



**SCOTTISH WILDFIRE FORUM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MONDAY 5 DECEMBER 2016 AT 10:00 HRS  
MORAY CONFERENCE ROOM  
INVERNESS**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

<b>Andy Coueslant (Chair)</b>	<b>AC</b>	<b>Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)</b>
<b>Michael Bruce</b>	<b>MB</b>	<b>Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor)</b>
<b>Allana MacDonald</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>SFRS</b>
<b>Bruce Farquharson</b>	<b>BF</b>	<b>SFRS</b>
<b>Simon Thorp (Via Telephone)</b>	<b>ST</b>	<b>Director of Heather Trust and Chairman of England &amp; Wales Wildfire Forum</b>
<b>Michael Foxley (Via Video)</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>SFRS Board Member</b>
<b>Jim Whiteford</b>	<b>JW</b>	<b>NFUS</b>
<b>Ian Wilson</b>	<b>IW</b>	<b>NFUS</b>
<b>Dunstan Cribb</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>Forestry Commission</b>
<b>Dave Leishman</b>	<b>DL</b>	<b>SFRS</b>
<b>Graham Sullivan</b>	<b>GS</b>	<b>SNH</b>
<b>Rebecca Williams (Note)</b>	<b>RW</b>	<b>SFRS</b>
<b>Helena Turnbull (Note)</b>	<b>HT</b>	<b>SFRS</b>

Item		Action
1	<p><b>APOLOGIES &amp; WELCOME</b></p> <p>No apologies were received.</p> <p>AC advised that Dave Leishman would join the meeting at 12.00 hrs to provide a Training update.</p> <p>Allana MacDonald, Inverness Control, was present in an observational capacity, as she was considering redeployment and examining the suitability of various roles.</p>	

<p>2.</p>	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (05.09.16)</b></p> <p>AC proposed for the ease of minute taking/logging actions, the Minutes of the Previous Meeting would be checked, page by page, first for accuracy and then for approval.</p> <p>Actions would be Minuted and also added to the Action Log.</p> <p>The Minutes of the Previous Meeting were approved, subject to the following minor amendments:</p> <p><b>Page 1 – Para 2</b>  <b>ACTION:</b> Amend spelling of “Cribb”.</p> <p><b>Page 2 – Para 6</b>  Fire Danger Warnings  <b>ACTION:</b> AC and MB to produce an alternative form of words off-table and provide to HT for inclusion in the final Minute.</p> <p><b>Page 3 – Para 4</b>  Contribute comment to MB rather than ST.</p> <p><b>Page 6 – Para 1</b>  Wildfire Project Plan/Leader Application  It was agreed that the final conclusion of the meeting was to drop this bid, and HT would amend the Minute accordingly.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this decision, GS believed that the issue was important and should be reconsidered at a later date if relevant.</p> <p><b>Page 6 – Para 4</b>  Software Solution to Support Rural Fire Management  Amend “Aberdeen” to “Dundee”.</p> <p><b>Page 6 – Para 5</b>  Amend spelling of “Glen Tanar”.</p> <p><b>Page 7</b>  Re-format responsibility column.</p> <p><b>Page 9</b>  Amend “EWWF Conference” to “Wildfire 2017”</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>AC/MB</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p>
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<p>3.</p>	<p><b>ACTION LOG AND ACTIONS ARISING</b></p> <p><b>Action Log Number 003 – Asset Database</b>  It was agreed that this item should be removed from the Log together with Action 029, as it was replicated in Action 039 from a more recent meeting.</p> <p>Updates would be captured, and Actions recorded under Action Log Number 039.</p> <p>BF advised that work on the software platform for the Community Asset Register was almost complete. A degree of tweaking was being undertaken to make it more user friendly.</p> <p>Project members continued to seek the information required to ascertain exactly where responsibility lay for maintenance of, and training to use, equipment. ACO Lewis Ramsay did not want SFRS to become liable for the costs this might incur. BF was meeting with ACO Lewis mid-January and hoped to receive the final OK at that time.</p> <p>DC commented that the Forestry Commission was responsible for significant numbers of personnel and equipment. Costs for maintenance and training programmes was high, but ensured quality was built into its maintenance programme.</p> <p>BF added that it had not been put out to the various land/estate Agencies as yet, as ACO Lewis had not given final approval, and it was not a “Wildfire”, but Community-based initiative.</p> <p>MB re-iterated his opinion that the Register should follow a “people-chain” format containing up-to-date listings of contact names in all areas, rather than lists of specific assets or equipment. This would also avoid some of the issues surrounding maintenance and training, as maintenance of vehicles and upkeep of facilities would be the responsibility of the Agency/Landowner involved.</p> <p>BF agreed this was the case, and the Wildfire element of the Community Asset Database was only 10% of the whole register.</p> <p>DC and MB discussed briefly the realignment of accountability within the Forestry Commission, and advised that Scottish Land and Estates want the organisation to remain as second responders.</p>	<p>HT</p>
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	<p>GS advised that private equipment, including Argocats, could be mobilised through the organisation's Deer Management Officers links to Deer Management Groups. He was confident equipment could be used/loaned to the Fire Service if required, but believed it should be listed separately, on an equipment register, rather than a people register.</p> <p>MB suggested it was important to ensure the new SNH system of responders is tested comprehensively before March 2017 to gauge resilience.</p> <p>GS agreed this would happen, and suggested he and MB discuss organising a table-top exercise to test that all telephone links worked successfully.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 009 – Wildfire Tactical Advisor Role</b> BF advised the meeting that the number of Advisors would be reduced from 16 to 6, but CFOA had still to agree the role, and what it would involve exactly.</p> <p>MB suggested Senior Land Managers on the fire ground undertake a liaison role, as they had in the Grampian area, which seemed to work well,</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Under this item AC requested Bullet point (2) of the Action be removed from the Log.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 011 – Fire Danger Rating System</b> This would be discussed as an Agenda item.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Under this item MB suggested that Action Log Number 045 be removed from the Log as it replicated 011.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 013 – SWF Memorandum of Understanding</b> AC hoped there would be movement of this item in the New Year.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> the “Due Date” of this item on the Log would be amended to June 2017.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 015 – Communications Strategy</b> AC commented that the Electronic Newsletter was just another way of communicating the Wildfire message to different groups.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> It was agreed that the various elements of the overall communications strategy be allocated separate Action Log Numbers for ease of future discussion and update.</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p>
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	<p><b>Action Log Number 018 – CFOA Wildfire Training Group</b>  <b>ACTION:</b> Item is now concluded and will be transferred to the Archive Log.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 019 – SWF Website</b>  <b>ACTION:</b> Item on-going, but will be removed as merging with Action Log Number 046.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 020 – Wildfire Project Plan/Leader Application</b>  It was agreed this item would be placed on the archive log.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 024 – Emergency Planners</b>  BF reported that his proposals had been accepted in principal by Colin Gray and the 3 RRP groups; Grampian, Tayside and Highland. LRPs and RRP provided another tier of co-ordination when building resilience into planning for emergencies.</p> <p>DC believed the LRP was developing its own form of asset register, which would be a duplication of the work being undertaken to formulate the Wildfire element of the Community Asset Register. The meeting concurred with this view.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 029 – Software Solution to Support Rural Fire Management</b>  It was agreed this item would be deleted from the Action Log.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 033 – Promote Appropriate H&amp;S at Wildfires</b>  DC reported that this initiative had been transferred directly to FISA.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> DC and MB to work together to investigate where progress could be made.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 034 – Promote T&amp;D of Persons with Wildfire Involvement</b>  <b>ACTION:</b> Item concluded and to be transferred to Archive Action Log.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 036 – Prevention Communication Strategy</b>  The meeting concurred this item was linked to the Newsletter, item 015, and would be removed from the Action Log.</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>HT</p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>HT</p> <p></p> <p>DC/MB</p> <p></p> <p>HT</p> <p></p> <p>HT</p>
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	<p>MB stressed that forecasts for increased Wildfire incidents in 2017 were likely, as recent climatic and sub-soil conditions, combined with the possibility of freezing temperatures over the Winter period could combine to produce difficult conditions.</p> <p>BF commented that the Wildfire User Group were aware of all information being disseminated to various groups through the P&amp;P directorate. He asked whether MB might be interested in receiving documents for comment on content and suggestions for improvement before P&amp;P distributed them. MB agreed to assist.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> BF to arrange for documents to be sent to MB prior to publication/dissemination.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 037 – Key Stakeholders Seminar</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the Seminar would be held in June 2017, with a major communication taking place in February 2017. There were a number of high profile Wildfire, Muirburning and Peatland events taking place in the first quarter of this year, which it was felt would reduce the interest in, and influence of the Seminar if it was held earlier.</p> <p>ST confirmed he would use Muirburn events to promote Wildfire topics, and the Seminar itself if a communications plan was in place.</p> <p>Once appointed, the project support officer, would contact MB to assist with formulation of the communications plan.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 038 – Knowledge Transfer</b></p> <p>AC reported the successful migration from Aberdeen to Dundee Control Operations last month, with the Inverness migration due the following day. Personnel from Dundee Control had visited Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles as part of a familiarisation exercise.</p> <p>AM reported that personnel from Dundee had been allocated Wildfire roles, and specific information/plans from Inverness had been handed over.</p> <p>AC believed this item was now concluded and should be moved to the Archive Action Log.</p>	<p>BF/MB</p> <p>ST</p> <p>MB</p>
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	<p><b>Action Log Number 039 – Software Platform</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the bullet point discussing the “Register” be removed from the Action Log as this was covered in item 003.</p> <p>The meeting was reminded of a previous joint fire map project between SFRS, CNPA and landowners in the South Grampian Wildfire Group, where a consultant had been employed to produce fire maps compatible with all computer systems, ensuring quality assurance was built in. With the upgrade to SFRS computer systems it should now be possible to input this information into SFRS systems</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> HT to amend Action Log</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 040 – Fire Plan Template</b></p> <p>BF reported that the template had been produced, but not approved, and as such it would only be shared with meeting members. MB was keen to have sight of the template as soon as BF could do so.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 041 – Fire Groups and Operation Ballater Clean Up</b></p> <p>It was agreed this would be merged with item 024 on the Action Log.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> HT to amend the Action Log.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 042 – Muirburn Code Review</b></p> <p>This item was on-going, and would be discussed as an Agenda item later in the meeting.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 044 – Controlled Burning Training Even</b></p> <p>This item was on-going, and would be discussed as an Agenda item later in the meeting.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 045 – Fire Danger Warnings</b></p> <p>It was agreed this item could not be progressed until it has “bottomed out”, but would be discussed later in the meeting as an Agenda item. Status to be amended from INS to WIP.</p> <p><b>Action Log Number 046 – Website</b></p> <p>This would be discussed as an Agenda item, but status would be amended to WIP.</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>BF</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p>
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	<p><b>Action Log Number 047 – Muirburn Code Review</b>  This would be discussed as an Agenda item, but status would be amended to WIP, and it would be merged with item 042.</p>	HT
4.	<p><b>FIRE DANGER RATING SYSTEM (FDRS)</b></p> <p>ST reported that from a EWWF position this was considered high priority, and it was vital to co-ordinate action for one system that would work across the entire UK. It was also felt that a “buy in” from the Met Office was essential.</p> <p>MB commented that in conjunction with Rob Gazzard from the Forestry Commission, he had conversations with Karl Kitchen regarding a “Fire Severity Index”, which was being modelled on the Canadian system. It utilised Fire Danger Class Boundaries; but what they hoped to achieve was one document that incorporated both Indices and Boundaries.</p> <p>MB and KK believed that a better interpretation of the Index values was essential to offer effective guidance. He believed an expert group should be set up to support the Met Office in this task.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> MB to convene a committee to progress this item.</p> <p>ST agreed with MB’s approach, and that believed representatives from the “customer” side, e.g. SFRS/CFOA, should take the lead on this through its inclusion in the user group, rather than being led by the Met Office.</p> <p>BF noted that further discussion would take place on the subject during meetings in Barcelona at the end of January, which he believed CFO Shaun Walton would attend.</p> <p>ST reported that he had already engaged with CFOA on the subject, and BF would ensure information was supplied to Rob Stacey.</p>	MB
5.	<p><b>WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT (NATURAL ENGLAND GUIDANCE PAPER)</b></p> <p>AC advised the meeting that this subject had already been discussed by himself and MB off table. GS believed that the risk assessment was based on climate change, and the impact of burning on peat bogs. It would support work on the Muirburn Code, which is separate from Wildfire (EU infraction).</p>	



6.	<p>ST advised the =need for a risk assessment came from the requirement included in the Countryside Stewardship agri-environment scheme for applicants to submit a wildfire risk assessment. Guidance was required as nothing else existed. MB and ST would sit down and discuss the subject further off table. Alistair Crowle would be the best person to contact for information.</p> <p>GS believed that although it was necessary for us to be aware of their findings, we might be jumping the gun because it's a Natural England initiative that might not be applicable to Scotland.</p> <p><b>WEBSITE</b></p> <p>BF reported that he was meeting with Dundee and Angus College tomorrow to provide a brief on what we want from the website. It had to be simple, user-friendly and easy to amend or update information quickly. He hoped that he may have something to show at the next meeting of the Executive Committee Forum.</p>	MB/ST
7.	<p>MB believed he had almost half of the content required, and he would pass this to BF and the College.</p>	MB/BF
8.	<p><b>EU REPORT</b></p> <p>BF advised the meeting that a new project, based on Horizon 20/20 R&amp;I programme was being undertaken researching Satellite and Terrain based positioning. SFRS would be an ideal end user, as well as the aerospace industry. There would be opportunity for SFRS and other end users to give direction, and it could possibly be used in Control Rooms.</p> <p><b>CONTROL ROOMS, SOFTWARE AND PROCEDURES</b></p> <p>Brief discussion of the Control Room situation had already take place, but AC was keen to hear any further comments from meeting members. He reported that control rooms were working well locally and there seemed to be no negative impact on our relationship with the public and various agencies. Telephone numbers in Aberdeen and Inverness have been changed but full information has been sent out to all interested parties.</p> <p>ST would appreciate an update on call-out procedures that will be built into the Muirburn Code Review. BF agreed this stance. The key period would be from January onwards. BF would provide ST with all relevant telephone numbers for control rooms.</p>	BF

<p>9.</p>	<p><b>MUIRBURN CODE REVIEW</b></p> <p>ST reported there had been a little slippage on this item, but a proposal should be available for the next steering group meeting on 14 December 2016.</p> <p>It would concentrate on the impact of water courses and quality of those water courses, and the effect of burning on blanket and peat bogs. The work needs to be redefined, and a programme of 4 workshops has been planned around the country:</p> <p>7 February 2017 – Carfraemill, Lauder, Borders  16 February 2017 – Sabhal Mor Ostaig (Gaelic College on Skye)  21 February 2017 – Edinglassie Estate, Huntly  14 March 2017 – Battleby, Perth</p> <p>He hoped a comprehensive draft of the Code would be available by the end of March/beginning of April, although it wouldn't go live until October 2017, when the next Muirburn season commences.</p> <p>Under this item MB reported that he hoped to receive a report from the commission awarded to the James Hutton Institute over the next month or two, and he would feed this into ST when available.</p> <p>JW enquired whether the report would cover water courses, as NFU members had been utilising this method of providing a fire break for years. ST advised that there would be no real change to the current methodology, but it would be treated more sensitively.</p> <p>MB added that in a wildfire context the aspect of safety would have to be considered if the water course was often used as a fire break.</p> <p>ST advised the meeting that there was an element of conflict between SEPA's views on the subject and those of the EWWF.</p>	<p>MB</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>MF added he was interested in learning more about water courses, and would like to attend the workshop in Skye.</p> <p><b>THEMES FOR REGIONAL/UK SEMINARS/CONFERENCE</b></p> <p>ST was keen to have the meeting's thoughts on how to frame the next UK Wildfire Conference, and what subjects could be tabled for inclusion.</p>	

<p>11.</p>	<p>He advised that Andy Elliot, Dorset FRS Wildfire Lead, had indicated willingness to host a conference to discuss the American NFPA model.</p> <p>BF commented that CFOA meetings are held in Dorset and there are no issues for those travelling.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the most appropriate framework; whether a national, top-end event or a series of regional workshops, and it was agreed that it would depend on which audience they wanted to attract.</p> <p>ST re-iterated he felt a wildfire conference should be organised by and for those who dealt in the wildfire business specifically, and it should not be led by members of other bodies that have little relation to wildfire.</p> <p><b>FEEDBACK FROM SFRS WILDFIRE GROUP</b></p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>BF reported that SWUG had accepted the CFOA training model for Firefighting, and a paper was being prepared for SLT regarding equipping FFs effectively to deal with Wildfire.</p> <p><b>TRAINING UPDATE</b></p> <p>DL provided a brief training update, in which he explained topics that included:</p> <p>Work with CFOA Wildfire Sub Group to produce Guidance on Wildfire National Operations.</p> <p>Approval sought from SLT to manage prescribed burning, which would necessitate more intense FF training.</p> <p>SFRS adoption of CFOA model for national operational guidance.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>MB was keen to identify the numbers of personnel being trained subsequent to the revision of the N.O.S for wildfire firefighting, and DL explained that courses would recommence when they had all been agreed</p> <p><b>A.O.C.B.</b></p> <p>JW advised the meeting that he was stepping down as Chairman of NFUS. The new Chair would be appointed in February, but IW would continue to represent NFUS.</p>	

<b>14.</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>  February 6 or February 13 2017 were proposed for the next meeting, commencing at 10:30 hrs. HT would ascertain members' availability in the New Year, and confirm the date at that time.	