



Northumberland Fire Group

Northumberland Fire Group - Steering Group Meeting 29th July 2009, The Highlander, Belsay, Northumberland 1000 - 1200

Attendees:

Angus Collingwood-Cameron, CLA (Chair)
Ethan Bigelow, Northwoods
Pete Berry, Forestry Commission
Gary Jefferson, NFRS
Chris Livsey, Ministry of Defence

Duncan Hutt, Wildlife Trust
Steve Gibson, NFRS
Martin Glynn, RDI
Martin Dodd, Landmarc

Apologies:

Jon Williams, Durham Cathedral
Ian Long, NFRS
Andrew Miller, NNPA
Alan Edwards, East Allenheads Estate / NGO
Ian Fletcher, National Trust

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.*

Northwoods Staffing Update

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EB to leave his role as NFG Project Officer at end of August 2009 ACC extended his thanks to EB for his dedicated work on the fire group over the past year and a half MG assured the NFG that RDI (and Northwoods) are dedicated to the continuation of the fire group, given the provision of the funding from group members. A suitable replacement for EB is currently being sought, and RDI will look to appoint an appropriate person as soon as possible. RDI will report back to the NFG in September 	<p>MG to contact NFG in September with update on RDI position</p>

Review of past Minutes

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EB explained that the DVD to accompany the Live Wildfire Exercise was not created due to the lack of time available to develop an appropriate and targeted storyboard GJ confirmed this, said that he wasn't sure if the DVD would be of worth to its specified target audience (e.g. land managers) SG did not feel that the DVD would be worth the necessary financial commitment at present ACC hold off on Live Wildfire Exercise DVD SG U of Manchester, MOD, & English Wildfire Forum have tentatively agreed to conduct a research project at Otterburn Camp on managed burning & wildfire. More details to come 	

NFG Argocat

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EB stated that the Argocat was on standby at Otterburn, and ready for use. Operating procedures between the NFRS and 	<p>EB to draft press release regarding the new NFG Argocat</p>

<p>Landmarc/MOD have been agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD would like to test the operating procedures • EB could be a great opportunity to test the operating procedures at the 'wildfire exercise' in February 2010 • EB to draft press release regarding the Argocat and distribute to fire group members • CL Lee Buckingham (NFRS) to meet with CL regarding fire and partnership working between the NFRS and MOD/Landmarc 	
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Fire Plans

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB fire plan completed for Chillingham Wild Cattle Park; Hebburn Woods fire plan is in the process of completion • EB Annual review of all NFG fire plans currently underway – about half have been reviewed • EB NFG resources allocated for fire plans were spent on converting fire plan maps from individual JPEG/PDF maps into only 8 GIS shape files, allowing the NFRS to lay out a single file (containing all N'land Fire Plans) on a digital OS map. This will make the fire plan maps easier to use, and compatible with the NFRS's new mobile data system • EB provided NFRS with all currently reviewed and converted fire plans 	<p>EB to finish annual review of all fire plans before end of August</p> <p>EB to provide converted GIS fire plan maps to NFRS when they are completed</p>

NFG SOP Handbook

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB SOP handbooks to be distributed with cover letter through the NNPA (250 farms & estates), and through NNPA voluntary rangers (150). EB to draft accompanying cover letter and send all materials to AM • ACC possible to distribute SOP handbooks through Natural England's HLS officers • MG recommended that any distribution should be targeted, and back up by an accompanying event, or something meaningful to capture their attention and commitment to its aims • PB could distribute to foresters within the FC • ACC should distribute SOP handbooks in wildfire fighting training courses 	<p>EB to source desired copies of handbook from fire group members</p> <p>EB to distribute SOP handbooks through NNPA</p> <p>EB to draft cover letter to accompany the distribution of the SOP Handbook</p> <p>EB to contact PB regarding distribution of SOP handbook through FC</p>
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High Wildfire Risk Signage

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB asked the steering group what should be done about coordinating the posting of High Wildfire Risk Signage • Steering Group EB to monitor FSI and alert all fire group members as to when the high wildfire risk signs should be posted • ACC EB to make this a strong point in the handover notes 	<p>EB to monitor FSI and contact NFG when High Wildfire Risk Signs should be posted/taken down</p> <p>EB to draft guidelines for use of the High Wildfire Risk Sign</p>

'Wildfire Exercise' to be delivered/funded through Cheviot Futures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB confirmed that the Cheviot Futures project would fund a 'Wildfire Exercise' put on by the N'land Fire Group. Funding of at least 6K to be provided to deliver exercise • EB gave an explanation of the Wildfire Exercise (See attached 'Wildfire Exercise Outline') • EB suggested holding the Wildfire Exercise at Linhope Estate in 	<p>EB to circulate notes of the wildfire exercise to fire group; submit formal funding application to Cheviot Futures</p>
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<p>February 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB A planning team to be created in Autumn to organise exercise; invited all attendees to participate in the planning team • CL good opportunity to test communications systems between the FRS and fire group partners • SG said that live fire could be involved in the day – depending on the weather • ACC this wildfire exercise template could be used by all fire groups across the UK • SG the NFRS to set up a 'mutual aid' agreement with CFRS 	
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Controlled Burning – NFRS to work with Estates

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB liaised with 5 estates from across N'land who would be willing to participate in a scheme aimed at NFRS personnel assisting land managers with controlled burning. List of estates sent to NFRS. • EB suggested that after initial contact had been made by EB, direct liaison should be established between NFRS (or other NFG members who wish to participate) and the estates • SG to take this forward in Spring 2010 • ACC this work is critical to the success of the NFG, encouraged EB to build this into future action plan and highlight this in the handover notes 	<p>EB to seek two quotations for the production a live wildfire exercise video</p> <p>GJ to work with EB to create a storyboard for the Live Wildfire Exercise / SOP video</p> <p>EB to forward storyboard to AM for approval</p>
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Advanced Wildfire Fighting Training Course

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB an Advanced Wildfire Fighting Training Course to be delivered in the Autumn 2009. To be funded by Leader • EB Interested organisations include FC, East Allenheads Estate, National Trust, Landmarc, NNPA • EB fire group members interested in receiving fire fighting training should get in touch with EB • EB Lantra training funding available (70% match funding) to private sector through fire group 	<p>EB to submit Leader application for wildfire fighting funding</p>
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NFG Action Plan

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB presented idea for three year action plan • EB to revise current action plan, draft a 'three year action plan' • SG said that the NFG needed to focus on consolidating existing networks and established work (e.g. fire plans) • CL supported SG on this • EB & MG agree with SG, but are also aware that funding from pots such as Leader & Cheviot Futures, is only granted to new and innovative projects; there is a need to continuously re-invent good activities delivered by the NFG • ACC reiterated the need to focus on cooperative working, which could be carried out by the NFRS working together with private estates conducting managed burning • EB to take all comments on board when revising the NFG action plan • CL raised the issue of Natural England not being represented on the NFG • SG & MG to raise this issue at the English Wildfire Forum • ACC to take this up with Natural England 	<p>EB draft action plan and circulate for fire group approval</p> <p>EB to submit Action Plan with funding bids</p> <p>ACC to contact Natural England regarding their representation on the fire group</p>

ROS Castle Debrief

Discussion	Action
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACC the ROS castle incident was not a shining example of what the NFG is striving to achieve. A lack of communication and cooperation led to a hampered suppression effort. • SG agreed with ACC. NFRS had reviewed the incident internally, and believe that this is an isolated incident, and is unrepresentative of the message they are delivering in training their fire fighters • ACC reiterated the need for the NFRS to work with the land managers during the controlled burning season in order to facilitate cooperation and effective teamwork on an actual wildfire incident • MD NFG should support more team building events to facilitate this partnership building 	
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Summary of 'WILDFIRE 2009'

Discussion	Action
<p>EB reported on Wildfire 2009 – the largest wildfire event ever held in the UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage: www.wildfire2009.org.uk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You can view all presentations by going to the Wildfire 2009 website! • Key Topics of Wildfire 2009: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updates from English Wildfire Forum and Scottish Wildfire Forum ○ Arson and Wildfire ○ Partnership Working and Fire Groups ○ Wildfire Behaviour and Suppression Techniques ○ Incident Command Systems ○ Training – Eurofire ○ Environmental Impacts of Wildfire ○ Summary of FIRES Seminars – Interdisciplinary Research on Ecosystem Services ○ Land Management to Reduce Wildfire Risk 	

Other Wildfire Groups Update

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG RDI delivering wildfire groups in South East England, North Yorkshire, and Highlands and Islands. All in varying stages of development, but progress is being made • GJ a new wildfire project within the D&D Fire and Rescue Service could be the catalyst for the development of the Durham Fire Group • EB to get in touch with Andrew Whitehead at the D&D FRS 	<p>MG & EB to contact AW at the D&D Fire and Rescue Service regarding the development of the Durham Fire Group</p>

NFRS & English Wildfire Forum Update

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SG NFRS has taken the lead on wildfire within CFOR's (Chief Fire Officers) • SG has taken up chair of the English Wildfire Forum • SG to rethink the role of the English Wildfire Forum, make it a legitimate body, and take wildfire forward in the UK • MG suggested using Wildfire 2011 as the public forum of the English Wildfire Forum – setting clear objectives at two year intervals and measuring progress 	

Date of Next Meeting

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Fire Group meeting to be announced when a new project officer has been appointed 	<p>MG to inform NFG of next meeting date</p>