

MINUTES OF MANAGEMENT MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES		PRESENT: John Mackenzie – Chairman (JM) Barry Blake (BB) David Barclay (DB)	
DATE:	15 March 2011	APOLOGIES: Angus Morrison (AM) Bob Kindness (BK) Nigel Pearson (NP) Mark Williams (MW) Ian Fergusson (IF) Graeme Wilson (GW) Richard Greene (RG) Richard Wilson (RW) Ben Hadfield (BH)	
OPENED AT:	10.30		
CLOSED AT:	14.30		
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Jarosz (PJ) Peter Cunningham (PC) Mary Gibson (MG) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Jonah Tosney (JT)			

1. MATTERS ARISING

1.i The minutes of the Management meeting of 1st February were adopted as read.

2. FINANCE

2.i With the financial year almost at a close the WRFT income has been well up to budget:

- All but 2 of the Southern Rivers' proprietors have contributed.
- There is still 5K to come in from the WRASFB.
- Also 3.5K to arrive from invoiced contract work – which this year totals 5.5K.
- SNH still have a grant payment of 2.2K to make for the S&T project.
- There is 6.3K (now invoiced) to complete the TWG sweep-netting budget.
- RAFTS' grants for FMP projects have been partly paid but some 5.5K is still outstanding

2.ii Expenditure this year:

- Equipment/maintenance has been higher than budgeted/anticipated.
- The Bruachaig restoration project has run 1K over-budget tfy.
- There are still sufficient funds in the Ewe rotary screw trap project to finish this year with a surplus of a few hundred pounds. For next year WRFT will need to find additional funding – PJ to approach AM.
- An under-spend of 4.5K (of core money) on the Conon Carrying Capacity can be carried over into the new fy (see 4i).
- The Little Gruinard FMP is now in draft format (at a cost of 9K) – it will be available on our web site and as a CDrom but will not go to print.

2.iii Budget Setting for 2011/12:

- This year's core income + 3% gives 48K including an additional one-off donation from WRASFB of 7K.
- Funding for the Tournaig trap is anticipated to be from MH as was the past 2 years' funding.
- RAFTS monies for the next fy will amount to 10.5K (some 3K less than this year) and no monies from Crown Estate (last year 2.3K).
- WRFT have budgeted for 7.5K for sweep-netting next fy – this is a performance based funding extending over 2/3 sites.
- Grant funding applications have been made for both education projects to SNH, the Nineveh Trust and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation – to date there is no indication of success from any of these funders.
- Operating budget costs have yet to be finalised.
- WRFT need to have a third electro-fishing unit operational for the coming year's field work – PJ to attempt to raise funding for this and possibly a fourth unit. JT to investigate possibility of using BK's equipment.
- WRFT has budgeted 1K for upgrading the admin computer as well as bringing the network, email and broadband services in-house.

3. FORWARD PLANNING & KEY ISSUES

3.i It is now very likely that the Scottish Government will provide around £225,000 for a follow-up project to the TWG. This will involve employment of two staff, preparation of GIS-based planning aids for more sensitive fish farm site selection, a sea lice sampling programme, and some form of genetics work to build on FASMOPS. This is a west coast wide project involving all Trusts on a co-operative basis.

3.ii The education projects need continuing funding and new grant funding sources are being actively sought (see 2.iii item 5). The Robertson Trust has helped fund S&T this year but before we can re-approach them we need to return a report to them on the success of the project.

3.iii (See 4 ii)

3.iv WRFT participation in the Gairloch Wildlife Festival will involve habitat survey demonstrations at Slattadale in collaboration with the Forestry Commission. One day of PC field time plus preparation.

4. BIOLOGIST'S REPORT

4.i PC

- Juvenile fish surveys remain a priority and a new two-year cycle of sampling target rivers will commence this year. The appointment of JT will permit sampling of some southern rivers within the same period. **PC/JT** to agree a sampling programme.
- The TWG sweep-netting programme will be replaced by a more targeted and coordinated west coast wide project and WRFT is likely to receive finds for perhaps only two sites. **PC** to prepare a case for additional work to be funded outside the new project – objectives, approach and cost implications.
- The carrying capacity project remains a high priority, and WRFT endeavours will be enhanced, and benefits increased, by collaboration with the work of Inverness College (IC) on the Carron Research Project. It was agreed that, without compromising our existing commitment on the Conon project, unspent project funds from this FY could be made available to support the Carron work. JT is already a key part of the proposed IC work.
- The River Ewe rotary screw trap was successful in capturing smolts last year, and it is now important to ascertain the requirements (and likely WRFT role) of AM and Ray Dingwall to maximise information gathering and interpretation in 2011. **PC/PJ**
- An investment of up to £1500 is required to repair the upstream Tournai trap. It was agreed that this was an appropriate investment for WRFT to continue this long-term data set and story of salmon in a Wester Ross river. This commitment was made on the clear understanding that the existing data will be thoroughly analysed and a paper (hopefully for publication) will be produced. **PC and JT** to produce a time bound action plan for this task.
- The herring project has not progressed. **BB** to discuss with RG.

4.ii JT

- An agreement is close to completion with Skye Trust to carry out an electro-fishing survey this year. Some additional work may also be requested.
- The Trust has been asked to participate in AMGs for three southern areas, and also to take a more active role in coordination. This is an important natural progression given the termination of the RDO system.
- The Carron Research Project is major initiative by Inverness College to assess the impact of different stocking approaches. Alongside this core aim, the project also seeks to gain a better understanding of system dynamics by studies of, for example, carrying capacity and predation. WRFT will benefit from our collaboration with the College via the second biologist
- The creators of the Assynt angling information and research project have offered to assist the development of a similar system for Wester Ross. The Assynt initiative was supported by lottery funds. This was agreed as a priority initiative. **JT/PJ** to ascertain costs and seek possible sources of funds.

5. AOB

5i DB will attend the 23 March RAFTS conference. **BB** to confirm with RW that he will be attending the AGM meetings on 22 March.

5ii A sea-lice review meeting has been proposed by WRF Ltd asking WRFT to attend. WRFT will request a date after 14th April – PC to co-ordinate.

5iii The WRFT AGM on 1st June 2011 will be in the Gairloch Community Hall annex.

MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Management meeting	21/04/2011	WRFT Office	10.30
Trustees' and AGM meeting	01/06/2011	WRFT Office	10.30