

Management Committee Meeting –Minutes

25th November 2020 – 10:30 – 12:00

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Present

Joanna Girvan – Forth Rivers Trust (Chair)
James Hunt – The Tweed Foundation
John Armstrong – Marine Scotland Science
Kjersti Birkland - SEPA
Sean Robertson – Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Alan Wells – Fisheries Management Scotland
Marcus Walters – Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust
Sean Dugan – SFCC
Jamie Ribbens – Galloway Fisheries Trust

Apologies

Antje Branding – Marine Scotland

2. Review of August meeting actions

Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and all were reported as completed, except for a discussion on integration between the Fisheries Management Scotland and SFCC websites, which was carried over to the next meeting.

3. Activity report

SD provided a quarterly activity report via a PowerPoint presentation. Activities were as follows:

- Development of a document setting out the range of mapping support options available to members. This document also refers to development of mobile/tablet field data collection software templates using ESRI software. Data collection topics discussed included fish health reporting, pink salmon, INNS, redd counting, habitat and woodland survey, predator observations, enforcement.

Action: SD to add conifer impacts, pollution, and impassable culverts to the list of potential mobile field data collection survey templates.

- SD reported on communication between EMIS and SFCC to try to resolve the transition of SFCC database hosting to the Microsoft Azure platform. Whilst the transition to Azure has not yet progressed the costings and logistics of doing so are now clearer. To provide ongoing support and maintenance, SFCC have been invited to enter a contract with Rockpool Solutions monthly with an initial registration fee.

Action: SFCC to pay the Rockpool Solutions database support registration fee before Christmas.

- Progress on the review of electrofishing training materials and on the development of online training resources for members.

- Joint working with Forth Rivers Trust to draft a European eel data collection guidance note and potential session at the biologists meeting. JA warned that eel data analysis is a significant undertaking. JR enquired about the Solway Eel Management Plan and the need for discussion between SEPA and the EA.
- SD reported changes to the agreement permitting SFCC member access to Ordnance Survey mapping through a contract with Scottish Government. Discussions with Scottish Government are ongoing.

Action: SD to communicate developments with members and to ask members not to access Ordnance Survey mapping in the meantime.

- Other activities included progressing the final stages of the mapping pressures on Atlantic salmon project, ongoing database support to members and developing a means to communicate escaped farmed salmon data with Fisheries Management Scotland.

Members enquired about progress and next steps for the salmon pressures project. Working with SFCC/Fisheries Management Scotland, Marine Scotland are currently developing a tool to allow rapid summaries showing the length of river and wetted area affected by each pressure. This work is progressing well, and contributors will be notified when outputs are ready to be discussed.

4. Biologists' Meeting

Due to Covid-19, the 2021 biologists' meeting will take place online, featuring short presentations and discussion sessions. A discussion paper was circulated in advance.

4.1. Discussion on meeting format/structure

Several different structures were discussed by committee including the traditional two-day structure and delivery over three afternoon sessions following the success of the recent online IFM Festival of Fisheries.

It was agreed that a session designed to promote discussion among biologists on the wild salmon strategy and salmon pressures would be timely given the national importance of these processes.

Action: Biologists' meeting to retain the traditional two-day structure.

Committee also discussed optimising the online nature of the event and promoting discussion wherever possible via Q&A and use of the chat function within Microsoft Teams. Members agreed that all presentations should be delivered during the meeting rather than being pre-recorded. Given the shared challenges faced by all members this year it was felt that all members should be encouraged to provide a short update.

Action: All SFCC members to be invited to provide a short update at the biologists' meeting with PowerPoint slides provided and collated in advance to allow smooth transition between members.

Action: Biologists' meeting date proposed as February 3rd and 4th.

4.2. Discussion on key themes

A discussion paper was circulated in advance proposing key meeting themes. The online approach opens the opportunity to invite guest speakers to share new perspectives at specific points during the programme such as themed sessions.

The following themes were proposed in addition to those circulated in advance; Wild Salmon Strategy, National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland update,

commercial forestry and riparian habitat issues, technical session on mapping using drones, telemetry session.

Action: SD to develop the biologists meeting themes within the traditional two-day structure. Outline programme to be circulated before Christmas.

5. Finances

5.1. *Cash flow report*

There were no comments on the cashflow report. It was agreed that the cashflow report would be circulated to Committee monthly and any comments or questions dealt with by correspondence. This would ensure that Committee were fully sighted on the financial position of SFCC, but that cash flow did not need to be discussed at Committee meetings.

5.2. *Member subscription update*

Two partial subscriptions and two full subscriptions were outstanding at the time of the meeting. Both partial subscriptions are to be paid by the end of the month.

Action: SD to follow up with outstanding SFCC member subscriptions by phone.

In some parts of Scotland where few staff are employed full-time, neighbouring Trusts/DSFB's have developed a service agreement approach. Committee discussed SFCC membership pricing options in this context and the need to maintain fairness across all SFCC members, while also making every effort to make SFCC services available across all of Scotland's rivers.

6. AOB

JH enquired around SFCC objective planning which normally occurs at this time of year.

Action: Proposed SFCC objectives for 2021-22 to be developed in advance and discussed during the annual member's meeting.