

DPLUS116 Falkland Wetlands PMG meeting
Skype
12 January 2021

Attendees: Denise Blake (DB) (FIG), Steffi Carter (SC) (SAERI), Chris Evans (CE) (CEH), Damien Hughes (DH) (SAERI), Roger Flower (RF) (Independent & UCL), Tara Pelembe (TP) (SAERI), David Stroud (DS) (Independent), Julian Thompson (JT) (UCL)

Apologies: Al Baylis (AB) (SAERI)

Time: 10.00am – 11.30am (Falklands) / 13.00 – 14.30 (UK)

Minute taker: Steffi Carter

1. Introduction – Damien Hughes

Damien is a work experience student, who is taking a gap year between years 2 and 3 of his BSc degree for which he is based in the Falklands. He joined the project in November 2020 and will mostly likely stay involved until July 2021.

2. Project admin

SC provided several updates to the group:

- Equipment sourcing has been difficult with lots of delays and it is not guaranteed that all necessary equipment will arrive on time for the fieldwork to begin. SC is currently including DHL shipping and cargo on the Airbridge as shipping methods, which are currently the fastest, but the latter is not guaranteed
- Budget: the change request was submitted just before Christmas and is pending. SC anticipates that the project year 1 budget will be fully spent and does not foresee any budget issues
- Contracts: SC apologises in the delay with research contracts. She will send drafts out as soon as possible
- Research license: once approval from the entire PMG has been received SC will submit the document to Falkland Island Government (FIG)
- Monitoring and evaluation: SC will send the M&E plan to the PMG group for approval over the next few days
- Log frame: SC went through the log frame indicators that need to be completed in the current project year; she does not foresee any issues with any of the indicators and anticipates that project year 1 will be concluded according to the log frame
- Google Drive: SC will set up a Wetlands Project google drive for sharing project documents and data. She will send out a link to share the folder

3. Fieldwork

3.1 Loggers

SC recaptured that there will be six loggers for water level, water temperature and light plus one additional logger for pH and one for conductivity. The PMG discussed the deployment of loggers and concluded that one representative example of each of the following categories should be monitored for water level, temperature and light:

- Upland peaty streams (probably Moody Brook)
- Lowland peaty streams
- Upland (mountain) non-peaty streams
- Peat ponds
- Seepage lakes
- Larger lakes

Selection of sites for each of the categories needs to consider accessibility, support from landowners and availability of barometric measurements. SC will select three or four examples for each of the categories, will plot them on a map and send the suggestions to the PMG.

3.1 Fieldwork protocol

SC will send an updated fieldwork protocol to the PMG for comments. Filter paper was discussed for filtering water samples either in the field or in the evening of the collection date. SC will go ahead with 0.45 µm cellulose nitrate membrane filters; this pore size should generally be ok at most sites, however, at some sites this may prove difficult and more filter papers will need to be used.

3.2 Fieldwork locations

The PMG discussed the site selection. The approach should be to include a mixture of sites that have previously been visited and new sites. The discussion also led to the question of the overall aim and purpose of the fieldwork. SC will prepare a brief to address this. SC will also prepare a list with suggested sites and will send this to the PMG for review.

4. Other matters

4.1 eDNA component

SAERI were successful in securing a small grant for the eDNA component of the project. The aim and purpose of the eDNA component will also need to be determined to decide on the way forward.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement

SC sent an email to all landowners in December to introduce the project to them and ask for their support with fieldwork and deployment of loggers. This will be followed up by a paper submitted to the Environment Committee taking place in March 2021 as well as a public talk before the end of March 2021.

4.3 Water level monitoring

RF noted that an alternate method at reduced cost for monitoring water level would be the installation of stage boards combined with infrared cameras. He will send a paper to SC that highlights this method.

Actions

SC:

- Send out updated fieldwork protocol to PMG
- Send out map and site list for suggested fieldwork locations and logger locations to PMG
- Send out fieldwork brief to PMG

RF:

- Send out paper with alternative method for monitoring water level