

The collaborative turn in NZ freshwater management:

Who's steering, and where are we going?

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Big questions about collaboration

Understanding our predicament:

- Where did the collaborative turn come from?
- What *work* is 'collaboration' meant to do?
- Why not 'collaborate'?

=> Where is the collaborative turn heading – and where *should* we go from here?



Collaboration: where did it come from?

- Scandinavia via Guy Salmon, 2008/9
- Land and Water Forum
- CWMS and ECan Zone Committees
- Structured decision making (Hawkes Bay) etc
- NPS-FM 2011/2014 does **not** mention/require collaboration
 - Yet it has become a de facto model



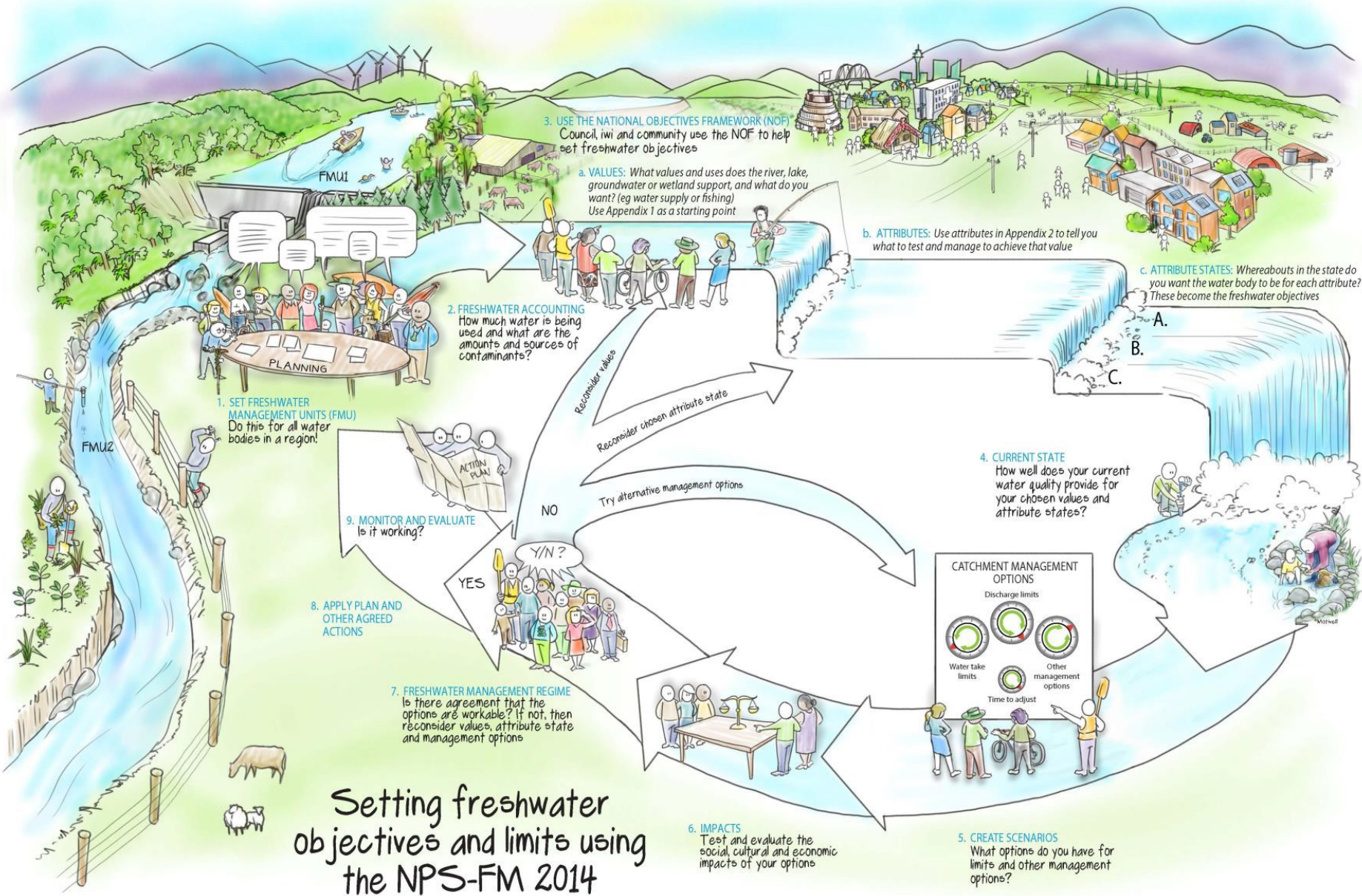
Collaboration – what work does it do?

Collaboration in NZ is generally framed as:

- Including key players (env court)
- Consensus
- Making difficult distributive decisions
- More legitimate – less conflict after-the-fact

=> Creating consensus 'outside' of politics – is it really possible?





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Collaboration – *has it worked for us?*

The past 6 years have revealed 'collaboration' to be:

- Expensive – who pays?
- Difficult – skills needed?
- Exclusive – can all participate?
- Not-so-innovative – lowest-common denominator?
- Not-so-worthwhile – decisions cherry picked by govt, network saturation

=> But it is still a better way to do business... right?



Taking a step back...

We've been trying to operationalize a specific concept of 'collaboration' in NZ

- consensus
- 'representative' participation
- formal devolution of decision making

We haven't worked through the costs/benefits of **diverse** responses to these challenges



Collaborative turn – who's steering, and where are we headed?

- **RMA reform**
- MfE – guidance, implementation
- LAWF
- Research/ers
- Practitioners (e.g. IAP2, RCs)

⇒ towards 'best' model for Collaboration



McDonaldising democracy?

Rather than regulating for a specific concept of Collaboration (with a capital C)...

Perhaps we should be asking bigger questions about how to make our environmental democracy more collaborative:

1. Can Collaboration be tacked-on to fix our RM system?
2. Where might Collaboration fit within a wider collaborative regime?



1. Can Collaboration be tacked on to fix our existing RM system?

- Have we specified Collaboration too narrowly?
- Should Collaboration be used to make regulations, to raise issues, or implement plans?
- What kind of resourcing/infrastructure would be needed to make Collaboration work beyond NPS-FM?
- If Collaboration fails, are we to go back to the drawing board?
 - Collaboration fatigue



2. Where might Collaboration fit in a collaborative regime?

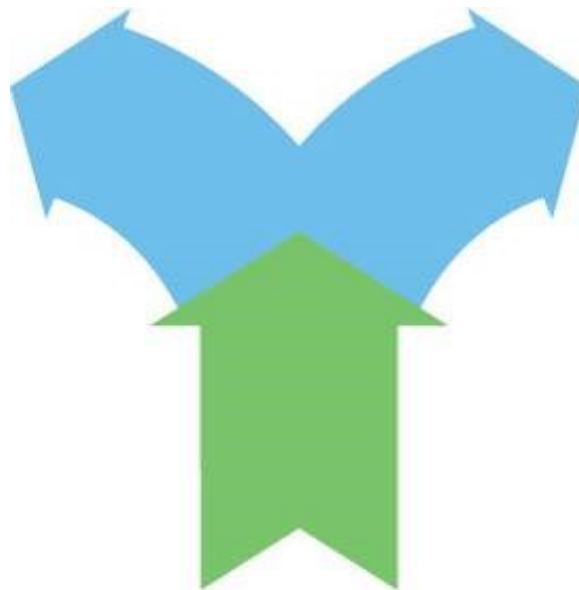
- Can the purported benefits of Collaboration be pursued through other means, e.g. wider culture change in RM?
- Election cycles, political support and resourcing
- Treaty settlements and partnerships – is big-C Collaboration even an appropriate vehicle?
- At what spatial scale and temporal frequency can we expect civil society actors to invest in participating?



We appear to be steering towards a cul de sac of narrowing options and huge costs, when we need a longer view (with more lanes?)

Regulatory model
of collaboration

Collaborative
'regime'



Conclusion

- 'Collaboration' has been narrowly specified and conceived
- Shift from operational questions (about Collaboration) to strategic questions (about collaborative regimes)
- Tension around narrowing our concept of Collaboration versus broadening our collaborative *repertoires*

=> What kinds of collaborative regimes are desirable and feasible

