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### **Integrating diverse social and ecological motivations to achieve landscape restoration**

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## 40 **Abstract**

41 1. Landscape-scale restoration requires stakeholder collaboration and recognition of  
42 diverse social and ecological motivations to achieve multiple benefits. Yet few landscape  
43 restoration projects have set and achieved shared social and ecological goals.

44  
45 2. Mechanisms to integrate social and ecological motivations will differ in different  
46 landscapes. We provide examples from urban, agricultural and mined landscapes to  
47 highlight how integration can achieve multiple benefits and help incentivise restoration.

48  
49 3. Better communication of ecological and especially social benefits of restoration could  
50 increase motivation. Social and economic incentives from carbon markets are evident in  
51 agricultural landscapes, biodiversity offset schemes are unlikely to motivate restoration  
52 without proof-of-concept, and framing restoration in terms of ecosystem services shows  
53 promise.

54  
55 4. *Synthesis and applications.* When setting restoration goals, it is important to recognise  
56 the diverse motivations that influence them. In doing so, and by evaluating both social and  
57 ecological benefits, we can better-achieve desired restoration outcomes. Customising  
58 incentives to cater for diverse stakeholder motivations could therefore encourage restoration  
59 projects.

## 61 **Keywords:**

62 Old-field restoration, biodiversity offset scheme, ecosystem services, restoration incentives,  
63 mine restoration, stakeholder engagement, urban restoration, socio-ecological.

## 65 **Introduction**

66 The transformative and widespread impact of human activity on the Earth's ecosystems  
67 requires landscape-scale restoration approaches to support and promote biodiversity

68 conservation (Menz, Dixon & Hobbs 2013). Here we define ecological restoration as the  
69 'process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or  
70 destroyed' (SERA 2016). In principle, ecological restoration can achieve best practice  
71 outcomes for both people and nature in degraded landscapes (Martin *et al.* 2014; Guerrero,  
72 Mcallister & Wilson 2015). Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability highlights the need for  
73 social motivations to be incorporated into restoration objectives (UN 2015). The *International*  
74 *Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration* (McDonald *et al.* 2016) suggest how  
75 social values can be incorporated in setting restoration goals and objectives, but the social  
76 outcomes do not feature among the proposed indicators of restoration success in this  
77 guiding document or its predecessor, the *Australian Standards for Ecological Restoration*  
78 (SERA 2016). More generally, references to social attributes, aspects, outcomes or benefits  
79 are often mentioned in the literature (Hobbs 2018), but they are usually poorly addressed or  
80 defined, and used interchangeably, making it unclear how restoration outcomes impact  
81 society.

82  
83 While there is agreement that shared goals for social and ecological outcomes are  
84 prerequisites for restoration, there are few examples of shared outcomes being achieved in  
85 practice. Landscape-scale restoration requires the involvement of diverse stakeholders  
86 invested in restoration planning, activities and outcomes (Gold *et al.* 2006). Motivation to  
87 engage in restoration can be influenced by political context, cultural values, personal  
88 attributes and social identities (Fielding & Hornsey 2016). As motivations ultimately define  
89 intended outcomes in restoration, differences in motivations between stakeholder groups  
90 and the nature of the governance arrangements can lead to tensions and divergent  
91 outcomes, particularly if socio-political conflict exists between groups (Fielding & Hornsey  
92 2016).

93  
94 A comprehensive understanding of the socio-ecological context of landscape restoration  
95 could help to set and achieve shared restoration goals (Budiharta *et al.* 2016). In particular,  
96 shared restoration goals could be achieved by understanding and promoting the expression  
97 of multiple and inter-linked motivations (Hagger, Dwyer & Wilson 2017). Whether motivations  
98 for ecological restoration are biotic, heuristic, technocratic, idealistic or pragmatic (Clewell &  
99 Aronson 2006), being explicit about the diversity and inter-relatedness of motivations, and  
100 their potential to change over time, could help identify trade-offs and improve on-ground  
101 outcomes (Iftekhar *et al.* 2016).

102

103 Here we argue that social motivations could be better integrated into ecological restoration,  
104 because integration may provide: a) greater shared ecological and social benefits; b) greater

105 involvement of, and collaboration among stakeholder groups and; c) better governance of  
106 restoration projects. We identify social and economic incentives that can promote integrated  
107 ecological restoration projects into the future. We use examples from Australia to support our  
108 arguments, but many ideas will be applicable to restoration projects elsewhere in the world.

109

## 110 **Benefits of socio-ecological approaches to restoration**

111 Below we outline examples of how social motivations have been integrated into ecological  
112 restoration, and some of the benefits achieved. We begin with examples from three different  
113 settings where landscape-scale restoration activities are prevalent. These landscapes offer a  
114 rich diversity of lessons owing to differences among socio-political and ecological contexts.  
115 We then discuss incentives for restoration and their potential application in these  
116 landscapes, some of the challenges with their current use, and opportunities for potential  
117 future use.

118

### 119 ***Agricultural landscapes***

120 In agricultural landscapes, restoration efforts can increase farm productivity and native  
121 biodiversity on properties (Fischer *et al.* 2010). For example, in south-eastern Australia,  
122 landholders tended to undertake restoration activities if they believed these activities were  
123 likely to benefit their farm as well as the natural environment (Jellinek *et al.* 2013). In South  
124 Australia, community organisations, government agencies and Indigenous groups  
125 collaborated to undertake landscape-scale restoration around a Ramsar wetland (Jellinek *et*  
126 *al.* 2016). In this program, all stakeholders were involved in every step of the planning  
127 process, and new knowledge was shared among project stakeholders. Motivations of  
128 individual farmers to contribute towards landscape-scale restoration in such programs will be  
129 tempered by farm productivity, which determines the amount of farmland set aside for  
130 conservation (Polyakov & Pannell 2016). Productivity losses resulting from land set-aside for  
131 restoration, and the potential for greater financial benefits over the short-term through  
132 traditional farming methods, are trade-offs that may limit the uptake of restoration activities  
133 (Crosthwaite *et al.* 2008). Improved knowledge and communication of the social and  
134 ecological benefits arising from restoration is therefore important for enhancing uptake of  
135 these activities (Alexander *et al.* 2016).

136

137 **Urban landscapes**

138 In urban landscapes, the importance of collaboration to achieve ecological and social  
139 benefits is also evident. For example, a partnership between a municipal council and local  
140 community group in Melbourne, Australia, engages urban residents to become involved in  
141 restoration on their land, retaining remnant vegetation and adding vegetative structure and  
142 habitat features. A study of this program found residents had strong connections to the  
143 environment, and viewed their property-scale restoration activities as contributions to  
144 landscape-scale conservation efforts as well as to their local community (Mumaw 2017).  
145 Council and community members were the key factors promoting and supporting their  
146 participation (Mumaw & Bekessy 2017). Residents were also motivated by their personal  
147 wellbeing, including learning new skills and sharing experiences and knowledge (Mumaw,  
148 Maller & Bekessy 2017). Similarly, a survey of people involved in vegetation restoration  
149 projects across Australia showed social motivations to be important, particularly in urban  
150 areas (Hagger, Dwyer & Wilson 2017).

151  
152 In another study, landholders in Melbourne's semi-rural areas had attempted to return  
153 private land to a pre-colonial condition (Cooke & Lane 2015). The ecological success of  
154 these plantings differed; shifting participant motives for restoration from a desire to return  
155 historical ecological communities, to a desire to establish novel ecological communities that  
156 could persist in heavily modified landscapes. This study showed that considerations of  
157 restoration motivations are not static, and that past experience can shape subsequent  
158 restoration efforts. Similar to agricultural landscapes, urban residents can be engaged to  
159 work collaboratively towards restoration beyond the boundaries of their land if these  
160 activities result in broader social and ecological benefits.

161

162 **Mined landscapes**

163 In mined landscapes there are social, ecological and regulatory pressures that affect  
164 restoration approaches and outcomes (Carrick *et al.* 2015). In Western Australia, mining  
165 companies undertaking restoration near to the capital city and its water catchment have  
166 been influenced by social pressures and regulations. As a result, companies have invested  
167 in research and restoration practice has developed to consistently restore forest  
168 ecosystems, minimising impacts on water supplies, benefiting people and the environment  
169 (Koch 2007). In contrast, the remote mining region of the Pilbara, Western Australia, has  
170 limited visibility to large human populations and restoration has been less successful  
171 (Shackelford, Miller & Erickson 2017). However, these restoration activities can provide  
172 social benefits for remote indigenous communities, through employment opportunities and

173 connection to country, if these groups are engaged in setting restoration objectives.  
174 Moreover, social licence to operate is becoming increasingly important for the mining  
175 industry, even in remote regions (Mercer-Mapstone *et al.* 2018).

176

### 177 ***Incentives for restoration***

178 Depending on stakeholder needs and their motivations for restoration, incentives can foster  
179 and promote restoration activities. While incentives are often framed in terms of direct  
180 payments, payments for ecosystem services are only one approach amongst a range of  
181 policy options for incentivising action (Muradian *et al.* 2013). Critically, payments for  
182 ecosystem services can outcompete the more intrinsic motivations such as heuristic and  
183 idealistic motivations (Muradian *et al.* 2013). However, covering direct costs of interventions  
184 are also common. For example, in agricultural and urban landscapes, pragmatic incentives  
185 such as funds to support fencing and weed control can increase landholders' ability to  
186 implement conservation activities (Nielsen-Pincus, Ribe & Johnson 2015).

187

188 Many incentive programs currently operate in different countries to promote restoration and  
189 conservation activities on private and public land. In Australia, the Environmental  
190 Stewardships Programme and the 20 Million Trees Program promote conservation and  
191 restoration respectively, in the United States the Conservation Reserve Program has  
192 operated since 1985, and in Europe there is the Common Agricultural Policy. In developing  
193 countries, the United Nations REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest  
194 Degradation) programme aims to reduce land-use related emissions, and globally there is  
195 the Bonn Challenge to achieve forest landscape restoration (e.g., 150 million hectares by  
196 2020). In addition to these specialised programs, there are universal incentives for  
197 restoration that might underpin or complement these programs. These incentives are seldom  
198 well aligned to people's motivations to undertake restoration activities (Clewel & Aronson  
199 2006), so we provide examples of how motivations can be better integrated into restoration  
200 incentive payments, and ways to inform future policies and programs.

201

### 202 ***Carbon markets***

203 Carbon markets have been developed to address global greenhouse gas emissions and  
204 have the potential to pay landholders for the restoration activities that they undertake,  
205 predominantly in agricultural landscapes (Bryan *et al.* 2016). Evans *et al.* (2015) showed  
206 there were economic returns and biodiversity benefits for undertaking assisted natural  
207 regeneration in Queensland, Australia, and that carbon farming was a viable land-use on up  
208 to 34 % of the land in a catchment, depending on the carbon price. However, achieving

209 ecological restoration in practice will likely require additional regulation or incentive  
210 payments to compete with other land uses, such as payments for ecosystem services or  
211 accounting that considers the cost of environmental degradation (Maraseni & Cockfield  
212 2015). Furthermore, the carbon sequestration potential of biodiverse carbon plantings needs  
213 to be emphasised to offset both the perception that monocultures sequester more carbon,  
214 and the more complicated carbon accounting for mixed-species plantings (Hulvey *et al.*  
215 2013). Carbon projects that retire agricultural land may also cause a trade-off with food  
216 security, highlighting the importance of considering the social implications of carbon farming  
217 initiatives (Evans *et al.* 2015).

218  
219 Social barriers to carbon farming include uncertainty regarding policy and compliance  
220 schemes, variable carbon pricing and requirements for long-term management of carbon  
221 stocks (Mitchell, Harper & Keenan 2012). There is also potential for financial incentives of  
222 emerging carbon markets to fail to capture all the environmental and social benefits that  
223 could result from carbon projects (Standish & Hulvey 2014). For example, projects can  
224 deliver co-benefits such as honey production which can be highly valued in surrounding local  
225 communities (Funk *et al.* 2014). Ensuring carbon markets achieve high level environmental  
226 and social outcomes will require research that aligns incentives to motivations, and for these  
227 elements to be incorporated into policy frameworks (Standish & Hulvey 2014).

228

### 229 *Biodiversity offsets*

230 Biodiversity offsets are measurable outcomes for biodiversity conservation that are meant to  
231 compensate in full for biodiversity impacts or losses associated with economic development.  
232 They are increasingly being delivered in global restoration projects, driven by economic and  
233 legislative incentives (Bull *et al.* 2013). Biodiversity offsets are created on the assumption  
234 that restoration can recreate ecosystems containing equivalent biodiversity to those lost to  
235 development, i.e. that there is 'no net loss' or 'net gain' in biodiversity, which often may not  
236 be achievable or feasible (Maron *et al.* 2015).

237

238 The blending of biodiversity outcomes and legislative incentives has created inevitable  
239 tensions and potential for unintended outcomes. For example, the choice of baseline against  
240 which the offset is measured can lock in biodiversity loss if it assumes a business-as-usual  
241 scenario of ongoing biodiversity decline (Maron *et al.* 2015). Also, if policy makers have an  
242 interest in promoting development, there can be a perverse incentive to have steeper  
243 crediting baselines (Pattanayak, Wunder & Ferraro 2010). Bull *et al.* (2015) outlines ways in  
244 which social considerations, conservation targets and other drivers can be included in offset  
245 policies, and Maron *et al.* (2016) has described the most contentious social issues related to

246 offsets. While biodiversity offsets have the potential to deliver social and ecological benefits,  
247 this is heavily dependent on a range of interrelated issues including restoration feasibility,  
248 implementation frameworks, social equity, ethical considerations and compliance (Bull *et al.*  
249 2013).

250

#### 251 *Ecosystem services*

252 Framing restoration in terms of restoring or maintaining ecosystem services provides a clear  
253 approach to integrating ecological and social motivations and benefits. A meta-analysis by  
254 Benayas *et al.* (2009) showed that global restoration projects increased biodiversity by 44 %  
255 and ecosystem services by 25 % compared with (un-restored) degraded sites. In agricultural  
256 landscapes, restoration efforts can increase crop pollination and decrease pest invertebrates  
257 (Klein *et al.* 2007), whereas in urban areas they can improve air quality, reduce urban noise  
258 and increase peoples opportunities to engage with nature (Standish, Hobbs & Miller 2013).  
259 Provision of these sorts of ecosystem services can be an important incentive for restoration  
260 activities, especially when linked to improved markets and payment schemes for ecosystem  
261 services (Barral *et al.* 2015).

262

263 The benefits of restoration in providing these ecosystem services are increasingly being  
264 recognised (Guerrero, Mcallister & Wilson 2015), although the economic and social  
265 outcomes of these services are seldom measured (Salzman *et al.* 2018). Similarly,  
266 ecosystem disservices such as competition on crops or gardens from native plant species,  
267 increased pest animals (von Döhren & Haase 2015) and groundwater drawdown are rarely  
268 evaluated. Yet, obtaining these measures and understanding their financial or intrinsic value  
269 or cost is important for determining their social value. Managing or enhancing ecosystem  
270 services are already a stated incentive for restoration activities (Hagger, Dwyer & Wilson  
271 2017), although their social and economic benefits may be greater if these benefits could be  
272 adequately quantified.

273

274 Cultural ecosystem services are worthy of special consideration because of their direct  
275 influence on people's motivation towards restoration and stewardship activities (Masterson  
276 *et al.* 2017). Cultural ecosystem services include those services that underpin people's  
277 quality of life, such as learning, inspiration, and identity support (Díaz *et al.* 2018). Indeed,  
278 ecosystem services as a whole have recently been re-categorised by key intergovernmental  
279 bodies to recognise that: 1) culture, place, and people mediate how all these services are  
280 perceived and experienced, and 2) the different forms of services and motivations to secure  
281 them are intertwined (Díaz *et al.* 2018). Importantly, in landscape-scale projects, developing  
282 collaborative governance can be an important step in capturing these diverse motivations,

283 and building authentic engagement through relationships of trust (Jedd & Bixler 2015). From  
284 a restoration standpoint, cooperation will fail if benefits to individuals and groups are in  
285 conflict, or when socio-ecological systems have problem-causing and problem-enhancing  
286 feedbacks (Cumming 2018).

287

## 288 **A Way Forward**

289 In urban landscapes, understanding the motivations of urban dwellers, and how these can  
290 be integrated with a biodiversity conservation ethic and practice, are research priorities. In  
291 rural settings, there is a long history of farmer-driven restoration of agricultural landscapes  
292 and some understanding of the motivations for this activity. However, a better understanding  
293 of the dynamic social context of restoration in these landscapes is required. In mined  
294 landscapes, restoration has been largely driven by mine closure legislation but there is  
295 scope to more proactively involve local communities, particularly in remote regions to  
296 facilitate higher-level ecological and social outcomes for local residents and indigenous  
297 communities. Better dialogue between mining companies and communities may also foster  
298 social acceptance of mining (Mercer-Mapstone *et al.* 2018).

299

300 Mechanisms such as biodiversity offsets and carbon markets can provide economic  
301 incentives not to clear habitats, removing the need for restoration in the first place. Improving  
302 our ability to predict carbon sequestration resulting from restoration, advancing landscape-  
303 scale restoration, and increasing restoration success under a changing climate can greatly  
304 enhance the ecological benefits of carbon-funded restoration in degraded landscapes.  
305 Similarly, offsets will become more meaningful through advancing best-practice restoration,  
306 reducing uncertainty, and increasing the feasibility of restoration. While not covered here  
307 specifically, the efficacy of incentives for restoration may hinge on how land tenure and  
308 ownership is understood. Where land tenure is uncertain, contested or does not conform to  
309 western notions of individual property ownership, financial incentives may prove unsuitable  
310 (Kolinjivadi & Sunderland 2012). Finally, assessing the economic and social value of  
311 ecosystem services arising from restoration activities, while simultaneously improving the  
312 ecological value of restoration activities through best-practice, would greatly increase our  
313 ability to generate and evaluate the socio-ecological benefits of restoration projects  
314 (Chazdon *et al.* 2017).

315

316 Enabling researchers and practitioners to undertake long-term social and ecological  
317 monitoring of restored landscapes, and collaborate with indigenous groups and local  
318 communities, may deliver greater benefits from future restoration projects. Monitoring should

319 capture ecological and social benefits and engage the local community to ensure ongoing  
320 support for long-term management (Guerrero *et al.* 2017). Socio-ecological researchers  
321 should collaborate with landowners, land managers and practitioner to innovate and develop  
322 restoration best practice.

323  
324 Identifying both social and ecological restoration goals, seeking to understand how they are  
325 interconnected, and incorporating them into restoration decisions would improve shared  
326 ecological and social benefits. Collaborative governance can provide a mechanism by which  
327 different social and ecological motivations can be captured and integrated into restoration.  
328 The scale of restoration and stakeholder heterogeneity are key areas for further research in  
329 collaborative governance (Cumming 2018). Continuing to promote research across  
330 disciplines for progressing the field of restoration ecology - or possibly better termed -  
331 restoration socio-ecology, would greatly increase research outcomes.

332

#### 333 **Authors' contributions:**

334 SJ and RS conceived the ideas and outlined the contents of the manuscript; KW, VH, BC,  
335 LM, SJ, RS, PW, TZ, AG and TE provided examples and wrote sections of the document;  
336 SJ, RS, KW, VH, BC and LM reviewed the manuscript. All authors contributed critically to the  
337 drafts and gave final approval for publication.

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#### 344 **Data accessibility**

345 Data have not been archived because this article does not use data.

346

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