

**COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday 30th November 2016, 10:30 -13:00**

**Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry**

**Minutes**

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

Kerrie Campbell, Simon McKelvey, Alistair Duguid, Shona Marshall

Present:

James Hunt The Tweed Foundation

Simon Dryden Marine Scotland (Wild Fisheries Reform team)

Alan Wells Fisheries Management Scotland

Jackie Graham Galloway Fisheries Trust\*

John Armstrong Marine Scotland Science\*

Pamela Esson River Dee Trust\*

Jo Girvan River Forth Fisheries Trust\*

Sean Dugan Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre

\*committee member

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

Ammendments made to the minutes were agreed as being accurate and were approved.

**Review of action points and matters arising**

SD and JA provided an update on work to develop a means for Trusts to collect and store smolt data centrally in 2017. SD requires access to the SCOTS computer system to access the fish database. This access will likely be processed imminently once security clearance and disclosure certificates have been received. A meeting has been arranged between SD and MSS staff to assess technical and resource needs for a trial of smolt data collection by fisheries trusts in 2017. This further trial will develop on the basis of successful trials with Lochaber and River Dee Trust in 2016.

**Action CARRIED FORWARD: AW to send SD the ASFB/RAFTS report on suggested Fisheries Management Areas (FMA’s).** FMA’s are to be discussed at the stakeholder reference group on 14th December. Thereafter pilot FMO’s will likely be set up in early 2017.

1. **Chairman's report**

Items discussed are numbered below;

**3.1. Competency requirements for licensing of broodstock collection by electrofishing.**

An SFCC member trust has raised concern to the SFCC management committee around the current system of licensing for Broodstock collection as an angling club in their area was granted a license by Marine Scotland. The chairman investigated the decision making process in regard to SFCC training.

The following points summarise the discussions :-

* The SFCC electrofishing training courses are currently based on scientific data collection for juvenile fish and do not include broodstock collection as it is for a different purpose. Committee discussed competency and whether an angling club (rather than a Trust/FMO) should be permitted to undertake broodstock collection.
* There is currently no formal training for broodstock collection available in Scotland. JH suggested that in the absence of training, people starting to collect broodstock with a license should be required to gain experience with another organisation that does this work on a regular basis.
* AW suggested that this issue will need to be picked up by the national strategy development as part of the WFR process.
* Some members of committee agreed that all members of an electrofishing team should hold a qualification (either SFCC or equivalent) for health and safety purposes.
* Licensing from Marine Scotland is required if there is any chance of catching trout or other non-salmonids. Therefore, as part of the Wild Fisheries Reform process, clarity is required around licensing by Boards within the fishing season and licensing by Marine Scotland.
* Electrofishing licensing and training processes operate separately at present. The reform process will need to consider how these systems could be better integrated.

**3.2. SFCC Manager employment from April 2017 onwards**

Fisheries Management Scotland can in principal facilitate the employment of the SFCC Manager. The new FMS board will be formed in January, at which point it can consider any further detail. The Manager position would remain situated at the Freshwater Laboratory.

**ACTION: JH and AW to meet to discuss FMS.**

**3.3. SFCC time allocation to Wild Fisheries Reform and Conservation Regulations working groups:**

SD has been invited to join the Fisheries Management Plan Template group and the new tracking and Telemetry working group.

**ACTION: SD to join both groups.**

**3.4. Reflection on SFCC 2016 objectives and setting 2017 objectives.**

The current secretarial role and working group arrangements are working well and are complimentary to SFCC’s objectives. Committee acknowledged that objectives for 2016 were largely delivered. JH invited committee members to consider objectives for 2017 with key suggested aims being:

* Continue secretarial role
* Deliver outputs and action points from wild fisheries reform working groups: Training and C.P.D and Fisheries Management Plan Template.
* Pilot FMO’s will be formed shortly and will require work in terms of management planning, science and data
* Review of electrofishing training and data collection
* Standard central storage of smolt data
* Continue to progress current mapping and data collection work

**ACTION: Canvass SFCC member preferences for 2017 objectives at the biologists meeting (day 1) and report and review on day 2.**

Citizen science for data collection was also suggested as an area to be explored.

**ACTION: Hold a session on citizen science at the biologist’s meeting.**

1. **Wild Fisheries Reform & the future of The SFCC**

Further to a continued reflection on science, data and training functions, JH asked for an update on the current thinking on the proposed central unit, noting the need for engagement with SFCC members on this topic of the reform. JA noted that the discussions are evolving and developing. Engagement and liaison between local and national organisations will be important for the central unit. Jeff Gibbons has been replaced by Simon Dryden on the Wild Fisheries Reform Team. WFR Working groups are meeting for the 3rd time before Christmas. The stakeholder reference group is also considering the transition process.

1. **Manager’s report**

A summary of SFCC work since October 6th can be viewed at this link:

1. **Finance**

Committee provided feedback on updated accounts which have been circulated before the meeting. Of note a late invoice was received for the habitat course from 2015. JH’s line management time will continue at the current rate. With some minor expenses outstanding, the accounts are likely to run a deficit of around £3000 for the year.

1. **Review of electro-fishing protocols/ training manuals and database storage**

Committee discussed this action point arising from the MSLFBLG electrofishing data working group, and the purpose of the review and how it will be progressed. It is 10 years since the manuals and collection/storage processes have been reviewed so committee welcome this aim. Members had a wide-ranging debate about electrofishing data collection. Members were referred to the minutes of the electrofishing data group on the Scottish Government website and to Iain Malcolm’s talk next week (8th December) which will outline the proposed further work items on electrofishing.

**ACTION: Take forward this item in detail at the biologist’s meeting.**

1. **SFCC Biologists meeting – Feb 8th and 9th 2017**

The venue is confirmed as Faskally House, beside the Freshwater Laboratory, which will assist with Lab staff involvement. With the return to Pitlochry for the first time in 3 years there is the chance to hold a range of joint Lab-biologist sessions, talks and workshops. Ideally these sessions would cover topical business related to science and data aspects of the Wild Fisheries Reform. For example working groups outcomes could be discussed by attendees. Committee also suggested the following session options/themes for the two days:

West Coast themed session

Scale reading

Mapping session

 Citizen Science

Flip chart exercise on salmon run timings.

Conservation Regulations

WFR update

Girnock burn

Flooding themed session

Sampling design

Life in the future fisheries management system

Fisheries Management Scotland

Small scale hydro

How do planning applications interact with each other?

Licensed activities?

**ACTION: Wider Lab attendance on first day. Lab updates on the second day**

**ACTION: JA to speak to people who have already given talks as part of the seminar series.**

**ACTION: SD/JH to prepare a skeleton programme and circulate to committee for comment.**

1. **Wild Fisheries Forum**

**ACTION: Launch the forum at the biologist’s meeting.**

1. **Environmental Impact Assessment Study**

Emily Bridcut (Marine Scotland Renewables Group) provided a talk and a written note describing her proposed project to review the process of data collection and analysis for onshore renewable developments. The talk is available here:

Attendees provided a range of positive feedback on the proposed project and some suggested actions.

**ACTION: Determine all onshore renewable developments in Scotland then consider which have data collected by Trusts.**

**ACTION Consider contacting SEPA as they may have data**

**ACTION: SD to export all electrofishing metadata from database then overlay with SNH renewables map layer to ascertain relevant sites.**

**ACTION: Emily Bridcut to draft a template letter requesting access to the data for all trusts to use when contacting developers.**

1. **AOB**

There were no items of outstanding business.

1. **2017 meeting dates.**

Dates for next year were confirmed as; March 22nd, June 21st, October 4th, and December 6th