**Biologist update** RW 30 Nov 2021

This summarises key work tasks completed since the last update 10 Sep 2021. Sep-Nov’s focus has been on finishing off the final historical electro-fishing survey sites, including sampling fry for Frank’s genetics project. Setting up (with AS and SN carrying out) Japanese knotweed control, completing the data entry for the NEPS (with LM), carrying out reviews of the Bailiffing and Beauly Balsam Basher activities and survey season tidy up. Sections 2 of 3 have been completed of the H+S manual. Pre- Xmas priorities involve finalising the H+S manual and commencing writing the Fishery Management Plan. Monthly team meetings occur between Jock, Ali and me.

**A Better BFB**

**Kit**-The Electro-fishing kit is currently being assessed by Wilsons (kit servicer). **Vehicle** booked in for service.

**Procurement**- Invoices were issued for the second half of the NEPs work and the National Adult Sampling Project.

**Office building**- The Corff store was cleared out with the ghillies and is much improved from how it was. JB donated bunding for chemical store and this was installed 26 Nov. Rentokil visited the building on 25 Nov to assess the rodent problem and give LBFS a quote with the intention that the board would contribute. AC has been looking into alternative office space options (e.g. old RBS building, old Logic building... too expensive so far).

**H & Safety**- Sections 2 of 3 of the H+S manual has been completed. RAs (section 3) will need to be incorporated (with a few additions and tweaks). Japanese knotweed chemical handling forms have been produced. Lateral flow testing is occurring regularly, most work is currently home-based.

**LBFS**- It was good to work with the ghillies clearing out the store (12 Nov). We visited Black burn together to look for spawning activity.

**Future**: H+S manual is the current priority. Preparation for the Annual General meeting, 8 Dec. The Fishery Management Plan will start to be written in December (slight delay), see Action Plan and Operational Programme. Hoping to procure a lightweight lithium battery for 2022 to reduce the weight of the EFish kit. We will look into getting an intern to help 2 days a week during the smolt run (smolt trap checking am, oral history project pm).

**People: Community engagement, participation and heritage**

**Volunteer BBQ** was held (16 Sep)

**End of Season Drinks** were held at the Priory Hotel (15 Oct)- this was a good opportunity to chat to a wide range of folk interested in the river (ghillies from LBFS and Farrar were there, also Glass Syndicate and board staff).

**Future:** Annual Public Meeting and Xmas drinks in Beauly, 8 Dec.

**Furthering our understanding**

**Electro-fishing-** A total of 30 NEPS sites and 18 historic sites were completed over the summer. Sites were well distributed across the catchment and included the mainstem Glass. This has given us a great snapshot. NEPs data input occurred mid-October. AS is currently working on SFCC data entry for historic sites.

-Fry samples for the Farrar genetics project were also gathered, and a summary of the sites visited provided to UHI.

**2021 Smolt report**- Draft produced on 21 Sep, Final due to be completed, awaiting generation data from SSE.

**Beavers-** NatureScot carried out a walkover survey on 10-11 Nov from the bottom of the river up to Cannich. Contacted landowners.

**Pink Salmon**- scaled, head awaiting collection for Pink Salmon study.

**Future:** Fish counts will be disseminated ahead of 8 Dec board meeting.Chase beaver dam mitigation advice from NatureScot.Download the temperature loggers and send off for calibration.Brief EFishing summary reports will be written in January/ Feb following data entry and MS data processing. Fish count validation to occur next summer depending on how Kilmorack fish counter trial goes.

**Improving ecosystem processes**

**Invasives-** The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative ended up winning the ‘Coasts and Water’ category at the NatureScot/ RSPB awards event 18 Nov 😊 <https://www.invasivespecies.scot/nature-scotland-award-win>. The SISI project will run until the end of Sep 2022 and discussions are being held regarding potential future project options with NatureScot.

Himalayan Balsam: The Beauly Balsam Bashers were mentioned in the Herald ahead of COP26 <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19629398.nature-rich-future-vital-planet/> . A review meeting was held 14 Oct. Volunteer hours and picking records were compiled. 99 volunteer picking hours!! Case study here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SeFpBPZe5SMAfHZYA7KVN6uRy8U3AIZA/view?usp=sharing>

Japanese Knotweed: Survey conducted on 23 Sep. AS and SN treated the main upstream sites in Oct. JK site codes allocated.

Mink: Ali continues to support the mink volunteers.

**Burn clearing for fish passage**: Out with LBFS ghillies 30 Nov, Bruaich and Culburnie burns.

**Bailiffing**: Overall, a great first season for Ali and Bob. **Bailiffing review** completed 2 Nov. AS was out with the ghillies clearing burns. See **Fisheries Officer report**.

**Future**: Landowner riparian tree meeting/ talk planned for 10 Feb at Lovat Arms Hotel, landowner phone-calls will happen before then. Continued Japanese Knotweed control work in future years. Next Beauly Balsam Basher meeting end of March 2022. Need to identify smolt trap sites on Farrar service trap/ make traps ahead of smolt run timing work on Glass (and hopefully Farrar) Apr-May 2022.

**Incidents:**

**19 Nov Kilmorack top gate outage:** We were informed that the top gate of the Kilmorack fish pass had stopped functioning 22 Nov. Liaison occurred with SEPA and SSE. Few fish were likely to be moving at that time and the gate is scheduled for repair in January. Updated fish counts will be with us first week of Dec.

**Written outputs:** 2021 DRAFT smolt report, Beauly Balsam Bashers Case study, Bailiffing review.

**Meetings/ phone calls:** Highland Environment Forum meeting (29 Sep), Lovat Holiday Park Crassula survey (5 Oct), Hosted BBB review meeting. SISI meet (4 Nov). SSE liaison meet (11 Nov), FMS AGM (11 Nov). Internal budget meeting (18 Nov).

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| **A Salmon Parr at the final EFish site of the season, 7 Oct (mainstem Farrar- FAR2).** |
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