

Freshwater and Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group Meeting Oxford Island Discovery Centre 22nd June 2006

Attendees

Mike Meharg (EHS - Chair)
Bob Davidson (EHS)
Martin Bradley (EHS)
Joanne Livingstone (EHS)
Colin Somerville (EHS – Minute Taker)
Judith Bankhead (Rivers Agency)
Alan Keys
David Griffiths
David Loughlin
John Gamble (DARD Central Policy Group)
Mary Gallagher (EHS MWU)
Rachel Bain (Freshwater Task Force)
Jackie Morgan (DOE Environmental Policy Group)
Marcus McAuley (DCAL Inland Fisheries)
Paul Lynas (NIBG)
Liz Whiteside (DARD Service Delivery Group)
Richard Kennedy (Fisheries Conservancy Board)

1. Introduction

Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions from new members to the group.

2. Apologies

Alex McGarel (CNCC), Phil Davidson (FTF), Robert Rosell (AFBI), Paddy Boylan (Loughs Agency), Richard Crowe (DARD Service Delivery Group), Jim Ryan (NPWS), James Robinson (NIBG), Brenda Walker (EHS WMU), Richard Weyl (EHS)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 29th March 2006

Agreed

4. Matters Arising

Under Representation in the Terms of Reference –
Alan had contacted David Loughlin.

Bob still needs to contact Forest Service to see if they can send a representative.

Action: Bob

Update on Habitat Action Plans

Martin agreed to e-mail a summary of Richard Weyl's presentation, relevant HAPs, Species Action Plans and a list of relevant websites.

Action: Martin

Local Biodiversity Action Plan Officers

Mike advised that Louise McAlavey would attend the next meeting to give a presentation on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Officers.

Action: Mike

5. Terms of Reference

It was agreed that the following objective should be added:
Advising and contributing to River Basin Management Plans.

Bob confirmed that NILGA had been contacted but were still to provide a representative. It was agreed that they should be approached again to see if they could offer two representatives. Although the group were keen for certain individuals within NILGA to be invited, Mike advised that NILGA should decide who to send.

Rachel asked if Ulster Wildlife Trust could have a representative in their own right, however, it was decided that the NGO's were already represented through NIBG, CNCC, FTF and that further representatives could be considered when the annual review of the Freshwater and Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group occurred.

Action: Bob to amend Terms of Reference

6. Presentation

Alan delivered a presentation on The Ballinderry River Project and answered questions on various aspects of his work. He also tabled copies of the WWF CD "Bridging troubled Water"

He was congratulated on his sterling work, and the positive reaction to his work from farmers was noted.

7. Introductions

Mike outlined a guidelines document "Introductions, Reintroductions and Translocations". He confirmed that EHS would consult with other organisations and the document would be endorsed by NIBG and CNCC, before being presented to the Freshwater and Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group.

Marcus confirmed to David that DNA listings of Salmonids had been provided for the Foyle catchment, and that this would also go ahead for the Bann Systems.

Richard pointed out that collecting genetic material could be a huge task, as various sub species exist.

8. Work Programme

Bob advised the group that the Habitat Action Plans for various Freshwater and Wetlands habitats had been condensed and restructured, and put into one document. He pointed out that it was important that the group focused on Biodiversity issues and did not duplicate work that was going to be dealt with by other groups working on the Water Framework Directive.

It was agreed that raising the profile of the group so that other organisations know about it was important and should be listed on the work programme and included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: Bob

Bob pointed out that there were 6 main objectives, 36 sub headings and 80 key tasks, and that priority tasks should be identified.

It was noted that the group could not cover all of the work programme at this meeting, and that it should be signed off at the next meeting. It was agreed that the work programme should be taken forward via e-mails or sub meetings before the next group meeting.

The Work Programme will be reworded to reflect that the objectives and targets are to be met by the group (not just Government).

Action: Bob

Objective 1 – Site Designation

Mike advised that these targets may change slightly as they are being revised by CNCC.

It was noted that the section on SLNCIs should be reworded to reflect that others can contribute to the process of nominating SLNCIs.

Action: Martin

Objective 2 – Management of Designated Sites

Impacts

This Key Task is to be reworded to look forward rather than at the “impact”.

Rivers Agency are to be added to the Lead Partners.

Abstraction

Water Service should possibly be added to the Lead Partners.

Action: Bob to discuss with EHS WMU

Mary was asked to find out who could advise David on Water Abstraction Licences.

Action: Mary

(peter.dose@doeni.gov.uk is the contact)

Objectives 3&4

Monitoring

Bob explained that there is a three tier system of priority for restoration in the GB, and he agreed to take this issue forward for Northern Ireland.

Action: Bob

Mike advised that Water Quality should be listed in the Monitoring section.

Action: Bob

Restoration

Liz advised that DARD used the terminology “Protection & Maintenance” rather than “Restoration”, and informed the group about Agri Environment Schemes for Protection & Maintenance.

Marcus advised that Fisheries do restoration work as well as monitoring, and it was agreed that this section should be reworded to reflect their input.

Action: Bob

Agriculture

Liz advised that DARD should not be a Lead Partner in section 3.5

Land Use Change

No changes required.

Eutrophication

It was agreed that this section could be summarised to only include what the group needed to address, as much of the work was being done elsewhere.

Mike suggested that the term “Support initiatives” was used.

Action: Bob

River Basin Management Plans

Bob stated that there was a key role for the group in ensuring that biodiversity information was included in the plans, and that there would be wide stakeholder involvement.

It was agreed that Rivers and Streams should be added to the list of habitats on page 2 of the work programme.

Action: Bob

Marcus asked if Priority Species should be listed

As there was no time to review the remainder of the document, it was agreed that an updated version of the document should be e-mailed to the group, and that it will be signed off at the next meeting.

AOB

Bob reported that Ian Enlander (EHS) is concerned about the decline of birds in Lough Neagh, and intends to set up a meeting to discuss this in the Autumn (date and venue to be arranged).

Bob informed the group that a contract had recently been awarded to Envirocentre and Quercus to implement the recommendations of the Invasive Species in Ireland Report, and agreed to keep the group informed.

David drew attention to reports of a colony of 1000 cormorants in the Lough Neagh Bann systems, and the amounts of fish being lost each day.

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 26th October 2006 in the Kinnegoe Room, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island.

(Please note that the date has changed from the date agreed at the meeting).