

Minutes
 from the meeting of the
Peatland Working Group
 held at
SSE Inveralmond House
 on
Tuesday 11 October 2011
 from
10.00 – 11.30

Present:

Simon	Thorp	Chairman
Rebekka	Artz	JHI
Mark	Aitken	SEPA
Clifton	Bain	IUCN
Francis	Brewis	Scottish Government
Andrew	Coupar	SNH
Jim	Densham	RSPB
Stuart	Gibb	North Highland College
James	Hepburne Scott	Forest Carbon
Andrew	Midgley	SL&E
Mark	Reed	ACES
Lynne	Ross	SSE
Adam	Smith	GWCT
Mary-Ann	Smyth	Crichton Carbon Centre
Malcolm	Younger	CKD Galbraith

Apologies

Russell	Anderson	Edrington Group
Doug	McAdam	Scottish Land & Estates
James	Milner - Smith	SSE Renewables
Duncan	Orr-Ewing	RSPB
Uilleam	Smith	Crofters Commission

1 Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1 The meeting had been set up in response to the proposal that came out of the Peatland Summit organised by the 2020 Climate Group in April 2011.
- 1.2 This was an exploratory meeting and a key issue for consideration was whether a group was needed.
- 1.3 It was not going to be possible to address key issues during a single meeting but it was hoped to harness ideas and develop a way forward.

2 IUCN UK Peatland Programme

- 2.1 To provide an introduction to current issues, Clifton Bain provided an update about the work of the Programme.
- 2.1.1 The project had been running for 2.5yrs and funding would end in June 2012.
- 2.1.2 The report from the Commission of Inquiry would be published in November and presented to UK Government and the devolved administrations. The launch at Holyrood would take place on the evening of 16 November.
- 2.1.3 The project did not provide the whole answer, but it had been successful in bringing people together and in identifying a direction of travel. A key concept was the need for 'preventative spend' on peatlands to avoid larger expenditure later.
- 2.1.4 Demonstration or pioneer projects were in progress and the programme hoped to learn from these.
- 2.1.5 Funding for an additional period of 12 months, from July 2012, was likely and this would be used to establish the follow on project; a Peatland Hub was proposed.
- 2.1.6 Another important output from the Programme had been highlighting the need for a Peatland Carbon Code.
- If pioneer projects could be shown to be operating within the guidance contained in the Code, this would validate the work.
 - This validation would be a precursor for involving Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investment from business.
- 2.2 The current position was summarised:
- 2.2.1 The science is still in its infancy and more information is needed.
- 2.2.2 More work needs to be done to develop accounting principles for carbon storage in the uplands.
- 2.2.3 A range of different carbon models has been developed but these often start from different assumptions. Greater uniformity is required.
- 2.2.4 Long-term monitoring of restoration work is needed. At present, the benefits of restoration are being assessed from short-term monitoring only.

3 Discussion of Issues

- 3.1 Coordination of different initiatives was identified as the biggest need and a key role for the Group. Many initiatives were underway but there was very little linkage, if any, between them.
- 3.2 Support from the land management community was seen as essential.
 - 3.2.1 Unless engaged effectively, little would happen on the ground.
 - 3.2.2 While the benefits need not all be financial, to encourage take up, where there are commercial benefits from best practice peatland management, these need to be established.
 - 3.2.3 Existing examples of good management should be identified and details circulated / demonstrated to the land management community.
 - 3.2.4 JHI / ACES might be able to organise / fund demonstration events, possibly in conjunction with the Group.
- 3.3 Government support for the work of the Peatland Working Group was important and good connections should be established and maintained.
- 3.4 For the development of a Peatland Carbon Code, lessons could be learned from the development of the woodland carbon code. Chris Nixon (FCS Inverness) was suggested as a good person to contact. **Action: Chairman**
- 3.5 Other carbon-rich soil types should be considered. Initially the focus should be on peat, but the scope could be expanded when the group was established.
- 3.6 Stocktaking procedures for the amount of carbon stored in peat were developing and researchers were gaining confidence in their figures. A briefing on the current situation could be considered for a later meeting.
- 3.7 The Group could have a facilitation role for pioneer projects, especially if CSR investors could be identified and matched with landowners / managers wishing to carry out peatland restoration.
- 3.8 International approach is focussing on an ecosystem approach and multiple land uses and the Group should consider this in developing its programme of work.
- 3.9 The Group should look for linkages to parallel organisation in other parts of the UK. The Peatland Hub being proposed by the IUCN Peatland Programme could help with this.
- 3.10 The benefit to biodiversity was high on the list of reasons for investors to consider investing in peatlands. A definition was offered. **Action: Clifton Bain** (attached)

3.11 Environmental Research Institute (ERI) – Peatland Hub

3.11.1 There was some confusion over the double use of ‘Peatland Hub’. It was likely that this term would be used by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme and not by ERI, which might adopt the term ‘Centre of Excellence’.

3.11.2 An application had been submitted for a £3m programme that would aim to carry out international competitive research

4 Outputs

4.1 Briefings

4.1.1 The Group would produce briefings in order to improve knowledge about peatland matters.

4.1.2 These would be pitched at providing information rather than referencing research.

4.1.3 The audience for these briefings would be wide but the aim would be to improve the knowledge of people involved in, or with an interest in, peatland management.

4.2 Briefing 1

4.2.1 *Route Map towards a Peatland Carbon Code*

4.2.2 A document on this topic was being produced for Defra. It would be amended (if necessary) and made available for the Group. **Action: Clifton Bain, Mark Reed, Stuart Gibb**

4.2.3 The briefing would include a chart showing existing organisations and groups so that the way that Peatland Working Group related to these could be identified.

4.3 Briefing 2

4.3.1 *Different Types of Carbon Market*

4.3.2 Mark Reed provided a summary of the three types of market: compliance, voluntary and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

4.3.3 It was clear that there was confusion within the Group between the different markets and without doubt this would be repeated outside the Group.

4.3.4 Mark Reed agreed to work up existing guidance into a briefing that the Group could issue. **Action: Mark Reed**

4.4 Timing

- 4.4.1 No timescale was agreed for the production of the briefings but Defra were keen to have the information about the Peatland Carbon Code as soon as possible.

5 Formation of the Group

- 5.1 It was agreed unanimously that the Group had a valid purpose.
- 5.2 The working title of the 'Peatland Working Group' was agreed.
- 5.3 The Group should continue to operate as part of Scotland's Moorland Forum.

6 Membership of the Group

- 6.1 The meetings of the Group should not become unmanageable and it was proposed to establish a Core group, who would attend meetings, and a Communications Group. The boundary between the two groups could be fuzzy.
- 6.2 Additional members were proposed, but all of these had already been contacted and invited to contribute to the Group. Copies of these Minutes would be circulated to everybody who had been contacted.
- 6.3 Other suggestions about who should be contacted would be welcomed.

7 Funding

- 7.1 Funding for the Group was not discussed in detail but it was made clear that without some additional funding the Group could not proceed in the current form.
- 7.2 Funding would be required to cover the administration of the Group and associated meeting costs plus any additional expenses.
- 7.3 IUCN Peatland Programme might be able to help with some funding but other organisations that might be able to support the Group were asked to give this some consideration.

8 Future direction

- 8.1 Good coordination and communication would be key to the success of the Group.
- 8.2 Meetings will be held when required, and communication at other times would be achieved by electronic means.
- 8.3 The Briefings would provide output that would be of benefit to everyone with an interest in peatlands.

8.4 The options for linking CSR investors with restoration projects will be considered.

9 Next meeting

9.1 Late January / early February 2012. Date TBC.