

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Birnam Institute, Birnam, Dunkeld, on Tuesday, 12th December 2017.

Present: Iain McLaren (Prospective Chairman)
Claire Mercer Nairne
David Brown
Geoff Coates
John Wood
Steve Mannion
David Godfrey
Bob Band
Cohn O'Dea

In Attendance: Inga McGown - Clerk
Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director

Apologies: Brian Roxburgh
William Jack
Simon Furniss
Alastair Riddell
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)

Declaration of Interests:

There were no new declarations of interests. IMcG had previously circulated declaration forms.

Minutes of Board Meeting of 17th October 2017:

The Minutes were agreed unanimously and were signed by the prospective Chairman.

Matters Arising:

John Apthorp Gift:

This matter is in hand, and a date for the presentation will be set in the near future.

Road Repairs:

IMcG explained that she was awaiting feedback on road usage from Cromwell store and would keep pushing the subject with the owner. In the meantime, the bailiff team had been very busy gritting the road, clearing overgrown verges and drainage and filling in the worst of the potholes so the road was at least presentable for the foreseeable future.

Biosecurity and maintaining river system:

ACTION: DS to investigate biosecurity measures for the Tay for next season

River Lyon:

ACTION: DS to look into possibility of moving the counter at Stronuich dam in the near future, after talks with Alistair Stephen from SSE.

Financial Report

Cash Account to 5th December 2017:

As at 5th December 2017, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £45,054, and the overall bank balance stands at a healthy £452,295, with £100,000 of this being invested.

Income

To date, 78% of 2017 assessments have been paid. The forecast and budget are still standing at 7.5% of total for appeals, which equates to just over £38k. The assessor has confirmed that the Eden and Earn have accepted a 20% reduction in their 2016 valuation which equates to around £8k, but the remainder of the appeals, largely to do with April's revaluation have yet to be assessed. This still constitutes a potential threat to forecast figures.

Expenditure

The road repairs are not looking likely this financial year, so show a saving in forecast of £10k, but should be budgeted for next year.

The capital cost is showing a saving in forecast of £10k due to no additional capital items being purchased this financial year.

Both of these items are the main contributors of the £20,921 saving in forecast.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £28,067, of which £21,506 is salary related.

Health & Safety Report

DS stated that there had been no health and safety reportable incidents since the last meeting.

River Garry Update

DS stated that the Garry had now been officially opened, although most of the river has been running since the spring. Works at the Garry intake are now complete, although SSE have found that it is only delivering around 75% of expected output, but this will be corrected in the near future by making adjustments to the equipment. Works on the Glas Choire intake are nearly finished.

An Adaptive Management Plan between SSE, SEPA and the Board is being put in place whereby "tweaks" can be made to the system where it is found to be lacking. DS went on to say that the Board will be monitoring the situation to see if fish can get up the river to spawn, and will be looking at adult fish counts, and the presence of redds.

He added that we now know fish can navigate the falls, and electrofishing surveys will be carried out in subsequent years. It was imperative that we find out if fish could get over the

falls, and that is why the Board have stocked this area for years. DS explained he was keen to continue stocking, and had agreed with SEPA and SSE that stocking in 2018 would take place upstream of where the natural fish were observed to have spawned, i.e. immediately below the Garry intake and the Glas Choire tributary (neither of which has been stocked before). This is to reduce the risk of redds having to compete with stocked fish and to make the identification of the two types of fish easier. All parties are keen to see whether any natural juveniles will be produced. Stocked fish will be identified through genetic profiling. The cost will be upwards of £10k per annum, but it appeared that SSE might be willing to contribute to this cost.

ACTION: DS to circulate finalised Garry plan to Board once completed, with accompanying map of affected areas.

JW asked what the freshet situation would be, to which DS replied they would need to establish under which flows fish attempt the falls, and then an action plan could be drawn up.

IMcL asked whether the flow in 2017 was similar to a normal year, to which DS replied that the weather had been wetter, plus there had been no abstraction from the Anndeir and Edendon intakes so the flow may often have been higher than what we might expect in future. When there is a natural spate in the river, the abstraction regime means it drops off suddenly. DS stated that the freshets should be used to prolong the tail of a natural spate. At present this can only be achieved by cranking a handle to open a gate. This would have to be done in the first instance until a satisfactory working regime was established. IMcL observed that the river was now able to produce smolts, barriers had been removed and compensation flow put in place, and now fish were getting over the falls, all of which was very good news!

CMN asked whether this area had been fished in the past, and whether it would be again. IMcL replied that he had spoken to the proprietor and had a verbal agreement that the area would be utilised as a sanctuary and not fished for the foreseeable future.

DG asked how this might all affect rod catches in the area, to which DS replied it could up the number of fish by at least 300 so fairly significant increase, particularly in the Tummel area.

Hatchery Update

DS stated that there was only one more maiden fish to strip at the hatchery, and that this year's broodstock fishing had certainly been helped by the fact that two teams were operational this year and they had enjoyed decent weather conditions. He thanked the ghillies and board members who had participated.

He went on to explain that 75 females had been collected last year, which was considered a good year, compared to 111 this year. 2018 had been the most successful broodstock fishing in the last ten years.

JW asked whether the fish had been segregated to guard against BKD, to which DS replied the hatchery manager had the Dochart fish in isolation as it was believed they had been the BKD threat last year.

DB asked how many eggs would be produced this year, to which DS replied the count was not finalised but it would be in the region of 800,000 compared to last year's figure of 650,000. DS stated that it would take a few years of catching fish at this rate and building up records to get the number of eggs we hope to.

SM asked about the factor of increased costs.

ACTION: IMcG to provide costing for next Board meeting.

JW stated that it wasn't just a hatchery and smolt production unit, but it also gave a safeguard.

Forthcoming Elections

The outgoing Board agreed that it would recommend that there be 2 Lower representatives and 5 Upper representatives.

AOB:

There was no OB.

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