



REGIONAL FORUM

People Water and Land – *Te Mana o te Tangata, te Wai, te Whenua*

RECORD OF WORKSHOP

Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 October 2021
Phase 3 Workshop 15, held at Ascot Park, Invercargill

Present

Fiona Smith (Chair)
Phil Morrison (Deputy Chair)
Kelsi Hayes
David Diprose
Lisa Pearson
Estelle Pera-Leask
Darren Rewi

Vaughan Templeton
Michelle Roberts
Rose Hanley-Nickolls
Sean Bragg
Cain Duncan
Paul Marshall (via Zoom)
Bernadette Hunt

Focus of the workshop

1. The Regional Forum continue to explore options and develop concepts
2. The Regional Forum hears and considers scientific and economic modelling outputs
3. The Regional Forum to agree on how their advice will be recorded and by whom

Due to COVID-19, a last-minute venue change resulted in this session being held at Ascot Park rather than at Takutai o Te Titi Marae (Colac Bay), which had been the intended venue for the workshop.

Day one

Start and welcome

Chair Fiona Smith opened the workshop with a karakia. She acknowledged the change in location due to COVID-19 and that while it was disappointing the Forum could not meet at Takutai o Te Titi Marae, she thanked the kaitiuiti for relocating the workshop so the members could meet in person. Fiona led a discussion among the Forum members to help them to reconnect with each other and to focus on the work ahead as they transition into developing and finalising their recommendations. The need for impartiality was reiterated as they strive to consider the needs of the Southland-wide community.

Fiona recapped the work they had undertaken to date, noting the advice and information they had received from the many stakeholders and interested parties. She thanked Te Ao Marama Inc. and Environment Southland, noting that their assistance had been consistent, valuable, honest, and transparent. She acknowledged the pressure that was starting to be felt and offered reassurance that the Forum was on track with where they needed to be.

Packaging the advice

The Forum have learnt about and considered many possible actions and mechanisms (Methods) that could be used, singularly or jointly, to effect change within the freshwater environment. In this session the Forum explored if and how these might be combined in their package of advice.

Computer modelling – scenario outputs

The Regional Forum had previously identified bundles of Methods that they would like to ‘test’ by running through computer models. While not full scale technical assessments, these were designed to show how far full implementation of good management practice (GMP) and Ngai Tahu ki Murihiku’s preferred methods get us in achieving the reductions required to meet the draft freshwater objectives. Exploratory scenarios were run to provide indicative answers to these questions. Once it was realised answering the first two scenarios would not be far enough, two further exploratory scenarios were included – so the Regional Forum ended up with the following scenarios:

- Good Management Practice (GMP)
- Ngai Tahu ki Murihiku preferred methods (discharge of wastewater to land and return of indigenous vegetation and wetlands lost since 1995)
- Wetlands – more indepth scenario
- Repurposed land (or land retirement)

Both scientific and economic computer models were used to run exploratory scenarios to estimate what changes might be expected within Southland if these Methods were employed as a way of improving freshwater and what impact this would have on the Southland economy. The Forum were presented with the outputs in two separate sessions – science-focused outputs followed by economics-focused outputs. Both presentations were facilitated by Environment Southland staff and associated specialist consultants Ned Norton (LWP Ltd) and Dr Nicky McDonald (Market Economics).

These presentations generated a lot of questions and much discussion. Presenters highlighted the benefits and the limitations of computer models in general, as well as the specific models used for the scenario testing. It was explained that the model scenarios were developed to align with each other as far as possible, however, differences between science and economics, and the data that they use, somewhat limits direct comparison of outputs. Nevertheless, the outputs of these exploratory scenarios were of sufficient quality and usefulness to be used as a tool to help the Regional Forum understand the type and scale of effect these Methods might have.

Of significant note was that the scenario outputs from the science modelling showed that on average across the region, there would still be a gap between these possible mitigation methods and where Southland needs to be to achieve its freshwater aspirations.

Explorative discussion followed which covered many topics and concepts, including: Sediment; practices beyond current GMP (GMP+); costs and gains; catchment scales and variations between FMUs; GIS innovations; degree of farmer engagement/uptake (now and in the future); soil types and appropriate/best land use; development of wetlands; Ngai Tahu involvement; alternative avenues; existing regulations and those known to be coming; non-market benefits; who should fund mitigations, and how; timeframes and scale.

The Regional Forum showed an interest in having an additional science scenario looking at destocking. This and the remainder of the economic scenarios are to be presented at a future workshop (probably in December).

Evening kōrero with rūnanga

The Rūnanga had been invited to share an evening meal and kōrero with the Regional Forum. This was moved to an afternoon session due to the change in location of the workshop. Although the change in location resulted in fewer people being able to attend, Stewart Bull and Maria Barlett led an informal conversation

around the perspective of Māori, how and what had changed over a lifetime, and how remediation of freshwater in Southland would benefit them.

Stewart reflected on his sense of disconnection from the environment, and the resulting lost sense of mana, because environmental degradation has resulted in an inability in many places to practise mahinga kai or drink the waters. He talked of his responsibilities for the welfare of future generations and of the worries he has for them.

Forum members explored various topics with Stewart including: Greed verses need; co-development and co-leadership; aspirations for the Waiau River and issues around water quality and quantity i.e., balancing resource use to ensure sustainability; and the need to find a new 'normal'. Stewart acknowledged the Forum members for 'stepping up' and thanked them for their mahi.

Day two

Structure of advice

The Forum continued to explore the implications of the Methods they're considering. Breakout group discussions were run as a way for the Forum to test the realities of how Methods might be implemented and how this might work 'on-the-ground' and in differing environments.

Topics explored included: Retiring or repurposing land; land acquisition; trials, incentives, and penalties; new industry opportunities; transitioning; economic returns; opportunities and need for innovation; risk assessment processes; benefits of collaboration; a co-governance approach; catchment plans; positive cumulative effects; climate change; wetlands; education and outreach; and resourcing/funding methods.

Break out group findings were presented, and further exploration ensued. Discussion indicated a realisation and an acceptance that GMP+, or even 'GMP++', will not be sufficient. The difference between the state of freshwater currently and where it needs to get to in order to meet the community's aspirations is significant i.e., the gap is huge and there will be no 'silver bullet' quick fix, business as usual needs to change.

It was agreed that there would be an additional workshop in November to ensure that the Forum had sufficient time to have further explorative discussions, so they can be confident in the main structure of their advice. The December workshop would be focused on fleshing out the detail.

Drafting the report

The forum reconfirmed that they wished the Forum's Deputy Chair, Phil Morrison, to be the main author of their recommendations report and that he would be supported by a small group of Forum members who could commit to the time required to perform editorial duties. Fiona Smith, Lisa Pearson, David Diprose, Sean Bragg, Bernadette Hunt, and Rose Hanley-Nickolls volunteered to make up the editorial team. It was agreed that this 'Report Team' would meet monthly as the report was drafted. Phil would draft the report content and then the editors would review and provide comment/feedback for Phil to consider. Any changes would be made before sharing the draft to all Forum members (and technical support staff) ahead of the next workshop.

Each workshop in 2022 will include a session for report feedback and discussion. As the 2022 workshops have been reserved for refinement of the Forum's advice, Phil will note questions and/or gaps as he is writing, and this will form the basis of the sessions in these workshops. This will ensure that the Forum are able to use the workshop time in the most productive way. Technical staff will support the Forum if/as required.

Waiau River and the Manapōuri Power Scheme

Environment Southland provided information and context on the clause in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 that applies to the Manapōuri Power Scheme on the Waiau River (Part 3: 3.31 (1) (d)).

There are multiple interests in the Waiau catchment. Ngāi Tahu has a long and significant relationship with the river, and this is recognised in the statutory acknowledgement in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. Other interests in the catchment include forestry, agriculture, recreation, and tourism. There are perceived constraints on land use because of the limited access to freshwater for irrigation, use, and dilution.

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) requires councils to set environmental flows and limits for freshwater in a way that puts the health of the water and freshwater ecosystems above all other matters. As part of the limit-setting process, ES Council and TAMI Board will be required to decide how limit-setting will be applied in the Waiau FMU.

The Regional Forum has been tasked with recommending methods and limits to achieve the draft freshwater objectives. To assist the Forum in their task, a series of 'policy questions' were developed by the ES Policy Team to help them consider key topics. Policy Question 13 asks "If Council was to set target attribute states below national bottom lines for the Manapōuri Scheme then what are important factors to consider when developing methods for the Waiau FMU?" The Forum will delve into this issue at a future workshop.

Wrapup comments/reflections from Regional Forum members

- Thanks to Stewart Bull and Maria Bartlett for their mana whenua perspectives.
- Work to refine some of the mechanics of how we might go about implementing methodologies.
- Scenario testing/modelling influencing our thoughts.
- Assessing the risks in terms of certain types of land, using a matrix.
- Made a lot of progress, starting to develop what will be in the report. We are aware of importance of communication with public/wider community.
- It has been hard to articulate our thinking to date. Now, we're starting to draw some conclusions.
- Appreciate people would like to know where our work is going. We've invested in understanding, our ideas are now starting to coalesce and will become more shareable in upcoming weeks/months.
- Scenario information had been eagerly anticipated. Chunky set of information to reflect on and analyse - is reassuring, appreciate the work undertaken to deliver it.
- We have gone a long way towards establishing our ideas. You can see we've come up with similar ideas each time we sit down.
- Ingredients and analogy of the cake – now seeing what it's going to look like and how it will be decorated.
- Assessing the model of improvement in water quality with expected costs, thinking about ideal timeframes for improvements.
- Took some time to consider unique position of Waiau, looking forward to extending that understanding and conversation in December.
- The way this team is working together – such a diverse group of people can come together and discuss with honesty and courage things they're personally connected to. When things get gritty, keep talking, end up laughing. On the whole, cohesive.
- Disappointed we couldn't make our scheduled marae visit due to COVID-19.