

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES		PRESENT: John Mackenzie – Chairman (JM) Richard Greene (RG) Nigel Pearson (NP) Ian Fergusson (IF) Bob Kindness (BK) Mark Williams (MW)	
DATE:	1 June 2011		
OPENED AT:	14.00		
CLOSED AT:	17.30		
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Jarosz (PJ) Peter Cunningham (PC) Mary Gibson (MG) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Jonah Tosney (JT) Donna-Claire Hunter (DC) Alan Wells (AW) Diane Kennedy (DK)		APOLOGIES: Angus Morrison (AM) Barry Blake (BB) Graeme Wilson (GW) David Barclay (DB) Richard Wilson (RW) Ben Hadfield (BH)	

At the outset of the meeting JM welcomed Alan Wells, the recently appointed Policy and Planning Director at ASFB, and Diane Kennedy, joint RAFTS project officer, to their first Trust meeting.

1. MATTERS ARISING

1.i DC confirmed that RAFTS would shortly be issuing advice on the operation of AMA's post TWG. The minutes of the Management meeting of 21st April were adopted as read.

2. FINANCE

2.i The Cash Projections show a financial loss for the current year as was predicted – this, in the main, relates to the cost of the second biologist. This “loss” will be met by our current healthy surplus reserves.

2.ii The annual accounts for the year 2010/11 are completed and are with our accountants – an initial draft version will be circulated (as soon as it becomes available) for scrutiny and comment.

2.iii As is usual, the over-headed rates, calculated using the agreed RAFTS' formula, are higher than last year.

2.iv It was agreed that having the second biologist in place was already proving very valuable. Although the costs inherent in this contributed to the projected loss for the year, it was too early for the income which could be generated by JT to be properly assessed. It was agreed, in the expectation that significant income will be generated, that the Trust would strongly wish to continue JT's employment following the end of his initial 12 month contract.

3. FORWARD PLANNING & KEY ISSUES

3i Peter Cunningham's biologist's report:

- The SFCC electro-fishing database is now operational
- Sea trout sampling is now underway (funded by SG via RAFTS) with a target of 30 fish per site and with four sites to sweep.
- Reports coming in indicate that most rivers are fishing well with a report today of a 30lb salmon from Loch Maree.
- The catch reporting system could do with amending though it is difficult to see just how it could be improved on some of the smaller rivers.
- The Tournai trap is operational with the upstream trap still to be fully overhauled and the paper on the results of the trap has still to be written –**PC**
- Trustees agreed that the Trust can carry out field work under contract but should not undertake analysis/assessment of developments.
- 9 mink were trapped on Isle of Ewe in 2010 and although so far unsuccessful in 2011, trapping/monitoring will continue this year.
- There is a need to monitor sea-lice (Sea trout) on the Southern rivers especially as the biomass in fish farms is increasing in the near future. With the Carron as the

only southern site in the RAFTS programme, should the Trust consider sampling at its own cost? If WRFT did sample the resultant data can be fed into the RAFTS' project. Could this be viewed as a joint venture with WRFT paying some costs while approaching fish farms for a sizeable contribution to the project?

A Herring project, intended to involve a range of interest groups, probably led by WREN, is being developed. The trustees considered that it was worth WRFT supporting themes 4 "Finding Spawning Herring" and 5 "Herring for Wildlife" subject to funding being found.

- WRFT have expressed a wish to be involved in Pearls in the Classroom, part of a LIFE+ freshwater pearl mussel project being formulated by SNH and RAFTS.. PJ should contact Iain Sime of SNH to register.

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

- Agreement has been reached with Skye Fisheries Trust regarding their electro-fishing survey requirements for the coming field work season.
- The Carron screw trap was set up on 16th April and was operational until 12th May during which time a peak of 900 fish were caught in a total of 6600+ salmon smolts. Using BK's calibration exercise (of 17% sampling caught in the screw trap) this would equate to circa 39,000 salmon smolts being produced within the system. The Sea trout smolts numbers were significantly lower at around 300.
- An electro-fishing survey has been done of Loch Milton for the Applecross Landscape Partnership Scheme . They will pay for this consultancy service – invoice to be raised **PJ**.
- Responses are currently being prepared for two fish farm applications in Loch Carron and Loch Torridon.
- Sweep netting on the river Carron has not been possible due to high water flows – alternative site at Loch Carron are being investigated.
- JT reported on the Anglers Information project – see below:

3.iii The Anglers' Information Project

This project could be based both on the web site and in the new Gairloch TIC similar in format to the "assyntanglingresearch.org.uk". Discussions with Dr Adam Brown of Substance Coop (who developed the Assynt project) indicated a cost between 25K – 50K. While some costs could be covered by WRFT (particularly data collection costs) there is a need to consider other partners and sources of funding as well as possible advertisement revenues before this project can progress.

3,iv Fish Farming and Wild Fisheries

- It was agreed that a defined structure needs to be formulated for responding to planning applications and reviews (relating to aquaculture) particularly between the main categories of:

- a) Screening and Scoping
- b) Actual responses
- c) Objections (which only carry any weight if from a Statutory Consultee)

Alan Wells agreed and promised to produce such guidance for our future responses.

- The future role of Marine Protection Areas covering salmon and sea trout may well prove to be an important tool in the defining of areas unsuitable for aquaculture.
- MSS offer advice on sea-lice (data collection) and whilst their advice may not be clear WRFT should liaise with MSS.
- Local regular fishermen could be trained on sea-lice data collection to know what to look for, how to undertake handling and how to report the collected data.

3.v The Bruachaig Project

If this project is to continue, additional funding will be necessary:

- There are both Kinlochewe and Coulin fish held by BK at Glenmor – some are now of a size of big parr or smolts.
- Should these be kept on as brood stock or stocked out?
- For brood stocking about 2000 of these could produce a good amount of young fish but the cost of growing on needs to be considered – who should pay? –

should WRFT pay some of the costs? Perhaps covering the costs of monitoring?
It was agreed to review the position once accurate costs have been established.

3.vi Permitted Development Rights Consultation Paper

- **AW** said that ASFB and RAFTS will respond to the PD Rights consultation paper and added that the Board should also respond.
- This consultation paper proposes a PDR for fish farms to increase biomass using more than one equation with a limit for small and medium size farms.
- It is a concern that whilst biomass limits are not a planning matter, Boards do not have any opportunity to respond to CAR licence applications for biomass increases thus precluding any “valid/relevant” opportunity to object to the very significant threats posed by increased biomass on farms.

4. AOB

4i His term of office having just ended, **BH** was unanimously re-appointed for a new 3 year term. Other Trustees’ terms end in November 2011.

4ii PJ reminded Trustees of their previous decision to provide brief personal resumes to be put on the website, asking those who had not provided them to do so.

NEXT MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Management meeting	03/08/2011	WRFT Office	10.30