



TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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WOODLAND SUB-GROUP

**Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 11th January 2006
at the Forestry Commission Offices, Glenearn Road, Perth - 10.00 am**

Present:

Mike Strachan	(Sub-Group Leader) Forestry Commission
Eric Hamilton	Dundee City Council
Fred Conacher	Angus Council
John Whyman	Dundee City Council Ranger Service
Graham Christer	Angus Glens Ranger Service
Alan Napier	SEERAD
John Burrow	SNH
Bruce Anderson	RSBP
Graham Esson	Perth and Kinross Council
Ken O'Lone	Perth and Kinross Council
John Bruce	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Phil Burkinshaw	Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group
Jay Burkinshaw	Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group
Beth Wilson	SNH (arrived at 11.50 am)
Angela Hughes	Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust (arrived at 12 noon)
Mike Flinn	Forest Enterprise (arrived at 12 noon)
Catherine Lloyd	Tayside Biodiversity Partnership
Lorraine Smith	Perth and Kinross Council – Minute Taker

1. Introductions and Welcome

Mike Strachan welcomed attendees to the meeting, and introduced Lorraine Smith, thanking her for taking the Minutes. For the purpose of the Minute, individual attendees introduced themselves.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

John Craig (Deer Commission for Scotland)
Alan Ross (Scottish Nature)
Carol Littlewood (Angus FWAG)
Richard Brough (Perth and Kinross Council)

3. Matters arising from the meeting held on 26th November 2004

CL reported on the undernoted:

- There had been an excellent turnout for the Summer meeting at Comrie
- The official Biodiversity Website is now up and running
- The review of 1st Tranche Actions has slowed down at the moment as the UK BAP Review has precedence and we will be able to use national information in our own review in the future.
- Kenny Kortland of the Scottish Capercaillie Group gave a very interesting presentation.
- Various projects and funding opportunities were discussed.
- The proposed Perthshire Juniper Project was discussed.

4. Funding Opportunities and New Partnership Projects:

Small Cow-Wheat Recovery Project – MS reported that there are currently 4 sites, these being: Comrie Woods, Balnaguard, Keltney Burn and Cairnie, near Kinloch Rannoch, all in Perthshire. Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund monies have been allocated to Forest Research to continue this project.

Juniper Regeneration Trials – these will be held in Fungarth and Balloukan, Perthshire. MS confirmed that they are still looking at the condition of the site as it is currently being grazed with cattle. Again Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund monies have been allocated to Forest Research for this project.

Veteran Tree Survey – Currently looking at information from groups through the education process, plus management and retention of trees/legislation. MS confirmed that the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust will be leading this project but it is hoped it will ultimately be a Tayside-wide initiative.

CL confirmed that the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership had received £200,000 in total for the current and next financial year towards projects. To date 12 applications had been received from the 1st Round last October; 7 of these have been granted funding. The closing date for applications for the 2nd Round is 20th January 2006; and the 3rd Round is 21st April.

Some members asked CL for an application information pack. CL explained that application forms and an updated Guidance Note could be downloaded from the website: www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk. Serge Merone from Perth Quality of Life Trust is the main contact for general queries: 0845 605 2000. CL would be pleased to advise on proposed projects before application forms are completed.

CL went on to confirm that all applications must be site specific. It was also highlighted that only 10% of the project costs can be allocated to education or interpretation – the fund is primarily for enhancement or safeguarding of habitats and species. CL updated the group on the project applications received for the 1st Round.

JB asked about the YMCA's possible involvement in projects, as a way of getting young people off the streets. It was confirmed that the YMCA normally obtain funding from other avenues.

5. Awareness-raising and Future Sub-group links to National Events

CL reminded attendees that the Scottish Biodiversity Fortnight would be from 27th May to 11th June, and that the Ranger Services have already agreed to link in some of their events.

Backyard Biodiversity Day will, this year, run over two or three days - 8th, 9th and 10th June.

CL asked if the sub-group would consider focussing on a national event or a project, for example National Tree Week.

ACTION: event/project ideas to CL

[It was subsequently agreed to publicise a Tayside Wildlife Tree Initiative to raise awareness of fruit or berry/cone-bearing native trees. This will link into the National Tree Week celebrations. Further details are available from CL]

MS reported that the BBC is publicising their Breathing Space series. Some of the suggested topics are: Black grouse, Red squirrels and the Wood Bus. If you have any other suggestions please let either MS or CL know as soon as possible. The BBC contact is Catherine.garvie@bbc.co.uk.

ACTION: project ideas to MS/CL

FC reported on his current projects during National Tree Week – 9 to 12 schools in his area are taking part. He reported that he is applying for funding for a further 3 years.

KO'L reported that his colleague Richard Brough has been in touch with primary and secondary schools throughout the Perth and Kinross area regarding National Tree Week. He also reported that the Tree Wardens had expressed an interest in participating in this.

6. **Proposed Tayside Juniper Day 2006**

MS reported on the 2004 summer meeting at Comrie, and that he had been looking at a follow up day centred around the Dunkeld area, possibly the 'Glack' at Cally car park.

MS thought the sub-group could visit the area to see the type of management prescriptions being undertaken - in particular, to look at the cattle grazing. MS said he would invite Lucy Sumison from Argyll to talk about the Grazing Project. The proposed date is Wednesday 21st June; Alice Broom (Forest Research) to arrange this. All members confirmed they were available on this date.

ACTION: MS to plan event with Lucy Sumison and Alice Broome

7. **Round-the-table Partner's Project Updates**

Members' projects listed below:

Eric Hamilton, DCC:

- National Tree Week
- Wetland Tree Project

Fred Conacher, AC:

- Angus Millennium Forest and Maintenance Works
- SITA Application (woodland flora enrichment)
- Planting Project (urban environment for creation of new woodlands)
- Creation of Red Squirrel-friendly public park
- Steelwood in Forfar (SFGS)
- Hillside Estate near Brechin (SFGS)

Alan Napier SEERAD:

- Single Payment to farmers
- Level 3 land management contracts

John Burrow, SNH:

- Juniper
- Black grouse

Bruce Anderson, RSPB

- Black grouse – compilation of guidance note
- Tay Reed Bed (the RSPB now manages 40% of the reed bed) – currently producing a Management Plan for experimental cutting regime

Graham Esson, PKC:

- Production of Forestry Strategy for Perth and Kinross which will be passed to Committee in August, and then to Scottish Ministers for approval.

Ken O'Lone, PKC:

- The Tree and Woodland Service of Perth and Kinross Council is about to produce its Five Year Tree & Woodland Strategy; this will be presented to Committee this year. CL asked if she could also be consulted on the document.

ACTION: Ko'L to pass details to CL

John Bruce, Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (and British Deer Society):

- Habitats
- Squirrel protection
- Land Management
- Deer Management

Phil and Jay Burkinshaw, Perth & Kinross Red Squirrel Group:

- Red Squirrel survey

Mike Strachan, Forestry Commission:

- Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme - MS circulated a copy of the document to members
- Approval on expansion of carbon sequestration
- Grant to allow grazing within woodlands
- 2 grants to develop farm woodland energy
- Development of farm woodland products (this is to be piloted in Perthshire)
- Approval of a dedicated Farm Forestry Officer
- Pilot scheme of an agro-forestry grant – creating open grazing

8. Review of 1st Tranche Woodland HAP actions

CL circulated a copy of the current document to members, and asked for comments to be e-mailed to her by mid-February. Some lengthy discussion took place on this matter.

ACTION: ALL - comments to CL

9. Review/completion of draft (2nd Tranche) Consultative Woodland HAPS

CL asked the group to agree these draft documents, so that they can all be posted on the website as soon as possible.

Round-the-table Partner's Project Updates (continuation)

At this point in the meeting, Angela Hughes and Mike Flinn arrived; they explained the undernoted items:

Big Tree Project/Veteran Tree Survey

Angela gave further details of this awareness-raising project and all that would be involved. She reported that she and Mike Flinn would be meeting Woodland Trust staff in February to discuss the working together on the above projects. Until that meeting takes place, though, there was nothing further to report.

Woodland Bus

The Woodland Bus is a converted mobile library designed as an educational tool to take woodlands into schools, eco schools etc. It encourages children to enjoy a variety of activities on the bus, working largely in teams and groups. CL confirmed that one of the Tayside biodiversity displays had been lent to the Woodland Bus.

10. Presentation by Dundee Red Squirrel Group – Community Involvement in Species Management

John Wyman from Dundee Ranger Service gave a very informative and detailed presentation on their involvement in the project and the links with the local community. JW handed out a variety of leaflets to members for their information.

ACTION: ALL - additional information available from JW

11. Reports from Perth & Kinross Red Squirrel Group and Angus Red Squirrel Group

(a) Update from Jay Burkinshaw, Perth and Kinross Red Squirrel Group

The Perth and Kinross Group has been revitalised and reorganised in the past year. It has produced recording postcards with assistance from Perth Museum, and the group is asking for public sightings. It has a website with a recording facility, has held a number of events, together with a competition for a new logo design.

Two survey training days were set up in 2005; these were delivered by Dr. Mel Tomkin, the Scottish Squirrel Officer based in Edinburgh.

At the moment emphasis is on agreeing a policy on Grey Squirrel control. The Group is really struggling without local authority backup, and it is a very large area to manage which is proving difficult at the moment.

The group is regularly involved with planning applications, and has regular liaison with Mountaineering Clubs to obtain distribution data.

(b) Update from Graham Christer, Angus Red Squirrel Group

Graham was enlisted to set up this group. The first meeting was held in December, and things are starting to progress.

In the next few weeks a large number of survey leaflets will be distributed to local people in the area, and there will also be a press article to raise awareness.

Graham has also been in touch with Brian Tasker of the Dundee Squirrel Project to obtain a copy of their official poster etc. He also confirmed that the group would receive help from Elmwood College (Fife) students.

FC reported that he had recently tailored some new woodland planting in Angus specifically for Red Squirrels.

12. Tayside Red Squirrel Species Action Plan

CL confirmed that she had updated (and heavily précised) the existing draft Red Squirrel Action Plan, but now needs members' help in completing the document – and shortening the national strategy part of the draft. CL asked for comments to be passed to her no later than 1st March 2006. An electronic copy is available on request.

ACTION: ALL – comments to CL by 1st March

13. Any Other Business

CL circulated a short report (contributed by FC) regarding the Forestry and Tourism Workshop.

It was agreed that a small group should meet separately to discuss Red Squirrel issues - and to complete the draft SAP. A Red Squirrel Interest Group was proposed to bring together interests across Tayside and to act as a forum for the three local Red Squirrel Groups, local landowners and TBP partners. It was suggested the Interest Group meet in April after comments on the Action Plan had been collated.

ACTION: CL – arrange meeting*

14. Date and Format of Next Meeting

No date was set for another meeting of the Woodland sub-group, although MS reminded members of the proposed summer site visit (Juniper Day) on 21st June.

The meeting closed at 2.10 pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair. MS thanked Lorraine Smith for taking the Minutes and CL thanked the Forestry Commission for hosting the meeting and providing a working lunch.

** Subsequent to the Woodland sub-group meeting, James McDougall (Forestry Commission), called a meeting at the beginning of February at which the Tayside & Fife Red Squirrel Forum was set up. This group replaces the proposed Red Squirrel Interest Group and will next meet at the end of May.*

If anyone is interested in joining the Forum, please contact CL or James McDougall direct.