

Completion Report for Envirolink medium advice grant: 612-TSDC41
Project title: Developing a significance classification framework for water body uses
and values: Project Scoping Workshop

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Lincoln University, August 2008

1. Introduction

Tasman District Council is developing a schedule of water body uses and values along with specific management objectives for each water body. It depends on knowing what the values are and also the relative significance of values and uses to help guide water body management decisions (in relation to management of water allocation and quantity as well as effects of activities in the bed or on the margins). Currently the Council (and many others) does not have good, objective significance criteria for the range of water body values and uses. The aim of this project is to get agreement on the values for which the criteria could be developed and to establish the framework (or process?) for how significance criteria might be determined and evaluated.

The workshop outcomes will inform the subsequent Envirolink Tools project by establishing which values will be further considered for development of significance criteria and outlining the process to be followed.

2. Project aims

This project aimed primarily to organise and run a workshop that leads to:

- Gaining agreement on the range of values (instream and abstractive) associated with water bodies in New Zealand for which it is possible to develop significance criteria.
- Discussing, proposing and agreeing on an approach to identifying sets of objective criteria for prioritising these values in terms of national, regional and local importance;
- Identifying lead councils and researchers/consultants that will take responsibility for developing and applying the objective prioritisation criteria to defined values; and
- Ensuring available information is identified, evaluated appropriately and shared as necessary.

The outputs from the workshop were planned to include:

- an ongoing work programme; and
- a draft set of criteria applied to salmonid fisheries in Tasman District.

It is expected that the workshop will firstly inform people about the project and the tool that is to be developed. It will also provide an opportunity for the project managers to present the project framework and intended scope and content and to test it with the participants.

The workshop will provide the opportunity to explore what is currently known and understood about water body value significance assessment and to identify where the major knowledge gaps are.

3. The workshop

A workshop was held at Ministry for the Environment, Wellington, on 21 August 2008. It was attended by the following¹:

Regional/Unitary councils:

- Northland - Jonathon Gibbard
- Auckland - Carolyn Blackford
- Waikato - Kevin Collier
- Horizons Manawatu - Helen Marr
- Greater Wellington - Murray McRae; Summer Warr
- Tasman - Mary-Anne Baker
- Marlborough - Pere Hawes
- Environment Canterbury - Ray Maw
- Environment Southland - Rachael Millar

Expert assistance/advice:

- NIWA, recreational angling - Martin Unwin
- Lindis Consultants, rec. - Kay Booth
- NZ Irrigation Association - Terry Heiler

Government departments:

- DoC - Jim Nicolson, Scott Bagley, Eduardo Villouta Stengl
- MfE - Penelope Laurenson
- MAF - Bob Zuur, Murray Doak

Other organisations:

- Lincoln Uni, Project mgr - Ken Hughey
- Fish and Game, Nel/Marl - Neil Deans

The workshop was organised by a reference group of Mary-Anne Baker (TDC, Chair), Ken Hughey (Project manager and workshop facilitator), Neil Deans, John Hayes and Murray McLea. The workshop agenda is attached as Appendix A.

4. Workshop outcomes

The workshop was highly successful and achieved all of its planned outcomes, albeit with some significant discussion around very important issues.

Six formal presentations were given in the course of the morning to promote discussion and to evaluate existing practices. These presentations (in PDF format) can be accessed via the Environmental Management and Planning theme of the LEAP website hosted by Lincoln University – see:

<http://www.leap.ac.nz/site/section.asp?bid=24§ionid=1031>). The presentations were:

- Water body uses and values - introduction to project: Mary-Anne Baker, Tasman;
- Significant Sports Fisheries: Neil Deans, Fish and Game, Nelson/ Marlborough
- WONI 2 the way forward: Eduardo Villouta, DoC;
- Prioritising Ecologically Valuable Areas for Waikato Streams and Rivers: Kevin Collier, Environment Waikato;
- Using the REC as a basis for community definition of values: Rachael Millar, Environment Southland;

¹ Apologies were received from: Matt Hickey (Otago), Kerry Hudson (Gisborne), Rosemary Miller (Taranaki), John Hayes (Cawthron), Raewyn Moss (Meridian Energy), Nick Brown (Economic consultant), Gail Tipa (Iwi consultant).

- Identifying water management zones, values and standards in the Horizons Region: Helen Marr, Horizons Manawatu.

Those present agreed there was a national need for standardised criteria to allow the prioritisation of in- and out-of-stream values within regional planning contexts. In particular the following agreements were reached.

There needs to be standardised terminology. A particular recent example has been use of the term 'notable' in the proposed NPS on freshwater. Those present concurred with the view that the following should be used subject to definition agreement:

- nationally important
- regionally important
- locally important
- data deficient.

There was discussion around the term 'insignificant' and some more work is necessary on the need of otherwise for this classification.

Value definition involved considerable discussion. Debates of particular note included:

- the extent to which biodiversity should be treated as a single value and ranked as such (Environment Waikato), or as multiple values. Ultimately it was considered both views are valid.
- the extent to which the RMA terminology should direct choice of values. For example sections' 6 and 7 include significant habitat of fauna, amenity and intrinsic values. An approach that takes these values into account but is more pragmatically concerned with values for which criteria could feasibly be developed was agreed to.
- whether water quality is a value in its own right, e.g., Pupu Springs and Canterbury groundwater? Most believed that water quality is a parameter that affects/influences activities/values and should be treated that way – there is room for more debate here.

Whatever the case it was clear that the ultimate list of values would be too large for any short-term ongoing project to deal with. It was therefore agreed to cluster the values under the four 'well-beings' and to strategically identify a defined number to develop criteria for (as shown in Table 1). Considerations included current relevance for Regional Council water policy development, potential data availability and representativeness (i.e., jet boating and rafting were dropped in favour of kayaking, fishing and swimming).

Also discussed was the extent to which stakeholder consultation was provided for. It was agreed that there would be a need to work with other agencies who hold relevant data, such as the NZRCA, however, the timeline and the budget both precluded extensive consultation. The group largely agreed that the inclusive nature of the project and the process to be followed are rigorous and the project outcome was a tool in future management decisions.

An ongoing programme of work was agreed to with volunteer councils and key research providers identified (see also Table 1; subject to funding and other resource availability). The nominated researchers in some areas still have to confirm availability, although only Dr Mike Joy has not yet been contacted regarding potential ongoing work.

Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the individual projects were prepared as part of designing the ongoing programme of work. It was emphasised that these TOR needed to specify that ultimately the agreed criteria needed to reflect SMART criteria,

i.e., the Global Environment Forum projects and programmes, and many others as well, typically incorporate indicators chosen against SMART criteria²:

1. Specific: Related to achieving a specific objective/outcome;
2. Measurable: All parties agree on the indicator, what it covers and there are practical ways of measuring the indicator and reporting the results;
3. Achievable and Attributable: There is a known cause and effect link so that if the indicator changes to an undesired level then an intervention can be undertaken;
4. Relevant and Realistic: all stakeholders must buy into the indicators;
5. Time-bound, timely, trackable and targeted:

An additional criterion, based on the integrated nature of this work, can be proposed:

6. Already in use for related criteria.

Given the addition of this sixth criterion it is proposed all projects produced criteria that ultimately meet the SMARTA criteria.

A timeline proposed for a follow-up Tools project was agreed to. Environment Waikato expressed the view that it would be unlikely to meet this timeline.

FRENZ (Freshwater Environments of NZ) links explicitly with the Waters of National Importance (WONI) project, the 'natural' component of which is DoC's responsibility. The need for an ongoing cooperative and collaborative working environment was identified by all participants. In particular the Department of Conservation offered to cooperate fully with use of its FRENZ initiative and related approaches. To this end DoC will be making FRENZ available for all regional councils and will cooperate with initiatives that attempt to integrate FRENZ with efforts to develop the criteria as envisaged in this project.

² See:

<http://gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPIndicators/mepindicators.html> accessed 8 Feb 2007

Table 1. Values and programmes of work to define criteria (highlighted rows are agreed areas for criteria development and application)

The four well-beings	Core value	Specific values/ activities	Key research contact and organisation	Volunteer council and contact	Issues
Cultural	Iwi/ tangata whenua		Gail Tipa	Southland, Rachael Miller	Discuss specific values and connections with other well-beings
Social	Recreation ³	Angling	Neil Deans (F&G), Martin Unwin (NIWA)	Tasman – Mary-Anne Baker	Explore the link between matching angling and the REC, while also using the ROS. Also, how to deal with angling in its broadest sense, e.g., whitebaiting
		Kayaking	Kay Booth (Lindis), Rob Greenaway	Tasman – Mary-Anne Baker, West Coast - TBC	Note the need to deal with kayaking/ canoeing in separate but related ways – consult with NZRCA
		Swimming	Kay Booth (Lindis)	Horizons Manawatu – Helen Marr; Tasman – Mary-Anne Baker	Note the need for an initial scoping meeting to maximise efficiency issues between regions.
		Rafting			
		Jetboating			
	Community benefits	Public health	Paul White and Nick Brown for consistency	Northland	Possible work area but Northland staff are stretched and probably not possible within a short time period
	Amenity (non-recreation)				
Economic	Irrigation		Nick Brown – econ. consultant	Environment Canterbury - Ray Maw	Need to work also with Terry Heiler, Irrigation New Zealand
	Hydro power		Nick Brown – economic consultant	Environment Canterbury - Ray Maw; Otago - TBC	Need to work also with Terry Heiler, Irrigation New Zealand. Possible issue if energy companies will not identify potential resources and participate in ranking
	Industrial use				This could be linked for example with forestry mills, mining, freezing works, etc. Thought that criteria above might also apply here?

³ Generally the criteria need to be very closely aligned so that the sum of the specific value classifications can be used to derive overall recreational importance.

Environmental	Biodiversity ⁴			Environment Waikato – Kevin Collier	This is based on the view that biodiversity is a holistic term and needs to be classified as such. EW does not think it can complete this exercise within the same timeframe as individual values.
	Biodiversity	Invertebrates			
		Native fish	Mike Joy – Massey? TBC	Greater Wellington – Murray McLea	Note the need to connect with recreation – Kay Booth
		Wildlife (birds)	Colin O’Donnell – DoC, Ken Hughey – Lincoln University	Environment Canterbury – Ray Maw	
		Indigenous vegetation			
	Natural character				
	Landscape			Marlborough – Pere Hawes	Note the work being undertaken by Boffa Miskell for Marlborough DC, and also ARC initiatives.
	Ecosystem Health				
	Habitat (S6c RMA)				Generally agreed that habitat would be included in: - - Invertebrates; - Native fish; - Wildlife (birds); and - Indigenous vegetation; and then applied if appropriate here.
		Trout and salmon	Neil Deans – F&G Nelson/ Marlborough	Tasman – Mary-Anne Baker	Note the need to connect with recreation – Kay Booth

⁴ Note that there were two important views here: first, that biodiversity be viewed in its entirety and be dealt with as such (Environment Waikato); second, that councils needed to rank the key individual components. It was agreed that all the biodiversity criteria need to be very closely aligned so that the sum of the specific value classifications can be used to derive overall biodiversity importance.

Appendix A - Agenda for workshop

PRIORITISING RIVER VALUES - OUTLINE FOR THE 21st AUGUST PLANNING WORKSHOP

Location: Level 1, Environment House, 23 Kate Sheppard Place, Wellington.

Workshop aims:

- Bring councils (and others) up to speed with the project and gain buy-in
- Get councils and science, technical and policy advisors to agree on values, help identify data sets and availability, begin identifying criteria, and develop a linked work programme, including a 6 month timetable

Programme:

- 0900-0910 Introductions, timetable for the day, etc: Ken Hughey (KH)
- 0910-0930 Presentation of project justification, aims, methods and timeline: Mary-Anne Baker
- 0930-0945 WONI update and connections to this project – DoC primarily
- 0945-1015 Presentation of fisheries proposed criteria, discussion and confirmation - to show the potential/ possibilities. Emphasise the need for threshold changes of value or status: Neil Deans

1015-1030 Morning break

- 1030-1115 Council application presentations – or ‘Making sure we don’t re-invent the wheel’:
1. Kevin Collier, EW: ‘Prioritising Ecologically Valuable Areas for Waikato Streams and Rivers’
 2. Racheal Millar, ES: ‘Using the REC as a basis for community definition of values’
 3. Helen Marr, HM: ‘Identifying water management zones, values and standards in the Horizons Region’
- 1115-1130 Discussion of morning session, to date: KH to facilitate
- 1130-1215 Confirm value sets – discussion based session: KH to facilitate

1215-1300 LUNCH

- 1300-1345 Identify data sets, national, regional, local, others and availability for each value set- break out groups to confirm and define
- 1345-1500 Development of Terms of Reference for each value: host council and key contact, suggested expert/consultant/scientists, others, timeline, etc
- * Hand out templates
 - * Break group into sets of similar values and develop TOR/work programme for all of the “values”
 - * Report back to group
- 1500-1530 Where to from here, etc?

1530- Afternoon break and finish