

## **‘Restoring the health and wealth of ecosystems’**

CGHS 28-30 September 1998

Main points from the discussion (recorded by Mark Smale).

### **Workshop 1: What do we want to achieve through ecological restoration?**

#### ***Panel opening remarks***

*Shona Myers*

- (1) Retain existing natural heritage.
- (2) Restore connexions between fragments.
- (3) Importance of the land-water interface.
- (4) Maintenance and enhancement of water quality.
- (5) Community involvement from an early stage.
- (6) Restoration framework should reflect regional identity.
- (7) Ecological understanding needed to underpin decision-making.
- (8) Importance of sense of place.

*Mark Bellingham*

- (1) NZ Government’s signing of the Biodiversity Convention is the starting place for and should underpin all our activities.
- (2) What is biodiversity? Fourth spoke in the wheel is cultural biodiversity (sense of place), both Maori and pakeha.
- (3) Restoration of biodiversity is a grassroots activity.

*David Given*

- (1) Linkages between individuals, organisations, and countries are needed to make it work.
- (2) Landscape-level structures and processes are vital.
- (3) Integration between different scales from individual property to national to global is needed.
- (4) NZ has been identified as one of 25 ‘hotspots’ of biodiversity on the globe, the only western country.
- (5) Sense of place is hard to define but nonetheless real.
- (6) There is a universal need for guidance.
- (7) Scientists need to interact with lay people.

*Carol West*

- (1) DoC manages 30% of the country's land area, mostly upland, and a little of the marine environment.
- (2) Restoration has a lowland focus, most of it in private ownership, so community involvement is vital.
- (3) DoC is currently developing a national restoration policy.
- (4) Examples of restoration activities in Southland Conservancy mentioned.

*Pam Richardson*

- (1) Banks Peninsula is a habitat 'island' with good examples of landowner conservation.
- (2) The biggest challenge for restoration is to get endusers (sic) involved. In the past, scientists have ignored or tried to educate endusers.
- (3) Clash between landowners' need to make a living and bureaucrats' and scientists' wishes.
- (4) Endusers have a responsibility to decide what sort of landscape they want to live in.
- (5) Relationship between endusers and landowners needs to improve.

*Bill Karaitiana*

- (1) Restoration and production need to be integrated. Identify the task, the process, and the people. The three traditional baskets of knowledge: knowledge, negatives, and spiritual relationships.
- (2) We should learn to be, rather than engage in an endless quest for knowledge.
- (3) Good ground will ensure good fruit.
- (4) Consultation needs to be early rather than late in the process.
- (5) The value of synergy of collective energies.

*Discussion*

*Q Roger Macgibbon*

What are attitudes to non-indigenous plants and environments?

*A Carol West*

Although adventives are ubiquitous, our first responsibility is to conserve indigenous biodiversity.

*A Shona Myers*

Native species give us our identity.

*A Mark Bellingham*

We should aim to be as 'pure' as possible.

*A Bill Karaitiana*

Find out what the local people want.

*Q David ?Solvik?*

People fear losing freedom, income, way of life. How can this be overcome?

*A Pam Richardson*

Hugh Wilson was initially opposed by local farmers, but is now widely supported. He leads by example. There was no consultation with landowners in the Banks Peninsula District Scheme.

*A David Given*

gave example of a rare shrub on 15 properties. Conservation can achieve practical ends as well as conservation.

*A Mark Bellingham*

We need to understand the economic situation of landowners.

*A Shona Myers*

Although time-consuming, consultation is very important and productive.

*A Carol West*

Wider community needs to help landowners manage their natural areas.

*A Margaret Kilvington*

People can be over-awed by the demand to use local provenances.

*A Georg Santos*

People come to nurseries for information, ecological and practical, as well as plants.

[This evolved into a general discussion]

*Mike Peters*

The Bush Society is a South Island-wide restoration organisation. Christchurch City Council Water Services material is very useful and taps into the NZ 'DIY' approach. Landcare groups in Australia provide a model that we could follow.

*Shona Myers*

There is plenty of enthusiasm to tap into.

*Mark Bellingham*

The 50% of the land area in primary production presents huge opportunities for restoration.

*David Given*

New Zealanders have very little awareness of indigenous biota. We're too negative about the difficulty of communicating with people.

*Michelle Crowell*

Important to have clear restoration objectives. Also important to acquire local site knowledge, invaluable in achieving restoration goals.

*Bill Karaitiana*

Goal congruence between different groups is critical to success.

*Geoff Wightman*

Called meeting of local landowners in Waimate North. Ninety percent wanted to preserve forest remnants on their farms. The will is there but resources are lacking. No practical help is available.

*Joe Rosier*

described Rhode Island scheme in America, an organisation of individuals doing restoration.

*Robin Foster*

Sense of place and identity doesn't come only from natural identity but also cultural identity.

### ***Panel closing remarks***

*Shona Myers*

People need to be involved.

There much grassroots enthusiasm to be captured.

Local identity is important.

Local knowledge is important.

Linkages are important.

*Mark Bellingham*

Importance of sense of place/identity.

*David Given*

Conflicts (e.g., between biodiversity and cultural values) are inevitable in restoration, but need to be debated, not avoided..

A range of scales is important for restoration processes.

The importance of doing rather than talking.

*Carol West*

We respond to the land. “We don’t own the land; the land owns us”.

Partnerships are vital.

*Pam Richardson*

More interaction between all interested groups is needed.

We need to define the purpose of nature conservation.

We need to define the nature of future landscapes.

Management needs to be proactive.

*Bill Karaitiana*

We need to come together with goodwill and passion to restore the land.

## **Workshop 2: Critical success factors in achieving our goals.**

### ***Panel opening remarks***

*Hugh Wilson*

Involvement with local people is important.

Minimal intervention policy is desirable.

Restoration needs to be integrated.

*Di Lucas*

Information is fundamental to success.

Information has to be actively shared.

Community involvement should as wide as possible.

Protection of existing biodiversity is a key first step.

*Brenda Greene*

discussed restoration policies of ARC for

‘cultural’ sites (consult, plant) and

‘conservation sites’ (control weeds, plant).

*Philip Simpson*

Overarching need is to restore ecological *processes* rather than places or things.

Ecological health.

is the capacity for life-supporting processes to continue operating

involves maintaining disturbance regimes

involves achieving representative suite of protected natural areas.

Eco-restoration is a huge broad-spectrum activity.

Restoration should be catalytic, i.e., should kick-start natural processes.

Much future restoration will be on private land and therefore community-led.

Scientists can supply information.

Councils and departments have to get the right information to the right people.

Financial resources should come back from the business community.

? *McCann*

Need for ongoing involvement and continuity.

Mentioned his involvement with 'young people'.

Landowners need to know the values of their land.

Advocacy is important, with the potential for good results with relatively little input.

*Philip Simpson*

DoC's advocacy role has withered due to lack of resources.

Landcare groups in Australia are vibrant because of lack of government interference.

[A general discussion ensued]

? *McCann*

Many landowners prefer to deal with non-government agencies.

*Rhys Taylor*

Many citizen-based initiatives are happening, many of them frustrated through lack of scientific knowledge. Restoration begins with community aspirations; scientific knowledge comes later.

*Mark McDonald*

The fundamental problem with restoration ecology is that we are missing restoration 'doctors' and 'engineers'. Educational institutions need to produce restoration 'doctors' and 'engineers'.

Q ???

*How do indigenous groups deal with restoration issues?*

*Brenda Greene*

Gave some practical examples of them.

*Brendan Hoare? (Unitec)*

Many small groups are working towards common goals. How will genetic engineering affect ecological restoration?

*Colin Meurk*

The present science environment is anathema to interaction between scientists and practitioners.

*Harley Spence*

Described the success of Beachcare groups. A whole range of activities will be involved in restoring the health and wealth of ecosystems. The problem has been inadequate processes of consultation and communication. Important to celebrate our successes.

*Hugh Wilson*

Would like to see FfRST fund a RbM restoration project.

*[They won't buy land, but we could achieve this in co-operation with landowners and community groups MCS]*

*Di Lucas*

Group dynamics are crucial. Best to avoid the adversarial approach of the planning process.

*Pam Richardson*

Didn't think agricultural businesses should pay for restoration.

*Jenny Potaka*

Strong motivation by Northland farmers to protect natural areas, but there are major financial problems in doing it. Discussed rate relief possibilities.

*Margaret Kilvington*

Discussed sensitivities of landowners to financial incentives. Partnerships are preferable.

*Cathy Morgan*

Mentioned the \$100k contestable fund of CCC suggested by individuals, a catalyst for restoration ecology.

*Christine Heremaia*

Workshop has focussed on rural areas but Christchurch is urban. Restoration/protection should occur in urban environments as well.

*Susan Wiser*

The long term future of most restoration projects is preservation. Is there scope for restored areas to be economically productive?

*Di Lucas*

Mentioned economically 'productive' projects.

*Philip Simpson*

There are opportunities for 'economic' restoration activities.

*Jenny Steven*

Good to see endusers at this conference. FRST wants to see partnerships between scientists and endusers.