Design Activity – Hints on the Process

The main purpose of the design activity is to provide an opportunity for supported practice & to show that you have achieved and are able to implement an understanding of the permaculture principles and their application using the design process.

Step One: Site/Client analysis

Site analysis:

- Create a base map with existing boundaries, structures, land/vegetation types (pasture, trees, etc.), water bodies, access routes, etc. Can also make a site profile/transect to show slope/shape of land.
- List information on climate, soil, plant species (esp. those indicating types of site), water/moisture, wind, microclimates, etc. Pay attention to those things that may act as limiting factors and/or resources, and potential hazards e.g. flooding, fires. Include historical information about the site.
- List areas/types of erosion (leaks) i.e. where resources are being lost from the site e.g. soil, nutrients, water, money, skills, etc.

Client Analysis:

- Use client questionnaire handout as a basis for your client interview.
- List goals of client - their vision for the land, what they want to achieve.
- What is their timeframe for achieving these goals?
- List the resources they have, e.g. time, skills, money, etc.
- List their constraints/limiting factors, other relevant information.

Step Two: Identify Areas of Production/Functions needed

- What systems are required to meet the needs of the client & land, prevent the resource leaks etc? e.g. livestock, irrigation, income generation, soil conservation, shelter, security, etc. Some of the "areas" can be sub-divided e.g. income generation into bees, vegetables, fruit, livestock, crafts, etc.
- List these & examine linkages/beneficial relationships that exist. Examine the needs/outputs/characteristics of the different systems (systems' analysis).
- Experiment with placement of systems (using a map) & examine if their productivity can be improved (or erosion reduced) by siting them in different places.

Step Three: Feedback to client

Feedback the outcome so far & if the client has any changes/suggestions etc. Is the design helping to achieve their goals while meeting the needs of the land? Are new problems being created?

Step Four: Working design

- Select and place elements to fulfil the functions identified as needed in step two. Give an idea of species' composition of relevant systems e.g. windbreaks, orchard, kitchen garden, etc.
- Integrate functions to satisfy needs with outputs i.e. allow the systems/elements to do the work to decrease effort & waste (pollution).
- Detail the sequence of implementation - which systems/elements go in first (priority ranking). Give an idea of time needed to implement the different priorities.
- Give an idea of costs of implementation over time.
- Give an idea of outputs coming from the designed system, over time if possible.
- Detail how the design is maintained and/or added to over time (including the costs of doing this).
- Detail how the design involves and/or benefits the community/region as a whole.
- Make a detailed map with systems & placement.

Step Five: Feedback to client

Feedback the design so far & if the client has any changes/suggestions etc. Is the design helping to achieve their goals while meeting the needs of the client & land? Are new problems being created? Is the design realistic/achievable? Are there any unnecessary costs? Modify as required.

Step Six: Presentation

You will have 60 minutes for presentation of which approximately:

- 5 mins on introduction, summarising step one.
- 40 mins to present the design, including all the items in step four. Include information on process - how you came to reach the decisions/selections you made, what other options had you considered?
- 5 minutes question/answers, clarification etc.
- 10 minutes feedback from client/tutors.
- Make sure all the group is involved in the presentation.
- You don't have to give details of every plant/animal in the design, but give representative samples e.g. structure of the windbreak, orchard, vegetable beds etc.