

**COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday 7th December 2017, 10:30 -13:00**

**Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

**Apologies:** Shona Marshall, John Armstrong, Isabel Moore, Craig MacIntyre,

**Attendees:** Alan Wells\*, Keith Williams, Alistair Stephen, Alistair Duguid\*, Simon Dryden\*, James Hunt (Chair), Jackie Graham\*, Simon McKelvey\*, Joanne Girvan\*, Pamela Esson\*. Simon McKelvey\*, Sean Dugan. (\*committee members)

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

The October meeting minutes were agreed as accurate and were approved.

**ACTIONS CARRIED FORWARD:**

SD to facilitate a meeting on snorkelling for adult Salmon counting, perhaps at biologist’s meeting.

JA to contact Chris Todd to see whether he will coordinate a meeting of scale readers from Trusts and MSS

**3. Chairman's report**

JH provided an overview of the last two months and introduced the main agenda item of the meeting as being an evaluation of current SFCC working activities, a discussion of the priorities for the coming year and the biologists’ meeting. JH noted recent important pieces of work delivered by SD were several training course and visits to member Fisheries Trusts. JH also noted that the logical time to finish as chairman is the biologist’s meeting, but as the payment for his time to The Tweed Foundation is for the financial year, he will continue as chairman until the March 2018 committee meeting.

**4. SFCC Manager’s report for October & November**

SD distributed a short summary report of his working activities since the last meeting. His main work areas were:

* Visits to SFCC members
* Delivery of mapping training and data provision
* Scale reading training
* Fisheries Management Plan Template mapping tool development
* Salmon Liaison Group (SLG) secretariat and collation of single run electrofishing data for national analysis
* Wild Fisheries Forum
* Smolt Data Collection Tool

ACTION: Add Simon McKelvey, Joanne Girvan & Ross Gardiner to the forum.

**5. SFCC 2018 objectives**

Committee discussed the SFCC vision statement and aims of the SFCC, which form the strategic basis for developing annual objectives.

The following key points were covered:

* The aims and objectives of the SFCC vision statement are not currently measureable.
* The term “Fisheries Organisations” used in the vision statement could apply to members of the SFCC or it could extend to other organisations as well, such as consultants or academic institutions. It was agreed that the interpretation should be SFCC members (Trusts, DSFBs MSS, SEPA, SNH), which could be clarified as a footnote).
* The importance of ensuring that electrofishing standards, and appropriate seasonal electro-fishing sampling times, are maintained by all surveyors in Scotland was emphasised.
* to the possibility of raising awareness of grey literature, annual reports and publications produced by Fisheries Trusts and consideration of creating a searchable digital repository was discussed.
* A data sharing MOU between Trusts, MSS, SEPA and SNH had been developed a few years ago by Jeff Gibbons but hadn’t reach completion.

ACTION: JH and SD to consider these discussion points and evaluate vision statement for recommendations at the next committee meeting

ACTION: JH/SD to speak to Jeff Gibbons to get hold of MOU document for progression

Committee discussed the need for SFCC membership to cover the whole of Scotland. A major disadvantage of not having full membership coverage is that is then harder to access fisheries related data for national analysis.

ACTION: JH to contact these organisations for discussion

JH described the SFCC aims in the Terms of Reference and the SFCC objectives document circulated to members. Feedback points from committee included:

* The SFCC service to members is wider than just GIS as it includes general phone and database support.
* SFCC’s role is to help fisheries management happen in an evidence based manner.

ACTION: JH and SD to continue developing the objectives document based on the feedback that was received

ACTION: SD to speak to JA/Gordon Smith about salmon distribution map to plan when it is opened up again for data input.

ACTION: AD to speak to Gordon Smith about a planned meeting to reconcile SEPA’s and MSS’s information on salmon distribution.

There was a general discussion and agreement by committee on the benefits of national standards of data collection in relation to protocols and training for all organisations. JH noted the very great benefit that would arise from MSS staff contributing to SFCC training events.

Committee members in attendance were in agreement that training for electrofishing and scale reading needs be carried out on a more collaborative basis between all SFCC members including MSS and SEPA.

ACTION: Electro-fishing review to include national standards in its terms of reference for discussion and recommendations

ACTION: Scale reading review group, hopefully with Chris Todd, to make recommendations for national standards and joint training

**Review of electrofishing protocols and training**

JGir has taken the lead in this review.

The review needs to fully involve MSS through Iain Malcolm. SDr noted that a meeting will be arranged between Marine Scotland and Fisheries Management Scotland to discuss MSS licensing. This was discussed in the context of SFCC electrofishing training becoming the standard training for Scotland. SDr also noted that it has been proposed that it should be a condition of electrofishing in a Board area that data is shared with the Board.

Committee agreed that there needs to be a national protocol for electrofishing data for conservation regulations. The electro-fishing working group found that the main area for improvement is the need to clearly define timed electrofishing protocols.

Members discussed the experience / qualifications required in Scotland to electro-fish and the issue of data storage.

**Smolt Data Collection**

ACTION: SD to complete the trial of the smolt data collection tool by mid-January.

**Fisheries Management Plan Template**

SDr mentioned that the draft salmon pressures tool has been updated by SD and is ready for further trial. It is not possible at this stage to put an estimate on SD’s time requirements for 2018 and when his time will be required. There will be a pause in development until February-March to allow the trial to take place and to remove potential duplication of data already stored on the SEPA RBMP maps. This will allow Fisheries Management Scotland to discuss FMP with the wider membership of DSFBs and Trusts.

ACTION: SDr to convene a meeting with SEPA to take forward the FMPt.

**Fish counter meta-data collation**

The first task is to map the locations of existing counters.

ACTION: SD to collate Fish Counter meta-data for mapping.

To help progress the concept of a National Fish Counter Network, the next task is to map potential new locations for fish counters, which could be discussed at the biologists’ meeting using local Trust knowledge. Committee also discussed the possible collation of existing fish count data, a task which could be carried out by SFCC in the future.

ACTION: MSS to clarify whether SFCC should include the objective of mapping out structures that could potential be used for fish counter locations in 2018

**Scale Image Sharing/ Database**

ACTION: As a starting point, SD to develop a simple means for SFCC members to share scale images between one another using Flickr or Dropbox.

**6. Finance**

Committee reviewed the latest accounts.

Committee agreed that SFCC’s reserves policy should have at least 12 months of operating costs (~£50,000). SFCC has 24 members (including SEPA) each paying £1200 per year, producing a total of £28,800. Marine Scotland contribute a grant of 29,000 per year. With fixed costs and no additional items there is an annual surplus of around £6000 and a current bank balance of around £75,000.

Committee debated a reduction in SFCC membership costs for 2018-2019, to bring down the reserve and provide greater value for money for members. JH noted that the total contribution from members is equitable to the grant from Scottish Government. It was agreed to carry over this discussion to the next meeting.

ACTION: Committee to reflect on this discussion for next meeting and chairman to discuss informally with Trust and committee members

**7. 2018 Biologists’ Meeting**

Committee shared ideas on broad themes for the 20th meeting in February. There was agreement that the meeting needed to acknowledge and discuss the recent changes in adult Salmon abundance. AD suggested a general Salmon assessment theme, which could work through the juvenile and adult stages of the life cycle, incorporating sessions relating to conservation regulations. This could include :-

* Regional reports. This could take the format of a 4-5 minute talks from Trusts, including catches and fish counter data.
* Redd counting – currently carried out by a number of Trusts.
* Electro-fishing sampling design for national assessment (conservation regulations)
* Smolt trapping protocol to be launched at biologist’s meeting
* Adult stock assessment session including snorkelling, fish counters, angling effort, genetics

It was also felt that Pink Salmon needed to be discussed. A rotating workshop session that worked very well last year should be continued. This could include a demonstration of the MSS temperature modelling, a tour of the genetics lab and perhaps a demonstration of the tri-tech fish detection system

ACTION: SD and JH to draw up an outline plan for the biologists’ meeting for consideration by committee by email

**8. AOB**

ACTION: AW to discuss the language used as disclaimers in SFCC protocols with Fish Legal.

**Smolt trapping manual**

Keith Williams outlined the draft smolt trapping manual for consideration of SFCC committee. Keith was commended for the work.

ACTION: SD to circulate smolt trapping manual to SFCC committee for feedback deadline before Christmas.

**Invitation of non-SFCC members to committee meetings**

ACTION: It was agreed that non SFCC members to attend by invitation only, as per the SFCC Terms of Reference.

ACTION: CC Colin Bean in to committee agenda emails.

**9. Management Committee dates for next year**

14th March, 20th June, 3rd October, 5th December

Biologists’ meeting: 7th – 8th February

ACTION: SD to circulate meeting dates and biologists meeting dates to membership.

ACTION: SD to invoice SEPA early for SFCC subscription.