

Northland Conservation Board

Te Runanga Papa Atawhai o Te Taitokerau



Poor Knights Islands, Whangarei (Photographer Unknown)

2007/08

Annual Report

Chairperson's Overview

I have much pleasure in presenting the Northland Conservation Board's Annual Report for 2007-2008. It's been a year of pressure and uncertainty for the Conservancy with a restructuring, resulting in the loss of 3 valuable positions due to the Department's Strategy and Budget Alignment Review.

Once again this has been an interesting and productive year for the Board. As in previous years, the Board looked to continue and enhance the traditions that have been established over the years, particularly its close working relationship with Northland Conservancy staff. Of particular note was the outstanding support provided to the Board by Jeannie Hogarth and the passion and enthusiasm of Jeff Griggs, who continually challenged the Board to think outside the square. Unfortunately Jeff was one of the three positions lost in the Department's Strategy and Budget Alignment review. I would like to express my thanks to Jeff for his time, energy and insight he has provided both myself and the Board over the years. His inspirational strategic guidance will be sorely missed and has left a gap that will be difficult to fill. I would like to wish him all the best for the future.



Chairperson, Kevin Evans [Photo by Terry Conaghan]

Since our last report, the Board has been particularly active across the conservancy with all members involved in guiding the strategic direction of conservation at our local level. We continue to measure our statutory role against our Board priorities and the Department of Conservation's Statement of Intent. This work will continue going forward to ensure our contribution is as effective as possible and that we are proactive instead of reactive.

The Board has begun preparation for the review of our Conservation Management Strategy with consultation now well under way. We are excited about embarking upon the review and ensuring the final product will be as relevant and user friendly as possible. The Board's CMS field visits continue to provide for an invaluable insight into the great work that is being done for conservation throughout Northland by the Department,

Landcare, Community Groups, local iwi and passionate individuals. They also highlight the issues and future challenges we need to help overcome.

The 2-day Chairperson's Conference provided an excellent opportunity for all Boards to interact, exchange ideas, experiences and different approaches in working effectively as a Board. It was a great foundation for greater collaboration between Chairs and Boards and well worthwhile.

A major highlight for the year was the Board and the Department hosting the New Zealand Conservation Authority - the last time the Authority had visited was seven years earlier. It is always a great opportunity to not only showcase our wonderful part of the country but also engage with the Authority on issues which are unique to Northland and how we can go forward together in overcoming the conversation challenges we are facing.

We welcomed four new Board Members to our Team in 2007/08 [Judi Gilbert, Helene Leaf, Ken Ross and Waitai Petera]. Unfortunately at the end of the year we said farewell to the Deputy Chair Mike Horne who's contribution and commitment had been invaluable and would be greatly missed.

As the Board meets the challenges of the forthcoming year, I would like to thank the Board members, the Conservator Chris Jenkins and his Team, who have helped in numerous ways to make it possible to achieve the Board's undertakings over the last year. Whilst often operating under considerable resourcing constraints, the Department has offered the Board the best that it can.

Yours sincerely



Kevin Evans
CHAIRPERSON
30 June 2008

Introduction

The Northland Conservation Board is one of fourteen bodies appointed nation wide by the Minister of Conservation under Section 6P of the Conservation Act 1987.

The functions of the Board are outlined in Section 6M and the powers that enable the Board to carry out those functions are under 6N of the Act.

The role of the Conservation Boards as laid out in the Conservation Act 1987, is as follows:

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

Section 6O of the Conservation Act requires that every Conservation Board provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement, the Northland Conservation Board submits its Annual Report for consideration.

The Board's main focus for 2005/06 was the Conservation Management Strategy monitoring process, commercial and rural sustainability in conservation and all things marine.

1 The Board's Area

The Northland Conservation Board's area of responsibility covers the same boundaries as the Department of Conservation's Northland Conservancy.

Northland is a long narrow peninsula, the features setting it apart from the rest of the country being its subtropical climate and 1,700km of indented and very scenic coastline. The Region covers a land area of 1.25 million hectares, supporting a population of just over 150,000.

Northland's economy is based on pastoral farming, forestry and horticulture, with well over half the region's land area devoted to beef and sheep farming. Northland is a popular holiday destination, making tourism a significant industry.

In ecological terms Northland is notable as home to two high profile species - the kauri and the kiwi. One of the most magnificent trees in the world, the Kauri, was prolific in the north but much of the region's Kauri forest is now gone. A number of relatively large kauri dominated tracts do remain, principally the Waipoua/Mataraua/Waima ecosystem and the Puketi/Omahuta/Maungataniwha complex but other individual forests as well.

Kiwi too are an important ingredient that makes Northland special, but the North Island Brown is under threat and special effort is required to maintain several large viable populations in the region.

Notable are the harbours, headlands, islands and reserves of Northland's eastern seaboard, the islands that provide offshore sanctuary to the very best of New Zealand's natural treasures and the wild and rugged yet beautiful west coast.

However, Northland also has the dubious distinction of being the region with more native plants and animals at risk than anywhere else in the country. The arrival of new pests which is not an uncommon occurrence, pose great risks to our native biota.

In terms of history and culture, Northland was the cradle of both the Maori and European settlement of New Zealand. For both cultures the North has a long, fascinating and sometimes turbulent past and the region's historic sites and buildings still reflect this history.

The majority of historic places are of Maori origin, with many holding a deep spiritual significance amongst the region's iwi. On Crown administered land alone almost 3,000 historic places have been recorded. The sites include fortified pa, traces of ancient gardens, coastal middens and sculptured, terraced hillsides. Around Kerikeri and Waitangi there are a number of significant historic buildings relating to early European settlement in the area.

The Conservancy is split into four Areas – Kaitaia, Bay of Islands (including Russell Field Centre), Kauri Coast (including Trounson Kauri Park Mainland Island) and Whangarei. Each area has its own Area Manager.



Membership

The Board welcomed the following new Members in 2007/08

- **Judi Gilbert** from Whangarei. Judi has brought with her a broad interest in conservation and has been actively involved in a wide variety of protection projects in Northland for more than 20 years. She has a wide base of ecological knowledge, plus an understanding of Regional and District Council legislation.

Judi is a long time member of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and has been involved for many years in the protection of the natural, cultural and historic environment in Northland.

- **Helene Leaf** from the Hokianga. Helene brought with her a wealth of experience in community related issues and a positive attitude to resolving issues covering a wide range of topics. Helene has wide affiliation to Ngapuhi, Te Aupouri, Te Rarawa and Te Roroa and has been able to assimilate this background to great effect into addressing many issues presented to the Board during the year.

On 02 June 2008, the Board was delighted to see Helene's community efforts recognised when she was awarded a Queen's Service Medal in the 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours.

- **Ken Ross** from the Bay of Islands. Ken has brought with him wide knowledge of local authority processes and legislation from his position as Community Development Advisor with the Far North District Council responsible for environmental and sustainability issues. This background has proved invaluable to the Board during the 2007/08 year.
- **Waitai Petera** from the Far North with affiliation to Te Aupouri and Ngati Kuri. Waitaia has wide experience in Maori development initiatives and is a Member of the Muriwhenua Incorporation and the Parengarenga A&B3C Trust Board. He has brought a fresh perspective on issues relating to Treaty Settlements and the implications on how conservation land will be managed post Settlement. This will be very important for Northland given the complexity and diversity of Treaty Claims currently nearing completion and the implications of the outcomes on how conservation areas will be managed in the future.

Conservation Board Meetings

The Northland Conservation Board held four[4] meetings during the reporting period. The venue for Board meetings is chosen to ensure as wide a coverage as possible is made of the region and to enable members of the public throughout Northland to have access to the Board.

1	31 August 2007	-	Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei
2	30 November 2007	-	Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei
3	13 February 2007	-	Omapere Hotel, Hokianga
4	09 May 2008	-	Kaitaia Area Office, Kaitaia

Members Attendance

▪ Kevin Evans	Dargaville	3 from 4
▪ Ian Faulkner	Bay of Islands	3 from 4
▪ Judi Gilbert	Whangarei	3 from 4
▪ Julie Gordon	Waipu	3 from 4
▪ Mike Horne	Bay of Islands	3 from 4
▪ Jeroen Jongejans	Whangarei	4 from 4
▪ John Kenderdine	Kaitaia	4 from 4
▪ Helene Leaf	Hokianga	4 from 4
▪ David Monro	Whangarei	4 from 4
▪ Waitai Petera	Kaitaia	2 from 4
▪ Ken Ross	Bay of Islands	4 from 4
▪ Richard Shepherd	Whangarei	4 from 4

Induction Day

On 04 October 2007 the Board held its annual Induction Day at Barge Park in Whangarei. The objective of the Induction is to introduce new Members to the workings of the Board and the Department and to provide an opportunity, in an informal setting, for Members to get to know one another and to meet and discuss a wide range of topics with staff of the Department. This annual opportunity is proving to be a very important event that sets the foundation for the year ahead as well as being an opportunity for the Board to consider future projects and how the Board can add value to conservation outcomes in the coming year.

The dynamics of Board Members and Department of Conservation staff changes each year as current Members become more confident in their role and new Members get a glimpse of things to come. Opportunity is also taken to include Members leaving the Board to attend and give their perspective of what it has meant to be a Member of the Northland Conservation Board, to highlight successes, and to draw attention where the Board can be more effective.

The opportunity to meet in an informal setting, without the presence of the public, ensures full, frank and robust discussion can take place in a non threatening and positive environment.

2007/08 Year in Review

2007/08 was a very good year for the Board. The first meeting of the year farewelled Hally Toia from the Board, but this farewell was mixed with sadness that Hally was leaving the Board, but delight that he was moving on to be a Member of the New Zealand Conservation Authority. This was seen as a real milestone for the Board to have such close links with the Authority, especially on terms of continuity and the opportunity to ensure that Northland issues would be aired at the highest level and by someone with intimate knowledge, background and experience.

A major highlight for the year was the Board and the Department hosting the New Zealand Conservation Authority on its visit to Northland in February 2008. The location chosen for the meeting was Omapere in the Hokianga – one of Northland's hidden treasures. The setting provided the Authority Members with the opportunity to see a part of the country that holds unique conservation values – from the towering Kauri Forests on the land to the wide expanse of coastline surrounding this special place.

The increase in the number of tourists to the region and the impacts from this, were highlighted when the Authority was provided with a unique opportunity to view the Waipoua Forest – the home of Tane Mahuta.

The local initiative “Footprints Waipoua” continues to bring a fresh and very local perspective to the visitor experience in the Forest. This talented group of young people has put together a unique package covering the spiritual, cultural, ecological and historical aspects of the Forest and bringing these together in an awe inspiring experience of song and narrative. This Group's passion for the local taonga/treasures and the need to preserve and protect these for future generations is demonstrated through this remarkable tourism venture.

The Board hosted Authority Members and Department of Conservation staff to take part in a night visit to the Waipoua Forest to experience “Footprints Waipoua” at its spiritual best. Those who participated were not disappointed and left knowing they had been part of a unique experience.

Nature was at its best in this dark, still environment. The moment of silent prayer at the closure of the experience was only shattered by the continuous slapping of hands on body fending off some of the largest mosquitos seen in the area. A small price to pay for such an uplifting experience.

The commencement of the review of the Conservation Management Strategy ['CMS'] for Northland began in earnest in late 2007, when the consultation round of hui and meetings commenced. Board Members were encouraged to participate in as many of these hui and meetings in their locality as possible, and this opportunity was taken up with enthusiasm and commitment. The ultimate success of the reviewed CMS will be based on the success of this initial consultation with all the communities in Northland. The Board's role in this is one of the most significant responsibilities of being a Board Member.

The involvement of the public in Board meetings was significant in 2007/08 with issues relating to marine pollution [discharge of treated and untreated effluent into our Harbours, particularly in the Hokianga]; impacts of recreational activities on our birdlife and habitats [kite boarders at Ruakaka; vehicles on beaches], tracks and walkway management within Northland, being major issues discussed during the Public Forum Section of meetings.

The Board continues to encourage members of the public to recognise that the Board is the voice of the public in Northland and has the ability to advocate on a wide range of issues to a degree that the Department does not. The Board recognises the commitment, enthusiasm and zeal of members of the public, passionate about protection and preservation of conservation values demonstrated by those members of the public who regularly attend Board meetings to ensure that the Board is kept up to date on what is happening in the region.

Specific actions undertaken by the Board in terms of their mandate under s.6M and s.6N of the Conservation Act 1987 are detailed.

Conservation Management Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Field Inspections 2007/08

Bream Bay & Ruakaka – 25 October 2007

The Area Manager, Whangarei and his Team hosted the Board on a site inspection in the Bream Bay area in Whangarei. Major issues focused on subdivisions impacts, vehicles



on beaches, shorebird protection, campground management and compliance and law enforcement issues.

Board Members and DOC staff on site at Ruakaka with Bream Head in the Background
[Photograph – David Monro]

The impact on species and habitats as a result of increased recreational activities [particularly vehicles] on beaches was highlighted. The Board acknowledged the need to ensure that the public were able to enjoy recreational opportunities on conservation managed land. However, the issue of protecting and preserving species and habitats was paramount and the Board supported efforts by the Department to provide this protection. It also acknowledged the huge volunteer effort going into shorebird protection programmes, particularly during the summer nesting season. The commitment of these volunteers was commendable and played a significant part in the success of each breeding season.

The increase in resource consent applications for subdivisions in the area, and the impacts of this increased pressure on the environment, were also highlighted during the course of the visit. This was an issue not exclusive to Whangarei but was increasing rapidly throughout Northland as developers south of the region and overseas increased their desire to cash in on the magnificent, unspoilt coastline and isolated headlands.

The Board acknowledged the work the Department was undertaking in working with Regional and District Councils to ensure that Regional and District Plans and Resource Consent conditions contained clauses to ensure the protection of key areas of conservation habitat and the protection of the species within these areas.

The Board appreciated the time and effort staff of the Department had put into the site visit that had provided first hand insights into issues being addressed and opportunity to discuss future management with operational staff on the ground.

S.4 Treaty of Waitangi – Te Runanga o Te Rarawa

On 09 May 2008, the Board was privileged to be invited to visit representatives of Te Runanga o Te Rarawa on the Roma Marae in Kaitaia. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the whenua ngahere concept for post Treaty Settlement management of land expected to be handed back to Te Rarawa.

The whenua ngahere concept related to an indigenous classification of land use that predated the Treaty of Waitangi. The concept covers the shared agreement and interest involving the management and practices pertaining to the conservation of paehere reserves, which included access to neighbouring hapu and iwi.

The special purpose of these paehere reserves includes the preservation of bird life, the catchment of water, medicinal purposes [rongoa], selection of lumber [rakau] for various cultural purposes, plus other purposeful uses to enhancing and sustaining life of whanau and hapu.

The Board was impressed with the concept, particularly its “inclusive” approach. It was also impressed with the sincerity and spirit of collaboration that the whenua ngahere concept embodied.

The Board received a full and frank presentation from the Te Rarawa Representatives and Members were able to discuss all aspects of conservation, environment, cultural and historic issues of importance to both Te Rarawa and the Board.

The visit [one that the Board had long been waiting to make] was an inspiring one and set a sound foundation for further interaction with Te Runanga o Te Rarawa.



Hami Piripi, Chair, Te Runanga o Te Rarawa
[Photograph – Rongo Bentson]

During the course of the visit, the Board was pleased to note the good relationship that had been developed between Te Runanga o Te Rarawa and the Department, particularly the Area Manager, Kaitaia and his staff. This relationship was a key factor in enabling the Board to meet with Te Rarawa, and this effort was appreciated.

Later in the day the Board was provided with a briefing by Kaitaia Area Office staff on progress being made in relation to the Treaty Settlement processes within the Far North.



The Northland Conservation Board and Friends at Roma Marae, Kaitaia
[Photograph – Rongo Bentson]

Board Functions Under Section 6M of the Conservation Act

6M1 The functions of each Board shall be

- (c) *To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on the implementation of Conservation Management Strategies and Conservation Management Plans for areas within the jurisdiction of the Board:*

Conservation Management Strategy Review

Piet Nieuwland, Conservation Support Officer, Management Planning, continued to provide the Board with regular updates on progress with the Review of the Conservation Management Strategy [‘CMS’] during the year.

Sioux Campbell, Conservation Support Officer, Relationships, supported Piet Nieuwland in developing and progressing the consultation hui and meetings as the first stage in the review process.

Board Members were invited to participate in all hui and meetings, especially those in their home locations. This process is working well and the Board will continue to actively participate in all phases of the development of the CMS.

The Board appreciates and acknowledges the work that has gone into the review of the CMS thus far and, in particular, the work Piet and Sioux are undertaking, together with staff in all four Areas.

The first draft of the revised CMS for Northland is expected to be completed early in 2009.

- (d) **To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General –**

- (ii) *On any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board:*

Natural Heritage

The issues of “Global Warming” and “Carbon Footprints” were ones the Board were keen to become actively involved in during 2007/08 and beyond. Board Members acknowledged that while both these issues were “global” in magnitude, every individual on the planet needed to address each issue and from that starting point to put in place practices to minimise the adverse impacts of both.

The Board has taken a leading role in Northland in terms of fostering “sustainability” in all walks of life. It has lead the way in successfully hosting a Rural Sustainability Forum [2006] and a Marine Sustainability Workshop[2007]. The Board has continued to engage with all agencies within Northland to progress a collaborative approach to sustainability and will continue to do so.

Marine

Marine Protected Areas Policy

The Board welcomed the long awaited release by Government of the Marine Protected Areas Policy early in 2008.

Marine Sustainability

The Board and the Department continue in their commitment to working together to ensure that Northland’s unique coastline and ecosystems are protected.

A Marine Sustainability Steering Group, was established to progress the outcomes from the Marine Sustainability Workshop and map a “Way Forward”. The Board met with the Chair and representatives of the Northland Regional Council in an effort to bring Council on board to co-host the inaugural meeting of the Steering Group and pave the way for making progress towards setting meaningful and measurable goals to achieve marine sustainability.

The Northland Regional Council decided to await the outcome of the review of the Regional Coastal Policy Statement before engaging with the Steering Group. The Board respected this view but was firm in its commitment to honour the outcomes from the initial Workshop and convene a meeting of the Steering Group.

It is pleasing to report that as the 2007/08 year closed, the inaugural meeting of the Marine Sustainability Steering Group was scheduled to take place on 11 July 2008, hosted by the Northland Conservation Board.

Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserves

Following the establishment of two new areas of Marine Reserve in the Whangarei Harbour in 2005, the Department was required to set up a Whangarei Marine Reserves Advisory Committee. The Northland Conservation Board was to be represented on this Committee and the Board appointed David Monro to be its representative on the Committee.

The Board is pleased to be involved with the management of these two key Reserves and looks forward to participating in the Advisory Committee to ensure the maximum benefits are achieved from the establishment of this Marine Reserve.

Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve & Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve

The application, supported by the Board, to have the *Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve* and *Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve* declared World Heritage Sites, is still being progressed. The Board hopes that the final outcome will see these iconic sites included in the World Heritage Site list.

National Marine Park for Northland

Jeroen Jongejans continues to advocate for a Marine Park in Northland and the Board sees merit in this approach and will take the opportunity to foster this idea as appropriate and timely. He was able to provide a presentation to the New Zealand Conservation Authority during its visit to Northland in February 2008. The Authority was enthusiastic about this concept and with Jeroen leading the charge, the Board is hopeful that such a Park may be established in the future.

Species Management & Predator Control

Board Members continue to advocate vigorously for stricter enforcement of current dog control laws throughout Northland and to focus on education of dog owners on the impacts their pets have on wildlife – Kiwi in particular. With the increase in subdivision and similar development in Northland, the impact on the habitat of a wide variety of species is of major concern to the Board.

“Project Island Song” – Eastern Bay of Islands

During the visit to Northland by the NZ Conservation Authority, the Department hosted an “on the water” site visit in the Bay of Islands for the Board and the Authority to view the site of an ambitious rat eradication project for the Eastern Bay of Islands. This was a combined project between Department of Conservation and Guardians of the Bay of Islands, lead by Adrian Walker of the Bay of Islands Area Office. One of the main islands of focus was Urupukapuka Island – a major tourist destination.

The Board and the Authority supported the project and were pleased to be able to view first hand the scale and scope of what was being proposed.

The Board acknowledges the predator control work the Department is undertaking throughout the Conservancy and continues to advocate for the appropriate level of resources to keep the momentum up long term.

Pateke/Brown Teal Survival Guide

Kevin Evans, Board Chairperson and passionate Pateke/Brown Teal advocate and captive breeder, was instrumental in the development of the “Pateke/Brown Teal Survival Guide”, which was launched in conjunction with *World Wetlands Day*, in February 2008 at a function hosted by Banrock Station Wines in Auckland.

The support [both financial and advocacy] from sponsors such as Banrock Station is crucial to the survival of this threatened species.

Historic Heritage

- **Kerikeri Basin Sustainable Development Plan**

The Conservator Northland provided the Board with a copy of the final “Kororipo-Kerikeri Basin Sustainable Development Plan” that was adopted in early 2008. This Plan will see the implementation of the development of a pedestrian access only historical precinct in the Kerikeri Basin – home to Kemp House, the Kerikeri Stone Store, Kororipo Pa and Riwa’s Village.



NZCA Visit to Northland 15 February 2008 – Kororipo Pa with Kerikeri Basin in the background

The Kerikeri Bypass [diverting all vehicular traffic from access through the Basin] was officially opened in June 2008 and the road bridge spanning the river is currently being removed to make way for a pedestrian overbridge several metres downstream from the old bridge.

The Kerikeri Basin is an iconic historic precinct and the Board sees the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Sustainable Development Plan as a big step in recognising the historic and cultural significance of this site and its contents.

During the visit to Northland by the New Zealand Conservation Authority in February, the Department hosted the Board and the Authority on a site visit of the Kerikeri Basin. Both the Board and the Authority Members were impressed with what was being proposed in terms of future management and acknowledged the need to ensure the historic and cultural treasures within the Basin were protected for the future.



Stone Store, Kerikeri Basin

6N[f] *To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.*

- **Northland Fish and Game Council**

Ian Faulkner continues to represent the Board at meetings of the Northland Fish and Game Council. This is providing the Board with ongoing updates on activities of the Council and identifying issues where the Board and Council could collaborate to achieve positive outcomes for conservation.

Rudi Hoetjes, Manager, Northland Fish and Game Council is similarly invited to attend meetings of the Northland Conservation Board.

The Board acknowledges the work undertaken by the Northland Fish and Game Council and will continue to proactively engage with Council at every opportunity.

General Liaison

The Board continued to actively engage with as wide a range of community groups, organisations, agencies and individuals in 2007/08. The current composition of the Board is providing additional opportunities to engage with local communities and individual Board Members proactively involve themselves as much as possible with projects and programmes in their areas. This is resulting in closer liaison with a wide variety of community groups covering a broad spectrum of issues.

Key Liaison

- **NZ Conservation Authority**

The opportunity to host the NZ Conservation Authority in Northland in February 2008, was a highlight for the Board. The Board took full advantage of this visit to canvass a wide range of issues with Authority Members and to provide Members with the time to interact and build relationships for the future.



**Footprints Waipoua - NZCA Visit to Northland – night walk with Footprints Waipoua in the Waipoua Forest to visit Tane Mahuta
[Photograph – David Monro]**

The visit also provided the Board with the opportunity to make presentations to the Authority on key issues affecting Northland. These included

- Biosecurity – Plant and animal pests
- Climate Change
- Marine
- Models for Community Engagement

Board Members provided the Authority with examples in each of the above topics, pertinent to Northland and suggestions for models of best practice that could be picked up by other Boards throughout the country.

▪ **Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society**

During the year representatives from the RFBPS continued to attend Board meetings on a regular basis. The opportunity for them to speak during the Public Forum section of meetings has been taken up with gusto and when pertinent issues and concerns have been raised they have been followed through either by the Board or the Department.

The Board greatly appreciates the interest and support from the Society and wishes to note that the Society is well served by its Northland representatives.

▪ **Hapu & Iwi**

The Board continues to actively seek opportunities to meet with Hapu and Iwi throughout Northland.

The meeting with Te Runanga o Te Rarawa was a highlight for the 2007/08 year and has set a good foundation for future interaction with Te Rarawa.

The Board acknowledges the support from its Maori Board Members in negotiating opportunities for the Board to meet with Hapu and Iwi. The Board is fortunate indeed that it has Members who are held in high esteem throughout the region and who are able to interact at all levels within their communities to seek out ways that the Board can work more closely with these groups to achieve positive outcomes for conservation.

The Board recognises the support that is provided by Pat Campbell, Pou Kura Taio of the Department of Conservation in Northland. Pat has great mana amongst all Hapu and Iwi in Northland and has been instrumental in assisting the Board in its liaison function.

Pakanae Marae

A powhiri of welcome was held at the Pakanae Marae Hokianga, to welcome the Board and Members of the New Zealand Conservation Authority at the commencement of the Authority's visit to Northland in February 2008.

Lead by Kaumatua, John Klaricich [a previous member of the NZ Conservation Authority], the powhiri was warm, welcoming and inclusive. Opportunity was taken to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the Hapu and Iwi of the Hokianga and particularly those associated with the Pakanae Marae i.e. disposal of treated effluent into the Hokianga Harbour.

The Board acknowledged the assistance provided by Hally Toia and Richard Shepherd in organising the powhiri and were unanimous that it was this event that laid the foundations on what turned out to be an excellent visit.

The hospitality afforded the Board and the Authority at the Marae was greatly appreciated. It was hoped that this would be the first of many such visits to this particular Marae.

Te Pukenga Atawhai Wananga

Board Members were provided with the opportunity to attend Te Pukenga Atawhai Wananga in Auckland in February 2008.

The opportunity for Board Members to attend Te Pukenga Atawhai Wananga is ongoing and it is hoped that all Board Members during their tenure on the Board will have been able to take part in the wananga. Feedback from those Members who have been fortunate to attend Te Pukenga Atawhai has been positive and instrumental in changing perceptions and view points.

Te Roroa Settlement

The settlement of the Te Roroa Treaty Claims has seen a major shift in terms of dispersal of land currently managed by the Department on the West Coast of the Northland.

The Deed of Settlement has still to be enacted, but is expected before the end of 2008.

As the Settlement was expected to be enacted early in 2008, the implications of the transfer of the Kauri Coast Area Office, Visitor Centre and facilities at Waipoua to Te Roroa required the Kauri Coast Area Office to be moved to Dargaville. A purpose

built facility was completed [based on G-3 principles] and staff of the Kauri Coast Area moved to Dargaville in May 2008.

The giving effect to the Settlement is still very much in its early stages and the Board will be watching developments closely.

Te Runanga o Te Rarawa

The meeting with representatives from Te Runanga o Te Rarawa at the Roma Marae in May 2008 was a highlight for the Board.

The positive exchange of views at that meeting and the good relationships built as a result of the inclusive collaborate approach being taken, has set the scene for future meetings with Te Rarawa. It has also enabled the Board to view how Te Rarawa is working towards developing the whenua ngahere concept for post Treaty Settlement management of land expected to be handed back to Te Rarawa.

The Board took the opportunity at the meeting to acknowledge and honour the major force behind the whenua ngahere concept, Mrs Gloria Herbert [previous Chair of Te Runanga o Te Rarawa and Member of the Northland Conservation Board]. The mark Gloria has left on both Te Runanga and the Board is immeasurable.

Ngatiwai Trust Board

The Board continues to follow the progress being made on the judicial review that Ngatiwai initiated in 2006 of the Department's processes and protocols with the Ngatiwai Trust Board. The Board acknowledges that these sensitive issues take time to resolve and appreciates that the Conservator keeps the Board updated on the status of this process.

Te Uri o Hau

While the Board did not have direct contact with Te Uri o Hau in 2007/08 it has followed with interest the progress being made in terms of the Integrated Management of the Kaipara Harbour. It is hoped that an opportunity will be available in 2008/09 to meet with Te Uri o Hau to discuss other issues of mutual interest and explore opportunities to work together wherever possible.

■ Department of Conservation

The Board takes this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous support and assistance the Conservator and his staff have provided during the year. Staff at all

levels have demonstrated their passion, commitment, knowledge and experience that has left the Board in no doubt that they were not working for DOC “for the money”.

The Department continues to work through continuous periods of change and early in 2008 a Strategy and Budget Alignment Review was commenced and finally implemented on 30 June 2008.

The major impact was felt at Head Office, Regional Offices and Conservancy Offices throughout the country. The Director-General of Conservation took the opportunity to discuss the objectives of the Review with the Board during the meeting with the NZ Conservation Authority at Omapere in February 2008. The Director General advised that while the need for financial cut backs was required it was not the main focus of the Review. He also said that, regrettably, some positions would be lost.

As a result of the Review, Jeff Griggs, Community Relations Supervisor, Northland Conservancy, elected to accept redundancy, effective from 30 June 2008. The impact on the Board was major as Jeff had been the spearhead behind the strategic projects of the Board for a number of years. The loss of Jeff’s strategic capabilities, his perception, vision and drive, will be a tremendous loss – big shoes of a big man that will be almost impossible to fill.

At a farewell to Jeff in Whangarei, Kevin Evans, Chairperson, spoke of Jeff’s total commitment to sustainability, and his conservation ethic, both personal and professional. He and several other Board Members present acknowledged the enormous impact and contribution of Jeff during his time with Board.



Jeff Griggs - “Simply the Best”

[Photograph Jeannie Hogarth]

While the Board understands that there is nothing so inevitable as “change” it ponders on the potential for such changes to make things go “backwards” rather than “forwards”. It also acknowledges that no one is “indispensable”, but some people have the ability to bridge all boundaries, and with their visionary approach can personally achieve outstanding results as well as assist others to do so.

The Board takes the opportunity in the 2007/08 Annual Report to extend its heartfelt thanks to Jeff Griggs for his outstanding contribution over the years and to acknowledge that while he may no longer be involved directly with the Board, the legacy he leaves behind is timeless.

▪ **Public Forum**

The Public Forum section of Board meetings continues to be well attended and has provided the Board with a large volume of information on a wide variety of issues affecting the wider community in Northland. Issues such as the

- Ngunguru Sandspit – currently being considered for possible land exchange.
- Vehicles on Beaches – adverse impacts on species [particularly shorebirds] and habitats.
- Recreation opportunities – opening of closed tracks; maintenance issues.
- Effluent Disposal - treated effluent into harbours.
- Tourism impacts - increased number of visitors to conservation areas – coping with these impacts on the natural environment.
- Predator control - weeds, possums, Argentine Ants

The Board will continue to encourage members of the public to attend Board meetings and assure them of a warm welcome and fulsome hearing and response.

CONSERVATION LAND USE

The Department continues to involve the Board in reviewing major concessions for use of Department of Conservation administered land in the region.

- There were no major concessions reviewed by the Board in 2007/08. However, the Board continued to follow with interest the resource consent issues associated with the construction of wind turbines by Meridian Energy.

Cape Reinga

The Conservator Northland continued to update the Board on progress being made on the infrastructure work being undertaken at Cape Reinga. The work included the formation of a new car park and extensive revegetation and landscaping to bring the area to the appropriate standard.

The Board is pleased to report that the work is nearing completion and it hopes to be able to visit the site early in 2009.

The Board acknowledges the work undertaken by the Department, particularly staff in the Kaitaia Area, in terms of building a sound relationship with the relevant hapu and iwi to ensure that the project had the blessing and cooperation of all parties involved.

SUBMISSIONS

The Board made a further submission on one Plan Change with the Northland Regional Council -

1 Plan Change 4 [Policy & Regulatory Regime for Aquaculture Management Areas]

David Monro, who led the Board's submission on this proposed Plan Change resulting in a comprehensive submission being lodged with the Northland Regional Council, also ably represented the Board at Hearings on the application.

This was an example of Board Members stepping up to the mark, often in unfamiliar fields, but displaying total professionalism and doing credit to the Board.

2 Development Proposal – Waipu – Private Places

Judi Gilbert picked up the challenge on behalf of the Board to write a submission opposing a proposed Private Plan Change rezoning land from coastal countryside to more intensive subdivision within the Whangarei District Council's jurisdiction. The Board opposed the proposed development as it breached the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and the introduction of such intensive settlement would have ongoing adverse effects on the wildlife of the area.

The Developers concerned subsequently withdrew their application.

Walkways Act

6M[e] *To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on proposals for new walkways in any area within the jurisdiction of the Board.*

The Board was not called on to advise the Authority on any proposals for new walkways in 2007/08. However, there were two major “walking tracks” that created a great deal of public interest, which were presented to the Board for consideration.

a] **Waikaraka Walkway**

This “walking track” was being managed by the Department of Conservation “by default” as it was not on conservation administered land, but was clearly the responsibility of the Whangarei District Council.

The Department provided a background paper on the issue for the Board to consider in terms of s.6M[e] and outlined that the Department was in the process of encouraging the Council to accept its responsibilities over the walking track, including ongoing maintenance.

The Board noted the issue and acknowledged that

- i] the Waikaraka “walkway” was not a Walkway under the Walkways Act.
- ii] the Waikaraka walking track was the responsibility of the Whangarei District Council.

For the above reasons i] and ii] the Board did not proceed to engage in this issue and advised the Department to continue to work with the Whangarei District Council for Council to accept full responsibility for this track.

b] **Tangihua Trig Track**

The Board provided an opportunity for a member of the Public, Zelka Grammer to provide a written submission to the Board as part of the general section of the May 2008 Board meeting, seeking the Board’s support to requesting the Department to re-open the Tangihua Trig Track that had been closed since 1997.

The Board also requested a report from the Department on the issues raised.

Zelka Grammer and the Conservator Northland spoke to the issue at the May Board meeting.

The Board acknowledged both sides of the argument and agreed that it did not have the mandate to demand that the Department re-open the Tangihua Trig Track.

The Board noted that the Department and Zelka Grammer had been undergoing long term major dialogue on the issue and the Board encouraged and supported ongoing discussion between all parties.

The Board considered that the best way forward regarding this issue was to use the opportunity to table this type of concern via the review of the Conservation Management Strategy.

The Board will continue to encourage communities to use the review of the CMS as a means of addressing this and similar issues. This was the objective of the consultation and submission phase of the review.

Promotion

- **Loder Cup**

The Board was pleased to nominate Mr Guy Bowden of Tawapou Coastal Natives Nursery at Tutukaka, for the 2008 Loder Cup. Mr Bowden has dedicated his life to conserving New Zealand's natural flora. His Nursery is now recognised as one of the best in the country. Mr Bowden also has a deep love for the *Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve* and was a leader in initiating a strategic plan for the eradication of environmental weeds on the Islands.

It is hoped that in the 2008/09 Annual Report the Board will be able to report on the success of this nomination



Guy Bowden [Photograph – David Monro]

Comment from Members – Highlights for the year under review

Board Members were asked to identify the *highs* and *lows* for them for the year. The following is a collation of the highlights submitted by Members :-

- “Overwhelming response from Marae and community meetings wanting to be part of local management decisions and the acknowledgement from local Department of Conservation staff that this is also what they want. This would seem to add up to an understanding that the management of the DOC estate is a “whole of community” issue.” **[John Kenderdine]**
- “A *high* for me has been the support and encouragement from DOC Pou Kura Taiao, Pat Campbell and fellow Board Member Richard Shepherd, to use *te Reo Maori* in appropriate situations. Kei te mihi, kia korua oku hoal

A *low* was the strong feeling that we are *not* fully and effectively acting out our role as advocates for the public with the Department, especially in some of the more difficult cases. There *is* a feeling of dissatisfaction with DOC’s performance amongst some members of the community, and often I find myself acting defensively as an advocate for DOC, but perhaps the most effective I can be in my role as a member of this Board is to make every effort to facilitate effective communication between DOC and members of the public in working towards and achieving win/win outcomes.” **[David Monro]**

- “The question often in my mind is, "is it worth while commenting when the discussion in English fails to capture the wairua of the korero". Why continue with an argument and embarrass people who struggle to understand. Why indeed be part of a Board when you feel a sense of frustration? Being bi-lingual has its drawbacks. Caught in two camps, one based on science and the other on mythology there is no one road to follow. That’s a low.

“But mixing with people from different backgrounds, observing how a Government agency manages to traverse a minefield of complex issues, noticing how a collaborative approach can provide options helps to fill the knowledge tool box. Thats a high.” **[Richard Shepherd]**

- “For me, one such ‘learning’ from this past year is just how concerned the general population of Northland is over the issue of ‘mangrove invasion’ (for want of a better term). We all know that the proliferation of mangroves is symptomatic of the more serious problem of soil destruction and erosion in the catchment areas. However, the proliferation of mangroves on the silt washing in to the harbour areas is rapidly increasing the retention of further silt material in the area of the harbour and accelerating harbour infilling.

“Mangroves are not just a symptom of accelerating land degradation, they are also ‘positive reinforcers’ in the cycle of harbour in-fill. Harbours such as Herekino, Pawarenga, and even Houhora will disappear in the space of a human lifetime if this process isn’t interrupted. Many people around the North would like to see greater action from the Northland Regional Council and DOC, to halt the threat to their Harbours.” **[Ken Ross]**

Conclusion

The 2007/08 year has been another good one for the Board. Opportunities were provided by the Board for local authorities, agencies, community groups, environment groups/organisations, tourism groups etc to come together to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern and to develop collaborative ways in which all can work together to achieve the common goal.

The global issue of climate change and the need for everyone to take ownership of the issue and to make a change, will continue to be an important concern for the Board to take a lead on.

At the end of the day it is each one of us as individuals who need to take stock of our “carbon footprints” and what we do about it as individuals that will be the start of turning the tide. All individual Board Members are committed to playing their part in achieving a better environment to leave for future generations.

The enthusiasm, commitment and willingness of each Board Member to contribute to discussions, play their part in the community and actively advocate on conservation and environment issues in Northland is to be acknowledged and has set the scene for an even better year in 2008/09.



Kevin Evans
BOARD CHAIRPERSON
30 June 2008