

Taranaki / Whanganui Conservation Board (Te Tai Hau-ā-uru)

Annual Report 2010-2011



TARANAKI / WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD
TE TAI HAU-Ā-URU

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Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board Members



From left to right: Richard Steedman (Deputy Chair), Barney Haami, Dave Digby, Christine Cheyne, Rachel Steele, Wikitoria Keenan, Rex Hendry, Darryn Ratana (Chair)

Absent: Donald McIntyre



Donald McIntyre

Table of Contents	<i>page</i>
1. Conservancy Amalgamation	4
2. Introduction to the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board	4
3. Membership of the Board	4
4. Board District	5
4.1 Overview & Map of Board Area	5
4.2 Description by total area	5
4.3 Protected land	5
5. Budget, Fees and Allowances	6
6. Board Meetings and Inspections	6
7. Functions Under the Conservation Act 1987	7
7.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987.....	7
7.2 Functions of the Board	7
(a) Recommend the Conservation Management Strategy.....	7
(b) Approve Conservation Management Plans	7
(c) Advise on implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy And Conservation Management Plans.....	7
(d) (i) Advise on any proposed change of status or classification	9
(ii) Advise on any other conservation matters	9
(e) Advise on walkways	9
(f) Liaison with Fish and Game Council	9
(g) Ministerial delegations	9
8. Power of Boards	9
(a) Advocacy.....	9
(b) Establishment of Committees.....	11
9. Functions under the National Parks Act 1980	11
(a) Recommend National Park Management Plans, Reviews or Amendments .11	11
(b) Have special regard in respect to Whanganui National Park.....	12
10. Reserves Act 1977	12
11. Liaison	12
12. Chairperson’s Comment	13

1. CONSERVANCY AMALGAMATION

In December 2010, the Department formally amalgamated the Tongariro/Taupo and Whanganui Conservancies to become the Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy.

Both the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board remain unaffected in this reporting year and will continue to exist as separate bodies. The Minister of Conservation has however approved changes to their respective areas of jurisdiction to mirror boundary changes made in the conservancy amalgamation and these became effective 1 July 2011.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE TARANAKI/WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board is an independent statutory body appointed by the Minister of Conservation. It was established by section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987.

The Board has the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the conservation management strategy (CMS) and conservation management plans (CMPs) for its region. As well as providing for interaction between the public and the Department of Conservation at the conservancy level, the Board also acts as an advocate for the protection of conservation values. Its prime role is to advise the Department and the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

The functions of the Board are set out in Sections 6M of the Conservation Act 1987, and in the National Parks Act 1980 and the Reserves Act 1977.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

Following the 2010 round of appointments, membership of the Board was reduced from ten to nine. Two of these appointments are statutory and selected in consultation with the Minister of Maori Affairs on the recommendations of the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board and the Taranaki Maori Trust Board.

Members of the Board are appointed for up to a three year term by the Minister of Conservation having regard to their experience, expertise and links with the local community including tangata whenua. Members may have knowledge of nature conservation, natural earth and marine sciences, cultural heritage, recreation, tourism, and Māori perspectives. This process ensures a diversity of experience and background and a spread across the main geographical and ecological zones within the board's area.

Appointed Members	Year Appointed	Home Location	Meetings Attended (4 held)
Darryn Ratana (Chair)	2005	Whanganui	3
Richard Steedman (Deputy Chair)	2008	Taihape	3
Ian Bell ¹	2005	Whanganui	2
Christine Cheyne	2004	Palmerston North	3
Dave Digby	2006	Stratford	4
Barney Haami	1998	Whanganui	3
Rex Hendry	2008	New Plymouth	4
Wikitoria Keenan	2009	New Plymouth	1
Donald McIntyre	2008	Inglewood	2
Rachel Steele	2005	Taumarunui	3

¹ Retiring member who did not seek reappointment – could only attend two meetings within the reporting period

4. BOARD DISTRICT

4.1 The Board’s current area of responsibility for this reporting year covers the Department’s pre-amalgamation boundaries for the Whanganui Conservancy and includes the Palmerston North Area. It encompasses some 20,000 square km of land extending from the Mokau River in the north to the Manawatu River in the south and extending inland to include the western Ruahine Ranges, north to the edge of the Kaimanawa Forest Park, across SH49 to Raetihi and northwest to Taumarunui.



Map of Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board Area

4.2	Within the Board’s district are:	
	National Parks (Egmont & Whanganui)	108,401 ha
	Conservation Parks – Ruahine Forest Park (western side) and Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area	54,936 ha
	Sanctuaries	2,357 ha
	Conservation Areas	162,159 ha
	Marginal Strips	932 ha
	Scenic Reserves	22,873 ha
	Historic Reserves	39 ha
	Recreation Reserves	149 ha
	Local Purpose Reserves	260 ha
	Other Reserves	880 ha
	Wildlife Reserves	181 ha
	Wildlife Refuges	254 ha
	Marine Reserves	3,248 ha
	Total Area (hectares)	(approx.) 356,670

4.3 The protected lands (as detailed above) within the Board district represent approximately 18% of the total area of the district.

5. BUDGET, FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The Board's budget for 2010/11 was \$16,650. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. Board members are paid a daily meeting fee of \$140 and the chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$190. Members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged on Board business.

6. BOARD MEETINGS AND INSPECTIONS

As in previous years the Board has continued to alternate Board meetings between Whanganui and other locations throughout the Board district to give local people the opportunity to attend meetings and raise any issues. There is time set aside at the start of each Board meeting for a public forum that allows Board members to become familiar with local conservation issues. The relevant DOC Area Manager provides Board members with a briefing on work undertaken as well as any current issues in the area where the Board meeting is held. This enables the Board to gain a greater understanding of the Department's work in the field and an opportunity to meet field staff.

Wherever possible, the Board implemented its policy of focusing meetings, and any associated field inspections, around a strategic theme related to key conservation issues agreed by the Board for its reporting year. Guest speakers were invited to provide the Board members with a range of views on the conservation issue.

The Board scheduled four formal meetings for the report period. A combined workshop and field inspection with Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board was scheduled to coincide with one of the meetings. The meetings were as follows:

Date of Meeting	Meeting Venue	Location
3 September 2010	Wharerata, Massey University	Palmerston North
3 December 2010	Headquarters Land Training Doctrine Group	Waiouru Military Camp
4 December 2010	Ruapehu District Council Service Centre	Ohakune
4 March 2011	Hawera Community Centre	Hawera
10 June 2011	Whanganui Conservancy Office	Whanganui

Field Inspections

The Board regards inspections as an important part of exercising its functions because they provide opportunities to discuss management issues on site and share ideas with Department staff. Wherever possible, field inspections are arranged to coincide with topical conservation issues so that the Board can be provided with relevant background information.

Friday, 3 December 2010: Accompanied by NZDF staff as well as Conservancy and Area staff, members from both the Taranaki/Whanganui and Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Boards met at Waiouru Military Camp before being provided with a visit into the Waiouru Army Training area. This site visit was especially pertinent given that Board jurisdiction for this area was transferred from the



Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board member Richard Steedman explains the history of Waiu Pa

Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board effective 1 July 2011. The inspection included an overview of the site, and access roading proposals for Hihitahi Wind Farm and their likely impact. Members were also provided with an overview of the different landscapes and values including Waiu Pa, forest remnants, shrubland advance, heather and contorta control and were briefed on stakeholder engagement with the NZ Army with regard to biodiversity monitoring and Kaimanawa Horse management.

7. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

7.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 states “This Act shall be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. As a board established under the Conservation Act 1987, section 4 applies to the Board in the discharge of its functions.

7.2 Functions of the Board

(a) Recommend the Conservation Management Strategy for approval

A conservation management strategy (CMS) is a 10-year statutory document that implements General Policy and establishes objectives for the management and protection of the natural and historic features and wildlife of the region, and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. Conservation Boards are actively involved in the preparation, review and amendment and approval of CMSs.

The current Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Whanganui Conservancy was approved in April 1997 and work had been undertaken by the Board to prepare a new draft CMS for public notification. In December 2009 however, the review of CMSs nationally was put on hold due to the Director-General’s decision to develop a national framework for CMSs.

A new template was formally approved in late 2010. The Board was informed at its March meeting that there would be one CMS produced for the Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki (TWT) Conservancy and the review project would commence in October 2011. A committee was established to liaise directly with a similar committee formed from within the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board specifically for the review of the draft TWT CMS.

(b) Approve Conservation Management Plans

The Board did not approve any conservation management plans, or their review and amendment, in this reporting period.

(c) Advise on the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy and Conservation Management Plans

At each of its meetings the Board receives a CMS Monitoring report prepared by the Department that focuses on one or two different ecological districts/regions covered by the CMS. The template outlines the relevant performance indicator, the current situation and changes and a report on changes and trends over time.

The report covers the following key issues for each ecological district/region: land management, native species protection, threats (possums, goats, deer, domestic stock, and weeds), historic places, recreation, commercial use and freshwater.

During the report period, the Board considered the following monitoring reports:

- *September 2010* - North Taranaki & Matemateaonga Ecological District
- *December 2010* - Egmont & Taumarunui Ecological District
- *March 2011* - Manawatu Plains Ecological District & Manawatu Gorge Ecological Region

The Board received the above reports and discussion took place at the meetings on items of interest. The Board however, requested that the content of the report be re-visited so that it reports against the objectives in the CMS rather than input and output statements. It was decided to trial an alternative CMS Monitoring model at its June meeting.

- *Threatened Flora*

Threatened plant objectives of the CMS for species with known populations have largely been met. Although successes have been obtained through joint initiatives with councils, iwi, trusts and local interest groups, the Board stated that resourcing is critical to retain the trained specialists needed for technical support.

- *Statutory Planning*

The section for statutory planning in the Whanganui CMS covers the entire framework of planning including statutory advocacy, coastal planning, and management planning. With regard to policy, the Board noted that the Department's input into the development of the One Plan appears to have been critical in assisting Horizons Regional Council to achieve better policies in relation to freshwater and added that coastal planning has also seen gains with new marine reserves.

The Board questioned whether the lull in RMA work currently, compared to recent activity, was due more to lack of capacity (through constant restructuring, staff turnover and lack of resources) to engage in RMA planning processes rather than the economic recession. The Board advised that a key mechanism for achieving outcomes in statutory planning is through relationships with community stakeholders.

The Department had noted that positive inter-organisation liaison with district and regional councils, and working relationships with iwi have been developed. The Board stressed the importance of advocacy through statutory planning at the present time given the changing status of iwi as economic players, landowners and resource managers in the wake of Treaty settlements, and the development of second generation RMA plans for councils.

In addition to the monitoring reports, the Board is provided with a Conservator's report that gives a brief overview of work being performed and improvements/changes made and completed. Since the amalgamation, the Conservator's Report has included all of Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy for context. The Board is also provided with a presentation from the relevant Area Manager at its meetings.

Other Departmental staff and guest speakers are invited to give presentations to the Board. The Board received the following presentations for this reporting period:

September 2010

- Kakadu National Park (*Board Chair*)

December 2010

- Overview of the newly amalgamated Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy
- Update on the current iwi landscape for Tongariro/Whanganui/Taranaki
- CMS Review Update

March 2011

- Offshore mineral exploration by Trans-Tasman Resource Limited (*Guest speaker*)
- Sand mining
- Whaling in NZ

June 2011

- Generation 2 CMS
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation
- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

The Board is grateful for the time and effort staff and guest speakers put into preparing and delivering these very informative presentations.

(d) (i) Advise on any proposed change of status or classification

There were no proposed changes of status or classification of any area of national or international importance within the reporting year.

(ii) Advise on any other conservation matters

Feral Cats

In February 2011, a letter was written to the Minister of Conservation and the President of the NZRSPCA regarding the promotion of barn cats by the North Taranaki SPCA. The Board requested that any practice of releasing introduced predators that may endanger native fauna be strongly discouraged, and sought the immediate cease of the promotion of barn cats.



Reviewing the Crown Minerals Act 1991

As previously advocated, the Board strongly supports a greater awareness of the contribution that conservation of NZ's indigenous biodiversity and protection of unique and/or iconic species and landscapes make to our economic well-being. In providing feedback to the discussion paper "Reviewing the Crown Minerals Act 1991" the Board considered that this contribution needs to be more accurately measured than at present, and competing uses of NZ's conservation estate need to be more accurately valued. The Board further stated that environmental and economic impacts of mining in the conservation estate need to be comprehensively assessed with conservation taking precedence in the case that minerals are located in the conservation estate.

(e) Advise on walkways

The Board formerly had the function of advising the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on proposals for new walkways. This function was repealed by section 82 of the Walking Access Act 2008.

(f) Liaison with Fish and Game Council

Liaison has been maintained with the local Fish and Game Council through an exchange of agendas and minutes of meetings. A representative from Taranaki Fish & Game attended the June meeting. There were no matters arising from the liaison which required direct Board input.

(g) Ministerial delegations

The Minister did not delegate any ministerial powers or functions to the Board during the reporting period.

8. Powers of Boards

(a) Advocacy

The Board considers it has an important role to play in:

- Information sharing with iwi authorities
- Promoting public understanding of and fostering support for the protection of the natural and historic heritage of New Zealand
- Raising public awareness of conservation boards and their roles, through meeting members of the public and representatives from other agencies and groups
- Making submissions on issues relevant to the Board.

Treaty/Iwi Relationships

The Board has a statutory requirement to include members who can represent Taranaki and Whanganui iwi. As well as this, several Board members have iwi affiliations with two current

members also appointed to the regional forum of Taranaki iwi. These connections play a vital role in improving the Boards understanding of iwi perspectives.

Progress in Treaty settlement negotiations continues within the area covered by the Board with four deeds of settlement having been completed; two in negotiation; and three iwi having signed Terms of Negotiation with the Crown. The Waitangi Tribunal is currently preparing its report on an iwi land claim.

Tapuae Marine Reserve Advisory Committee



In February 2010 the Minister of Conservation approved the establishment of an advisory committee for Tapuae Marine Reserve under section 56 of the Conservation Act 1987. Further, the Minister agreed that the advisory committee would consist of 7 members via nominations from local iwi, fishing groups, the Taranaki Regional Council, and the Board.

Due to concern regarding appropriate tangata whenua representation on the advisory committee, the Board advocated that the Department pursue further consultation on the number and composition of the Tapuae Marine Reserve Advisory Committee. In its June 2011 meeting, the Board was informed that this consultation had been performed and a further submission to the Minister was being processed.

Submissions

The Board has provided comments on discussion documents from other Government organisations and statutory plans developed by territorial authorities and regional councils. During the report period the Board made submissions/comments on the following documents:

Regional Land Transport Strategy – Horizons Regional Council

The Board considers that an environmentally sustainable land transport system will complement its focus on conservation. As such, its submission recommended that greater weight be given to environmental sustainability and having a multi-modal land transport system including rail - for both passengers and freight. The Board also advocated for increased priority to improve public transport infrastructure and services, and walking and cycling opportunities.

Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki – Taranaki Regional Council

In its submission, the Board strongly recommended that greater emphasis be placed on increased provision for alternative modes of transport; reducing carbon emissions; increasing the targets for walking, cycling and public transport growth; and to include a policy on roadside planting.

Outdoor Recreation Research Agenda forum – SPARC

In endorsing the development of a research agenda to identify key strategic research priorities that will support the Outdoor Recreation Strategy, the Board supported the board conception of the recreation resource and highlighted the need for specific research into the impact of recreation on conservation. In principle, the Board supported the emphasis on access to natural areas to support a range of outdoor recreation opportunities and commented on the need to ensure outdoor recreation is considered alongside other users of rivers, lakes and coastal areas.

Proposed National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity

The Board supported a National Policy Statement (NPS) on Indigenous Biodiversity in principle but expressed concerns regarding the focus, application and implementation of its proposed NPS. The Board concluded that the proposed NPS does not adequately address the issue of resourcing the protection and maintenance of indigenous biodiversity, and highlighted the importance of volunteer work which should be more substantially recognised and supported.

(b) Establishment of Committees

The Conservation Act enables the Board to establish committees and delegate to them functions and powers. The committees active during the reporting period were:

- *Marine* Darryn Ratana, Rex Hendry
- *CMS* Darryn Ratana, Richard Steedman, Christine Cheyne, Rex Hendry, Rachel Steele
- *Whanganui National Park Management Plan Review* Darryn Ratana, Ian Bell, and Rachel Steele
- *Statutory Planning* Christine Cheyne, Ian Bell
- *Biodiversity* Ian Bell, Darryn Ratana, Rachel Steele, Richard Steedman and Donald McIntyre
- *Section 4* Barney Haami, Richard Steedman
- *Concessions* Darryn Ratana, Rex Hendry, Barney Haami

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

In accordance with the Ngati Tama Claim Settlement Act 2003, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was established under the Act to advise on the management of Whitecliffs and other nearby conservation areas, including Parininihi Marine Reserve. JAC committee members include representatives from Ngati Tama, the Department of Conservation and the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.

Following the gazettal of Parininihi Marine Reserve in September 2006, the JAC was delegated the Board's power to approve, review or amend any conservation management plans for the reserve, in accordance with section 6N(2)(b) of the Conservation Act 1987. In its August 2007 meeting, the Board resolved that the JAC be the governing body for the Parininihi Marine Reserve (a preferred choice of Ngati Tama), rather than establishing a separate marine reserve committee.

9. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

(a) Recommend National Park Management Plans, Reviews or Amendments

The review process for the Whanganui National Park Management Plan formally commenced on 28 July 2003 and the original draft was notified in 2006.

At its June 2010 meeting the Board agreed to further changes to the draft plan review pending comment from Whanganui Iwi. In the interim the management plan was sent to National Office Policy and Legal units for their respective checks and was returned with some recommended changes by the Policy unit.

In its March 2011 meeting the Board was advised that wording changes had been incorporated into the draft plan that would better reflect the Department's role and not anticipate changes that had not yet occurred.

The Board was advised at its June 2011 meeting that the current draft document was yet to be assessed for consistency with the Department's General Policy for National Parks 2005 and updated with maps and formatting before being submitted to National Office for its final check of the reworked sections. The Board was informed that the draft management plan would then be presented to the Board for its recommendation to the Conservation Authority.



*Matemateaonga Track – Whanganui National Park
Photo: DOC*

(b) Have special regard in respect to Whanganui National Park

Following its June 2010 meeting the Department was asked to seek formal endorsement from Whanganui Iwi on amendments made to the draft plan to reflect the major progress that had been made with the Kia Wharite and National Cycleway projects since the plan was originally drafted.

The Board was advised in its September 2010 meeting that following a policy and legal check further changes had been recommended by the National Office Policy unit with the most significant being changes to wording around the Maori National Park concept. These changes were to be incorporated into the Department's upcoming discussion with Whanganui Iwi.

In its March 2011 meeting the Board was informed that the Department had met with the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board to propose that a variation to the adopted plan should take place once Treaty settlements are settled and mandates are approved. The Board was advised that Whanganui River Maori Trust Board had indicated that they were happy with the commitment to address the Maori National Park concept on this basis.

The Board questioned the specific changes to wording around the Maori National Park concept given that it was seen as a central issue when discussed at its meeting at Pipiriki in April 2009. The Board was assured that the essence of those discussions had not changed and there had been no change to the intent of the policy in the revised draft.

10. RESERVES ACT 1977

There were no matters raised under the Reserves Act 1977 that required consultation with the Board during the reporting year.

11. LIAISON

All Board members receive the minutes of NZCA meetings and liaison has been maintained through NZCA member John Nankervis. The Board is very grateful to Catherine Tudhope, Manager of the Statutory Bodies Unit, Elena Sedouch and Katrina Edwards, Statutory Bodies Officers, for keeping regular contact with the Board.

The Board has continued liaison with adjoining Conservation Boards through an exchange of minutes and shared correspondence on matters of national importance. As a result of the recent amalgamation and a need to discuss whole of conservancy outcomes, the Board Chairs from both the Tongariro/Taupo and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board have a reciprocal agreement to attend meetings.

Board members liaised with a number of individuals, groups and organisations throughout the reporting period. This liaison is seen as a very important way of providing an interface with the community. Board members were given the opportunity to report back at each board meeting.

Liaison included:

Ian Bell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wanganui Museum Botanical Group• Wanganui Branch Ornithological Society – Birding Wanganui• Whanganui Summer Programme Trust• Wanganui Forest & Bird• Friends of Gordon Park• Wanganui Rock & Mineral Club Inc• The Parkinsonism Society Wanganui Inc
Christine Cheyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment Network Manawatu• Manawatu Forest and Bird• Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club• Manawatu Te Araroa Trust• Sustainable Manawatu Taskforce
Dave Digby	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• South Taranaki Forest & Bird• Stratford Tramping Club

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain Safety – Taranaki
Barney Haami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamaupoko Link (Chairperson) • Tupoho Whanau Trust • Tamahaki Inc. • Ngati Rangi Trust • Hinengakau Development Trust • Whanganui River Maori Trust Board • Whanganui Maori Regional Tourism Organisation • Maori Sector of Regional Partnership Programme (Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu District Councils)
Rex Hendry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand Alpine Club & Advocacy Committee • New Zealand Outdoor Instructor's Association • New Zealand Recreation Association • Taranaki Regional Transport Committee • Taranaki Land Search & Rescue • Western Institute of Technology (WITT)
Wikitoria Keenan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Atiawa Iwi Authority • Te Atiawa (Taranaki) Settlements Trust • Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum • Taranaki Maori Trust Board • Puke Ariki Land Trust • Ngati Te Whiti Ahi Kaa Trust
Donald McIntyre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taranaki TB Free Committee • Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust • Taranaki Tree Trust • Taranaki Federated Farmers Inc • Taranaki Farm Forestry & Shelter Association
Darryn Ratana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nga Rauru Iwi Authority • Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum
Richard Steedman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otaihape Maori Komiti Inc • Te Runanga O Ngati Whitikaupeka • Te Runanga O Ngati Tamakopiri • Te Runanga O Ngati Hauiti • Te Runanga O Ngai Te Ohuake (Interim) • Aorangi Awarua Land Trust • Owhaoko B & D Land Trust • Aorangi Experiences Ltd • Environmental Working Party of Ngati Whitikaupeka & Ngati Tamakopiri
Rachel Steele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Committee • Taupo Forest & Bird

Members of the public were provided with an opportunity to raise issues with the Board via letters, and/or public forums at each Board meeting. None were raised during the reporting period.

12. Chairperson's Comment

It is regrettable that the 2010/2011 reporting year has seen the conservancy in a continual flux of change that has impacted predominantly upon its staff and to a lesser degree its stakeholders, including the Board. I continue to hold deep concerns for the Department's ability to carry out its function of protection of the Conservation Estate within the Board's area.

A review of the Department's specific management positions in the Northern Region at the commencement of the reporting year provided considerable angst to the Board with regard to its initial proposals however the finalised management structure was seen as a positive move. I believe that both the Tongariro/Taupo and Whanganui Conservancies have reaped the benefit of sharing skills across their boundaries as they merged to become the Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy.

At the outset, members of both the Tongariro/Taupo and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Boards identified the need for closer liaison between both boards particularly when discussing whole of conservancy outcomes, and it has been a pleasure to host the Chair of the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board at our subsequent meetings and to attend the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board meetings when possible.

Following a joint meeting of both boards in December 2010, the Department had decided (with the Board's endorsement) to forward a recommendation to the Minister of Conservation supporting an amalgamation of the two boards. Unfortunately subsequent discussion with DOC National Office and uncertainties regarding outcomes for Treaty settlement led to a decision to retain separate boards for a period of 12-18 months at which time the proposal for amalgamation can be re-visited.

As we progress into a new reporting year the Department has announced a review of support services across the country that will initially include the loss of over 100 jobs in order to make savings to address the \$13.5 million cut that was made annually to the Department's budget over the past four years. As yet unknown is further budget cuts from July next year to meet the Government's saving requirements from public sector organisations.

For some years this Board has protested against continual funding reductions to Vote Conservation and in addition to the anticipated public sector cuts, hold deep concerns over the long-term ability of the Department's capacity to protect New Zealand's natural environment and heritage.

It is for these reasons that our conservancy staff must be congratulated for their on-going commitment and passion to conservation work. The Board celebrates their successes and are grateful to their advice and contribution to its work.

As to other Board matters, progress has finally been made on the Whanganui National Park Management Plan (WNPMP) with the final draft expected to be presented at the next Board meeting for its recommendation in September 2011. The review process for the WNPMP formally commenced in 2003 and its progress has been both frustrating and slow however the Board are satisfied that consultation with stakeholders and iwi has been thorough and I am in no doubt that the relationships between iwi and the Department are stronger as a result. The Board looks forward to presenting the plan to NZCA later this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the passing of Sir Archie Taiaroa. His dedication over many years to Iwi/Maori development and his wise counsel will be greatly missed by me and many others across Aotearoa and other countries worldwide.

I had the privilege of travelling to Kakadu National Park with Sir Archie and Sir Tumu Te Heu Heu in order to investigate co-governance and co-management models with local aboriginal communities and central government. I would encourage the Department to continue to look at this issue in a pre and post Treaty settlement context here in Aotearoa. I believe the ability of local communities to take a more active lead in conservation matters can only be good for conservation work in the long term particularly as it would appear central government is pulling back on its role in conservation work.

In addition to the WNPMP, the Board has also been informed that work is to re-commence on Conservation Management Strategies (CMSs) nationally. Due to the recent amalgamation the Board will be considering one CMS for the newly formed Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy and have established a joint sub-committee with Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board to further this. It appears that there will be no shortage of work for the Board in the upcoming reporting year.

Acknowledgments

Following the last round of board appointments, we welcomed back Christine Cheyne and Dave Digby and farewelled Ian Bell. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Ian for the commitment he made to conservation during his tenure on the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.

Once again, I extend my gratitude to my board members for their continued drive and support. Their commitment of time and energy in attending meetings, hearings, and preparing submissions is most appreciated and ensures that the Board has a "voice" in conservation matters.

My thanks also to John Nankervis who has provided a strong link to the NZCA – his advice and support has been most appreciated – and to the team within the Statutory Bodies Unit – Catherine, Elena and Katrina.

The Board is particularly grateful to the Conservators (both Paul Green and Damian Coutts) and the team of Departmental staff throughout the Conservancy, as well as guest speakers, who have provided assistance and support throughout the year. My thanks also to Louise Davies (our Board Support Officer) for her administrative support. The job for us all would certainly be much harder without you.



Darryn Ratana
Chairperson
September 2011

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board adopted this report on 9 September 2011



*Kaimanawa Wild Horses graze near the roadside in the NZDF Army Training Area, Waiouru
Photo: DOC*