

## **Introduction**

The Northland Conservation Board is one of fourteen bodies appointed nationwide 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. Between them these areas are dominant elements of the proposed Kauri National Park.

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, with an ongoing programme of systematic surveying being carried out to record new sites. 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.

## 2 Membership

Five new members, Mrs Julie Gordon, Mrs Nora Rameka, Mr Rick Stolwerk, Mr Hugh Pollock and Mr Bruce Yorke. Mr Stephen Soole and Mr Maurice Penney did not seek re-nomination. Mr Hally Toia continued as Board Chairperson with Mr Kevin Evans as Deputy Chairperson.

During the course of the year the Board farewelled Mr Lew Ritchie and Mr Haydn Edmonds. Both men citing heavy pressure from other commitments preventing them to complete their full term. Board Members took the opportunity to express their appreciation to Mr Ritchie for his long service on the Board, both as a Member and Chairperson, and his unstinting commitment to ensuring that marine issues in particular were given full, frank and open discussion and direction.

Board Members welcomed the new Members at a memorable Induction Day at Aroha Island in September 2005.

There were six(6) public meetings during this reporting period. Membership and attendance were as follows:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>
Mr Hally Toia	Whangarei	6 from 6
Mr Haydn Edmonds	Whangarei	0 from 6
Mr Kevin Evans	Dargaville	5 from 6
Mr Ian Faulkner	Bay of Islands	4 from 6
Mrs Julie Gordon	Waipu	6 from 6
Mr Jeroen Jongejans	Whangarei	6 from 6
Mr John Kenderdine	Kaitaia	6 from 6
Mr Hugh Pollock	Whangarei	6 from 6
Mrs Nora Rameka	Bay of Islands	2 from 6
Mr Lew Ritchie	Whangarei	3 from 6
Mr Rick Stolwerk	Whangarei	4 from 6
Mr Bruce Yorke	Whangarei	4 from 6

### **3 Conservation Board Meetings**

The Northland Conservation Board held six (6) meetings during the reporting period. The venue for Board meetings is chosen to ensure as wide a coverage as possible of the region and to enable members of the public throughout Northland to have access to the Board.

- 1      29 July 2005            -Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei
  
- 2      30 September 2005   -Kaitaia Area Office, Kaitaia
  
- 3      02 December 2005   -Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei
  
- 4      17 February 2006     -Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei
  
- 5      28 April 2006         -Kingsgate Hotel, Riverside Drive, Whangarei
  
- 6      23 June 2006         -Woodlands Conference Centre, Kerikeri

#### **4 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:**

The Board and the Department have worked together to develop a method of reviewing the Conservation Management Strategy ('CMS') that enables the Board to receive the level of information it requires for it to be able to comment meaningfully on the performance of the Department against the CMS. Department staff prepare notes and a presentation on identified sections within the CMS that then form a major part of each Board meeting. Questions asked include:

1. Background: What does the CMS say about the issue?
2. What has been achieved towards the CMS objectives?
3. What has been achieved but is outside the CMS? This should include references to the Statement of Intent and Northland Strategic Directions.
4. What has not been achieved?
5. What are the obstacles to progress?
6. Describe iwi relationships and Section 4 responsibilities.
7. Describe relationships with other stakeholders.
8. Identify outstanding policy issues and any limitations, changes, or additions required in the CMS including management planning requirements.

An audit report is then prepared by the Board which is forwarded to the Conservator. These audit reports will eventually form part of the review process. The review of Northland's CMS is scheduled to commence early in 2007. A template for the Reports has been finalised, which will provide a consistent approach and presentation for all Department of Conservation CMSs across all 14 Conservancies.

- (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:**

**World Heritage Proposal – Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve and Marine Reserve**

The uniqueness, significance and diversity of the Poor Knights Islands has been recognised by the establishment of a Nature Reserve and a Marine Reserve. The significance of this area was further recognised by the International Maritime Organisation and its adoption of its Sub-Committee's 2003 recommendation for avoidance of the Poor Knights Islands area by specified shipping, an almost unprecedented action.

The Board continues to chart the progress of the application for World Heritage status for the Poor Knights Islands and a recent update has advised that the application is still being finalised prior to submission to the relevant agency for consideration. It is hoped to have this finalised before the end of 2007.

**Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve**

The Board was delighted when the Minister of Conservation announced the establishment of two new Marine Reserve areas within the Whangarei Harbour. This announcement was met with great enthusiasm and delight by the Applicants – students from Kamo High School in Whangarei, who had worked on this project for 10 years.

The Minister of Conservation is expected to visit Whangarei in October 2006 to establish the Marine Reserves and the Board hopes that this is but the beginning of such Reserves being established in Northland.

**Mimiwhangata Marine Reserve Proposal**

The Board is following with interest the proposal (as yet in its formative stage) for the establishment of a Marine Reserve at Mimiwhangata. This proposal has the support of the local Iwi and an application is likely to be lodged with the Minister by the Iwi jointly with the Department of Conservation.

## **Marine Protected Areas**

The Board sought confirmation from the Minister of Conservation that, following the announcement from the Minister of Fisheries of the Marine Protected Areas Policy, that the Government intends to see 10% of New Zealand's coastline in MPAs by 2010.

The response from the Minister of Conservation that this was still the Government's target has prompted the Board to give notice to the Northland Conservator that it would be watching carefully how Northland intended to give effect to this 10% target by 2010.

## **Marine Information Compact Disk**

The Board was delighted to receive a very comprehensive advocacy tool for marine information by way of a CD compiled and produced by Dr Vince Kerr, Marine Biologist, who works on contract for the Department of Conservation in Northland.

Already the CD is proving its worth, with presentations to key groups throughout the region e.g. Rotary, requesting copies of the CD and for Dr Kerr to make presentations at Club meetings etc.

Marine issues are perhaps top of the issues list for Northland and the Northland Conservation Board actively advocates for marine conservation at every opportunity. It is also an issue where the Board and the Department are committed to working together to ensure that Northland's unique coastline and ecosystems are protected.

## **Sustainability**

2005/2006 was a major year for the Board to focus on "sustainability" in all its forms, but specifically for Northland linking into the "Growing for Good" report produced by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.

Following an initial "Growing for Good" Forum in Northland in August 2005, the Board was concerned that it not only did not reach out to the full spectrum of interest groups, individuals, agencies, but did not seem to gain any momentum on the ground. To this end it saw the need for a further Workshop to be held, that would encompass as wide a range of participants from throughout Northland and beyond, as was possible.

The Board extended an invitation to Dr Morgan Williams, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, to come to Northland and be the Keynote Speaker for a “Growing for Good” Rural Sustainability Workshop. Dr Williams accepted the invitation and a Workshop was planned for 14 July 2006 in Whangarei.

250 Invitations were extended to a wide range of participants and interested parties. A turnout of 80+ on the day was less than hoped, but the calibre of the participants far outweighed the drop in numbers expected.

The subjects covered on the day included

- Maori world view (Kaitiakitanga).
- Natural Capital/Biodiversity.
- Current rural land management practices/impacts.
- Regulatory/Educational method for improving land management.
- Production (Northland).
- National/International perspectives.
- Balancing environmental, economic, cultural, social considerations in rural land management.

A Discussion Paper and graphic record of the Workshop was circulated to all participants and invitees who did not attend, seeking comment on the Paper with a “Where to from here” objective.

The Workshop was seen as a great success and is to be followed up with a similar Workshop focussed on marine sustainability in the near future.

### **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. Some key concessions brought before the Board in 2005/2006 included

- Mighty River Power – easement across Department of Conservation administered land for a coal conveyor belt for the Marsden B Power Station.



- Sand Mining – access easement for sand mining under the Crown Minerals Act 1991.
- Meridian Energy – lease, licence or easement for the purpose of constructing and operating a wind farm on the Epikauri Conservation Gumfields area in Kaitaia.

**(f) To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board:**

The Board continued to enjoy a close liaison with the Northland Fish & Game Council and to provide copies of Agendas and Minutes of meetings and other relevant reports to each other as applicable.

In 2006 the Board also gave a commitment that action would be taken for more meaningful interaction between the two Agencies by way of extending invitations to Northland Fish and Game Councillors and Management to join the Board on Conservation Management Strategic Inspection Tours in the region, particularly where of special relevance to the Council.

**5 Board Responsibilities Under Other Sections of the Conservation Act**

**Section 4 responsibility that gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi**

The Board continues to endorse its commitment committed to giving effect to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and takes every opportunity to do so.

**Te Roroa Settlement**

The Board was delighted to receive advice that the Te Roroa Treaty Claims Settlement had been finalised. This will have wide ranging implications for the Department in the future management of the Waipoua and Waima Forests and environs. It will also see the Area Office shift from the Waipoua Headquarters base to a new Area Office in Dargaville early in 2007.

**Ngatiwai Trust Board**

The Board follows with interest the judicial review that Ngatiwai has initiated of the Department of Conservation's processes and protocols with the Board.

Opportunity is taken to invite members of the Trust Board to attend the Northland Conservation Board meetings and to join the Board on its Conservation Management Implementation field inspections when these take place within the Ngatiwai rohe.

### **Te Runanga o Te Rarawa**

At the Board meeting in Kaitaia in September 2005, the Members were provided with a presentation from Mrs Gloria Herbert, Mr Joe Cooper and Mr Rongo Bentson relating to the Whenua Ngahere concept.

Mrs Herbert outlined the proposal that provision would be made in settlement legislation for the various parcels of Department of Conservation land to be named “Te Rarawa Conservation Area” or “Te Rarawa Ngahere Pou o Te Taiao”. The name would be supported by a statement in the legislation. The yet to be finalised mana whenua recognition statement, would express a purpose similar to *“to recognise the mana whenua of the hapu of Te Rarawa over the Te Rarawa Conservation Area and to engage Te Rarawa in the business and activity of conservation management of all the Te Rarawa Conservation Area in a manner that assists and enhances the particular existing purpose of the Conservation lands.”*

Board Members were impressed with the concept and would be following the outcome of the Treaty Claim Settlement for Te Rarawa, with great interest.

### **Te Uri o Hau**

The Board continues to liaise with Te Uri o Hau, particularly in relation to conservation related issues following on from the Treaty Claim Settlement. Of particular interest is the management of the Kaipara Harbour and environs.

## **6 Liaison**

### **Department of Conservation**

The Board continues to enjoy a sound relationship with the Department of Conservation in Northland. Regular meetings are held with key staff of the Department and, where applicable, the Board joins the Department in key conservation programmes and proposals within the region.

The relationship between Area staff and the Board is a highlight, never more so than when the Area hosts the Board for meetings and Conservation Management Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Field Inspections.

## **Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society**

The Board welcomes opportunities to liaise with the Northern Branches of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society ('RFBPS'). A representative from the Society regularly attends all Board Meetings and takes the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of issues with the Board during the Public Forum section of each meeting.

### **?Kaipara Harbour**

At the June 2006 Board meeting in Kerikeri, Ms Suzi Phillips, RFBPS, Kaipara Branch make a presentation to the Board on the RFBPS Kaipara Branch application to have the Kaipara Harbour declared a RAMSAR site.

Ms Phillips highlighted the importance of the Kaipara Harbour for migratory birds who travel an amazing 17,000kms from the northern hemisphere each year (some as fledglings) to settle in the Kaipara Harbour for the summer months. She also outlined the significance of the habitat within the Kaipara and how it supports a vast number of wildlife within its confines.

The Kaipara Harbour met all the criteria laid down for a RAMSAR site and it was seen as not an "if" but "when" this would be formalised.

### **Public Forum**

The Public Forum slot at each Board Meeting continues to attract a wide variety of topics being presented by Members of the Public. This has enabled the Board to become aware of issues within the region in which, in terms of its mandate, the Board can specifically become involved and often act as a conduit between the public and the Department.

## **7 Conservation Management Strategy Implementation & Monitoring Field Inspections**

### **29 September 2005 – Kaitaia Area**

#### **Rangaunu Harbour – Carrington Farms**

Kaitaia Area staff hosted this CMS field inspection. The inspection gave Board Members a first hand inspection of the Carrington Farms complex, which covered a major development including a golf course and vineyards.

Board Members are most interested in the massive wetland that is being looked after by Carrington Farms and the predator control work undertaken by an independent contractor. This was seen as a compliment to the predator control work being undertaken on adjacent Department of Conservation administered land.

Later in the day the Board Members inspected various aspects of the Rangaunu Harbour relating to CMS objectives in the area.

### **16 February 2006 – Bream Head**

Whangarei Area staff hosted the Board for an excellent CMS field inspection at Bream Head. This inspection provided the Board with an opportunity to meet with members of the Bream Head Restoration Trust and to see first hand the work being undertaken as a joint venture between the Trust and the Department of Conservation.

The Board was provided with an excellent overview of the work being undertaken by Mr David Monro representing the Trust. Mr Monro had provided the Board with an inspiring journey back in time with regards to the area, what it had been like 1000 years ago to the present day. His presentation entitled “Creative Visualisation” gave a graphic background for the Board Members present on the day.

The visit also outlined the positive results for conservation that were obvious to all present as well as the added value from a project where the Department and the community worked together with the same objective in mind. Board Member Kevin Evans summed up the day by saying “having the Landcare Group and Bream Head Trust co-ordinating the initiative supported by the Department, was a recipe for success and provided an holistic view of the Department and the community working together.”

### **22 June 2006 - Puketi/Omahuta**

The Board was hosted by the Area Manager and key Area staff for an inspiring, informative and often awesome field inspection of the Puketi/Omahuta Forests, with a focus on recreation and visitor issues. The contrasts in visitor experience from the full forest experience to the highly visited Manginangina Boardwalk, were significant and showed the diversity of the landscapes and habitats that provided visitor experience at all levels.

The impacts of increased visitation of these areas was noted and the Board Members were impressed with the commitment and dedication of the DOC staff involved and the challenges they and the Department as a whole face in continuing to provide quality visitor experiences, without compromising the conservation values of the sites.

A key issue during this inspection was the need to bring all commercial users of the sites into the concession system and the need to ensure that the conservation message needed to be provided to all Tour Operators to ensure that facts (as opposed to enhanced fiction) were being given to visitors at key sites.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Northland Conservancy staff for making these visits not only memorable but also very informative.

## **8 Highlights**

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 :-

- Working through own internal review of the CMS (CMS presentations and Audit Reports).
- Sustainable Rural Development Forum and “where to from here” discussion paper. A big challenge for the Board.
- Progressing National Marine Park idea.
- Various submissions Board has been involved with.
- Variety and enthusiasm of fellow Board Members.
- Conservation is as much about people as it is about the environment – its about getting on with one another as well as doing the job.
- Working for conservation and alongside DOC staff can at times be a slow and frustrating experience.
- DOC jargon (both verbal and written) adds difficulty to understanding.
- Value the opportunity to network with fellow Board Members from throughout Northland.

- Growing realisation of the gap between making policy and its implementation. All policy requires an implementation Plan and resourcing to match. If no implementation Plan then the policy needs to go back to the Policy-makers – particularly important for the Board as it begins to review the current CMS.
- Emphasis on marine issues and the understanding of the impact on the marine environment from bad catchment management.
- Board member Induction Day
- CMS Inspections with DOC staff – good to get out and see the work being done and problems being encountered.

## **9 Summary**

The Board can look back on the 2005/2006 year with some pride in that it was a very full year indeed. The continuation of the implementation monitoring of the Conservation Management Strategy afforded the Board with numerous opportunities to view, first hand, how the Department was coping with this directive. It also enabled the Board Members to get alongside Departmental staff to see “the CMS in action”.

The Board has started to embrace the Department’s Strategic Directions and will be discussing how it can give effect to it at the Board Induction Day.

The Board is also interested in keeping in close contact with other Boards as to how they are giving effect to the Strategic Directions and have written a letter to all Board Chairs seeking their comment. This will be closely followed up in the 2006/2007 year.

Board Members want to thank the Conservator Northland and his staff for the support, open and frank discussion of issues, opportunities provided to the Board to get out and about with staff, during the course of the year. The DOC/Board relationship in Northland is one that the Board appreciates and values highly and augers well for the future of conservation in the region.

Hally F Toia  
BOARD CHAIRPERSON