

Tākaka Valley Community Hikoi

On Saturday, May 3rd, a group of enthusiastic Golden Bay locals went on a special journey through the **Tākaka Valley – from the mountains to the sea**. The twenty-five participants brought a wealth of knowledge and curiosity to the day.

Our hikoi started at **Waitapu Bridge**, where Margie Little from Manawhenua ki Mohua opened with a Karakia, blessing the journey. She shared the deep cultural significance of the lower reaches Tākaka Catchment, where the sacred waters of Waikoropupū connect with the Tākaka and flow out to the sea.

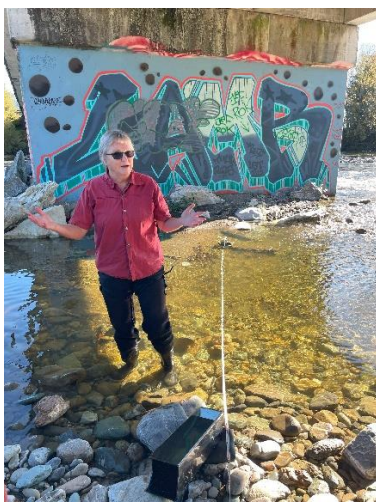


From there, we boarded *Rosa*, with Maddy at the helm, and headed towards the **upper Tākaka Valley**. Surrounded by indigenous forest and birdsong, Greg Napp from Department of Conservation presented an overview of the work DOC has been doing to protect this large and unique area, encompassing Kahurangi National Park.

Julie Sherratt from Friends of Cobb told us about the efforts of over sixty volunteers who have been trapping pests in the Cobb for many years. She recalled how quiet the forest used to be – and how, the birdsong can now be heard across the Valley.

As we began our descent, we stopped at **Lindsay's Bridge**, where the Claire Webster from Tasman District Council provided an animated demonstration of how to test water quality and shared indicators of river health.

Local botanist Simon Walls gave us a fascinating overview of the rare plants that grow only on Mt Arthur's marble and limestone – species found nowhere else in the world.



At **Uruwhenua**, Corrigan Sowman welcomed us onto his family farm. A short stroll to a vantage point, allowed us to view the extensive native planting and Corrigan shared the innovations which the family has

implemented to both improve productivity while enhancing land and water health. The unique characteristics of doline lakes was another focus of conversation.

At Fish Paradise, in the lower Motupipi, we saw the extensive rehabilitation work which has slowly transformed the river over time. Claire Webster shared lessons and challenges associated with creating a healthy and biodiverse aquatic environment.



Our last stop was at the **Motupipi river mouth and estuary**, where we enjoyed lunch in the sun looking out over the tranquil waters.

Ursula Passl from Tasman Environmental Trust highlighted the significance of estuary environments – where freshwater flowing from the mountains meets seawater. Flourishing ecosystems and the temperate climate attracted successive Māori tribes to the area, with the length of occupation reflected in the abundance of interconnected cultural sites found along the coast.

Elaine Asquith introduced her work as Predator Control Activator with TET. She spoke about the power of collective community pest control efforts and shared some exciting new developments in AI-based trapping technology.

Celia Butler from Tasman District Council spoke about the unique birds that live along GB shorelines, and the risks they face – especially from dogs disturbing their nesting areas.

Margie Little offered a closing Karakia, and we all went our separate ways from Waitapu, grateful for a day full of connection, learning, and shared purpose.

Next steps - to collate community storytelling/conversations into a visual, highlighting the special nature of the Tākaka Valley and community efforts to improve the health of the catchment for future generations.