

Paper 2017/5 a&b Minutes & MA



**Meeting of Affric and Kintail Deer Management Group
Held at NTS Balnain House, 40 Huntly Street, Inverness IV3 5HR
on Wednesday 28th June 2017 at 1.30pm**

Present	Estates/Agency
Willie Fraser	Chair/NTS
Angus Hughes	East Benula South
David Matthews	North Affric
Chris Macleod	North Affric
Willie Lamont	FES
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Linzi Seivwright	Secretary

1. Apologies.

Derick Macaskill	FES
Donald Fraser	East Benula North
Peter Urquhart	East Benula South
John Hay	Mullardoch
Iain Reynard	Wester Guisichan

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 18th April 2017.

These were approved by DM and seconded by WL.

3. Matters Arising.

AP	Action	Who
1	WF to provide an up to date report of Group accounts. This has been actioned	WF
2	Corriclair and Inverinate Estates to be approached regarding inclusion in the A&K population model and setting of culls. The population model currently includes Corriclair but further data is required from Inverinate in order to include in population model. Action Point 1: LS FE keen to see more more hinds being shot across the wider area.	WF
3	DMG members to carry out a recruitment count by end of April and email results to LS/WF. W Affric reported that recruitment currently in model as 33%. FE reported recruitment at 34%.	DMG members
4	Group members to undertake Habitat Monitoring for Blanket Bog and Dwarf Shrub Heath. SC reported that as yet no details on funding for training or support had been provided by SNH. With the SAC report having been completed last year, this covered HIA across all of East Benula South and most of Mullardoch. Woodland HIA being completed on Mullardoch 2017. West Affric HIA completed in 2015. HIA being conducted on Kintail in 2017. North Affric awaiting training. Action Point 2: LS to collate HIA in end of year report once done.	DMG members
5	Forest Enterprise to meet with neighbouring properties to discuss deer movements. FE had met with Corriclair, The Chair of Glenmoriston and Alan McIntosh (W. Guisichan). The main message from the meeting was concentrate	FE

	culling efforts on hinds.	
6	<p>Maps and coordinates of random plots to be circulated to members and a training day organised, possibly in conjunction with Glen Strathfarrar DMG.</p> <p>Glen Strathfarrar training day had gone ahead. JH from Mullardoch had attended. The Group was still waiting to hear about possible funding/support for HIA. SC indicated that ECAF was still due to be launched. The previous ECAF application had included funding towards collating woodland information across the Group. Members provided an update on the following:</p> <p>EBS – Ongoing discussions about possible woodland projects were still underway.</p> <p>NA – new woodland being created</p> <p>Mullardoch – Survey being undertaken and new woodland exclosures due to be erected in 2017.</p> <p>FCS – new woodland being created – see on website.</p> <p>Action Point 3: LS to put together a proposal for a woodland consultant to pull together a one-stop-shop document on all woodland information – current and potential. Proposal to be circulated to the Group.</p>	LS

4. Proposed Culls 2017/18

At the previous meeting, the Group had agreed to meet in June to agree final cull targets. The following proposed culls were indicated:

Property	Stag Cull 2017	Hind Cull 2017/18
East Benula South	15	25
North Affric	25	25
Mullardoch	12	6
NTS Kintail	100	100
NTS West Affric	55	80
NFE Strathglass	TBA	TBA
NFE Fasnakyle	45	35
NFE Glen Na Ciche & NFE Affric Enclosures	TBA	TBA
NFE South Affric	TBA	TBA

Forest Enterprise indicated that the culls in Fasnakyle would be increased to 35 stags and 45 hinds. FE were hoping to speak to Mullardoch about a collaborative approach to the delivering the hind cull.

Action Point 4: FE to speak to JH (Mullardoch)

For South Affric, rather than come up with a figure at this meeting, there was a desire from their point of view to try to agree a strategic, collaborative approach/solution to practically reducing deer numbers/impacts on the ground. FE proposed that an approach be considered by the Group to concentrate efforts into reducing the female element of the wider deer population by removing unproductive hinds. Given the extent of deer movements with neighbouring DMGs, it was recognised that ideally this discussion should also include neighbouring properties out with the immediate DMG area.

It was agreed that a further meeting of the DMG should be held with the Chairs of Lochalsh DMG and Glenmoriston DMG plus key neighbouring properties (Inverinate, Corriellair and Wester Guisichan) in order to discuss and agree culls, particularly the hind cull, for the coming season.

Action Point 5: WF/LS

With regards to the stag cull, FE indicated that they would be reviewing the contract for South Affric next year. In the meantime, although they were intending to start the stag cull early, they would temporarily limit the stag cull to 25 until a meeting had taken place. Given the extent of the hind cull required to be taken, the Group discussed front-loading the cull with more effort being directed towards the hind culls earlier in the season.

The Group discussed the offer of helicopter training that could be made available to the Group for the hind cull to assist with facilitating collaborative culling in relation to reducing deer pressure on the SAC. SC noted the agreement of the Group to investigate this further should the opportunity arise and would keep the Group updated.

Action Point 6: SNH

It was agreed that the population model would require to be updated with proposed cull figures and to include Inverinate as per Action Point 1. LS to update model using recruitment figures from the Group. WF reported a recruitment of 33% on West Affric. WL provided a figure of 24% from FE.

5. Out of Season Authorisations

NTS indicated that they had applied for an Out of Season Authorisation in relation to Glenshiel Public Safety issues and that 6 deer had been shot.

LS reported that Mullardoch had traditionally applied for an Out of Season Authorisation to protect the designated Pinewoods if required and that this would likely occur this year

The Group discussed that possibility of individuals applying for an Authorisation to shoot hinds from the 1st October. The Group agreed in principle that there would be no objection provided that dependent calves shot first.

6. Training and Funding Update

This item was discussed under Item 3.

7. Access Issues

WF indicated that he had received a complaint about access issues and difficulties with getting through an enclosure in West Affric. There had been complaints from walkers about styles. FE indicated that they were addressing the issue.

Action Point 7: WF to send an email to WL

8. Treasurer's Report

The Chair reported that there had been no expenditure or income since the last meeting.

9. SNH Update

SNH reported on the recent SNH Board meeting that was about to take place.

Action Point 8: LS to circulate link.

The papers proposed that SNH take an enhanced approach to deer management. For example SNH could ask for a DMP to be drawn up (either from an individual or from a DMG) and SNH would also be looking at the use of Section 7 Agreements with progression to Section 8 Control Agreements if the Section 7 process failed. A Paper to be discussed by the Board focussed on deer management on Assynt Peninsula where a recent Section 7 had failed.

As part of this more robust approach, SNH would now be assessing the effectiveness of DMG meetings. It was agreed that SC would share any such assessment with the Group.

Action Point 9: SNH

10. ADMG Update

The Group were informed of a Chairs and Secretaries Workshop to be held at Birnam on 17th July.

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11. Other DMG Update

There had not been a meeting of the neighbouring DMGs since the last Affric and Kintail meeting. Glenmoriston DMG due to meet on 16th August at Invermoriston at 7pm.

12. Any Other Business

WF reported on a meeting that had been held on the 20th June at the NTS Offices between Trees for Life and National Trust for Scotland. LS had attended to represent the Affric and Kintail Collaborative Land Management Plan. It was discussed at that meeting that woodland expansion is something that the Group is already considering through the Collaborative Management Plan, however it was recognised that this would require the cooperation of the Group members to deliver on the ground.

Trees for Life (TFL) had indicated that they were keen to initiate a landscape partnership that would look to creating a woodland corridor through Glen Affric. As well as discussions involving the properties within Glen Affric there were a number of other potentially interested parties who might be interested such an initiative including Rewilding Britain, local Community Groups, Trees for Life.

WF reported that whilst NTS have agreed to engage in principle. However, it was recognised that plans for such an initiative would be ambitious as much of ground is either inaccessible or had significant Crofting interest attached. It was emphasised that such an initiative would also require significant funding (possibly Heritage Lottery Funding).

TFL are going to seek funding to pull together a proposal to go to stakeholders and the local community in November.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Group agreed that a meeting should be held as soon as possible to include the Chairs and key properties of neighbouring DMGs.

4b. Matters Arising/ Summary of Actions

AP	Action	Who
1	<i>Further data is required from Inverinate and the population model to be updated.</i>	LS
2	<i>LS to collate HIA in end of year report once done.</i>	LS
3	<i>LS to put together a proposal for a woodland consultant to pull together a one-stop-shop document on all woodland information – current and potential. Proposal to be circulated to the Group.</i>	LS
4	FE to speak to JH (Mullardoch) about collaborative culling opportunities between Mullardoch and Fasnakyle.	FE
5	<i>Further meeting of the DMG to be held with the Chairs of Lochalsh DMG and Glenmoriston DMG plus key neighbouring properties (Inverinate, Corriclair and Wester Guisichan) in order to discuss and agree culls for the coming season. DMG members to carry out a recruitment count by end of April and email results to LS/WF.</i>	LS
6	<i>SC to keep the Group updated on the use of helicopter training to assist hind culls should the opportunity arise</i>	SNH
7	<i>WF to send an email to WL about access issues</i>	WF
8	<i>LS to circulate link to SNH Board papers.</i>	LS
9	<i>SNH to circulate Assessments of DMG Group meetings</i>	SC