

## **Freshwater and Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group Oxford Island 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

### **Attendees**

Michael Meharg (EHS, Biodiversity Unit – Chair)  
Richard Weyl (EHS, Biodiversity Unit)  
Bob Davidson (EHS, Biodiversity Unit)  
Helen Paul (EHS, Biodiversity Unit – Minute Taker)  
Judith Bankhead (Rivers Agency)  
Richard Kennedy (Fisheries Conservancy Board)  
Marcus McAuley (DCAL, Inland Fisheries)  
Angus McRobert (EHS, Water Management Unit)  
Brenda Walker (EHS, Water Management Unit)  
Alan Keys (Ballinderry Hatchery)  
David Griffiths (University of Ulster)  
Robert Rosell (AFBI)  
Liz Whiteside (DARD Service Delivery Group)  
Phil Davidson (NI Freshwater Task Force)  
John Gamble (DARD Central Policy Group)  
Wallace Kennedy (Loughs Agency)

### **1. Apologies**

Alex McGarel (CNCC), James Robinson (NIBG), Aine O'Connor (NPWS),  
Ulster Farmers Union, NIA PA.

### **2. Introduction and Welcome and Background**

Mike thanked everyone for attending and outlined how he hoped that this group could help in the delivery of Habitat Action Plans (HAPs).

Mike explained that a NI Native Woodland Group had been set up to look at multiple HAPs relating to Woodland and that this group had worked extremely well.

He explained that in addition to this group, a Peatlands and Upland Group and a Marine and Coastal Group were being set up and that DARD were also considering setting up a Farmland Group. He informed the group that the Peatland and Upland group had their first meeting the previous week and that it had been very productive.

Mike gave the group some background to the NI Biodiversity Strategy and how EHS had to produce 37 HAPs.

He explained that it would not be feasible to have a group for each of the 37 HAPs therefore it was decided to form these 5 groups to take forward the HAPs relating to them and the associated key priority species.

### **3. Terms of Reference**

Mike pointed out that the aim was to produce one common implementation plan for the group and that the Terms of Reference are not set in stone and can be adopted over time to suit needs.

Bob tabled the latest version of the terms of reference incorporating some changes made by the Peatlands & Upland Group, highlighted in red, that might be relevant to this group.

### **Purpose**

It was felt that cross border and UK should be added in.

**Action: Bob to come up with wording to include these comments.**

### **Scope**

“**Coastal & Floodplain grazing marsh**” to be added as a bullet point.

**Action Point: If the group felt it necessary they could make a recommendation to the NIBG for a particular Habitat to be added.**

### **Objectives**

At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point add “**Where possible**” and remove the word “**To**”.

**3.1** Remove “**and relevant policies**” as this was specifically relevant to peatlands

**3.2** Bullet point 3 – Add “**and other stakeholders**”

Bullet point 4 – Add “**the**” before Republic

(Add new bullet point “**where appropriate this remit will extend to cross border catchments**”)

**Action point: Bob to discuss wording with NPWS**

Comment [01]: Delete

The other suggested changes in red were accepted.

### **Representation**

Mike pointed out that EHS do not necessarily have to chair the meeting and it can be reviewed at any time. It was agreed that EHS should chair for now.

The group also considered a range of recreational and commercial organisations. It was decided that they would revisit this in the future rather than make the group too large at this early stage.

Freshwater Task Team – to be amended to “**NI Freshwater Task Force**”

“**NI Local Government Association**” (**NILGA**) to be added

Alan Keys suggested inviting David Loughlan who sits on the board of Bann Systems and other related organisations.

**Action: Alan to speak to David Loughlan.**

**Action 2: EHS to speak to Forest Service to see if they would be interested in sending a representative.**

### **Organisation**

Agreed

### **Review**

After effectiveness add “**Terms of Reference and membership**”

#### **4. Background to Water Framework Directive**

Angus McRobert gave a power point presentation on the connection between the Water Framework Directive & Biodiversity.

#### **5. Update on Habitat Action Plans**

Richard Weyl gave a power point presentation on relevant habitat action plans.

It was agreed that EHS would produce a disc containing all the relevant HAPs, Richard's presentation, the Species Action Plan and a list of any relevant websites. This disc will then be issued to all members of the group.

**Action: Richard**

#### **6. Wetland Biodiversity & River Basin Management Plans**

Bob distributed copies of his presentation, entitled 'Wetlands and the Water Framework Directive'. As time was running short he did a brief run through and briefly explained some of the jargon used.

#### **7. Priorities for next meeting**

Bob tabled a sheet outlining a possible structure for the Implementation Plan which was similar to the Peatland one. The group agreed that this was a useful format.

Mike advised that EHS would have a draft work programme ready for the next meeting.

**Action: Bob/Richard**

The subject of re-introducing species was mentioned and Alan Keys advised that he would be very keen to be involved in practical action on the ground. Mike advised that EHS recently held a meeting on 'introductions, re-introductions & translocations' and that EHS are drawing up guidelines.

**Action: EHS to raise at next meeting**

Mike agreed that it would be a good idea to have someone attend the next meeting to talk about an ongoing project.

**Action: EHS to arrange for next meeting**

#### **8. AOB**

Marcus McAuley asked about how the councils were involved in Biodiversity Action Plans. Mike reported that EHS grant aid local councils to employ Local Biodiversity Officers to develop Local Biodiversity Action Plans. He proposed to bring Louise McAuley of EHS to a future meeting as she would be the best person to give an update on what the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Officers are doing.

#### **9. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 9.30am at Oxford Island.