

NORTH HIGHLAND AREA ADVISORY GROUP

Draft Minutes of Meeting 7 November 2012, SEPA Office, Dingwall

Present:	Organisation:
Iain MacMyn (IMcM)	Kyle of Sutherland DSFB
Alistair Swanson (AS)	National Farmers Union Scotland
Fiona Garner (FG)	Scottish Water
Andy Rosie (AR)	SEPA – NH AAG Chair
Paul Griffiths (PG)	SEPA – Environmental Quality Unit
Morgane Gillet (MGi)	SEPA – NH AAG coordinator
Keith Beaton (KB)	SEPA – Local Operations team
Alice Tree (AT)	SEPA – Environmental Advice
Steve MacFarland (SM)	SEPA – Flood Risk Management
Efe Scott-Emakpor (ESE)	SEPA - Environmental Quality Unit
James Bronham (JB)	Highland Council
Kenna Chisolm (KH)	Royal Society for Protection of Birds
Lynn Brydon (LB)	Cromarty Firth Fishery Board & Trust
Richard Fyfe (RF)	SEPA- Operations
Apologies	
Simon McKelvey (SMcK)	Cromarty Firth Fisheries Trust
Richard Wallace (RW)	Forestry Commission Scotland

1	<p>Welcome, Apologies, Minutes and Actions of the Last Meeting</p> <p>The chair welcomed the AAG members and thanked them for their attendance. The minutes of 5 December 2011 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.</p>
2	<p>RBMP Update</p> <p>MGi gave an RBMP update including progress with the development of supplementary plans (Invasive non native species and restoration), consultation on the getting involved document, especially the change of boundaries that are relevant to this group.</p> <p>The group discussed the spread of Salmonberry in the Caithness area and the fact that they are not recorded as a WFD species. Concerns about the practicality and price to dispose of Himalayan Balsam were also raised.</p> <p>Action: MGi – to discuss and forward concerns about Salmonberry to Jo Long, SEPA INNS Specialist.</p> <p>AR spoke about the boundary change of the AAGs and invited everybody give their views as part of the getting involved consultation.</p>
3	<p>WFD classification- morphology: Example of the Rosemarkie Burn</p> <p>MGi gave a presentation on how morphology is classified using the Rosemarkie Burn as an example. See Paper 04.</p> <p>The group discussed what more can be done in dealing with riparian vegetation or morphology (river engineering). This obviously depends on the river system and associated energy. The group acknowledged the lack of case study on</p>

	<p>water restoration to inform people on the process.</p> <p>Action: SM to circulate link to research on the link between restoration and riparian vegetation.</p>
4	<p>WFD Classification- Fish Barriers: Example of Balangowan burn</p> <p>MGi gave a presentation on fish barrier classification using the Balangowan Burn as an example. Paper 04.</p> <p>Afterwards, the group discussed the Water Environment Fund; what can be funded and what makes an application successful (benefits to RBMP, options appraisal, including VAT in the cost calculation...)</p> <p>AT added that there all the successful projects are reported on the SEPA website.</p> <p>IMcM spoke positively about the successful restoration of the River Evelix, through the Water Environment Fund.</p>
5	<p>Water Environment Fund</p> <p>AT gave a presentation and update on the fund and the ongoing projects in the North Highland Area. She added that it is encouraging to see projects delivering work on the ground.</p> <p>LB spoke about the River Peffery work to date. Forestry Commission Scotland are to donate trees for the head waters of the Peffery and they are also going to unblock hill drains. This was highlighted as a good partnership approach to deliver RBMP.</p>
6	<p>Restoration subgroup?</p> <p>The group discussed the need to have a restoration sub group. Concerns were raised about the creation of another group, however, the group acknowledge the need to drive forward restoration project. It was acknowledged that if a group were to be set up the membership need to be appropriate to include local knowledge and links with land managers.</p> <p>AR suggested that an exploratory meeting could be organised to see the benefits of a sub-group.</p> <p>Action: MGi to organise a restoration meeting with fisheries trusts, FCS and Highland Council roads/engineering departments and any other interested stakeholders representatives.</p>
7	<p>AAG work</p> <p>The group received an update on the implementation of the North Highland action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffuse pollution task group. The task group is planning on organising three awareness events in June 2013 in the Nairn catchment, Cromarty

	<p>Coastal and Caithness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highland Invasive non native species forum- ongoing work. • River Morrison project: A flow channel trial was carried out to see if freshwater pearl mussel population had increased. Results to be discussed with SNH. • River Shin improvement- Richard Fyfe from SEPA joined the meeting to give an update on River Shin and the ongoing fish monitoring.
8	<p>AAG implementation of measures</p> <p>Each stakeholder provided an -update on the work that they have undertaken to help the implementation of the North Highland area management plan.</p>
9	<p>Current conditions and challenges for the future</p> <p>MGi gave a presentation on the progress of the development of the current conditions and challenges for the future, including timescale for the publication.</p>
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>The group raised concerns about the absence of key stakeholders at the AAG meeting, especially SGRIP and Forestry Commission Scotland.</p> <p>Action: AR to contact SGRIP and Forestry Commission Scotland to ensure attendance at the next meeting.</p>