

**Peatlands & Upland Biodiversity Delivery Group Meeting
Oxford Island, Thursday 15th June 2006, 9.30am**

Attendees

Michael Meharg	(EHS)
Richard Weyl	(EHS – Chair)
Bob Davidson	(EHS)
Martin Bradley	(EHS)
Helen Paul	(EHS – Minute taker)
Paul Lyness	(RSPB – deputising for James Robinson)
Ronnie Tosh	(DOE, Environmental Policy Group)
Laverne Bell	(QPA)
Kevin Armstrong	(DRD Planning)
Gillian Stewart	(Invest NI)
Roy Anderson	(AFBI)
Jim McAdam	(AFBI)
Sean Convery	(FWAG)
John Hetherington	(Forestry & Timber Association)

1. Introduction

Richard welcomed John Hetherington & Sean Convery to the group.

2. Apologies

UFU, Nicki Whitehouse (QUB), Keith Johnston (DARD), John Gamble (DARD), Ken Bradley (EPG), Dermot Hughes (CNCC/Peat Consortium), James Robinson (NIBG/RSPB)

3. Minutes of Previous meeting

Agreed

4. Matters Arising – Actions from the previous meeting.

**4. Terms of Reference
Representation**

Dermot to provide a further name from Peat Consortium

Action: Dermot

NILGA to be invited to join the group.

Action: Bob

Gillian to contact Brian Grey as a potential member to represent Peat Retailers.

Action: Gillian

5. Update on Habitat Action Plans

EHS to produce a disk with Richard's presentation, the full set of HAPs and the Peatlands Review – Complete list to be compiled and emailed to the group.

Action: Martin

7. Priorities for next meeting

Report on Peat alternatives due to be published by DEFRA – This report is not available yet. It will be circulated when available. It was felt that at the next meeting a discussion should take place on how to take forward the report.

Action: Bob

Peat Producers to be encouraged to attend the next meeting.

Action: Richard

Information on Imported Peat from Plant Imports section still to be received.

Information on imported peat from Bord Na Mona still to be received.

Action: Jim McAdam

Jim Ryan

8. AOB

Information on documentation on best practice and an inventory of publications on Peatlands still to be sourced.

Action: Richard

5. Terms of Reference and Membership

The revised Terms of Reference were agreed.

NILGA to be added to the Representation list.

Action: Richard

Richard informed the group that he had contacted the Horticultural Trade Association, the Irish Peatlands Conservation Council, the Forestry & Timber Association and FWAG to invite them to join the group. The Forestry & Timber

Association and FWAG were both represented at the meeting. Richard reported that the Horticultural Trade Association and the Peatlands Conservation Council were both very keen to have papers sent to them but were unable to attend meetings at the minute but would consider attending in the future.

Bob reported that he had tried to contact NILGA. They are to return his call.

Richard reported that he will endeavour to meet with the Ulster Farmers Union before the next meeting.

Action: Richard

6. Update on 'Boglands' project – J Ryan

Jim was not able to attend the meeting therefore Bob gave a brief overview of the project.

He provided everyone at the meeting with a copy of the Bogland Sustainable Peatland Management Project. This is a 3 year European funded project managed by the EPA and delivered by a UCD team.

He advised that more information was available from the website

www.ucd.ie/bogland. He advised that the project manager, Florence Renou, would be the person to contact if anyone wanted to get more detail of the individual projects. It was felt that it would be very beneficial if a meeting could be arranged with Florence. It was suggested that rather than take up a lot of time at the next meeting a separate workshop should be set up with Florence and relevant members of the project team.

Action: Bob

7. Work Programme

Richard asked for any comments on the structure of the work plan. It was felt that a cross reference column should be included.

Action: Martin

It was noted that the Peatlands Conservation Policy was still in draft. DOE, Environmental Policy Group are going to take this forward.

The group requested to see the draft Peatland Conservation Policy before it goes out to consultation.

Action: Ronnie

Richard stated that actions in the work plan were assigned to a few Government Departments but members of the group were invited to volunteer to be the lead partner for any of the tasks.

The general structure of the task plan was agreed.

Several specific comments on sections were made.

Site Designation

Roy pointed out that he would like more information on site designation.

Richard agreed to provide the group with SLNCI guidelines and the database showing the SACs, ASSIs, and SLNCIs.

Action: Richard

Site Management

It was felt that there should be an update at each meeting to report on key tasks relating to site management (and designation)

Action: Richard

Agriculture

DARD required to be consulted on action and dates.

Action: Richard.

Sean asked if the group would be interested in doing a submission to DARD on the Rural Development Programme.

Action – Richard to check with John Gamble on EHS's position in regard to sending a submission.

Monitoring

3.9 – Mke suggested that there should be explicit reference to links to the Habitat Survey Document Article 11.

Action: Richard

Forestry

Forest Service required to be consulted on actions.

Action: Richard

Planning Policy

3.13 – Planning Service required to be consulted on actions

Action: Richard

Development Control

3.16 - Planning Service required to supply wording for Key Tasks. Review the issues surrounding development.

Action: Richard

Peat extraction

3.21 – It was felt that some clarification on DARD turbary policy was required.

Action: Richard

Peat Use & alternatives

4.1 - The group felt that there was an important link to the Sustainable Development Strategy NI.

Action : Bob to check if the targets are reflected in the Sustainable Development Strategy.

4.1 - Local Government to be included, but discussion with NILGA required.

Action: Richard

Archaeological and paleo-environmental

To check with Nicki Whitehouse if key tasks are required.

Action: Richard

Richard informed the group that the draft task plan will be amended and circulated to the group before the next meeting.

Action: Richard

8. AOB

Richard informed the group about the UK target review and costings. He agreed to circulate papers.

Action: Richard

A draft list of the relevant published SAPs to be circulated to the group for information.

Action: Richard

9. Date of next meeting.

It was decided that the next meeting would be held at Glenwherry in late September/early October. The meeting will be in the morning and a site visit in the afternoon. Date to be arranged.

Action: Richard