

ICM Arts and Science Project

Mountains to the sea: Exploring integration and collaboration in the Motueka River catchment using art and science.

This “ArtSci” project, being carried in conjunction with the ICM research programme, is focused on two things:

1. Understanding more about the process of collaboration between people with different world views and work interests.
2. Through development of an art “Work”, raising awareness or increasing our understanding of issues associated with the multiple facets of Integrated Catchment Management – especially the social and environmental interconnections within the Motueka River catchment.

One outcome of the project will be a collaborative “Work” developed by the team of six – three based in Nelson and three at Lincoln. This work could be a structure, photo essay, film, installation... the options are wide open at present, but we would like to involve people within the Motueka catchment in some way.

This project started with a workshop in October 2002 that looked at the possibility of collaboration between artists and scientists. The workshop focused on how artists and scientists worked within the Motueka catchment. Following this workshop a proposal was put to the “Smash Palace” arts and science dialogue fund supported by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology and Creative New Zealand. The “Mountains to the Sea” project was one of only three groups (out of 23) that were successful in gaining funding.

The first part of this project has been to learn ways of creating common ground between the artists and scientists involved. We have developing this common ground by talking to one another about the catchment, exploring the different ways we think about it and discussing what joint projects could be worked on to achieve our second goal. To do this we have used a shared web-based workspace where all group members can drop in with their ideas and comments. An important part of our work is developing some understanding of the way nature and culture form our environment. This means that we have much to learn about the catchment, its communities and its history.

The people involved in this work are:

Andrew Fenemor:	Leader of Landcare Research’s Integrated Catchment Management Programme in Nelson, with a background in agricultural engineering, hydrology and resource management.
Maggie Atkinson:	Landscape architect, artist and formerly involved in environmental science.
Suzie Peacock:	Artist, Art & Design Programme Leader, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.
Chris Phillips:	Scientist, Landcare Research with interests in knowledge management, erosion processes and slope stability and sediment delivery to streams.
Chrys Horn:	Scientist, Landcare Research with interests in participatory processes, participatory evaluation, and resource management.
Margaret Kilvington:	Scientist, Landcare Research with interests in participatory processes, participatory evaluation, and integrated catchment management.

‘We make landscapes according to the political system in which we operate, the economic use we see for the land, our aesthetic preferences, our social conventions - all of these summarised under the label of culture’ (Joan Nassauer, 1995).