

Rowan and Jamie gave a powerpoint presentation - updating on GFT works within the Dee catchment completed and ongoing.

To meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, that all water bodies should meet Good Ecological Potential (GEP) by 2027; first phase improvements have been completed by Scottish Power on the Pullaugh Burn and Black Water of Dee following the review of Scottish Powers Controlled Activities Regulation (CAR) licence by SEPA two years past. To increase water flow in the Black Water of Dee (measured at the Hensol Weir) to Q95; Scottish Power have re-established flow down the Pullaugh Burn (outflow of Loch Grannoch) that was in its entirety, previously fed by canal through to Clatteringshaws reservoir. From December 2012, the compensation flow has been increased; at Pullaugh Burn from zero to 0.224m³/sec and at Hensol Weir from 0.63m³/sec to 0.914m³/sec .

Concerning improvements to compensation flow regimes at Tongland; GFT have been working with SEPA to make an appropriate assessment of the current classification of the lower Dee (GEP). In February 2012, Rowan and Jamie met with Jim Storrie, Iain Cruickshank and Kjersti Birkeland of SEPA to review the lowermost km of the Dee – a key area there has been concern raised regarding the current volume of attraction flows available to migratory fish entering the River Dee. Following this initial walk over, Scottish Power have proposed that a change in compensation flow regime may be adopted and GFT have begun a two part investigation into how this might best be managed. Having fixed flow gauges to Tongland fish pass and compensation valve, Scottish Power have demonstrated that the 'average' flow in the fish pass is actually around 6.5mgd which is 1.5mgd higher than the statutory minimum requirement of 5mgd outlined in their existing CAR licence. They have suggested that this additional water could be made available for freshet releases if the fish pass 'average' flow is reduced to 5mgd . This would provide about 547millions gallons of water for freshet releases.

GFT have consulted SEPA on a phase one proposal of undertaking a series of flow trials at Tongland. Progress on this will be reported on at the next DSFB board meeting. As part of the classification system, SEPA plan to undertake electrofishing surveys between Glenlochar and Tongland Power Station this year (this was planned for October 2012 but had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions).

A quick review of Tongland Vaki Data showed annual salmon totals ascending Tongland fish pass over the last three years at 848 in 2010, 601 in 2011 and 792 in 2012. Of particular interest last year was the earlier summer peak in instream salmon migration (found most commonly in August), having taken place in July with 433 salmon through compared to only 201 in August. Historical Vaki data and Tongland tagging study (completed 2008) results will be important when reviewing freshet regimes as part of phase two flow regulation study later this year. The Marine Scotland Science Tongland Tagging report "*Movements of Returning Atlantic Salmon through Tongland Fish Pass*" can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0038/00389823.pdf> Tongland Annual Reports are available from GFT on request.

A brief update on the Fishery Promotion Project and RAFTS Barrier Easement Project were provided. It is hoped that plans will progress this year for undertaking easements on two fish obstructions on the Tarff.

Rowan thanked Tim Ewing for helping out with a project recently undertaken with Dalry High School along the same sort of lines as 'Salmon in the Classroom'. This project was only possible through the successful collection of salmon broodstock within the fish pass at Tongland, collected with the help of Tim at the end of last year.

The Dee Eel Restoration Project feasibility study which took place in 2011 involving over four months of eel trapping at the bottom of Tongland Fish Pass, is hoped to continue in 2014 as part of a large EU Life bid that has been proposed by Scottish Power. GFT will know the final outcome of this proposal by the end of May.

Controlling Priority Invasive Species and Restoring Native Biodiversity (CIRB) Project on the Dee – in 2010 the Dee catchment was surveyed with help from Tim Ewing and 4,500 m² of Japanese Knotweed was identified. The downstream limit of this JK was found at the road bridge 50 m u/s of Tongland Power Station. The upstream limit was found to be on the upper Coom Burn by Glenlee. Due to the nature of the JP existing in fairly low density isolated patches, it was decided that the appropriate method of control would be through stem injection of the chemical roundup pro-biactive. This control method has been successfully carried out by contractors during 2011 and 2012 and it is expected that surveys this year will uncover little re-growth.

A lengthy discussion on American Signal Crayfish took place prompted by the recent proposal that has been put to Marine Scotland, SNH and SEPA for a commercial trapping operation at the side of Loch Ken. To date, none of the agencies have supported this proposal and it is likely that a trapping project will only be supported in future on an entirely non-commercial basis only.

Jamie discussed that about 55 km of water courses in the Dee catchment are acidified. GFT have been commenting on various forestry restructuring plans with the aim of reducing the conifer tree cover in poorly buffered areas. GFT were glad to see the Dee DSFB submitted a response to the recent consultation regarding controlling conifer tree planting in acidified areas.