

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES		PRESENT: John Mackenzie – Chairman (JM) Richard Wilson (RW) Graeme Wilson (GW) Richard Greene (RG)
DATE:	14 December 2011	
OPENED AT:	10.30	
CLOSED AT:	13.00	
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Cunningham (PC) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Peter Jarosz (PJ) Mary Gibson (MG)		APOLOGIES: Angus Morrison (AM) Nigel Pearson (NP) Ian Fergusson (IF) Ben Hadfield (BH) David Barclay (DB) Jonah Tosney (JT) Bob Kindness (BK) Mark Williams (MW) Melanie Smith

1. MATTERS ARISING

1.i There were no matters arising from the 11th October minutes.

2. TRUSTEES

2.i Following prior email consultation with all Trustees and discussion with her, Dr Melanie Smith (UHI/Inverness College) was unanimously formally approved as a new trustee.

2.ii Dave Barclay will be approached with respect to taking on the role of vice-chairman which was left vacant by Barry Blake's resignation.

3. FINANCE REPORTS

3.i VM reported that WRFT's annual accounts for year ending 31st March 2011 were complete and ready to be signed off – which was done..

3.ii Despite two months of significant outgoings, there is little change in the overall healthy state of our finances. The current cash projections are showing a small deficit for this financial year.

3.iii The contract work on Skye is now completed, the report has been written up and sent to the Skye Trust – invoice needs raising – **PJ**.

3.iv UHI now has funding in place for the next three years for **JT** which requires WRFT to ensure that our sources of income for **JT** are equally in place. **PJ** has been talking with MS about using the European Fisheries Fund as a source of funding for a substantial project that **JT** has been looking to do in Loch Carron. All EFF projects require the partnership of an aquaculture company and **JT** has been in discussion with such a partner for a specific project. **JT** will work on progressing this application.

3.v The management reports show that the Tournaig Trap is running over budget for the year.

4. BIOLOGISTS' REPORTS

4.1 Peter Cunningham's biologist's report:

- The River Gruinard has been surveyed and the report will be written up over the winter.
- For the SAC contract work, the Little Gruinard river data has been submitted.
- Differences in trout, within the different tributaries of the Loch Ewe system, have been noted and there is a need to look at the genetics of these trout. 2011 has been a good year for salmon on the river Ewe – mainly 2SW should mean good spawning.
- 14 rod caught fish from the Bruachaig have been put back into the river above the falls – therefore there were no fish put into the hatchery at Coulin and no spend on the project this year. The genetics work will continue and WRFT will look for fry above the falls next year to see if the fish that were put there did spawn. The fish in BK's hatchery will remain there although some may need to be released in the spring.

- Brian Eddy should be included onto the list of fishermen to be interviewed as a part of the herring project.
- There is an absolute need to respond to the consultation process that will lead up to a new Bill on Aquaculture/Marine issues. The consultation document seems to be building on recent scientific research on sea lice – with SEPA getting new powers to deal with aquaculture sea lice problems. The document also has implications for the structure and the operational working of Boards and proposes statutory/compulsory AMAs.
- March 2012 may see the start of work by Scottish Water on a new water supply for Kinlochewe from the A'Gairbhe – PC has made them aware of the implications, at this time of year, for eggs and fry in the vicinity of work on the system.
- PC and JT will work on producing a schedule for fish farms visits next year. The Summer Isles farms (SSF) have not previously been visited and they will be in their first year of production (next year) – so these would prove useful to visit. Fish go into the Ardessie farm in May – after the smolt run – but sea trout in Little Loch Broom can be affected if there are high levels of lice at the farm.
- PC suggested a number of potential projects for 2012/3:
 - Additional sweep netting particularly if the RAFTS funding is cut back from this year's figures.
 - Herring spawning survey
 - Fish marking project in the river Ewe
 - Torridon fisheries plan
 - Rotary screw trap project
 - Redd washout study

The trustees asked PC, JT and PJ to meet, discuss and then propose projects (fleshed out and costed) for the trustees' approval.

4.ii Jonah Tosney's biologist's report:

- Having completed a comprehensive survey of the rivers on Skye, it would be interesting to compare the Skye results with those from Wester Ross – identifying, in particular, effects of winter washouts.
- This year, of the southern rivers, the Shiel, Allt Diurinish, Croe More, Gleannbeag, Applecross, Kishorn, Balmacara Burn and Ling were all surveyed. In the case of the River Carron only the tributaries were surveyed. After the data is fully assessed, a report will be produced over the winter.
- The sea trout and arctic charr discovery week was a great success with charr being found in a number of lochs including in areas of Loch Dughail where they were suspected of spawning. Sweep netting in Loch Dughail also found reasonable numbers of sea trout and finnock, suggesting a repeat of G Herbert Nall's 1930s study may be worthwhile. Many thanks to RW for his hospitality.
- Two contracts (one in Applecross and the other on Skye) have been completed and invoiced.
- Aquaculture developments:
 - Loch Duich - discussions are underway with MH on the development of a monitoring programme (which MH will support) for the re-developed Loch Duich site.
 - Loch Torridon - no objection was lodged to Marine Harvest's re-configuration of cages in Loch Torridon, as no increase in biomass was proposed, however a request was lodged in the response for information as to how the new configuration would affect lice treatments and the possibility of mass escapes. Meanwhile, Scottish Salmon Company has applied for planning permission for a new site in Outer Loch Torridon, near Diabaig. Loch Torridon farms are currently in the second year of production and Marine Scotland data show the number of lice in plankton samples and on returning fish has been high throughout the year. (Post meeting note. Based on advice from JT, WRASFB has lodged an objection to the application, based primarily on the lack of

evidence that the applicant has been able to demonstrate satisfactory control of lice.)

- Loch Carron - a planning application is expected from Scottish Salmon Company for a large biomass increase in Loch Carron either through expansion of the existing site or establishment of a new site nearby.

5. AOB

- PC/JT/PJ will meet together in January to list 2012 projects, which will need to be fully justified and costed, for trustees' approval. These projects should include a redd washout project.
- With the Scottish government now in place for a full term, RAFTS are hoping to negotiate a three-year funding package for trusts' work on sea lice data collection.
- A Locational Guidance model is still being developed by RAFTS (D-CH and DK) and is linked to sea lice information. There are three sections to the model – river ranking, coastal waters evaluation and fish farms performance. Its relationship to the Highland Council's aquaculture framework plans could be considered during a meeting with WRFT, HC and RAFTS scheduled in the second half of January 2012.
- It was agreed that all trustees should be consulted on the removal of the current distinction between "Management" and "Trustees" meetings to reflect what has de facto become the standard. For the past several years, what was known as The Management Committee has not existed and all trustees have been invited to attend all meetings. It is also proposed that meetings should be limited to just six bi-monthly meetings a year.
- All WRASFB responses to planning applications (as a statutory body) and many of its decisions are based on advice given to the board by the trust's biologists. Even though a draft version of advice to the board is usually circulated to trustees for their comment, sometimes WRFT's trustees have not been fully informed of the advice that has been given. It was agreed that this needs to be rectified with greater attention being paid to the use of email to canvas views, reach decisions and circulate the final responses.
- The Code of Good Practice has been finalised by RAFTS and circulated for signing up to. WRFT is, however, already highly regulated by the Charities Commission and believes further regulation to be unnecessary, a view which has been reported to RAFTS and circulated to a number of other West coast Trusts

NEXT MEETINGS	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Trustees' meeting	22/02/2012	WRFT Office	10.30
Trustees' meeting	29/03/2012	WRFT Office	10.30
Trustees' meeting & AGM	06/06/2012	WRFT Office	10.30