

Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board Annual Report 2008/2009



Te Rūnanga Whakauka o Kahurangi ki Kaikōura
NELSON/MARLBOROUGH CONSERVATION BOARD

Herea kia Kōtahi - Working Together

Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board Annual Report 2008-2009

Presented to the New Zealand Conservation
Authority pursuant to Section 6(O) of the
Conservation Act 1987

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Cover photo: Two Board members walking on the foreshore at Adele Island, Abel Tasman National Park in May. Photo: Kay Switzer.

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1. Introduction

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board is one of 14 appointed by the Minister of Conservation under section 6(P) of the Conservation Act 1987. Board functions are outlined in section 6(M) and the powers, which enable the Board to carry out those functions, are under 6(N) of the Act.

The Conservation Act specifies that the Board's role is to:

- recommend the approval of conservation management strategies;
- approve conservation management plans;
- advise on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice;
- advise on proposed changes to the status of land areas of national and international significance;
- advise on proposals for new walkways;
- liaise with Fish and Game Councils on conservation matters; and
- carry out other powers delegated to them by the Conservation Minister, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

The Board has a number of functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of national park management plans and recommending approval of such plans by the New Zealand Conservation Authority.

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires Conservation Boards to provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after the 30th June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board submits this, its eleventh annual report.

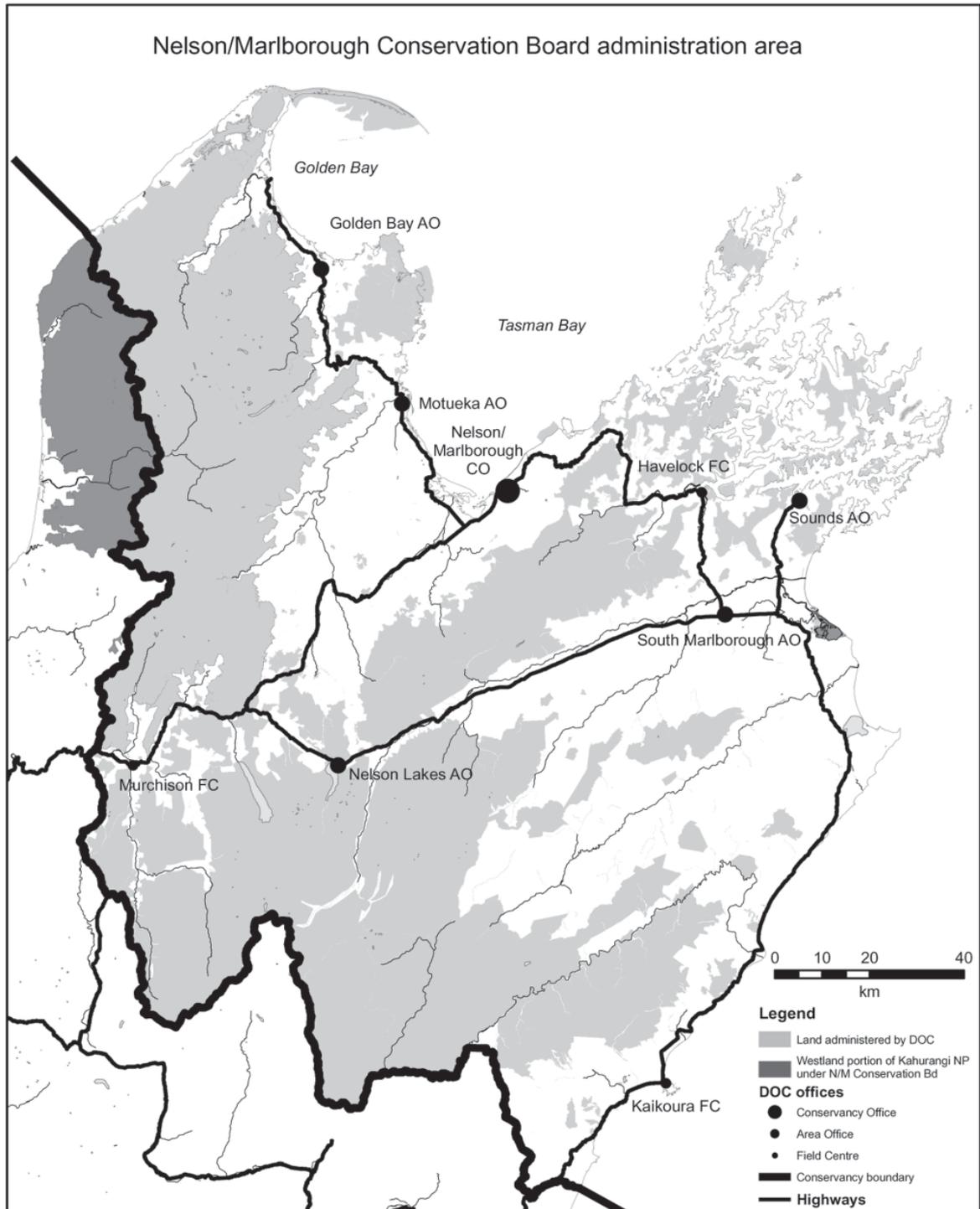
2. Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction covers the Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy, with oversight of the whole of Kahurangi National Park. Fifty percent of the Nelson and Marlborough regions is managed by the Department of Conservation on behalf of the public. This includes Abel Tasman, Kahurangi, and Nelson Lakes National Parks, Mt Richmond Forest Park, Molesworth Station and important nature reserves such as Stephens Island and Farewell Spit. The Marlborough Sounds and the Kaikoura Ranges also offer many opportunities for recreation on public conservation land. There are four marine reserves in the region: Long Island, West Haven, Tonga Island and Horoirangi.

There are a full range of historic sites including Maori archaeological sites, historic backcountry huts, the Perano whaling station in Queen Charlotte Sound and cob cottages in South Marlborough.

Species protection programmes in the area cover blue duck, land snails, tuatara, native frogs, kaka, takahe, mohua and plants endemic to Nelson/Marlborough.

The Board's area of jurisdiction also covers some of New Zealand's best known visitor sites, including the Abel Tasman Coastal Track, the Heaphy Track, and the Queen Charlotte Track. There are over 300 other walks and tracks totalling more than 1900 kilometres.



3. Highlights and key events for the year

3.1 ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

During the year the new Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan came into effect. This is a very significant plan as it deals with possibly the smallest yet most intensively used of the country's national parks. The plan broke new ground in its approach to balancing the competing needs of conservation and commercial recreation opportunities. There was intense public interest with 277 public submissions during the process. Board members were involved in the hearing of submissions. The plan generated considerable discussion between the Board and the Conservation Authority.

The operative plan concentrates commercial activity at four points in the park and sets total limits on commercial (concession) activity. A monitoring regime is in place.

The Board particularly wants to record its acknowledgement of the work Bill Gilbertson, a former Board member, both on his time on the Board and later as an ex-officio member of the sub-committee, put into bringing this plan to fruition. His dedication and leadership through a very complex and time consuming process was a major contribution to the success of the process.

3.2 TE WAIKOROPUPÜ SPRINGS MANAGEMENT PLAN

This year the Te Waikoropupü Springs Scenic Reserve management plan became operative. In June 2008 the draft management plan was publicly notified and 16 submissions were received and of those, six submitters requested to be heard. The hearing was held in Golden Bay on Thursday 13 November 2008 by Board members Philip Simpson and Tracey Osborne and Department of Conservation representatives.

Three main themes arose out of the submission process. The first was a challenge to the prohibition of recreation which involved contact with the waters of the main spring, particularly diving. The second theme was a challenge to the level of recognition given to local iwi, Manawhenua ki Mohua's interests in the Springs. There were also concerns about the type of viewing platform to be used at the Springs.

These issues were resolved and a hui was held for Board members to present the operative plan to Manawhenua ki Mohua at Onetahua Marae on 3 April 2009.

The Board would like to thank members Tracey Osborne and Philip Simpson for their input into this plan over a number of years.

3.3 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW WORK BEGINS

The Board started work on the review of the existing Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) with the Board considering papers on the process and the concepts involved. At its April 2009 meeting the Board had a workshop to define the kinds of issues that might be incorporated in the new CMS and the changing context that might affect how conservation is managed in the future.

On 24 June 2009 there was a further workshop which built on the identification of issues and the context within which the new CMS is likely to operate.

3.4 PROGRESS WITH PLANS

Partial review of Kahurangi National Park Management Plan

The partial review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan has proceeded well. The key issues being reviewed in the plan relate to mountain biking and aircraft (helicopter) landings in the park. The draft partial review of the plan was notified for public submissions on 1 July 2009.

Abel Tasman Foreshore Reserve

Work has continued on the management plan for the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve, largely at the level of Department staff working with Tasman District Council staff. The scenic reserve is jointly administered by the Department of Conservation and Tasman District Council. Board members have not had a great deal of involvement in this process so far.

Ross Hall represents the Board on the Abel Tasman Foreshore Advisory Forum and attended a Forum meeting in January 2009. The meeting was attended by a number of stakeholders and a range of viewpoints was expressed, particularly in relation to the way water taxi activity is managed at Torrent Bay.

Implementation of Conservation Management Strategy and Conservation Management Plans

Detailed reports monitoring the implementation of management plans for Nelson Lakes and Kahurangi National Parks and the CMS came before the Board this year. Board members were able to comment on specific provisions and projects from their own knowledge of the areas. In some

cases the Board called for additional information on the results of specific projects.

Overall, members were impressed with the volume and quality of the work carried out and reported on by the Department. However, Board members have questioned how they can add value through this reporting process, given that it is hard for members to reach conclusions from the reports about the overall state of a national park, or the Conservancy as a whole. It is hoped that the new format and structure for conservation management strategies will result in more meaningful monitoring implementation reports.

4. Board membership

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board has had a membership of 12 this year. Members are appointed by the Minister for Conservation. Two members, Gina Solomon and Maurice Manawatu, are appointed on the recommendation of Ngāi Tahu.

During the year the Board welcomed new member Marama Tākao and the re-appointment of Ian Mitchell, Ross Hall and Maurice Manawatu.

Board members elected Judy Hellstrom Chair, and Tracey Osborne Deputy Chair, during the year.

4.1. MEMBERS' PROFILES



Judy Hellstrom

Judy Hellstrom, who is Chair of the Board, is an active advocate for conservation in the Marlborough Sounds, both land and marine-based and has considerable personal experience in plant pest eradication and bush restoration. She lives in outer Queen Charlotte Sound. Judy has been a Board member since 2003.



Photo: Nelson Mail

Véronique Cornille, Nelson

Véronique Cornille was born into sheep and cattle farming at Port Waikato. She has experience in sales and marketing management, was a national finalist in the New Zealand Tourism Awards and winner of the Commerce Nelson Emerging Business Award. Véronique is a photographer with publishing experience, and has documented Molesworth Station. She has lived and worked closely with iwi all her life, and immersed her children in Te Reo. Her interests include advocating for the voice of young people and the preservation of historic sites including our WWI sacred places in Flanders, Belgium. Véronique has been a volunteer on the Kakapo Project on Whenua Hou and attended a Pukenga Atawhai course.



Carl Elkington, Picton

Carl is a resource management and quota management consultant based in Picton. Carl has extensive knowledge of the fishing industry and is affiliated with Ngāti Koata, Taranaki and Te Tau Ihu. He joined the Board in 2003 following in the footsteps of his father, Jim.



Ross Hall, Dovedale

Ross has wide experience in the horticultural field, a background in outdoor recreation and interests in ecology and ornithology. He joined the Board in October 2007 and has been re-appointed for a second term.



Maurice Manawatu, Kaikoura

Maurice was first appointed on the recommendation of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu in 1998 and has continued to serve ever since. He is affiliated to Ngāti Kuri and Ngāi Tahu. He owns and operates a Maori tourism venture in Kaikoura and chairs the coastal guardians group Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura.



David Melville

David Melville is an ecologist specialising in ornithology, with particular experience in wetland management. He joined the Board in 2003 after managing the World Wildlife Fund in Hong Kong.



Ian Mitchell, Blenheim

Ian is a viticulturalist from Marlborough's Wairau Plain with extensive experience in public land administration and management. Ian joined the Board in 2005 and was re-appointed for a second term this year. Ian also serves on the Molesworth Steering Committee.



Lynda Neame, Blenheim

Lynda is experienced in air quality and water quality issues, with an interest in waste treatment systems and the impact of discharges on receiving environments. She is involved with habitat maintenance and restoration projects, particularly Te Whanau Hou project at Grovetown Lagoon. Lynda is also involved with iwi and Forest & Bird and joined the Board in 2007.



Dr Tracey Osborne, Onekaka, Golden Bay

Tracey is a marine biologist who first joined the Board in 2004. She is convenor of the marine committee of the Board providing expertise in marine science and the aquaculture and fishing industries.



Dr Philip Simpson, Pohara, Golden Bay

Philip is an ecological consultant, wine grower and author. He has twice won the Environment section of the Montana Book Awards. His research interests include tree lilies, ethnobotany, New Zealand flora and natural history, ecological processes and conservation philosophy. He represents the Board on the Tasman Environmental Trust.



Gina Solomon, Kaikoura

Gina was appointed in 2006 on the recommendation of Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu. She is affiliated to Ngāi Tahu, Kurahaupo, Ngāti Koata, Te Ātiawa, and Ngāti Toa. She follows in the tradition of her mother, Darcia Solomon, a Board member for many years and her late father John, a passionate conservationist.



Marama Tākao

Marama Tākao is of Ngāti Rārua, Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Kaitahu and Ngāi Tāhoe descent. She lives in Motueka and is interested in the long term sustainability of our natural resources for her new grandson and future generations.

5. Meetings

Five Board meetings were held during the year:

- 28 August 2008 at Picton
- 27/28 November 2008 at Karamea
- 26 February 2009 at Te Hora Marae, Canvastown
- 30 April/1 May 2009 at Kaiteriteri
- 25 June 2009 at Nelson

Field trips included a visit to the replanting work at Kaipupu Point above Picton and an inspection of the walking tracks and landscapes in the Oparara Basin near Karamea. Members were fascinated by the distinctive limestone arches and vegetation easily accessible to day walkers. The Board admired the just completed visitor facilities which provided interpretation, picnic tables and toilets.



Ross Hall and Judy Hellstrom by the new visitor facilities at the Oparara Arches walks, Kahurangi National Park.

Photo: Kay Switzer

Members of the Board also went by boat up the coast of the southern part of the Abel Tasman National Park, visited Adele Island and walked through from one bay to join the main walking track at the Anchorage. During this trip members heard about the work of the Birdsong Trust, which is an exciting conservation initiative by commercial operators. A key issue covered on the field trip was the effectiveness of current methods in dealing with the intense visitor pressure experienced at peak times in the Park which have been implemented through the new Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan.

5.1 ATTENDANCE

Meeting attendance by Board members at full Board meetings is shown below. In addition to full Board meetings, Board members attended sub-committee meetings throughout the year and three Board members attended the Department's Te Pukenga Atawhai training during the year.

MEMBER	HOME	ATTENDED
Judy Hellstrom (Chair)	Marlborough Sounds	5/5
Maurice Manawatu	Kaikoura	5/5
Gina Solomon	Kaikoura	5/5
Carl Elkington	Picton	4/5
Ian Mitchell	Blenheim	4/5
Lynda Neame	Blenheim	4/5
Ross Hall	Dovedale	4/5
David Melville	Dovedale	3/5
Tracey Osborne	Takaka	3/5
Véronique Cornille	Nelson	3/5
Philip Simpson	Takaka	3/5
Marama Tākao (*)	Motueka	1/4

(*) Joined the Board October 2008

Other meetings and events attended by Board members over the year included:

- Te Waikoropupū Springs management plan hearing: (Tracey and Philip)
- Hui to present Te Waikoropupū Springs Management Plan: (Tracey)
- Hui at Te Awhina Marae: (Judy)
- Te Pukenga Atawhai Course: (Judy, David and Lynda)

- West Coast Tai Poutini Board meeting: (Véronique)
- Long Island Marine Reserve monitoring meetings: (Lynda)
- Nelson Community Forum: (Véronique)
- Fish and Game Council meetings: (Ian and David)
- Abel Tasman Foreshore Advisory Forum: (Ross)
- Workshop on Marlborough Sounds outcomes: (Ian and Lynda)

5.2 TE PUKENGA ATAWHAI

The Department of Conservation runs a staff training programme Te Pukenga Atawhai designed to enable staff to build and maintain effective working relationships with tangata whenua specifically and Maori generally. This year Judy Hellstrom, David Melville and Lynda Neame attended the programme at Barry's Bay. Last year Gina Solomon, Véronique Cornille and Kay Switzer, Board Support Officer, attended the programme.

6. Board committees

The Board re-organised the committee structure in February 2009. The main committees remain Marine, Management Planning, Concessions, and Marlborough. Sub-committees are established to deal with specific management plans or locations as required.

6.1 MARINE

The purpose of this committee is to provide a link between the Board's wider communities of interest, the Board and the Department in relation to issues associated with conservation and use of the marine environment.

Members

Tracey Osborne (Convenor), Carl Elkington, Gina Solomon and Lynda Neame.

In addition Lynda represents the Board on the Long Island-Kokomohua Marine Reserve committee and Tracey is the Board representative on the Horoirangi Marine Reserve committee.

Highlights and key areas of work

Long Island Marine Reserve: The Board received the initial results of the Long Island monitoring work which showed that fish stocks were about the same as in previous years within the marine reserve but there were improved numbers of legal sized blue cod in the area. Lynda attended meetings on monitoring in March and April. In the past

year there have been four incidents involving nine people at Horoirangi Marine Reserve. The Board supports the Department taking action to ensure compliance.

This year, the Board agreed to the Department's proposal to provide additional protection status to two islands in the Abel Tasman National Park - Tonga and Pinnacle Islands. The effect of the Special Protected Area status is to restrict public access to these two small islands to protect breeding seals. Tangata whenua have been consulted on this.

The government issued a Notice of Intention to establish four new marine mammal sanctuaries in late June 2008. Two areas affected were Clifford and Cloudy Bays in Marlborough. The Board discussed the possible restrictions and requested more advice but in the end decided not to make a submission.

As part of its strategic planning, members of the committee listed issues related to the sea, coast and adjoining land. The list spanned 84 issues, illustrating the range and scope of the matters that could be addressed. Given the Board's limited resources, it is important to focus on the areas where the Board can add real value.

Tracey Osborne (Convenor)

6.2 MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The purpose of this committee is to advise the Department in relation to strategic direction and planning for the management of conservation land, in particular national parks. By agreement with members, smaller sub-committees are constituted from the overall management planning committee to work on individual management plans, which includes working with Department staff on the preparation of draft plans.

Members

Judy Hellstrom (Convenor), Philip Simpson, David Melville, Ross Hall, Véronique Cornille, Tracey Osborne and Marama Tākao.

Sub committees during the year were: Kahurangi Partial Review (members: Tracey Osborne, Philip Simpson, Judy Hellstrom, Ross Hall and Marama Tākao) and Farewell Spit Reserve Management Plan (David Melville, Tracey Osborne and Véronique Cornille).

Highlights and key areas of work

Two highlights of the year were the approval by the New Zealand Conservation Authority of the new Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan, and the Conservation Board's approval of the management plan for Te Waikoropupū Springs Scenic Reserve. The former of the two plans had involved extensive involvement by a sub-committee of the Board, through both the drafting process and the subsequent consultation and public hearings, prior to the plan's approval. The approval of the management plan for Te Waikoropupū Springs came after many years of work by Department staff, with the support and involvement of the local iwi,

Manawhenua ki Mohua. Sub-committee members Tracey Osborne and Philip Simpson were involved through the process of public hearings.

A planning sub-committee has been formed for involvement in the public hearings process prior to the eventual Board approval of the new Molesworth Recreation Reserve Management Plan.

Kahurangi Partial Review sub-committee members have been involved in recent months in the partial review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan, still in process.

The primary planning involvement of Board members, into the next two years, will be the review of the CMS for the Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy. Conservation Board members have looked forward to this review for some time, with most Board members to date expressing an interest in being involved in this important activity. The Board is grateful for the time and effort that has so far been expended by Department staff in briefing the Board on the format and expectations for their part in the CMS review. The Conservation Board will welcome the guidance that the CMS will be able to provide as further management plans are developed or reviewed.

Judy Hellstrom (Convenor)

6.3 MARLBOROUGH

The purpose of this committee is to advise the Department on issues associated with conservation in Marlborough. At the April 2009 meeting the committee structure was simplified so that the Marlborough committee now incorporates the previous South Marlborough and Queen Charlotte Track committees.

Members

Ian Mitchell (Convenor) Maurice Manawatu, Gina Solomon, Philip Simpson, Judy Hellstrom, Véronique Cornille and Lynda Neame

Key issues and highlights for the year

The commencement of poisoning of wilding pines in Queen Charlotte Sound co-ordinated by a Local Trust with encouragement from the Department and the Marlborough District Council was a highlight of the year. This work has also encouraged landowners to commence similar work, the results of which are now very evident. Finance has been obtained to continue this work in the coming season.

Pest-free status of all the Department-managed islands in the Sounds was achieved early in the year after years of dedicated and difficult work by departmental staff. This has resulted in a number of these islands being utilised as nurseries for some endangered bird species including kiwi and orange fronted parakeets. All islands are showing increased bird life populations.

Following years of negotiations, both physically and financially, between various parties including the Department, a fine new wharf has been opened adjacent to Outward Bound at Anikiwa to service the Department, the public and Queen Charlotte Track adventures. This “all tides” facility has enhanced the area and eased congestion.

Difficulties still remain in obtaining sufficient funds from the users of the Queen Charlotte Track and their transport contractors for the upkeep of other service facilities for this iconic asset.

The planting of 10,000 trees on Takapourewa (Stephens Island) by volunteers was most gratifying and appreciated.

It is pleasing to note the progress that has been made with the preparation of the Reserves Act Management Plan for Molesworth Station. The draft will be released in the last quarter of 2009 for public consultation and comment and in its final form will obtain the Board’s approval in mid 2010, hopefully. The Molesworth Steering Committee, which is overseeing and guiding the process, is to be congratulated on progress to date.

Ian Mitchell (Convenor)

6.4 KAIKOURA KORERO

What’s been happening in Kaikoura?

- The Hutton's Shearwater Trust has been very successful in collecting funds for the predator proof fence on the peninsula.
- Access to Clarence Reserve has been a topic of discussion with the grazing concessionaire. The Department is now providing for event-based access for vehicles rather than the permits that were issued to individuals in the summer before last. Mountain biking, horse riding and tramping access into the Clarence Reserve remains unchanged.
- There have been protracted discussions with a neighbour at Goose Bay over his request for shared costs on new and replacement boundary fencing. Fencing notices have been served on the Department.
- The Dusky Dolphin Tourism Impacts report is due to be released in July with community discussions occurring in early August. The report will inform the decision on the review of the current moratorium on tourism permits.
- The contract for the Sperm Whale Tourism Impacts research project has been let and this research will occur over the next three years. Once again this is to inform the decision on the moratorium which is up for review in late 2012.
- There was a resource consent hearing in late June with regard to the Department wishing to apply 1080 to Isolated Hill Reserve again. This is part of a wider combined Landcare/Animal Health Board/DOC project.
- Planning work has been completed for the upgrade of the Whalers Bay Track. This is part of the Kaikoura Peninsula Walkway upgrade.

- The Marfells Beach toilet is built and landscaping work is happening to get the area reinstated for the approaching summer.
- DOC staff organised a whale disentanglement workshop in Kaikoura. This included some of the marine mammal concessionaires and other community members who have offered to assist in the event of an entanglement. June is the month when most of the previous entanglements have occurred with humpbacks.
- Te Korowai has received good letters of support from the Ministers of Conservation, Environment and Fisheries and Ministers are likely to visit Kaikoura to be briefed directly by the project team.
- The Rūnanga, DOC representatives, Rachel Puentener and DOC staff recently met for the first time this year to discuss conservation issues. Dates for meetings for the rest of the year will be timetabled. This group meets three times a year.

Ka Kite Ano

Maurice Manawatu and Gina Solomon

6.5 CONCESSIONS

This committee advises the Department on policy matters associated with concession management and also advises on specific concession applications.

Members

David Melville (Convenor), Carl Elkington, Gina Solomon, Judy Hellstrom, Ross Hall, Marama Tākao.

Highlights and key areas of work

This year the sub-committee finalised its guidelines for considering applications for sporting events on conservation lands. The sub-committee acknowledges the considerable input provided by former Board member Bill Gilbertson. These guidelines will assist applicants, the Department and the sub-committee. Copies have been supplied to other Boards on request.

The sub-committee welcomes the Department's efforts to improve the concessions process. Members are having an input into the Conforming Tracks Schedule.

7. Other Board work

7.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

At the August 2008 meeting, the Board confirmed that its strategic priorities were coastal matters, freshwater policy and pests and weeds and some background work was done on defining these matters further by Gina, Ross and Judy.

At the April 2009 meeting members reviewed their strategic planning document and identified further actions to take. The review of the CMS was seen as an effective tool through which the priority issues could be pursued.

7.2 FRESHWATER POLICY

The Board made a submission to the Board of Inquiry into a proposed national policy statement on freshwater management. The essence of this submission was to remind policymakers of New Zealand's obligations as a signatory to the Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands and ensure the wise use of wetlands. This matter had not been covered in the draft policy statement.

7.3 PROTECTION OF BIRDS ON MOTUEKA SANDSPIT

The Board had been concerned about the use of the Motueka Sandspit for fireworks, and recreation of all kinds including dog walking. It made a submission to the Tasman District Council's proposed by-law on dog control in order to draw attention to the national and international importance of the Motueka Sandspit as a nesting and roosting area for birds. The Council decided to impose some restrictions on the use of the sandspit.

7.4 RELEASE OF ROBINS TO ADELE ISLAND

David, Ross and Véronique were involved in the translocation of 31 robins to Adele Island on 5 May 2009. The robins went from Omaka in Marlborough via plane to Motueka, then on to Te Awhina Marae and finally to Adele Island. The three Board members were in the party that met up with the robins at Te Awhina and helped carry them on to the marae.

7.5 CHANGES TO THE BUILDING CODE FOR HUTS

The Board put in a submission to the Department of Building and Housing supporting the proposed changes to the Building Code requirements that apply to backcountry huts. We believe that the proposed changes remove some very unnecessary restrictions and will simplify compliance for building and upgrading backcountry huts.

7.6 WHITEBAIT AND EELS

A letter from a member of the public about the decline of the whitebait fishery suggesting banning the sale of whitebait and eels caused considerable discussion. The Board was of the opinion that the main issue contributing to the decline of the whitebait fishery was likely to be the loss of habitat rather than overfishing. The East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board had produced some very informative material on actions that could be taken to enhance whitebait spawning and survival. Actions included such things as placing culverts so that juvenile whitebait can negotiate them. Our Board sent copies of this information to Federated Farmers' branches in Nelson, Marlborough and Golden Bay and to the Nelson City and Tasman District Councils.

7.7 DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION REVIEW

The Board wrote to the then Minister of Conservation in the context of the Departmental review which was taking place, to express the Board's concern that any reduction in planning and scientific staff would adversely affect conservation work.

7.8 LIAISON WITH OTHER GROUPS

Tasman Environmental Trust: During the year Philip Simpson replaced Tracey as the Board representative on the Tasman Environmental Trust which funds environmental projects.

Fish and Game New Zealand: Each Board has a statutory obligation to liaise with the regional council of Fish and Game New Zealand. There is a regular exchange of minutes and Ian Mitchell and David Melville attend Fish and Game meetings in Nelson and Blenheim when they can. In addition this year the Board held a joint meeting with the Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council on 25 June 2009. Our Board was interested to learn about the role and structure of the regional Fish & Game councils and discuss matters of common concern including recreational access to public land, policy on sportfish and pest fish, water quality and wetland creation.

Kaiteriteri Recreation Reserve Board: Peter King, Chair of the Kaiteriteri Recreation Reserve Board spoke to members at their meeting on 30 April outlining the Reserve Board's history, structure and priorities.

7.9 BIG GAME HUNTING

The Board received a briefing on proposals to establish a Big Game Hunting Council at its June meeting and were addressed by Bill O'Leary who serves on the Establishment Council on the current process and its possible outcome. As a result, the Board resolved to write to the Minister of Conservation seeking an answer on the absence of iwi representation on the Establishment Committee for the Council and re-iterating the Board's view that changing the status of deer, chamois, thar and pigs so that they have some kind of protection could be detrimental to the native flora and fauna. The Board's view remains that the current animal control regime provides adequate opportunities for hunting.

7.10 WASTE FROM CAMPERS

The Board had been concerned about the litter and other waste left by river banks and in reserves. The new small camper vans without toilet facilities are common in the top of the south particularly between November and March and members felt that these freedom campers were contributing significantly to the problem. At its June meeting the Board welcomed the actions taken by the New Zealand Freedom Camping Forum to educate and inform prospective campers. The Board sees the education programme as a good first step and intends to review the results after the end of the next summer holiday season.

7.11 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Board believes that working with conservation organisations and individuals is an integral part of conservation work. A public forum was provided at each Board meeting and this was advertised in the main daily newspapers. Although attendance was not high, where people did attend, a wide range of issues was raised and the Board appreciated the input and the efforts made to attend meetings. Board agenda and minutes are sent to groups and individuals on request and the minutes when confirmed by the Board are posted on the website along with meeting dates. Currently 40 people or groups receive copies of the agenda and 42 copies of the confirmed minutes.

The Board now has a policy of following up on concerns raised by members of the public.

8. Message from the Chair

Kia ora koutou

Since last year, when I was elected as chair of this Conservation Board, I have become even more conscious of the high standard of leadership that had been set by our previous Chairs. Although I have found this a challenging act to follow, it remains both a privilege and an honour to have been asked to step up to that challenge.

During this last year we have welcomed Marama Tākao onto the Board and there will be further new appointments made during the coming year. During this past year, our Board has decided to put further energy into the orientation process, because we expect a busy workload over these next two years with the review of the CMS for Nelson/Marlborough. Current Board members have recalled that there was a reasonably steep learning curve for them as they familiarized themselves with the normal work of the Board.

The approval of the new Management Plan for the Abel Tasman National Park, with that plan's particular strategies for addressing the high tourism and recreation values of this park has been a highlight during the past year. We are now involved in the partial review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan.

A particular highlight of the year for me has been our Board's approval of the management plan for Te Waikoropupū Springs. As I write this, there is still much work to be done, with operational matters now being addressed by Department staff. Board members were very aware that the local iwi, Te Manawhenua ki Mohua and the Tasman District Council had been working for at least 10 years with the Department of Conservation towards the development and eventual approval of the plan.

Our Board particularly values the very positive working relationship that we have with Department staff. We have an excellent Board Support Officer in Kay Switzer, and know that we can seek advice or information whenever we need it. We wish to thank Neil Clifton and the staff at within the Conservancy, including all Area Managers and their staff, for continuing to foster and support this relationship.

Our challenges from here on include the review of the CMS. We also value the overview that we have of the implementation of all other management plans. We have given high strategic importance for this next year to freshwater issues, coastal issues, pests and weeds and landscape ecology. These issues will all be included within the CMS, but we wish to also give focus to them when undertaking other Board work during the year.

I wish to thank my friends and colleagues on the Board for their support during this past year.

Noho ora mai ra



Judy Hellstrom



Board members alighting on Adele Island, Abel Tasman National Park.

From left: Maurice Manawatu, Philip Simpson, Lynda Neame, Barney Thomas (DOC), and Ross Hall on right.