

Overview of what the Trust has been doing and how the context has changed (Eric Jorgensen)

Through the last quarter of 2016 many important processes were underway that would impact the future management and state of the environment of the Marlborough Sounds:

- MEP (minus aquaculture)
- MPA proposals
- Fishing for Our Future
- National Environment Standards for Plantation Forestry
- National Environment Standards for Aquaculture
- NZKS Salmon farm relocation process

Many of those processes were being managed by different agencies.

All of those processes have substantial interdependencies with others in the list; none should stand alone.

All of those processes have multiple stakeholders across the region (and New Zealand) holding multiple and often diverse values and views.

And all of those processes look to manage activities that have the potential to substantially impact eco-system health within the Sounds.

Collectively they provided an opportunity for lead agencies to utilise collaborative approaches; approaches that engage multiple stakeholders to co-develop enduring management solutions for our coastal environment for the betterment of all and, most vitally, the coastal marine environment itself.

In other words; the opportunity was ripe to commence the creation of an integrated management framework; a framework recognising the integrated functions, connectivity and productivity of our eco-system (that we all rely on), recognising the need for integrating and managing the collective impacts of all that utilise and value those eco-systems and recognising the need to integrate existing, somewhat disparate (and sometimes competing), management processes. The Trust has previously bundled this up as 'Integrated Management'; today people might paraphrase that as EBM.

The Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge is founded on that approach.

Central government politicians said they believed the way forward was through collaborative and community engaged (though not necessarily led) processes.

So the Trust, we followed these matters with interest and hope.

After discussions with MDC, we did not think it was the appropriate at the time to continue to push hard ahead with our plans as outlined through the forums early to mid-last year. Rather, we should wait and see how those processes 'bedded-down'.

If the involved agencies could see and understand the need to 'connect the dots' then we may not need to act at all.

But they did not, or, could not (e.g. MDC may want to try adopting an EBM (or holistic) approach but are restricted by the bounds of the RMA - for starters).

So, in terms of what the Sounds needs from its' management agencies and people the situation remain somewhat 'status-quo'.

So? What is the issue with the status-quo? Emerging research (which will resonate with many) suggests that existing management processes are overly litigious, adversarial, fragmented, ad-hoc and slow to adapt to change/new information.

We don't have to look far for the results of this:

- *State of the Environment Report 2015* "Marlborough's marine biodiversity is not in good shape, particularly in the Sounds. The significant issues are..."
- *Our Marine Environment 2016 (MfE)* recognises that in "our coastal waters, harbours and estuaries the top issues - coastal habitats and ecosystems are degraded" and, "we are leaving uncertainty for future generations". Degraded marine habitats and ecosystems are one of the top three issues identified.

The effect of us humans and our activities on our environment is seeing that environment continuously degrading.

Things have to change.

The consequences of passing an ecological tipping point is that there is no point having an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff; you'll need a whole ICU with life support. And a lot, a whole lot of time for recovery. And it may never be the same again.

When talking about the state of the environment people, at times somewhat glibly in my view, use terms like "we must ensure future generations must have the same opportunities as we do".

Not good enough I say; THEY, the next generation deserve better. We can do better. We know we have a degraded environment. Knowing that we have a responsibility to set about the act of restoration, merely halting further decline is not good enough.

The Trust has determined to 'front-foot' these challenges in a more direct manner than it has in the past. We have presented our plans to Council. This change in philosophy coincided with Peter's Winston Churchill Scholarship work reviewing similar scenarios elsewhere around the World. There are some practices in other places that may work for us here with some adaptation.

Today is a first opportunity for the Trust and Peter to share and discuss these evolving ideas with you all, listen to your initial reaction and to begin to plot a way forward.

There is a way forward but we all must play our part.

That said, enough from me.

One of the foundations for good decision making is good information. The definition of 'good information' is multi-faceted but we must also recognise that when making decisions about the marine environment we will never have perfect or complete information. One of the things we have identified the need for and commenced work on with the MDC is a coastal research strategy for the Marlborough Coastal Environment.

We are aiming to present a more detailed presentation on that strategy at the next forum. Steve will tell you a little more about that. After Steve Sean will present an overview of his research which provides an insight of how relevant research can really help inform management discussions and decisions.