

MINUTES OF MANAGEMENT MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES		PRESENT: John Mackenzie – Chairman (JM) Barry Blake (BB) Graeme Wilson (GW) David Barclay (DB) Richard Greene (RG)	
DATE:	3 August 2011		
OPENED AT:	10.30		
CLOSED AT:	14.00		
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Jarosz (PJ) Peter Cunningham (PC) Mary Gibson (MG) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Jonah Tosney (JT) Donna-Claire Hunter (DC) Alasdair MacDonald (AM)		APOLOGIES: Angus Morrison (AM) Nigel Pearson (NP) Ian Fergusson (IF) Bob Kindness (BK) Richard Wilson (RW) Ben Hadfield (BH) Mark Williams (MW)	

1. MATTERS ARISING

1.i There were a few matters from the 1st June minutes that are “on-going” and these were on the agenda for this meeting.

2. FINANCE

2.i WRFT has received approval of a grant from HC for S & T in the Classroom. This means that all the educational projects for this financial year are now part funded (current shortfall of around £1000) and prospects look good for the next year. A range of bids for funding are under consideration.

2.ii The management reports reflect various contracts viz: Bruachaig, Site Condition Monitoring for Little Gruinard river (under RAFTS for SNH) and Coulin hydro schemes (per Bob Morgan).

2.iii A scientific microscope has been purchased that will offers educational opportunities with two extra viewing scopes and a video camera attachment.

2.iv A new “mileage” cost of 45p/mile was set – this reflects Inland Revenue guidelines.

2.v WRFT is committed to supporting the regional mink control project, and it was agreed that 10 traps would be purchased on behalf of WREN. The cost is to be reimbursed in full when current WREN cash flow problems are resolved.

3. FORWARD PLANNING & KEY ISSUES

3i Peter Cunningham’s biologist’s report:

- WRFT now have three teams electro-fishing – so far parr numbers are good but fry numbers low.
- Sea trout sampling programme (funded by SG via RAFTS) is completed but WRFT will do some further sampling and feed the information to RAFTS. Next year RAFTS may well extend the period of sampling (if funds materialise), meanwhile a workshop will take place to consider/agree the methodology to be used for lice counting.
- From our initial sweeps, lice numbers on the river Kanaird are of concern.
- Grilse are now coming in – but the rivers are low so numbers are few.
- River Ewe screw trap has not been successful for a number of reasons. But could it be better redeployed elsewhere – say to look at sea-trout movement in sea lochs or look at numbers on a smaller (and better suited) river?
- The Herring Project is being revised – the oral stories section is still not completed and needs to be reviewed.. It was agreed that an interviewer would be recruited to complete the project. **PC/JT**
- Any proposal for further work on trout populations in Loch Maree requires further input from Eric Verspoor on the genetic information he is processing – **PC**.

3.ii Jonah Tosney’s biologist’s report:

- JT reported that he is in discussion with MH regarding access to sea-lice information in support of a proposed (by MH) “no objection” for a development in Loch Duich.
- JT also stated that talks with SSC over collaboration in a possible research project (tracking migrating sea-trout) are on-going.
- Angling Information Service was discussed at this point – see 3.iii
- On the Aquaculture Mitigation Project, JT reported that:
 - a), The GIS-based location aid system is being constructed
 - b) The sea lice data collected this year by west coast trusts is currently being analysed by RAFTS with some help from MS.
 - c) Samples currently being analysed now include both farmed fish and wild fish. An interesting advance.

3.iii The Anglers’ Information Project

DB give an update on the progress he has had with James Hutton Institute who are willing to help develop this project. DB explained how the finished service could be utilised as a tool to manage access (and non-access) to specific hill lochs, once the project is operational. DB and JT to meet with James Hutton staff to advance the project.

3,iv Fish Farming and Wild Fisheries

Following sea-lice monitoring using the Dundonnell fyke net (operated by AM) and a site visit (by PC/AM) to the WRF Ltd cages at Ardessie – a sea-lice problem in that area was indicated. After some email discussion, a local proprietor approached MSS requesting a visit by fish health inspectors to Ardessie. An inspection was made, and the outcome of that visit is awaited. The report will not be published by the FHI, but would presumably be available under FOI. The situation was not aided by a lack of communication between the FHI and the WRSFB regarding the existence of a potential or actual problem and the resultant action by FHI.

This sequence of events emphasised the need to set up a discussion with WRF Ltd the sole purpose of which should be to try and establish a protocol procedure for “taking forward” sea-lice (and any other) problems that affect both farmed and wild fish. It was agreed that DC would arrange a meeting between WRFT and WRF Ltd. This situation raised the issue of WRFT visiting fish farms more frequently in order to improve communications and mutual understanding of issues. D-C suggested that in principle WRFT has the opportunity to make two inspection visits a year to each fish farm under either the FMA or AMA frameworks. That number of visits to fish farms may well have both time and resource implications for WRFT, but it was agreed that this should have clear priority over more peripheral issues however important these may be (invasive species work was one example given).

Actions/points:

- Carry on sampling wild fish as indicated by circumstances
- Revisit WRF Ltd and establish a communication protocol for when and where problems exist
- Contact FHI (MSS) requesting clarity of the lines of communication (in both directions) to avoid misunderstandings and conflict when problems occur.
- PC to produce a schedule of proposed random site visits across all fish farms
- The meeting agreed unanimously that continuing dialogue with the aquaculture companies was both desirable and necessary.

3.v The Bruachaig Project

Funding has been sought from MH for the Bruachaig Restocking Project to enable the scaling up of the continuing work into a brood-stock project.

The question was raised of whether it would be possible to mark the fish prior to release? Using genetics to identify returning fish would be a very expensive option.

Smolts from previous stocking should return next year so we need to see if they can navigate the falls

4. AOB

RAFTS have produced a draft "Code of Good Governance" to which WRFT needs to respond by 31st August 2011. BB will summarise the main issues and circulate for trustees to comment and will then follow up by circulating a draft response (again for comment) before the final response letter goes to RAFTS by 31st August.

NEXT MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Management meeting	06/09/2011	WRFT Office	10.30