

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES	PRESENT: John Mackenzie – Chairman (JM) Mark Williams (MW) Richard Wilson (RW)
DATE: 21 October 2010	APOLOGIES: Barry Blake (BB) David Barclay (DB) Angus Morrison (AM) Nigel Pearson (NP) Ian Fergusson (IF) Richard Greene (RG) Ben Hadfield (BH) Bob Kindness (BK) Graeme Wilson (GW) Donna-Claire Hunter (DC)
OPENED AT: 10.30	
CLOSED AT: 15.30	
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Jarosz (PJ) Peter Cunningham (PC) Mary Gibson (MG) Veronica Mullaney (VM)	

1. MATTERS ARISING

1.i The minutes of the Management meeting of 14th September were adopted as read.

2. FINANCE

2.i The 2009-10 annual accounts were approved and signed off.

2.ii The general financial position remains healthy with two new life members and the sale of fish scale envelopes to SEPA. On the expenditure side, we have bought a new USB microscope, a “back up” pack for the server (computer), serviced our electro-fishing kits, bought new batteries for one kit and paid for the training of a leader for a second electro-fishing team

2.iii Funding for the coming financial year remains unclear – an application for TWG follow up funding has been lodged by RAFTS to SG – its success is not guaranteed. GIS, sweep-netting programmes and genetic study are the three main elements with all resultant data being freely available.

2.iv The Robertson Trust have requested a report of this year’s “Salmon & Trout in the Classroom” following their grant aid of £2K towards the project

3. FORWARD PLANNING & KEY ISSUES

3.i 11 applications have been received for the second biologist post (initially a one year project) and interviews will take place on Monday 25th October 2010. The gross cost of the post to WRFT is estimated at circa £18K/year but some of this cost should be offset by income from Skye Trust for contract work of their projects following the production of their FMP.

3.ii Although TWG programme comes to an end in March 2011, AMAs can/will continue – but with a need to re-organise themselves and with no RDOs.

3.iv There remain issues over the availability of sea-lice data.

3.v The planning application for Ardesie A was discussed (JM declared an interest and did not speak on the subject). Ardesie is in a sensitive area in respect to wild fisheries, being close to both the Little Gruinard and the Gruinard rivers posing possible issues to sea-trout. Whilst salmon are currently doing OK – what implications would expansion at this fish farm pose in the future?

A screening and scoping exercise (instigated by the Highland Council) will request, from statutory consultees, responses to all the issues raised. WRFT (through WRASFB) could then recommend that an EIA is required as part of the process of determining this application.

The key question is: will the responses, to the issues raised, be considered “material” by the planning authority to this proposed modification application?

3.vi It was also decided that WRFT should write to WRF Ltd expressing concern at their mode of operation with their transferring fish from Ardmail & Corrie to Ardesie with (potential) resultant impact on sea-lice levels.

4. BIOLOGIST’S REPORT

4.i There has been less electro-fishing achieved (to date) than in previous years due mainly to weather conditions. Reported rod catches are variable (sea-trout numbers are down in R Ewe – but could have gone through to L Maree) with relatively few sea-lice problems.

4.ii There is, possibly, a case for stocking sea-trout in L Maree but there is a need for more knowledge on genetics in order to make an informed judgement on what might be appropriate.

4.iii Sweep-netting is to continue in Loch Gairloch and Loch Ewe over the winter – with £6.5K still to claim, further sweeps are necessary in order to fully utilise our budget.

4.iv The Carrying Capacity project is almost worked up again this year – will we experiment with enrichment?

4v Biosecurity/Invasive species: to date 9 mink on Isle Ewe and 7 on Little Gruinard have been accounted for – but could more be done and, if so, by whom? RAFTS have submitted a bid to LEADER for a project and should SNH take up a co-ordinating role?

4vi There is a continuing need to observe Loch Tollaidh – **PC** will speak to the Angling Club and discuss how best to achieve this watching brief.

4vii The Little Gruinard FMP is in draft form and awaiting comments from **GW** and SNH focusing on management action points. A meeting is to be arranged to agree the format and final content of the report with other trustees to be given the opportunity to comment.

4viii The Herring project is still not progressing.

4ix MPAs – work is underway to provide survey information with public consultation as the process moves on.

4x There is a need to produce a newsletter.

4xi WRFT needs to produce fisheries reports for the lochs Tollaidh, Squoid and Tournaig.

4xii There is the possibility of:

- a tagging training day
- support for the rhododendron project
- an interpretation board project for Flowerdale that is supported by SNH.

4xiii WRFT own two working (fully serviced) electro-fishing kits but with the advent of a second biologist do we now need to get a third kit into commission?

5. AOB

5i It was agreed that the “Black Book” (declaration of interests) is good practice even though it is not mandatory. However, WRFT needs to decide whether a member of the public asking to see the “Black Book” is allowed to do so.

5ii Richard Greene, Richard Wilson, Angus Morrison and Ian Fergusson all offered themselves for re-election as trustees for a new term and were all re-elected unanimously.

5ii The Trustees confirmed that they wish to have fish farm representation among the ranks of their trustees.

5iii It was drawn to the attention of the Trust that our 2010 review should have mentioned responses made to any fish farm planning applications. As previous annual reviews listed responses that WRFT had made (or advice that had been given), should mention of these matters be reinstated in annual reviews? It was agreed that this should now happen and that any responses should also go on the WRFT web site.

5iv Membership rates, which have remained static for a number of years, were briefly discussed but it was decided that the rates should remain as they currently are.

5v It was agreed that we should purchase a new dry suit for **PC** for use when sweep-netting.

5.vi WRFT have received an award from the Highland Council in recognition of their educational work with the local schools.

MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Management meeting	01/12/2010	WRFT Office	10.30
Trustees' and AGM meeting	01/06/2011	WRFT Office	10.30