

Peatlands & Uplands Biodiversity Delivery Group
Thursday 6th November 2008 – 9.30am
Oxford Island

Attendees

Richard Weyl (NIEA, Chair)
 Billy McCabe (DARD)
 Julie Corry (Omagh Biodiversity Officer)
 Andrew Upton (UWT)
 Dermott Hughes (CNCC)
 Richard Schaible (Forest Service)
 John Hetherington (ConFor)
 Jim McAdam (AFBI)
 Larry Toal (NIEA)
 Helen Paul (NIEA, Minute Taker)

1. Introduction

Richard thanked everyone for attending.

2. Apologies

Godfrey McRoberts (CMB), Sean Convery (FWAG), Nicki Whitehouse (QUB), Laverne Bell (QPA), Martin Bradley (NIEA)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Action Points C/F from meeting held 24/04/07	Progress
Richard to contact UFU	C/F
Richard to circulate SLNCI guidelines to the group	Richard to email the area plan programme & guidelines to the group
Action Points C/F from meeting held 8/11/07	
AP 14 – Richard W to send copies of the presentations from the ‘Peatland Climate Change Seminar’ to the group	Presentations to be put on CD and issued to the group. Mairaed & Raja’s presentations to also be include on the CD.
AP 16 – Richard W to speak to Ken re relationship between PUBDG & Peatland Policy Reduction	Richard waiting for feedback
AP 17 – Jim to contact DARD re scoping exercise to review the approach to less favourable areas	DARD submitted a paper but still not finalised.
Action Points C/F from meeting held 8/05/08	
AP 8 – Louise to talk to Jackie re trying to get the Departments on board and using the system via BIPs	Richard to check with Louise

AP 12 – Claire to let the group know what guidelines RSPB use	Richard to check with Claire
AP 13 – Claire to give Richard good news stories on Red Grouse and to provide contacts	Richard to check with Claire
AP 17 – Claire to send discussion paper on Wind Farms to the group	Richard to add as agenda item at next meeting

4. Matters arising

Richard asked the group if they had any objection to him inviting Roy Tomlinson to join the group. There were no objections and Richard advised the group that he would contact Roy. He advised that the membership of the group and the Work Programme would be discussed at the next meeting but asked everyone to have a think about anyone else one who should be included in the membership.

Action Point 1: Richard W to invite Roy Tomlinson to join the group.

Jim informed the group of the Red Grouse Recovery Programme and the Predator Control project at Glenwherry. He suggested Alastair Cameron (CAFRI) be asked to give a presentation at the next meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting should be held at Glenwherry and to have a field trip in the afternoon to a nearby Wind Farm.

Action Point 2: Richard W to add Wind Farms to the agenda for the next meeting.

Action Point 3: Richard W to contact Alastair Cameron to give presentation.

Richard informed the group that he had attended the International Peat Congress. He advised the group that he would check with Catherine Farrell about copyrights and if possible would provide information to the group on a CD. He also agreed to circulate Catherine's contact details and advised anyone wanting further information to contact her directly.

Action Point 4: Richard to seek agreement to circulate International Peat Congress papers.

5. Reporting on Peatlands & Upland Priority Habitats

Richard had circulated a paper on the above to the group prior to the meeting. He explained that reporting information of UK priority habitats and species was required by the end of November 2008 and that this data will be supplemented and used in compiling the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group report early in 2009. He informed the group that the reporting is being undertaken through the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) and that the data sources are the condition monitoring of designated sites (mainly Areas of Special Scientific Interest) and the preliminary results of the NI Countryside Survey. He asked the group for comment/agreement on the information to be used for the reporting. The increase in peat-cutting was raised.

Richard said that this was a potential problem associated with high fuel prices but a peat-cutting survey undertaken by Roy Tomlinson over the last three years had shown increase in peat-cutting. It was agreed that Roy should be asked to speak on this at the next

meeting He also asked if everyone could get examples of increased peat-cutting for the next meeting.

Action Point 5: Richard W to ask Roy Tomlinson to give presentation on peat-cutting.

Action Point 6: Richard W to investigate TELIS and remote investigation.

It was also suggested that Richard add the factors that have contributed to the trend. The group gave their agreement to the information to be used for the reporting and Richard agreed to circulate the information he would be submitting. He also agreed to email the link for BARS.

Action Point 7: Richard to circulate the information he submits for the reporting on UK & NI peatland and upland priority habitats.

Action Point 8: Richard to email link for BARS to the group.

6. Work Programme

Richard informed the group that NIEA had updated the comments/updates column on the work programme where possible. Richard suggested that the information from BARS could be used and that if everyone was to inform Larry of things they were doing he would update the work programme. Dermott raised concerns that in the areas where the partners were 'ALL' no-one would take responsibility for updating these.

He also pointed out that he felt that where the word 'ongoing' was used it should be more specific. He agreed to have a look at the work programme and make suggestions for the type of information needed to be able to see if progress was being made.

Action Point 9: Dermott to make suggestions for information needed to show progress being made rather than the word 'ongoing' being used.

Richard S asked if the word 'upland' could be changed to 'priority habitats' to avoid confusion.

Action Point 10: Larry to amend work programme.

It was agreed that everyone would provide Larry with their updates before Christmas and he would issue the revised work programme in January. It was also suggested that Richard speak to Godfrey McRoberts to ensure that DARD know to send in their updates before Christmas.

Action Point 11: All to provide update on work programme to Larry before Christmas.

Action Point 12: Richard to contact Godfrey.

Action Point 13: Larry to issue updated work programme in January.

7. Proposed Red Grouse Workshop (2009)

Larry advised the group that it was planned to have the workshop in January and that Carnfunnock was being looked at as a possible venue. He informed the group that the workshop should bring together those involved or need to be involved directly or indirectly in the Red Grouse Action Plan. These include organisations and individuals

involved in shooting, land management and nature conservation. It was agreed that landowners would need to be represented. Andrew also suggested that Lough Fea Red Grouse Conservation Trust should be invited and agreed to provide a contact.

Action Point 14: Andrew to provide contact details for Lough Fea Red Grouse Conservation Trust.

John enquired if anyone knew if the NI Grouse Council was still in existence. Richard W agreed to ask Fred Quinn if he knew. John also recommended that Roger Pollen be asked to speak at the workshop.

Action Point 15: Richard W to contact Fred Quinn to find out if NI Grouse Council still in existence.

A discussion took place and it was agreed that there should be a smaller initial workshop and possibly a larger one at a later date. It was felt the initial steering group should consist of landowners, Forest Service, AFBI, DARD, CMB, ConFor (Lord Hamilton), CAFRE and shooting interests e.g. BASC. It was also felt that March would be a better time to hold it.

Action Point 16: Richard to contact potential attendees and arrange workshop.

8. DEFRA Peat Soils Project

Richard advised the group that he would circulate any updates as he received them and that he hoped to have something within the next month.

9. Website Proposal - update

Larry informed the group that the NI Peatlands website had been up and running for 5 years. He advised that at present it can only be updated through frontpage and that this needed to be changed to Livelink editor. He asked the group for comments as to whether they felt the site needed a complete overhaul or just some tweaking. It was felt that the site was basically good and just needed amended and enhanced. It was agreed that the small steering group within NIEA would proceed and Larry would report on the progress at the next meeting.

Action Point 17: Larry to give update on the website at the next meeting.

10. NI Species Delivery Group

Richard explained that the Species Delivery Group were in the process of drawing up a NI Priority Species list and that there will be species relevant to this group. He informed the group that he would circulate the new list of NI Species and the list relevant to this group along with the actions required as soon as it was available.

Action Point 18: Richard W to circulate NI Priority Species list when available.

11. A.O.B.

Richard W informed the group about an email from Nicki Whitehouse advising of the NIAF (Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum) which is a relatively new campaigning body designed to raise the profile of archaeology in NI. She suggested making formal

contact with this group to obtain more archaeological input. The group agreed Richard should make formal contact with the NIAF.

Action Point 19: Richard to contact Nicki.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting has been arranged for Thursday 30th April 2009 and will be at Glenwherry. The meeting will be in the morning and there will be a field trip in the afternoon.

Summary of Action Points

Action Point 1	Richard W to invite Roy Tomlinson to join the group.
Action Point 2	Richard W to add Wind Farms to the agenda for the next meeting.
Action Point 3	Richard W to contact Alastair Cameron to give presentation.
Action Point 4	Richard to seek agreement to circulate International Peat Congress papers.
Action Point 5	Richard W to ask Roy Tomlinson to give presentation on peat-cutting.
Action Point 6	Richard W to investigate TELIS and remote investigation.
Action Point 7	Richard to circulate the information he submits for the reporting on UK & NI peatland and upland priority habitats.
Action Point 8	Richard to email link for BARS to the group.
Action Point 9	Dermott to make suggestions for information needed to show progress being made rather than the word 'ongoing' being used.
Action Point 10	Larry to amend work programme.
Action Point 11	All to provide update on work programme to Larry before Christmas.
Action Point 12	Richard to contact Godfrey.
Action Point 13	Larry to issue updated work programme in January.
Action Point 14	Andrew to provide contact details for Lough Fea Red Grouse Conservation Trust.
Action Point 15	Richard W to contact Fred Quinn to find out if NI Grouse Council still in existence.
Action Point 16	Richard to contact potential attendees and arrange workshop.
Action Point 17	Larry to give update on the website at the

	next meeting.
Action Point 18	Richard W to circulate NI Priority Species list when available.
Action Point 19	Richard W to contact Nicki re NIAF.