

NOTES: AOTEA CONSERVATION COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

Claris Conference Centre, Monday 23 November, 10.15am-2.30pm

Purpose

Identify and agree opportunities for collaboration over the next 12 months, based on shared priorities for conservation and ecosystem restoration on Aotea. These may be projects, places, species, education or other things of importance to the group.

This document is the combined transcript of the notes from the working groups and workshop discussions. Please also refer to the Overview and Agenda and the Top 5 Priorities for Conservation Collaboration in 2021.

Participants' objectives for the workshop

In session 1, participants as individuals, wanted to see the following achieved through the workshop:

Agreed priorities and action

- Agreed focus – holistic – including marine environment
- Priorities and holistic approach
- All working together to protect land, fresh water, moana
- Some priorities to work on together
- Action, not single focused, and integrated plan
- Actions!
- Identify problems, plan and eliminate
- Identify potential research projects that deliver impact

Community connection

- Community involvement with a common goal
- Taking the pulse of common ground
- Community involvement at all levels; develop trust in each other; trust is imperative for the future
- All organisations engaging with the community
- Connections – increase with general public

Learn from process and connect with others

- To listen and learn
- Here to listen and learn
- Respecting directly in process
- Meet new people in conservation and come away with new dots connected – connections
- Network

Collaboration

- Collaborative thinking
- Strengthen collaboration, link into mana whenua and value exchange
- Collaboration in the future to achieve goals with support from Auckland Council and other agencies, mana whenua leadership

Mana whenua involvement

- Mana whenua hui and involvement, education
- Mana whenua input into conservation eg whales disappearing, story of loss; create an environment where they can come back

Biodiversity restoration

- Protect oceans around Aotea
- Healthier wetlands and removal of pines
- Aotea Biodiversity Ark
- Continuation of resurgent bird populations – and indicator
- Direct rules eg no cats on Aotea (story of cat impacts eg on kereru); island wide rat control
- Restoration of Awana estuary and stream
- An overview of CMS and what research would be most effective on island - impact

Other objectives

- Succession planning
- Teaching younger people to be involved in conservation
- A consensus on minimising the use of poisons in the environment of Aotea
- DOC sticking to core business ie Conservation rather than tourism; Biodiversity/Conservation

Reflecting on 2020

(Please refer to Placement for details of 2019 summary of values and threats and priorities mentioned here)

Values – do these still resonate? Any new/changed values?

- Yes they do
- Aotea community (multiple mentions – 10+)
- Mātauranga Maori – a foundation, potential/leverage, help with priorities, emphasise this more, timing is right, portal for journey; funds to facilitate this (multiple mentions 6)
- Rangatahi – new initiative; value of youth coming through; schools doing well
- Maori and mana whenua values/community (multiple mentions 8+)
- Biodiversity/Biosecurity – multiple mentions - 9
- Flourishing like to use to! What are we comparing it to? Stories are important
- Recognise the uniqueness and specialness of what we have
- Education/knowledge (Community) and skills; bridges between ages, diverse backgrounds, cultures;
- How to increase, advance and grow the conversation – with visitors also (opportunity!); more tools and resources
- Collaboration – several mentions
- Marine environment – this deserves its own heading – iwi lead (rahui, mataitai, taapuru); marine reserve (multiple mentions)

Threats – any new/changed threats?

- Agree with previous 2019 hui notes
- Still seeing increasing impacts from threats listed in 2020 (pests, biosecurity/invasives, climate)
- Biosecurity even more critical at our borders – be proactive and keep upping our game
- Climate change driving threats to biodiversity – but other drivers are still important; impact on species, forest, biodiversity (multiple mentions)
- Increased fire risk (multiple mentions)
- Ecosystem resilience – how do we assist this?
- Add risks from increase in visitor numbers on environment of Aotea – control/cap numbers
- Vehicles on beaches and in back country
- Consider levy/tax (eg \$45pp on entry), to improve biodiversity and manage risk of importing pests
- Funding – more funding is available overall (multiple mentions) but needs to be ongoing
- Keep the IP and knowledge on the island
- DOC is chronically underfunded – change in priorities by DOC to lift status of Aotea

- Communication – still challenging; must follow up post-Rakitu to show that risks have not been realised – lost opportunity
- Te Ao Maori – education and understanding needed
- Capacity – huge issue; understanding this the Aotea way (multiple mentions)
- Decision making – still an issue, but has been some improvement (need a pou to support right way of operating) – risk of a decrease in island-based decision making
- Increasing population (subdivisions) – need for covenants
- Dogs and cats as companion animals but also a threat to wildlife
- Fragmented monitoring, consistent sharing data across all groups; feedback important to show impact to community/agencies
- Need ongoing effort – understand annual changes eg that impact feral cats

Progress on priorities – how did we go in 2020?

- Agree with previous hui priorities (in general all groups agreed with these)
- Rakitu declared rat free; regeneration (several mentions)
- Have maintained what was started but one new invasive species – Asian paddle crabs
- Conservation programmes confirmed, even under COVID – and increased in some cases (eg Auckland Council investment on Aotea and confirmed positions)
- More connections between groups
- Additional community efforts and role models – Aotea Trap Library/free peanut butter, Ecology Vision, OME, Awana (multiple mentions)
- Feral cat trapping – northern Aotea project/Tu Mai Taonga (multiple mentions); conversations re cats and companion cats
- More A24s on Hirakimata
- Aotea Bird Count – collaborative and community based – platform for other monitoring
- Communication/education/engagement/visitors – yes has been improvement eg DOC Kauri Dieback ambassadors, Ecology Vision in schools, GBIET work – but still needs more
- Improved awareness of all aspects of environmental issues
- Better experience of DOC/Council/Local Board
- Auckland Council moving towards 2 and 3 year funding/contracts
- Aotea Ora Trust (re carbon and ecological footprint)
- Employment opportunities and procurement – island based, island led
- No longer advertising Aotea as a place to fish by accommodation providers

What are the gaps in priorities?

- Te Ao Maori awareness
- Engagement with mana whenua on monitoring and research, via funded roles
- Climate change
- Fire management and increased understanding of the threat to people and biodiversity
- No marine protection progress – mountains to sea; not enough marine protection still (multiple mentions)
- Marine reserves and fisheries management conversation; possibility of six protected sites that move around the motu; education, awareness and enforcement
- COVID 19 impact – what does it mean for Aotea?
- More integrated management of pest species
- No progress on freshwater and marine monitoring
- Measure what difference pest control is making – share data, communicate information - from single entity
- Dog ownership conversation needed; Dogs trained/support to behave for good of Aotea - several mentions
- Need greater focus on Boatie arrival – what is happening in interior of Aotea
- Change Barrier Air promotional vico to reflect proper visitor behaviour
- Can we talk about biodiversity achievements rather than “rat free”?
- DOC accountability and consultation (re Rakitu)

- Relationship with iwi – Rakitu Slightly increased protection and action – particularly on private land
- Community communication re Rakitu outcomes – multiple mentions of this issue
- Protection of biodiversity on DOC estate – changing ecological priority of Aotea/DOC ranking system
- DOC needs to refocus on Biodiversity
- No visits to pest free islands have happened
- Road kill eg birds (due to increase in cars / visitors)
- Island based food production, seed banks, resilience
- Long journey - understanding and relating to long term agency plans (DOC, Auckland Council)
- Knowing whose job it is to take on the threats (eg predators)
- Relationships: people changing; who to talk to' fear
- Communication with community – sharing information from these sessions

Reflecting on 2020: Themes in observations by groups in morning session

Community conservation and engagement

- Growth in Community Conservation, including growth in local projects and private landowners taking action
- Communication and involvement of community
- Doubling down on education

Mana whenua

- Mana whenua involvement
- Mataurangatanga
- Building capacity eg through developing rangatahi

Vision

- What is “flourishing” on Aotea? Eg return of whales/tohorā
- Sliding baselines – eg kereru, whales, fish, birds – people think this is an unspoiled place – is not

Climate impact

- Climate change – stands alone as an issue, what will the impacts be? What is the value of our forests under climate change?
- Drought, fire and water risks increasing

Visitor management

- Visitor increases – how to deal with it; tourism messaging; what are the consequences for nature eg roadkill of birds and lizards
- Building the conversation on the island, and with visitors, including boaties

Department of Conservation

- DOC role – improve engagement, Rakitu feedback, DOC prioritisation – low levels of pests on Aotea not valued

Marine

- Marine is a common priority and needs to stand alone; including the deep sea

Review of potential priorities for collaboration

<i>Identifying priorities – we were asked to consider...</i>	<i>The impact may</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree up to five • Must be collaborative • Must be impactful • Describe it in a sentence • Is it: already funded, proposed/planned or is it new today? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease threats • Increase what we value – eg species, ecosystems, community connection to nature • Increase mauri • Increase capacity and skills

Groups identified 11 potential priorities for collaboration in 2021 and then a “Top 5” (two votes per person)

TOP 5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION IN 2021	OTHER OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED – NOT PRIORITISED IN TOP 5
<p>1 Marine protection - 14 votes, four groups described this opportunity in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New collaborative initiative. Identify and agree a plan that catalyses multiple projects – iwi and community lead; activism highlights; influence change; new funding and seed funding needed • Set up rahui/mataitai/monitoring • Marine ecosystems; climate change impacts on species • Reaching common understanding of what marine protection might look like; build on Dec 2020 hui; engage, engage, engage 	<p>Community education and communication 5 votes, one group put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and improve communication/education to increase engagement in conservation on Aotea (impactful, collaborative, planned) <p>Improve tools and support 3 votes, two groups put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve support to private landowners – resources, equipment, fencing, wages, cutting through red tape • Improve our toolbox kits – requires funding
<p>2 Fresh water - 13 votes, three groups described this opportunity in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshwater ecosystems – what we have, threats, understanding actions and opportunities • Freshwater restoration – hui to establish values, threats, goals etc then action; fencing – some funding available • Healthy waterways – including wetland protection/enhancement, riparian planting 	<p>Fire and climate event readiness 3 votes, two groups put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change – preparedness/build resilience ie fire/drought/cyclone/interlinked – large scale threat to biodiversity • Fire management – threat and response to people and ecosystems; capacity built, education, manage for fire risk eg what we plant, core part of conservation
<p>3 Enable mana whenua— 10 votes, three groups put this in their top 5 (see also Rangatahi and Employment below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Tiriti enacted: building and learning; acknowledge, power/empower/share power; apply the treaty; support mana whenua to lead the community; funding exists, agencies willing • Mana whenua: more employment opportunities; enable co-governance; value exchange; rangatahi; Rakitu Restoration Plan • Kaitiakitanga: supporting and enabling capacity for frameworks for mātaurangatanga (traditional knowledge) 	<p>Upskilling and employment 3 votes, one group put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and local procurement opportunities; upskilling our people, including rangatahi (youth) <p>Visitor impact 2 votes, two groups put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOC community presence and involvement in visitor information • Tactical visitor messaging: Identify portals, enrol messengers, “make it everywhere”, ensure Aotea driven (values), amplified and consistent, redirect Local Board funding (which is there)
<p>4 Feral cats— 6 votes, two groups described this opportunity in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathway to cat eradication: steps to get there; start! • T ū Mai Taonga – planned initiative, partly funded, now needs feasibility and operational plans— collaborative! 	<p>Rangatahi 1 vote, one group put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and including rangatahi (youth) at all levels; learning by doing and seeing eg visits to pest free islands
<p>5 Return Tīeke – 5 votes, one group described this opportunity in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring back tīeke to Glenfern and Windy Hill; already planned and partly funded; huge community impact - positive 	<p>Effectiveness of pest control One group put this in their top 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance pest control effectiveness – island specific eg data on changes in food sources throughout the year for various pests – then target control