

**MINUTES ROSS & CROMARTY EAST BIODIVERSITY GROUP  
10 APRIL 2006, SNH OFFICE DINGWALL. 14.00-16.30**

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION POINTS
1. Welcome/thanks	Present: Jennie Abell (HC), Martin Hind (HC), Kenny Taylor, Steve Corcoran (contractor), Christel Smeets (MCWT), Murdo Macdonald, Gillian McKnight (SAC), Tanya Ogilvy (SEPA), Tim Sweeney (SEPA), Kenna Chisholm (RSPB), Fran Lockhart (FWAG), Dave Bruce (FCS), Sue Scoggins (SNH) (minutes)	
2. Apologies	Simon McKelvie (CDSFB), Aileen Mackay (Education)	
3. Introductions	All present briefly introduced themselves to the group	
4. Roles	<p><b>Secretary:</b> Jennie Abell until return of Janet Bromham.</p> <p><b>Minutes:</b> Sue Scoggins</p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> To be decided</p> <p>KC suggested and the group agreed that an administrative role to co-ordinate effort and facilitate the group similar to those in Wester Ross and PRIN was desirable. It is not clear about funding for this role</p> <p>TO and MH expressed an interest and TO indicated that she had some days within her job plan.</p> <p><b>Administrator:</b> To be decided</p>	<p><b>JA 1</b> Investigate financing of an administrative post.</p> <p><b>JA 2</b> Job plan for above role time committment</p> <p><b>JA 3</b> liaise with TO and MH re. potential administrative role</p>
5. Update	<p>JA gave a brief review of the progress to date of the 7 Highland LBAPs, staff changes and current roles.</p> <p>The Highland Biodiversity Partnership (HBP) has been established to provide guidance and support for the existing network of local biodiversity groups to make progress on the key strategic biodiversity issues arising from the LBAPs.</p> <p>Funding has been put together to take on contractors to conduct a review of the LBAPs and draw out implementation plans for each of the areas, to put together Highland Biodiversity Action Plan and to put together an accessible habitats and species database.</p> <p>Funding has come from THC, SNH, HIE, FCS, RSPB Scotland, Crofters Comm.</p> <p>Funding for projects in the future will be</p>	

	<p>available after the review. There was general agreement from those attending that small projects were preferable to a few large projects all though these were also valuable. Training days in particular were seen as having the greatest potential to reach more folk and raise awareness and involvement at the local level.</p>	
<p>6. Highland LBAP Review</p>	<p>SC distributed a paper outlining the purpose of the meeting and suggested key areas for action taken from the R&amp;C(E) LBAP. This paper formed the framework for the ensuing discussions.</p> <p>KC asked what mechanisms were in place for feeding into the Highland Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>Issues regarding funding were raised</p> <p>KC suggested co-ordinating what is happening at a local level in a spreadsheet format.</p> <p>What projects are currently running across the other Highland LBAPs? Jonathon Willetts to be asked to make this available to group</p> <p>Populate s/sheet with all projects for the last 2 years. This should indicate where there are gaps in effort and where to potentially target funds.</p> <p>The following key areas were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness at a local level by engaging community groups through implementation of small projects.</li> </ul> <p>MH has already been approached by a group in Dingwall. KT felt it was better to target community groups rather than Community Councils.</p>	<p><b>JA 4</b> Mechanisms for this.</p> <p><b>JA 5</b> to investigate funding for future projects</p> <p><b>MM 1</b> To produce and circulate for comment a draft s/sheet in Xcel</p> <p><b>JA 6</b> Distribute other LBAPs from Highland area.</p> <p><b>ALL 1</b> populate s/sheet by 30 April and return to JA</p> <p><b>MH 1</b> to progress with community group and report back</p> <p><b>ALL 2</b> Have a think are there community</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS suggested and there was general agreement that effort was put into auditing the natural history of roadside verges and village open spaces. MM felt that this was the remit of the HC in their biodiversity duties under the NC(S)A and should not be part of the LBAP process. However, there was support for training and then auditing villages. The work of Ferintosh, Wild &amp; Green and Black Isle Verges, Know your Own Patch, Boat of Garten were seen as good examples of this type of project. It was suggested that Iain Evans, Assynt was approached to lead a training event and KC mentioned Jess Toms RSPB field teacher who works in ER.</li> <li>• It was generally agreed not to target schools as other mechanisms were in place to engage schools.</li> <li>• It was decided to work up a project on butterflies, after discussion the peacock was selected. It should be possible to involve BC Scotland, local recorders and HBRG in the recording</li> <li>• Other projects including tree sparrows, barn owls, swifts, red squirrels, newts and bats were discussed as potential projects.</li> <li>• Following the success of the cornflower project it was decided to take this forward for another year, growing and collecting local farm saved seed and trialling the sowing of oats and cornflowers as wild bird cover. It is proposed to expand the number of sites include interpretation, monitor existing sites and record activity on unharvested crops.</li> <li>• Reintroductions MM suggested propagation of <i>Moneses</i> and twin flower.</li> <li>• Exotics KC spoke of RSPB whole catchment project for Balnagowan River to eradicate giant hogweed. TO mentioned the Tweed Forum a whole catchment plan to eradicate hogweed and Japanese knotweed.</li> </ul>	<p>groups of which you are aware that might be interested, report back to JA.</p> <p><b>SC 1</b> To work up a project plan for peacock butterflies for 2006.</p> <p><b>ALL 3</b> Feedback to SC on draft implementation plan for peacock butterfly</p> <p><b>FL and GMcK</b> To progress report back to JA</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KC also suggested added value to the tern rafts through interpretation using LBAP funds.</li> <li>• TO said that SEPA has funds available for match funding projects on which they take the lead.</li> <li>• KT suggested that SMcK was asked about any fish related projects particularly catchment wide projects. SS spoke about proposals by SSE for fish passes so that Strathconon could be reached by migratory species TS/SS discussed the reinstatement of the meander on Dunglass Island.</li> </ul>	
7.AOCB	There was no other business and the meeting closed at 16:40	
8 Date next meeting	19 June 14:00-16:30 SNH meeting room Dingwall	