

Week Twenty One

Monday started as a day off for me this week.

On Tuesday I started the day at Cragievar Primary school where I presented to the pupils taking part in the Salmon in the Classroom project. Mrs Drummond and her pupils were very interested in this year's project, as some had already participated in earlier forms of the project. The school children were also so interested in the project that they decided to film the various sections of the project. The principle behind the recording of the different sections is to include these on the school's interactive website based on the Aberdeenshire schools Glow network. The Glow network enables all the schools in the region to communicate via the internet by posting pictures, messages and videos of the various activities and topics that they have been involved in. The presentation went well and as I left the pupils informed me that they were looking forward to the forthcoming hatchery visit. On returning to the office I had a large log pile to stack into the woodshed. I soon had the wood burning stove blazing in the office taking some of the chill of the thick granite building. I spent the rest of the afternoon catching up on various bits of paperwork.

Wednesday started with a pre presentation meeting at Lumsden primary school. Here I met with the head teacher to discuss the project and the requirements for the classroom hatchery. From here I headed up to meet with the Board Staff Jim, Martin & Stephen at the Hatchery at Strathdon. The guys had already started to prepare the equipment by the time that I had arrived. Today we would be catching up fish, tagging and taking scale and genetic samples. This work will enable the Trust and Board to establish the various components of the salmon stock in the Don and then use this information coupled with other catchment info to create a suitable strategy for stocking using the hatchery, more on this shortly. Toward the end of the afternoon I headed five minutes down the road to meet with another participant in the Salmon in the Classroom project, Towie Primary School. Here I met with the pupils and gave a presentation on the project and arranged for them to come and see the hatchery process the following week.

On Thursday I was back up at Strathdon at the hatchery, this time it was to meet with representatives from SEPA, the DonDSFB, the Trust and Highland Eco Design. The meeting was setup by Mick Bestwick and Jamie Wallace from Highland Eco Design in order to discuss the various Hydro schemes they intend to develop within the catchment. We used the meeting to discuss and visit the site of the proposed micro hydro scheme at Allargue by Cockbridge, we also visited the existing hydro scheme at the Newe weir and discussed the hydro scheme proposed for Craigpot. The meeting was well attended by SEPA with two senior officials present, alongside two experts in fish ecology and geology. The day went well and all aspects of the schemes were discussed from the volume of compensation flow, to intake and out take design, to mitigation. The minutes of the meeting were summarised by Jamie Wallace from Highland Eco design and comments were returned by each party. Follow up meeting to update on the progress of each of the schemes is to be arranged at a later date.



Some of the group present at the hydro scheme discussion at Allargue.

On Friday I was back at Lumsden again this time I was presenting to the school pupils. The Lumsden head teacher had also arranged to host another school for the presentation. Each year some schools partake in various exchange visits and Lumsden arranged it so that this could be combined with this presentation. I felt that this was an excellent idea and Riverside School from Tillydrone were also very pleased that they could be participating in this part of the project. Following the presentation I headed up to the hatchery to assist with tagging and scale and genetic sampling, for the remainder of the day.

Next week I'll be at the Hatchery with some of the schools I'll also be visiting Mr Bryce White of FRS Marine Scotland at Montrose regarding the reading of Salmon scales.

Cheers Jamie