the objectives document, and where appropriate, delegation to committee and the membership. Even with these recent constraints, progress has been made with the Memorandum of Understanding for data sharing between SFCC members and public bodies and SFCC ran a successful Electrofishing refresher course. Sean has also managed to progress online GIS and scale reading training. An important development is the addition of SEPA to the SFCC membership and this represents an important step forward. JH added that an important consideration for committee is how we spend the planned deficit this year and there are a number of items that are proposed including; development of a hand-held recording device for electro-fishing data, an online mapping portal and development of a habitat training manual.

4. Manager's report

SD provided a brief power point presentation summarising his time allocation since June. SD has enjoyed the challenge of recent tasks with BSWG and SFCC, with 4 days per week allocated to BSWG and 1 day per week to SFCC (having spent more time with SFCC activities earlier in the year). Main activities:

- Electrofishing data provision (Marine Scotland and Southampton University).
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Smolt Project presentations
- Website development
- Database support + Free trials to Lomond and Lochaber
- CEH GIS data licensing
- Team Leader Refresher Course assistance
- Scale reading E-learning
- GIS E-learning

The group agreed that while some objectives have been delayed, there is a need to maintain flexibility. JH stressed the immediate priority for SD being the database audit.

Action: SD to progress database audit.

5. Finance

JH summarised current finances with particular consideration given to how the planned deficit should be spent for this financial year.

- SNH payment for the BSWG post had been delayed significantly but should be resolved shortly
- The GIS course ran at a financial loss to SFCC with low attendance so no courses are planned for 2015.
- The Electrofishing Team Leader Refresher, although highly successful made a financial loss of £1500. After some debate regarding an appropriate cost for the course, Committee agreed that in 2015 members will be charged £150.00 and non-members £250.00, with 9 attendees being the ideal number. SFCC will advise team leader's to re-sit the course every 3 years. The group agreed that SFCC must target external participants in order to achieve full cost recovery but must ensure that SFCC members can always attend. JGi reiterated the need to sell the wider concept of CPD.

Action: SFCC to do this by website publicity, bulletins, biologists meeting and contacting non-SFCC members directly.

The group asked for a clearer projected cost of suggested work on the hand-held electro-fishing data input device. While SFCC intend to utilise the existing database, MSS have recently developed a new database capable of holding a wide range of fisheries data recorded in the field.

Action: SD to organise a demonstration of the FISHOBS database at the December committee meeting.

Action: JH to establish outline costs for using the electro-fishing database on a handheld device.

Committee agreed that there is a need to develop a habitat survey manual that includes the SFCC habitat protocol and other methods available that will be of use to members. JH proposed allocating an upper limit of £5000 for this items and this was agreed by the committee members present.

Action: JH / SD to draft a tender document for a habitat survey manual

JH reported that the SFCC treasurer has completed the 3-month financial summary but not the audit due to personal reasons. SFCC treasurer will be stepping down at the end of this financial year.

Action: JH to find a new treasurer

6. Data sharing projects with MSS and Southampton

SD provided an overview of progress to date on both fronts and thanked the membership for their co-operation and willingness to share data.

MSS

For the purpose of the MSS spatial modelling/conservation limits work, around 5000 events and 1000 sites were supplied to MSS by SFCC members.

Action: MSS to provide an update at the annual biologists meeting.

JH asked for clarity on the nature of the MSS work: JM: Juvenile salmonid electrofishing data analysis is part of many approaches (such as catch data) that could be used to derive conservation limits further down the line. MSS are currently carrying out large scale spatial modelling of juvenile data to derive carrying capacity and stock recruitment relationships. JM also added that the fish counter network design is on going and will have to weigh up conservation, resource and policy priorities. The group suggested that MSS provide a brief update on the counter network at the biologists meeting. JGi advised members to look at the NASCO plan for an overview of the counter network process.

University of Southampton

~2000 records have been selected by The University of Southampton or further analysis. SFCC are currently checking sensitive sites with members before supplying raw data. In return, Southampton are delivering fish density modelling knowledge transfer workshops on November 10th-11th at the Freshwater Laboratory. The group advised SD to be mindful of his time spent providing data and he needs to keep a record of his time allocation. SD has asked for an in-kind financial contribution for his time from Southampton.

7. Memorandum of understanding for data sharing

JGi, JH and SD have drafted the MOU document for data sharing between SFCC and MSS, SEPA and SNH. JH and JGi summarised good progress with the MOU with comments having been received from SEPA and SNH. SD suggested that when SFCC go to the membership with the MOU we communicate carefully that this concept is not because of the review, but seeks to re-affirm the data sharing landscape has been developing as a result of many years of work by the SFCC and MSS. Recent success with national data provision projects could be viewed as an example of the aims of the MOU being delivered in practice.

Action: JGi to continue discussions with SEPA and SNH, and to circulate a revised draft to committee when appropriate before circulation to the membership for consultation.

8. Fisheries Management Review

The group discussed briefly the review and the possible implications for the SFCC with the report to be published in early October. JH mentioned recent discussions with MS around possible funding for the manager's post and the need to resolve this issue before Christmas. JGi added that the SFCC has some longevity regardless of the review outcomes and therefore funding for the manager position from MSS is being considered for 1 year from March 2015. The group agreed upon the need to encourage joint funding from other public bodies, with the MOU on data sharing providing one possible incentive.

9. Habitat

Discussions on the habitat protocol developments were deferred to the December meeting.

Action:

Action: Alan Kettle-White to convene a meeting of the habitat sub-committee in November.

10. Training

Electrofishing

SD and JG reported on the successful launch of the team leader refresher course which had 14 attendees over 2 days (each paying £100.00). The new bespoke course features ½ practical / ½ theory and a new online exam/quiz. The group thanked JG and Bob Laughton for providing this course. For future years SFCC will market this course to external (non-SFCC member) participants including MSS and consultant companies.

Action: SD to get the list of team leader names and contact details from Inverness College.

Action: JM to raise Lab attendance on Electrofishing courses and general attendance on wider courses with MSS senior management group that include GIS and scale reading.

Scale Reading E-Learning

SD demonstrated the new scale reading online resource while thanking Ronald Campbell (Tweed Foundation) and Aya Thorne (MSS) for their contributions.

Action: SD to invite members who attended the scale reading course to trial the resource.

Action: JM to locate the MSS scale reading quiz for SD.

GIS E-Learning

SD reported the completion of the GIS online training resource with thanks extended to Nick Paling of the West Country Rivers Trust. The intro and advanced Scottish GIS courses are now online in digital form in their entirety. SFCC members also have access to wider River's Trust GIS training resources, with the River's Trusts also able to access the Scottish resources.

Action: SD to invite feedback from previous attendees on GIS courses.

Action: SD to promote the testing and use of these resources with feedback provided to Nick Paling

Action: SD to ask Nick Palling about ongoing maintenance and costs for the GIS site
Action: Both scale reading and GIS online learning courses will be free to members.

IBIS stats courses

SFCC identified high demand for stats courses in the 2012 and 2013 questionnaire. To the assistance of Jennifer Dodd (IBIS) was acknowledged in putting together a strategy for SFCC members to learn the R software package, before attending further specific courses. The group stressed the need to market why members should be using statistics before encouraging the use of R software.

Action: SFCC to promote R as the package of choice for members with members encouraged to purchase the book "An introduction to R".

R surgery days can be provided at Pitlochry by Jennifer, followed by 1 day courses tailored to fishery relevant stats.

Survey Design Courses

IBIS Survey design courses (as delivered in Ireland) can be delivered in Scotland in spring 2015 if demand is sufficient. IBIS can provide a limited number of free places to SFCC (and RAFTS) members.

Action: SD to continue communication with Jennifer Dodd and canvass demand ASAP.

11. Biologists meeting

SD communicated details for the February 2015 biologists meeting.

The Birnam Institute is provisionally booked for 4th-5th Feb 2015 with a total price of £1900 including a buffet meal. The Freshwater Lab costs £300.00 in total, but is limited to 36 people going forward because of new fire safety regulations.

Action: SD to canvass other venues including hotels, particularly in Pitlochry, by selling the concept of 20-30 people paying for rooms at a quiet time of year. SD to also investigate if there is any flexibility in the costs for the Birnam Institute.

Proposed MSS-senior biologists meeting

The group also discussed the concept of retaining an annual Lab meeting through inviting 1 biologist from each Trust to have an annual meeting with MSS, SEPA and SNH senior staff. Committee considered how SFCC can best increase general engagement with public bodies. This annual meeting could provide an opportunity to progress collaborative projects such as the smolt data project, conservation limits or temperature monitoring network.

Action: SD to provide JM with structured aims (very brief document) for JM to take to the management (Lab) meeting.

12. AOB

An SFCC member raised concerns about the cancellation of Electrofishing Training courses at Barony College 2 years in a row. JH summarised the situation and proposed that all future courses be delivered at The Freshwater Lab. JG advised that these courses are easier to run through the colleges. JG outlined the need to have a training meeting in the near future, set dates, push colleges, assess demand and the for First Aid requirements to be consistent between colleges.

Action: SFCC to assess demand in questionnaire at the end of the year and promote both intro and team leader courses.

There is a need to ask specific questions about preferred location and gain numbers specifically for intro and team leader courses.

Action: JG to discuss the highlighted issues with Barony College, in particular their promotion and interest in running these courses.

13. JH summarised action points.

Next meeting is 10th December where committee will set dates for the annual training meeting and dates for next years committee meetings.

ACTION POINT	DETAILS	UPDATE	LEAD
AP6/	Action: SD to progress database audit.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SFCC to sell wider concept of CPD by website publicity, bulletins, biologists meeting and contacting non-SFCC members directly.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SD to organise a demonstration of the FISHOBS database at the December committee meeting.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: JH to establish outline costs for using the electro-fishing database on a handheld device.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: JH to find a new treasurer	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: MSS to provide an update at the annual biologists meeting.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: JGi to continue discussions with SEPA and SNH, and to circulate a revised draft to committee when appropriate before circulation to the membership for consultation.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Alan Kettle-White to convene a meeting of the habitat sub-committee in November.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SD to get the list of team leader names and contact details from Inverness College. Action: JM to raise Lab attendance on Electrofishing courses and general attendance on wider courses with MSS senior management group that include GIS and scale reading.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SD to invite members who attended the scale reading course to trial the resource. Action: JM to locate the MSS scale reading quiz for SD.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SD to invite feedback from previous attendees on GIS courses. Action: SD to promote the testing and use of these resources with feedback provided to Nick Palling Action: SD to ask Nick Palling about ongoing maintenance and costs for the GIS site Action: Both scale reading and GIS online learning courses will be free to members.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SFCC to promote R as the package of choice for members with members encouraged to purchase the book "An introduction to R". Action: SD to continue communication with Jennifer Dodd and canvass demand ASAP.	ACTIONED	

AP6/	SD to also investigate if there is any flexibility in the costs for the Birnam Institute.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SD to provide JM with structured aims (very brief document) for JM to take to the management (Lab) meeting.	ACTIONED	
AP6/	Action: SFCC to assess demand in questionnaire at the end of the year and promote both intro and team leader courses. Action: JG to discuss the highlighted issues with Barony College, in particular their promotion and interest in running these courses.	ACTIONED	
AP5/4	Display low resolution maps of electrofishing locations (by protocol) on SFCC website	CARRIED FORWARD	SD
AP5/11	Enquire with John Armstrong about the annual meeting with senior biologists, MSS, SEPA and SNH.	CARRIED FORWARD	JM, SD.