

Learning about sediment in the ICM research programme

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A major focus of the Motueka ICM research programme is the involvement of stakeholders in the research, specifically involving the Tasman District Council as environmental management agency and different groups of stakeholders living in the Motueka catchment. A number of innovative ways to facilitate constructive interaction that more closely links science management and policy are being trialed through the programme. One of the latest of these has been the establishment of a Sediment Collaborative Learning (CL) Group.

The Sediment Learning group aimed to provide a new forum to put into practice many of the things that Margaret talked about in her opening e-mail. These include a focus on active and experimental learning which emerges from the use of dialogue approaches to develop a shared understanding and adaptive management or “learning by doing” approaches on the ground. The group emerged from a programme initiative in November 2004 that wanted to see how such an approach could develop from discussion among a range of stakeholder interests.

What made this group different was that it was set up among a group of people who wished to find something to work together on, rather than to solve a given problem. Groups that are task-focussed are commonly found in organisations, and can emerge across groups in response to crises. However groups that are focussed on building relationships – i.e. acknowledging that above all they want to work together for their community or environment - have to look for things that they can do together. In science programmes we are normally task focussed, whereas long term environmental management requires an equal emphasis on relationship support. The group did agree to begin with a focus on some issue that relates to sediment management.

The group met first in May 05, and comprised Andrew Fenemor, Les Basher, Tim Davie, Roger Young, Will Allen and Margaret Kilvington from the science team. The range of people with different interests that also joined the group comprised Neil Deans, Mick Park, Hayden Henry, Colin Michie, Eric Verstappen, Mary-Anne Baker, Andy Karalus, and Lewis Metcalfe. Lewis and Hayden left the group following job changes.

The group has met in total four times, with their third meeting in October last year being a field trip. The first two meetings involved the group discussing their goals from the

learning group, and working through the range of issues that arise from considering sediment from different viewpoints. The group's goals were set out as:

- Trying to understand each other's views
- Building a shared view for moving forward by working together
- How to take this (learning) back further to the wider stakeholder groups involved.

Following the discussions that followed the second of these meetings one main topic were picked up by group members to work on. This involved looking at management practices and the relative impacts that they have to varying weather events (e.g. storm intensity) in terms of factors such as sediment yields and in-stream biota. This topic was further discussed at the field day, and was subsequently developed by e-mail discussion and Tim Davie's presentation "Populating Management Curves" which provided some data from other field work to further support the group's discussion. Tim's powerpoint has been put up on the ICM website at <http://icm.landcareresearch.co.nz/> Further work will look to round this work up and look for more data sets and different impacts. People have noted that we can look across biology and economics, and that there is a need to link across disciplines and management silos.

A second topic that has raised the interest of the group emerged from discussions following the field day, and revolves around the need to look more closely at what is a healthy river. This has since been the topic of a number of e-mails. The discussion highlights how that different groups all have different views and reasons that they use in assessing measures of river health. This is a topic that the group wants to continue with, but that also can link with other initiatives and funding proposals being considered within the programme.

A third topic is looking at the lessons that are emerging from the Sediment Collaborative Learning group. At the last meeting people commented on how the group went further down the track of multi-stakeholder dialogue than most current participatory efforts, which usually involve bi-lateral engagement. The importance of the field day was commented on, as was the surprise that people had engaged so willingly in this process.

In this way the lessons learnt from the Sediment Collaborative Learning Group feedback into work being done and planned in the ICM programme itself. The lessons being learnt about what works for this group and what doesn't are being directly linked into other programmes both within New Zealand (e.g the Auckland-based Low Impact Urban Design and Development FRST-funded programme) and internationally (e.g. the Challenge Programme for Water, Food and Environment CGIAR-funded programme).