

**LIFE 3 Project Management Team Meeting**  
**Basing Room, HCC, Winchester**  
**10:00 - 1200 Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

## Minutes

### Present:

Bryan Boulton (Chair - HCC)	Grace Ford (Forestry Commission)
Tim Turner (HCC)	Phillip Marshall (National Trust)
Darren Crowfoot (HCC)	John C' Ailceta (Environment Agency)
Jonathan Mycock (HCC)	Maxine Elliott (Environment Agency)
Deborah Luckham (minutes -HCC)	Kevin Penfold (Forestry Commission)
Carrie Temple (RSPB)	Doug England (National Trust)
Diana Westerhoff (English Nature)	

### 1. Apologies

Caroline Bird (HCC), Simon Weymouth (Forestry Commission), Russell Wright (English Nature), Helen Wood (Forestry Commission), Bruce Rothnie (Forestry Commission)

### 2. Minutes

Minutes of previous meeting were reviewed and agreed.

### 3. Matters arising

The majority of actions listed in the minutes had been carried out.

Forestry Commission had produced the map of project achievements on GIS. Some sites listed for habitat restoration in the bid were substituted for other sites with equivalent areas (e.g. where consultation had proved difficult); this ensured that restoration targets were still met.

### ACTION:

NT to send in Claims 8-11  
FC to provide comment on Layman's report  
FC and NT to provide final variances to balance phased spend plans with final budget by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

### 4. Partners Completion Reports

KP commented that work for the FC finished at the end of July 06. They are very pleased with all the work to date, and the key target areas that they have restored. There is one item left to complete at Waters Copse, where Hedge planting is to be completed during winter '06/07.

The 'Practitioner's Guide' had been produced.

KP pointed out that in future, he would like to see image control stored better, due to the vast quantities of digital photos that are now being taken. The DVD's were inexpensive to copy, and the FC requested a delegate list from the technical conference to be forwarded. Partners that want copies can still request them. They will also be distributed to schools / colleges / universities.

Financially the FC are pleased with their spend and under spent, although they were close to their target. KP felt that they struggled early on with the development of their database, but it proved valuable in the long run.

DW claimed that the restoration work was now all signed off by EN, and the actions in guiding partners was now complete. The total area of habitat condition changed from unfavourable condition to unfavourable recovering condition was over 1300 hectares. DW will send copies of her figures to partners.

CT commented that the RSPB are currently tying up their finances, and that there was an overall under spend on Personnel in their participation in the project.

ME commented that the EA had finished the remedial work at Highland Water. The EA had to import basalt from Somerset, as they couldn't locate any other suitable natural materials from anywhere else. The Invertebrates and Fishery reports have been signed off, and a draft report from Southampton University needs to be finalised with David Sears. ME had sent these to JM via e-mail. ME will resend the topography reports.

ME added that the hydrological monitoring report was outstanding, as data was still being analysed and would not be available until the end of October due to drought work. All the graphs were completed. The Mid - Cornwall Moors project came to view the work completed by the EA, and internal groups have also come for advice.

JM voiced his concerns about the hydrological monitoring report delays, but ME commented that she has attempted to make contact with the persons responsible for the outstanding report, but they were away on leave, so the work won't be completed until the end of October.

DE was also pleased with NT's progress and explained that they had reached their targets, although there was still some work to do at Newlands Plantation, but this will be funded outside of the project.

DE had completed the report for the biological survey & monitoring, and had brought copies to the meeting for JM. DE commented that he still needed to organise the photographic images he had accumulated. There was an overall under and over spend, that equalled itself out, but comments that he needed to talk with DC about variances after the meeting. DE requested the FC to forward the GIS map to him to check the areas mapped by Jane Smith at Newlands/Dockens Water.

BB commented that this all sounded good, and that everyone needed to organise their paperwork and filing systems. HCC are currently looking for a location to store the project records ready for the audit, which could be up to 5.5 years after the project end. LIFE3 is substantially under budget, so we must show why we asked for so much, and achieved so much more than the original target.

**ACTION:** DL to forward delegate lists to FC  
ME to confirm with JM when the person responsible for the hydrological report is back from leave to continue work.  
JM to copy EN signing off letter and site list to partners  
GF to forward a map of work areas to DE.

## 5. Project Management

**BB thanked all for meeting the project targets. A discussion was held re-audit; CB explained that there were 3 types: Member State audit; European Court of Auditors; and DG Env't audit.**

### a) Project Manager's Report

JM commented that effort has been put into the European Project events, and DL has been recruited to the team to complete the final stages of the project.

### b) Final Report

JM commented that this had been the main work for the last month. He is still requesting reports and other items from partners, and thanked those that had already responded. JM is looking to close down the project and begin archiving once the report had been sent off to the Commission in November.

### c) Closure of project and outstanding tasks

JM commented that the deliverables were the final reports and annexes.

ME commented that under Actions C4.1. and 4.3, completing tasks and following the schedule of carrying out 6 months of river restoration every summer didn't happen, as information was captured in different reports. The Geomorphologic work fitted into more than one action, so had been placed into the most relevant one.

BB commented that JM needed a hydrological summary from the EA with a heading of what has been done, with before and after photos. GF comments that she has brought a CD with her for JM on monitoring FC project performance. NT have requested the DVD in mpeg format as well as HCC, for addition to their web site. Other partners would also like a copy.

JM drew attention to the contact list drawn up for the audit and all necessary changes were made.

JM explained that the Layman's report was on the final internal circulation before being sent to the printers. The deadline for the final report was tight, as it needed to be sent in mid November in the hope that the Commission may ask questions (which could then be answered) before the Christmas break.

**ACTION:** GF to send an MPEG copy of the DVD to all partners  
DE to send before and after photos of NT actions ASAP.

## 6. Financial Management

Graphical representation of the bank balance budget monitoring costs shows 81% of the original budget has been spent.

### a. Finance Officers Report

TT comments that Claim 12 has been submitted at the end of August. Claim 13 was submitted mid Sept. Finance are missing two claims 13 (EA and HCC). Project activities that can't be claimed are also done. DC has received all variances except Forestry Commission & NT and the requests have been accepted.

### b. Cash Flow Projections

DC comments that the date of importance for the budget is the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2006, and June 2007 as everyone will get the cheques to convert from Euros into Stirling, and the exchange rate is always changing.

### c. SOE Preparation

DC is liaising with auditors ready to sign off on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2006, so it is important to finish variances as the deadline for the audit is coming and takes time to produce. DC explains that you can't over claim on claim 13 so if there are outstanding claims these costs should be put into minus and a credit note may be issued. DE requested payment for Claim 11, although DC explained that he doesn't want to part - pay people, as he wants it to be done in a lump sum because the exchange rate heavily effects the budget. Depending on the ECR there may not be much money left to come from the Commission in the final tranche of grant.

BB: two dates were important: 1 November '06, as the ECR in effect then will be used to calculate the Final Claim/SOE. Secondly, the date when we are paid by the Commission will have a different rate when Euros are converted into £ sterling.

**Action: Environment Agency & HCC to submit claim 13.  
Forestry Commission & NT to submit variances by 13 October.**

## 7. Communications

DL reported on a very busy closure period. The photo index is under production and will be completed over the next month. DL asked for all images to be forwarded as soon as possible.

DL reported that Issue 6 of the newsletter is currently being printed, so will be distributed in the coming weeks, and the Layman's Report has been produced and comments received. It is ready to be sent to the printers, and will be distributed once received.

DL ran through the current additions to the website, and the changes that have been made to tenses and results. At the Communications Team meeting in April an interactive map for the website was discussed. DL is currently looking into this. DL is also arranging the translation of the additional text into French and German.

Action DL: let partners know how many old newsletters are left, in case they need further copies before they are sent to the NPA.

## 8. Life after LIFE

BB commented that the project team will be handling the audit visits, and the NPA can field general queries from those interested in the project. Any partners can return promotional material to be forwarded to the NPA for distribution on request. The website transfer is still being liaised over.

DW commented that the EN have a project where they are applying for £50,000 to fund the bid design, although the money wouldn't come until October 2008.

KP commented that the FC will continue changes and look after what has been achieved throughout the LIFE 3 project.

EN want SSSI recovery by 2010, through the HLF bid for restoration. FC will meet the costs of this through their own funds.

ME comments that EA are producing an article regarding innovative techniques of bed raising levels in November, and a monitoring works article for February. There is also a best case studies review, where the LIFE 3 project is being featured.

## 9. Reflection and Lessons Learned

Project partners discussed the LIFE 3 project to reflect lessons learnt from the project. The outcome of the discussion follows:

### PRE-APPLICATION PERIOD

An initial application was made.

2<sup>nd</sup> submission was smaller.

Lack of time for all to consider.

Tight deadlines.

Partners didn't have the chance for a final read of application before submission.

Need to interpret terms of contract and application correctly i.e. SAP.

LIFE 3 different to LIFE 2 i.e. interest on the bank balance can't be spent on the project.

Costings were done by different staff to Project Managers.

Difficult to gain accurate costs without baseline surveys.

### SET UP

Initial tensions, differences.

Important to ID actions on the ground and achieve them.

Many actions took lot of planning time.

Project bid.

Most of easy deliverables were taken out at application stage.

Financial systems useful.

### IMPLEMENTATION

One of biggest achievements is overcoming changes within EC and external monitors.

FC delivered using existing staff and combining with existing workload.

Partners all obtained new skills.

Partners are still learning from the river restoration work that took place

Importation of materials and mobility was difficult.

Surveys showed or will show effect on invertebrate populations Pleased with techniques used eg. bed level work.

Debris dam research, 6 types of material. Dams were 'blown out'. Need long term research

### IMAGES. DIFFICULT TO MANAGE/CATALOGUE

Might have been better co-ordinated by HCC especially where high resolution photos are needed.

There would have been a cost to this.

Admin costs were reduced by EC during application.

Could have had a person designated per organisation to take photos.

## PLUS POINTS

FC database - very useful for FC project management.

Claims benefited HCC indirectly.

Financial monitoring was tricky due to need to work in £ but reporting and monitoring to EC was in €

FC would recommend a similar database for the new HLF bid.

CT commented that it might have been helpful to have an interim meeting between finance and partners to look at systems etc. (health check). HCC was late for some partners.

## BEST THINGS ABOUT LIFE 3

EA - confidence given to local community in this type of work and confidence given to FC in doing this type of work.

NT - WBMF - very good 'tool'.

HCC - partners supported us in our project management role despite challenges posed by EC and monitors.

Tensions between outcome and process.

PM - public reaction was very good, eg. at Newland's Plantation there were no complaints over tree felling.

DW - people seem to think we're doing right thing.

KP - learning eg. new techniques

- partnership working

- rewarding being involved with restoration

Jon C - importance of keeping going.

DW - moving from L3 to Pathfinder has been easy due to success of Forum and Consultations.

GF - communications team involvement was rewarding and getting out on site was fun.

CT – the LIFE 3 project raised the profile of RSPB in the Forest, and the importance of Forest for breeding waders.

## 10. AOB

BB reminds all partners that there is a LIFE funded meal for all project partners following the end of the project.

The EN logo was discussed and it was decided that the new logo NE (Natural England) should be used.