



**Cumbria Wildfire Group – Steering Group Meeting
15th January 2009, Skirsgill Depot Cumbria 1430-1630**

Attendees:

- Charles Ecroyd (Chair, CLA)
- Ethan Bigelow (RDI)
- Alasdair Brock (Natural England)
- Andrew Clark (Landmarc)
- Vicky Pearson (United Utilities)
- Chris Tomlin (Lake District National Park)
- Simon Boyd (Cumbria County Council)
- Ben Quarcoo (Forestry Commission)
- Duncan Taylor (CFRS)
- Stewart Palmer (National Trust)

Apologies:

- Jake Morley (Garrigil Estate/Moorland Association)
- John Bruce (Forestry Commission)
- Mark Eccles (Lake District National Park)
- Roy Henderson (Keswick Mountain Rescue)
- Robert Benson (Lowther Estate / Moorland Association)

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.*

Funding Update

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB gave the funding update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EB stated that funding applications had been submitted to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Friends of the Lake District Environmental Grant Scheme ▪ Solway Coast AONB Sustainable Development Fund ▪ British Nuclear Fuels ▪ EB also stated that the RDPE Leader applications had been sent out on 14 January 2009. EB to complete RDPE Leader funding applications as soon as possible. 	<p>EB to update steering group on result of funding applications</p> <p>EB to submit a funding application to RDPE Leader</p>

CWG Promotional Flyer

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Group approved the content of the promotional flyer. • CE to push their circulation in through the open access forums. • CE raised the issue of where the promotional flyers should be dispersed and how many flyers to be printed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EB stated that the quote for 500 copies was £126 at Qicprint, based in Carlisle ▪ AB proposed that a specific audience concerned with fire should be targeted 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SP said that there were over 100 tenant farmers on National Trust land ▪ SB suggested that 1000 flyers be printed; proposed that flyers should be sent to Fiona Southern of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners ▪ SP Thought that steering group members should have the power to disseminate the flyers to those tenants who they thought would benefit / use the promotional flyer. ▪ CE Seconded that the flyers should be sent to an individual of a high level within each organisation and let them select the individual people who will receive a flyer. ▪ SP proposed that a second “Public Awareness Publication” be issued in the future to educate a wider audience about the risk of wildfire and the existence of the CWG. ▪ DT raised the issue of how to target the “larger” estates or land managers who are responsible for a high number of wildfires ▪ CE suggested that the best way to contact the larger estates was by personal contact; indicated CLA would be best to make this contact; offered to place a column in the March CLA Magazine ▪ CE Confirmed, with steering group’s backing, that 1000 copies of the CWG Promotional Flyer are printed as soon as possible. Flyers to be distributed to steering group members. EB to enquire as to how many flyers individual group members would like to receive after printing. 	<p>CE to look into the possibility of getting a column on the CWG in the CLA March magazine</p> <p>EB to have 1000 copies of the CWG Promotional Flyer printed; to distribute to CWG steering group members after printing</p>
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CWG High Wildfire Risk Sign

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT stated that the LDNP Rangers expressed concerns about the use of wildfire risk signage, saying that the signs might <i>encourage</i> a small minority of the population to conduct arson • CT (later) confirmed this point • SP stated that this was a weak argument; that it was better to have a majority of the population aware of the risk of wildfire and be potential eyes on the ground • Steering Group seconded SP’s statement • CE suggested that most Cumbrian organisations would want to use a wildfire risk sign, but that it should not be mandatory for all CWG organisations to use the sign according to the proposed guidance notes • VP proposed that a set of “guidance notes” outlining procedures for using the signs be created and issued along with the sign • SP Seconded this motion • CE proposed that the procedures mirror those already used by the Open Access Forums and the CCC. This system is linked to the FSI. If the FSI hits category 4 or above, the signs should be posted. If the FSI is at 3 or below, the signs should not be posted, or should be brought down • SB raised the problem of signs being posted inconsistently by different land managers • CE reiterated the need to distribute clear guidelines with the wildfire signage • VP proposed that multiple signs be created, each sign would be proportionate to the level of risk of wildfire (e.g. lower risk sign for FSI level 3, higher risk sign for FSI level 4) • SP discouraged the use of multiple signs because it might cause confusion and it would be time intensive to change multiple signs 	<p>EB – To research use of “High Wildfire Risk Signage” in the Peak District National Park</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VP proposed that the signs should be printed with clear instructions on the front with the sign's message. • CE discouraged putting instructions on the actual signs • CE Asked EB to create a "Protocol" for the use of High Wildfire Risk Signage • EB asked what "contact number" should be included on the High Wildfire Risk Sign, if any. • AB proposed that Natural England may be the best contact body, but he would have to check with Natural England. • DT proposed the use of the national FSI contact # • AC – Stated that it might <i>not</i> be appropriate to include a phone number because no organisation is specifically designed to respond to questions concerning wildfire • CE Confirmed the group's agreement to <i>not</i> include a contact number with the High Wildfire Risk Sign • CE Confirmed that the High Wildfire Risk Sign will be circulated in pdf format to the steering group members. Group members will have the power to print and distribute the signs as they see fit. • SP raised the issue that the high wildfire risk sign's 'colour' might not be in accordance with disability legislation. • CE Confirmed group's agreement that SP should check on this and get back to EB • SB raised the issue of the CCC using their own sign for the closure of open access land at times of <i>extreme</i> fire risk (FSI 5) Asked group for confirmation that this was OK. • CE spoke on behalf of the group, giving approval for the CCC to use their own closure sign to close land at times of <i>extreme</i> fire risk (FSI 5) 	<p>EB / CE – Draft a "protocol" to be circulated with the CWG High Wildfire Risk Sign</p> <p>EB – to circulate protocol and wildfire risk sign to steering group members upon completion</p> <p>EB – To remove contact number from High Wildfire Risk Sign</p> <p>SP – To check if the colour of the Wildfire Risk Sign is in line with disabilities legislation</p>
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High Wildfire Risk Press Release

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB asked which media outlets could be used to distribute the high wildfire risk press release • CE proposed that the LDNP and the CCC would be the best group members to send the press releases to forward on to media contacts • SB stated that any content would have to be checked by the CCC • AB proposed that the content of the press release reflect the FSI level and the "High" risk of wildfire • CE confirmed that EB is to send the high wildfire risk press releases to the LDNP and the CCC at time of high fire risk. High fire risk press releases will be sent out when the FSI reaches 4 or 5 	<p>EB – Draft Press Release at steering group's direction in the Spring of 09</p>

Future Public Awareness Campaign

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE – looking to the future, the group needed to discuss what future public awareness activities would be beneficial • CE – proposed the creation of a <i>second</i> wildfire risk sign, which was directed at land "users" or the general public. Content would focus on raising the public's awareness of the potential for wildfire to occur. It would not be linked to times of high wildfire risk. Rather, it would be appropriate for posting at any time of year 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB – thought that old CCC literature would be available for use • CT – Suggested that the LDNP would also have old literature available to provide guidance in writing this sign (Pre-Crow) • SB – proposed that this sign should only be A4 size • VP – proposed using the countryside access code together with wildfire risk literature • AC – proposed that these posters should be put up just before and during the burn seasons • CE – thought that message should be “Act responsibly in the countryside with regards to wildfire” • SB – proposed that the sign should retain the same ‘top and bottom’ of the CWG “High Wildfire Risk Sign”. • DT – raised the issue of “targeting land managers who have historically been responsible for a large portion of wildfires • AB – proposed the use of “pocket card guidelines” like those used in Northumberland and the Peak District • BQ – suggested targeting specific areas of the land management community where there was an ‘identified’ history of wildfire events • CE – suggested using Jake Morley and Robert Benson to decipher if there was a specific area of the land management community who would benefit from receiving information on the risk of wildfires 	
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Live Wildfire Exercise

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB – Updated the group on the Live Wildfire Exercise • Details of the event are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host: Lake District National Park ▪ Site: Calbeck Fell ▪ Date: Last two weeks of March (Specific Date to be determined near to the date, weather dependent) ▪ Objectives: Fire suppression training; partnership building ▪ Day’s Events: Morning Session at Mungrisdale village hall; late morning and afternoon burning sessions on Calbeck Fell. ▪ Lead: LDNP and CFRS • DT – proposed that steering group organisation personnel should be contacted by land managers on burning days to create more opportunities for personnel to gain experience in wildfire and managed burning. (e.g. The LDNP rangers will contact the CFRS when they are going to burn throughout the winter and spring, invite them to participate and have the opportunity to gain experience and encourage partnership work • EB – Seconded this motion, has been successful in Northumberland. 	<p>EB – To organise the Live Wildfire Exercise Event for the last two weeks of March</p> <p>EB – To build communication to aid cooperative burning days between interested steering group organisations</p>
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Wildfire Training

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB stated that the first Basic Wildfire Fighting course had been successful. The course was put on for a total of 16 people, from the Forestry Commission, United Utilities, Natural England and the Lake District National Park • DT stated that the CFRS sponsored course had also been successful with representatives from the steering group attending and also trainers from the CFRS • EB asked steering group for appropriate date of next Basic 	<p>EB – To circulate date of next Basic Wildfire Fighting course to the steering group</p>
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<p>Wildfire Fighting Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP requested that the next course be run after March 2009. • SP also mentioned that the National Trust was considering sponsoring members of the Keswick Mountain Rescue Team to attend the course • AC – proposed that another future activity could be the development of managed burning courses 	
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CWG Wider Wildfire Group Forum

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB – Asked steering group if it wanted to hold a “Wider Cumbria Wildfire Group Meeting / Forum” in the near future • SP – proposed that the CWG run a forum where good burning practice was encouraged and an open discussion on wildfire issues was encouraged • AB – cautioned that there was not, as yet, enough data available to draw conclusions about what specific areas / audiences were responsible for the large proportion of wildfires. Proposed that a Cumbria Wildfire Forum / Meeting would be a good idea for the future • CE – seconded this motion • SB – proposed that the forum be held in Winter / Spring 2010 to ease planning and organising process; Autumn Steering Group Meeting could discuss the objectives of this event after the wildfire season • CE – spoke on behalf of the group, saying that a CWG Wildfire Forum or Wider Cumbria Wildfire Group Forum would be an activity for potentially Winter / Spring 2010 • SP – Called for a measured approach to wildfire in Cumbria, one that was proportionate to the degree of risk in wildfire • Steering Group – In general agreement with SP's proposal 	<p>Steering Group – To set objectives for CWG “Wider Cumbria Wildfire Group Forum” at Autumn 2009 steering group meeting</p>

CWG Newsletter

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB asked for direction on when CWG Newsletter should be created and what content it should include. • CE proposed that the Newsletter be published biannually, once before winter / spring burn season, once post season in the Autumn • Potential Newsletter content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Goals of the Cumbria Wildfire Group ▪ Group Activities (Fire plans, Wildfire Training) ▪ Benefits of getting involved ▪ The CWG webpage ▪ Steering Group recommended using the CWG Promotional Flyer's content as a guide 	<p>EB to create CWG Newsletter to be delivered by Easter, 2009</p>

New CWG Fire Plan

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB – New CWG fire plan template and guidance notes have been created (December 2008) • EB – Changes to the old CWG fire plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New cover page ○ Within the guidance notes, new instructions on how to obtain assistance with the completion of your fire plan, and new instructions on what to do with a completed fire plan 	<p>EB to circulate the new CWG Fire Plan and Guidance notes to the steering group</p>

Members' News

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SP – Work on fire plans continues; National Trust looking to fund the training of Mountain Rescue Team • VP – Requested formal letter from CFRS on the “importance and benefit” of fire plans, stating that the CFRS intends to use the fire plans • CT – Fire plans to be completed by March / April • AB – Fire plans to be completed by March / April; looking to provide training for Natural England staff • AC – Raised importance of map reading skills in wildfire suppression, proposed the funding of training in this area • DT – CFRS to have Land Rovers with “Fire Express” kit in the following locations by the end of Spring 09: Ambleside, Appleby, Sepa, Sideth (Spelling??). CFRS expects to have 4 more land rovers with fire express kit in place by summer 09. Eight CFRS stations will be outfitted with wildfire PPE kit • CE – Spoke for Robert Benson, saying that the Fire Plans will be completed soon • AB – proposed future action of creating a “router” for Cumbria wildfire equipment and personnel trained in wildfire suppression 	<p>DT – To draft a letter to UU stating the importance of the fire plans and the CFRS’s intention to use the plans for wildfire response</p>

Date of Next Steering Group Meeting

Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of April 2009 	<p>EB to use Doodle for potential meeting date at end of April</p>