

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 9th February 2016.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
Simon Furniss
Claire Mercer Nairne
David Brown
Iain McLaren
Alastair Riddell
John Wood

In Attendance: Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director
Inga McGown - Clerk
Ian Young – Eden Angling Association

Apologies: Eric Starke
Brian Roxburgh
John Apthorp
Gavin Clark
Alastair Munro
David Godfrey
Mike Brown
Steve Mannion

Declaration of Interests:

There were no new declaration of interests.

Minutes of Board Meeting of 8th December 2015:

The Minutes were taken as read, approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

Horseshoe Weir:

DS explained that repair work, while not an absolute immediate necessity was nevertheless desirable to prevent further deterioration of the weir which would threaten the supply of water to the hatchery. While the Board has only a minor interest in the operation and maintenance of the weir, it was proving in our interest to take the initiative and obtain quotes for repair works. DG had already stated somewhere in the region of £7k, and DS/IMcG had

contacted both Skene's and King's for quotes, which would be ready for the next Board meeting.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to gain two further quotes from Skene's and King's for the next Board meeting.

ACTION: DG to provide written quote for the works.

Website:

CMN stated that good progress had been made, and the website was almost ready to launch, but for some further content to be input, and some photos.

ACTION: CMN/DS to finalise.

ACTION: CMN to ask Ally Gowans for permission to use photos.

Parabolic Filter:

DS explained that there was not a market for the filter online, but that he was awaiting feedback from the original manufacturer as to where to sell the filter. SF commented that it would be good if the filter could be used somewhere to which DS replied that representatives from Dawnfresh had been to have a look at it but were unable to use it.

ACTION: DS to continue trying to sell filter.

Health & Safety Report:

DS stated that a meeting was held with Green's of Haddington and that a full H&S audit would be produced in the coming weeks.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to circulate H&S report once it is received.

Garry Update:

The Chairman announced that there had been some progress since the last meeting, as he and DS had attended a meeting with SEPA and it had been agreed that the Board, SEPA and SSE would hold a meeting at the Hatchery, chaired and minuted by SEPA in a bid to bridge gaps and plan a way forward. The meeting is to happen before the end of the month.

DS had suggested that a possible area of compromise might be to adopt a system whereby the restored flow released might be reduced somewhat when during wet weather there was significant natural runoff. It had been suggested that a first step would be to monitor current levels of flow at various strategic points along the river to determine what effect natural runoff does have at present. IMacL stressed that flexibility in flow would be required around spawning times and in hot weather.

Meeting Dates:

The Chairman asked that the June meeting be changed from the 7th to the 14th, and also that the October meeting be put back till after the season had finished to the 18th October, to which all present agreed.

ACTION: IMcG to circulate new meeting dates.

Staff wage increase:

The Chairman suggested the increase be 2% to which all agreed.

Financial Report:

IMcG concentrated on the budget for the forthcoming year, and went through the proposed budget line by line, with the more salient points being that the Assessment percentage was agreed unchanged from previous years at 53.2%. There was no agreed funding from the Tay Foundation for the hatchery. Salaries take into account Mike Brown starting in February 2016.

It was suggested that we should perhaps look at allocating both Mike Brown's time and the bailiff time to the hatchery, but in essence this would be fairly difficult as it was very ad hoc.

Health & Safety Report:

DS stated that no new issues had come to light since the last meeting, and that all other H&S news had been covered under Matters Arising.

River Garry Update:

Covered under Matters Arising.

River Tummel Smolt Project:

DS stated that Mike Brown had now been employed as an integral part of the project, and that the Tay Foundation had approved spend on the rotary screw trap, and therefore the project was progressing. The rotary screw trap will arrive early March, and DS has contacted the Spey Board and arranged for them to familiarise MB with the operation of a rotary screw trap. He had also contacted John Armstrong of Marine Scotland Science to provide PIT tagging training. The PIT tagging equipment supplier was also to arrive in the near future to finalise details of equipment required and where it would be best sited. DS went on to say that the main component was to get MB up to speed and to have the device running by early March before the smolts appear, and we are on track to achieve this.

IMacL suggested we should investigate a range of potential PIT tag suppliers as in his experience these could vary in price.

ACTION: IMacL to supply DS with name of contact for PIT tags.

Kill Licence Update:

DS informed the Board that the Minister Aileen MacLeod had made a recent announcement that they would be pushing ahead with their current proposal for implementation on 1 April 2015, and there would be no grace period until the river categorisation model was improved. Understandably, the Eden and the Earn are rather disappointed and have been lobbying politicians. The proposed order is to be considered before the Rural Affairs, Environment and

Climate Change Committee in early March where it is believed there may be a motion to annul.

Wild Fisheries Reform:

DS explained that the official WFR launch had been held the previous day up at Pitlochry lab. He had previously circulated the latest communication which included a partial draft Bill with consultation attached. The consultation would be open until 2 May and DS proposed setting up a sub-committee to report to the next Board meeting in April, ahead of the May deadline. All agreed this was a good idea, and CMN, IMacL and DS agreed they would form the sub-committee.

ACTION: Sub Committee to propose response to consultation at next meeting.

Hatchery Update:

DS circulated a stocking report (February 2016) to all and explained its contents to the assembled Board. Basically there are two types of eggs; maiden (from new fish) and reconditioned. The egg numbers are a lot lower than we would like, largely due to loss of fish in 2013 and adverse water conditions during the broodstock collection period in 2014. He explained where the eggs came from and where they were stocked out. AR questioned why the Lyon was not being stocked, to which DS replied that the Board had adopted the policy not to stock above waterfalls. AR asked why the Lyon couldn't be stocked in future, to which DS replied that electrofishing studies had been conducted there since 1999 and evidence showed it to have stable juvenile densities with relatively low growth rates which he interpreted as meaning a saturated population. There was therefore relatively little need to stock. However, we could stock marked parr in Lyon and gather electrofishing data to see where they had moved and roughly how many survived.

The Chairman proposed informing the Lyon proprietors of our intentions and inviting them to join us for any stocking or electrofishing procedures.

ACTION: DS to formulate plan for the Lyon and AR/DS to communicate this to the Lyon proprietors.

IMacL stressed that we should be using our valuable eggs most efficiently and that stocking the Lyon might not therefore be the best use, to which the Chairman replied that we need to defend our stocking policy and demonstrate to the Lyon proprietors that we have taken the right decision by not prioritising stocking there.

Tay Foundation Update:

JW explained that he and DS had attended the RAFTS AGM last quarter, and that he had attended a seminar in Banchory regarding the inshore tracking of smolts. Indeed, a number of east coast rivers are interested in being involved in such work and there has been a £100k

grant from the Atlantic Salmon Trust to further this project. JW thought the Tay Foundation could become involved with this project, with perhaps some strategically placed acoustic tag reading equipment.

He then went on to give an update on the Malloch trophy, which had been presented on Opening Day to Tom Buchanan for his fish from the River Lyon.

JW explained the smolt trapping project, and asked for bailiff help in delivering the project. IMacL stated that he could help with PIT tagging training should he be required.

As to the finances of the Tay Foundation, JW explained that as there had been no season extension or fundraising activity, the Foundation's income was very limited, but that it would still support partial payment of TDSFB staff for their TF contribution, and of course Salmon in the Classroom was still being funded by the Foundation.

He went on to say he was unsure of the legal position of Trusts (Tay Foundation) with respect to the wild fisheries review, to which DS answered that the Tay Foundation as a charity was not in the WFR remit, as it was a stand alone organisation.

The Chairman asked for a biannual update from the Tay Foundation elected members, which all agreed was a good idea.

ACTION: JW/AR to provide biannual updates to the Board from the Tay Foundation.

AOB:

Eden Brood stock collection:

Ian Young, representing Eden Angling Association, stated that there was no component for taking broodstock fish for the Eden, and asked whether it was possible that we could do this in future.

DS replied that we usually tend to concentrate on springers, which excludes anything at the back end of the run. Also autumn run fish which were still partially silver at spawning time had proved much more prone to fungus when brought into the hatchery. However, because we do have room for more broodstock, particularly in December after spring fish have all been stripped and so he would definitely look into the possibility.

ACTION: DS to look into possibility of collecting Eden broodstock at the back end of the year.

Fish Counter on Eden:

Ian Young asked if the spare fish counter could be placed on the Eden to capture data. Since being classed as a category 3 river, they had no way of monitoring fish numbers and providing Marine Scotland Science with any meaningful evidence.

DS replied that there was an urgent need for fish counters in rivers which only had genuinely late running fish as the four fish counters used in the Government model might not adequately represent such rivers. The main question was where they could be situated. Ian Young suggested an area downstream of the Ceres Burn confluence might be a possibility,

but DS stated that a structure would need to be built to house the equipment which may prove cost prohibitive.

ACTION: DS to liaise with Ian Young to investigate whether there may be potential fish counter sites on the Eden.

Conservation Management Plan:

Ian Young asked who was responsible for the completion of the management plan, to which DS replied the Government have not specified who is responsible, and therefore it would be sensible to wait until they have announced exactly what is required.

No Other Business was brought up and the Chairman closed the meeting.