

# Planning News

## The Scottish Wildlife Trust's planning newsletter

November 2011



### Welcome

Welcome to another planning newsletter. The last few months have been a busy time in terms of planning matters both for head quarters (HQ) and SWT's Member Centres/planning volunteers. During this period I have enjoyed catching up with a number of you either out on site, at our planning conference or when you have visited HQ.

Planning issues that HQ have commented on include the proposed Stornoway windfarm, a fish farm proposal at Claggain Bay, Isle of Islay, a renewable energy development close to our reserve at Montrose Basin, North Ayrshire Council's draft Local Development Plan, Orkney draft Local Development Plan, Cairngorms National Park Plan and Main Issues Report and Hunterston multi-fuel power station (again!). If you would like to see a copy of the Trust's response to any of these please let me know.

At the end of February we had a very successful and well attended planning workshop - with over 35 attendees. Speakers included John McNairney - Assistant Chief Planner, Scottish Government; Julia Dewar - Planning Officer (Natural Heritage) City of Edinburgh Council and Peter Robson - Scottish Power Renewables.

The next planning workshop will be in Edinburgh (I'm still finalising the venue- but it's likely to be central) on **Friday 24 February** - so please get in touch, if you have not already done so, if you would like to attend. It would be great to see every Member Centre (MC) represented. If there is anything you would like included in the workshop please email me.

I have been on three site visits with planning volunteers - all highly enjoyable and extremely useful. The first was with Scottish Borders planning volunteers (Dr. Malcolm Lyndsay, Lawrence Robertson and John Elliot) to investigate the potential impacts of a proposed windfarm (Gilston) close to Fala Flow Special Protection Area (SPA), the second was with Clyde and Lanarkshire planning volunteers (Dave Shenton, Pete Murray and Bob Barr) to discuss the impacts of gravel extraction close to the River Clyde - at Overburns (near Biggar) and the third was a boat trip with David Ainsley (Lorn and Mid-Argyll MC) to discuss the impacts of a proposed fish farm at Ardmaddy close to the Firth of Lorn Special Area of Conservation (SAC) near Oban.

Please do get in touch if you would like me to accompany you on a site visit to discuss a planning proposal. If you would like to discuss a planning matter that will affect wildlife in your area please contact me.

If you are concerned about a marine planning matter please discuss it with Alex Kinninmonth, our new Marine Policy Officer who started working for the Trust in November 2011. You can contact Alex by email: [akinninmonth@swt.org.uk](mailto:akinninmonth@swt.org.uk) or telephone: 0131 312 4749

Regards,

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# SWT Planning News

## Major Developments

### Responses from HQ

#### *Hunterston multi-fuel power station, Ayrshire*

The Scottish Wildlife Trust's most recent objection to the Hunterston multi-fuel power station can be viewed on our website at:

[http://www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/docs/002\\_057\\_publications\\_policies\\_Response\\_to\\_Ayrshire\\_Power\\_addendum\\_to\\_Hunterston\\_development\\_September\\_2011\\_1316679371.pdf](http://www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/docs/002_057_publications_policies_Response_to_Ayrshire_Power_addendum_to_Hunterston_development_September_2011_1316679371.pdf)



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On 21 September 2011, SWT considered the additional environmental information (which was lacking in the original planning application) submitted by Ayrshire Power Limited. We upheld our objection to the multi-fuel power station because:

- the proposed development would result in significant and permanent damage to the Portencross Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest. As the small amount habitat created will not compensate for that lost, the development will have a significant and damaging effect on nationally important eelgrass beds and wildfowl and waders that are reliant on this stretch of the Ayrshire coastline throughout the year.
- the operation of the power station will increase Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and as such, will be harmful to the wildlife and people of Scotland.
- there may be indirect harmful effects, caused by acid deposition, on nearby European protected sites such as Renfrewshire Heights SPA and Dykeneuk Moss SAC.
- granting consent would be contrary to the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

### *Objections*

To date, there have been over 21,000 objections to the planning application.

North Ayrshire Council has also objected to the planning application - this will trigger a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). If the developers press ahead, it is likely that the PLI will occur late in 2012.

**Remember - you can still submit your objection to the development - visit:**

<http://www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/how-you-can-help/appeals-and-campaigns/say-no-to-hunterston-power-station>

### *Stornoway Windfarm (WF)*

The proposed 38 turbine WF borders the Lewis Peatlands SPA and is close to the Lewis Peatlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). SWT objected (in August 2011) because:

- of the significant collision risk to the Annex 1 species present within the SPA and within the boundary of the WF. The data is incomplete and it cannot be stated with certainty that there will be no significant impact on notable birds present such as red-throated diver, golden eagle and black-throated diver.
- the residual impact to Annex 1 habitat (i.e. blanket bog) is assessed as "significant" and has not been adequately compensated for in the mitigation proposed.



© Bob Coyle

### *Claggain Bay fish farm Isle of Islay*



© Lynne Newton

In July 2011, SWT wrote to Marine Scotland expressing our concerns regarding the proposed location of Claggain Bay salmon farm off the south east coast of Islay. The problem was the proximity of the fish farm to the South East Islay Skerries Marine SAC – which is designated for its common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) colony. The fish farm would inevitably attract seals and this would lead to some seals having to be shot under license if they were persistently attracted to the site.

Fortunately, Marine Scotland has agreed with us regarding the sensitivity of the location and the application has now been withdrawn.

## Responses from planning volunteers

### Gravel extraction at Overburns Farm, Lamington

This planning application continues to rumble on in a new guise. After having a site visit with planning volunteers Pete Murray, Dave Shenton and Bob Barr and following a discussion about the main impacts of the proposed development the planning volunteers submitted an objection to the planning application at the end of August 2011.



© David Shenton

The main reasons for the objection were:

- reduction in the ecological value of the River Clyde downstream of the proposed site due to the movement of the river channel into the excavation area.
- rapid reduction of the proposed stand-off width due to collapse into the quarry void.
- rapid breaching of the proposed stand-off area due to water loss from the river into the quarry void.
- reduction in flow in the River Clyde due to water loss from the river into the quarry void.
- rapid breaching of the proposed stand-off area due to flood water movement into the quarry void.
- pollution of the River Clyde by re-suspension of fine sediment during flood events.
- pollution of the Easterton Burn by sediment from the access road, conveyor system and the plant crossing.
- pollution of the Easterton Burn and local groundwater by fuel, oil and hydraulic fluid.

### Proposed fish farm at Ardmaddy - near Oban



© Niki Clear

David Ainsley, with guidance from HQ (including a site visit to discuss the potential impacts of the development) has submitted an objection on behalf of Lorn and Mid-Argyll MC to the Ardmaddy fish farm. The main reasons for the object were the impacts of the development on:

- the Firth of Lorn SAC
- cetaceans such as harbor porpoise and bottlenose dolphin
- common seal
- Atlantic salmon and sea trout
- otter

We also sent out letters to our members in Lorn and Mid- Argyll urging them to object to the fish farm application. So far over 700 local people have objected to the development including many SWT members.

## ***Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan (LDP) - Main Issues Report.***

Graham Smith galvanised his MC to examine the proposed LDP in terms of checking the proposed development sites against impacts on wildlife and/or local nature conservation sites. HQ also assisted in the process by providing general comments on the LDP and supplementary planning guidance on WFs. Appendix 1 shows Graham's methodology for reviewing the sites which was used by the volunteers. A lot of local wildlife knowledge was put to good use and Graham submitted some excellent comments regarding the impacts of the proposed plan on wildlife on behalf of Galloway MC.

## **Thank you**

Thanks to everyone who has helped the Trust protect Scotland's wildlife this year. I have only given a snap shot of work that is going on in the MCs, I know there is much more happening across Scotland and I could not capture all of this in the current newsletter. If you want me to include a planning issue that you would like to share with others get in touch.

## **Talks and training**

### ***Marine Policy Officer***

Now that we have our new Marine Policy Officer, Alex Kinninmonth, in post - please contact him if you would like him to talk to your MC about marine issues such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the Marine Act, marine planning or marine wildlife. Please contact Alex (akinninmonth@swt.org.uk) directly or let me know.

### ***Environmental Impact Assessment training***

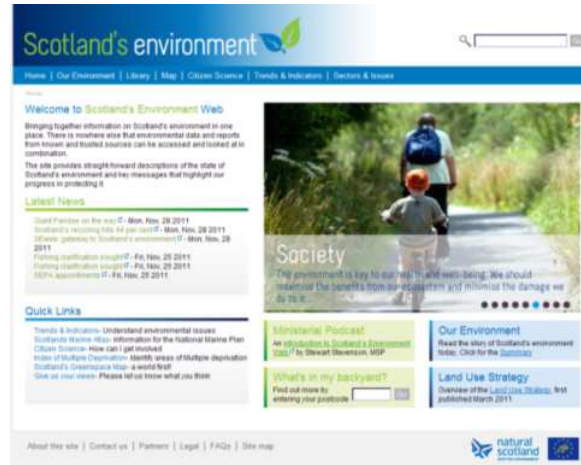
If anyone is interested in having individual/group EIA training please get in touch. I have used a 'live' WF application to demonstrate how to go through an EIA quickly to assess the impacts of WFs on wildlife and habitats. Those that have been through the process found it very useful and are less daunted by the length of EIAs- which can be very off putting!

## **SEweb: gateway to Scotland's environment**

Scotland's Environment Web – named SEweb – is an environmental information hub.

See: <http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/>

This should be a handy one stop shop for getting wildlife information and should prove useful when assessing development sites.



## **Planning Workshop 2012**

The next planning workshop will be held in Edinburgh on **Friday 24 February** (location in Edinburgh still to be finalised). If you have any issues you would like us to discuss on the day please let me know.

So far, I will be having talks on impacts of fish farms, biodiversity offsetting, strategic development plans, ancient woodlands and possibly public local inquiries. I would also like an informal round up of planning casework from our planning volunteers.

## APPENDIX 1

### SWT Galloway Response to D & G Local Development Plan April/May 2011

#### SWT Process to Review Site Assessments:

##### For Each Settlement...

##### Review Candidate Sites:

- Identify proposed sites on an up-to-date Ordnance Survey Map (preferably 1:25,000)
- Use Google Maps or Google Earth to get different angle
- Review sites on map to assess which sites cause concern and require further investigation
- Visit sites which cause concern and assess whether they should be challenged by SWT

##### SWT should challenge a proposed development site if:

- The site is on a priority habitat
- The site is adjacent to or threatens a priority habitat
- The site threatens a priority habitat
- The site impacts a priority species
- The site impacts a "green corridor" and restricts movement of wildlife across the landscape
- The site restricts access by the local community to an area of wildlife interest

##### What to do when you have identified a site that should be challenged by SWT

- Note number of site
- Document general description of the site
- Document concerns/objections to the development (based on guidelines above)
- Take a photo of the site
- Send to local coordinator (Graham Smith at [grahamsmith3@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:grahamsmith3@tiscali.co.uk) )

##### List of Local Priority Habitats listed in LBAP (April 2009)

Subtidal Rock	Purple Moor-Grass and Rush Pastures
Subtidal Sands and Gravels	Blanket Bogs
Intertidal Sand and Mud Flats	Calcareous Grasslands
Seagrass Beds	Neutral Grasslands
Intertidal Rocky Shores	Acid Grasslands
Honeycomb Worm Reefs	Inland Rock Outcrops
Coastal Shingle Beaches	Montane Moss-heaths
Coastal Sand Dunes	Upland Heaths
Coastal Saltmarshes (Merse)	Native Wet Woods
Coastal Cliffs and Slopes	Native Ash Woods
River Headwaters	Native Oak Woods
Lowland Rivers and Backwaters	Native Birch Woods
Exposed River Shingle	Forest Ponds
Eutrophic Lochs	Wood Pastures and Parklands
Mesotrophic Lochs	Arable Fields
Oligotrophic Lochs	Traditional Field Boundaries
Reedbeds	Farm Ponds
Fens	Traditional Orchards
Marshes	Industrial and Post-industrial Sites
Upland Springs and Flushes	Urban Watercourses and Wetlands
Raised Bogs	

**List of Settlement Site Assessments listed in MIR & SEA (March 2011)**

Annan	Kirkcudbright
Auchencairn	Langholm
Braehead / Kirkinner	Leswalt
Canonbie	Lochmaben
Carsphairn	Lockerbie
Castle Douglas	Kirkcolm
Closeburn	Kirkconnel/Kelloholm
Creetown	Moffat
Crossmichael	Moniaive
Dalbeattie	New Abbey
Dalry	New Galloway
Drummore	Newton Stewart
Dumfries	Palnackie
Dunscore	Penpont
Eaglesfield	Portpatrick
Eastriggs	Port William
Ecclefechan	Sandhead
Garlieston	Sanguhar
Gatehouse of Fleet	Springholm
Glencaple	Stranraer
Glenluce	Thornhill
Gretna	Twynholm
Holywood	Whithorn
Johnstonebridge	Wigtown
Kirkcowan	Strategic Business and Industry Sites