

Integrated Land Management Advisory Forum

9th November 2006, The Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

Johnnie Grant	Rothiemurchus Estate
James Innes	Glenlivet
Frank Law	Seafield Estates
Thomas MacDonell	Glenfeshie Estate
Alistair MacLennan	CNPA Board (Chair)
Archie McNab	(In place of Davie MacLeod)
David Wright	SEERAD (In place of Anne Rae)
Eoin Smith	Glen Tanar Estate
Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Eleanor Mackintosh	CNPA Board
Will Boyd-Wallis	CNPA Staff
Hamish Trench	CNPA Staff
Fiona Chalmers	CNPA Staff
Colin McClean	CNPA Staff
David Bale	CNPA Staff
Wendy Rogerson	CNPA Staff
Duncan Bryden	CNPA Board
Roger Knight	Spey Fisheries Board
Iain Hope	DCS
Lucy Grant	CNPA Board

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Nicola Abrams	SEPA
Michael Blackburn	FWAG
Richard Cooke	ADMG
Bob Dunsmore	FCS
Ian Francis	RSPB
Alistair Laing	SAC
Helen McDade	Scottish Environment LINK
Anne Rae	SEERAD
Colin Shedden	BASC
Adam Smith	Game Conservancy Trust
Kenny Taylor	Chairman, Cairngorms LBAP

Simon Thorpe
Mark Young

Heather Trust
Aberdeen University

2. Minutes of last meeting (8th August 2006)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with the following amendments:

- a) Vicky Thomson should be added to the list of those present.
- b) Michael Bruce requested that the following should be added to page 4: “in developing forest habitat networks it is essential to identify fire hazards and in particular the fuel load and work out control measures, fire breaks etc.”

Action points from last meeting:

AP1 – Work is currently underway to revamp the CNPA website, to make it more informative on a whole range of issues.

AP2 – Two Core Path Plan Land Managers Workshops have taken place since the last meeting. CNPA to send out details of forthcoming workshops.

AP3 – Forest Framework is progressing.

AP4 – There is ongoing discussion within the Cairngorm Deer Advisory Group regarding the publishing of minutes on the CNPA website

3. National Park Plan

Hamish Trench reported on the final stages of the National Park Plan,

Points raised in discussion were:

- a) Special qualities of the park
- b) How the Local Plan timetable fits with the Park Plan timetable

4. Implementing the National Park Plan

Will Boyd-Wallis gave an introductory briefing on how to begin implementing the National Park Plan, with particular regard to

- a) Private/Public sector collaboration:
How can the public sector most effectively work with the private sector?
How do the Private sector best represent their interests?
- c) Collaborative land management:
How do we embrace diverse management objectives between land holdings?
How do we achieve a consistent approach to management across boundaries?

Points raised in discussion were:

Sharing information

- a) The sharing of information between and within sectors, in particular the use of IACS information. The associated data protection issues were also discussed.
- b) It was noted that there are a number of unofficial databases containing information about landownership.
- c) The possibility of agreeing protocols for sharing information from SEERAD applications.
- d) The possibility of adding a question to the IACS form to say whether the land concerned is within the National Park Boundary.
- e) The possibility of using Royal Mail to carry out a voluntary survey to get more accurate information.

How can each sector communicate what they are doing and integrate better?

The discussion points continued as follows:

- f) Consultations are a good way of communicating however; to be effective they should be realistic and open, especially in terms of funding and implementation etc. Both sectors need to be more inclusive.
- g) An example was given by a forum member of where communications were seen not to be working and information was not filtering through or being acted upon. It was thought that the CNPA could play a useful role in making sure the private sector knew who best to contact regarding specific inquiries and on acting upon inquiries that may fall between remits.
- h) Both public and private sectors need to look holistically, long-term, and see the bigger picture of the National Park as a whole. There are short term gains to be made from managing units in isolation, but integrating management across estate boundaries will help enhance the Park and its reputation as a whole.
- i) Concerns were raised about the need to produce many different plans for different purposes. There is a need to take a more joined up approach to

land management and to avoid time spent on producing too many overlapping plans.

- j) The issues involved in a move from sector activity based plans to area based plans.
- k) Issues involved in producing land management plans which show the real value of characteristics on that particular piece of land rather than the exercise becoming about point scoring.
- l) The importance of ensuring that sufficient public money is used to effectively to deliver the Park Plan.

How best to plan effectively to get things done on the ground.

The discussion points continued as follows:

- m) The idea that the private sector should be supported in monetary terms to provide public benefits on their land. The public sector therefore needs to determine the value and cost of the public benefits the private sector provides.
- n) Changing public trends and changes in the focus of public support impacts on long-term planning.
- o) The Park is valued for how it currently is managed; changing things will not necessarily improve it.
- p) The collective management of the whole of the River Spey including its tributaries was given as an example of good private sector collaboration. Along with an example of angling interests and canoeing interests working together.
- q) Estates collaborate over deer issues to a degree; however as each individual estate has their own agenda, collaboration is not always as effective as it perhaps could be.

The value of the park's special qualities

The discussion points continued as follows:

- r) The need for long-term vision and mechanisms to be put in place for a change in legislation if the legislation is not doing what it set out to do.

- s) How the CNPA may help achieve the above by monitoring not just the actions but the consequences of legislation, designations etc.
- t) The importance of ensuring that what is delivered by land management is well run and presented to ensure good public perceptions of the park, therefore ensuring a high level of economic and tourism values of the area and the importance of ensuring that the CNPA is a facilitator to deliver and enhance this.
- u) “Responsible Tourism” is a developing ethos being explored by CNPA staff to facilitate positive and beneficial links between the tourism and land management sector.
- v) The positive/negative implications of being in the National Park for estates was discussed including changing capital values of estates, public expectations and compliance with designations and legislation.
- w) The concept that the National Park is the “customer” on behalf of the public and therefore it is the land managers that will effectively deliver what the public want was brought up.

The Chair and Will Boyd-Wallis summed up the discussions:

- There is a need to get a handle on sources of data and improve the sharing of info between all bodies.
- There is a need to reduce regulation and bureaucratic burden.
- There is a great need for flexibility rather than strict rules everywhere, especially when it comes to whole unit planning.
- Many of these issues can be sorted by a one-stop-shop single entry/contact point with a practical approach to handling funding.
- There is tremendous frustration on the ground at being unable to gain access to the funding needed to assist a business to go the way that the government wants them to go.
- There is a role for the park in filling gaps not filled by other agencies.
- There was support for CNPA developing a study to determine the contribution land managers make to special qualities of the National Park and their value in monetary terms.
- There is an increased expectation of delivery because we are a National Park and therefore it needs funding.

- Tourism in the Cairngorms area, highly dependent upon landscapes maintained by land management, brings in £120m. The government share of that in VAT is £21m. It was argued that it would be equitable to transfer this back into land management.

5. Scottish Rural Development Programme

David Bale gave an update of the latest developments relating to future Land Management Contracts.

Points raised in the discussion were:

- a) The implications of the RDR make the difference between rural businesses making a profit and surviving or not making a profit and failing.
- b) Questions about whether or not Community Planning Partnerships have an understanding of RDR Issues
- c) SEERAD policy and funding issues
- d) The concept of breaking down into areas and associated timescales
- e) Voluntary modulation and budgets
- f) "Modulation without match funding will lead to huge losses"

6. Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group

Colin McClean gave a report of the last Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group meeting held on the 5th September 2006.

Main points included:

Focus of the group is about advice, communication across sectors and promoting understanding.

The group is made up of NGO's, Land managers, agencies and Community Associations.

A key aspect of sustainable deer management is reduced conflict between different sectors in the deer industry. The key conflict is between those who wish to manage land for the natural heritage and those who wish to manage land for commercial deer stalking. This is a conflict of deer densities.

It is evident that within the National Park both types of management are needed to meet all of the aims of the Park, in order to achieve both economic and natural heritage outcomes we need a patchwork of deer densities across the Park allowing different objectives to be achieved in different parts of the Park. This

patchwork would be underpinned by an inclusive deer management planning process.

The Strathspey DMG has led the way in producing a comprehensive plan which went out to widespread consultation.

Better communications between all sectors involved in deer management are also needed including better explanations of deer management objectives to the public and promoting the idea that deer are an asset.

One of the main objectives is to increase the socio-economic value of deer as a whole.

There has recently been a meeting between the DCS Board and the CNPA Board to discuss ways of increasing the value of the deer resource. A more valuable deer resource would benefit rural communities throughout Scotland. Where deer reductions are required a more valuable deer resource may enable a deer based economy to be maintained with lower numbers of deer. This may make deer reductions more palatable to land managers who currently feel threatened by them.

Points raised in the discussion were:

- a) The difficulty in maintaining differential densities as deer will concentrate in different areas at different times of the year.
- b) The loss in revenue to the estate (£s per stag stalked) must be offset.
- c) The need for flexibility in what is decided, i.e. if things don't work change should take place, management needs to be realistic.
- d) Cross march deer issues.
- e) Funding issues to continue policies
- f) Venison prices – SCA promotion/marketing, the potential of possible National Park marketing.
- g) Public perceptions and the need for promotion of deer.
- h) The need to comply with designations such as Natura.
- i) The need for neighbour collaboration
- j) Issues regarding changes in close seasons
- k) The need for traceability of deer carcasses
- l) Having a unified data system
- m) The concept of added value
- n) The Sustainable Deer Management Project

Iain Hope of the Deer Commission Scotland gave an update on DCS thinking on deer management and projects which DCS were undertaking. To expand on his points excerpts from an internal DCS Briefing have been annexed to these minutes.

7. Future role of the forum

The Chair advised the forum that in light of the National Park Plan the future of all CNPA led advisory Forums may be reviewed.

The current remit of the forum is to provide advice to the CNPA in its development and implementation of policies and strategies on integrated land management within the National Park.

Specifically it is intended:

- to act as a critical and constructive sounding board for draft proposals from the CNPA, and in particular, to help ensure that strategic issues relating to land (including forestry), water, landscape, sustainable development and natural heritage management are addressed in a holistic and integrated way
- to help generate new ideas for policy and implementation;
- to advise on the development of the relevant sections of the National Park Plan, and monitoring of implementation once it is approved.
- to act as a means of the CNPA communicating its thinking as this develops, and progress with initiatives and projects.

8. Date of next meeting

A provisional date of Tuesday 6th March 2007 was set.

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS

1	Improve sharing of database information on land holdings between agencies. Agree protocols for sharing IACS information for updating land manager databases	CNPA
2	Ensure continuity of individual contacts to improve communication between CNPA and land managers	CNPA
3	Monitor impacts of legislation and policy change	CNPA
4	Develop improved links between tourism and land management sector	CNPA

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Annex: Deer Commission for Scotland internal briefing

Best Practice Update

Definition & Categories

Subject to final confirmation from both DCS and the BP Steering Group based on a draft pilot guide, the definition of what constitutes “Best Practice” in the context of deer management is defined as:

“Consideration of all aspects of the guidance, implementation of elements from the background text where there is benefit, and implementation of all guidance in categories 1, 2 and 3”.

This definition will require practitioners to be able to demonstrate awareness of the guidance and follow the procedures in categories 1, 2 and 3. Practitioners may also be required to implement any cost-effective procedures described in the background text. The background text will also include information on procedures which may add-value in some circumstances

Pilot guides demonstrating the use of categorisation defined below and references to links with National Occupational Standards are currently being developed by the BP project officer and will be circulated to DCS and the Steering Group upon completion for approval.

1	Set down in law, it is an offence not to comply with these
2	Required of all practitioners in order to safeguard public safety, food safety and animal welfare. These guidelines could be used in legal proceedings to support evidence regarding competence.
3	Required of all practitioners in order to carry out task effectively.

Joint Working

As the Scottish public bodies most closely involved, DCS, FCS, SEERAD & SNH have agreed the need for a joint approach to working with deer managers on the

use of incentives and regulation, to secure effective management of deer and other herbivores where their impacts on the environment or public safety are causing concern.

Currently, the impacts of deer (as well as those of other herbivores) are dealt with through a variety of different approaches and regulatory and grant aiding mechanisms.

No single agency has all the tools to effectively address concerns of adverse impacts on important natural heritage, woodland or agricultural sites; or concerns over public safety. A multi-agency joint approach is thus required to prevent these impacts or concerns from hindering the achievement of public policy objectives.

Joint working between government agencies brings together the key mechanisms to enhance by use of targeted incentives; or if necessary, halt deterioration by regulatory action. Deer managers should find it easier to work with partner bodies acting as one. Details of the joint working process can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/JointAction/deerhome>

Joint working is about:

- Sites where there are detrimental impacts by deer, or deer and other herbivores
- A single public sector message and approach
- Shared clear objectives
- Agreed clear criteria for identifying which sites and impacts are important,
- Clarifying the role of partner bodies in each case
- Working with local interests and identifying local solutions.
- Prioritising action in the public interest
- Taking action on a site by site basis within a consistent overall framework
- Ensuring progress is made within a reasonable timescale

Summary of the 4 projects taking forward the Seasons: Next Steps.

	Competence	Unified data	Responsibility of care	Sustainable Deer Management
Aim	To develop a definition of competence	To identify the most cost-effective method of providing: 1. data from culled deer to assist in their sustainable management ; 2. data from culled deer	1. Draft a document on Responsibility of Care. 2. Scope the most consensual method of delivering it.	1. To develop a better understanding of sustainable deer management. 2. To make recommendations as to how best to deliver it taking into account private and public

	Competence	Unified data	Responsibility of care	Sustainable Deer Management
		<p>against which practitioner competence might be monitored;</p> <p>3. full traceability to potentially assist in disease monitoring and quality assurance.</p>		benefits.
Message project will promote	Reasons for and methods of assessing competence.	Utility and efficiency of data collected from culling.	Developing the principle that increasing management intervention goes hand in hand with increasing welfare responsibility.	<p><i>Deer are a fundamental resource for Scotland.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deer are an integral part of the grazing regime - deer management is a primary land use - deer have a high cultural value <p><i>It is worth investing in sustainable deer management.</i></p>
Process	This is a DCS led project. Proposals on the definition, methods of demonstration and monitoring competence will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.	This is a DCS led project. Proposals on the data collected and methods will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.	This is a DCS led project. Proposals on the criteria, Responsibility of Care document and its implementation will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.	Six study sites, representing the spectrum of deer management, will be used to provide the necessary practical detail to make the case for and then test options that provide public support for deer and land management at differing scales. The testing of these options will take place through 2007 to 2010