

Annual Report 2022- 2023

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board

Taiao ā-uta, Taiao ā-tai
Atawhaitia mai te taiao e te
taitangata e!

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board

Annual Report 2022 – 2023



(Left to right: Jill Sheehy, Dave Rogers DOC, Liana Poutu, Mike Dickson DOC, Ritesh Chandra DOC, Chris Smith, Dr Bruce Clarkson, Claire Dowsett, Drew Castle)

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

This report is presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required by the Conservation Act and is distributed to interested parties. Members of the public are welcome to attend Conservation Board meetings.

If you would like more information on the Taranaki Whanganui
Conservation Board, please refer to: www.doc.govt.nz

ISSN 1173-2849 (print)
ISSN 1174-1813 (online)

Published by



Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board
c/o Department of Conservation
73 Rostrevor Street
Hamilton 3204

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1. Chairperson's report

I orea te tuatara ka puta ki waho
A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions

I am delighted to present the Annual Report for the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board, encompassing the year 2022/2023.

Serving as Chair for the first time has been a significant and gratifying experience, marked by the responsibility entrusted to me by the Board.

I first wish to acknowledge the stewardship and mentorship of previous Board Chair, Vicky Dombroski. It was under her tenure that I gained invaluable knowledge and insight into governance and collaboration with operations staff within the conservation space.

Throughout this inaugural year, I have had the privilege of leading a dedicated and collaborative Board. I have found the efforts of the Board, along with the invaluable support of our Iwi partners and the Department of Conservation, have been instrumental in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities to preserve the natural and cultural wealth of the Taranaki & Whanganui regions.

As Chair, I have come to appreciate the strategic importance of our Board in safeguarding the Taranaki & Whanganui regions' distinctive attributes. The Board has seen a renewed and ongoing commitment to sustainable practices within the conservation space, aimed at ensuring that our regions remain cherished assets for both residents and visitors alike.

The Board recognised the vital need for proactive planning in protecting our natural taonga, while also acknowledging the interdependence of the Taranaki and Whanganui regions within the Department of Conservation's operations.

Undeterred by challenges, the Board remained steadfast in its commitment to advocating for initiating the CMS review process, as this underpins the function of the Board itself, and from this comes trust from the community in the statutory abilities of the Board to progress community oversight of environmental and conservation outcomes within the rohe.

Within the 2022/2023 year, the Board acknowledges the commendable regional projects undertaken and funded under the Jobs for Nature programme. These initiatives, geared towards enhancing environmental conservation and sustainability, have made significant contributions to the preservation and restoration of the regions' natural resources. The Jobs for Nature projects reflected a commitment to creating employment opportunities while fostering a healthier and more resilient environment within the Taranaki & Whanganui regions.

The Board also prepared an annual governance workplan which, while being alignment with the Minister of Conservation's Letter of Expectations, also included:

- Legal engagement and statutory obligations
- Treaty partnership and obligations
- Advice and oversight to the Department in our rohe
- Community advocacy
- Biodiversity and climate change advocacy

This Annual Report stands as a testament to our shared journey, and I am thankful for the opportunity to contribute to the oversight of the Department of Conservation within the Taranaki and Whanganui regions.

To the Board, I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me as Chair, and I am thankful for your commitment to the roles on the Board over the last year, and for our shared goal of positive conversation outcomes which we can all be a part of.

It is also timely to acknowledge the passing of our respected Board Member, Boy Cribb in May 2023, as we take stock of the enormous contribution he made to conservation over many years.

To our colleagues in Te Papa Atawhai, on behalf of the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board, I extend our thanks and appreciation for your dedication to conservation and to the environment in the Taranaki and Whanganui regions, and for your continued community advocacy in sometimes trying times in the field. Your hard work bears the fruit which we all celebrate.

I hope you will find this report valuable in understanding the work and effort that the Board undertakes, while providing you with an insight into the community engagement the Board has been part of during 2022/2023.

For more information on the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board, including its members, meetings, and more reports, please visit the Department of Conservation website: www.doc.govt.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Drew Castle
Chairperson

30 June 2023



2. Introduction

This is the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board Annual Report as required under Section 6 of the Conservation Act 1987.

Conservation Boards are independent advisory bodies, established by statute. The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board represents the community and offers interaction between communities and the Department of Conservation, within the area of jurisdiction of the Board.

The Conservation Board has several statutory roles under various Acts including:

- advising the Department of Conservation and the NZCA on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice
- reporting on the implementation of the CMS
- the approval of Conservation Management Plans
- the recommendation of National Park Management Plans to the NZCA for approval
- advising the Department of Conservation and NZCA on conservation matters, and proposed changes to status of land of national and international significance
- liaising with Fish and Game Council on conservation matters
- carrying out other powers delegated by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act, or any other Act

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

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

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

The Board has several functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of national park management plans and recommending approval of these plans by the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

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

3. Conservation Board region

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction encompasses some 15,000 sq. km of land extending from the Mokau River in the north to the Turakina River in the south and inland to Ohura and Taumarunui. Approximately 298,000 ha of public conservation land is administered by DOC which represents almost 20% of the total area of the Board's district.

In addition to several scenic, historic, and recreational reserves, the district includes both the Egmont National Park and its associated array of recreation opportunities, and the Whanganui National Park with its unique history and strong cultural connections.

The coastal boundary that extends along the Board's district includes the Tapuae and Paraninihi marine reserves as well as the long-established Ngā Motu Sugar Loaf Islands Protected Area.

Volcanoes, wild and scenic rivers, huge tracts of forest, rugged mountain ranges and a dynamic coastline provide for a great diversity of landscapes, habitats, plants, and animals.

The area also extends out to the 12-nautical mile limit with respect to coastal and marine issues, and out to the 200-nautical mile limit, with respect to protected species.

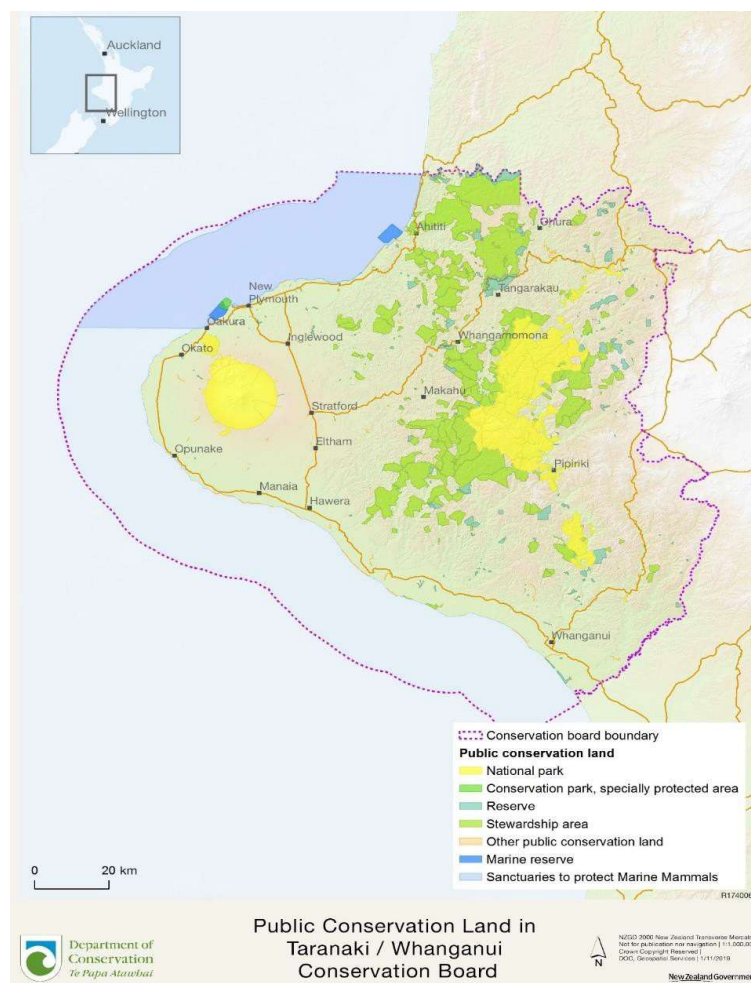


Figure 1: Public Conservation Land in Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board

Public Conservation Land (hectares by legislative section) in the Taranaki Whanganui Board Area

Public Conservation Land	Hectares
Recreation Reserve	<i>58.19 ha</i>
Historic Reserve – 31.60 ha	<i>31.60 ha</i>
Scenic Reserve (sec 19 1a)	<i>20,078.93 ha</i>
Scenic Reserve (sec 19 1b)	<i>4.72 ha</i>
Conservation Park	<i>723.44 ha</i>
Scientific Reserve	<i>259.4 ha</i>
Government Purpose Reserve	<i>455.85 ha</i>
Sanctuary Ara	<i>1.34 ha</i>
Local Purpose Reserve	<i>168.42 ha</i>
Moveable Marginal Strip	<i>56.24 ha</i>
Fixed Marginal Strip	<i>649.78 ha</i>
Stewardship Area	<i>160,929.93 ha</i>
National Park	<i>108,463.07 ha</i>

3.1 Conservation features of the Area

Main features of Public Conservation Land and Waters within the Board’s boundaries are:	
Wetlands, lakes, and rivers	Waverley Lake network
Island sanctuaries off the coast of New Plymouth	Sugar Loaf Islands Conservation Sanctuaries
North Island West Coast dunes and estuaries	Whitiau Scientific and Scenic Reserves Tapuarau Conservation Area Patea Harbour
Mainland Sanctuaries	Uenuku Rotokare (Scenic Reserve) Bushy Park
Community Projects on Conservation Land	Taranaki Mounga Project Kaitake, East Taranaki Environment Trust
Historic pre-European and Remnants from the Land War Areas	e.g., Mangapapa Tieke, Koru Pa Fort St George Omata Stockade Pukerangiora Okau Pa.
Vast areas of intact lowland forest	Whanganui National Park Waitotara Conservation Area Tangarakau Conservation and Scenic Reserves North Taranaki Conservation Areas
Marine reserves	Paraninihi and Tapuae Marine Reserve
Marine mammals	West Coast North Island Marine Mammal Sanctuary Māui Dolphin Proposed Blue Whale Sanctuary New Zealand Fur Seals
Whanganui River	Te Awa Tupua Settlement
Taranaki Mounga	
Whanganui National Park	The extensive forest of the Park is at the heart of a vast area of intact native forest, the second largest on the North Island. It holds the largest remaining kiwi population in the North Island. Covering a total area of 74’231 hectares.

The large number of issues which are of interest to the Board include:

Taranaki Mounga

Wetlands, lakes, and rivers

Island sanctuaries off the coast of New Plymouth

North Island West Coast dunes and estuaries

Vast area of intact lowland forest

Marine reserves

Marine mammals

Whanganui River

Large scale pest control

Intensive management of endangered species

Consents and Concessions

Recreational Activities and Tourism

Biosecurity

Climate Change

Legislative Reform

Treaty Settlements

4. Board functions

4.1 Board functions under 6M of the Conservation Act 1987

The functions of the Board are:

To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies, under the relevant enactments.

To approve conservation management plans, and the review and amendment of such plans, under the relevant enactments.

To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on the implementation of conservation management strategies and conservation management plans for the area within the jurisdiction of the Board.

To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director-General.

- On any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance; and
- On any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board.

To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.

To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.

4.2 Powers of the Board under Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987

Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions:

- Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), each Board may –Advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process, and
- Appoint committees of members and other suitable persons, and delegate to them functions and powers.

The power conferred by subsection (2)(a) shall include the right to appear before courts and tribunals in New Zealand and be heard on matters affecting or relating to the Board's functions.

4.3 Responsibilities under other Sections 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.

With two statutory member appointments and other members with Iwi roles, the Board is well positioned in the treaty landscape space and advises the Department of key tangata whenua issues when relevant.

4.4 Board Functions under the National Parks Act 1980

There are two national parks within the Board's region: Mt Egmont National Park and Whanganui National Park. Both National Parks will be subject to Treaty Settlement Negotiations in the coming years.

4.5 Board membership

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board had nine members for the 2022-2023 year appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Conservation Act 1987.

The following table lists the membership of the Board between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023 and their term of office.

Board Member	Location	Term Start	Term End
Drew Castle	Inglewood	01/07/2019	30/06/2025
Chris Smith	Whanganui	01/07/2021	30/06/2024
Dr Bruce Clarkson	Hamilton	01/07/2022	30/06/2025
Te Aorangi Dillon	Hawera	01/07/2021	30/06/2024
Claire Dowsett	Whanganui	01/07/2022	30/06/2023
Liana Poutu	New Plymouth	01/07/2015	30/06/2025
Jill Sheehy	Whanganui	01/07/2022	30/06/2025
Mathew Vujcich	Inglewood	01/07/2017	30/07/2023
Boy Cribb	Whanganui	01/07/2019	30/06/2025

4.6 Members profiles

Drew Castle of Inglewood

Appointment term: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2025

Drew (Ngāi Tahu) is a self-employed IT professional with 20 years' experience in the IT industry. He has more recently been involved in other governance activities in the wider Taranaki community. He is strongly involved in local conservation efforts and brings an IT solutions focus to how this can support and enhance conservation initiatives. Drew has always had a keen interest in outdoor activities, and is an advocate of habitat protection, repopulation efforts of native birdlife, and the recognition of the uniqueness of local ecologies.

Chris Smith of Whanganui

Appointment term: 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Chris (Ngāti Apakura) is educated in Environmental Science and Geography and has experience in search and rescue. He also has an interest in the combination of indigenous knowledge systems and science, to address conservation issues.

Dr Bruce Clarkson of Hamilton

Appointment term: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025

Bruce is a scientist, researcher, educator, and ecologist who has 50+ years' experience working to recognise and restore native plant communities. He is internationally renowned in his field of botany and is currently a Professor at the University of Waikato, and the Programme Leader for Peoples, Cities and Nature. He offers valuable expertise and knowledge of the biodiversity and ecology of the Board's area.

Te Aorangi Dillon of Hāwera

Appointment term: 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Aorangi (Ngāruahine, Ngāti Hāua, Okahu, Inuawai, Kanihi, Umutahi, Mōkai Pātea Nui Tona, Te Arawa, and Ngāti Rangitihī) is a social worker and a member of a number of Māori organisations, including iwi and hapū governance bodies, and the South Taranaki District Council Iwi Liaison Committee. She is actively involved in her community and has excellent relationship and interpersonal skills.

Claire Dowsett of Whanganui

Appointment Term: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026

Claire (Ngāti Raukawa ki Waikato) lives with her whānau in Whanganui. She is a current PhD student studying community values for introduced species and the relationships between people and nature. Claire has previously worked for the Department as a Biodiversity Ranger and a Biodiversity Planner and will bring to the Board experience in hands-on conservation practice and the inner operational workings of the Department.

Liana Poutu of New Plymouth

Appointment term: 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2025

Liana (Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Whanganui and Maniapoto) is the statutory nominee of the Taranaki Māori Trust Board. She has a legal background with a strong focus on Māori land, Treaty of Waitangi, governance, and public law. Liana has extensive governance experience (including prior conservation board experience) with strong iwi, hapū and marae networks across Taranaki and Whanganui. She also serves as a negotiator for Te Ruruku Pūtakerongo - the Taranaki Maunga collective redress deed.

Mathew Vujcich of Inglewood**Appointment term:** 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2023

Mathew has over 30 years' involvement in local and regional government. He has experience in parks and recreation management and has expertise in biodiversity restoration and pest eradication projects. He has a strong personal interest in integrating farming and sustainability issues and farms in Inglewood.

Jill Sheehy of Whanganui**Appointment Term:** 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025

Ko Ngaapaerangi te Iwi o Paerangi o te Maungaroa, o te Kāhui Maunga ki Tangaroa.

Ko Te Aatihauui a Paapaarangi te Iwi o Hinengākau, Tamaūpoko, Tūpoho.

Jill has strong community engagement, governance, planning and nature conservation skills. This, coupled with her cultural affiliations, makes her an asset to the Board. Her expertise in RMA/planning matters will be very useful to the Board's ongoing and future review work.

Robert (Boy) Cribb of Whanganui**Appointment Term:** 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2025

Boy is nominated by the Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui Trust. He has strong governance experience across several Boards and Trusts.

4.7 Board Meetings

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board held four Board meetings during the reporting period. Venues for the Board meetings vary each year to ensure a wide coverage and enable members of the public in the district to attend meetings and access the Board.

Board meeting dates and location:

Date	Location
26 August 2022	The Avenue, 379 Victoria Street, Whanganui
8 November 2022	Millennium Hotel, 1 Egmont Street, New Plymouth
2 March 2023	The Avenue, 379 Victoria Street, Whanganui
16 June 2023	Millennium Hotel, 1 Egmont Street, New Plymouth

Attendance:

The table below summarises the number of Board meetings (4) attended by members out of the total number of meetings held during the year.

Members attended other meetings and events in their role as Board members.

Board Member Attendance:

Board Member	Board Meetings
Drew Castle	4/4
Chris Smith	4/4
Dr Bruce Clarkson	4/4
Te Aorangi Dillon	2/4
Claire Dowsett	4/4
Liana Poutu	2/4
Jill Sheehy	4/4
Mathew Vujcich	3/4
Boy Cribb	3/4

Board Committees and Representation:

Drew Castle	Hector's and Maui Dolphin Stakeholders Threat Management Plan Review
Mathew Vujcich	Ngāti Tama Joint Advisory Committee
Drew Castle	Tapuae Marine Reserve
Drew Castle	Wild for Taranaki

Department involvement in Board meetings:

Department staff that have regularly attended meetings during the Directors session with the Board; including the Director Regional Operations: Hauraki Waikato Taranaki and Central North Island, Managers, Senior Rangers, and Specialist staff.

During the year, there have been regular meetings between the Board Chair, Deputy Board Chair, Ritesh Chandra DOC Statutory Manager and Tanya Hadfield DOC Board Support Officer. Tanya Hadfield also provides regular conservation focused newsletters to the Board.

4.8 Statutory work

The Board received updates on statutory work from the Directors of Regional Operations: Hauraki Waikato Taranaki and Central North Island and Ritesh Chandra DOC Statutory Manager. In addition, operational reports from the Taranaki District Office and Whanganui District Office are provided to the Board.

The Board also received reports from DOC's National Statutory Management Planning and Resource Management Act teams regarding planning projects the Department is working on within the Board's jurisdiction.

The Board's seabed mining case against Trans-Tasman Resources Limited regarding the company's proposal to mine iron sand from the seafloor of the Taranaki Bight, is ongoing and being managed by the Environmental Protection Agency's Decision-Making Committee. The Board receives regular updates regarding the case/process by the Board's legal counsel.

The Board has an assurance role to monitor the implementation of the Wanganui Conservation Management Strategy, Egmont National Park Management Plan and Whanganui National Park Management Plan. This is achieved through Regional Operational Directors reports and District Office reports to the Board as well as questions raised by Board Members to Regional Operations Directors and Manager during the Directors session with the Board as every Board meeting.

5. Board engagement

Conservation Board Liaisons:

The Board liaises with the Waikato, Tongariro Taupō and Wellington Conservation Boards to share learning and connect on strategic matters in the conservation space. The Board's agendas and meeting papers are provided by a liaison person from the other Boards.

New Zealand Conservation Authority:

The Board liaison person in the New Zealand Conservation Authority is provided meeting agendas/papers and is invited to every meeting. Board members raise regional issues with the liaison person that needs to be considered at a national level.

Community advocacy and involvement:

The Board believes that working with conservation organisations and members of the public is very important. Meetings are advertised and are held in different parts of the Taranaki Whanganui region with members of the public attending to speak on conservation challenges.

Iwi/hāpu advocacy and involvement:

The Board continues to be served well by several members who have strong connections to iwi/hāpu within the boundaries of the Conservation Board and their insights help the Board maintain advocacy and connection with the Te Ao Māori perspective.

6. Acknowledgement

The Board wishes to thank the Department's teams for their support, including attending meetings, providing updates, and hosting the Board on field trips.

7. Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board Annual Workplan 2022-2023

This workplan was developed by the Board in late 2022 in response to the Minister of Conservation's Annual Letter of Expectation to Conservation Boards, dated 19 July 2022.

This workplan is designed to give effect to the Board's functions under Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987, Section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980, the Reserves Act 1977, and other statutory requirements of Conservation Boards, and to align with the statutory functions of the Board in support of the application of these powers to deliver strong conservation outcomes for the Taranaki and Whanganui regions.

Responsible	Support	Part	Task
Jill Sheehy	Claire Dowsett	Part 1. Legal engagement and statutory obligations	<p>Monitor the Department's implementation of the statutory strategies and plans in its rohe.</p> <p>Advocate for and contribute to reviews of the statutory plans in its rohe.</p> <p>Continued oversight and engagement in the legal case against Trans-Tasman Resources Limited.</p>
Liana Poutu	Te Aorangi Dillon	Part 2. Treaty partnership and obligations	<p>Monitor implementation of treaty settlement obligations by the Department.</p> <p>Monitor and provide advice to the Department on its operations with respect to Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987.</p>
Drew Castle	Matt Vujcich	Part 3. Advice and oversight to the Department in our rohe	Provide advice to the department on conservation matters concerning the Board's rohe.
Chris Smith	Te Aorangi/Claire	Part 4. Community advocacy	<p>Work and collaborate with neighboring Conservation Boards.</p> <p>Work towards increased public profile and interaction with the conservation boards, in particular the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board.</p> <p>Provide input or submit on the development of policies, plans, or strategies in the Board's rohe that relate to or have a conservation impact.</p>
Dr Bruce Clarkson	Claire Dowsett	Part 5. Biodiversity and climate change advocacy	<p>Monitor and support the Department's implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao.</p> <p>Engage and liaise with groups outside of the Department with regard to biodiversity challenges in the Board's rohe.</p>

