

Highland Invasive Species sub-group.

Notes from Wednesday 24th February 2010.

Second Floor Committee Room. Town House, Inverness.

1. Welcome

John Parrott	Scottish Native Woods
Steve North	SNH
Ian Collier	FCS
Ian Milne	SEPA
Jonathan Willet	Highland Council
Simon McKelvey	Cromarty Fisheries Trust

2. Apologies.

The weather was terrible so there was a low turn out due to folk being stuck because of the snow.

Jenny Sleeman	BTCV - Scotland
John Weaver	Volunteer Development Officer, BTCV - Scotland
David O'Brian	HBRG
David Glass	Caithness Biodiversity Group – Chair
Babs Macritchie	NTS – Balmacara
Rob Dewar	NTS - Inverewe
Lois Canham	North Highland Mink Control Officer
Julie Bowen	Scotland Transerv

3. Approval of minutes, matters arising

The minutes were approved. The action points arising are as follows.

AP1. JW to contact Bob Laughton regarding last year's RAFTS proposal for Invasive Species Control and see if we can use their idea. **Discharged. Large RAFTS application for this to SEPA.**

AP2. Once the IS mapping has been completed look to start drafting the Rhododendron Control Strategy. **Will be undertaken by the Rhododendron Control Officer. Discharged.**

AP3. SNH, SEPA, FCS. To contact their technical departments and find out what format they want the IS data in. **Ongoing. Now AP1.**

AP4. JW to contact contaminated land unit regarding their policy of dealing with/ identifying INNS on contaminated land. **Ongoing. Now AP2.**

AP5. IC to contact Liz Poulosom regarding how the job has been going to help inform the FCS/ SNH funding bid. **Discharged.**

AP6. JW to recirculate Invasive Species Policy. **Discharged.**

AP7. JW to circulate the Mapping Invasive Species report around the sub-group. **Discharged.**

AP8. Sightings of any of the Priority Invasive Species to be send to JP. **Discharged.**

AP9. JW to deliver leaflets to the library service for circulation to the local libraries. **Discharged.**

AP10. JW/ JWr to get more information on the work of the IS apprentice in NI. **Discharged.**

There was a discussion regarding development and SNH/THC/SEPA are producing guidance for major developments in the form of an Environmental management Plan. Pat Haynes at SEPA is the lead on this.

AP3. SN to find out more about this and report back.

4. Mapping Invasive Species in Highland – final report

There was discussion about the report. It was welcomed and the work done by the consultants was of a high standard and will be of a great deal of use. A cut-off date for comments for the group was set for the 8th of March, after this the report will be finalised.

AP4. All to send any comments on the final report to JP by the 8th March.

There was a discussion about data. SMcK mentioned that there was an agreement between SEPA and the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre on a standard format of data collection for all fisheries and habitat surveys. It was also agreed that SEPA's geomorphological surveys would include data on invasive species present.

AP5. JP to sent JW the metadata headings that they used in the report.

The collection of data from the public was discussed and a web-based approach seemed the obvious way to go about this. IC mentioned that the Highland Squirrel Group we developing a records inputting page. This is very similar to what JP has been suggesting in the last couple of years. It was decided to make this an agenda item for the next meeting.

AP6. INNS recording portal to be discussed at the next sub-group meeting.

Control strategies for the various INNS were discussed and it was felt that there should be clarity about what is the best approach to take. It was suggested that documents should be drafted for each of the Top 5 INNS in Highland detailing the approach that is best to take for each species.

AP7. JW to draft species control strategies for each of Top 5 species.

JW said that an eye should be kept of the bigger data picture and that maximising data sharing between organisations and to the general public

should be a goal, especially when large spatial datasets are being released and made publically available e.g. the native Woodland Survey of Scotland.

5. Invasive Species Policy

All partners in the Highland Invasive species Forum are asked to sign up to this. The IS Policy will be launched at the Forum and organisations asked to sign up then.

6. Invasive Species Forum

Ideally this should be an event that can be used for publicity purposes to launch the Invasive Species Policy. The Forum could be held at SEPA's offices in Dingwall or Marybank Village Hall, the availability and capacity of the venues will determine which one is chosen. The date of the Forum is to be on the 14th of April.

AP8. JW to contact IM and SMcK regarding venue availability and suitability.

The talks will consist of updates/ progress reports on;

- BTCV Apprentice
- Rhoddy Officer
- Lever and Mulch Progress
- North Highland Mink Officer Report
- Skye Mink Project Report?
- RAFTS proposal
- INNS Policy
- Giant Hogweed Control.
- Salmonberry control update.

The INNS top 5 distribution maps should also be on display at the venue for comment.

7. INNS posts

Rhododendron Officer – 18 months of funding secured but FCS see it as a one year post.

Mink Project – There will be another two years of funding for the combined NW Highland and Cairngorm Project. RAFTS are going to take over the line management of the NW Highland Officer. SNH will provide 6 months of funding until November to sustain the post until RAFTS can secure further funding for the post.

RAFTS INNS control bid to SEPA – A grant application has been submitted to SEPA and a decision is imminent.

BTCV Apprentice – The post is advertised and due to start in May/ June, initially for a year but the Cromarty Fishery Trust/ RAFTS are looking for continuing funding for a post for the next 3 to 4 years once the apprenticeship is over. The post will include training in survey skills, data handling/ processing, species ID, practical control techniques, habitat restoration

techniques and project management. Other organisations have offered short placements to broaden the apprentice's skills and experience.

8. AOCB

JW - The Giant Hogweed contract has been let and awarded to Bowlts. The contract will look to contact landowners and encourage them to take forward coordinated control of his species on their land. Opportunities for including this management in SRDP applications will also be investigated.

SMcK – SSE have funded the capture of high quality aerial survey work by Apen. Very Hi-resolution, down to 2cm. From this information you can measure the depths of rivers, substrate types etc. Planst can be ID's using colour filters. Keith Hardy at Apen. SSE has the copyright. This information could be of great use.

Transport Scotland is developing a database of information to inform the 4G (4th generation) Trunk Roads maintenance contracts. This will likely include invasive species. They may be interested in the datasets the Mapping Invasive Species contract has collated. There is a Sea Trout Survey and it is looking at ID'ing any culverts under roads, INNS either side of the culvert could be surveyed for at the same time.

AP9. JW to contact Angus Corby at Transport Scotland with regard to the MIS contact data.

NTS at Balmacara are looking into a large-scale Rhododendron control project involving the adjacent estates back to the Lochcarron road.

9. DONM

8th June. 2-4pm. Second Floor Committee Room, the Town House, Inverness.

The aims of the Highland Invasive Species Group were agreed as follows:

- To bring together the key players and take stock of the situation regarding invasive non-native species in Highland;
- To raise awareness and spread good practice;
- To identify any major gaps and prioritise key areas for future work; and
- To work together to secure new resources and funding.

Sub Group Remit.

The Forum agreed that biosecurity issues and the securing of funding for the projects discussed at this meeting are of key importance. It also agreed that the sub-group should continue and seek to secure funding to deliver the projects it has detailed.