

Paper 2017/8 a&b Minutes & MA

Minutes of the Meeting of Affric and Kintail Deer Management Group

at Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV8 3NW

on Monday 6th November at 10.30am

Present

Willie Fraser
 Angus Hughes
 Chris Macleod
 John Hay
 Willie Lamont
 Derick Macaskill
 Sinclair Coghill
 Linzi Seivwright

Estates/Agency

Chair/NTS
 East Benula South
 North Affric
 Mullardoch
 FES
 FES
 SNH
 Secretary

1. Apologies.

Peter Urquhart East Benula South
 Iain Reynard Wester Guisichan

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 28th June 2017.

These were approved by CM and seconded by JH.

3. Matters Arising from Meeting held on 28th June 2017

AP	Action	Who
1	Further data is required from Inverinate and the population model to be updated. Actioned and population model included in working plan.	LS
2	LS to collate HIA in end of year report once done. Action Point 1. LS to source funding from SNH and organise a training day on 16 th April. LS to provide a quote for training and collation of all HIA information in 2018. NTS reported that impacts had been assessed in Kintail this summer. FE happy to share data. East Benula south and North Affric to complete monitoring after training. Possibly some additional plots required on Mullardoch. SNH reported that there was no need for a MOA regarding the SAC as the management actions detailed in the Deer Management Plan were considered to be competent.	LS
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. Action Point 2: 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 as well as peatland restoration. Proposal to be circulated to the Group. LS to look for possible sources of funding through FCS for collaborative planning.	LS
4	FE to speak to JH (Mullardoch) about collaborative culling opportunities between Mullardoch and Fasnakyle. Covered under item 9.	FE
5	Further meeting of the DMG to be held with the Chairs of Lochalsh DMG and	LS & WF

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	<p>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.</p> <p>Action Point 3: LS reported on a meeting of Lochalsh DMG. A&K to liaise with Lochalsh DMG to arrange a meeting of South Ross Group.</p> <p>Action Point 4: DMG members to carry out a recruitment count by end of April and email results to LS/WF</p>	
6	<p>SC to keep the Group updated on the use of helicopter training to assist hind culls should the opportunity arise. Discussed under item 7</p>	SNH
7	<p>WF to send an email to WL about access issues. Actioned</p>	WF
8	<p>LS to circulate link to SNH Board papers. Actioned.</p>	LS
9	<p>Action Point 5: SNH to circulate Assessments of DMG Group meetings. To be actioned.</p>	SC

4. Peatland Restoration Opportunities

Ndurie Abah (SNH Peatland Officer) who is based at the Kinlochewe Office provided the Group with a helpful presentation on the Peatland Action Project and discussed available funding available from Scottish Government. She explained that peatland assessment is carried out to determine what type of peat is present. She also discussed the various options for restoration including drain blocking, reprofiling, bare peat re-seeding using heather/sphagnum. Dealing with bare peat is proving harder so she recommended that trialling on smaller plots at first is a recommended option. Peatland restoration is a long term process which needs to be taken into account when planning as areas will need to be maintained for 10 years (part of the grant conditions). This may influence management as deer populations would be expected to be maintained at less than 10 deer per km² and muirburn would be prohibited. The presentation went on to describe the benefits of healthy peatlands including water quality improvement and increased biodiversity.

Although the current funding window has closed for 2017, it is hoped that a new round of Peatland Action funding might become available in April 2018. It was also pointed out that SRDP funding will only be available up until Spring 2018. Details of funding for capital works and feasibility studies can be found on the SNH website. Contact details and links below.

(Contact details: 01445 760254, 07979833336) <https://www.snh.scot/climate-change/taking-action/carbon-management/restoring-scotlands-peatlands/peatland-action-201718>

The Chair explained that half the Group had already been surveyed (FCS,NTS). The Group would explore the funding of further feasibility studies of the remaining properties in order to provide a DMG wide map of possible restoration opportunities. It would then be up to individual properties to access funding for the work. **Action Point 6:** LS to explore Peatland Feasibility Study

5. Updated Working Plan including Hind Cull Targets

Paper: 2017/6

The updated working plan was discussed. The following hind cull updates were provided:

North Affric: 12 Hinds

West Affric: 15 hinds

Kintail: 15 hinds

South Affric 8 hinds and 6 calves.

NTS informed the Group that they would be looking to increase the hind cull to include the 40 hind shortfall from last year if possible. **Action Point 7:** LS to update population model

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The following hind targets were confirmed (note cull figures updated as of 13th December 2017):

	2017/18						2016/17					
	Stags Target	Stags Actual	Hinds Target	Hinds Actual	Calves Target	Calves Actual	Stags Target	Stags Actual	Hinds Target	Hinds Actual	Calves Target	Calves Actual
NFE Fasnakyle	30	30	35	3	0	0	30	25	24	24	10	7
NFE South Affric	75	75	80	19	0	3	100	100	80	80	40	23
NFE Strathglass	130	76		32	0	15	130	130	100	84	50	47
NFE Glen na C	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NFE Affric Enclosures	0	2		0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
North Affric	25	25	25	12	0	0	25	24	25	26	0	7
NTS West Affric	55	51	107	15	0		50	54	80	53	0	9
NTS Kintail	100	104	114	15	0	1	100	101	100	86	0	14
East Benula South	15	17	25	12	0	6	20	12	25	25	0	14
Mullardoch	12	12	5	2	0	2	12	12	6	6	0	2
Corriclair	18	18	50	11				18		45		9
Inverinate Forest	150		400					40		105		43
Inverinate West Benula	0		0					51		140		61
Wester Guisachan		23		5		2						
Total Affric and Kintail (Open Range)	312	314	391	78	0	12	337	328	340	300	50	76
Total Affric and Kintail (All)	442	392	391	110	0	27	467	462	440	384	100	123
Total Open Range (including Corriclair and Inverinate)	480	332	841	89		12		437		590		189

6. Out of Season Authorisations

FE and NTS reported that they had applied for an OOS for hinds from 1st October. Mullardoch reported that they had an OOS in place for stags. FE reported that they would be applying for a night shooting licence for NFE Strathglass.

7. DMG Training & Funding Update

SNH updated the group on Helicopter Assisted Culling Training which would be available to those Group members wishing to participate. SNH emphasised that the training involved the use of helicopters to deploy rifles to inaccessible areas and to provide support in carcass extraction. Graeme Macrae (SNH) provided logistical details to the Group for those members participating.

SNH also updated the Group on the £1800 which would be available to the Group to assist in training and in collation of DMG Habitat Impact Assessment Data.

8. Access Issues

At the planning meeting in September, JH had highlighted that there were a number of access paths on Mullardoch (Affric to South Benula and Benula Lodge to Tol Creagach) that could do with being restored – having been destroyed in bad weather/localised flooding. **Action Point 8:** JH to get quotes for the work and NTS to investigate support.

9. Note of planning meeting held 26th September

Paper: 2017/7

The note of the planning meeting was discussed. It was agreed that the Group should agree a diary of meetings for the year ahead to enable planning and ensure attendance. These were agreed as follows:

- **12th March 2018** Spring DMG Meeting. 10.30 am at NTS Balnain House
- **16th April 2018** Habitat Training Day – to be held at North Affric
- **13th & 14th May 2018** DMG Educational Open Days – details to be agreed.
- **6th August 2018 proposed meeting** – venue and times TBA.
- **5th November 2018- Autumn Meeting** – venue and times TBA.

10. Treasurer's Report

The DMG currently had £3700 in the account and had received an invoice from LS for £1485.

11. SNH Update

SNH updated the Group on their “enhanced approach” following the SNH review and recommendations from the Minister in July 2017. All DMG had been informed of their progress and a league table of DMGs had been circulated. SNH informed the Group that although they had come out well in the assessment, they should continue to maintain progress with delivering the DMP. SC also informed the Group that they would be due for another assessment in 2019 so it was essential to be able to demonstrate that the Group were delivering on the actions detailed in the Working Plan.

The Group was also updated on a Deer Panel that had recently been set up by the Environment Minister to explore some of the recommendations from the ECCLR Committee. The panel consists of Simon Pepper (Chair), Andrew Barbour, Jayne Glass with support from Robin Callander and Richard Cooke as an external advisor. The Group were being given 18 months to report to the Minister.

12. ADMG Update

The Group were advised that ADMG is encouraging all Groups to ensure that they are delivering on their Deer Management Plans.

ADMG are also supporting and promoting a Deer Health Survey which is looking to take samples from culled deer across Scotland in order to test for the prevalence of Chronic Wasting Disease, Cryptosporidium and E. Coli. Members agreed to provide samples to the survey.

Members were reminded that there would be an ADMG Regional meeting in Inverness on 23rd November.

13. Other DMG Update

Glenmoriston DMG would be meeting on 29th November at the earlier time of 2.30pm.

14. Any Other Business

There was no additional business.

15. Date of Next Meeting

12th March 2018 Spring DMG Meeting. 10.30 am at NTS Balnain House

8b. Matters Arising/ Summary of Actions

AP	Action	Who
1	<i>Group members to undertake Training on April 16th and undertake Habitat Monitoring for Blanket Bog and Dwarf Shrub Heath. LS to collate HIA once done.</i>	DMG members & LS
2	<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 as well as peatland restoration. Proposal to be circulated to the Group. LS to look for possible sources of funding through FCS for collaborative planning.</i>	LS
3	<i>A&K to liaise with Lochalsh DMG to arrange a meeting of South Ross Group.</i>	WF &LS
4	<i>DMG members to carry out a recruitment count by end of April and email results to LS/WF DMG members to carry out a recruitment count by end of April and email results to LS/WF</i>	DMG Members
5	<i>SNH to circulate Assessments of DMG Group meetings</i>	SNH
6	<i>LS to explore Peatland Feasibility Study</i>	
7	<i>LS to update population model</i>	LS
8	<i>JH to get quotes for Mullardoch path restoration and NTS to investigate support.</i>	JH/WF