Stakeholder Values Inform Indigenous Peoples' Governance and Management of a Former National Park in New Zealand

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Abstract

The global emphasis on stakeholder engagement in protected area management has increased over the last three decades. Here we present key values of statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups as they relate to their relationship with the former Te Urewera National Park (NP), New Zealand, which is now recognised as “a legal entity” with “all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person.” Non-statutory stakeholders conveyed a close, personal connection to Te Urewera NP in terms of heritage and legacy, which include both consumptive (e.g., hunting; fishing) and non-consumptive use (e.g., sight-seeing, hiking, boating). In contrast, statutory stakeholders expressed a more distant and procedural relationship with the park. Both stakeholder groups perceived the possible transfer of ownership or governance of Te Urewera NP to Tūhoe (the Indigenous Māori peoples of the Te Urewera region) favourably and expressed a desire to be engaged in the future stewardship of the NP. Stakeholders considered the fostering of relations with Tūhoe and other stakeholder groups as important to nurturing and maintaining their links with the area in future. Importantly, common interests that emerge from these relationships can increase mutual understanding between cultures and willingness to collaborate. Moreover, we posit that the legal personhood status for protected areas will be a powerful tool for reconciling pluralistic values and enable deliberative processes and flexible modes of collaboration between Indigenous peoples and non-indigenous stakeholders.

Keywords Stakeholders · Values · Governance · Protected areas · Indigenous peoples · Māori · Te Urewera National Park · New Zealand

Introduction

Protected areas are widely used for conserving biodiversity and biophysical features (Johnson *et al.* 2017). Globally, it is

estimated that 209,000 protected areas cover 15.4% of the world's terrestrial and inland water areas, and 3.4% of the oceans – the total area covering approximately 32 million km² of the planet (Juffe-Bignoli *et al.* 2014). In the modern conservation movement, the momentum for protected area systems primarily emerged from a drive to protect the natural environment from exploitation and land use intensification (Chape *et al.* 2008). Even so, almost 40% of all protected areas (km²) are being managed for sustainable use of resources (Juffe-Bignoli *et al.* 2014). While protected areas have delivered biodiversity protection in many parts of the world, in some instances these outcomes have not been measured or evaluated (Craigie *et al.* 2010; Barnes *et al.* 2016).

Lack of local community engagement in protected area governance and management can lead to the failure or diminished effectiveness of some protected areas (Wilshusen *et al.* 2002; Adams *et al.* 2004; West *et al.* 2006; Roe 2008; Blom *et al.* 2010). Local communities often see protected areas as ‘fortresses’ managed with statutory restrictions that subvert peoples’ rights, activities, and responsibilities for the area (Oldfield 1988; Fiallo and Jacobson 1995; Neumann 1997;

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Khan and Bhagwat 2010). Benefits for local communities living around or within the boundaries of these areas have been highly variable (Dasmann 1984; Fiallo and Jacobson 1995; Borri-Feyerabend *et al.* 2004; Schultz *et al.* 2011; Holmes 2013; Zorondo-Rodríguez 2019). Also, there are increasing concerns about the statutory processes used to establish and manage protected areas at the expense of Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) (Aswani and Weiant 2004; Ruru 2008; Holmes 2013). For example, while a range of protected area tenures have been widely adopted by nations around the world, many of these areas were already under existing customary land management and systems of Indigenous peoples (Rights and Resources Initiative 2015). Therefore, new paradigms, tools, and frameworks (e.g., juristic personhood) for redefining relationships with protected areas that facilitate better benefit and burden-sharing across society are being explored (Franks *et al.* 2018; Studley and Bleisch 2018).

Globally, national parks are an important form of protected area, making up approximately 25% of the protected areas (km²) that have been assigned an International Union for the Conservation of Nature Management Category (Juffe-Bignoli *et al.* 2014). The significance of national parks is deeply ingrained within the national consciousness of many societies. National parks were first gazetted in the nineteenth century by governments seeking to protect and utilise areas of perceived ‘wilderness’ as places for conservation, recreation, and tourism (e.g., USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand; Cleghorn 1861; Ruru 2012). In some countries, however, national parks were founded at the expense of IPLC, with land confiscations and resettlement programmes enabling their establishment (e.g., Poirier and Ostergren 2002; Ruru 2004, 2008; Parks Canada 2010). As a result, IPLC values were often subordinate to and transposed by the dominant culture in the governance and management of those areas. Protected areas, including national parks, link strongly with peoples’ identities, attachment to place, cultural heritage, and conservation, recreation, and economic values (Graham *et al.* 2003; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2008; Stolten *et al.* 2015). The plurality in how protected areas are valued within societies support the importance of their role and function, but it can also be a source of conflict between interest groups (Stolten *et al.* 2015; Mannetti *et al.* 2019). Equitable consideration of diverse value sets, among other priorities (e.g., cross-cultural understanding and communication) is therefore seen as a key component of effective protected area governance and management (Dovers *et al.* 2015).

In New Zealand (NZ), there are currently 13 national parks covering 28,881 km², which is approximately a third of the country’s protected area (Molloy 2015). Prior to 2014, Te

Urewera NP (2126.73 km²) was part of this collective. It was also the ancestral homeland of Tūhoe, a Māori tribal group whose traditional territory included the heavily forested Te Urewera mountain ranges in the North Island of NZ (Fig. 1; Binney 2009). Part of Tūhoe’s Treaty of Waitangi¹ claim that negotiations between the tribal group and the ‘Crown’ (a term signifying the highest or constitutional authority of government in NZ) sought to settle held that Tūhoe land was unjustly appropriated to establish a national park in 1954 (Coombes and Hill 2005). As a result of Tūhoe’s treaty settlement and enactment of the Te Urewera Act 2014, Te Urewera ceased to be a national park (section 12) in July 2014, becoming “a legal entity” with “all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person” (s 11(1); New Zealand Government 2014). As far as we are aware it is the first national park in the world to be delisted.

As part of Tūhoe’s Treaty of Waitangi pre-settlement process, the tribal authority mandated by the Tūhoe people to settle their claim with the Crown, Te Kotahi a Tūhoe (TKAT), consulted mostly non-Māori statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups with connections to Te Urewera NP. Amend to TKAT recognised that many stakeholder groups had a close connection and experience with Te Urewera NP and they wanted to understand the nature of these relationships and the knowledge that the groups could potentially contribute to the future management of the area. Therefore, the first objective of our study is to identify values that conveyed the nature of the relationship that statutory and non-statutory stakeholders have with Te Urewera NP. Our second objective is to identify the values that each group desired to see enshrined in a possible future ownership and/or governance model with Tūhoe and the key cultural and environmental governance principles that could enable non-Tūhoe stakeholder values and aspirations to be realised. We also discuss the delisting of Te Urewera NP and its reclassification within a juristic personhood framework.

Values can be described as higher-order evaluative standards or “trans-situational goals that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group” (Schwartz *et al.* 2012: 665) that influence people’s attitudes, their decision-making, and their behaviour (Rokeach 1973; Olson and Zanna 1993). Key values relevant to this study are those Indigenous and non-indigenous values Lyver *et al.* (2016) identified in relation restoration of a coastal forest in northern NZ. Many of these align closely with the

¹ The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) was signed on 6 February 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and Māori chiefs. The Waitangi Tribunal is “a standing commission of inquiry, [which] makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to legislation, policies, actions or omissions of the Crown that are alleged to breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi” (Waitangi Tribunal 2018)

Fig. 1 Boundaries of Te Urewera National Park, private Tūhoe lands, and Tūhoe's Area of Interest relating to their Treaty of Waitangi settlement in the North Island, New Zealand

concept of relational values that emerged after this work, which relates to living a good life but derived from engagement between people, and reciprocity with the biophysical landscape (Chan *et al.* 2016; Klain *et al.* 2017). Other value types include instrumental (that justify and prioritize conservation action based on ecological benefits to people (Arias-Arévalo *et al.* 2017)) and intrinsic values ("value of ecosystems as ends to themselves and are often represented as moral duties" (Arias-Arévalo *et al.* 2018: 1)), both of which can overlap with relational values (Chan *et al.* 2018). For example, using nature for one's own benefit (i.e., instrumental) does not preclude feeling connected to nature (relational value), or believing that nature has value in itself (i.e., intrinsic).

Methods

Background

Te Urewera is one of the largest remaining areas of indigenous forest in the North Island, and the former Te Urewera NP was one of the larger parks in NZ (Fig. 1). The region contains a diverse range of vegetative types ranging from lowland, sub-montane, montane, subalpine forests, and lowland, subalpine

mires (Department of Conservation 2003). It has also been a focus for tourism, recreation (e.g., hunting and hiking), and conservation efforts since the 1890s. Surrounding and embedded within Te Urewera are the remaining tracts of private Tūhoe lands and settlements.

Participants and Procedure

Prior to the interviews, potential groups of statutory and non-statutory stakeholders ($n = 27$ groups) were identified by TKAT and the researchers. In order to explore and achieve a wider range of feedback, we also used a snowball sampling technique (Fossey *et al.* 2002), through which two additional stakeholder groups were identified. Stakeholder representatives were mailed an introductory letter by TKAT to request their participation in the study. An information sheet and list of potential interview questions were also provided. Following agreement with the stakeholders to be interviewed ($n = 18$ groups), TKAT then provided the list of representatives to contact to the researchers. Reasons that stakeholders declined to be interviewed included limited engagement with Te Urewera NP, or the small area that Te Urewera NP shared with their jurisdictional areas. The Department of Conservation, a government agency, declined to be interviewed on the premise that it would be inappropriate

given the Crown was undertaking Treaty of Waitangi settlement negotiations with Tūhoe at the time.

Of the 18 stakeholder groups that participated, a total of 23 male and 4 female participants were interviewed. Groups were assigned as either statutory ($n = 7$) or non-statutory groups ($n = 11$). We defined statutory stakeholders as groups that engaged with Te Urewera NP (and Tūhoe) mostly through legislative and policy processes, while non-statutory stakeholders typically had a first-hand utilitarian (e.g., hunting, fishing, boating, hiking) and independent relationship with Te Urewera NP.

Of the 18 stakeholder groups interviewed, 14 were with single individuals from respective groups, while four comprised between two and seven individuals. Participants were advised that the results of the study and identification of the stakeholder groups involved would be made public, but were guaranteed confidentiality. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, with one exception of a phone interview with one group. Interviews were conducted between 28 February and 31 May 2012, and lasted between 22 min and 3 h and 20 min. All interviews were conducted by one researcher (PL) and were audio recorded. They were conducted in a semi-structured format with the interview protocol providing only a guide for discussions. Interview questions were jointly discussed with TKAT members to ensure relevant topics and concepts were addressed. Following the interviews, responses were summarised and sent to each of the stakeholder groups to check for accuracy. To aid interpretability, any pauses, stutters, and grammatical errors have been removed from participant quotes reported here.

Coding and Analysis

We conducted qualitative coding to analyse the data using nine primary values identified by Lyver *et al.* (2016) (Table 1). These values emerged as important to both Indigenous and non-indigenous stakeholders involved in the restoration of a coastal forest in northern NZ, and were chosen as our coding protocol (Saldana 2016) for their context relevance (i.e., interest group values in relation to an ecosystem). While the concept of relational values (see e.g., Chan *et al.* 2016, 2018) emerged after Lyver *et al.* (2016), it is noteworthy that many values in the protocol correspond with relational values. The nine values served as the primary codes. These codes comprised of secondary values (Corbin and Strauss 2008) identified inductively (i.e., derived from the data rather than from an existing set of values). For example, a primary value such as ‘stewardship’ (Lyver *et al.* 2016) contained the secondary value ‘access.’ Segments of interview text relating to the nine values were coded accordingly.

Values were assigned into two themes: (i) *Current values* conveyed the nature of the relationship that statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups had with Te Urewera NP at the

time of the interviews; and (ii) *Future values* conveyed that each statutory and non-statutory stakeholder group desired to see realised should ownership or governance for Te Urewera NP be returned to Tūhoe.

The percentage (%) of stakeholder groups that referred to a value was calculated by assigning ‘1’ to stakeholder groups who had spoken about the value at least once during the interview, and ‘0’ (zero) to stakeholder groups who had not mentioned the value at all. The number of stakeholder groups where a value had been assigned at least once was summed and divided by the number of stakeholders in each grouping (i.e., statutory versus non-statutory). Percentages of stakeholders that were assigned a value to their interview narrative at least once were then compared between statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groupings.

In addition, The frequency that each value was assigned to narrative within each stakeholder interview was calculated and analysed using non-metric multidimensional scaling to visually determine differences between groups. Non-metric multidimensional scaling is a robust, unconstrained ordination technique commonly used in ecological studies (Kenkel and Orloci 1986). We also conducted a non-parametric multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to test for differences in values between groups. The non-parametric MANOVA was performed using ANODIS from the ‘vegan’ library (Oksanen *et al.* 2019) in R 3.4.3 (R Core Team 2017), a function for the analysis and partitioning of distance matrices that is analogous to parametric MANOVA (Anderson 2001).

Results

Current Values

All stakeholder groups expressed stewardship as a key value at least once during their interviews (Fig. 2). It was suggested by some non-statutory stakeholders that everyone who uses Te Urewera NP takes a degree of ‘ownership’ in it. A number of non-statutory stakeholder groups recognised that the opportunity to achieve specific aims of their groups had relied heavily on their relationship with the (then) government department responsible for Te Urewera NP (e.g., the Department of Conservation; Supplementary material 1). Non-statutory stakeholders noted that their organisations received a fair chance of participating in decision-making under national park legislation.

Our alternate analysis using the frequency that values were assigned to narrative within interviews demonstrated that statutory stakeholder groups were more strongly associated with stewardship than non-statutory stakeholders, although the two Fish and Game authorities (a quasi-governmental group responsible for gamebird hunting and freshwater fishing management), were also aligned with ‘personal use - consumptive’ ($F_{1,16} = 8.57$, $p = 0.001$; Fig. 3a). The Forest and Bird group (an

Table 1 Nine core non-Indigenous stakeholder values relating to Te Urewera National Park

Value	Value statements
1. Connection	<p>Refers to relationships, both among people (including building understanding, facilitating cross-cultural linkages and interactions, and connecting communities) and between people and place.</p> <p>It is about being out in the natural world and seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling the diverse biodiversity of the area. For example, hunting, fishing, and tramping provide opportunities to experience the challenges in a small-group environment (e.g., couple of friends). Experiences provide topics of conversation when people meet, which binds people together.</p> <p>Experiences are integral to the lives of hunters, anglers and hikers which can define the individual and the group. ‘It’s what we do as New Zealanders.</p> <p>It has become a generational thing – grandfathers and fathers have spent a lot of time up there and now children and grandchildren of members are also going up there. One thing in common is that people love the place [Te Urewera] and have a passion for it.</p> <p>Differs from ‘Personal Engagement’ in that ‘Connection’ can occur among individuals who have met by chance, whereas ‘Personal Engagement’ relates to organised activities.</p> <p>Having a little piece of paradise, feeling privileged to have access to, and enjoying the peace and tranquillity.</p> <p>Wanting to leave a legacy for future generations.</p>
2. Economic use	<p>Specifically addresses the commercial and business opportunities used to provide economic benefit for stakeholders.</p> <p>The park provides employment and business and revenue opportunities for sectors of the community (e.g. professional fishing guides; possum harvesters; motor camp, water-taxi and helicopter services, park and conservation employees).</p> <p>It supports New Zealand’s exposure and standing on the world stage as a region of significant natural beauty, a travel destination, and New Zealand’s capabilities to protect its wild places and biodiversity.</p> <p>Concessions from guided freshwater angling and helicopter operations offer future opportunities for revenue production.</p>
3. Intrinsic	<p>Reflects the value around species’ right to exist within Te Urewera NP free from human-related interference or disturbance. The principle of National Parks ensures that this biological component is preserved.</p> <p>Te Urewera forests represent historical New Zealand since forests have been destroyed elsewhere.</p> <p>It has intrinsic value in that the forests, rivers, lakes, wetlands and the species that exist in these ecosystems have value simply by being there. It is knowing that the richness of our nature is not being lost.</p> <p>Designation as a national park lifts the area’s mana (i.e., prestige) and preserves the area’s intrinsic value.</p> <p>It is about remoteness, isolation (i.e., having the place to oneself), wildness and naturalness. Lake Waikaremoana being difficult to access ensures that it retains its intrinsic value. This value is the outcome of management (i.e., the park is being managed to this value) around the principles of the National Parks Act (For management see ‘Stewardship’).</p>
4. Knowledge & wisdom	<p>Refers to the mutual concept of teaching (imparting knowledge to others) and learning (gaining knowledge), both from people and the environment.</p> <p>The park [Te Urewera NP] provides opportunities that build: (1) life experiences; (2) an intergenerational experience and teaching of life skills, natural history and bush craft; and (3) identity that bonds individuals with predecessors, family, friends, youth, work colleagues, and community. Includes education and training.</p> <p>Includes professional managers’ knowledge around protecting New Zealand’s biodiversity (e.g. Department of Conservation - DOC).</p>
5. Personal engagement	<p>Reflects the valuable role of Te Urewera NP in providing opportunities for direct action and empowering people to make a difference.</p> <p>Relates to being an active part of the formalised process of managing the park (e.g., restoration). It is about being part of club or association activities. Does not relate to decision-making around management (see ‘Stewardship’) or business or profit (See ‘Economic use’). The park provides an opportunity to be involved in something bigger than yourself, giving a sense of ownership and belonging (e.g. voluntary labour towards conservation work, search and rescue, development and maintenance of infrastructure, financial donations).</p> <p>It provides opportunities that build identity and bond individuals with predecessors, family, friends, youth, work colleagues, and community in organised activities.</p>
6. Personal use – consumptive	<p>Refers to the consumptive ways of using Te Urewera NP for the purpose of human benefit.</p> <p>Such uses include, but are not limited to, food, medicine and recreation, such as hunting, fishing (fishing with lure and/or bait which includes catch and release due to the aspect of ‘consumption’ in catching fish, even if later released), and angling (fly fishing which includes catch and release). Commercial business-and-economic use was considered separately.</p> <p>The park is a popular hunting and fishing location allowing individuals to supplement diet with ‘wild foods’ and also target deer herds of significance (Javan rusa, <i>Rusa timorensis</i>) and rainbow trout strains (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i> – Ruakituri riverine strain).</p>
7. Personal use – non-consumptive	<p>Refers to the non-consumptive ways of using Te Urewera NP (e.g., for a wilderness experience, hiking, and bird watching).</p> <p>A wilderness experience refers to being faced with a challenging, wild environment, where navigating the terrain offers the opportunity for one’s individual skill set to be put to the test.</p> <p>With half of New Zealand’s population living north of Taupo, Te Urewera NP is the largest unbroken tract of native forest in the vicinity of this populace and therefore represents their main recreational opportunity to ‘go bush’.</p>

Table 1 (continued)

Value	Value statements
8. Personal well-being	<p>Te Urewera provides an experience of dense forest that cannot be gained anywhere else.</p> <p>Refers to how Te Urewera NP affects people in terms of their physical and psychological health and well-being. Te Urewera being a special place (i.e., with benefits for health and well-being).</p> <p>The park offers an expanse of quiet, undisturbed place for many New Zealanders to escape the rigours and stress of everyday work and home life – it has spiritual and healing value and restores ‘frame of mind’. It is a place to de-stress. The remote, natural quiet and serenity of Te Urewera NP are hugely important to personal experience. It is what people go there for, and what draws them back time after time.</p> <p>The park environment offers visitors opportunities to challenge their individual skill sets, use their judgement, problem-solve, and fosters teamwork and comradeship (e.g., while moving across the landscape hiking, camping, boating, hunting, and fishing), which has positive effects on their well-being.</p>
9. Stewardship	<p>Refers to concepts such as participating in the decision-making and management of Te Urewera NP with the goal of looking after the resource for future generations.</p> <p>Relates to the management of Te Urewera by governing bodies and clubs/associations, whose role may include ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules and regulations are enforced • The park retains its intrinsic value (i.e., does not get over-developed) • Access into the area is open, free, and there are multiple points of entry - having access into Te Urewera NP is considered to have value as a bequest to future generations of New Zealanders • Everyone has a fair chance of putting their perspectives and views out there where a decision-maker weighs those interests up and decides a course of action based around principles of the National Parks Act • Park users support these governing bodies groups because of shared values and because they feel a degree of ownership towards the park. Working to maintain good working relationships with other stakeholders.

environmental preservationist non-government organisation) was most associated with ‘intrinsic’ value of Te Urewera NP (Fig. 3a).

‘Connection’ to Te Urewera NP was the second most common value expressed across both statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups, albeit to a lesser extent among statutory stakeholders (Fig. 2; Supplementary

material 1). The importance of building or maintaining within-group relationships was especially evident among non-statutory stakeholder groups, who highlighted the satisfaction of sharing experiences in Te Urewera NP with others in their group. In many cases, this connection was inter-generational and childhood memories and camaraderie kept people coming back to the area.

Fig. 2 Percentage (%) of statutory ($n = 7$) and non-statutory ($n = 11$) stakeholder groups that had: (i) current values assigned with regard to their relationship with Te Urewera National Park; and, (ii) future values that stakeholders wished to see achieved if the ownership or governance of Te Urewera National Park be returned to Tūhoe

We've got club members and...I'm one of them, and [another family], they're there, my Dad and their Dad..., I've been going up the lake since I was about 10 and I'm 59, so I've been going up there for 50 years. (Non-statutory group member)

A common goal of non-statutory stakeholders especially was the desire for Te Urewera NP to remain as a legacy for future generations, considering it a special place. In contrast, statutory stakeholder groups tended to hold a more distant, and procedural relation with Te Urewera NP, given their function as administrators or managers, rather than users of the park.

While the statutory stakeholders also discussed 'stewardship' and 'connection' as their two most frequent values, the other seven primary values were mentioned in fewer than 50% of interviews (Fig. 2). In contrast, the non-statutory group members mentioned all values in more than 50% of the interviews. The largest differences in values between the two groups were in relation to 'personal engagement,' 'personal wellbeing,' 'personal use consumptive,' 'knowledge and wisdom,' and 'intrinsic' values (Fig. 2).

The high prevalence of non-statutory stakeholders who emphasized 'personal use (non-consumptive)' in their interviews also reflected how much they valued Te Urewera NP for the wilderness experience it provides, its isolation, and the challenge of a wild environment, and partaking in activities such as bird watching and hiking. These stakeholders particularly enjoyed staying in public huts or club lodges within Te Urewera NP (Fig. 2; Supplementary material 1).

Values regarding knowledge and wisdom were connected to the provision of opportunities to educate youth (e.g., native vegetation identification) and adults (e.g., bush craft, hunting, fishing, or the history of Te Urewera NP) within a natural forest environment (Fig. 2; Supplementary material 1). The creation of opportunities to transfer knowledge and experiences between stakeholder groups and with Tūhoe were also identified as important to non-statutory stakeholders, most of whom also valued the opportunity to actively engage in projects and activities around Te Urewera NP (i.e., 'personal engagement'; Fig. 2; Supplementary material 1), with some having volunteered over many years. A passion for Te Urewera NP and a willingness for their contributions to benefit the community were evident for some stakeholders (Supplementary material 1).

Future Values

A desire to build stronger formal relationships (e.g., fostering good relationships with Tūhoe and other stakeholders) was highlighted by many of the stakeholders as important for the

stewardship of Te Urewera (Fig. 2; Supplementary material 2). Members of both stakeholder groups acknowledged that there had been little formal engagement with Tūhoe in the past. In most cases, it was perceived that such formal contact was not needed for organisations to function in Te Urewera NP. While a large proportion of stakeholders supported the ownership and/or governance of Te Urewera NP being returned to Tūhoe through their settlement (Supplementary material 2), all stakeholder groups expressed a desire to share a stewardship role and be consulted in its future management (Supplementary material 2). Nevertheless, there was an expression of caution as to how quickly Tūhoe should be making any changes within Te Urewera NP, with a preference for a process of gradual change:

I think, a process that is evolutionary rather than revolutionary will actually carry the day (Statutory group member)

Stakeholders wished for public interest to remain at the forefront of Te Urewera NP management, and that the area be managed professionally, according to the principles of the National Parks Act (1980). It was perceived that enshrining current national park legislation and regulations in any future stewardship arrangement would be critical for protecting Te Urewera's biodiversity:

They [Tūhoe] should manage the park with all due diligence to the conservation values of the park and the... Acts and regulations as set down under the Act protected wildlife, the ongoing feral animal control. (Non-statutory group member).

One stakeholder group particularly emphasized the importance of keeping Te Urewera NP classified as a national park due to the high status of national parks, in order to attract tourists and provide a source of revenue for Tūhoe. The provision of funding to Tūhoe by the Crown was also considered to be an important secondary value to future stewardship of Te Urewera (i.e., to look after Te Urewera and its biodiversity; Supplementary material 2). Even so, the financial autonomy of Tūhoe (i.e., self-determination) was also seen by both stakeholder groups as an important value for the future. In particular, the creation of local business opportunities that employed local Tūhoe people was reported as important for the tribe by some stakeholders, particularly by non-statutory stakeholder groups. Guided activities (e.g., hiking, fishing, or hunting) and high-end tourism (e.g., luxury accommodation; cultural experiences) opportunities that utilised the natural and cultural features of Te Urewera NP were suggested as possible avenues to explore.

Fig. 3 Differences in values that statutory ($n = 7$) and non-statutory ($n = 11$) stakeholder group currently have with Te Urewera National Park (**a**), and those future values they wished to see achieved if the ownership or governance of Te Urewera National Park was returned to Tūhoe (**b**). Plots represent the results of non-metric multidimensional scaling analyses (NMDS), with the spread of current and future values shown on the top row; and statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups on the bottom row. Values codes are: economic use (orange); personal use: consumptive (dark blue); personal use: non-consumptive (light blue); connection (red); stewardship (pink); personal wellbeing (pink); knowledge and wisdom (green); personal engagement (aqua blue); and intrinsic (light green).

Stakeholder codes are: Forest and Bird (F&B); Friends of Te Urewera (FTU); Gisborne Angling Club (GAC); Professional Fishing Guides Association (PFGA); Federated Mountain Club (FMC); Te Urewera Raukumara Hunting Club (RHC); Waikaremoana Boating and Fishing Association (WBFA); Wairoa Angling Club (WAC); Whakatane Lions Hut Committee (WLHC); New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA); Hunting and Fishing Forum (HAFF); Bay of Plenty Regional Council 1 (BRC1); Bay of Plenty Regional Council 2 (BRC2); Fish and Game (F&G1); Fish and Game Eastern (F&G2); Wairoa District Council (WADC); Walking Access NZ (WANZ); and Whakatane District Council (WHDC)

But I think, if I had one thing to stress, it would certainly be, get something out of it for your people (Non-statutory group member)

Concerns about over-commercialized of Te Urewera NP that would spoil its current natural character were

expressed by some stakeholder groups. Many non-statutory stakeholders felt that the current level of development was appropriate, and that increased commercialisation would threaten biodiversity and spoil the ambience and natural features of Te Urewera. Fears around the use of certain pest control methods (i.e.,

aerial application of toxins primarily to control invasive Australian brushtail possum, *Trichosurus vulpecula*, populations) and how this might affect economic opportunities (e.g., guided hunting) were raised.

They [Tūhoe] want to give it absolutely 100 percent authentic experience up there and they don't want people then to come down tomorrow and get some downgraded version of it. They want us to maintain a very high standard around Māori tourism and we agree with that (Statutory group member).

Values relating to the return of Te Urewera NP to Tūhoe encompassed keeping fair, free, and secure access to the area for all members of the public (Supplementary material 2). Overall, non-statutory groups in particular did not wish to see changes in terms of their connection to and existing activities in Te Urewera NP (Fig. 2; Supplementary material 2). The possible restriction of public access to the park was worrisome for some stakeholders. For example, those groups who valued staying in affiliated club lodges were anxious about losing access to them. Moreover, there were concerns that some members of the public, such as those with limited mobility, might lose their connection to the area if access was restricted in some way. Also, the 'exclusive capture' of fisheries (i.e., a practice where some private landowners bordering lakes, rivers, and streams restricted access to paying clients) was identified as a possible issue that could affect public access. Therefore, public support for the national park being returned to Tūhoe was seen by stakeholders as contingent upon public access being maintained. The allocation of public funding for Tūhoe to manage Te Urewera NP was suggested as a mechanism to maintain support within the tribe for public access to the area.

Both statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups emphasized the value they placed on knowledge generation and transfer as part of their relationship with Te Urewera (Fig. 2; Supplementary material 2). Non-statutory stakeholders also emphasized Tūhoe's traditional knowledge and existing capacity around that knowledge system, which could be used to revive customary practices (e.g., customary bird harvest) or contribute to economic development opportunities such as tourism. It was suggested by stakeholders that growing capacity within Tūhoe people would be fundamental for allowing them to take full advantage of economic ventures within Te Urewera NP, and opportunities for training and experience would be critical to that growth. Support for growing Tūhoe's capability was seen by both stakeholder groups as important (Fig. 2; Supplementary material 2). Statutory stakeholders, in particular, were in a position to offer information and advice that they thought would be of benefit to the tribe.

So the aim was to actually try and grow their [Tūhoe's] own capacity and capability around doing things which they saw as being done by others within their area. So we flicked the switch on that and flipped it around and said, right, we'll train you up (Statutory group member).

In discourse about future governance, non-statutory stakeholders saw the need to become more directly involved in the stewardship of Te Urewera NP as much as the statutory stakeholders (Figs. 2 and 3b). This was evident in the intermingled alignment of both statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups around values (e.g., stewardship) that they wished to see achieved if the ownership or governance be returned to Tūhoe ($F_{1,16} = 1.06$, $p = 0.338$; Fig. 3b).

Discussion

The Importance of Identity and Connection to Place

The mountain ranges of Te Urewera NP, being the largest remaining expanse of forest in the North Island of NZ, combined with the cultural heritage of Tūhoe settlement, hold a unique position in the psyche of New Zealanders. Indeed, many stakeholders spoke of Te Urewera NP as a "special place". Te Urewera NP provided stakeholders with an extensive, quiet, and undisturbed place that delivers a high-quality experience. Engagement in intergenerational activities within the park (e.g., camping, fishing, boating, hiking, hunting, and inter-generational knowledge transfer) contributed to an identity for individuals and families, and facilitated bonding and ties among families, friends, and community. Forest users within developed nations often express a strong connection to the people they share time with in the forest environment (i.e., friends, family, fellow stakeholders), as well as to the place itself (MEA 2005; McNeill 2016). By developing a shared history and experience with the same place, the feeling of being part of a community with a collective identity and ownership was reinforced (Horwitz *et al.* 2001; Cheng *et al.* 2003). In this study, non-statutory stakeholders had contributed significant personal time, finances, and logistical resources to the development and maintenance of the services and infrastructure in Te Urewera NP as a consequence of their feeling of 'attachment to place' (Stedman 2002; Scannell and Gifford 2010; Lewicka 2011). It also gave participants a perspective of bequeathing their interest in the park to their children, grandchildren, and future generations.

A sense of connection to place and common identity are key relational values that drive relationships between people-to-people and people-to-nature (Chan *et al.* 2018). These values can reaffirm social relationships between people and place in a way that facilitates mutual respect and kinship (Stewart *et al.* 2004; Leigh 2005; MEA 2005; Gould *et al.*

2015). While an instrumental perspective may focus on using nature for one's own benefit, relational values provide a sense of common purpose around giving back to nature, which also promotes a greater diversity of perspectives, trust-building, reciprocity, and duty of care (Klain *et al.* 2017; Chan *et al.* 2018). Developing a sense of common identity or connection can be heavily influenced by instrumental or intrinsic values at the outset of an individual's engagement with a place; however, over time these values may achieve greater overlap with, or even transformation into, relational values within the individual and collectively. These values can be also used to enable cross-cultural contact and collaboration through the identification of common ground between interest groups (Gould *et al.* 2019). Non-statutory stakeholders in this study had long relationships with Te Urewera NP, which was manifested through extensive overlap between instrumental (e.g., personal use – consumptive) and relational (e.g., connection to place) values. We suggest that the expression of values from a perspective of what contributes to a good, meaningful life (Chan *et al.* 2016; van den Born *et al.* 2018) facilitated stakeholders' consideration and acceptance of an alternate governance system for Te Urewera NP centred on Indigenous people. Reflecting on their own perspective of living a good life (through connection to people and place) allowed stakeholders to consider Tūhoe governance as compatible with those values. We also postulate that an emphasis on relational values will facilitate greater cross-cultural linkages and empathy, and improve interactions allowing people to share their knowledge, break down cultural barriers and stereotypes, and improve governance (Tengö *et al.* 2014).

Engaging Governance and Stewardship Systems that Support Conservation and Community Wellbeing

Stakeholders expressed a sense of stewardship obligation for Te Urewera NP, especially statutory stakeholders (Fig. 3a). For non-statutory stakeholders who had been involved with Te Urewera NP since its inception, a sense of 'ownership' came from their personal connection, interaction, care, and passion for the area (Fig. 2). One non-statutory stakeholder group referred to themselves as a "watch-dog for Te Urewera NP," keeping a careful eye on how the park was being managed by the Department of Conservation, and how it was being used and treated by public visitors. There was a personal need to make a difference, to protect the landscape and its biodiversity, but also make it a place to enjoy, to build links between community and environment. This form of interplay between individual agency (power to act) and collective identity is recognised as fundamental for broader environmental care (Agrawal 2005; Clayton and Myers 2009; Phipps *et al.* 2011).

Competing values, uses of place, and aspirations can create significant challenges for joint governance or management

arrangements that involve a complex array of actors within communities, government agencies, and industry (Carlsson and Berkes 2005; Nursey-Bray and Rist 2009). While stakeholders acknowledged that it was unlikely that Tūhoe's management would detrimentally impact Te Urewera NP, it was unclear how stakeholders would respond to possible changes in key areas that Tūhoe might implement (e.g., developing bylaws, activity and livelihood approvals, approving customary take requests, economic development initiatives; Te Urewera Board 2017). At the time of the study and settlement, Tūhoe were not in a position to articulate what these activities and changes might be, and many are currently still under consideration. However, it was likely that stakeholders would accept some level of change in the interest of preserving the current suite of benefits (e.g., access and connection) they enjoyed within Te Urewera NP. In this regard, governance that established a pluralistic stewardship system that engaged deliberative processes to link a diverse network of partners (e.g. tribal communities, government, non-government organisations) and nested institutional frameworks would be aspirational (Berkes 2007). Specifically, deliberative processes should be used to manage occasions where objectives such as those found within different conservation and development agendas pull in different directions (Brechtin *et al.* 2003). In such a stewardship system, functions, inter-generational planning, entitlements, and responsibilities for conservation and development goals would be defined, negotiated, and agreed among the partners (Gavin *et al.* 2015).

Both statutory and non-statutory stakeholder groups expressed a desire for both conservation and development outcomes to be achieved in Te Urewera NP. The success of such initiatives within protected areas globally is, however, widely contested (see e.g., Wilshusen *et al.* 2002; Adams *et al.* 2004; Roe 2008; Blom *et al.* 2010; Zeller *et al.* 2017; Engen *et al.* 2019). Conclusions from studies are reported to be largely context-dependent, although recent findings identify that remaining areas of high biodiversity are commonly found on the lands of Indigenous peoples (IPBES 2019). In these situations, humans are often an integral part of the ecosystem and commercial development is minimal. Therefore, finding a balance between protecting biodiversity, maintaining features of naturalness, and ensuring a threshold of sustainability, while enhancing cultural, recreational, and economic activity presents a significant challenge (Drumm 2008). Visitors can preferentially choose to visit national parks because of the elevated aesthetic or biodiversity status attributed to those sites (e.g., Yellowstone NP, USA). A change from a national park to another protected area classification could potentially downgrade tourism activity and reduce opportunities for the community to obtain revenue from the area. However, new opportunities are emerging through promotion of regions as 'biocultural landscapes' (Maffi and Woodley 2010) where a diversity of cultural, social,

environmental, and development objectives and a diversity of human–ecosystem interactions are managed. In Australia’s Northern Territory, the return of Nitmiluk NP to Jawoyn Aboriginal ownership provided a preferential right to establish commercial enterprises inside the park, as well as securing service contracts to conduct park management tasks (Bauman and Smyth 2007). Jawoyn values of cooperative action have facilitated economic growth opportunities, not only for the Jawoyn people, but also for the non-aboriginal community in Katherine and Northern Territory (Bauman 2007). It was recognised that the new arrangement is “an ongoing process and requires changes of mindset according to current priorities in the Park and the existing capacity of all involved” (Bauman and Smyth 2007: 13–14).

No One Owns Te Urewera: Social Equity Within a Juristic Personhood Framework

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity (2010) Aichi Target 11 “protected areas should be established and managed in close collaboration with, and through equitable processes that recognize and respect the rights of indigenous and local communities, and vulnerable populations.” It emphasizes that “these communities should be fully engaged in governing and managing protected areas according to their rights, knowledge, capacities and institutions, should equitably share in the benefits arising from protected areas and should not bear inequitable costs.” However, in a recent global survey of protected area staff and community representatives over 50% of respondents saw significant challenges to achieving equitably managed protected areas with IPLC (Zafra-Calvo *et al.* 2019). This study and others (Nepal 2002; McDermott *et al.* 2012; Lyver *et al.* 2014; Sikor *et al.* 2014; Dawson *et al.* 2017) suggest that stronger mechanisms within protected area governance and management are needed to balance three key dimensions of equity for IPLC: (i) Recognition – acknowledging and respecting rights, identities, knowledge systems, values, and institutions of different stakeholders; (ii) Procedure – diverse participation of stakeholders in decision making, transparency, accountability, and processes for dispute resolution; and, (iii) Distribution – dispersal of benefits (e.g., socioeconomic) across stakeholders, and mitigating burdens (e.g., potential loss of food security) experienced by some stakeholders (Franks *et al.* 2018). Finding alternate approaches that go beyond conventional Western conservation frameworks to deliver equity across a range of stakeholders is therefore fundamental (see also Butchart *et al.* 2015).

The current protected area system in NZ provides largely for a Euro-centric connection with the environment (e.g., protection of intrinsic biodiversity values, conservation, tourism, fishing and hunting of introduced species), but limits the relationship Māori aspire to have with their lands (Coombes and Hill 2005; Ruru 2004, 2008). However, the

recent delisting of Te Urewera NP and its reclassification as “a legal entity” with “all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person” (section 11, Te Urewera Act 2014, New Zealand Government 2014) was an attempt to address equity for Te Urewera and Tūhoe through NZ’s Treaty of Waitangi settlement process. The reclassification of Te Urewera NP as a legal juristic personhood provided the government with a politically acceptable solution to circumvent the Tūhoe proposal for outright ownership of the park (Ruru *et al.* 2017). It provided Tūhoe with a framework to redress Te Urewera identity, shift the focus to the management of people for the benefit of the land, and deliver equitable outcomes for its people and also the wider public (Te Urewera Board 2017). Moreover, through the newly established Te Urewera Board, a joint governance board comprised of Tūhoe and Crown membership, Tūhoe gained the opportunity “to act on behalf of, and in the name of, Te Urewera” (section 11, Te Urewera Act 2014), and “to provide governance for Te Urewera” (New Zealand Government 2014, Schedule 6, Part 2, clauses 17a and 17b). And it is through the functions of the Te Urewera Board that Tūhoe wished to “deliberately reset the human relationship and behaviour towards nature” (Te Urewera Board 2017).

While the concept of juristic personhood is not new, its capacity as a framework to deliver equitable governance and management for protected areas remains novel within the modern conservation context (Stone 1972; Sanders 2017; Studley and Bleisch 2018). Over the last two decades, however, an increasing number of bio-physical entities in different countries have been accorded legal rights (e.g., Pachamama – Earth Goddess in Ecuador) and juristic personhood (e.g., Te Awa Tupua–Whanganui River and Mount Taranaki in NZ; Ganga and Yamuna Rivers including their 115 tributaries in India) giving those entities the protections, obligations and rights to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate vital cycles, structure, functions, and processes in evolution as a legal subject (The New Zealand Parliamentary Counsel Office 2016; Safi 2017; Gordon 2018; Studley and Bleisch 2018). For IPLC, the juristic personhood framework resonates more closely with their worldviews and the reciprocating familial relationships that they hold with other-than-human entities, than other protected area classifications. For Tūhoe, recognising Te Urewera as its own legal person links directly with their concept of *whakapapa*, which is the sequential system that portrays the identities and interconnectedness between all elements of the living and non-living realms (Timoti *et al.* 2017). It provides the cultural context for Tūhoe, through the Te Urewera Board, to legally exercise legal guardianship and represent the rights of Te Urewera, and to also open up conversations with other interest groups through an interface that reflects Tūhoetanga (Tūhoe principles and values). Moreover, it allows for the reconciling

of both key cultural (Te Urewera principles: *Papatūānuku* – landscape; *mauri* – life; *tapu* – resilience; *āhua* – character; *tātai* – heritage; and *whānau*, *manuhiri* and *tanata whenua* – discipline and wellbeing of the collective; see Te Kawa o Te Urewera – Te Urewera Board 2017) and environmental governance principles (e.g. legitimacy, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, fairness, connectivity, and resilience; Lockwood 2010) in the ‘management of people’ for the benefit of Te Urewera.

Te Urewera provides a unique scenario in that Tūhoe have tasked themselves with accounting for the values of non-Tūhoe stakeholders, while they are still addressing the values and inequity of colonialization from the past 175 years for their own people. This approach represents the ethos embraced within Te Kawa o Te Urewera that Te Urewera “is about the management of people for the benefit of the land – it is not about land management” (T. Kruger, Te Kawa o Te Urewera – Te Urewera Board 2017: 2). For Tūhoe, creating conditions for ‘inclusiveness’ in management in a way that accommodates many of the stakeholder aspirational values (Fig. 3) was a key component of a new governance framework. Inclusiveness for stakeholders encompassed meaningful participation in management with an opportunity to influence decision-making, processes, and action (e.g., stewardship). Stakeholder groups, such as Friends of Te Urewera, can be invited by the Te Urewera Board to assist with activities such as biodiversity and pest management, service delivery (e.g., hut and hiking track maintenance; boating infrastructure, such as ramps), and the creation of economic development opportunities (e.g., eco-tourism). It provides opportunities for Te Urewera stakeholders to continue their stewardship role and contribute to supporting the integrity of places (e.g., through voluntary labour and logistics) to which they may hold a strong relational attachment, and which can continue to shape their identity (Hernández *et al.* 2007; Scannell and Gifford 2010; Bennett *et al.* 2018). Inclusive governance is beneficial because it can better integrate a range of interests and values, provide conditions to engage diverse knowledge systems, improve learning, build trust and legitimacy, enhance ownership and commitment to solutions, and increase capacity to mediate competing interests and conflict (Lockwood 2010; Young *et al.* 2013). An inclusive process also emphasises the need to clarify the goals and role of all stakeholders involved. This can lead to a more resilient governance system that is better positioned to assimilate new information and adapt decision-making and actions (Decker *et al.* 2016). Increased stakeholder involvement can also build capacity in systems to cope with change and uncertainty, reduce negative attitudes towards management initiatives, and buffer against unanticipated social and biological feedbacks (Sterling *et al.* 2017; Mannetti *et al.* 2019). It is through these processes of inclusivity that Tūhoe perceive people and groups giving back to Te Urewera.

Conclusion

Despite differences in how Indigenous and non-indigenous people might express their strongest values with regard to protected areas, non-indigenous stakeholder groups share common relational values with IPLC with regard to stewardship and connection to people and place. Juristic personhood is potentially a powerful governance and management framework to integrate values and needs of both Indigenous peoples and non-indigenous stakeholders. The designation has the potential to facilitate both community wellbeing and ecological protection, since balance and reciprocity (interconnectedness of humans and nature) and ecological integrity are a fundamental part of IPLC worldview. Legal personhood can also recognise and protect the rights and cultural integrity of IPLC through self-determination, while giving non-indigenous stakeholders some reassurance that the area will be protected for current and future generations. The designation may fulfil the paramount goal of protecting nature, while reconnecting all people to nature. Protected areas under legal entity are also ideal mechanisms to disentangle issues of IPLC rights and power and to facilitate inter-cultural linkages and exchange.

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Authors’ Contributions KL, TK, RA, and PL conceived the research; PL conducted the interviews; CB, SM, AW and PL developed the analyses; CB and AW analysed the data; CB, SM, KL, TK, RA, AW and PL wrote and edited the manuscript.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

All participants received an introductory letter from Te Kotahi a Tūhoe to request their involvement in the research. A research information sheet and list of questions were also provided by researchers ahead of interviews. Transcripts of interviews were provided to participants for their review. Interviews were conducted in accordance with Te Kotahi a Tūhoe – Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research Cultural Ethic Agreement.

Conflict of Interest The authors KL and TK were members of Te Kotahi a Tūhoe at the time that interviews were conducted.

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