

Workshop Notes

Session 2: Te weu o te kaitiaki – The roots of the guardian

Te weu o te kaitiaki – The roots of the guardian

The session was presented by Phil Lyver (Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research), with support from Puke Timoti (Tuhoë Tuawhenua Trust)

Working as a plenary, participants checked understanding of words and terminology and recapped the topics covered. Some key words included:

Whakapapa: the interconnectedness between all elements of the living and non-living realms. It refers to the tangible and intangible genealogical connections, relationships, and linkages between the natural environment and the cosmological domain)

Mauri: the representativeness and condition of the relationships and responsibilities between elements of whakapapa; it also denotes the interconnectedness and appropriate sequential order of elements within whakapapa)

Mana: authority, prestige, agency

Ihi: a measure of the vitality of mauri and mana of the environment and tangata whenua.

Tapu: (closely aligned to wairua) something that is set apart, sacred, or forbidden with an untouchable quality. It has innate qualities drawing those from its origins within whakapapa. The application of tapu places animate or inanimate objects under restriction, therefore often imbuing those objects with mana or a greater level of reverence. The function of tapu was to provide boundaries and protect the mana and mauri of a place, object, time, species, person, or people

Ahikaaroa: important for identity, having a place to stand, and for the mandate to make decisions at a place and for people)

Participants then addressed the following questions:

How does your organisation currently support and enable the relationship and connection that tangata whenua have with their environments?

Regional councils

- Via co-design and co-management
- Have specific committees – Māori committee and regional policy group
- Local hapu engagement
- Through policy direction. Looking at Mātauranga Māori and how to integrate through all council business

- Committees consist of local Māori and they provide their aspirations and needs. They work as a partner in the process (e.g. Canterbury Water Management Strategy)

Universities

- Through culturally responsible teaching practice. This may be still a little aspirational. Have specialists to help teach Pacific and Māori students

What new approaches from the presentation could you apply?

- Ecological baselines: There is great value in understanding historic ecological baselines' or 'reference ecosystems' as they can provide insights into what a restored population or ecosystems could potentially look like. These ecological baselines are helpful for a) understanding the scale of losses or creeping degradation, and b) consider what can be done/needs to be done over what timeframe to improve desired outcomes
- The issue of shifting ecosystem baselines recognises that how communities perceive the health and condition of an ecosystem can be affected inter-generationally. Restoration or environmental management projects should think about this issue when considering how they measure their 'restored' habitats. For example, a 'large' kereru flock was 300 birds for a kaumātua, 50 birds for a middle-aged person, 5 birds for a young person
- This means mainland islands such as 'Maungatautari' are critical to reset the baseline, as are memories of our eldest people. Areas that have been rehabilitated (with pictures and data of what they used to be like) are also really important to show the outcomes of interventions and beneficial 'halo' effect and to understand limitations

What might get in the way of applying this (these)? And what could you do to overcome these barriers?

Relationships

- To foster the new relationships with Māori organisations:
 - Need a diversity of staff to honour these relationships
 - Need to value relationships for real (not as a tick box exercise)
 - Need to extend relationship through the whole organization
- Longevity of relationship
 - Engage with Māori organisations on multiple issues at the same time. Don't meet with them on separate issues; try to get efficiencies in engagement (and be realistic about timeframes)

Policy

- Impacts of policy
 - The impact of water allocation, e.g. the grandparenting water allocation approach disadvantages undeveloped iwi land. Other approaches could be better
 - Existing uses and the fact they are provided for as a right in statutory plans means that those uses have lots of power. This means longer term solutions/approaches which may be more sustainable solutions are more difficult to implement
- Mauri and holistic nature of Phil's approach is helpful, but this can be lost in the planning process

Capacity

- Capacity – time to engage by Māori is currently very limited
 - With regional councils, engagement seems more ad hoc and on issues when needed
 - Regional councils need to give effect to the Treaty as well
- Regional councils are lacking in terms of their approaches and mechanisms for engaging tangata whenua

Other

- Determine the linkages between economic development and mauri. What are the trade-offs that communities might have to consider, e.g. the ability to source wild foods
 - Ecosystem service markets may be a solution, e.g. pay for ecosystems services from the land)
- Knowing Marae/Iwi/Trust structure so can go to right place for the various issues/questions