

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES	PRESENT: John Mackenzie – Chairman (JM) Barry Blake (BB) David Barclay (DB)
PURPOSE: MANAGEMENT MEETING	APOLOGIES: Angus Morrison (AM) Richard Greene (RG) Nigel Pearson (NP) Richard Wilson (RW) Graeme Wilson (GW) Ben Hadfield (BH) Mark Williams (MW) Bob Kindness (BK) Ian Fergusson (IF)
DATE: 29 October 2009	
OPENED AT: 10.30	
CLOSED AT: 14.30	
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Jarosz (PJ) Mary Gibson (MG) Donna-Claire Hunter (DH)	
Peter Cunningham (PC) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Chris Horrill (CH)	

1. MATTERS ARISING

1. i There were no matters arising and minutes of the 24th September meeting were passed as read. DH, the new RDO, and CH, biosecurity specialist from RAFTS, were welcomed to the meeting.

2. TRUSTEES

2.i. In future, angling interests will be represented through the appointment of Professor David Barclay as a Trustee. DB was welcomed by the Chairman, and the WRFT Board now has a full complement.

3. FINANCE

3.i The Cash Projection for October (but 2 days short of the month end) were presented at the meeting along with the September version.

3.ii Some of the Southern River proprietors' monies (£819) have started to come in as well as another Board tranche, leaving just £4K to complete the Board's contribution of £23K.

3.iii An additional Biosecurity contribution of £500 can be used for 2 raising awareness days – one has already occurred at Inverewe Gardens and the next one is yet to be arranged.

3.iv Due to the late arrival of some equipment, the Life in Lochans project ended with part of the field programme having to be cancelled. As a result, the grant claim to SNH was less than the grant application amount.

3.v WRFT last year produced a surplus of £10K with a smaller surplus this year – it has always been an objective of WRFT to have a sufficient reserve of funds to run the Trust for a full financial year without any further income in that year. Now that this objective has been realised, any further surplus needs to be ring-fenced for specific projects even if 2 to 3 years down the road.

3.vi RAFTS intend to hold a seminar in order to help Trusts develop/deliver projects – individually or collectively. The proposal will help to create a “project bank”.

3.vii VM said that the accounts for 2008/9 are all but completed and have to be lodged with OSCR before the end of December 2009.

4. PLANNING AHEAD – BIOLOGIST'S REPORT

4.i Genetic work on salmon is progressing through the analysis being carried out by FRS Pitlochry, and the results will hopefully support more effective management, notably restocking ventures. For maximum utility, this work should include comparative analysis of fish farm material, but at present this is unavailable. The trout genetics work is less well focused. The Trust needs to be clear on its priorities, namely understanding of Sea Trout population structure in Loch Maree, and seek an appropriate technical partnership to address analysis and other project requirements.

4.ii The Bruachaig project (currently funded by AM and RAFTS) covers 10 kms plus of river and was originally funded by TWG.

4.iii Sea lice numbers are lower this year on both farmed and wild fish. The wild fish, sea trout in particular are in fine condition as feeding at sea has been good.

4.iv Marine Scotland has offered to analyse lice data collected by Trusts to further assess the relationship between fish farm production cycles and location, and the lice burden on wild fish.

4.v DH has expertise in GIS and could help develop ideas for monitoring lice “hot spots” .

5. AOB

5.i The draft Biosecurity plan is on WRFT's web site and it is now necessary to identify action points for the area and for WRFT, Rhododendron are a local area priority whilst pike and crayfish may be preventative action priorities for WRFT in the future.

5.ii CH presented an outline of RAFTS's involvement in biosecurity planning From a Scottish Government perspective, invasives can have a significant impact on biodiversity and economic activities. If not dealt with early, invasives will spread and the costs of dealing with the problem will escalate exponentially. So priorities are:

- **Prevention of invasive species getting a foothold**
- **Establishment of a surveillance programme.**
- **Eradication and removal.**

5.iii There is a need to develop this strategic approach at a local level. Whilst no one organisation has the responsibility for non-native invasive species, RAFTS is prepared to take a lead and has identified 29 priority species throughout Scotland. RAFTS will seek funds for implementation either collectively across the Trusts or with other partners,

5.iv CH needs to ascertain the position of WRFT in this whole process – what issues have arisen and what WRFT wish to do. The local area probably has 5 invasive species that are currently a problem – effectively a subset of the RAFTS approach. The meeting on 11th November may help the evolution of this project.

5.v The River Conservation Centre specialists' visit to the Tollaidh and Taagan burns resulted in a draft report that highlights some issues that need to be addressed, including the necessity to clarify the distribution and status of Fresh Water Pearl Mussel in the Tollaidh burn. There are, however, concerns about the potential levels of benefit compared to the cost of over-coming some complex problems.

5.vi New guidance on hydro schemes is being produced by SEPA who are responsible for fisheries under WFD PC has already has a backlog of applications to review, and the role of WRFT needs some thought.

5.vii PC and Brian Fraser had visited Ardessie fish farm. PC reported favourably on the working/treatment procedures and state of the fish.

5.viii PC thought that it would be informative to research further into Brown Trout numbers and distribution, DB suggested that he and fellow anglers could collect more information, especially from hill lochs. Can WRFT encourage more general recording by anglers?

5.ix PC will be producing the usual November newsletter soon.

MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Management meeting	14 Jan 2010	WRFT Office	10.30
Trustees' meeting	04 Feb 2010	WRFT Office	10.30