

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES		PRESENT: Johnie Parry – Chairman (JP) Colonel A Lindsay (AL) John Mackenzie (JM) Richard Wilson (RW) Richard Greene (RG) Ian Fergusson (IF) Nigel Pearson (NP) Angus Morrison (AM) Bob Kindness (BK)
PURPOSE:	TRUSTEES' MEETING	
DATE:	12 November 2008	
OPENED AT:	10.30	
CLOSED AT:	15.45	
IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Gibson (MG) Veronica Mullaney (VM)	Peter Cunningham (PC) Peter Jarosz (PJ) Barry Blake (BB)	APOLOGIES: Ben Hadfield (BH) Peter Voy (PV)

1. MATTERS ARISING

- 1.i The question of what policy WRFT should adopt on fish farm expansions (in general) was “rolled forward” to the January meeting when Colin Wishart (Highland Council Planning Officer for Marine Matters) will be present and aid discussion with his input on the planning criteria for such applications.
- 1.ii The minutes of the 29th October meeting were passed as read.

2. FINANCE

- 2.i WRFT have received a contribution from the Orrin Trust of £500.
- 2.ii In order to minimise any chance of individual bank deposits of over £50k not being guaranteed by government, it was decided to open a treasurers’ account at the Nationwide and deposit a minimum of £10K as a start.
- 2.iii Funds for the Bruachaig Restoration Project for 2008/9 are now secure – thanks to Angus Morrison and John Ogle.
- 3.iv The recent Argyll Trust fatal accident has raised the question of insurance cover and risk assessment for all WRFT’s workers. RAFTS have promised to provide advice on both subjects prior to their AGM in March where the matters will be on the agenda. Meanwhile, WRFT will look at all insurances over the next twelve months with a view to possible amalgamation with one provider and a cost advantage.
- 2.v The remaining balance (circa £1350) from the Scottish Executive (via RAFTS) money (after the 3 projects that have already been match funded) will hopefully be match funded by Highland Council for a Marine Seminar in the new year. This will leave a figure of £2.6K from the Crown Estate (again via RAFTS) that if match funded could result in another worthwhile project.
- 2.vi The sweep netting project is on target for completion on budget.
- 2.vii A Landfill Tax Credit application could be considered which may then offer a number of possible projects such as:
- High School version of Salmon & Trout in the classroom.
 - Redd washout project – building on previous work by James Butler – reflecting on higher flows and higher rates of washout – based on areas of low numbers of fry.

3. PLANNING AHEAD

- 3.i The FMP was discussed. There are currently 3 broad aims but the overarching and related aims need to be clarified and objectives need prioritising. Part 6 of FMP focuses on the action plan identifying high, medium and low priorities – including cost benefit analysis of the actions. These were somewhat subjective and could be further clarified.
- BB’s** offer to help with developing the FMP was much appreciated by **PC**.
- 3.ii The idea of river management groups (who would discuss and agree actions at a local level) was raised. There is a need to distinguish between what WRFT and what the landowners should do – important in relation to restocking and habitat enhancement.
- 3.iii There needs to be a balance between electro-fishing, report writing and other activities.

4. BIOLOGIST’S REPORT

- 4.i The focus this winter will be on fisheries reports for individual rivers and the redrafting of the FMP.
- 4.ii Some more time will be devoted to set up and deliver Artic Charr week that starts Sunday 23rd November.
- 4.iii More sweep netting will be carried out whilst, at the same time, seeking to identify better sites where

sea trout gather – the state of the tide being important.

4.iv The Marine Seminar is proposed for March (day after WRFT meeting?) and will, hopefully, involve local tour operators.

4.v There is a larger work load than originally envisaged and a case now for a second biologist.

However, the FMP should be firmly in place and the TRUST should then have a clear idea of what needs to be done – need to decide if a part-time or full-time biologist post is required.

PC agreed that if a second biologist were in place he would be able to work with them whilst at the same time being able to concentrate his skills and experience on the most important work.

4.vi Overall salmon catches are down yet there appears to be fish (in good numbers) within the rivers. The sea trout catch is up on the River Carron though overall numbers are lower than last year.

4.vii Genetic Project will plot different populations and show whether or not they are related. Samples are collected and will be analysed by FRS. River Ewe system has had samples taken from Coulin, Kernsary and lower River Ewe. The timescale for receiving results is unclear. There is a need to chase up results, especially where stocking programmes are planned or underway. The project should link to understanding any possible impact/genetic dilution from fish farm escapees.

4.viii Landcatch have genetic analysis capacity and **PC** said they could be a second option for analysis of genetic material. Marine Harvest have, also, been given a number of samples from River Ewe and had promised to inform WRFT of the results.

4.ix WRFT have received two consultation requests:

- For screening opinion for the Loch Duich proposal.
- For water extraction from River Ewe – **PC** stated that WRFT had no grounds for concern with R. Ewe extraction based on the information made available to WRFT.

4.x AM said he would have preferred extraction to have been from Loch Maree rather than from the River Ewe, a view shared by other trustees. His concern was that the extraction could (and would) affect pools nearby. It is likely that extraction will take place subject to a written agreement but there are more significant concerns about the long term possibility of future increased extraction which would have adverse effects.

5. AOB

5.i Information on the most appropriate treatments (against Gyrodactylus Saralis) for tackle and clothes need to be circulated to river proprietors so that they can provide the necessary facilities. Ideally fishing tackle should be provided by the host river as no matter what treatments are used there will always be a potential threat.

5.ii WRFT needs to consider if its Child Protection Policy is up to date and appropriate.

6 TRUSTEES

6.i JP confirmed what he had already told all trustees in confidence some 2 weeks previously, namely that he felt his position as Chairman was untenable. Despite his having the full confidence of trustees, there was a minority of proprietors who argued vociferously that his ownership of a Crown Estate salmon lease was incompatible with his chairmanship of the Trust. He felt that far too much time and resources were being spent defending his position, to the detriment of the Trust. He therefore announced that he was standing down with immediate effect.

AL said that given this situation, he would not be standing for re-election with effect from 15th November, nor did he wish to exercise his right to take part in the forthcoming election of new trustees.

All trustees voiced their deep regrets at these decisions and thanked **JP** and **AL** for their untiring (and unrewarded) work for the Trust of many years. Both left the meeting at the point.

PJ chaired the remainder of the meeting.

6.ii The 3 year terms of office of two trustees, **N.P** and **B.K.**, expired on 15th November. Both agreed to serve for a further 3 year term and were re-elected unanimously.

6.iii There were now also three trusteeships to be filled and six nominations had been received. Before any discussion about the replacements took place, all non trustees left the meeting whilst the nominations were considered.

6.iv It was decided by the trustees that a new chairman should be appointed immediately and after some discussion **JM** was elected unanimously.

6.v The trustees then appointed Mark Williams, Barry Blake and Graeme Wilson as the new trustees.

6.vi Non-trustees rejoined the meeting.

6.vii It was agreed that all trustees should write/review/amend their interests in the register.

6.viii The three nominees that were not successful on this occasion will be written to immediately thanking them for their interest.

MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Trustees' meeting	28 Jan 2009	WRFT Office	10.30
Management Group meeting	09 Mar 2009	WRFT Office	10.30