

MINUTES OF SWRFT TRUSTEES' MEETING

Ledgowan Lodge Hotel	PRESENT:	
DATE: 5 th October 2017	Ian Lindsay (IL) – Chair	Bob Kindness (BK)
OPENED AT: 11.00 CLOSED AT: 15.00	Mark Williams (MW)	Ally Macaskill (AMac)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Nigel Pearson (NP)	Neil Cameron (NC)
Peter Cunningham (PC)	APOLOGIES:	
Isabel Moore (IM)	Richard Greene (RG)	James Close (JC)
Bill Whyte (BW)	Alasdair Macdonald (AM)	David Barclay (DB)
Lynne Schweitsfurth (LS)	Melanie Smith (MS)	Ewan Macpherson (EM)
Mary Gibson (MG)	Duncan Burd (DBd)	Derek Dowsett (DD)

1. Minutes of Meeting on 28th August 2017

The minutes were approved by BK, seconded by IL and confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

There were no specific matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

2. SFT+WRFT Amalgamation – Latest

- PJ explained that the amalgamated trusts are now named the Skye & Wester Ross fisheries Trust (SWRFT) and fully registered at both Companies House and OSCR with a revised Memorandum and Articles of Association to reflect the size of the new entity.
- The SWRFT is a Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee - so trustees are now directors of the company.
- SWRFT has an annual turnover of circa £80K.

3. PowerPoint Presentation by DB – “The Fisheries Trust, its Aims and Objectives”

- The presentation bullet-pointed the background of both of the former the WRFT and the SFT, précised the structure of the SWRFT as well as its “position” among the other fisheries trusts of Scotland, illustrated its work in the field and in education and listed its working partners.
- Points made in the presentation involved the need for a period of consolidation for the amalgamated trust and the need to identify common objectives/priorities.
- The presentation confirmed that the area in the south of the SWRFT is not within a District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) and this does need to be addressed as any area not within a DSFB could be subject to a “hostile” take-over by a neighbouring DSFB.
- The presentation confirmed that currently one third of the trust’s income comes from the WRASFB with the remaining two thirds from charitable funding for specific projects and donations.
- The presentation pointed out that rivers on Skye, that are mostly in public ownership, present opportunities for river restoration projects that are unique in that they could attract funding from sources that are unlikely to fund similar work on privately owned rivers.
- The presentation posed the question of how do we fund a second biologist (once the PhD project ends) unless we explore 50% funding by university work and/or a further project and/or fish farm monitoring programmes agreed and funded by aquaculture.
- The presentation listed the trust’s current main activities as:
 1. Juvenile surveys in the main rivers.
 2. Habitat improvement recommendations.
 3. Tournai trap.
 4. Education – with opportunities to expand into both marine projects and into projects involving disadvantaged/disabled groups.
 5. Collaboration with UHI, Glasgow UNI, Middlesex UNI, Wester Ross Biosphere, the Loch Maree Management Project and Local Events.
- It was agreed that a version of the presentation should be loaded onto our web site.

4. Meetings and Correspondence (PJ)

- There was some further discussion regarding the item 4.i of the minutes of 28th August 2017 meeting – a Statement of Intent from Marine Harvest Scotland (MHS) following a meeting in early August discussing cooperation between MHS and fishery trusts on the west coast and outer Hebrides. It was agreed that the weakness of the document, as it appears currently, was the fact that there was no mention of triggers or sanctions in the event of the failure of agreed management of sea lice, AGD and/or BKD on a fish farm. This weakness within the document has been relayed back to FMS as it is FMS that are leading this discussion with input from SWRFT and other trusts.
- There are still some local AMAs operating, with the one on Skye being an example, and these are seen as valuable forums allowing for open, frank discussions between the wild fish and farmed fish sectors. Most are held annually or bi-annually.

5. Financial Reports

- PJ reported the WRFT accounts for the year 1st April 2016 to 30th June 2017 are predicted to show a slight loss of some £3K – the finalised accounts from the accountant are still pending as are the SFT accounts for the year 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017. We will then move to accounting for the amalgamated SWRFT with the first year being from 1st July 2017 to 31st March 2018 – bringing us back into line with the recognised UK fiscal year (which runs 12 months from 6th April to 5th April).
- BW said that DSFBs, in their role of protecting public assets, are seeking additional funding from ScotGov both in recognition of this fact and to better manage this protection by employing suitable enforcement measures in both the coastal marine as well as in the fresh water environments.

6. BIOLOGISTS' REPORTS

6.i PC's Report

- **PC** added to his report that had previously been circulated:
- Pacific Salmon have recently been seen/caught on Skye rivers – are they escapees from Russia/Norway or from natural migration? The risk these Pacific Salmon pose to Atlantic Salmon is likely to be low.
- PC stated that there have been no escapes in Wester Ross or Skye for some time – either reported by Aquaculture itself or by anglers catching escapees. The SEPA web site has these details when escapes occur.
- In the 2017 season reported rod catches have been mostly grilse with numbers slightly up on both the Gruinard and little Gruinard rivers. Little fishing has taken place on Loch Maree this year. Work on Loch Maree could be done looking at both Sea trout and brown trout.
- PC said that the Salmon Festival Presentations were extremely useful and, if they are available, could be circulated generally. PJ to ask MS.

6.ii IM's Report

- **IL** added to her report that had previously been circulated:
- Field work this year has been mostly on the PhD project (supervised by Glasgow UNI and funded by Grieg Seafood). Other field work this year did include some trust work on Skye as well as helping with the Aberdeen Harbour project through most of August.
- It would be sensible now to identify a possible follow up project – maybe with a focus on finnock rather than smolts and possibly in Loch Carron so building on the work the BK has been carrying out. This needs to be fleshed out and fully costed.

- It is worth noting that in 2018 there will be a big telemetry project using lots of receivers based on the east coast – any telemetry project demands large amount of resources/money.

7. PLANNING AHEAD

Possible projects might well involve:

- 1) Loch Maree with the focus on its management – to manage and restore sustainably. So the Loch Maree Management Project will have Freshwater and Marine elements, will have links to the Biosphere and its objectives.
For the Freshwater element we need to look at all existing data sets and collate the data meaningfully, investigate the conditions of known spawning burns and use electro-fishing/trapping to gather new data. Note that the role of Protection Orders could ensure the control of what is exploited. The area has a number of hydro schemes on four river systems so can the developers contribute financially to this project?
For the Marine element we again need to at existing information and use telemetry for the collection of new information.
- 2) Skye presents the opportunity to move publicly owned rivers (an unique situation in Scotland where the vast majority of rivers are privately owned) into community ownership. We need to identify a river where the crofting community, as well as SRIPG, is supportive of community ownership.
- Angling Information Project – further work is still required before we have the working smartphone App. The three students, involved in the App development, will be presented with a smartphone of their choice. The presentation itself will also be used as a PR exercise for this project
- Education – we should continue to outreach to land managers and get involved in courses/lectures/training.
- The role of FMS and the Fishery Board in particular relation to the proposed Rum fish farm is presenting the opportunity to have a common approach.
- The ScotGov re-modelling to determine categories 1 to 3 for salmon rivers in Scotland has lead to the re-categorization for the rivers of Wester Ross and Skye.
- We need to produce an Annual Review and hold an AGM. We should aim to do both in the early part of 2018.
- There is a new owner of the Barrisdale and therefore value of ensuring that we electro-fish this area next year.
- We need a listing of the members of the former SFT so that they can be included onto a list of the former WRFT members.
- There has been a number of reports of large numbers of dead farmed fish probably coming from the Loch Torridon area but, despite involving Fish Health Inspectorate, we have no firm details.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	STATUS
13/12/2017	WRFT Office	10.30	Proposed
08/03/2018	WRFT Office	11.00	Proposed