

Agenda

Highland Invasive Species sub-group.

2-4pm. Tuesday 24th May 2011.

SEPA Office, Dingwall.

1. Welcome

The chairman welcomed Gunnar Scholtz to the meeting.

John Parrott	Scottish Native Woods (Chairman)
Ian Milne	SEPA
Jonathan Willet	Highland Council
Gunnar Scholtz	North Highland Mink Project
Simon McKelvey	Cromarty Fisheries Trust
Steve North	SNH
Jenny Sleeman	BTCV - Scotland
Barbara Macritchie	NTS – Balmacara
Rob Dewar	NTS - Inverewe
Merryl Norris	BTCV – Scotland (Invasive Species Apprentice)
Julie Bowen	Scotland Transerv
Julie Paton	Highland Rhododendron Officer

2. Apologies

David O'Brien	HBRG
Dieter Tuerlinckx	Caithness Biodiversity Group

3. Approval of notes of last meeting, matters arising.

There were no notes from the last meeting, rather a list of action points.

APs from 10/11/10

AP1. SEPA responded saying that the data was not of use in river classification, which is the main purpose they use INNS data for.

Discharged. JW also to contact Niall Moore of the GB INNS to highlight this issue to him.

AP2. JW to contact contaminated land unit regarding their policy of dealing with/ identifying INNS on contaminated land. **Ongoing.**

AP3. SN to find out more about the SNH/THC/SEPA guidance for major developments in the form of an Environmental Management Plan and report back. **Discharged.**

AP4. RD to bring the Mink issue up at WREN and also with Wester Ross Fisheries Trust. **Discharged.**

AP5. BM & JW to finalise location and venue. **Discharged but Date TBC.**

AP6. JW to speak to Janet B about WR Mink Project. **Discharged.**

AP7. JW to send round table with a schedule of PR opportunities. Examples of stories that people could submit to keep INNS profile high in the papers. **Ongoing.**

AP8. Next meeting seek to draft one page on control methodologies for all key INNS in Highland. **Discharged, the group felt there was sufficient information already available.**

AP9. JW to look at the website and look to create species webpages with attendant resources. **Ongoing.**

AP10. SN to update on Pine Tree Lappet. **Discharged.**

Control order in force for the timber in the Kiltarlity area. No timber with bark on is to leave the area. Lots of potential options; clear fell, sanitation felling and aerial spraying. At the moment they are trying to confirm if the moth has been in the area for a while as they are unconfirmed reports of it being present in the area in the mid-70's. So trapping is scheduled to happen now around the area to see if it can be found.

APs from 2/3/11

AP11. SN to contact SNH Anancaun about the possibility of a coordination role for mink control in W Ross. **Discharged.**

AP12. JW to contact Neil Strong of Railtrack to arrange a meeting to look a joint projects. **Discharged**

AP13. JW to draft a PR table for this year. **See 10.11.10 AP7.**

AP14. Send PRs to local nature writers Ray Collier, David McAllister and WHFP chap. **See 10.11.10 AP7.**

AP15. MN to give a short talk about her work, a final review and what is going forward from it. **Discharged.**

AP16. JW to invite new Mink Officer to the next meeting. **Discharged.**

4. All Highland Invasive Species Awareness Table

This table lead to the INNS info packs for specific user groups that were compiled by MN.

AP1. MN to circulate the updated table to the group for comment and any additional information. Also to circulate the pdfs of the User Group INNS info packs.

5. Plantlife horizon scanning 3-4star rated plants.

It was agreed that this document was of interest but the original priority table was the one from which the group was working from and this will be regularly updated and reviewed.

6. Mink Project Update.

GS told the group that traps have been set along the Great Glen and from Contin to Ullapool. FC are keen to have their rafts checked regularly and are paying for contractors to check the traps. The FC Golspie Office is keen to get involved on the Oykel and Blackwater. The key task is to get more volunteers to monitor and trap Mink. The big challenge is to get enough volunteers to cover such a large area that has such a small population. Some estates have no Mink and so are not willing to get involved this is an issue for detecting new colonisation of Mink to these areas. GS's contract will last to October 2013.

AP2. All those identified in the Agenda to give updates should email them a week prior to the meeting

7. Rhododendron Officer Update.

Training day went well. The Agent for the L&M site on Skye should have the proposal submitted soon. Rhoddy policy being finalised. New Rhoddy leaflet published in the next month. See update at the end of these notes for more information.

8. BTCV Apprenticeship Update

MN finishes on the 6th of June, but is staying on with the CDSFB&T continuing INNS work and other duties. The Group agreed that Meryl should have a vote of thanks from the group for efforts in helping focus INNS work for local groups and creating a momentum for action. Thanks too to the CDSFB&T for hosting MN and the other partners that have provided support and training.

9. Inverness INNS Project Update

JPrt confirmed that this project had succeeded in getting funding from SEPA and the Landfill Communities fund 22K and 10K respectively. There will be 4 folk working through the summer surveying and 10 days of the BTCV Green Gym. After the mapping the control element of the project will begin. Meetings are being arranged with large landowners and house building companies. An issue that is coming to light is the many culverted small burns that disappear and re-appear, it is had to know where to look for their re-emergence. JW suggested looking at the historic maps at <http://maps.nls.uk> .

There are also plans for longer term web-based mapping this may be as part of a Leader funding application.

10. Giant Hogweed Update

Control is continuing at Balnagowan and Auldearn. The Munloch area has been mapped and landowning has been confirmed and the landowners are being approached to contribute to the spraying costs. It is hoped that full or partial spraying will go ahead this year. No progress on the River Nairn SRDP application. JPrt mentioned that there were GH plants growing at the Longman and the Scretan depot, he offered to spray them if the Council weren't going to.

AP3. JW to contact TECS to ask for permission for JPrt to spray the GH on their land.

11.2011 HIS Forum.

The Forum date was re-scheduled and will be on the 7th of October in Plockton Village Hall.

12.AOCB.

RBMP – This is now a standing item on the Agenda. Nothing to report at the moment as Rachel Harding-Hill is acting up and her cover is not in post yet.

GAEC – discussion around this point. It was pointed out that there needed to be a serious and significant issue for RPID to take any action. So INNS unlikely to do that.

AP4. Invite BSBI Recorders to the Forum. And ask them to assess any outlying priority INNS records.

AP5. All to put their projects on the GB INNSS website. JW to circulate the link to everyone in the HISF.

13. DONM

Tuesday 16th August. 2pm. SEPA Dingwall.

Action Points.

APs from 10/11/10

AP2. JW to contact contaminated land unit regarding their policy of dealing with/ identifying INNS on contaminated land.

AP7. JW to send round table with a schedule of PR opportunities. Examples of stories that people could submit to keep INNS profile high in the papers.

AP9. JW to look at the website and look to create species webpages with attendant resources.

New APs

AP1. MN to circulate the updated table to the group for comment and any additional information. Also to circulate the pdfs of the User Group INNS info packs.

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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.

Highland Rhododendron Project Steering Group Update – May 2011

Encouraging Uptake of SRDP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing liaison with landowners and agents regarding possible SRDP applications on designated sites. Since SAF funding has been confirmed, effort has been focused on encouraging uptake around the SAF Priority sites. Availability of funding has prompted more interest from agents previously resistant to SRDP. See Site Summary May 2011 for progress on individual sites.• Highland Rhododendron Control Strategy has been drafted and is pending final sign-off from Highland Conservancy to release. Will be circulated to agents and made available on the HB website in the first instance• Application guidance has been drafted and is now available to applicants in its first draft form.
Community-Led Removal Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation underway for a volunteer day on Loch Maree Islands which is being run through THC Ranger Service with support from SNH. These islands are within the Loch Maree Complex which is a significant target area for action. Information display to be prepared for Visitor Centre• Sunart Oakwood Initiative's Morvern Rhododendron Project is ongoing but with no developments of note
L & M Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training course delivered 5th – 7th April on Fairburn Estate with 6 participants. The training site is now available as a demonstration site which will be monitored over the coming year and pre-training information is now available as an additional L&M resource.• Landowner on Skye and his agent is still willing to pursue L&M control via SRDP on the restricted approval basis so application is ongoing. Pursuing additional opportunities as they arise having identified 2 more practitioners
Best Practice Events / Raising Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FCS Woodland Officers attended Demonstration Day on 7th April, visiting Fairburn Estate to look at L&M, stem treatment, mechanised and manual clearance and Carbisdale Castle to see work carried out on FCS land.• Revised leaflet should be available by late May 2011 for distribution through HRP and through HISF• Information display to be prepared for Loch Maree Volunteer Day and International Forests Day at Laggan in June.
Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £15k secured from SNH Species Action Framework fund to survey 13 key sites. These are all high HRP –scoring sites where there is little or no survey data available. Uptake will be reviewed in September and list eligibility list amended accordingly should sites refuse the offer. All funding should be spent or committed

by December 2011. Intent to proceed with a SRDP application can be evidenced with a letter from the landowner

- Up to £33k has been made available to the project through FCS, SNH and THC. The FCS balance will be due in December and payment may be dependent on project performance. With the full £33k, a post can be supported until April 2012 (depending on additional activities required of the project). Without the full funding, the post would be supported until January 2012.
- HB continues to scope out funding opportunities beyond Year 2 but without success

Year 2 Workplan

- Focus on Year 2 will be to generate Sol and SRDP proposals, particularly around HRP priority sites. The project will continue to seek opportunities to work with partners to develop community-led projects beyond 2012 which can be taken on by them.