

**MINUTES OF THE RIVER BRORA DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**Held at Drummie Council Office
On Thursday 8th August 2019 at 11am**

Present		In Attendance	
The Earl Cadogan, (Lower Brora North Bank)	LC	Neil Wright (Clerk to the Board)	NW
Mrs Angela Tyser, (Upper Brora & Loch Brora)	AT	Martin Livings (Head Bailiff)	ML
The Hon. Martin Janson, (Lower Brora South Bank & Loch Brora)	MJ	Robert Rattray (Sporting Agent)	RR
		Philippa Cliff (Agent)	PC
		Christian Wroe (Agent)	CW
		Murdo Ballantyne (Loch Brora Angling Club)	MB
		Jon Watt (Waterside Ecology)	JW
		Graham Sutherland (Bailiff)	GS
		Iain Mackenzie	IM

1	APOLOGIES	Action
	Laurent Hild	
2	MINUTES OF THE 28th MARCH 2019 MEETING	
	LC welcomed all attendees and noted an external presentation will be held by Dr Jon Watt The minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated. LC signed a copy as being a true reflection of the meeting. The signed copy was handed to the Clerk.	
3	DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTREST	
	No conflicts declared.	
4	MATTERS ARISING	
	To be dealt with during the meeting.	
5	FINANCE UPDATE	
	NW commented on the finance of the Board and explained that £31,000 had been collected to date with a surplus of £1500 so far compared to budget. A grant of £3,600, which is a 45% upfront payment from the Scottish Government for the National Electrofishing Program had been received. All income and expenses are in line with the budget and the board is operating within its means. The yearend accounts have been circulated to the Board previously. Page 4 of the accounts highlights the main income and expenditure for the Board and show a comparison with the previous year. The assessment was up in 2019 to cover the costs of the survey being carried out by Dr Jon Watt. There was also extra income received from the Scottish government of almost £6,000 for the	

	<p>National Electrofishing Program. Total income was £102,000 for the year and there was a total surplus of just over £8,000 for the year. Expenditure varied from the previous year due to their only being one bailiff for part of the year and a reduction in rent for a bailiffs house.</p>	
6	HEAD BAILIFF'S REPORT	
	<p>ML ran through his Bailiff's report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>PC enquired about staffing level and ML responded that they are getting help with strimming and bailiffing when required by a local person.</p> <p>LC enquired about pink salmon, ML responded that none had been reported this year but there was a couple of sightings last year. Generally their spawning cycle is every 2 years and they wouldn't be seen until next year.</p>	
7	CONSERVATION POLICY	
	<p>NW circulated the conservation policy which was agreed by the Board.</p> <p>LC enquired about the water temperatures and the requirement to stop fishing at 18 degrees celsius. NW responded that this figure was a recommendation from Fishery Management Scotland and if the temperatures reach the 20's it endangers life of fish.</p> <p>The Brora has provisionally been set as a grade 1 river by the Scottish Government for 2020.</p>	
8	PRESENTATION BY JON WATT	
	<p>LC welcomed JW to the meeting. JW thanked the Chairman</p> <p>JW ran through a number of slides which demonstrated the progress to date. The previous year was gathering the data and compiling it all. This allows for data sets to be created which allow the habitats to be interrogated.</p> <p>A large amount of electrofishing was undertaken last year which has assisted with the study. A draft management plan will be issued shortly and it will be broken down into sections. The plan will look at habitat for all juveniles.</p> <p>All 145km of river and tributaries has been walked and various elements have been recorded, including habitat, wetted area width and river bed conditions. A very high proportion of the 145km would be classed as productive for either juveniles or spawning habitat.</p> <p>The aim is to produce a management plan which encompasses as much information as possible and allows the document to be used as a benchmark.</p> <p>JW did note that while undertaking electrofishing survey work they found one salmon parr above the falls at Dalnessie, these falls had previously been assumed to have been impassable for salmon but not sea trout.</p> <p>Off the back of the government electrofishing programme Marine</p>	

	<p>Science Scotland have identified that the Brora performs better than expected when compared with the benchmark for juveniles.</p> <p>JW further explained that there will be varying pressures on the river and land management, the management report can only make suggestions as to best practice but these other pressure such as deer management and farming would have to be taken into account and the various stakeholders worked with.</p> <p>JW suggested that on reviewing the data the best strategy will be one of protecting what you have and improving where possible with tree planting for tree shade, to provide resilience for the future rather than any major enhancement. The river appears to be healthy but the real issues will likely be at sea and so it is important to make sure the habitat stays healthy with protection of the juveniles and smolts. Conserve and protect.</p> <p>NW enquired if Dalnessie falls were eased would it impact on sea trout numbers. JW noted that there was too little data and further density surveys would have to be done on fish densities, but in theory there is a lot of habitat above the falls.</p> <p>LC thanked JW for his very informative presentation and wished to progress with the report and all its recommendations.</p>	
9	AOCB	
	<p>It was noted that Perch are present in Loch Brora and the population should be monitored. JW commented that they could compete with artic charr and become a problem.</p> <p>IM enquired about the bank erosion along his section of land, there was a general discussion about the erosion. The Board recognised that it will be a discussion between IM and the river owner.</p> <p>The proprietors of the lower north, lower south and Gordonbush Fishings agreed to allow local fishermen on to the river if there were no other lets, for example if the lower river had a let on the north bank but not on the south then there would not be a local let, but if both banks were free a local let could be allowed. A local let would be at the discretion of ML or the owner but run past the sporting agent to ensure no duplicate bookings. Any local lets would be at the invitation of the proprietor. This arrangement would be trialled for a year and would allow the catch records to be kept up and for local to get a chance on the river.</p>	
10	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	LC commented the April meeting would be agreed closer to the time.	