

COMMUNITY-OWNED RURAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

A GUIDE FOR PARTNERS



Community-owned Rural Catchment Management:
A guide for partners.

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A key feature of NZ Landcare Trust is the ability to unify diverse interests such as production, the environment and recreation. This is achieved by including representatives from these groups on the Board of Trustees: Ecologic Foundation, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Federated Mountain Clubs, Federation of Maori Authorities, Fish & Game New Zealand, Royal Forest & Bird Society and Rural Women New Zealand.

Table of Contents

1. Rural Catchment Management In New Zealand	3
2. Local Ownership	7
A. The Role And Value Of Community Ownership	8
B. Achieving Community Ownership	17
3. Being Strategic	33
A. Six Questions For Strategic Thinking	35
4. Collaborative Planning And Management	45
5. Well Designed Incentives	55
6. Regulation Backed By Effective Compliance	61
7. Further Information	71

1. RURAL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

Sparkling shaded streams and rivers, clear lakes, wetlands rich with life, sustaining estuaries and a healthy coastal sea – all set in and around a landscape of productive, profitable farms. It's a vision of farming in New Zealand that is desired by us all. It is a vision that where it is made a reality sustains our farming economy as well as enhances our recreation, our reputation, our appreciation of our farming landscapes, and the mauri of the land.

That vision is made a reality – or not – across rural New Zealand by the collective actions and management practices of all the landowners of each freshwater catchment.

Those landowners and managers are in turn supported, or not, by a diverse range of partners including central, regional and local government, iwi, scientists and research groups, sector groups and industry, NGOs and trusts, community groups and schools. The engagement of so many individuals, groups and agencies in this single issue is an indication of the value and importance to New Zealand of effective rural catchment management.

Catchment management has been practiced in New Zealand since 1868 as communities and implementing agencies have sought to resolve issues of flooding, erosion, sedimentation, water quality and water allocation issues.¹ In recent decades, water problems have become more acute and their resolution more urgent, as we become aware that our water resource limits are being approached. After 20 years of Resource Management Act policy, regional councils have produced State of Environment reports that commonly describe deteriorating water quality of our lakes, rivers and harbours through intensive land use. In drier catchments, demand for water commonly outstrips its supply. In many places, water issues spark division and conflict in communities.

As the easier catchment problems are starting to be resolved, we are beginning to understand the profound complexities of the physical, chemical and biological processes that drive nutrient cycling in our waterways. Solutions to these problems are often elusive, expensive and require high levels of engagement, commitment, compliance and cooperation from all players.



Widespread regulation is now inevitable, spurred by the National Policy Statement on Freshwater which specifies the requirement for regionally set minimum standards for water flow and quality that must be implemented by 2014.

There are many successes in the freshwater story. Examples of far-reaching national or regional collaborations between farmers, industry, government and conservation interests that find common ground and achieve break-through consensus; of regional councils working effectively with local farmers through packages of incentives and regulation; of research institutes sharing science with community landcare groups and so enhancing outcomes; of local farmers meeting in kitchens to discuss land management for the river they share, and of landowners, farm by farm, applying the best of their knowledge and experience to improve the environmental quality of their land and water. These successes are supported by the strong investment New Zealand has made in researching the solutions to our water quality issues.

Some common themes run strongly through these successes and are reflected in the structure of this guide:

- local ownership of the problems and the solutions
- strategic design and implementation
- collaborative processes in partnership forums
- well designed incentives
- regulation backed by effective compliance.

This Guide examines these themes of success from the view point of partners – iwi, government, NGOs and researchers – who want to engage effectively with rural communities. The guide presents a practical body of knowledge from real projects, on-the-ground programmes and catchment initiatives across New Zealand in the expectation that sharing experience and understanding will enhance outcomes for our freshwater resources.

NZ Landcare Trust has worked alongside rural communities since its establishment in 1996. In that time the Trust has gained considerable experience on a range of catchment projects, building meaningful productive relationships with farmers, landowners, community groups, science providers, regulatory authorities, environmental groups and recreation bodies. This open inclusive approach is an important part of the Landcare philosophy and a key ingredient in the success of many catchment management projects.

The inclusive nature of the Trust is reflected at a senior level, with a board of trustees made up of seven representatives covering three key areas of interest; production, environment and recreation. Such a broad range of input at a strategic level helps ensure NZ Landcare Trust retains clarity over the potentially conflicting nature of stakeholder interests and is therefore well placed to focus on genuine long term solutions.

This guide is not simply a stand alone publication - it provides a useful reference point within a broader 'community-owned catchment management' awareness building programme to be delivered by NZ Landcare Trust with funding from the Ministry for the Environment. The education programme will include a series of master-classes aimed at resource management professionals, each of which will be delivered in a focused one day event. Additional support material is also planned to help reinforce teaching and learning and provide tools that can translate directly into the working environment.

¹ Ministry for the Environment, *Integrated Catchment Management – a review of literature and practice*. Clare Feeney, Will Allen, Annette Lees and Maree Drury. June 2010.

2. LOCAL OWNERSHIP

A. THE ROLE AND VALUE OF COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

What is community ownership?

When a local community – its landowners, its farmers and its community groups – have developed a vision for a catchment, have identified its problems and designed solutions, have jointly participated in planning a programme of action, have contributed resources, own the risks and successes and are accountable for the implementation of the programme, they own it. The problems of that catchment belong to them. The solutions are dependent on their actions. Other parties might come in to help, might contribute resources and ideas, provide strategic support or practical muscle–power, but a community-owned programme remains the responsibility of the community.

People must be engaged if we want environmental change.

Groups of people (communities) must own the issue if we want effective, sustained change.

Why aim for it?

Where environmental problems are sourced from farms, we rely on farmers to resolve them. Others may help, but it is the farmers and landowners who ultimately manage many of the land and water issues of the catchment. It's their fences, their riparian margins, their stock, their pastures and their management that this involves. Clearly, they need to be actively engaged.

Rural communities comprise more than farmers – residents of the local township, lifestyle block owners, council staff, anglers, hunters, kayakers and trampers, conservationists, the local school, and other land and water users such as marine farmers or tourism operators.

Ethically, all of these people should be engaged in design and implementation of solutions to issues that are central to their lives. And for catchments, engagement will be much more effective, more committed, more locally relevant, if the local communities have defined their issues, designed solutions to these, and implemented them together.

We want local ownership because it works. There are a growing number of stories from around New Zealand where ownership by rural communities has accelerated catchment programmes to success. National analysis by several agencies proves the overall argument: local ownership fosters commitment, enthusiasm, open debate and solution–finding, demonstration and adoption of new practices, raised awareness, and social contact and support leading to local resilience.^{1,2}

¹ Ministry for the Environment, *Integrated Catchment Management – a review of literature and practice*. Clare Feeney, Will Allen, Annette Lees and Maree Drury. June 2010.

² Allen WJ, Kilvington M, Horn C. 2002. (Allen et al 2002a.) Using participatory and learning-based approaches for environmental management to help achieve constructive behaviour change. Landcare Research Contract Report LC0102/057, Lincoln, New Zealand. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment. Available at: www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/sustainablesoc/social/par_rep.asp.

'At what stage did the community become involved?'

If the answer is simply 'when they were required to implement the solution', then it is probably not community ownership.



CASE STUDY

WAITAO-KAIATE LANDCARE GROUP

Waitao Catchment, Welcome Bay/
Rangatua Bay, Tauranga

A neighbourhood project to restore the banks of the Waitao Stream has had the additional benefit of restoring community spirit. That's the inspiring story of the journey taken by the Waitao-Kaiate Landcare Group and their work with local iwi, to clean up the Waitao Stream and maintain the natural beauty of the Kaiate Falls.

It was the threat of a landfill site at the top of their valley that first brought the Waitao Road residents together. United by their common goals of keeping heavy trucks off their quiet rural road and protecting their stream from contaminants, neighbours in the middle and upper catchment joined forces. They eventually succeeded in stopping the dump and as an added bonus, they got to know each other over countless cups of tea. So when approached by NZ Landcare Trust and local hapū with concerns about water quality in the Waitao Stream they already had a common bond to work from.

Local hapū, with their marae at the bottom of the catchment, had been working to enhance the lower reaches of the stream, with assistance from NZ Landcare Trust and NIWA. They shared their knowledge with their upstream neighbours through workshops in 2007 and 2008. Inspired by the work of downstream neighbours and buoyed by earlier success the Waitao residents formed the 'Waitao-Kaiate Landcare Group'. This reinvigorated community went on to take up the challenge of improving overall water quality within the stream.

The founders wanted to create a corridor of bush along a pristine stream – a place for birds to live and children to play. To achieve this goal the Environmental Group developed a 10 year strategic plan and a structure that included six sub-committees to deal with specific aspects of the work. Representatives of the sub-committees, and non-voting representatives from the Te Awa groups and agencies formed a steering group to oversee the plans' implementation. Creating a formal group helped with access to council funds and advice.

As the river has been improving, so have the neighbourhood relations. Resident Lyndel McGowan remembers the strong community spirit in the valley she grew up in. When she returned years later with her husband and daughter, everyone seemed to be leading their busy lives separately. The stream restoration project has changed all that. Now a core group of dedicated families have fortnightly working bees, chatting and enjoying each other's company while planting or potting up seedlings.

This case study provides an excellent illustration of the true value of community involvement, not just in terms of environmental outcomes but also the re-establishment of community values and a sense of pride in the local area.





Eight common questions

Questions about community ownership for catchment management.

Q1

Catchment management issues are now big, complicated issues of national importance – can we trust a rural community to do the right thing?

Community ownership means supporting community ideas and visions. It can be a challenge for resource management agencies to trust that community visions will align with established policy and rules and that their agreed action pathways will meet these requirements. However, when armed with first class technical support to build a solid knowledge baseline, communities are very adept in creating practical, responsible, community focused pathways for sustainable resource management. The next section describes best practice for achieving effective community-owned catchment management outcomes.

It should be noted however, that no community, landowner or farmer, is an island. Local, regional and central government have placed (and will increasingly place) regulatory and policy boundaries around what are acceptable environmental outcomes for catchments. A key enabler for community ownership is externally set environmental bottom lines (such as minimum flows, nutrient caps, and other regulation and policy). If best practice has been followed, rural communities will have contributed to establishing those nationally important outcomes through a collaborative process (see chapter three). Within this framework, catchment communities can take ownership over the design, implementation and monitoring of how these outcomes are achieved.

Q2

Farms in our local catchment are mostly corporate owned, with the local resident community made up of farm managers who don't have much say in these issues. So what is 'community ownership' in our situation?

First, it is important to ensure strong environmental bottom lines for the catchment are set (such as Regional Plan rules). These make expectations and standards crystal clear for farming businesses no matter where they are based or who owns them.

Next, persist with a community ownership approach for the issue. Rural communities consist of a wide range of interested sectors. The synergies made possible from working together cannot be envisaged until these sectors get together to discuss the issue.

It is also very true that although farm managers, sharemilkers or employees do not hold the cheque book, they are responsible for the day to day management of the property. They will be the ones who shift the effluent irrigators or decide instead to go inside for a cuppa. They will decide if the sheep can spend another week strip grazing the turnips even though a storm is forecast and the fence was put in only 1.5m from the stream. The awareness and 'buy in' of farmers is equally if not more important than the owners.

Q3

The community in our local catchment has expressed little interest in 'owning' these issues. How do we as partners help kick start the process without harming their ownership potential?

It is important the community be given the opportunity to weigh up the alternatives. Either they own the issue and drive changes themselves or the alternatives kick in. Without community ownership, regulators are going to depend on a higher level of regulation, less flexibility and tighter compliance enforcement, all spelling an extra level of bureaucracy and cost which most people want to avoid.

Try a three step community engagement process where over several public meetings:

- a. The issue is clearly explained (backed by credible science where possible). The regulators speak about the environmental bottom lines they need to see met and the expected ramifications if change is not implemented. Allow plenty of time for questions.
- b. The community is asked what it wants from its water resources (a visioning session).
- c. The community is asked for ideas on how to address the issue and reach their goals.

These processes allow the community to begin the ownership process. They are likely to discover that their wider community shares environmental goals, would like change, and that they are responsible for implementing this change. They are also likely to enjoy a sense of power over outcomes and the desire to effect change. Effective and far-reaching community-owned initiatives can start from such small beginnings.

Q4

Farmers in our communities don't want a talkfest – just runs on the board and practical support. They don't tend to go to meetings, they want one-on-one interaction with us...is this community ownership?

Wouldn't it just be easier and more helpful if the external partners completed all the research, found the solution, made simple rules and handed these over to the community? It certainly sounds easier than asking a diverse grouping called 'community' to design and implement a pathway for change. There are even local people explaining that this is what they want. "Just tell us what to do and we'll do it, we don't have time to muck around".

In this instance it is great the community are keen to be involved. There is a great deal of good will and an obvious established relationship. However it's worth considering the outcomes of simply offering the answer. Sometimes people say they want to be told what to do but this is not always the best way to sustain change long term.

In requesting somebody gives you the answer, you may be in fact be asking that somebody else take the responsibility for the issue... not a strong pathway to sustainability.

Setting the environmental bottom lines is one thing. Telling farmers how to achieve those bottom lines is something else. There are problems in being prescriptive about management systems and equipment. Here, it is the council driving the solutions on farm. This stifles innovation and flexibility as the farmer is given 'the' solution. Often the solution is only useful if the farmer has the will to actively manage the equipment to best practice standards. A farmer may have a low rate effluent irrigation system but if they do not shift the pods frequently then soil saturation can still occur. The farmer can then feel resentful and shift the blame.

Shifting responsibility, shifting blame:

'The Council made me put in this expensive system. It takes up way too much of my time moving pods and even then I'm getting run-off. I'm in trouble but it's the Council's fault. I never wanted this system.'

If however, the farmer is given the opportunity to:

- fully understand the issue (often by hearing other sectors of the community's views on it)
- know the repercussions of not acting
- design a solutions to fit their needs.

He or she is far more likely to want to manage the issue effectively and adaptively. They then own the issue and the solution.

There is certainly a place for one-on-one advice. Everybody benefits from expert advice. As a rural partner, making yourself available for farm visits is essential. Perhaps it is worth considering making this advice part of a wider programme (a community ownership model).

People from rural communities do tend to attend meetings if the meetings are discussing personally relevant information and if community members see the meetings as worthwhile and interesting. Locals are even more likely to attend if the meeting is hosted by the farming community itself.

Added benefits of a community ownership approach

- Ability for peers to get together and share ideas. ('Farmers are innovative experts.')
- Diversifying skills and achieving synergistic benefits through bringing in other stakeholders
- Supporting each other long term through a long journey
- Gaining widespread sustained change
- Building social capital and a sense of community
- Chance to attract external funding to bring in independent experts for project support or technical advice. Working alone makes funding harder.
- Opportunity to collectively establish a vision and 'buy in' for the environmental goal
- Creating a coordinated point of call for communications with the farming community



Q5

Farming is a high-finance business primarily about profit. Farmers have to be much more concerned about the dollar bottom line rather than the environmental bottom line. Is this a strong basis for community ownership of catchment programmes?

Absolutely. Community ownership is about consequences: 'What will happen if I do not invest in change?'

There are existing financial disincentives to not acting and these disincentives will become more prevalent and most costly. There is now strong case law with prosecutions for offences against regional regulations and the RMA, as well as market needs and industry imposed penalties. These needs and penalties will only increase as tolerance for environmental breaches declines.

Farming communities may say they are not focused on environmental bottom lines as a form of defence but you will seldom meet a farmer with no feeling for the environment when questioned independently. Communicating with people as though they do have a strong environmental ethic is important. It is equally important to respect the realities of economic bottom lines. Allowing communities flexibility to understand issues and be part of the solutions is good way to do this. A community ownership approach can allow farmers to be in the driving seat in designing effective, practical, and cost-sensitive solutions.

Q6

We've got strong community ownership over catchment management and good local engagement but there are a few rogue farmers who are constantly non-complying and not taking part in local initiatives. Community ownership doesn't work in these cases.

Don't allow these individuals to spoil the efforts of others.

Invite them to be involved. Phone and ask whether they would like a hand with the issue, firmly conveying that the ball is in their court. Many times they are happy for a little bit of help (especially from an independent expert). There may be a legitimate personal reason for the lack of action, and a high degree of embarrassment about the situation. A financial crisis may have meant an on-farm upgrade has not occurred as quickly as was planned. In this case an interim management plan to avoid adverse effects may be useful. A cash fine at this stage may just slow down the ability of the farmer to deal with the issue.

If there is blatant disregard for environmental standards, actions need to be dealt with through regulatory action. The wider, complying, community will support this stance.



Q7

We know we didn't start out well with the community. We're now well into our catchment management processes but would like to remedy this situation and achieve buy-in. What should our approach be?

Encouraging community ownership at any stage is useful. The bulk of community-owned projects start out with a degree of conflict between parties and disagreement about issues. This is often the spark needed to ignite the fire. You will undoubtedly have a lot of interest in the issue even if you got it wrong (possibly even because of it – use it to your advantage). You will gain a great deal more respect and goodwill from the community if you front up and openly acknowledge you got it wrong, seeking their help with a way forward, than soldiering on alone.

Q8

It sounds good, but it's all too slow and too hard. We're in a hurry for outcomes.

The simplest pathway is not always the most effective. Achieving ownership, despite its complexity, is a proven foundation stone to effective long term management.

These are complex environmental issues that cannot be addressed through a quick fix. Spending the time to 'get it right', gaining good community support for implementing change, is vastly more important than railroading a timeline.

There is however, a place for setting sound environmental bottom lines promptly rather than spending years and years getting them 'perfect'.

B. ACHIEVING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Local context shapes programme design. The history of the issues, the people involved, the nature of the environment, the regulatory setting and the resources that are available all affect the way in which a project evolves.

Although your catchment's programme design will be specific to your patch, successful processes share commonalities, as evident from reviews of integrated catchment projects and nationwide 'in the field' experience. This section passes on ideas and approaches that have been successful, incorporating the lessons of existing and historic rural catchment projects.

Gaining trust, gaining ownership

We recognise that community ownership requires the engagement and participation of all members of a community. But the process outlined in this section acknowledges the need to gain the trust of farmers first up. Farmers are most directly responsible for change in a rural catchment. Without this as a starting point, goodwill can be lost through shattered pride. If farmers have had time to understand the issue and work on some ideas for solutions goodwill can be maintained. Farmers are then in a strong position to gain ownership and then engage with others positively.

Next up, and as soon as possible, bring the whole community together. It is important to hear everyone's views and get a true sense of all dimensions of the issue. This process may be full of friction but it takes friction to start a fire. It may be just what is needed to draw high farmer numbers to further meetings.

The process described here offers some ideas that may be useful to your circumstances. There are nine key stages and seven key enablers. Your own catchment area will be unique so adapt and change the process to match.



NINE KEY STAGES

1. Spark of fire
2. Leadership development
3. Common knowledge platform
4. Collective vision
5. Assess interventions
6. Implementing change
7. Monitoring progress
8. Reviewing approach
9. Ongoing action





Nine Key Stages

STAGE	KEY STAGES	HOW	WHO
1 Spark of fire	1a. An issue arises	<p>Somebody or a group/organisation decides to address an issue (e.g. deteriorating water quality, water allocation, etc).</p> <p>Often through conflict (diverse views) on an issue, regulatory change or policy development. Could be simply because a positive idea is brewing as well.</p> <p>There may be a lot of passion around the issue, diverse views and a degree of tension.</p>	Anyone
	1b. Meeting to discuss issue and gain common understanding of various views and history of the issue.	<p>Organise a meeting and promote using a variety of communication mechanisms.</p> <p>Presentation on the issue from an authoritative group such as the local Council, followed by a facilitated open discussion. Record the story and people's views. A chance to get things out into the open.</p> <p>The history that has led to the issue will need to be aired to allow the future to unfold. The meeting may be friction-filled but remember it takes a spark to start a fire.</p>	<p>Farming community</p> <p>Non-farming community</p> <p>Statutory agencies (Regional Councils, DOC, Fish and Game)</p> <p>Iwi</p> <p>Other affected parties</p> <p>A good independent facilitator</p>
2 Developing community leadership	Community meetings to determine leadership	<p>Invite representatives from all stakeholder groups; farmers and business, local iwi, recreational users, environmental and community groups etc. Projects vary and representation will change accordingly, however it is important to recognise the benefits of achieving broad community ownership at an early stage.</p> <p>Seek nominations from the community for their representatives on a Management Group that will manage input into the process. Most rural communities have a champion (chairperson) and individuals with specific skills suited to this Management Group role.</p> <p>Farmer support is essential if a rural project is to deliver real change. In circumstances of conflict or where the focus is on the farming community, farmers may feel more comfortable and gain benefit from peer meetings. Once they are ready to meet with the wider community, a skilled facilitator should be engaged to ensure open and useful discussion ensues.</p>	<p>Facilitator and community representatives from a range of stakeholders.</p> <p>Where sensitivity around farming activity exists, initial meetings involving a facilitator and farming community only. This is a good way to build trust within the farming community.</p>

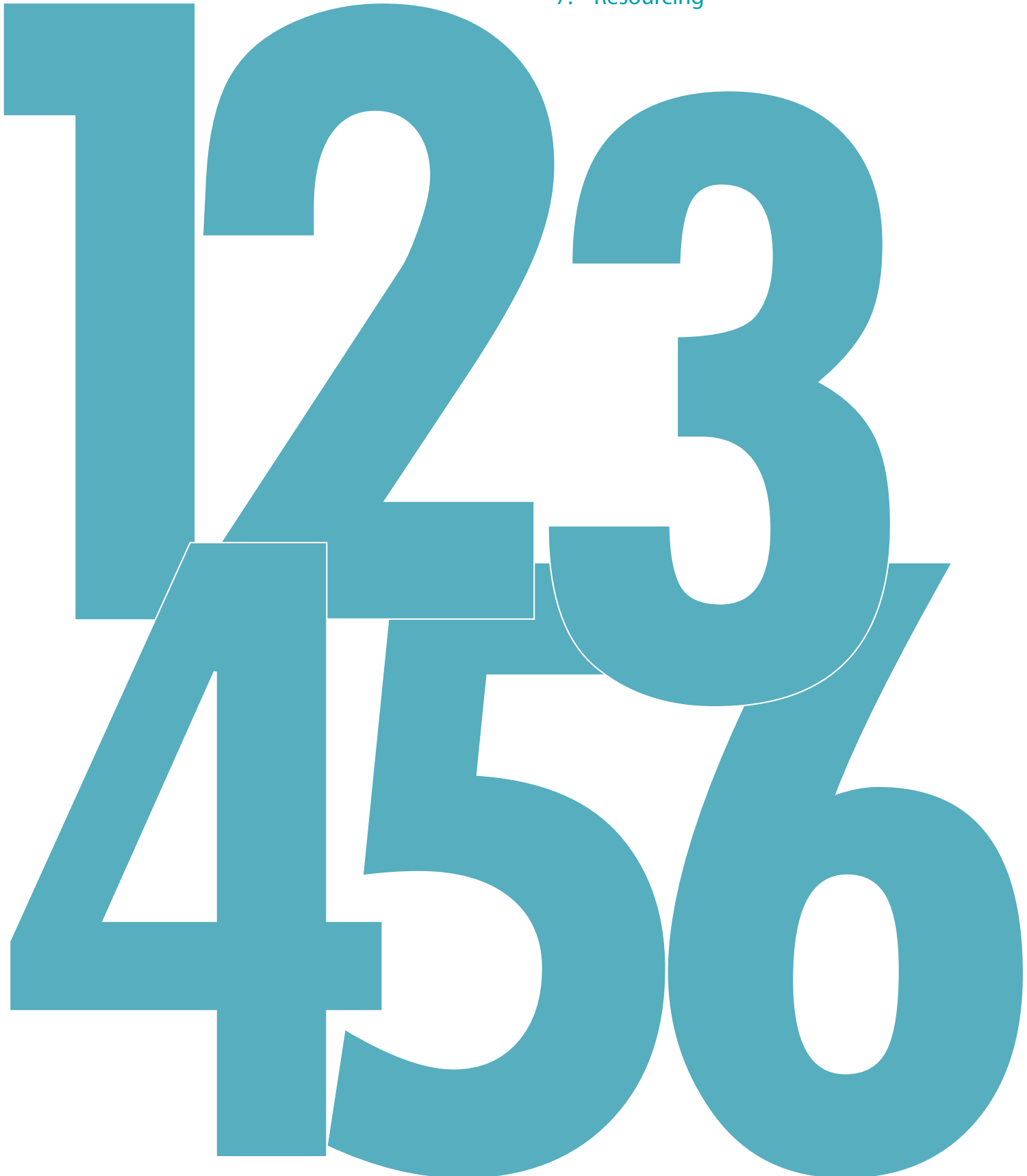
STAGE	KEY STAGES	HOW	WHO
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: #008080;">3</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); color: #008080; font-weight: bold;">Common knowledge platform</p>	<p>3a. Survey to develop a 'before shot' of community's values, attitudes, aspirations and current practice.</p>	<p>Consider an independent confidential survey/ interview process to gather both technical and social information from farmers (such as current attitudes, on-farm practices, ranking of issues etc). This can be used as a tool for the Management Group as they implement an effective pathway to change. It's also important to have a baseline with which to monitor progress (attitudes/knowledge and on-farm practices) and gauge whether the project is working.</p> <p>Note: Individuals are more likely to give their true core catchment values if asked directly on their own turf. In a group setting they are more likely to be defensive or say what they think is expected amongst peers. Generally individuals' core values are very similar and do include sustainable resource management. It is also a chance to go into more detail on current on-farm practice than is possible in an open meeting (due to confidentiality and time constraints). Gathering this baseline info is very useful in assisting with upcoming steps to establish a collective community vision.</p>	<p>Social scientist (to design and conduct survey). If this is not possible, support from somebody independent to conduct this survey and collate a report in a confidential and professional manner.</p> <p>Technical expert/s capable of accurately assessing the current state of the environment through reviewing existing data and where needed collecting further info or modeling the situation. Best if an independent expert but where there is good trust already, could be regulatory agency experts such as Council, Fish and Game, DOC etc.</p> <p>Farming community (perhaps wider stakeholders if there is good community cohesion already).</p> <p>Facilitator</p>
	<p>3b. Gather info on the current state of the environment</p>	<p>Best if this involves an independent technical study or review of material if high conflict/ disagreement exists.</p>	<p>Independent scientist or trusted local regulatory agency scientist.</p>
	<p>3c. Technical presentation on issue</p>	<p>Hosted (owned) by community and if possible involving an independent respected expert.</p> <p>In down to earth language.</p> <p>Lots of time for questioning (experts on-tap not on-top).</p> <p>Lots of time for community to discuss the issue together either afterwards or another meeting.</p>	<p>May be just the farming community at this stage (including Management Group) so that sensitive information can be digested and trust built.</p> <p>Need for field days etc around this to share the info widely within the rural community (not everybody likes meetings or is available to attend on any given day). Also newsletters, publications etc sent to rural homes recapping key messages.</p> <p>Once the farming community is comfortable with the information themselves, they often find they are excited and ready to share their findings wider. This is either because the issue is not as problematic as was initially thought or it is a complex issue and requires the input and support of diverse stakeholders. Be aware that it may be too early for a full multi-stakeholder approach if farmers need to feel they have some practical tools for change available before they feel on top of the situation.</p>

STAGE	KEY STAGES	HOW	WHO
4 Collective vision	4. Decide on collective vision.	Meeting drawing upon community baseline and scientific info.	Facilitator Management Group
5 Assess interventions	5a. Research how this vision can be achieved	Technical input on realities of achieving environmental goals and interventions required. Don't launch into on what you believe might work without seeking advanced technical advice on its true effectiveness. Don't just accept current popular approaches or 'Best Management Practices' until you know these are practical for your catchment.	Agricultural Scientist Aquatic Scientist Facilitator Management Group Then sharing with wider community
	5b. Develop an action plan	Develop a realistic pathway towards change. Keep in mind issues are not generally about gross negligence but changing everyday practice (tougher deeper issues) and this will take time.	Facilitator Management Group (either with wider rural community input or through the Management Group as representatives of the wider farming community).
6 Implementing change	6a. Support on farm	Farm plans Incentives (traditionally riparian management assistance) Field days Peer support Publications Regulation and supporting policy in place	Farmers Rural contractors Management Group Agricultural Scientists Facilitator Council community advisors Industry advisors (DairyNZ, Fonterra, Beef and Lamb, Farm Forestry, and others) Other practical assistance e.g. tree planting groups and programmes. Environment and recreation groups
	6b. Celebrating success	Look for opportunities to have fun, share ideas and celebrate success. This can be big or small progress.	A good chance to bring in wider community and showcase the positive vision and actions undertaken by the rural community.

STAGE	KEY STAGES	HOW	WHO
7 Monitoring progress	7. Survey	Repeat survey conducted at stage 3a. Look at changes in attitude, values, vision and on farm practice.	Social scientist (if possible) Farming community Facilitator Management Group
8 Reviewing approach	8a. Environmental review	Review the state of the environment.	Council scientist/s Independent scientist (if still required for sensitivity or complexity of technical issue reasons). Management Group Facilitator Dissemination to community (farming and by now could be wider)
	8b. Revisiting vision and action plan	Assess community survey and environmental health findings. Reassess the group's vision and action pathway in the light of the new information.	Facilitator Management Group is likely to include whole community at this stage as the project reaches a new level and requires a whole-of-catchment approach Dissemination to wider community
9 Ongoing action	9. Keeping up the momentum	Continue to implement the actions derived above whilst reacting to new information as a group. Celebrate success and recognise achievement. Share lessons. Continue to review and monitor progress periodically and revisit the action pathway.	Everyone. By now the project should have grown to include all the community, recognising their skills, passions and rights to inclusion.

SEVEN KEY ENABLERS

1. Community champion
2. Strong environmental bottom lines
3. Independent facilitation
4. Technical support
5. Adequate time
6. Communications plan
7. Resourcing



Seven Key Enablers

Key enablers of community ownership are the factors that are needed to ensure the stepped process outlined above can run smoothly. We can define seven.

1 Community champion/s

All successful community ownership models have at least one community champion: someone passionate about the success of the project, there for the long haul, continually motivating peers and encouraging behaviour change. It's a job description not for the faint hearted.

A community champion is somebody with:

- A thick hide
- Vision
- A willingness to speak up for change amongst neighbours and peers
- Community ethic (not motivated solely by personal gain)
- An ability to bridge the gap between diverse stakeholders
- A futures focus (passion for long term outcomes and multigenerational sustainability)
- An ability to assimilate policy and technical matters
- Mana (especially amongst the grassroots community)
- Lots of sustained energy
- Another income source (being a community champion is not a paying career).

Finding a community champion is a rare and precious occurrence. Nurturing this role is crucial to the ongoing viability of the project.

2 Strong environmental bottom lines

A key theme in successful community-owned projects is the presence of a strong environmental bottom line. This could be either regulatory such as a policy or rule in a Regional Plan, or a non-regulatory community or industry derived standard (such as 'surrounding coastal waters clean enough to harvest mussels commercially'). This bottom line provides impetus for the community to take action – there are known repercussions of breaching the standard. The community is motivated to find solutions to issues and invest in change. Monitoring and compliance checks are key factors in establishing effective environmental bottom lines.



3 Independent facilitation

Many community-owned projects have identified independent facilitation as a key success factor for their project. When tackling a multi-stakeholder environmental issue, community ownership itself can often best be achieved if the project is not affiliated to, or led by, a particular agency or group. Some projects can be successfully and skilfully facilitated by a stakeholder party, but more consistent success comes when an independent project facilitator is engaged.

Independent facilitators such as NZ Landcare Trust can play a key role working directly with the community, reinforcing environmental and social benefits and helping to ensure long term project success.

Key roles of an independent facilitator

- Supporting community leaders
- Neutral intermediary between organisations
- Community sounding board
- Media liaison
- Organising independent surveys
- Organising meetings
- Group facilitation (visioning, conflict resolution, action pathways)
- Disseminating technical information in ways stakeholders can digest (newsletters, field days, oral presentations)
- Organising celebrations and recognising positive action (such as multi-stakeholder showcases, award nominations etc)
- Seeking funding (developing plans, negotiations, funding applications) and progress reporting.



4 Technical support

Achieving a level 'information playing field' is crucial to the success of a community-owned project. Everybody must understand the current situation, the need for change and the form this change should take and why.

To achieve a common knowledge baseline, projects need:

- High quality baseline science (i.e. the state of the water resources)
- An objective conveyance of the causal factors and issue (such as a projection of future trends, a model of farm runoff based on actual practices, or a model of downstream impacts)
- Once a vision or bottom line has been set, well founded information on the practical changes needed to achieve desired targets.
- Presentation of the above material in a community focused manner (that is, easily digested, timed for when interest is present, plenty of chance for discussion).

The phrase that experts should be 'on tap not on top' is worth considering. Trusted experts are critical to the success of a project but they should not be driving the project if we are to achieve the benefits of a community ownership approach. To get the best 'bang for your buck' out of investment in technical research, it needs to be presented to a community with open ears in a way they can understand. Ensuring ears are open is simpler than it sounds. The community must invite the presentation, host the expert and be able to ask questions.

Many projects have also found (especially with complex divisive issues) that engaging an independent expert can be very helpful. This expert can be especially useful in covering potentially sensitive issues such the causal factors of environmental problems and the potential actions for change. Engaging an independent expert promotes the sense of community's ownership of information while providing a setting for open questioning.

5 Adequate time

Timing is crucial in a process to achieving community ownership. Many projects lose momentum and disintegrate due to a lack of long term support. Most environmental issues are not quick fix scenarios. It's crucial to fairly portray the amount of time needed to affect change. For example even if we removed all human activity from a catchment, groundwater quality reflects decades of catchment management decisions and reversing trends can take as many decades.

Not only do we work with the physical complexities of catchments we work with their communities. Communities need time to digest information and going through the processes they need to gain a sense of community ownership. Trying to speed up the process can break down an important process of self-ownership and deliver poorer end results.

It's also important to implement realistic timeframes for change based on skill and investment realities. For example there may simply not be enough contractors available to install water abstraction meters within a specified timeframe. Or low rate effluent irrigation systems for wet areas may not be financially possible within a year but perhaps would be within 3-5 years. Realistic transition times are vital to effective change.

6 Communications plan

It is really worth the time it takes for project management groups to develop a communications plan. This would cover media liaison, timing of communications/publications, communication responsibilities, skill development, external journalism contacts, and timing of reporting.

Although media liaison is only one aspect of a project communication plan it is none-the-less an important one. Projects addressing issues as publically important as waterway health will find no problem generating media interest. The skill is managing this attention while fostering maximum community ownership and buy-in. It is thus vital to consider the nature of information disseminated through these channels and equally the timing.

Timing of information release is important in building trust and ownership. Releasing an article on the degradation of a local waterway before informing the local community of the issue is obviously not ideal. More subtle timing issues such as when best to publically acknowledge positive individual behaviours or waterway improvements can be complex. It may seem helpful and positive to

celebrate an on-farm environmental enhancement action, yet it may not be in the interests of community togetherness to single out individual achievement or suggest a fix to an issue that realistically requires a great deal more action. Timing is fundamental to gaining the most from media reporting.

Style and content also affect the impact of a media report. Writing good media releases and building media relationships is a skill all in itself. Community based projects may be fortunate to have the assistance of a skilled communications expert (such as their facilitator or support from local agencies) but many may need to consider investing in a contracted freelance writer. Being able to generate your own reports greatly enhances the chances of getting it right and building community ownership.



7 Resourcing

Adequate resourcing of community based projects is critical. The reality is that most people involved in these projects will be unpaid 'volunteers'. Indeed motivation to get involved can be increased when communities have a sense of personal responsibility to make a difference. Yet most successful projects do require a level of support to sustain long term change.

Although high external financial resourcing can hinder the sense of community ownership, there are undoubtedly components of a community based project that need financial investment. Harnessing the expertise of a facilitator and scientists, the production of community information material, hosting events and implementing on-farm change all require cash.

Who pays is a keenly debated topic in environmental management. Generally the answer falls to those who benefit. The maintenance and improvement of waterway health influences local landowners as well as wider community as users of the resource (recreation, drinking water, tourism). Most government funding for water management projects recognises these multiple beneficiaries and thus requires input from local stakeholder groups and community before partnership funding is offered.

Where can you get funding from?

- MfE – Community Environment Fund
- MfE – Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean-up Fund
- DOC – Biodiversity Advice Fund
- DOC – Biodiversity Condition Fund
- MPI – Sustainable Farming Fund
- ASB Community Trust – Environment and Heritage
- Department of Internal Affairs – Lottery Grants, Lottery Environment and Heritage
- Lion Foundation
- Mataranga Kura Taiao Fund
- Nga Whenua Rahi
- Pacific Development and Conservation Trust (Department of Internal Affairs)
- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Open Space Covenants

Other tips for encouraging community ownership

Meeting protocol

Building community ownership of an issue is greatly assisted when key meetings are hosted by the community on their turf. For example if a regional council wishes to update a community with water quality monitoring results, it would be beneficial to seek the support of a community based catchment group to host the presentation. This approach promotes a sense of courtesy in recognising the status of local landowners and tangata whenua. It is also likely to result in a much higher local interest in the issue and thus attendance.

Under this model the community runs the meeting, speaking first, welcoming speakers and inviting wide community questioning and discussion. Where this approach is not followed, a real opportunity to build trust, good will, two-way learning opportunities and indeed ownership is lost.



Setting for message delivery

As already outlined above, the setting of a particular event can influence community ownership and thus long term outcomes. Key information dissemination events are best held within the catchment rather than an agency meeting room. It is worth considering your target audience and how best to encourage the uptake of key messages. This will vary for each catchment and event but it is worth thinking about the following:

- What time suits the community best? Would the event be best held over a sociable lunch thus generating conversation and attracting busy community members at a time they are generally not working or is an evening meeting best?
- Is the local hall or marae a good location to encourage information assimilation? Think about community ownership issues as well as practical things such as acoustics, warmth, and catering.
- Would the message be best presented as a powerpoint inside, or outside in the field? Events like on-farm field days promote local ownership, understanding of the practical application of messages, two-way learning and a chance to ask specific practical questions. Indoor presentations may be better for presenting complex water monitoring information as acoustics can be better and powerpoint can be used.
- Is the information best gathered or delivered in a group setting where the input and skills of the wider group may be beneficial or is this sensitive information that is best discussed one on one? Is the landowner comfortable with a visit or would they find it easier to speak on the phone? Ask!
- Sometimes inviting the community onto your patch is good protocol. For example community leaders may be asked to meet with the CEO of an organisation at a convenient time in their office. This can act to elevate the status of the issue and offer a setting for formal discussion. Similarly invitation to a conference or awards ceremony outside the catchment can create a sense of occasion and importance.

Having fun

Fun and enjoyment are key to sustaining community ownership.

Where a project is driven by the community, it inherently relies on a good deal of volunteerism. The best way to encourage wide involvement and sustained action is to make the project fun. Of course tackling tough issues won't always be a barrel of laughs but keeping your eyes peeled for as many chances to throw in a bit of fun should be high on the radar.

Some ideas for adding fun:

- Sharing food and drink at a woolshed bbq and presentation, a catchment-fare food and wine festival, a quick meeting at the local café
- Celebrating success (awards, recognition in local papers, phoning somebody to tell them they did a good job)
- Hosting day trips ('give the townies a look around' day, a boat trip, school visits)
- Collating a book (mahinga kai recipes, river art/poems, individuals' reflections on the river)
- Visiting other catchments for inspiration
- Morning tea discussion groups
- Whitebait workshops (everyone loves whitebait and learning about their environment is a great way to bring diverse stakeholders together over a common interest).

The world is your oyster (or whitebait perhaps in this case) so make the most of having a reason to get together as a community and have a bit of fun! You will find the benefits of building camaraderie and goodwill well worth the time it takes.

Building capability

Achieving effective local ownership of catchment issues is likely to require strengthened or new skills from the community – skills such as facilitation, conflict management, listening and solution-finding. Effective leadership can show the way to participants. Sometimes it is helpful to bring in outside experience to build local capability in these skills.

3. BEING STRATEGIC

Strategy is the essential link between vision and outcome.¹ Being strategic means that our work has an internal logic that links together our mandate, the problem we are trying to solve, our knowledge and understanding, our desired outcomes, our proposed solution and subsequent implementation. We then check on all this through strategic review.

Programme success is strongly linked to good strategy and sound strategic thinking. In all aspects of catchment management, strategic thinking is the most fundamental and valuable tool in the tool box.

Strategic thinking includes, but is not limited to, strategic planning. Strategic thinking needs to kick in at the beginning of our considerations, as we set out our framework for engagement in catchment management and with farming communities. Strategic planning then focuses on the specific steps of design and implementation for a selected project or programme. This chapter focuses on the broader concept of being strategic, rather than on strategic planning itself.

There are six core questions to ask when establishing a strategic framework for an organisation or partnership. The answers to these questions underpin a strategic approach to catchment management considerations. Some questions, and answers, may appear obvious but they have been selected because each represents a common point of oversight in the design of rural catchment management programmes in New Zealand.

¹ Lees, Annette *Strategy and Impact. Why it's the thought that counts*. Paper presented to the 2011 EDS Conference, Coastlines: spatial planning for land and sea.
www.edskonference.com/content/docs/2011_papers/Lees%20Annette%20Paper%29.pdf



Thinking first, collaborating next

This Guide describes the importance and value of building local ownership and collaborating with partners when addressing land and water management programmes.

A key part of ownership and collaboration is the process of collaborative strategic planning, where problems and solutions are identified together, where catchment plans are envisioned, developed, implemented and reviewed in partnership between farmers and partners. Collaborative planning at the local level and at regional/national levels is discussed in more detail in chapters one and three.

Whatever level you are working at, success in collaborative planning depends on prior strategic thinking by each of the partners.

It is important that each partner has a clear idea of their mandate, their own priorities and desired outcomes, and the scale at which they are able to work. It is important too that each partner gets their own house in order ensuring good internal communication and alignment.

Coming from this point of clarity, each partner then seeks common ground with others as the collaborative process begins. Then all of the questions in this section become relevant again for the collaborative partnership as a whole.



A. SIX QUESTIONS FOR STRATEGIC THINKING

Q1

What is your mandate?

What is your organisation's role in catchment management?

Each organisation, every partnership, has a specific role based on its mandate. Ask: why are you engaged here? What are you obliged to achieve? What policies, plans and governance direct your work? The answers to these questions help to clarify role and mandate, ensuring the scope and focus of the work are correctly aligned and fit your purpose.

What authority does your organisation or partnership have?

The answer to this question helps frame the scope and approach of your work. Are the members of your partnership delegated to act or will you be working primarily through influencing and persuading others? Do you have the appropriate legal mandate for your area of focus? Who else do you need to be working with to ensure this?

Q2

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

What is the problem? Be clear and specific about the issue or problem you are addressing. Watch for the following common snags:

Making assumptions: Our first best guess at what is going on in a catchment may not be correct. It is important to test our assumptions so our strategic thinking is based on a strong foundation. What really is the problem? Are you sure about the causes of the problem? What science, local and traditional knowledge can you access to help clearly identify the problem? Is the problem identification being driven by a 'solution' that has already been selected?

When identifying your problem, start fresh. Begin by being open to ideas.

Taking on too many problems: A focus on a whole catchment or a diverse community usually reveals many issues that need resolution. The partner organisation can feel tempted, compelled or requested to weave multiple issues into the one programme for solution. A sedimentation control problem might be stretched to address local unemployment, a school closure and rural roading issues. Unfortunately, it is rare for a catchment management programme to successfully resolve problems beyond its core mandate. It can however be a stimulus for local communities to go further and tackle other issues once they realise the power of collective action and support.

It is important to be aware of local issues and understand their implications, but equally it is important to clock up success for the priority problem that lies at the heart of the catchment management programme. It is usually best to keep things simple, avoid complication and stay focused. The problem you select to resolve should be your priority issue and the one that is closest to your mandate. You construct your engagement around that.

Problem avoidance: Problem avoidance solves a problem but not the problem. Your real problem might seem too big to solve. For catchments, this is often the 'N' word – the leaching of excessive nitrogen into aquifers. This is an elusive, complex, uncertain, conflict-ridden and expensive problem to resolve. Problem avoidance could have a partner select a lesser catchment issue and focus a land and water management programme around that.

That can be a strategic decision where there is a broad plan in place – if, for example, you need to start your engagement with a community with an easily resolved issue, and so build the foundations for an ongoing productive relationship. If this is the case, that goal – 'build productive community relationships in preparation for tackling the Big Problem' – needs to be explicit. At the same time you need to develop a deeper strategy for addressing the Big Problem beyond this first goal. This might include seeking early local engagement on the issue, commissioning scientific research, building industry alliances, beginning an education and awareness programme or costing potential solutions.

Q3

What is your desired outcome?

Being clear about the purpose of your work, what you are hoping to achieve, will help create a strong logical pull through the entire strategic thinking process. It is also an essential component of finding common ground with others you will partner with in the programme. If you can't clearly articulate your desired outcome the purpose of your engagement is fuzzy both to yourself and others.

Articulate the big end goal. That won't be simply to build good community relationships which is a necessity for any partner to achieve anything. Rather, take time to understand what you would like to achieve as a result of your intermediate steps.



Q4

What scale should you work at?

Organisations mandated to work over a large area commonly encounter issues of scale. Should you be working across entire catchments, with individual farmers, or in selected waterways, or all three? And what aspects of your programme need to change when you shift from one scale to another?

The following checklist describes factors that should be taken into account when selecting the scale of your work:

Mandate

At what scale are you mandated to work?

A regional council or an iwi is mandated to engage at a large scale, across several catchments. Outcomes at this large scale, established through regulation, policy or planning, require the partner:

- to engage with the whole region at a high strategic level,
- to establish priorities based on an understanding of the whole regional picture,
- to implement linked programmes based on these regional priorities and
- to evaluate the impact of its work at the regional level.

Of course, a large scale mandate does not preclude small scale engagement with individual farm owners or in small sub-catchments, but this engagement needs to be strategic and based on clear and informed priority setting.

A district council or hapū or local community group is mandated to work at a smaller scale. Their programmes will be designed to have impact for a local river or for a group of farmers. As well, every small catchment area is influenced by its larger physical, social, cultural, and political environment. The strategic challenge then is to ensure you are engaged enough at a higher level to influence those factors that impact on your local work.

The problem

The size of your problem will help determine the scale at which you need to work. If your problem is catchment-wide your strategic net will need to be cast catchment wide. You may focus your solution on just part of that catchment, but you need first to understand the dimensions of what you are dealing with. This helps to ensure that you are going to be focusing your attentions on the most critical part of your problem. It will also mean you can calculate what is going to be needed long term to resolve your problem (the partnerships, the cost, the political alliances, the regulation and policies).

The solution

Will your scale solve your problem? A small local problem may well be solved by a simple, small and local solution. A big problem won't be solved like this, although strategically addressing something small is often a good place to start. You may need to trial a solution such as:

- a first outreach to a community,
- getting runs on the board with a straight forward and immediate action,
- trialling a policy, a funding mechanism, or a planting regime,
- testing the skills and capacity of your staff to engage with farming communities,
- trying out a new partnership with an iwi or a research institute.

These test runs are often a critical start point for a successful large scale programme. They do need to be selected carefully.

- Understand how the test runs fit into the big picture
- Understand how they are expected to help resolve the big picture

Winning community ownership of the catchment management programme will always be a critical component of a solution. Scale impacts on this in two ways:

- Farmers and landowners need to know that their individual actions fit into a bigger picture that is being effectively addressed so they are not acting pointlessly. If badly controlled land development is a major contributor to sedimentation, farmers and foresters are going to want to see that addressed in addition to any work they might undertake themselves.
- The smaller the catchment, the more closely knit the community, the more obvious the link between the farm and its impact on the environment, then the stronger the sense of community ownership over it all. At a small scale the links between unsustainable farming and environmental consequence are often more obvious. And in smaller communities, environmental impacts that have economic consequences for neighbours can be clear. In such cases, community ownership can be readily achieved leading to durable and effective solutions. At a large scale, landowners are more likely to be distanced from the impacts of unsustainable land management, and community ownership of catchment management practices may then be more elusive.

Being aware of these possibilities in advance means a partner can take them into account when designing a catchment management programme.

The budget

The size of your budget will constrain your enthusiasms but should not change the scale at which you work. If your mandate is large scale and your problem wide spread, then you are obliged to engage at the large scale. This can be possible with a small budget by choosing the low cost but effective options; for example, getting to know your communities through direct contact, developing enabling partnerships, focusing on policy and planning solutions, and sourcing funding opportunities from outside your own organisation. Whatever your scale and budget, careful strategic planning will ensure you're targeting your priorities effectively and efficiently.

CASE STUDY

UPPER TAIERI WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Upper Taieri Catchment, Otago

A large scale project with complex issues and multiple stakeholders, the Upper Taieri Water Resource Management Project provides a useful opportunity to consider how community ownership can benefit a long term resource management process. Once an insurance against drought for sheep and beef farmers in the eastern South Island, irrigation is now used to diversify farming, and the pressure on water use is increasing. In this dry region, river water is crucial for irrigation, but the sheep and beef farmers aren't the only ones who need it. The Taieri waterways also support an important sports fishery and significant natural ecosystems. Competing interests for water have in the past led to protracted battles in the environment court, and increasingly voiced public concerns over river health.

The regional council allocates water takes, balancing the needs of the environment, farmers, and other users. However the Taieri River is currently 'over-allocated'. What is available gets shared among approximately 150 users, who either hold a permit from the council or an old mining right dating back to the gold-rush in the 1860's. These older mining permits are due to expire in 2021 and provide the motivation to plan ahead and identify a strategy for the future.

The irrigators joined forces in 2005 in an effort to re-design water allocation in the Upper Taieri. Led by the NZ Landcare Trust, the Upper Taieri Water Resource Management Group includes farmers, the Department of Conservation, Fish & Game New Zealand, iwi, local government and researchers. While other collective allocation models exist, the point of difference with this group is they brought on board everyone with an interest, to create an enduring water management and allocation system managed by, and for the good of, the whole community. A key concept is the aim to roll all of the individual consents into a single collective agreement, with a fair and transferable allocation arranged by the group, rather than by the council.

Money secured from the Sustainable Farming Fund enabled the group to contract experts to project manage and offer technical assistance. A series of meetings and public field days allowed all of the parties to clarify their interests and needs for the Taieri water, whether extraction for irrigation, or leaving water in the river to provide for conservation or recreation.



The project has developed a three-tiered 'Community Self Management Model' under which:

1. Central and Regional Government sets the policies, rules, and standards.
2. The Upper Taieri Water Resource Management Group is an umbrella group, liaising with the regional council, and co-ordinating water right transfers, reporting, monitoring, low flow rationing, and infrastructure development.
3. Four sub-catchment groups operate under single consents, managing and transferring water rights within their area, while meeting environmental standards, rules and consent conditions.

The Upper Taieri project has come up with a system for water allocation which results in: better community and agency relationships, cost efficient monitoring, smoother RMA processes, more efficient use of water, better environmental outcomes, and secure outcomes for everyone.

Along the way, the group realised it is far better to openly and honestly discuss issues and ideas from day one, rather than battle over a scarce resource through hearings and the environment court.

Their model of broad involvement, inviting users other than irrigators to take part, is a first in NZ, and an approach that can be used by other groups in catchments where water over-allocation is an issue.



Cautions about pilot projects

There is a limit to what you can test with a test project. Pilots or models by their nature are one-offs. They receive special attention in their design and implementation and they are often fully funded in a way that is unlikely to ever be replicable. They may receive the direct attention of a number of experts keen to experiment or prove a point. While it is often acknowledged that these factors are unique to the model site, pilots are justified by their potential to trial a new idea that would otherwise stay untested. The difficulty is that it is usually the non-replicable components of the trial (funding, expertise, 'blue-print enthusiasm') that are the most critical to have in place for any project site. As a result, it is rare for successful models to jump site ('upscale'). And when models fail, we don't tend to hear much about them.

Other people's pilot projects are useful as long as we bear in mind these caveats. They are especially useful if the pilot projects are independently reviewed with the results of such reviews made public. Then we can study them to help us build a strong body of shared knowledge about communities, partners, collaboration, and catchment management.

Trials can be useful for test-running the ideas and capacity of your own programmes as long as they are embedded in a learning culture, are independently reviewed, and are part of a clear and well analysed strategy.

What is always transferable across any project is sound strategic planning. The focus has to be on getting to know your own site and making the most of your own advantages. Learning from other places is essential intelligence gathering but nothing quite substitutes for solid strategic planning for your own place.

Q5

Okay, so if you know your mandate, the problem you are trying to solve, your desired outcome and the scale you are working at. So what's your solution, how will you implement that, and how will you grow?

You need to design a solution that will solve the problem. While this might seem obvious, there is not always a strong connection between the problem and the solution in catchment management programmes. As with aspects of strategic thinking, check your assumptions and look for solutions that will give specific and measurable improvements.

An implementation plan will lay out the internal logic of your plan, describe partners and stakeholders and how they will be involved, balance planning with action, describe the approach and methodology, state the tools and actions and who is responsible for them, assess the capacity of the implementers and how this can be enhanced, link the budget to the overall plan and finally describe how it will be monitored and reviewed.

Learning and improving from our work is an essential part of being strategic. Our new projects need to build on knowledge gained from our previous reviews. Our on-going projects need to be reviewed before they end so we can act promptly on recommendations to improve our outcomes. Our organisations need to be learning centred so monitoring, evaluation and review are prioritised and safely practiced.

Monitoring and review should answer these questions:

- Was our project a success – did we achieve our desired outcomes?
- Why or why not was it successful?
- Did it make a difference?
- Did we do what we said we'd do?
- Were our assumptions correct?
- Did we target the right issues?
- Did we involve the right people?
- Can we act on these findings in a manner that ensures our organisation improves its performance and knowledge?

Independent review is essential. Fresh eyes see things that those close to a programme can never see or would rather not see.

Q6

Are you ready?

Whether you are a partner or a partnership, designing and implementing a catchment management programme that achieves the desired outcomes – that is, being strategic – will depend on how effective you are. Are you ready? You'll need:

The right skills

Along with specific technical skills such as environmental sciences, planning, policy and community engagement, your organisation or partnership will need access to skills that develop and enhance relationships. Skills such as:

- Collaborative management and decision-making
- Facilitation
- Strategic thinking and planning
- Negotiation
- Conflict management.

Staff will need to readily engage with and be comfortable with, a broad range of people and professions –farmers, foresters, conservationists, researchers, and tangata whenua. The right staff or representatives with the right skills and training need to be employed for this work.

Alignment across the silos

Large organisations involved with community centred catchment management have the specific challenge of becoming internally aligned. Central and local government, for example, have a diverse range of departments, sections and individuals involved in communities and catchment management. The list can include iwi liaison staff, policy experts, planners, engineers, compliance staff, water allocation staff, farm liaison staff, natural heritage departments with terrestrial and aquatic ecologists, invasive species control divisions, community liaison coordinators, community fund administrators and so on. These individuals are usually based in separate parts of the organisation and sometimes there is minimal or ineffectual communication between them.

Before an organisation sets out to engage with external partners it is important it is internally aligned. To ensure a consistency of approach and logic in design, five aspects of this are key:

- Alignment in policy, planning and regulation
- Integration of understanding and knowledge
- Common purpose
- Effective communication
- Consistency in tone.

Through sharing knowledge and experience, and through following aligned policies and strategic thinking, it becomes more likely that you will be effective. From the communities' viewpoint, knowing there will be consistency in how they are approached (by knowledgeable, engaged and skilled staff no matter what department they represent) will advance the opportunities for collaborative management.

4. COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

New Zealand's streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands are hard working, meeting a wide range of needs for conservation, production, recreation, scenery, drinking water, other environmental services, and mauri. Consequently, most catchments have many interested parties involved in their governance and management, beyond the landowners themselves. Interested parties include iwi, government (local, regional and central with various ministries and departments), industry, NGOs, research, and community groups. At a national level, the same parties seek New Zealand-wide outcomes for fresh water.

At all levels there is intense debate about water quality, ecological bottom lines, rights, power and access to water. Unstructured debate can be bitter, protracted, litigious and expensive, while not often resolving the critical issues.

Increasingly, it is recognised that it is better for parties to sit down together to define problems and come up with solutions rather than to fight it out in the courts, or let the difficult issues remain unresolved. This chapter discusses the process of sitting down together: collaborative planning and governance.

We distinguish collaborative planning and governance from community ownership (discussed in chapter one) by scale.

Community ownership is locally scaled, usually involving a single catchment or part of catchment and closely engaging individual landowners and local group representatives. It will use collaborative planning methods but the reach and scope of this process is local. Community ownership processes usually start informally. Some stay that way, others move into formally establishing groups.

Collaborative governance and planning as described in this chapter refers to a larger scale – a region of catchments, a nationwide initiative. It will use approaches and methodologies also common to community ownership but the reach and scope of this is regional and national. It is usually formal in structure and operations.

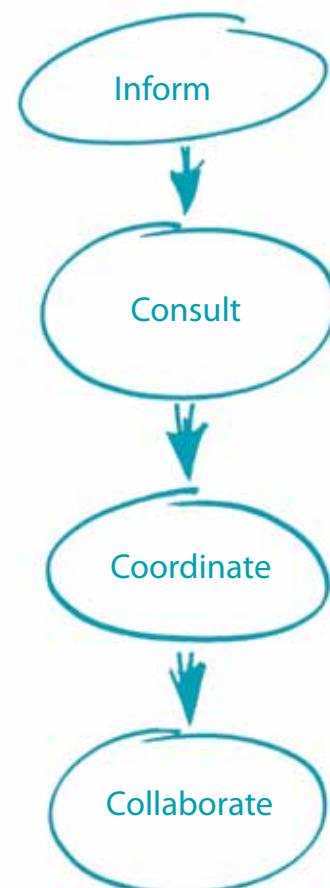
The concept of collaboration is not new for New Zealand. At an overarching level our Treaty of Waitangi recognises this principle, while at the grassroots, groups have been taking a lead and

making a difference in local issues for many years. Without doubt the concept of collaboration is a binding thread through our nation's development and will be at the forefront of our resource management future.

Throughout New Zealand there is a shift in engagement towards collaboration in resolving catchment problems. Government and other partners recognise the important gains and real breakthroughs made when deeper catchment partnerships succeed.

Collaboration and partnership require a high level of trust, a willingness to seek and grow common ground, as well as a willingness to share resources, risk, rewards and accountability. Through effective collaboration it can be possible to avoid confrontational, alienating and expensive litigation or unresolved argument.

There is a growing body of knowledge about collaborative processes in New Zealand. This chapter draws on this experience to introduce the core components of successful collaboration between parties.



Some definitions

Collaboration includes the less formal *collaborative process* where a group of stakeholders will move through a series of steps including informing themselves, finding common ground, debating possible solutions and seeking a consensus resolution.

Collaborative management uses the same steps but has a management objective. The group is collectively empowered to make management decisions about the catchment.

Collaborative governance uses the same steps but assumes an official mandate where the group is empowered to make policy decisions about the catchment under consideration.

A *collaborative forum* is the entity that the collaborating groups form.

'Collaborative governance: A process in which participants representing different interests are collectively empowered to make a policy decision or make recommendations to a final decision-maker who will not substantially change consensus recommendation from the group.'

Guy Salmon, Ecologic Foundation

Levels of engagement

There are several levels of engagement available to parties with catchment interests.

A light touch has parties simply *informing* each other, or local communities of their intentions, or providing information such as educational material.

An increased level of engagement sees parties *consulting* with each other, or with local communities. A consulting party will seek the views and input of others but it will not necessarily take these views into account, or if it does, it will be on its own terms.

Parties which are *coordinating* programmes discuss work plans with each other and seek to harmonise or enhance their work through finding common ground.

Collaboration and partnership represent a high level of engagement. Parties share the power of decision-making and accountability. They seek common vision and goals. They work together to find solutions and have ownership of shared outcomes. There is usually a greater formality of relationship.



The value of group dynamics in addressing common catchment management solutions

BARRIERS TO CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS	VALUE OF GROUP DYNAMICS IN RESOLVING THESE PROBLEMS
'My values are the only ones that are valid'	<p>Having to work as a group promotes aspirations of collective good and long term sustainability.</p> <p>Extreme views and greed sound OK in your head but silly when you have to say them out loud often enough in a group setting.</p>
Very disparate views and visions	<p>When we work in a group we encounter the inherent human quality of trying to reach consensus.</p> <p>Without a bit of conflict it is difficult to motivate people to get together to truly address issues.</p> <p>People often have different information platforms or histories to launch their ideas from. Once we all receive the same independent information, we are likely to reach consensus.</p>
History of conflict	It's hard to hate somebody you are face to face with. Generally people want the same things.
Individuals with passionate but negative energy	People don't like to waste their time in meetings. A group setting can often curtail the endless negative grandstanding because consensus is so strongly desired by all participants. Exposure to the same information often softens the strident. Being heard, being listened to by a group are also softeners.
Them vs Us	Working as a group and reaching a shared vision for change puts everyone in the same basket and brings otherwise disparate groups/individuals together creating skill synergies.
Fear of peer response	A formal setting where common ground is sought and expertly facilitated can disable peer pressure where that is keeping individuals from reaching consensus.
Lack of 'community'	The concept of community is not exclusive to a rural area. Collaborative planning can build a nationwide community of concerned and engaged partners, strengthening shared ownership and companionship over resolving complex issues.
Individual helplessness	Groups provide an ability to make use of collective skills and knowledge. Sharing skills and resources can empower everyone building confidence and motivation.
Burnout	Being part of a collaborative partnership helps to share the load. Sector leaders can be fostered, developed and supported.

CASE STUDY

OURS – THE MANAWATŪ RIVER STORY

The Manawatū River has a reputation for being one of the most polluted rivers in New Zealand with sediment from erosion, discharges from meatworks, community sewage outlets and run-off from farms all impacting on water quality. The situation is now set to change as the river undergoes a journey towards recovery.

The message from the community was clear, 'we want our river cleaned up,' and leaders agreed. So began an extensive process of collaboration and negotiation.

In early 2010 Horizons Regional Council hosted a meeting involving local leaders that shared an interest in the river. Those present represented a diverse range of interests: local government, iwi, farming, industry, recreation and environment. The meeting was a success and further regular meetings followed. A collaborative forum was established and a community wide process of improvement was agreed. In August 2010 the Manawatū River Leaders Forum signed an Accord which identified focus, vision, key issues, commitments and goals.

Specific goals set out in the Accord were:

- The Manawatū River becomes a source of regional pride and mana
- Waterways in the Manawatū Catchment are safe, accessible, swimmable, and provide good recreation and food resources
- The Manawatū Catchment and waterways are returned to a healthy condition
- Sustainable use of the land and water resources of the Manawatū Catchment continues to underpin the economic prosperity of the Region.

An important accord commitment was the production of a collaboratively owned Action Plan which was launched in June 2011, containing recommended targets, actions and opportunities, and included indicators and methods for monitoring. It was developed by a group of participants representing the different forum sectors, with assistance from the Massey University-led Integrated Freshwater Solutions research project. The Action Plan represented a considerable investment of time, energy, and resources from all the forum members and identified 130 tasks linked to 6 key priorities.

The inclusive collaborative process, with a clearly defined framework and strong commitment helped to focus the leadership group, ensuring the diversity of interests became a positive influence directed towards seeking solutions to complex problems. The result is an action plan that has the backing of the community and has now attracted \$5.2million of government funding from the Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean-up Fund. With significant funding and strong community support the long term prospects for the Manawatu River catchment look bright.

More information about this project can be found online: www.manawaturiver.co.nz



When to use collaboration

Collaboration is a useful approach when:

- The issues are complex and far reaching
- Reaching an effective solution is very important
- There are many parties involved representing different interests.

Collaboration can be kick-started by a crisis:

- sudden and clearly apparent environmental degradation
- threat of litigation
- threat of regulation
- fury or distress by one party
- groups simply tiring of argument.

Increasingly, collaboration is the start-point of discussion, rather than the end point of upset.

Who's there?

Every group with an interest in the issues under consideration should be represented on the collaborative forum.

Facilitator/chair

A collaborative forum requires an independent, respected and influential leader. This leader or chair needs skills in facilitation and conflict resolution. He or she needs to be willing to provide leadership in building compromise and solution finding.

Support and resourcing

The collaborative forum will need support for it to be effective. Ideally, it will have a well-resourced secretariat or management unit. This provides logistical support as well as accessing the information and analysis required for the forum to make good decisions.

Partners in catchment management

The potential partners with an interest in collaborative governance and management of catchments includes the following:

Central government

- Ministries with policy, regulation, compliance and strategy responsibilities that include catchments: DOC, MfE, MIP, Environmental Protection Authority, Parliamentary Commission for the Environment.

Sector groups nationwide

- Primary Sector Water Partnership, NZ Business Council for Sustainable Development, Turnbull Group (Water New Zealand), Irrigation New Zealand, Fonterra's Dairying and Clean Streams Accord, Federated Farmers, Land and Water Forum, Fonterra, Demeter, Organic Dairy and Pastoral Group, DairyNZ.

Iwi

- Tangata whenua authorities – iwi and hapū
- Māori regional forums

Local and Regional Councils

- Regional councils
- District councils
- City councils.

NGOs and Trusts

- Fish & Game Council, Forest and Bird, Environmental Defence Society, Ecologic Foundation, Trees for Survival, Tindall Foundation Habitat Protection Fund, Conservation Volunteers NZ, WWF
- NZ Landcare Trust, QEII Trust, New Zealand Farm Environment Awards Trust, Agri-Women's Development Trust, Rural Women New Zealand.

Research Institutes

- Landcare Research, NIWA, AgResearch
- Universities and technical institutes.

Community groups

- Formal or informal community groups engaged with farmers through education, tree planting, fund-raising, general support
- Water user groups
- Landcare and Waicare groups.

Local business professionals

- Farming support professionals such as lawyers, accountants and bankers
- Farm consultants.

How it works

Collaboration requires decisions to be made by consensus. It is based on negotiated and agreed actions. Individuals will be coming from different base values but they will need to have an agreed set of principles for how they will work together.

This is likely to include requiring the participants to commit to collaboration, to be listeners, to be open to ideas, and to be willing to learn new skills in engagement. Success will depend on building trust between the forum participants.

For collaboration to be effective, within the forum each group needs to have approximately equal power over decision-making. In other words, each group has the power to stop a solution.

Mandate

There are two levels of mandating required for a collaborative forum.

First the representatives of *each group must be mandated by that group* to represent them. The group must respect and support their representative and the representative must in turn report back what is happening at the forum so the processes are open, engaging and informed. It is helpful if representation at the forum is consistent so that each meeting doesn't involve significant catch-up time for a new representative.

Second, the *forum itself should ideally have a mandate from a public decision-making body* (a government minister or a regional council for example) to address an issue or resolve a problem. This is important to ensure individuals don't feel they are wasting their time in pointless discussion, that there is a critical end-point to the talking. Invested with the responsibility to resolve a problem, the forum will apply diligence and leadership to the issue.

Collaboration requires independence. Participants will not reach a consensus unless they feel that their responsibility to do so is real, inescapable and not constrained. They must feel that the decision-makers will have serious regard for it, and will not allow it to be subverted. Parties to a collaborative process must feel that they have been asked to lead.

Decision-makers should be involved in collaborative processes, as well as those that will be impacted by the outcomes. They should see themselves as in some sense servants of the process.

We reflected that there can be problems when decision-makers do not fulfill this promise, by paying insufficient regard to collaborative outcomes, or when distinctions between collaboration and co-governance or co-management are not understood. Decision-makers can decide to take a course different from the one that the collaborative process has recommended to them, in the name of a broader public interest. The problem arises on the one hand when the collaborators fail to accept the decision-makers' ultimate right to do so, or on the other when decision-makers exercise the right to decide without proper respect to the weight of the process that has been set up to inform them. If the collaborators aren't listened to they'll feel they've wasted their time.

Note on Collaboration
Land and Water Forum
March 2011

Time

Collaborative processes take time but it is important that there are time constraints. Issues must be resolved before the process exhausts patience or the scope and dimension of the issues change.

Effective collaboration therefore follows good strategic practice, sets clear objectives, and builds in agreed targets for reaching milestones.

What it does

A defining aspect of collaborative processes is that they are deeply immersed in information. Participants base their understanding, thinking and analysing on extensive knowledge and science, including local knowledge and Mātauranga Māori. Large amounts of information are discussed in a non-adversarial setting. Through this, participants come to a deep understanding of the true nature of the problem they are addressing as well as the most effective solution. Learning together builds trust and understanding between the forum members. This process can often work to neutralise some of the points of contention.

Information comes from the support of technical advisors and from the work of the secretariat if there is one. If there are resources for this, independent research can also be commissioned.

With science and knowledge as the basis of the work, participants work through a process of jointly identifying the problem they need to solve, considering the options they have for resolution of the problem and seeking consensus on those options.

Throughout these steps the collaborative process focuses on common ground between participants, building and broadening the points of consensus.

Like all effective work, collaborative processes require strong strategic thinking including:

- Being clear about the purpose of the forum
- Understanding its scope and mandate
- Having consensus on desired outcomes
- Setting targets and milestones
- Monitoring and reviewing progress

- Manawatu River Story
<http://manawaturiver.co.nz>
- Land and Water Forum website
www.landandwater.org.nz
- The Potential of Partnership –
Key Learnings and Ways Forward
by David Craig and Megan Courtney,
August 2004.
- IAP2Spectrum of Public Participation
www.iap2.org



5. WELL DESIGNED INCENTIVES

As this publication has demonstrated, there are real environmental benefits and positive catchment outcomes by achieving community ownership of catchment management. Knowing this, central, regional and local government, along with other partners, want to encourage community ownership and to provide effective support for it. Encouragement and support are often expressed through the provision of a variety of incentives to rural landowners for their engagement in catchment management.

Incentives – non-regulatory tools – can include the provision of advice or information, or a range of funding initiatives such as grants, subsidies, rates relief or other forms of financial compensation.

Partners devise incentives for a number of reasons:

- As a way of kick-starting interest and engagement in catchment management
- A belief that without incentives farmers are unlikely to act of their own accord
- In recognition that some farmers might find the costs of improved catchment management prohibitive
- As a way of sharing the costs of catchment management between landowners and the rest of the community who will benefit from these measures
- As a sweetener to forthcoming regulation.

Non-regulatory tools for encouraging catchment management range from low cost to high cost, from effective to money wasting. They can stimulate

community ownership of catchment management or they can hinder it. They can be essential and fair or of marginal value and create inequities. This chapter provides a basic introduction to the types of incentives that are being implemented across rural New Zealand by partners and it provides some points of discussion about how to get best use of these non-regulatory tools.

Types of incentives

Advice and information

1. Partners provide written information such as in pamphlets, websites or reports on issues such as:
 - specific sustainable farm management techniques ('how to' guides on fencing streams, managing stock, planting trees, or pasture management)
 - guides to establish community initiatives or community based events
 - establishing where and how to source funding for sustainable catchment work
 - explaining policy, planning, or regulation.

Providing written information is an inexpensive entry point to rural communities and can be an effective way to disseminate ideas, advice and facts. It risks being seen as remote or lecturing unless you already have gained local support for, or understanding of, the information being disseminated.



2. Partners engage face-to-face at the community level. This might include:

- Local meetings in halls/kitchens
- Field days especially designed to provide practical advice on environmental farming practices or stock management
- A presence at community events (such as A and P shows, community days, school fairs and so on) where there will be someone on hand to answer questions and talk about issues.

Face-to-face engagement is an inexpensive but important way to show commitment to local communities. Putting a face to a name and being there to answer questions, to listen, and to explain are a first step for both sides to learning about the people who are responsible for catchment management.

3. Partners engage one-on-one with farmers and landowners. This category includes:

- Farm visits
- Farm plans
- Business advice.

One-on-one engagement with farmers can be important for several reasons. Farm visits are a way of building special rapport with a key individual, allowing time to talk things through in a relaxed manner. Such an investment might pay off in securing commitment from a catchment champion. Farm visits can work in catchments where the sense of community is not well developed, or with farmers with land critical for catchment management who avoid meetings where they can.

One-on-one engagement is most strongly developed through individualised farm planning. Many local government bodies provide free farm planning services for selected farms in selected catchments. These range from simple riparian planting plans to comprehensive plans that address all aspects of environment management such as nutrient management, soil conservation, effluent management systems, stock movement, protection of biodiversity, control of pests and water and energy usage.

Farm plans are individualised to each farm, taking into account the unique components of its stock, land form, freshwater systems, soil, vegetation and forest cover. The most useful farm plans are integrated with financial planning to ensure they are practical and profitable.

Clearly the more detailed the farm planning is, the more costly and difficult they are to implement. Yet simple farm plans may not address the core issues. It is important to ensure the right balance is struck to: enhance the likelihood of plans being implemented; ensure funding is not wasted on unnecessarily flashy schemes; and know that you're actually addressing the real problem in the right way.

For landowners with large land holdings such as some iwi, partners can go further and assist with comprehensive business management analysis and advice.

Funding

Non-regulatory tools from partners include a wide range of financial incentives including:

- Grants for one-off farm improvements such as creating wetlands
- Subsidies for farm improvements such as fencing and planting riparian margins
- Rates relief for environmental initiatives such as protection of indigenous habitat
- Financial compensation for retiring land, changing land use or land use intensity.

Budget lines can be set up for access from a range of farmers across several catchments or special deals can be negotiated directly with farmers that manage sites of particular vulnerability or importance.

Covenants

Land conservation covenants can provide a long term incentive to help farmers and landowners to protect important areas, ensuring future changes in land ownership will not undermine valuable work. Ownership of the land is retained but a legal protective framework is established which guides future activities. With 70% of land in New Zealand under private ownership, covenants provide a valuable mechanism to help protect our natural heritage and make a positive long term contribution to catchment level projects.

Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (QEII) offer 'Open Space' covenants designed to protect land areas in perpetuity. Each agreement is unique and can be tailored to specifically reflect local conditions. Some landowners may wish to include an entire property while others might prefer to identify key features on their land such as a wetland or a forest fragment. An Open Space covenant can also take into account different management areas within a single covenant, applying more stringent conditions to those areas that have greatest sensitivity. In addition QEII can also provide financial help covering the costs associated with setting up the covenant, survey costs and in some cases contribute to items such as fencing.

Māori landowners can also benefit from the Ngā Whenua Rāhui Fund, a contestable Ministerial fund designed to provide protection to indigenous ecosystems on Māori land while supporting the owners rights of ownership and control. Three forms of protection are available:

- Covenancing - long term protection with inter-generational reviews, sensitive to Māori values in terms of spirituality and tikanga
- Māori Reservations - smaller blocks on Māori land formally protected under Te Ture Whenua Act 1993
- Physical Protection - contribute to costs of fencing indigenous land to protect it from stock.

Once protection has been implemented the change in circumstance is noted in the Māori Land Court.

Further information:

- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust: www.openspace.org.nz
- Ngā Whenua Rāhui Fund: www.doc.govt.nz/publications/conservation/protecting-and-restoring-our-natural-heritage-a-practical-guide/legal-protection/



Putting the package together

Like all aspects of effective community-owned catchment management, the role and application of incentives needs to be strategically developed. They will always be part of a wider package, linked to regulatory bottom-lines, effective communication and a sense of ownership by the target communities.

The following steps highlight critical decision points in the design of non-regulatory tools for catchment management.

- Check you understand the core problem in your target catchment and you know what is needed to solve that problem.
- Break the solution into its components: the desire to retain or build local ownership; the role of regulation and enforcement; and what incentives can be expected to achieve. Have you struck the most effective balance between these three?
- Check your assumptions about incentives: are you sure you need them? Why are you so sure? How can you test which kind of incentive will be most effective? And how do you define 'effective'?
- What are the risks associated with the selected incentives? What about sustainability? Who is going to maintain the fencing and the planting or other capital investments and is this agreement in writing, with consequences for non-compliance clear?
- Are the incentives you have selected and the way you intend applying them fair and equitable?
- Is it within your mandate to do this? Who else is providing the services and incentives you are considering and are they better qualified or resourced to do so?
- How did you decide on the level of subsidy, if there is one? Should you charge for these services? Understand why or why not, and then test any assumptions inherent.
- Do your farm plans have to be so elaborate? Or are they not detailed enough?
- If you are a regulatory authority, how will you address the tensions between compliance and incentives within your rural teams?
- Are you clear about your end point? Do you know the overall cost for solving the core problems in your catchment and are you starting with your priorities?
- Have you built in programme review and evaluation?



6. REGULATION BACKED BY EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE

The current regulatory obligations of regional, district and local councils for rural catchment management

Integrated management and rural catchment planning

One of the key functions of local authorities is to establish, implement, and review objectives, policies, and methods to achieve integrated management. The focus for regional councils is to achieve the integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region, and for district councils the focus is on achieving integrated management of effects of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources of the district.

One of the objectives of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011 (the NPS) is to improve integrated management of freshwater and the use and development of land in whole catchments, including the interactions between freshwater, land, associated ecosystems and the coastal environment.¹ The integrated management function of regional councils is reinforced by a policy in the NPS that every regional council is to manage freshwater and land use and development in catchments in an integrated and sustainable way, so as to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects, including cumulative effects.² Regional councils are required to give effect to this policy in their planning instruments.

The objectives, policies, and methods established by local authorities in planning instruments to achieve integrated management must reflect the purpose of the RMA which is to promote 'sustainable management'. This encompasses management of the 'use, development and protection of natural and physical resources' so that people and communities are 'enabled' to provide for their own wellbeing while also sustaining the potential of the catchment to meet the reasonable foreseeable needs of future generations; safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

The RMA identifies matters of national importance, which local authorities are required to recognise and provide for when developing planning instruments.

Many of these matters are of particular relevance to rural catchment management, including the following:³

- The preservation of the natural character of wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (section 6(a))
- The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (section 6(b))
- The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (section 6(c))
- The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers (section 6(d))
- The relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu, and other taonga (section 6(e)).

The RMA also identifies a set of 'other matters' to which local authorities are required to 'have particular regard to' when developing planning instruments. This is a less rigorous test than for matters of national importance. Many of these matters have particular relevance to rural catchment management including kaitiakitanga; the ethic of stewardship; the efficient use of water; the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy; the effects of climate change on water quantity; the intrinsic value of ecosystems; the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and quality of the environment; and the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon.

Regional councils are required to have a regional policy statement providing an overview of the resource management issues of the region and policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region. Regional policy statements are important documents in the RMA hierarchy of policies and plans. They are the only documents which provide an integrated overview of the management of air, land, freshwater systems, the coast and the marine area, and they also play an important role in the hierarchy of RMA documents.⁴ Regional and district plans are required to give effect to regional policy statements, so they can have a significant impact on what happens on the ground in rural catchments through influencing all RMA plans within their region.

Regional policy statements have been identified by the Environment Court as the 'primary instrument' under the RMA to achieve integrated management of all the resources for the entire region.⁵ The Environment Court has noted that integrated management is 'intended to be more than an empty slogan'.⁶ The concept of integrated management recognises the interrelationship between resources and that the protection of one may be to the detriment of another.⁷

The RMA sets out the matters regional councils must have regard to, and what regional policy statements must contain. The NPS also provides that every regional council must make or change regional policy statements to the extent needed to provide for the integrated management of the effects of the use and development of land on freshwater, including encouraging the co-ordination and sequencing of regional and/or urban growth, land use and development and the provision of infrastructure.⁸ See *Strengthening Second Generation Regional Policy Statements: An EDS Guide* (2010) for details about how to achieve effective integrated management.

¹ Objective C1 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011.

² Policy C1 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011.

³ See Chapter 7 of *Managing Freshwater: An EDS Guide* (2010) for further details about these matters.

⁴ Page 4, *Strengthening Second Generation Regional Policy Statements: An EDS Guide* (2010).

⁵ *St Colomba's Environmental House Group v Hawkes Bay Regional Council* [1994] NZRMA 560, 567.

⁶ *Application by North Shore City Council* (1994) 1B ELRNZ 324, 335.

⁷ *New Zealand Shipping Federation of New Zealand v Marlborough District Council* unreported, EnvC Wellington, W038/06, 29 May 2006, Kenderdine J at [106].

⁸ Policy C2 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011.

The focus for regional councils is to achieve the integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region

District councils focus on achieving integrated management of effects of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources.



Regional councils were not required to prepare a regional plan under the RMA (although in practice most have done so). There is a regulatory obligation for them to consider the desirability of preparing a regional plan whenever certain circumstances or considerations are likely to arise.⁹ However, the NPS now requires every regional council to make or change regional plans to ensure they establish freshwater objectives, set freshwater quality limits and environmental flows and/or levels for all bodies of freshwater in its region,¹⁰ and also establish methods (including rules) to avoid or phase-out over-allocation of resources beyond a limit.¹¹ This applies to both water quantity and water quality. The NPS sets out other matters that must be included in regional plans, which are listed below. If a regional plan is prepared, the RMA sets out the matters regional councils must have regard to, and that the regional plan must contain objectives, policies, and rules (if any) to implement the policies.

District councils must have a district plan. The RMA sets out the matters district councils must have regard to, and that the district plan must contain objectives, policies, and rules (if any) to implement the policies. District plans are focused on managing the effects of land use. Land use can impact on rural catchments through such activities as the clearance of vegetation, earthworks, extension of the area covered by impermeable surfaces, and enabling sediment and pollutants to reach water bodies. District plans also typically control subdivision, the provision of esplanade reserves along the margins of lakes and rivers, and activities on the water surface of rivers and lakes such as boating.

Local authorities are required to undertake consultation on certain decisions, and give consideration to the views and preferences of persons likely to be affected by, or have an interest, in the matter. In particular, during the preparation of a proposed policy statement or plan the local authority must consult with tangata whenua of the area who may be affected. If a local authority undertakes consultation, it must do so in accordance with six principles of consultation. These include: providing people with reasonable access to relevant information; giving clear information on the purpose of the consultation and scope of decisions; encouraging and providing reasonable opportunities for people to present their views to the local authority; receiving those views with an open mind; and providing submitters with information on the decision and the reasons for the decision.

Before a proposed policy statement, proposed plan, plan change, or variation is publicly notified, and before a decision is made on these planning instruments, the relevant local authority must carry out an evaluation of the extent to which each objective is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the RMA and whether, having regard to their efficiency and effectiveness, the policies, rules, or other methods are the most appropriate for achieving the objective. In undertaking this evaluation the local authority must take into account the benefits and costs of policies, rules, or other methods, and the risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information about the subject matter of the policies, rules, or other methods.

The RMA provides the general framework for rural catchment management in New Zealand, but in some areas regional legislation also applies. For example, the Otago Regional Council is required to have regard to the purposes of the Lake Wanaka Preservation Act 1973 when exercising functions under the RMA, such as preparing a regional policy statement and regional plans.¹² Similarly, the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2010 provides special recognition for the Hauraki Gulf and requires local authorities to give effect to specific provisions of the Act. The Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010 is another example of regional legislation that affects local authorities' regulatory obligations. This Act includes a 'vision and strategy' to protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for future generations which is incorporated directly into the Waikato Regional Policy Statement.¹³ Local authorities that come within the catchment of the Waikato River must review their planning instruments and if necessary initiate changes to ensure they give effect to the vision and strategy.¹⁴

⁹ Section 65(3) of the RMA. These include any significant need or demand for, or conflict between the use, development, or protection of natural and physical resources; and any use of land or water that has actual or potential adverse effects on soil conservation or water quality.

¹⁰ Policies A1 and B1 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011

¹¹ Policies A1 and B6 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011

¹² Section 8 of the Lake Wanaka Preservation Act 1973

¹³ Section 11 of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010

¹⁴ Section 13(4) of the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010

Freshwater and beds of lakes and rivers

Regional councils have a number of regulatory obligations in respect of freshwater management. Notably, a regional council shall not set standards in a plan which result, or may result, in a reduction of the quality of water at the time of the public notification of the proposed plan unless it is consistent with the purpose of the RMA to do so. This is subject to the need to allow for reasonable mixing of a discharged contaminant or water.

Generally, no person may take, use, dam, or divert freshwater unless it is expressly allowed by a rule in a regional plan or a resource consent. Rules that protect or relate to water have immediate legal effect. There are also a number of restrictions in relation to the beds of lakes and rivers unless expressly allowed by a rule in a regional plan or a resource consent. These include structures impacting on beds of lakes or rivers, excavations or disturbances, introduction of plants, depositing of substances and reclamations. The Environment Court has recently prosecuted farmers for allowing river beds to be disturbed by stock when that disturbance was not expressly allowed by a rule in a regional plan or resource consent.¹⁵

As noted above, regional councils must now prepare regional plans to address a number of matters raised in the NPS. This includes provisions to provide for efficient allocation of freshwater, criteria for approval of transfers of water permits, methods to encourage the efficient use of water, and methods to phase-out over-allocation. Regional Councils may also prepare regional plans for any of the following of its functions related to water:

- The control of the use of land for the purpose of the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of water and ecosystems in water bodies and the maintenance of the quantity of water in water bodies
- The control of the taking, use, damming, and diversion of water, and the control of the quantity, level, and flow of water in any water body, including:
 - (i) the setting of any maximum or minimum levels or flows of water
 - (ii) the control of the range, or rate of change, of levels or flows of water

- If appropriate, the establishment of rules in a regional plan to allocate the taking or use of water
- In relation to any bed of a water body, the control of the introduction or planting of any plant, for the purpose of the maintenance of the quality or quantity of water in that water body.

Regional Councils will need to address most of the above matters in order to give effect to the NPS. In addition, local authorities must give effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (the NZCPS) which is likely to have implications for the setting of freshwater objectives and limits. Policy 21 of the NZCPS provides that, where the quality of water in the coastal environment has deteriorated so that it is having a significant adverse effect on a number of matters, local authorities are to give priority to improving that quality by including provisions in plans. It is likely that this will require working back up the catchment, and effectively managing the sources of contamination.

Schedule 3 of the RMA sets out a number of water quality classes related to different purposes water may be managed for. Where a regional council provides in a plan that certain waters are to be managed for one of these purposes, then rules about the quality of those waters must comply with the standards specified in Schedule 3, unless the regional council considers these are inappropriate. If this is the case, then the rules may state standards that are more stringent or specific.

Planning instruments cannot be inconsistent with any water conservation order. Local authorities shall not grant a water permit if the grant of that permit would be contrary to any restriction or prohibition or any other provision of the order.

¹⁵ Otago Regional Council v Country Pastures Farm Ltd unreported, District Court Dunedin, CRI-2010-005-10, 3 February 2010, Dwyer J, para 1; Otago Regional Council v Powley unreported, District Court Dunedin, CRI-2011-017658, 4 April 2012, Newhook J, para 1.

Discharges

Managing both point source and diffuse discharges is a fundamental component of effective rural catchment management. The RMA provides that no person may discharge any contaminant or water into water, or any contaminant onto land in circumstances where it may enter water, unless it is expressly allowed, including by a rule in a regional plan or by a resource consent. The definition of 'contaminant' under the RMA is very broad and relates to changes in the physical, chemical, or biological condition of water or land as opposed to the effect on the environment. This means that in most circumstances discharges from stock directly into water will be unlawful unless expressly allowed by a rule in a regional plan or by a resource consent. While the High Court has confirmed that the concept of "de minimus" is not available as a defence for prosecutions under section 15 of the RMA,¹⁶ in practice the effects of any discharges (including the cumulative effects) will be considered by local authorities and the Court has confirmed that it can deal with issues of proportionality in terms of the consequences of conviction when undertaking sentencing.¹⁷

Regional councils may prepare regional plans for their functions relating to the control of discharges of contaminants into or onto land, or water and discharges of water into water. If appropriate, regional councils may also establish rules in a regional plan to allocate the capacity of water to assimilate a discharge of a contaminant. While regional councils are not legally obligated to prepare regional plans for these functions, it is likely they will need to do so to give effect to the NPS and policies relating to sedimentation and contaminants in the NZCPS. Further, if regional councils propose to include permitted activity rules for discharges or grant discharge permits, then they must be satisfied that none of the following effects are likely to arise in the receiving waters, after reasonable mixing:

- the production of conspicuous oil or grease films, scums or foams, or floatable or suspended materials
- any conspicuous change in the colour or visual clarity
- any emission of objectionable odour
- the rendering of freshwater unsuitable for consumption by farm animals
- any significant adverse effects on aquatic life.

A regional council may only grant a discharge permit to do something that would result in the above effects if it is satisfied that exceptional circumstances justify the granting of the permit or that the discharge is of a temporary nature, and that it is consistent with the purpose of the RMA to do so. When considering applications for discharges, the local authority must also have regard to the nature of the discharge and the sensitivity of the receiving environment to adverse effects, the applicant's reasons for the proposed choice, and any possible alternative methods of discharge, including discharge into any other receiving environment.

Rules can require the adoption of the best practicable option to prevent or minimise any actual or likely adverse effect on the environment of any discharge of a contaminant. Before a regional council includes such a rule in its regional plan it must be satisfied that the inclusion of that rule in the plan is the most efficient and effective means of preventing or minimising those adverse effects on the environment. In making this decision, the regional council shall have regard to the nature of the discharge and the receiving environment, and other alternatives including a rule requiring the observance of minimum standards of quality of the environment.

As noted above, planning instruments cannot be inconsistent with any water conservation order. In addition local authorities are not allowed to grant a discharge permit to discharge water or contaminants into water, unless the grant of any such permit or the combined effect of the grant of any such permit and of existing permits and existing discharges, is such that the provisions of a water conservation order can remain without change or variation. Local authorities shall impose such conditions on permits as are necessary to ensure that the provisions of water conservation orders are maintained.

Current monitoring, reporting, and compliance obligations of local government.

¹⁶ Works Infrastructure Ltd v Taranaki Regional Council [2002] NZRMA 517 (HC), para 37-41.

¹⁷ Tasman District Council v P T Enterprises Ltd unreported, District Court Nelson, CRI-2009-042-4783, 1 March 2010, para 16.

Duty to gather information, monitor and keep records

Local authorities have a duty to gather such information, and undertake or commission such research, as is necessary to carry out effectively their functions under the RMA. There are specific monitoring requirements relating to the state of the environment; the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules or other methods in planning instruments; and the exercise of resource consents.

At least every 5 years local authorities must compile and make publicly available a review of the results of the above monitoring. Local authorities are also to keep information about the administration of planning instruments, monitoring of resource consents, and current issues relating to the environment reasonably available at its offices. This includes a summary of all written complaints received by it during the preceding 5 years concerning alleged breaches of the RMA or a plan, and information on how it dealt with each such complaint. Local authorities are also required to keep records about iwi and hapū.

The Resource Management (Measurement and Reporting of Water Takes) Regulations 2010 have set minimum requirements for the installation and operation of new water measuring and recording

devices and for the transfer of data to regional councils. The monitoring of water takes is to be undertaken by consent holders, and will enable regional councils to gain a better understanding of existing water takes when setting limits and developing rural catchment management plans.

Requirement to review plans

Local authorities must commence a review of a provision of a planning instrument if the provision has not been a subject of a proposed policy statement or plan, a review, or a change by the local authority during the previous 10 years. After reviewing the provision the local authority must either notify a planning instrument to alter the provision or notify the existing provision. There is still the ability for local authorities to commence a full review of their planning instruments, in which case they must review and subsequently notify all sections.

Obligation to ensure compliance

Local authorities are to enforce the observance of the policy statement or plan. Local authorities are also required to take appropriate action (having regard to the methods under the RMA) where this is shown to be necessary after monitoring.



CASE STUDY

VARIATION 5 FOR LAKE TAUPO CATCHMENT

The planning framework for the Lake Taupo catchment (otherwise known as Variation 5) is a useful case study of rural catchment management planning. The Variation became operative on 7 July 2011 and is now incorporated as part of the Waikato Regional Plan. The purpose of the Lake Taupo catchment plan is to restore and maintain the long term water quality of Lake Taupo, in the face of a gradual decline in water quality as a result of diffuse nitrogen discharges, predominantly from pastoral farming activities. The Lake Taupo catchment plan is different from many other rural catchment management plans in two key respects.

First, it addresses diffuse sources of pollution - namely nitrogen leaching. The plan includes a cap on nitrogen discharges associated with farming activities which restricts farmers from discharging beyond that level and requires compliance with a nitrogen management plan. It allows nitrogen offsetting between properties to provide flexibility for landowners to meet the new rule requirements.

Secondly, the plan provisions apply to multiple types of rural land uses and activities. It contains new policy and rules to manage land use in the catchment, with some farming practices controlled or requiring consents. It also contains tighter controls for new urban development in the catchment. This is an important distinction as other catchment plans often only address one specific type of land use, which may mean that the cumulative effects of multiple activities are not effectively controlled, and integrated management is not achieved.



Expected forthcoming changes to local government regulatory framework, how these might be expected to impact on rural catchment management, and what local government can do to prepare for these changes.

The Land and Water Forum (LWF) has made a number of recommended changes to the local government regulatory framework in its second report to the Government. Following the release of the LWF's third report expected in September 2012, the Government has indicated it will then be in a position to develop durable policies on freshwater management, based on the complete package of recommendations. Other forthcoming policy changes relating to monitoring have been announced by the Government that are likely to impact on the regulatory framework and rural catchment management.

National direction on setting freshwater objectives and limits

LWF recommended that the Government should direct regional councils to give effect to national objectives at a catchment scale (taking into account the variation in biophysical characteristics of their water bodies and their current state). It also emphasised that objectives at a regional level should be described as measurable states and where possible stated numerically.

The national objectives are contained in the NPS and LWF recommends that the Government should establish a national framework under which regional councils set objectives to give effect to these. In particular, LWF recommends that this national framework should include the following:

- Define minimum numeric state objectives (bottom lines) for a limited range of freshwater state parameters
- Provide narrative objectives and technical guidance on all other parameters for which regional councils are to set numeric objectives
- Calibrate parameters as a series of bands (fair, good and excellent) above bottom lines, to support regional decision-making in balancing local values for waterbodies
- Provide guidance and options for regional councils to set numeric objectives within the fair, good and excellent bands for particular waterbody types and situations.

LWF recommended that the freshwater state objectives and related limits set at a regional level must comply with relevant national objectives except in exceptional circumstances. In its opinion these should be defined nationally. LWF considered that the criteria should be the inability to meet a minimum state objective due to natural conditions of a waterbody or a regional decision to set a numeric state lower than the current state because an exceptional economic benefit and a net environmental gain will result.

The implications for rural catchment management are that it is likely that the setting of freshwater objectives and limits and related plan provisions will occur within the context of a national framework. For some freshwater state parameters it means the bottom lines will be set at a national level, and for others there will be a spectrum of options informed by national guidance.

LWF concluded that to control cumulative effects, limits for taking of water and the discharge of contaminations should be rules in regional plans, and these must be binding. This means once a limit is fully allocated additional resource use should be a prohibited activity. LWF proposes that regional councils should retain discretion to set timeframes for the adjustments required in land use, the use of water, and the discharging of contaminants appropriate to the circumstances of each case, within the bounds of reasonable economic practicality.

The implications of these recommendations for rural catchment management are that it will become even more imperative to base resource management decisions on the best available information so the limits respond to the current state of the environment and degree of resource use, are realistic, and achieve national objectives. In order to prepare for these changes regional councils can start, continue, or increase robust monitoring to assess the state of its water bodies. Regional councils should start identifying priority catchments for setting freshwater objectives and limits and gather sufficient information to inform decisions. This may also necessitate the commissioning of research about the consequences of possible options.

Changes to plan-making process

LWF recommended that there should be a presumption that a collaborative approach will be used for the development of, or change to, freshwater-related national instruments and components of regional policy statements and plans. It is proposed that there would still be the option for regional councils to determine to use the Schedule 1 process under the RMA after public notification of its intention and consideration of comments. It is advisable that regional councils up-skill staff to effectively facilitate, participate, and contribute to collaborative processes.

There were a number of recommendations from LWF about plan agility, many designed to ensure efficiency and flexibility in a planning regime with binding limits. For example, LWF recommended that planning instruments should identify processes for involving the collaborative stakeholder group and the community in the on-going evaluation of plan effectiveness. This includes in decisions on whether possible plan changes are consistent with objectives, have a localised effect, or are likely to have a material effect on objectives. LWF recommended that the level of subsequent consultation or collaboration should reflect the degree of consistency with the original objectives. If implemented this means there will be a formal avenue for rural catchment management to include feedback loops and respond more rapidly to changes in the environment.

LWF was relatively specific in terms of matters that a planning instrument should identify. These include key assumptions and areas of uncertainty, characteristics of the freshwater resource that need to be monitored or tracked, triggers that would prompt a regulatory intervention, and the parameters within which minor and technical changes can be made in an efficient and timely manner without the need for formal consultation or collaboration. Regional councils can begin addressing these matters and incorporate them in pending plan changes.

Environmental monitoring

In late 2011 the Government proposed a new Environmental Reporting Act which is to include amendments to the RMA to improve the consistency of environmental monitoring across regions for national reporting. It is proposed that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment would then be responsible for independently reporting on the state of the environment every five years using data from regional councils. Once implemented this is likely to have implications for rural catchment management as a robust monitoring programme should provide meaningful information on the state of the environment and current trends to inform resource management decisions.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Contacts

NZ Landcare Trust Hamilton Head Office
www.landcare.org.nz

NZ Landcare Trust Regional Offices and contact details
www.landcare.org.nz/contact-us

NZ Landcare Trust, Trustee Organisations:

- Federated Farmers of New Zealand
www.fedfarm.org.nz
- Fish & Game New Zealand
www.fishandgame.org.nz
- Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of NZ
www.forestandbird.org.nz
- Federation of Maori Authorities
www.foma.co.nz
- Ecologic Foundation
www.ecologic.org.nz
- Rural Women New Zealand
www.ruralwomen.org
- Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand
www.fmc.org.nz

Crown Research Institutes (CRIs): Science New Zealand represents the 8 CRIs including AgResearch, Landcare Research and NIWA
www.sciencenewzealand.org

Regional Councils: Local Government NZ
www.lgnz.co.nz/lg-sector/maps

Ministry of Primary Industries
www.mpi.govt.nz/

Department of Conservation (DOC)
www.doc.govt.nz

DOC List of Regional offices
www.doc.govt.nz/footer-links/contact-us/office-by-name

NZ Farm Environment Award Trust
www.nzfeatrust.org.nz

QEII National Trust
www.qe2.org.nz

New Zealand Native Forest Restoration Trust
www.nznfrt.org.nz

New Zealand Ecological Restoration Network
www.bush.org.nz

National Wetland Trust
www.wetlandtrust.org.nz

Tane's Tree Trust
www.tanestrees.org.nz

Land & Water Forum
www.landandwater.org.nz

Ours - The Manawatu River Story
www.manawaturiver.co.nz

Kaimai Catchments Project
www.landcare.org.nz/Regional-Focus/Hamilton-Tauranga-Offices/Kaimai-Catchments-Project

Integrated Catchment Management for the Motueka River
<http://icm.landcareresearch.co.nz>

Ministry of Primary Industries – SLM Hill Country Erosion Programme
www.mpi.govt.nz/environment-natural-resources/funding-programmes/slm-hill-country-erosion-programme

International Association for Public Participation
www.iap2.org

Inspiring Communities
www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz

Good Practice Participate
www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz



For further information and resources
supporting 'Community-owned Rural
Catchment Mangement: A guide for partners'
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