

## **ELSDMG**

### **Minutes of meetings that took place at 10:30 am on 17th July, and after Main meeting**

MEETING PARTS 1 AND 3.

#### **Meeting part 1; Present DMos EM SF SC DMac PS LC**

**Rumours abound that ELSDMG is to be issued with a Section 7 order, confirmed in part to S Fox p.m. 16/07/2016.**

#### **A meeting of participating sporting members was held to consider DMP Meeting part 1**

##### **DMP**

A discussion between members was held on the subject of how to proceed with the DMP, on the basis that the group was to be penalised on a number of false assumptions. Despite GT denials and reassurances at our last DMG meeting in November rumours abound that SNH were to issue us with a section 7 which GT had also warned SF of p.m. the day before.

David Mosgrove (DM) stated that the group was struggling for accurate data, with the maps provided by SNH designating areas as favourable or unfavourable being inaccurate and misleading, for example the inclusion of Loch Sheil as part of an unfavourable area.

The group as a whole felt that a large number of the SSSI areas and herbivore impact statuses are misleading, including areas which are securely deer fenced but are grazed by crofter's sheep included in the red areas for herbivore impact.

Lynda Campbell (LC) stated that Victor Clements would be able to provide the group with a very useful DMG 'Health Check' that would highlight areas that need to be improved, it was felt that as the DMP is being updated and is not yet ready for publication the document and the group would be scored badly if this were done today but that we were getting organized for a 'Health Check' mid September 2018.

DMos suggested that the group redraw the maps provided and exclude areas which we know are securely deer fenced and also suggested removing areas of land from the DMG whose land managers refuse to engage with us and do not take part in any deer group activities or meetings. This was met with universal approval.

## **Minutes**

All members agreed that minutes of the meetings needed to be more detailed and every discussion minuted, Shaun Corrigan (SC) suggested highlighting timelines provided by SNH to ensure that promises were delivered.

## **Mortality**

A discussion was held on recording mortality, SF stated that there is no established method for identifying mortality, it was suggested by SF that the group follows the SNH mortality model of 2% Stags, 2% hinds and 6% calves.

## **Population Densities**

SF stated that the population density of the deer in the group as a whole is 10 per Km which is much less than e.g. other areas he had heard discussed at Birnam with densities in excess of 30 per km, ours was felt by the group to be a low density and is comfortably in the mid - range density as set down by SNH.

## **Rotational fencing**

DMos explained that Conaglen had a policy of rotational fencing in the Ardgour Pinewoods designated site, ensuring that the natural regeneration of trees was able to take place free from interference from deer, and this method taken over time and relevant to the life cycle of the woodlands would ensure the long term preservation of the woodlands, whilst providing bio-diversity and shelter for deer and wildlife. It was agreed that the group as a whole approved of this method even though herbivore impacts will be recorded over much of the site.

## **Recent Surveys**

DMos highlighted his concerns regarding the recent surveys carried out by SNH on designated sites and SSSI's within the group, that the survey criteria has changed and his worries that if designated sites that are now ranked as favourable and have been for the past 40 years are soon to be ranked as unfavourable due to a change of criteria then that would have serious implications for the group in terms of a potential section 7. He thinks it likely that this survey which is not yet complete or reported on is to be pre-empted as an excuse for potential Section 7.

At 11:30 this meeting (part1) adjourned to hold the Main Meeting (meeting 2)

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And after re-convened (part 3).

Present as D Mos, EM SF SC DMAC PS LC(part)

LC will take back to ADMG to see if they can help.

All were disappointed to have the 'Section 7' 'risk assessment confirmed'. The SNH denials from the last meeting were misleading. The intention to impose this were leaked from somewhere prior to the meeting. SF was disappointed to be the last to hear about it.

All felt that the 'Section 7' has been decided already and no matter what we do will be imposed anyway.

When you look at the timing GT proposed. His work to be submitted by mid August to allow 'consideration' by his board then 6 months negotiation. They will have to meet these dates in order to issue the Section 7 prior to the 2019 review to prove to Govt that they are doing their job and using their powers. Chance of them agreeing to delay the risk assessment until after our Health check is non-existent as they will not be able to hit their end game target but SF will write to them anyway.

It looks as though SNH are going to pre-empt the survey that is not yet complete or reported on.

DMOs produced screen shots of various maps from SNH, NWSS etc and explained where a number of these were incorrect.

Further consideration was given to how we might not be dragged down by non-participating land-holders/managers. SNH have said in the past that they would ensure these members would participate, but we have seen no progress with this.

Consideration was given as to whether we should divert our attention away from our ongoing work to defend from a 'Section 7'. We felt that as we believed the section 7 has been decided on already that we should continue with the DMG and DMP development. Meeting ended.