

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at Cromwell park, Almondbank, on Tuesday, 12th February 2019.

Present: Iain McLaren (Convener)
David Brown
Simon Furniss
David Godfrey
Claire Mercer Nairne
Tom Monaghan
Jim Perrett
Mike Smith
Alec Stewart
Cohn O’Dea (TGA rep)
Allister Wallace

In Attendance: Inga MacGillivray - Clerk
Dr. David Summers - Fisheries Director
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)
Brian Roxburgh (SEPA)
Craig Somerville (Castabroad Media)
Sandy & Sam Datta (Salmon Fishing holidays Scotland)

Apologies: Councillor Bob Band
Steve Mannion

Presentation from Craig Somerville – Castabroad Media

The brief was for Craig Somerville to show the Board what could be done with short films which could be uploaded to various media platforms to improve coverage of the Board’s work.

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked AW to introduce Craig Somerville of Castabroad Media to the assembled Board. AW gave a brief introduction before Craig explained his history and passion for fishing and, showing examples of his work, explained how he could help the TDSFB raise awareness of their projects. The Convener thanked Craig for his time. (Craig Somerville left the meeting)

Presentation from Sandy & Sam Datta – Salmon Fishing Holidays Scotland

The brief was for Sandy & Sam to showcase their written work with a view to carrying out the weekly fishing reports. Sandy & Sam gave a history of their passion and involvement with the Tay and handed out examples of their written work whilst conveying their knowledge of the Tay system. The Convener thanked the Dattas for their time. (Sandy & Sam Datta left the meeting)

There followed a discussion surrounding both presentations. The general consensus on Craig’s presentation was that the short films certainly had merit and would be a great way to forward the aims and objectives of the Board. There would require to be some discussion surrounding the topics to be covered, and it was suggested this project may be best suited to be done in conjunction with the Tay Rivers Trust.

ACTION: IMacG to ensure Craig Somerville films be on next TRT agenda for 1st March 2019.
ACTION: AW to ask Craig to next TRT meeting.

Regarding the Datta's presentation and proposal, after some discussion ALL agreed weekly reports to be completed by Dattas, with the proviso that it cost no more than current reporting.

ACTION: IMacG to contact Dattas and check they can fulfil a weekly fishing report and for the same money as previously paid for weekly report.

ACTION: Providing above action met, IMacG to contact B White and explain situation.

ACTION: ALL to review Datta's work at end of season.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. Minutes from Meeting held 12th December 2018

The Minutes were then taken as being read, agreed unanimously and signed by the Convener. CMN pointed out that she thought there had been some action regarding studies into the stomach contents of piscivorous birds, but it was pointed out that this had been a discussion and no action had arisen.

5. Matters Arising

Eden

DS explained that the Fisheries Officers had been unable to catch any broodstock despite their best efforts and therefore there would be no parr to stock the Eden in 2019. TM asked that efforts be redoubled for 2019 broodstock collection.

ACTION: DS to examine possibilities for Eden Angling Association to help with broodstock collection on the Eden.

ACTION: DS to ensure Ranunculus study carried out on Eden by TDSFB drone later in the Spring.

Luncarty Weir

DS explained that he had been in contact with SEPA and there were concerns regarding sediment management associated with any weir removal. It was thought weir removal could cause up to 2 metres of bed erosion for an unknown distance upstream. This could also result in banks to be undermined and eventually collapse. Recently, SEPA's preferred policy in this type of circumstance has been to install a sequence of smaller weirs downstream to raise water levels below the main weir which is partially dismantled. This allows fish passage but prevents erosion occurring upstream. MS expressed his displeasure at the negativity surrounding the project and the fact it was taking so long to progress. BR explained it was a big structure to remove and would have huge consequences. DS pointed out that the project would not qualify for Water Environment funding as the works would not upgrade the status of the burn as there was evidence of salmon activity above the weir already. DS would visit the burn with a view to assessing the potential for raising downstream water levels.

ACTION: DS /MS to pursue plan for weir removal, reporting back at next meeting.

Finance – FMS Expenditure

The Convener announced that Stewart Middlemass from Marine Scotland Science (who is in charge of the categorisation process) would be happy to attend the April Board meeting, and it was agreed that Alan Wells from FMS should attend the June meeting.

ACTION: DS to invite Alan Wells to June Board meeting.

Site Road

IMacG stated she would deal with this under Item 6: budget 7 road update.

TDSFB Plan for the Future

DS stated he would cover this topic more fully under item 8: TDSFB plan for the future.

As to the FMS predation meeting, he stated he had circulated the papers the previous day. He explained that FMS have a predation subcommittee that works in conjunction with SNH & MSS, amongst others, and that they were looking at the licencing process in detail. Furthermore, it was thought MSS had secured funding to carry out a survey which would analyse the stomach contents of piscivorous birds, and DS had enquired whether the Tay might be included in this

project. The general consensus was that everyone felt the Tay should be involved in the project. DS went on to explain that the Dee had suggested that piscivorous bird predation might account for up to 75% of smolt deaths but there was some work to be done on the effects of tagging in this process.

MS asked whether the Tay was involved in the FMS predation committee, to which DS replied he was not but he was on a hydro committee.

Steve Mannion Paper

It was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting.

Nasco Project

CMN asked that NASCO project be put on website.

ACTION: DS to supply NASCO Project information for website.

No Confidence Petition

The Convener brought to the Board's attention the fact that a petition for a vote of no confidence regarding himself and DS had surfaced, which had been instigated by MS. He asked that, should MS have any concerns about either himself or DS that he be upfront about it. MS agreed that he had instigated the petition but stated that it had not been circulated.

SF asked what better proposal MS had to manage the TDSFB, to which MS replied he was disappointed with the lack of cormorant licence at a particularly troubling time for the river and felt that DS had done little. DS replied that he had applied for the licence and was awaiting its renewal.

The Convener asked whether the assembled Board wanted to proceed with the vote of no confidence, to which the general consensus headed by TM stated there was no need to have a vote.

JP denied making MS's letter and attached petition paper to him public and asked that it be minuted that he was displeased that MS had suggested he had made letter public. He then read out a letter regarding MS's displeasure with the Convener, the Fisheries Director and the Clerk. MS apologised to JP.

The Convener stated that the Board needed to work together, and that he had been aware of MS's concerns but pleaded with MS to be more constructive in future, as much time was taken addressing MS's continual problems and concerns. DB stated that MS's statement that the Board did nothing was simply not true and listed some of the projects the Board had accomplished.

MS then brought up his displeasure regarding the Fishponds project being met with such negativity from the Convener. The Convener explained that he had over 30 years experience in Fisheries Management and the project did not make viable sense. DS added that there would be licencing problems for collecting broodstock and issues surrounding who benefitted from the project. He asked that MS saw the wider picture, that the Board had to work with external influences and within constraints imposed by external decision makers.

6. Budget & Road Update

IMacG had circulated the budget the previous day and explained the budget figures to the Board members. It was agreed to keep the Rateable Value percentage to previous years level of 46%, given current conditions.

A salary increase based on figures from the Scottish Agricultural Wages Panel was agreed after some debate, and this will be implemented.

(DG left the meeting)

It was also agreed unanimously that shared parental leave policy would be as per the statutory policy in place.

IMacG gave an update on the road situation, stating that some exploratory work had been agreed to in order to ascertain the exact problems with the road substrate. Once this was confirmed, the repair process could be costed. The cost of repairs and who was to pay was currently under discussion.

IMacG also mentioned that the Scottish Government had enquired whether the Tay Rivers Trust would like to buy the site. ALL agreed this would be a good idea.

The budget was agreed as presented.

7. Health & Safety Report

DS stated that all staff were to go on a First Aid course in February and that there had been one incident whereby the operation Manager's finger had been damaged during the removal of the flume in the hatchery.

8. TDSFB Plan for the Future

DS explained that everyone had been asked to send in their top 10 projects to IMacG for collation, and proceeded to notify the Board of the top areas of Board concern which were:

1. Predation (particularly by birds)
- Joint 2. Water Abstraction – Ericht & Lochay
- Joint 2. Weirs – Shochie
- Joint 2. Beavers
- Joint 3. Stocking – Fishponds & General
- Joint 3. River works on main stem – Lunan/Isla/Earn
- Joint 4. Monitoring of Garry
- Joint 4. Biosecurity (eg crayfish)
- Joint 4. Invasive plants

C'OD asked that counters which were not in use could be put to use. DS replied that Marine Scotland were keen to see more fish counters in order to inform the categorisation process and had recently asked around for possible sites. DS had replied with possibilities in the district.

DB asked that the Almond be added to the list of projects regarding fish stocks and a counter.

ACTION: DS to produce a description of each project identified and circulate.

ACTION: IMacG to ensure electrofishing report is on agenda for next meeting.

9. AOB

Possible Funding from PDAA

DB explained that the Perth & District Angling Association was applying for funding from the new bridge project in Perth and he was keen to see fish counting be funded. The Convener replied that this was possibly better to be done through the Tay Rivers Trust.

Beavers

AS stated that beaver dams had now been identified in 2 sites, namely Kirkton and Auchtertyre Burns and he was concerned these would affect the quality of electrofishing surveys. He was due to visit the site and make an assessment of the situation.

The Convener asked if the beaver protection order was in place yet, to which NMCI replied it wasn't. He then asked if Brexit would affect the order, to which NMCI stated it would not.

There were no further items, and the Convener thanked the Board for attending, and closed the meeting.