

## Meeting Notes

### Highland Invasive Species sub-group.

2-4pm. Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

SEPA Office, Dingwall.

#### 1. Welcome

John Parrott	Coille Alba (Chairman)
Jonathan Willet	Highland Council
Simon McKelvey	Cromarty Fisheries Trust
Ullie Wenzel	TCV - Scotland
Lyn Bryden	Cromarty Fisheries Trust/ Dingwall Environment Group
Peter Nairne	Scotland Transerv
Barbara Macritchie	NTS – Balmacara
Gunnar Scholtz	North Highland Mink Project
Rob Dewar	NTS
Julie Bhatti	SEPA – River Basin Management Coordinator A&B
Marie Pages	Aberdeen University

#### 2. Apologies

Ken Knott	Forestry Commission Scotland
Steve North	SNH
David O'Brien	HBRG
Corinna Mertens	SNH
Ken Knott	Forestry Commission Scotland
Morgane Gillet	SEPA - RBMP
Judi Forsyth	SEPA
Peter Nairne	Scotland Transerv

#### 3. Approval of minutes, matters arising

JW apologised for not sending out the Agenda a week before the meeting, again.

Action Points 27/8/12

**AP5.** JW to submit the updated 2013-16 Highland INNS Strategy to the next meeting. **Delayed until the June meeting.**

**AP6.** JW to submit Japanese Knotweed Threat Assessment paper to the next meeting. **Delayed until the June meeting.**

Action Points 19/11/12

**AP1.** JW to contact Bob Lawton of the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust about hosting the event. **Discharged.**

**AP2.** JW to send SMcK the emails of the INNS contacts in SNH and SG so that he can bring this situation to their attention. *Discharged.*

**AP3.** Discussion about the future SRDP and INNS control funding to be has at the next meeting. *Discharged.*

**AP4.** JW to contact GB to see if he can circulate the email about this site to the HISF sub-group members. *Discharged.*

4. Standing Item Questions/ Comments

None.

5. Discussion on INNS and the next SRDP

There was a long discussion going over the usual points. It seems unlikely the SRDP will change much but there might be some area based prioritisation of delivering key objectives on the ground since previous schemes do not seem to have delivered Best Value.

At the end it was agreed that there was need of a land management fund outwith the SRDP to deliver action on the ground at the scale required to control prioritised areas for INNS control.

6. Crayfish.

- No report, but round the table information was forthcoming. Aberdeen University have undertaken a study of the economic impact of Crayfish. Xavier Lambin leading on this.
- Mink and Crayfish. Mink love Crayfish and this predation on the larger ones make them almost impossible to control.
- In Scandinavia they have cleared Crayfish from running water, but did poison the whole system.
- In D&G Crayfish are spreading.

7. HIS Forum 2013

- FN&L FT have conformed that they are happy to host the event.

8. Updating the 2009-12 Highland INNS Strategy.

- This is ongoing and will be presented to the next meeting

9. Japanese Knotweed Threat Assessment

This is ongoing and will be presented to the next meeting.

10. AOCB

- The GBINNS, Check, Clean, Dry Signs have arrived at Highland Council. **AP1**. GS to distribute to the Fisheries Trusts to the west and Cromarty FT to pick theirs up.

11. DONM

2pm, Monday 24<sup>th</sup> of June. SEPA Office Dingwall.

Standing Items.

1. Mink Project Update

- In Lochcarron and Gairloch 3 or 4 mink were caught.
- No sightings on the west coast north of Ullapool, but the sniffer dogs did get some scent but nothing was found.
- The project is in the last 6 months and it will hand over to the local fishery trusts. There is a Life+ bid with the EU at the moment.
- Gunnar is currently trapping around the Kyle of Sutherland for two weeks.
- Two weeks is planned in Wester Ross between Gairloch and Dundonnell, the keeper on the Little Gruinard is keeping traps open all year round.

2. Rhododendron Officer Update

- SRDP was closed on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, no more INNS management funding available except for plant health issues.
- The Highland Rhododendron project will finish at the end of March, it is currently collating all the survey data.
- Steve Robertson has been running a series of training workshops through the UHI LandsAre project. These have been well attended and there are more coming up this month.
- JP has been awarded a contract to undertake a Strategic Review of Rhododendron Control in Scotland.

3. Cromarty Catchment Update –

- They have just about finished clearing the riparian area of the Orrin, this has taken 4 years. Fairburn Estate are now clearing the rest of the Rhoddy on the estate.
4. GB INNS Local Area Group Update
    - This was down in Shrewsbury and again went well and was very interesting. JP attended with his travelling expenses funded by Highland Council.
    - 50 people attended.
  5. Lower Ness INNS Project Update
    - The project will continue in 2013. But funding is proving to still be an issue.
  6. Nairn Update
    - Just to confirm we are happy to host the event in Nairn later this year and are currently discussing matters with one of the local hotels.
    - We have also taken on the mink control programme and so far this has gone very well with a good array of rafts and traps spread across the Lossie, Findhorn and Nairn. Two mink captured so far one white one!
  7. Giant Hogweed Update – A new contract will be let for the continuation of the GH project in Munloch and Auldearn 2013-15. It will follow the successful template that has been developed and has delivered action on the ground.

River Wick GH. Still no action. JP offered to visit for free to assess the site. Not a big site but the GH is starting to spread.

8. Network Rail Update – None.
  - Possible SRDP Application made. **AP2**. BMcR to find out the details.
9. RBPM Update.
  - JB is the national lead on INNS. Having a meeting with SG and SNH to discuss issues. Another year of funding for the post.
  - WEF can't be used for INNS any more. Big impact on WFD issues.
  - Problems with WFD features and how impacted they are determined by current scoring.

10. Scotland Transerv Update.

- Becoming part of BEAR Scotland, their operations and staff should remain the same.

11. TCV Update.

- Rhoddy control on the Orrin.
- Full year of Green Gym in Dingwall, community work volunteers etc.

12. FC Update.

- Lots of rhoddy control.
- Otherwise minor knotweed infestations tackled.
- Mink workshop undertaken with LDSFT for FC staff and some externals.

**The aims of the Highland Invasive Species Group were agreed as follows:**

- To bring together the key players and take stock of the situation regarding invasive non-native species in Highland;
- To raise awareness and spread good practice;
- To identify any major gaps and prioritise key areas for future work; and
- To work together to secure new resources and funding.

**Sub Group Remit.**

The Forum agreed that biosecurity issues and the securing of funding for the projects discussed at this meeting are of key importance. It also agreed that the sub-group should continue and seek to secure funding to deliver the projects it has detailed.