

Subject: Beaulieu DSFB Board meeting
Date: 30 March 2021
Location: Video Conference
Present: Jock Miller (JM); Frank Spencer-Nairn (FSN); Michael Spencer-Nairn (MSN); Neil Cameron (NC); Victoria Rotheroe (VR); Nick Jackson (NJ); Ruth Watts (RW); Alastair Skinner (AS); Jim Braithwaite (JB); Alastair Campbell – Clerk (AC)



MINUTES

ITEM	ACTION OWNER
1.0 Apologies	
1.1 Apologies were received from Simon Lovat.	
2.0 Minutes of Board Meeting 8 December 2020 & Matters Arising	
2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 8 December 2020 were approved.	CLERK
2.2 Matters arising from previous minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">A few proprietor 2020 catch returns remained outstanding.RW confirmed that validation of fish pass counts for 2020 was ongoing. Final count data for the year had been requested from SSE. RW to contact Marine Scotland to confirm they are aware of the counter data problems in respect of their conservation grading calculations	CLERK RW
3.0 Register of Interest – Agenda Items	
3.1 The Clerk, JM & NJ made a declaration of their interests in the Lower Beaulieu Syndicate (as managing agent and committee members, respectively) in particular relation to item 8 on the meeting agenda (discussions on the works in Corff Buildings).	
3.2 AC to send declaration form to JB for future meetings.	CLERK
3.3 No other specific declarations were made by those present in respect of the agenda items.	
4.0 Senior Biologist's Report	
4.1 A written report had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.	
4.2 <u>Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)</u> . Commencement of writing a replacement plan was delayed due to instigation of the smolt monitoring project. In order to complete the FMP, some e-fishing may have to be delayed this summer.	

4.2.1 Marine Scotland had requested assistance with completion of a national survey on pressures affecting salmon populations. A payment would be made by MS for this. The results of this can be fed into the FMP.

4.2.2 The analysis in recent years involving the inner Moray Firth netting stations had shown these harvest mixed-stock fish from all over NE Scotland. These netting stations need reclassified (currently attributed by Marine Scotland to the Ness catchment only). JM to raise this with the Ness DSFB.

JM

4.3 Smolt Monitoring Project. RW ran through the project outline that had been circulated prior to the meeting and summarised where the project had reached, with a smolt trap installed at Fasnakyle to monitor run timing of smolts at the head of the Glass.

4.3.1 It is proposed that a similar run-timing survey will be undertaken on the Farrar in 2022.

4.3.2 RW confirmed that she was awaiting a final version from SSE of the dam smolt monitoring / recovery protocol to cover potential entrapment of smolts at Aigas / Kilmorack dams. The protocol provides '*where reasonably practical*' for 1 turbine at each location to be run up to a maximum load of 10MW, after which the load will be split, with a minimum of 5MW each turbine. Additionally, generation will continue to enable enhanced flows to be provided during hours of darkness.

RW

4.4 Possible student placement. RW requested the Board consider hiring a student placement during the summer to help kick start other projects, e.g. engagement with landowners over riparian planting, e-fishing surveys and historic data entry. It was agreed that an approach should be made to UHI initially to see if this could be done as part of existing coursework / doctorates. FSN to raise with Rivers & Lochs Institute forum.

FSN

5.0 Fisheries Officer / Bailiff Report (Confidential)

5.1 A written report had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

5.2 **REDACTED**

5.3

5.4

6.0 SSE Liaison Meeting 26 March 2021

6.1 JM reported that the liaison group had discussed kelt passage; fish pass counter software and validation; contact details for poaching incidents; fish pass lift daily timings and frequency; water storage and potential outages.

6.2 SSE has tendered for a replacement contractor to repair the Mk12 counter software issues throughout Scotland. However full resolution was not expected before 2022 at the earliest. SSE representatives had reported the matter was now a greater priority for senior personnel within SSE Generation.

6.3 The liaison group had agreed to request an additional daily fish pass lift at Kilmorack and Aigas, from two to three lifts. Timing was to be confirmed between RW and SSE. Discussion had

RW

taken place whether a 4th night-time lift might benefit seatrout. SSE was sceptical of any benefit. Analysis of historic catch data was to be undertaken to evidence potential benefit. The Board agreed a 4th night-time lift should be requested for one season to assess.

6.4 SSE had reported a change in their water storage policy, as a result of which they were entering spring 2021 with a greater water capacity than in recent years. This should ensure no repeat of the very low spring water flows seen previously.

6.5 An outage of the Loch Mullardoch (G Cannich) – Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin (G Affric) tunnel was expected later in the year for repair works, with a second outage for a period in 2022. This could result in water flowing naturally down the R. Cannich, rather than R. Affric. The Board agreed that overall flows to the R. Glass should be maintained and this to be monitored.

RW

7.0 Stocking Policy Review

7.1 A policy paper had been prepared by RW, reviewing the position on stocking in light of more recent advice and regulation from Marine Scotland. This has been circulated to the Board.

7.2 The Board agreed to maintain a current moratorium on any stocking until any further evidence established a specific requirement for restoration or mitigation stocking, and all other potential mitigation had been explored or ruled out.

7.3 However, to inform future decisions on stocking, the following actions were agreed to be included in the revised FMP: -

RW

- Review existing data on minimum number of returning adult fish required to fully stock the system, confirm and propose any additional survey work required, and produce stock recruitment curves
- Identify any areas potentially below juvenile carrying capacity (concern was expressed about recent e-fishing results on the Abhainn Deabhag) and any remedial actions (habitat, fish passage etc) that can be taken to resolve
- Further current work in investigating / easing barriers to smolt migration
- Confirm with Marine Scotland what returning adult threshold(s) they currently use for establishing their conservation grading calculations in the Beaully system

8.0 Office Accommodation

8.1 JM reported on a meeting with Tom Waring of the Beaully Fishing Syndicate committee to discuss potential works and occupation of part of the Corff buildings by the Board. Concerns had been expressed about the extent of works proposed and the prospect of a longer lease being requested.

8.2 It was confirmed that before further progress could be made, a price for proposed works was required, following which a decision could be made on how the extent of final works and a costed proposal could be put to the landlord. NC to follow up with the architect

NC

9.0 Date of next meeting

9.1 It was agreed to change the time of the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors to **10.00am on 10th June**. This will be followed by a meeting of the newly elected Board.

**ALL /
CLERK**