

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SPEY
DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD IN OPEN
SESSION held at the Craigellachie Hotel,
Craigellachie commencing at 10.45 a. m. on
Friday 22nd May, 2015

Present:-

Chairman	Brian Doran	Craigellachie Fishings
Proprietors	Peter Graham Angus Gordon Lennox Toby Metcalfe Sir Edward Mountain, Bt Oliver Russell Dr CMH Wills Alan Williams	Roths and Aikenway Brae Water Trust Crown Estate Delfur Fishings Ballindalloch Knockando Carron Fishings
Co-Optees	Grant Mortimer Mel McDonald	Strathspey Angling Improvement Association River Spey Anglers Association
In Attendance	Roger Knight Gavin Clark Brian Shaw Grahame Newman William Cowie	Director SNH Biologist SEPA Clerk
Public Attendees	Peter Hill Craig Mackay Mark Cockburn	International Game Fishers Association River Spey Anglers Association FishPal

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from James Carr and Peter Millar.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Session held on 13th February, 2015.

There were small adjustments made in respect of the SSE position and subject to these the Minute was proposed by Peter Graham and seconded by Alan Williams.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

3.1 Foundation Road Show event

Sir Edward Mountain advised that following his suggestion noted at 5.3 of the previous Minute, he felt it was vital to proceed with a roadshow to disseminate information about the Foundation's work. He would speak to interested parties and respond back to the Director to further this and would seek to involve some of the Rural Affairs Committee members.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report was as attached to the Minute but the following additional points arose:-

4.1 Consultation on Licenses to Kill

There had been some subsequent comment that the Board were slow to respond but details relating to the consultation had only become apparent very late in the day.

4.2 Wild Fisheries Reform

The Director updated those members of the public attending to advise that Proprietors would now have an involvement in the Scottish Government's Stakeholder Reference Group. The intention was to identify an individual with as broad a representation as possible.

4.3 Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB)

It was noted that the ASFB and Rivers & Fisheries Trusts of Scotland Joint Working Group was taking legal advice on whether Fishery Management Organisations should be charitable organisations or not.

4.4 Water Abstraction

4.4.1 Rio Tinto

Mel McDonald enquired whether there was a temperature logger for water temperature at Spey Dam. The Biologist reported that there was, but it was of limited use. It did, at least, demonstrate some cooperative working between the Board and Rio Tinto. He was of the opinion that there was scope for further work in this area and said it was important to establish a joint working relationship with Rio Tinto.

4.5 **Predator Control**

The Director reported that a review had been undertaken on 7th May involving the practical participants in the Moray Firth Seal Management Plan. This group was now communicating far better and there was representation from netting interests too.

4.6 **Staffing**

The new accounting arrangements were still subject to a period of transition.

Questions

The Director then invited any questions on his report. The following arose:-

- Peter Graham enquired in connection with the Stakeholder Reference Group whether Duncan Ferguson was on this group and it was confirmed he was.
- In response to enquiry, the Director confirmed that with regard to the application for the seal licence, the potential quota was based upon the Permitted Biological Removal rate in order to show a sustainable approach.
- Sir Edward Mountain enquired how many coastal patrols had been conducted this year and how many were to come. The Director reported that, as far as he was aware, one had already taken place and others were planned, subject to appropriate sea conditions.
- The Biologist, in response to an observation from Sir Edward Mountain, noted that a site survey would be undertaken this year to locate the most advantageous site for testing for Ranunculus control, once the water levels had reduced.
- Alan Williams enquired whether the Board were able to obtain a return of seals shot by netsmen. In response, the Director reported that Troupe Head was out-with the Moray Firth Seal Management Plan (MFSMP) area, so he would not have a return. However, the netsmen within the MFSMP made returns through their local Fishery Board.
- Craig Mackay, who was in attendance, and at the discretion of the Chairman, enquired whether there was a definite intention to hit the quota for seal management during the year and the Director confirmed that they would be striving to achieve this.

- Alan Williams enquired whether it was possible to share the survey of seal numbers and this was agreed.

5. Spey Foundation Report

Peter Graham reported that a significant focus of the Spey Foundation meeting had been on a new genetic project and the work undertaken by Mark Coulson for identifying the parentage of juvenile fish.

In effect, the work was attempting to calculate the number of adults that produced a certain number of juveniles, to help determine stock conservation status. It would help us to understand the numbers of mature adult fish that would be necessary to produce the next generation of returning adults on a sustainable basis. It was noted that there was still £20,000 from the DR CMH Wills Trust to support this work and the Committee had decided to proceed to use this money to support the ongoing project.

The other main focus of the Spey Foundation meeting was a presentation by the Biologist on the impact of the marine environment. It had been noted that SSE were intending to set up listening arrays to identify smolt survival as they transited between fresh and salt water. This was in connection with the offshore windfarm proposal within the inner Moray Firth, although as yet this did not extend sufficiently far as to include the Spey.

Peter Graham had lobbied Alistair Stephen of SSE to extend this listening array to include the Spey. Irrespective of that, the Foundation was also applying for a Trout & Salmon Magazine 60th Anniversary prize to seek funding to investigate in-river mortality.

The Biologist had also been working to investigate possible projects to involve PHD students on the river and a number of areas were to be looked at.

As an aside, Dr CMH Wills noted that Glen Feshie Estate, which was owned by a Danish billionaire, were interested in committing to long term research and this may be a route for further funding.

The Biologist also reported that a temperature and oxygen study was commencing.

Finally, another main issue that had been looked at by the Foundation Committee was communication. Discussion had taken place on producing fact sheets for display in the Ghillies' huts. A single A4 sheet was felt to be very useful for this purpose and the Biologist would endeavour to maintain this, together with regular briefings.

6. AOCB

6.1 ASFB

The meeting was informed of the intention to persuade the ASFB to coordinate a conference for the sharing of views prior to the closure of the Wild Fisheries

Reform Consultation. The involvement of Ghillies, Anglers and Anglers' Associations was to be encouraged.

7. Date of next meetings

The next meeting would be Friday 28th August, 2015

The Open Session then closed at 12 p.m.