



Northumberland Fire Group

**Northumberland Fire Group Meeting:
7th March 2008, Highlander Inn, Belsay, Northumberland 1000-1300**

Attendees:

Angus Collingwood-Cameron, CLA (Chair)
 Marc Barendrecht, Northwoods
 Pete Berry, Forestry Commission
 Mark Mather, NFRS
 Gary Jefferson, NFRS
 Steve Gibson, NFRS
 Dan Chapman, Wildlife Trust
 Alan Edwards, NGO/East Allenheads Estate

Chris Livsey, Ministry of Defence
 Andrew Miller, NNPA
 Richard Pow, Forestry Commission
 Garry Whitfield, Northumberland Estates
 John Queen, Linhope Estate
 Helen Courtney, Environment Agency
 Stewart Whitfield, Hepple-Whitefield Estate
 Pamela Baker, Northwoods

Apologies:

Martin Dodd, Landmarc
 Russell Tait, NNPA
 Ian Fletcher, National Trust
 Malcolm Fieldsend, NGO
 Tony Hume, Lilburn Estate
 Tania Conway, NFU

Brian Hesler, NFRS
 Alan Rutherford, Landmarc
 Les Wilkinson, National Trust
 James Scott-Harden, Moorland Assoc.
 Duncan Hutt, Wildlife Trust
 Adrian Vass, Natural England

Note: *Can all members highlighted in the Action sections please ensure that they act on the information contained. There are some very important actions within that need to be followed up to ensure the continued success of the group.*

ACC opened meeting and previous minutes were discussed.

Training Update

Discussion	Action
<p>MB gave the training update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWF training – The Basic Wildfire training course has been successfully completed, with good feedback from attendees. Target of 50 trainees from the rural sector was exceeded with a further 54 from the public sector also trained giving a total of 105 people trained. • Advance WF – The Advance Wildfire training course was run in February 2008 with 10 attendees on each day. Unfortunately the dates coincided with good burning weather and as a result some people were unable to attend the course. MB stated that although funding was not available for future courses, they could still be run for a reasonable cost (approx £30 per head). The Gamekeepers present requested the course be non classroom based and reduced from 1 ½ days to 1 day. A suggested date to run another course would be after 15th April. • Fire Plans & Support Visits – MB gave an update on the ‘Face to Face’ fire plan visits and copies of the map of Northumberland depicting the areas covered by visits was handed out. MB stressed to those that have yet to have fire plan’s completed that it was not necessary to have a digital map. 	<p>MB to see if there is enough interest amongst group members to hold more Advanced Wildfire courses</p> <p>All members requested to promote the face to face visits with their neighbours. Especially those which are next to a blank on the map.</p>

<p>An OS map with the boundaries marked would be sufficient and the digital mapping could be done by MB at Northwoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOP's – SG gave a brief description of the new handbook. Stating that the aim was to take an element of the Fire Services SOP's and adapt to make it useful for Gamekeepers and Land Managers. • ACC requested to see draft of SOP's 	<p>All Members to identify gaps in uplands and pass information to MB.</p> <p>MB to provide A0 fire plan boundary maps for certain group members to help with gap identification</p> <p>MB to arrange sub-meeting for members to see draft before final printing.</p>
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Live Fire Exercises and Wildfire Updates

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SG invited the Gamekeepers to attend the Wildfire Exercise scheduled to be run at Debdon Estate on 2-3 or the 9-10 April and would welcome their input. The Gamekeepers asked if the date could be moved to after 10th April. SG replied that getting permission to burn outside the burning season was difficult. • SG informed the Gamekeepers that it would be beneficial for the NFRS and the Gamekeepers if they could be incorporated into the Management of the Fire Service Incident Command Centres during Wildfire incidents in their areas. He requested any Gamekeepers interested to contact him. • MB raised the concerns of the Northwoods Steering Group as to how much control the Fire Service had over the editing of the BBC filming. Their main concern being the sensitivity of showing fires being started. SG replied that the emphasis would be on how the fire was handled and put out. 	<p>MB to distribute dates to members</p> <p>SG to take forward.</p>

Climate Proofing the Cheviots

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC informed the members that the project was set up to look at the effects of climate change and weather problems on upland areas in Northumberland over the next 50 years. It will consider the impacts of wildfire, drought, flooding, erosion and extreme temperatures as well as looking at the effects on farming, forestry, habitats and land management. She also indicated they were looking to put funding (£100,000) into a fire scheme and requested information & ideas from the group. It was stressed that the project would only cover the Cheviots (4 areas named). • HC will be putting together a summary of the project as an overview and will be putting out a quarterly letter. • AM stated that they would like to work closely with the Fire Service and the Cheviot Gamekeepers on this project. The group also discussed Carbon Storage and the impacts of burning on blanket bogs. AE asked that someone include him on these discussions as he has used techniques on burning blanket bogs in the past. • ACC suggested using the CALM (Carbon Accounting for Land Managers) tool to work out your carbon account. CALM is available through the CLA website: www.cla.org.uk 	<p>MB to liaise with HC to get a copy of this summary out to interested group members</p> <p>JQ & Lilburn Estates to be involved in drawing up initial planning and best practice for UK.</p>

Other Wildfire Groups

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MB updated the group on other areas (Cumbria, Dumfries & Galloway, Lothian & Borders and Surrey) that have contacted Northwoods with regard to setting up Fire Groups on the Northumberland model. Lancashire Gamekeepers also looking for something similar. 	

NFRS Update

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SG updated the group on the training progress that the NFRS had made since the last meeting – 20 fire officers and 9 Fire Group members trained. Training of personnel in wildfire is ongoing (fire fighters requesting advice from Gamekeepers is encouraged). The NFRS had worked in the Pyrenees and will be sending Fire Fighters to Catalonia to observe and work on wildfires there. He stated that there was an opportunity for Gamekeeper members of the group to accompany the Fire Service personnel (costs covered by the NFRS). 	All gamekeepers who would like to discuss the possibility of training trips to Catalonia to contact SG or MB to organise.
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English Wildfire Forum

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SG informed the group that there were 14 people on the forum of which 2 were from Northumberland. MB announced that Martin Glynn of RDI (Northwoods parent company) had also joined. 	
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Signage

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MB announced that after carrying out research it was decided that having the notices printed onto waterproof paper was too expensive. MB passed the notices around for approval/comment. It was stressed that the signs were only to be used on if FSI (Fire severity index) is L4 and above, also that they were temporary and should be removed once the risk was over. A request was received from James Scott-Harden that closure signs (passed around group) be used by all to promote uniformity. Closure signs to only be used if FSI reaches L5. It was noted that Land Closure could only be approved by Defra or Natural England. 	<p>MB to email temporary notices out to those that request them. Notices to be printed and laminated by individual estates/landowners before putting up.</p> <p>ACC to action.</p>

Northwoods Staffing

Discussion	Action
<p>MB informed the group that he would be leaving Northwoods to return to Australia. He will remain in post until mid May. Interviews have been held and his replacement Ethan Bigelow has been offered the post subject to visa clearance. Ethan has a strong wildfire background from the US Forest Service and will be an excellent candidate to take the group further forward. ACC thanked Marc on behalf of the group for his contribution in making the group a success.</p>	<p>MB to introduce Ethan to as many members of the group as possible upon his appointment.</p>

Public Awareness Campaign

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DVD Draft Showing – Olwyn Hocking of 'Digital Voice' gave a brief overview and explained the development of the DVD. After the showing Olwyn stressed that the DVD was only in draft stage and still had some shots & music to be added. Olwyn requested any comments or suggestions from the group which would be actioned before the final edit takes place. The completed DVD will be forwarded to MB at Northwoods.	MB to view edited version before approving and to notify members when DVD is ready for distribution.

Date of Next Meeting

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be notified once Ethan is in post.	MB to inform members of date