

COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 27th November 2019, 13:00-15:00

Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry

MINUTES

1. Attendees

Jo Girvan (JG)	Forth Rivers Trust (Chair)
James Hunt (JH)	Tweed Foundation (VC)
Anjite Branding (AB)	Marine Scotland
Jackie Graham (JG)	Galloway Fisheries Trust (TC)
Alan Wells (AW)	Fisheries Management Scotland
Sean Dugan (SD)	SFCC
Kjersti Birkeland	SEPA (TC)
Marcus Walters (MW)	Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Trust
Pamela Esson (PE)	River Dee Trust

Apologies

John Armstrong (JA)	Marine Scotland Science
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2. 13:05 - Review of September meeting minutes

The minutes were agreed as accurate and were approved.

Matters arising:

ACTION: SD to circulate member survey in advance of biologists meeting

ACTION: KB/SEPA to contact JA about fish counters working group.

3. 13:15 - Review of management committee meeting frequency

Committee reflected upon how it carries out business and considered reducing the number of face-to-face meetings per year and increasing the use of video/tele conference where possible.

ACTION: committee to meet in Pitlochry a minimum of 3 times per year in late March and early December. The 3rd meeting timing is to be confirmed. Use of teleconference and video conference is to be promoted as we now have a stable system installed at Faskally.

4. 13:20 - Role of Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre

SFCC's vision and strategic objectives were updated to the following:

Vision

The Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre promotes high quality training and consistent data collection. This will enable all river and fisheries organisations in Scotland to collect, collate, use, and provide information on freshwater fish, their habitats and fisheries, in an effective and co-operative way.

Objectives

- Provide a mechanism for member organisations to standardise data collection
- Co-ordinate the storage of fish and environmental data
- Promote and support a broad view of freshwater biodiversity and wider ecosystem health
- Provide a collaborative interface between local river managers and national science and policy functions
- Facilitate Scotland-wide projects to provide data to inform national policy decisions, and to

evidence local management actions

- Co-ordinate and disseminate mapping data and novel data collection technology for the benefit of fisheries management
- Provide training in methods of data collection and visualisation

ACTION: Committee to agree final text by correspondence.

ACTION: Committee to propose operational objectives for 2019 well in advance of the biologists' meeting.

5. **14: 00 – Finances**

The latest cash flow and projections were presented. A minor amendment was proposed to the wages and costs projection for March 2020.

It was agreed that a significant proportion of SFCC's reserves should be used to ease cash flow constraints during the 'Mapping Pressures on Atlantic Salmon in Scotland' project. These costs will be reimbursed in full to SFCC before the end of March 2020.

The proposed budget for 2020 was briefly reviewed. There is an outstanding need to decide upon how to spend money set aside for protocol development and training provision for SFCC members.

ACTION: Committee to propose spending options well in advance of the biologists' meeting.

6. **14:20 – Future of SFCC database – Consortium buy-out opportunity**

Immediately prior to the meeting, SD circulated correspondence received from the SFCC electrofishing database provider and also from the chair of a user group set up for all organisations in the UK using the same type of software as SFCC.

In summary: The future of the SFCC database in its current form is becoming increasingly uncertain and is time-limited. It is likely that the database provider will not continue SFCC's existing provision package for much longer.

20 or 30 other organisations also utilise the same type of system as SFCC across the UK and these organisations are also considering options, with communications taking place via a joint user group. This user group is currently developing a buy-out proposal with the aim of safeguarding the product for its members. Due to the urgency involved, SFCC were invited to agree in principal (pending further information and discussion) to join the user group consortium by Monday 2nd December.

ACTION: SFCC to consider the available information and respond to User Group proposal by first thing on Monday 2nd December.

ACTION: SD to speak to database provider by phone and report back to committee with urgency.

ACTION: SD/KB to keep in touch with SEPA on any developments

7. **14:40 - Biologists' Meeting – February 4th & 5th 2020**

SD provided an outline programme for the 2 days retaining a consistent structure based on the success of last year. It is proposed that Day 1 will feature updates from members (local and national) followed by a short themed session. Day 2 will begin with the SFCC members meeting, followed by a session before and after lunch. Given the importance of riparian woodland habitat to fish and the wider environment this topic will be the focus for day 2.

AB posed a range of insightful questions on the purpose of the event, attendance and its desired outcomes. AB suggested that a summary of the sessions could be written up to enable communication to a wider audience and to facilitate actions arising from the meeting. The task of writing up the event could be assigned in advance. AB also posed the suggestion of inviting a high profile guest speaker to introduce the day.

ACTION: JG to organise a follow-up discussion with AB

ACTION: SD to contact Simon Olley at SEPA RE green engineering.

ACTION: Mapping salmon pressures to form the topic for the afternoon session on day 1.

ACTION: Committee to contribute suggestions for speakers to SD.

ACTION: Posters to be considered for topics not covered in the programme including predation.

8. 14:50 - Manager's report

SD's report was circulated prior to the meeting. Key work areas in October and November include;

- Visiting SFCC members
- Providing mapping support by phone and email to 4 members
- Mapping Atlantic Salmon Pressures in Scotland project
- Planning for the 2020 Biologists' Meeting
- Fish Counters Working Group
- Wild Salmon Watch initiative
- SFCC Angling Diary decommissioning
- Scottish Mapping Conference

9. 14:55 – AOB

JG mentioned that SFCC have been approached to provide a positive reference for use of the EU LIFE Lamprey survey protocol <https://www.sfcc.co.uk/resources/more-protocols.html>