



River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Will Cowie Administrator: Valerie Wardlaw
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Minute of the Annual General Meeting (Annual Public Meeting)

Held on Sunday 21st August 2016 at Darnaway Castle, at 12.30am

Present: Alasdair Laing – Chairman
 Andrew Howard
 John Moray
 Anthony Laing
 Mark Laing
 Graham Bell
 Billy Strathdee
 Robert Hoskin
 Julie Balgonie
 Donna Skelly

In attendance:
 Sean Mclean- Head Bailiff
 Billy Forrester Bailiff
 Robert Laughton – Director, FNLFT
 Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, FDSFB
 Scott Ingle (MEDCO)

A	Item	Action
1.	Apologies: Philip Mackenzie, , Colin Cawdor, Alastair Gordon-Cumming, Ewen Brodie, Ian Wills, Richard Benyon, Edward Crookes, Richard Tinsley, Colin Glynne-Percy (Tomatin), Duke of Bedford, Andrew Fleming, Sir Edward Greenwell, Jamie Whittle (ASCT), Edward Osborne, Simon Woolton	
2.	Minutes of Meeting held on 14th December 2015 Minutes were approved.	
3.	Matters arising none	
4.	River Reports Chairman- Alasdair Laing The 2015 Annual Report has been published and is available from the www.fnlft.org.uk website. The 2016 Spring returns were good- 242 fish caught to the 14 th May of which 2 were killed. This is much better than the 5 year average (157). If the Wild Fisheries Reform is named in the programme of Scottish Government legislation to be announced in September, then a bill will be enacted in 2016-17. If it is not named, then the DSFBs will continue operating into the 2017-18 parliamentary year. Rosanna Cunningham is the Cabinet Secretary leading on the development of the WF legislation. There are likely to be between 15 and 20 FMO areas. Each FMO will draw up a Fisheries Management Plan which will identify priorities for improvement, and thus direct how funds raised will be spent. The FNL Boards and FNLFT have discussed forming an FMO with the Spey Board; however, the Spey Board would like to form a stand-alone FMO. River Director- Robert Laughton The FNLFT have continued organising control of INNS with funding from four grants for this year. Contractors have been employed to treat GH and herbicide has been provided to estates. The Mosset Burn treatment	

over the last 6 years has been successful with no heads left to flower for the last two years. The upper source of GH on the Findhorn has been identified at Logie Bridge, and GH has been treated downstream to the A96 bridge. The RAFTS SISI project should provide funding for the next five years.

JK treatment will start in mid-September- the advice is to stem inject and then blanket spray, and then spray again 2 weeks later.

Mink- there have been more sightings this year and one mink caught on the Mosset. Please report any sightings immediately to the bailiffs who are managing the mink rafts and traps.

Sawbills and seals- the bailiffs continue to organise regular counts and a new licence for sawbill control has been applied for. Please send ad hoc sightings of sawbills to RL as these are useful additional information for the licence application.

Smolt trap- a costing for buying and staffing a rotary screw trap to survey smolt output from the river has been given to the FDSF Board. The Board plan to install a smolt trap between March and May next year. This will provide smolt data to supplement juvenile fish survey and catch data to input into the conservation limits model used to assess the conservation status of the river.

The FNLFT are repeating the juvenile fish surveys of the Findhorn this year, as previous regular surveys have been disrupted by high water levels. This will give comprehensive juvenile fish population data for the first time in six years.

The Berry Burn Wind Farm construction monitoring programme has finished and Marine Scotland Science plans to publish the results as a scientific paper. Monitoring of Moy, Tom nan Clach, and other wind farm developments in the catchment continue this year. RL continues to monitor developments such as the A9/A96, the Farr substation and the new railway crossing of the Mosset. AH will forward a Network Rail contact to RL.

A schools project focusing on angling development is being funded by the Berry Burn Community Fund. RL to discuss participation in the project by the Forres AA with GB.

Head Bailiff- Sean McLean

Poaching activity has increased this year. The bailiffs are sharing information on incidents with bailiffs from the Nairn and the Spey, and Police Scotland. Information on an incident on the Spey at Dulnain, where 35 fish were netted, is being followed up. The Findhorn bailiffs are patrolling the River Lossie and working on joint patrols with the Nairn bailiff. The bailiffs rely on estates and anglers passing on information about vehicles and activities, so please contact them if you see anything suspicious.

Mink control is being managed by the bailiffs, with one mink caught on the Mosset.

Seals are being seen in Findhorn Bay and control measures will be implemented. The last seal count was duplicated by a drone capturing video footage of the populations. This showed that the counts from the ground are under representing the numbers of seals at Findhorn. It is hoped to repeat the use of drones to check the accuracy of counts in future.

Red vent is being seen in 60-70% of fish in the Forres Association waters this year.

AH

RL/GB

5.	Consideration of Accounts to 31st January 2016 The Accounts have been signed and are available on the website http://www.fnlft.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/FDSFB-JAN16-inexam-final.pdf	
6.	AOCB Donna Skelly informed the meeting of the new Monadhliath Deer Management Plan which is setting agreed kill targets for Coignafearn and surrounding estates to reduce overgrazing. RL will be submitting a water monitoring proposal to examine the effects of grip blocking on Coignafearn Estate. Alasdair Laing thanked the bailiffs, Sean McLean and Billy Forrester, and FNLFT staff, Robert Laughton and Valerie Wardlaw, for their hard work during the year. Andrew Howard thanked Alasdair Laing for chairing the Findhorn Board during the year.	RL

B. Election of Upper and Lower Proprietors

- (a) One Lower proprietor has offered to stand as a representative on the Board.
Anthony Laing was duly elected.
- (b) Six Upper Proprietors offered to stand for nine places on the Board.
The following were duly elected:
Alasdair Laing, Lady Balgonie, Andrew Howard, Lord Cawdor, Rob Hoskin and a representative of Forres Angling Association (Graham Bell).

C. Election of Co-optees by Representatives of Upper and Lower Proprietors

Mark Laing (FNLFT) was proposed, seconded and elected as a co-opted member.

These members will represent the Board for three years until the next elections in 2019.

D. Election of Chair by Representatives of Upper and Lower Proprietors and Co-optees

Alasdair Laing was proposed, seconded and elected as Chairman.

E. Meeting of the new Board

Alasdair Laing opened the meeting of the new Board.

AOCB- Scott Ingle asked for clarification of the Conservation Code for Sea Trout. Currently Moray Estates anglers comply with the Conservation Code and return all sea trout. However, Forres AA members are allowed to retain some sea trout. The Board agreed to discuss the release rate for sea trout at their next meeting to clarify this issue.

Alasdair thanked the three members who stood down at these elections: Ewen Brodie, Sir Alastair Gordon-Cumming, and Philip MacKenzie. Alasdair thanked them for their long standing support for the Findhorn DSFB.

Alasdair Laing thanked John Moray for hosting the meeting and for providing lunch.

Meeting closed at 1.10pm

The next meeting of the Findhorn DSFB will be on Monday the 21st November at 10.30am, venue t.b.c.