

Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board Annual Report 2017-2018



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

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Absent: Mike Britton, Annaka Davis

This report is presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required by the Conservation Act and distributed to interested parties. Members of the public are welcome to attend Conservation Board meetings. If you would like more information on the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board please see the website www.conservationboards.org.nz or contact the Board Support Officer, at the Department of Conservation in Taupo phone (07) 376 0072 or e-mail tongarirotaupoconservationboard2@doc.govt.nz.

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1. Chairperson’s report

I ahu mai tenei i runga i te hau matoa e pupuhi ana mai nga tihi maunga

*Ka rere atu kei tua i nga taumata me nga mania
Ka haere tonu atu kei runga i nga ahuatanga katoa o te taiao
Kei runga he mihi kei runga he aroha
Ko te kaitiakitanga kei runga Ko te papa kei raro
Hei manaaki hei whakatipua mo nga whakatipuranga ka heke mai*

No reira ki a koutou katoa

Tena koutou, tena koutou, huri noa tena tatou katoa!

I am pleased to introduce the 2017-2018 Annual Report for the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board.

It is appropriate that we reflect on the significant national taonga for which the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board have responsibility including:

- Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan
- Tongariro National Park Management Plan
- Tongariro Taupō Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

The changing landscape of both central government and Treaty Settlements in the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board area has presented the opportunity to give closer consideration to the current conservation estate strategies and management plans. Early consultation and engagement with iwi, key stakeholders and the wider community will be fundamental in order to shape and implement an enduring CMS for the protection and preservation of our taonga.

These plans are not just specific to the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board but are intrinsically linked with the management plans of the Bay of Plenty and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Boards that make up our larger geographic region. One of the unique features of our Central North Island region is the significance of our mountains, lakes, rivers, fauna and flora, which all have constant environmental, cultural and conservation/protection considerations and affect the whole country.

There has been considerable time spent receiving presentations from Department staff, key stakeholders and community organisations on the ever-increasing visitor numbers to the Tongariro Alpine Crossing and Tongariro National Park. As the popularity of these exceptional natural assets by both New Zealanders and international visitors has increased significantly, the Board have embedded the monitoring of the condition of the track and the infrastructure supporting the use of the TAC into all meeting agendas.

The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board provides a critical sounding board for the Department of Conservation (Te Papa Atawhai) and conduit for community concerns with communication being an important aspect of engagement by our Board. We have found undertaking field visits, together with opportunities for members of the public to attend locally at our Board meetings, has been immensely valuable.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board Members for their contributions during the year and pay special tribute to retiring member, Te Ngaehe Wanikau, having completed six years of service to our community and rohe.

Te Ngaehe is a well-recognised uri and pou korero of Ngāti Tūwharetoa who brought a holistic and cultural lens to deliberations of the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board, providing a platform for

shared aspirations to be developed and threaded through the values and vision of the Board. *Nga mihi mahana ki a koe e te whanaunga hoki.*

The Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board has a number of special acknowledgments we wish to make in recognition of key individuals who have been integral to the work of the Board, our community and continued efforts to protect and preserve special places within our region.

First and foremost, we acknowledge the passing of Harry Hamilton, formerly a senior ranger of the DOC Fisheries team based in Turangi who worked closely with tangata whenua and the trout fishing fraternity for a vast number of years. Harry will be sorely missed by his whanau, friends and colleagues. *Moe mai ra e te rangatira... Haere, haere, haere!*

We also take this opportunity to recognise the significant achievement of Phil Smith, Chief Fire Officer having been awarded the Queens Service Medal in December 2017 for services to the Whakapapa Community for 35 years. Phil's dedication and commitment has proven invaluable to local residents, community organisations and emergency agencies.

On behalf of my fellow Board Members, I would also like to thank our Department staff for their constructive contributions in assisting the Board throughout the year.

I hope you will find the following reports valuable in providing a broad sense of the activities and initiatives that are occurring across the Tongariro Taupō region. I encourage you to follow up on anything about which you would like more detail by looking at the various newsletters, articles and reports that are available on the web page www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutoryand-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/tongariro-Taupō/, many of which are referenced throughout this report.

Nō reira
Tēnā tātou katoa



John Bishara
Chairperson
Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board

2. Introduction

This is the 2017 – 2018 Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board Annual Report as required under Section 6 of the Conservation Act 1987.

The Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board had eight members for the 2017-2018 year appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Conservation Act 1987. There were no new appointments to the Board and two re-appointments – John Bishara and Mike Britton. John Bishara was confirmed as Chairperson and Mike Britton as Deputy Chairperson.

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

The Board has several statutory roles under various Acts including:

- The recommendation of a Tongariro Taupo Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) for approval
- 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 Tongariro Taupo 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 Board also has a number of functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of national park management plans and recommending approval of these plans by the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires conservation boards to provide the NZCA with an annual report as soon as practicable after the 30th June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board submits this annual report.



Photo 1 – Opepe Historic Reserve

3. Conservation Board Region

The Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction is dominated by major landscape features with Lake Taupō forming the headwaters of the Waikato River. This expansive body of water has tributaries which are in large part fed by the mountains that hold centre stage in the region, Mt Ruapehu, Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro. The mountains and their slopes form the core of the Tongariro National Park, which is New Zealand's first national park and only dual World Heritage site.

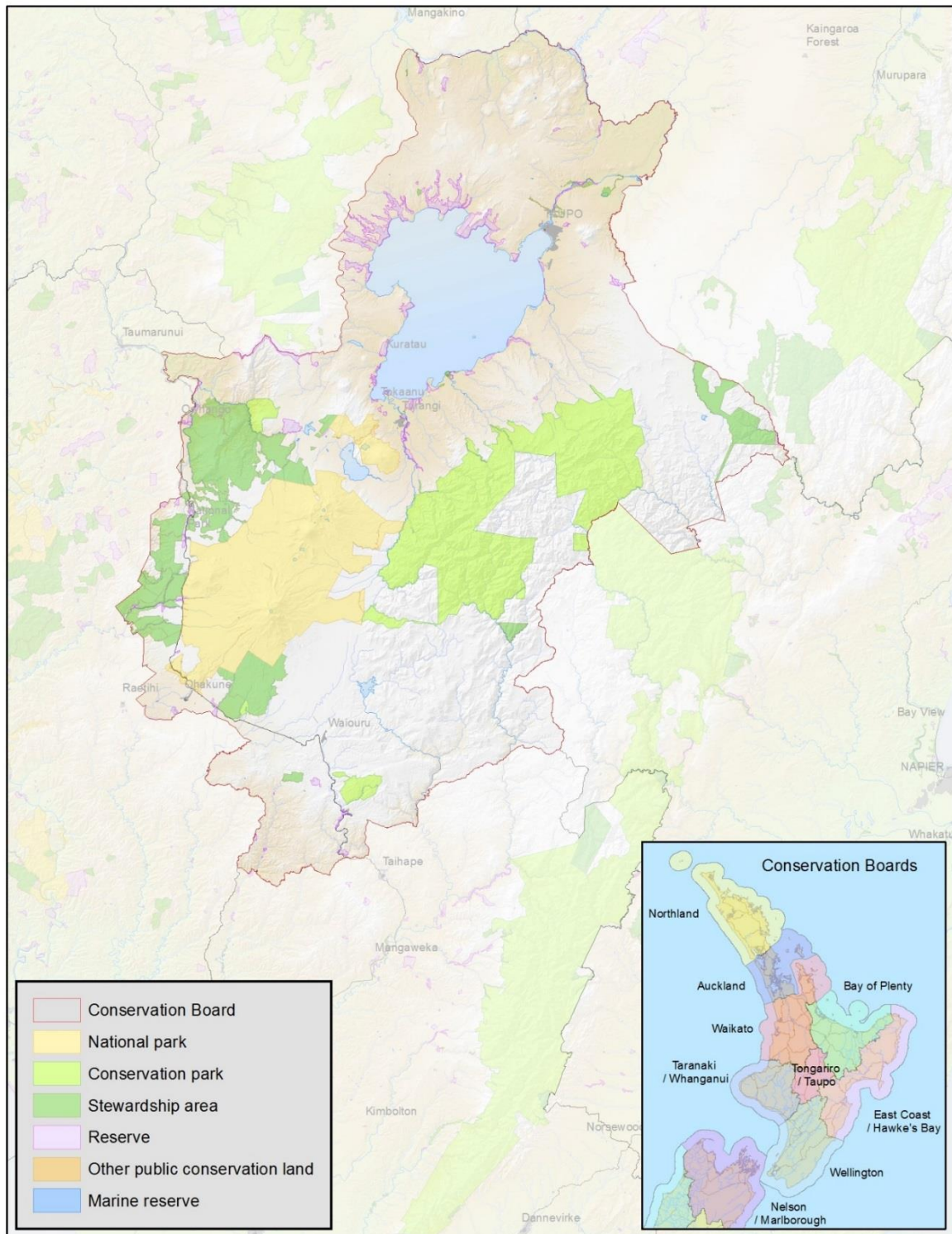
Areas to the east including the Kaimanawa Forest Park and adjoining rugged mountain ranges remain more remote, containing giant podocarp and beech forests, clear rivers and rare wildlife. The Tongariro Forest Park is located just northwest of the park and is home to a national whio security site and a North Island brown kiwi sanctuary.

On the western side of the National Park, the Ruapehu Conservation Area consists of the Erua Forest and Southern Tongariro Forest. The largest population of short tail bats in New Zealand is found in the Rangataua Conservation Area near to the township of Ohakune on Mt Ruapehu's southern slopes.

To the north of Lake Taupō, there are five geothermal power-stations, and until recent years, vast forest plantations covered the landscape. Large scale dairy conversions have changed the horizon and have created a new set of dynamics for the regions waterways. The iconic Huka Falls attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to this natural feature each year.



Photo 2 – Frost Flats Rangataiki



Tongariro / Taupo Conservation Board

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

0 25 50 Kilometres

Document Path: G:\GIS\Projects_2015\NorthIsland\R75862_Central_NI_Board_Maps\R75862_Tongariro_Taupo_Board_Maps.mxd

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atihanga

Figure 1. Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board Jurisdiction

Tongariro National Park lies within the Boards' jurisdiction.

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

- Ecosystem management and management of plant and animal species such as kiwi and whio.
- Management of recreational facilities and in particular the Tongariro Alpine Crossing which continues to be one of the most traversed alpine tracks in the world with a significant international audience creating unique management challenges for the Department,
- Management of historic sites such as Opepe Historic Reserve
- Concession activities and in particular those relating to recreation and tourism activities at key sites such as Tongariro National Park, Huka Falls and Five Mile Bay

The total area of the Central North Island Region comprises of 3,246,240 ha. Of this total, approximately 780,000 ha is contained within the boundary of the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction with 219,000 ha Public Conservation Lands.

Conservation features of the Area

Main features of Public Conservation Land and Waters within the Board's boundaries are:

- Tongariro National Park - 79,669 ha
- Kaimanawa Forest Park - 74,532 ha
- Kaweka Forest Park - 39 ha
- Scenic Reserves - 8,995 ha
- Historic Reserves - 186 ha
- Recreation Reserves - 1,268 ha
- Ecological Area - 2,140 ha
- Scientific Reserves - 342 ha
- Stewardship Areas - 50,730 ha

Te Urewera, Whanganui National Parks and Whirinaki Te-Pua-a-Tane Forest adjoin the Board's area of jurisdiction

Tongariro National Park is registered on the NZ World Heritage List.

4. Board Functioning

4.1. Board Functions Under Section 6m of the Conservation Act 1987

The functions of the Board are:

- 1) To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies, under the relevant enactments
- 2) To approve conservation management plans, and the review and amendment of such plans, under the relevant enactments
- 3) 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
- 4) To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director-General
 - i) On any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance; and
 - ii) On any other conservation matter relating to any area with the jurisdiction of the Board
- 5) To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matter within the jurisdiction of the Board
- 6) 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

- 1) Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.
- 2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), each Board may –
 - a) Advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process; and
 - b) Appoint committees of members and other suitable persons, and delegate to them functions and powers.
- 3) 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

The Board did not exercise any responsibilities under other Sections of the Act.

4.4. Board Functions under the National Parks Act 1980

There is one national park within the Board's region being Tongariro National Park. The Board has five sub-committees and the Strategic Planning & Policy Sub-Committee was involved in a Partial Review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan during the year.

4.5. Board Membership

There were eight Board members, including the Statutory position held by Te Ariki Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, appointed by the Minister of Conservation for the reporting year.

Two members terms of office expired on 30 June 2017, and were reappointed for a further 3-year term. There were no new appointments.

Chair and Deputy Chair – John Bishara was confirmed Chairperson and Mike Britton was confirmed Deputy Chairperson.

The following table lists the membership of Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2018 and their term of office.

Table 1: Board Membership

Board member	Area	Term start	Term end	Term served
Te Ariki Sir Tumu Te Heuheu	Tuwharetoa	1998	Life Member	20
John Bishara	Turangi	2011	2020	7
Te Ngaehe Wanikau	Turangi	2011	2018	7
Mike Britton	Wellington	2014	2020	4
Pete Zimmer	Ruapehu	2014	2018	1
Tracy Puklowski	Waiouru	2016	2019	2
Annaka Davis	Taupo	2016	2019	2
Laurie Burdett	Taupo	2014	2019	5

4.6. Board Meetings

The Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board held four meetings during the reporting period. Venues for the Board meetings are varied each year to ensure a wide coverage of the region and enable members of the public in the region to attend meetings and access the Board.

Table 2: Board meeting dates and location

Board meeting date	Meeting location and venue
15 August 2017	Te Kahukura o Tane Mahuta - Taupo
16 November 2017	Te Kahukura o Tane Mahuta - Taupo
1 March 2018	Dept of Conservation - Turangi
16 May 2018	Te Kahukura o Tane Mahuta - Taupo



Photo 3 – Board members and staff at Rangitaiki Frost Flats

4.7. Attendance

The table below summarises the number of Board meetings 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, including subcommittee meetings and representative roles.

Table 3: Attendance at Board meeting

Board Member	Board meetings	Liaison meetings	Special events
John Bishara	4/4		2
Te Ngaehe Wanikau	2/4		2
Mike Britton	4/4	1	1
Pete Zimmer	4/4	1	2
Laurie Burdett	4/4	2	1
Annaka Davis	3/4	2	
Tracy Puklowski	1/4		

4.8. Board Committees and Representation

Membership of Board committees was reviewed in July, at the beginning of the Board year. The following sub-committees were in place for the 2017 – 2018 year.

Strategic Planning & Policy sub-committee

The purpose of this subcommittee is to advise the Department on Conservation Management processes including CMS Review, CMS Monitoring, National Park Management Plans, Destination Management Plans and business planning generally.

Statutory Processes sub-committee

The purpose of this committee is to provide advice and advocacy on Resource Management Act processes, concessions, major works approvals and service delivery.

The committee has a formal role in relation to concession applications on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing as a provision of the National Park Management Plan as well as comments on other concession applications where they meet a certain threshold as determined with the department.

World Heritage Subcommittee

This committee has an advisory role in relation to ensuring the dual World Heritage status of the National Park and associated responsibilities are recognised and valued.

Partnerships

The primary function of this subcommittee is in relation to general communications and includes involvement in activities such as Conservation Week, Conservation Awards and ensuring the profile of the Conservation Board as a voice for the community.

He Kaupapa Rangatira

The purpose of this subcommittee is to monitor progress on the engagement between the Department with whanau, hapu and iwi in recognition of Section 4 of the Conservation Act which commits the Department to giving effect to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Table 4: Subcommittee membership

Subcommittee	Date established	Members
Strategic Planning & Policy	2016	Mike Britton - Chair
		John Bishara
		Peter Zimmer
		Tracy Puklowski
		Annaka Davis

Statutory Processes	2016	Laurie Burdett - Chair
		Mike Britton
		Peter Zimmer
Partnerships	2016	Laurie Burdett - Chair
		Annaka Davis
World Heritage	2016	Tracy Puklowski - Chair
		Mike Britton
		Te Ngaehe Wanikau
		Peter Zimmer
		Te Arika Sir Tumu Te Heuheu
He Kaupapa Rangatira	2016	Peter Zimmer
		Te Ngaehe Wanikau
		Tracy Puklowski



Photo 4 - Rangitaiki Conservation Area Frost Flats

Representation

Laurie Burdett represented the Board on the CNI Sika Foundation for the year. The purpose of this group is to advocate for the designation of a 'Herd of Special Interest' so as to manage the Sika deer resource that resides on public conservation land for the betterment of recreational hunting.

Annaka Davis represented the Board through her role on the Eastern Fish & Game Council in order to continue to foster a positive relationship. The desired outcomes of the liaison role is to identify mutual areas of interest and opportunities to work together and support each agency's goals.

Laurie Burdett attended the regional meeting of the DOC team considering the DOC Community Fund applications in 2017. Successful applications in the Tongariro Taupo part of the region included Blue Mountain Adventure Centre (BMAC Backstream Bush Predator Control), Greening Taupō (Coordinator role for Predator Free Taupō) and Project Tongariro (Te Matapuna Restoration Project).

Table 5: Summary of the representation

Representation	Members
CNI SIKA	Laurie Burdett
Eastern Fish & Game Council	Annaka Davis
DOC Community Fund	Laurie Burdett

4.9. Training for members

In addition to the regular updates on the Department's activities provided in the Directors report which is considered at each meeting, the Board received additional briefings and updates. Topics covered this year were:

- Permissions processes
- Tuwharetoa Settlement update
- CMS review process
- Threatened species Strategy
- Predator 2050
- Battle for our Birds and science outcomes
- Business planning processes
- Tongariro Alpine Crossing update
- Whakapapa Wastewater Treatment upgrade
- Operational policy on Drones

The Department also provided an update on conservation activities within the local area at each meeting location.

Board members were offered the opportunity to attend Te Pukenga Atawhai training during the year but the length of time of these courses limited the Board's ability to participate. Opportunities to deliver this type of training in a condensed form are currently being considered.

4.10. Community and DOC Involvement in Board Meetings

Public forums are offered at each Board meeting for members of the community to raise conservation issues with the Board.

August 2017

- **Greening Taupo** – Thea De Petris delivered a presentation to the Board outlining a pilot project initiative being implemented into local schools as part of a collaborative community education model for engaging in Conservation.

November 2017

- **Lucy Conway** – presented her concerns to the Board regarding the concession granted to Ruapehu Alpine Lifts and the management of the dedicated snow play area.
- **Mark Fredrickson** – 42nd Traverse Owhango advocated for track maintenance by DOC for this recreational reserve area.
- **Ross Copland** (CEO - Ruapehu Alpine Lifts) – provided a power point presentation to the Board detailing the proposed Whakapapa Gondola project from the Top of the Bruce Plaza to Knoll Ridge café.

March 2018

- **Warren Furner** (Ruapehu District Council) presented the ‘Ruapehu Regional Visitor Development Plan’ to the Board emphasising the Council’s vision that *“Ruapehu is not here for visitors – Visitors are here for Ruapehu”*.
- **Derek Kelly** (World Commission on Protected Areas - Oceania Region) talked to the Dual World & Cultural Heritage status of this area and highlighted the importance of the World Heritage in any CMS/TNPMP and/or development considerations and future proposals.

4.11. Field Trips and site inspections

Table 6: Field Trips

Field Trip date	Field Trip destination and purpose
15 November 2017	<p>In November last year the Board joined with the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board on a shared field trip. The first stop was Opepe Historic and Scenic Reserve where we heard the stories of this historic site for both Maori and pakeha.</p> <p>Following this the Boards and staff convoyed further along the Napier Taupo Road highway to the Rangitaiki River frost flat within the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board area, on the northern side of the road. This site is adjacent to a pine plantation in the headwaters of the Rangitaiki River and to the novice may look like an area of wasteland. Wildling pines are starting to take hold within this unique frost flat habitat and it was noted by staff that if action is not taken now this area will be lost for good.</p> <p>The next stop took us to the headwaters of the Rangitaiki River, on the southern side of the highway and within the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board area. This Rangitaiki Frost Flat area is not visible from the road and sits alongside Lochinvar Station. It was great to see the success of the wildling pine programme has been undertaken here although these pines will continue to be a threat to the area. In addition contaminants from surrounding farm land, 4WD vehicle damage and fire place these sites at risk and greater public awareness of the values of these places is needed.</p>

	Further down this road and immediately adjacent to the highway, the Boards were able to view the Matea Rd ephemeral wetland/frost flat which is surrounded by farmland. Following a lunch stop at the scenic Waipunga Falls, we left the Bay of Plenty Board to carry on the Kaimanawas and into Poronui Station. The Board were impressed by the wild deer they viewed on the station as well as the views of the Mohaka river.
28 February 2018	This field trip was focussed on Iwikau and Whakapapa villages on Mt Ruapehu and included a visit to the Wastewater Treatment plant where the Board gained an understanding of current and planned work being undertaken. The Board spent time at Iwikau hearing from RAL on their skifield works and future plans for this place. The day concluded with time at the Whakapapa visitor centre.

4.12. Special Events attended by Board members

- 8 July 2017 - Ngāti Tūwharetoa signing of Deed of Settlement with the Crown
- 10 March 2018 - Ngāti Rangī signing of Deed of Settlement with the Crown
- 8 & 9 August 2017 - NZCA Annual Chairs' Conference in Wellington

4.13. Community Activities supported by the Board

Board members have continued to be active in their communities and attend local events largely in their personal capacity.

4.14. Annual Work Plan

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the full Board Annual Work Programme.



Photo 5 - John Bishara at Opepe Historic Reserve

5. Statutory activity

Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board submission on Waikato Regional Council Long-term Plan 2018

Pest Management

The Board supported the continuation of activities to reduce high risk pests and the maintenance of current work programmes, noting that it is crucial to maintain these programmes to control the pests listed and hopefully to continue to reduce their impact. Any reduction in funding would waste years of hard work and achievements to date. It was noted that our indigenous species continue to struggle and decline and we cannot afford to reduce or pause in our efforts to control the plant and animal pests that threaten our native ecosystems.

The Board noted in particular the progress made in the control of wilding pines in our region and the need to keep up the pressure on possums with the reduction in control provided by OSPRI. Concern was expressed for the potential and actual movement of wallabies southwards from the Bay of Plenty, noting that it is crucial that these pests are prevented from invading the forest and National Parks in this area.

Catchment Services

The Board supported additional funding to implement the land diversity programme on WRC land. The native biodiversity continues to decline and this proposed planting will both provide a boost and hopefully a good example.

Canada Geese

The Board noted the intended multi agency discussion re Canada geese and look forward to being part of the discussion. Feedback from the Council states generically that the proposals in the Long-Term Plan that our submission supported have been maintained.

Proposed Waikato Plan Change 1: Waikato and Waipa River Catchments and Variation 1 to Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1: Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

The board submitted on this proposed plan change in relation to matters of interest to the board. We supported the exclusion of heavy stock from waterways and riparian planting of the margins. This will help the survival of native fish species by preventing trampling and sedimentation. It also has the potential to create native corridors. We did not support the proposed relaxation of this requirement in steep land over 25 degrees. (Due to the impractical nature of fencing land this steep.) We felt that heavy stock on steep hills accelerates erosion and thus adds to sedimentation of waterways and loss of topsoil.

Ruapehu Alpine lifts Application to Construct and operate a New Gondola at Whakapapa Ski Field.

The Board was fortunate to have a presentation from RAL on the proposed gondola and a visit to the Top of the Bruce where the gondola base station is proposed to be sited. This was helpful in formulating the Board's submission to the application. The Board noted that the plan for a gondola on the Whakapapa Ski Field has been in RAL's Indicative Development Plan for some time. This has gone through several iterations and the Board felt that the current proposal is an improvement on those previously planned.

The Board made the following comments in its submission.

- The overall effect of the gondola will be a reduction of infrastructure on the ski field which is supported. The base station and upper station of the gondola are adjacent to existing facilities and thus form a cluster. This is compliant with the Tongariro National Park Management Plan. *5.2.5 Building development. Policy 2. Building development will be concentrated in a minimum number of ski area servicing points*
- The gondola will provide the opportunity for those less able to visit the Knoll Ridge Café in relative comfort. It is also able to operate in less clement weather than the chair lifts and thus is a safety improvement.
- It will provide an easier ride up to the Knoll Ridge Café in the summer months and thus increase the use of the ski area in the summer months. This is in compliance with; *5.2.5. Summer Use, TNPMP. Objective b. To allow summer activities which utilise winter infrastructure without additional requirements. Policy 1. The department will promote the summer use of ski area facilities insofar as they increase access to and enjoyment of the park by summer users.*
- The Board noted that the site of the base station is planned to be over the existing walking track into Happy Valley. While the board supported the set down site for the base station in that it reduces its visual impact, it did not support the loss of ready foot access into the Valley without using the RAL lift. The Board requested that foot access into Happy Valley that is easily accessed and close to the Top of the Bruce area is provided as before, (other than using the lift).

Apart from the access into Happy Valley the Board supported the proposal. The Board submitted its comments to the Ruapehu District Council and DOC and attended the DOC hearing in Turangi to present our submission in person, staying for the whole hearing in order to hear the issues presented by other submitters. The Board is pleased to note that the application has been granted and that RAL have agreed to provide walking access into Happy Valley as requested.

5.1. Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

The Board has continued to monitor the Tongariro Taupo CMS and receive updates from the Department. Over a number of annual reports the Board has expressed concern at the delays in the review of the Tongariro Taupo CMS and considers that with the signing of Treaty Settlements with the principal Iwi in the region and given their key role in the development of CMS, this has become very urgent.

5.2. Management plans

Tongariro National Park Management Plan

The significant work for the subcommittee during the year was leading the partial review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan to provide for the development of a joint bike/walking track down the side of the Ohakune Mountain Road and the completion of a loop track connecting with the existing and popular Old Coach Road trail. This was not a straight forward matter as the Board was concerned to ensure that the tracks were appropriate and necessary facilities in the National Park. There was considerable community support for completing the lower loop track and by utilising old tram lines and other disturbed areas, noting the enjoyment of the park by large numbers of users could be enhanced. The trail from the Turoa Ski field to Ohakune was more problematic and although the trail development was provided for in the amendment to the plan the top section was to be subject to further evaluation and assessment of the success of the first stage development. The Board appreciated the support of the Departmental planners with the review and the input from Ngāti Rangi and Ngāti Uenuku and the public through the submission process.

Kaimanawa Forest Park Plan

This and previous boards have been expressing concern re the poor state of the ecology of this park in certain areas, especially the Southern wilderness area with many of the areas a distance from ready access by road. In these areas the deer impact has caused lack of regeneration of palatal species, mainly broadleaf, and in the worst impacted areas the forest floor is bare apart from some moss.

To date OSPRI has done pest control in sections with 1080 specifically for possum control. Unfortunately, the areas between the sections can quite quickly be re invaded by stoats and rats from adjacent untreated areas. As the Northern area of the park is a recreational hunting area deer repellent was added to the bait.

The Board understands that the Forest Park Plan will be incorporated into the CMS once this process is initiated. Until then we will continue to advocate for the values of this place and appropriate pest management.

6. Advice and Advocacy

All Board members have responsibility for liaising with other groups when opportunities arise with some members allocated specific liaison roles.

Table 7: Liaison persons

Liaison person	Group, agency or organisation
Annaka Davis	Eastern Fish & Game Council
Laurie Burdett	CNI SIKA Foundation
Te Ngaehe Wanikau	He Kaupapa Rangatira

CNI Sika Foundation

The board maintained a formal liaison with the Sika Foundation and supported their efforts to manage herd numbers by organising hunts and by encouraging hunters to target does rather than bucks. The board also supported the creation of temporary helicopter pads in the wilderness to facilitate management of the herd. The Sika Foundation has been a good source of information re the state of the forest and deer numbers and have commenced faecal pellet counts to better verify sika numbers and changes over time.

However, the board is mindful of the Kaweka Beech Project and the findings to date, (found online). It is also noted that sika deer were released into the Kaimanawa Forest in 1905 and the negative impact of deer on native ecosystems was recognised as early as 1867. The Kaimanawa Forest ecosystem has already changed due to this impact and regeneration is mainly horopito and beech. Mountain beech seed are estimated to last for about two years in the ground which has implications for those areas where there is no regeneration. Regeneration of palatable species will probably only occur in places inaccessible to deer.

The Sika Foundation plan to reduce deer numbers to a level where there is beech regeneration. This means that the forest mix will continue to change with the palatable species becoming sparse. What we do not know is how many strands of the forest ecosystem web break before a whole segment collapses. Also, to what level do the deer need to be reduced before there is beech regeneration in denuded areas, and to what level to allow regeneration of some of the palatable species?

The Sika Foundation report that, in their recent organised hunts in the Wilderness area, where forest health is poor, the deer numbers were low. The Board notes the Game Animal Council Mission Statement: “Sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.” The Sika Foundation aims to restore beech regeneration.

Anecdotally we hear that deer numbers are generally increasing and that some farmers are concerned re the number of wild deer on their land.

Therefore, the Board decided in the December meeting to withdraw our support of Sika deer becoming a herd of special interest but continue to support the work of the Sika Foundation in their efforts to manage the herd at a more sustainable level.

The board looks forward to having some information provided by DOC re the issues raised in this report.



Photo 6 – Vehicle damage at Rangitaiki Conservation Area Frost Flats

6.1. Other Conservation Boards liaison

Liaison person	Group, agency or organisation
Pete Zimmer	Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board
John Bishara	East Coast Hawkes Bay Conservation Board
Laurie Burdett	Bay of Plenty Conservation Board
Mike Britton	Wellington Conservation Board
Tracy Puklowski	Waikato Conservation Board

6.2. New Zealand Conservation Authority liaison

Warren Parker has been the NZCA liaison to the Board providing valuable insight into national priorities and work of the Authority in conjunction with engagement with the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board.

6.3. Department of Conservation advice

The Board did not receive any formal request for comment on concessions during the year other than in relation to the Whakapapa Gondola works approval noted above.

The Department provided a briefing to the Board on the current Wild Animal Recovery Operations permit renewal process and was asked for any comment in relation to this. The Board noted this information and did not have any specific comment.

6.4. Community advocacy and involvement

The Board believes that working with conservation organisations and members of the public is very important. Meetings were held in different parts of the Central North Island region and opportunities for the public to attend Board meetings were advertised.

Members of the public attended the Public Forum at several of the year's meetings and a range of issues were raised. The Board appreciated their input and efforts made to attend the meetings and responded by letter with a response to questions asked or concerns raised or forwarded these on to the Department to address as appropriate.

These were predominantly voluntary groups carrying out huge amounts of conservation work within the community. The Board recognises and appreciates volunteers and thanks them for the work done in this area.

6.5. Community visibility

The Board maintains a presence on the Department's website and contributes to the Conservation Boards newsletter. The Board values its connection to the community and is committed to being visible and active in the community.

The Board has previously run an annual Conservation Awards programme *Turoa Te Ao: Act for Nature*. At the March Board meeting the Department presented a paper recommending a revised format for these awards in the future. The proposal to discontinue the annual awards and focus on the existing Good Sorts Awards, renamed as *Turoa te Ao: Act for Nature* was endorsed by the Board.

6.6. District and Regional Councils advocacy and advice

The Board has appreciated the opportunities to meet with representatives of the Taupo and Ruapehu District Councils during the year to discuss regional issues in which it is interested.

6.7. Iwi liaison and advocacy

There were no specific iwi liaison events during the year. The Board maintains strong links with local iwi through its representatives and departmental staff.

7. Appendix I –Annual Work Plan

Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board Work Programme 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

REGIONAL WORK PROGRAMME

The annual workplan of the Board for 2017/18 is detailed below and will be carried out with reference to the Board’s 6 strategic principles of:

- Protection & enhancement of the natural environment
- Protection of historic resources where they are managed by the Department
- Development of an “effective conservation partnership with Tangata whenua”
- Fostering recreation use of public conservation land
- Limiting non-recreation commercial use of public conservation land
- Enhancing advocacy outcomes and community relations

PART A

1.Statutory Functions and Strategic Planning:

1.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *To monitor and review current strategic management planning documents*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	<i>Tongariro National Park Management Plan (TNPMP)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fulfil statutory requirements as part of the partial review of the plan in relation to the proposed Turoa to Ohakune and Horopito Walking and Cycling Trail Project and receive regular reports from the Department on progress and issues• Receive monitoring reports on the use of mountain biking on the Old Coach Road and other cycle trails in the Boards area
B	<i>Tongariro Alpine Crossing (TAC)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To consider options put forward by Department and Iwi in respect of the management, use and safety of the TAC and provide advice• Monitor and receive regular reports from the Department on the use and issues relating to the TAC over the summer visitor season
C	<i>Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Operations (RAL)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive regular reports from the Department on the use and issues relating to Ruapehu Alpine Lifts operations and matters relating to the development of the Whakapapa and Turoa skifields and provide advice to the Department

D	<p><i>Kaimanawa Forest Park</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and receive regular reports from the Department on the health of the Kaimanawa Forest Park • In conjunction with the Department develop a strategic approach in line with the Park Management Plan • Be represented on and engage with the Central North Island Sika Foundation
E	<p><i>Tongariro Forest Park</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise Department staff on the development of concepts to create new user and conservation opportunities within the Park as part of the review of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS).
F	<p><i>Tongariro Taupo CMS review</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Rangī and Ngati Uenuku as a preliminary to the review of the TTCMS to agree on process, participation and likely timetable • Establish a CMS review working party and start a preliminary scoping of the review • If planning resources are made available, in association with iwi, begin the formal review process by seeking input and comment from interested people and groups • Review the adequacy of the management of threats to the natural and historical values of the Tongariro Taupo region by the Department in terms of the CMS and management plans.
G	<p><i>Predator Free 2050</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep under review the predator control operations in the Tongariro Taupo region and engage with groups undertaking community predator operations as part of PF2050.

2. Provision of Statutory Advice:

2.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: To provide advice on proposed land status changes including classification changes to stewardship land

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Consider and recommend on proposed land status issues that arise following on from the Board advice to the NZCA and as part of Treaty settlement
B	Continue to advocate for stewardship land parcels nominated for status change as part of the national process and receive updates on this.

3. Relationship with other Statutory Bodies:

3.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *To continue to develop a positive working relationship with the Eastern Fish and Game Council regarding issues of mutual interest within the Boards area*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Receive regular updates as a standing agenda item and as required
B	Maintain a Board liaison to the Eastern Fish and Game Council for 17/18
C	Maintain a relationship with Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee (TFAC) and receive meeting minutes

4. Advocacy

4.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *The Board will advocate for and encourage positive conservation outcomes through public processes*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Advocate for increasing awareness, ongoing monitoring and mitigation of the threat posed by invasive pests, both flora and fauna, within the Tongariro Taupo region with relevant agencies.
B	Support the department in seeking strategic working relationships, funding partners and collaboration with community and Iwi to form collaborative, focussed pest eradication programmes.
C	Encourage greater awareness of significantly endangered habitats and/or ecosystems, and advocate for regular monitoring information from the Department regarding measures to restore/protect identified areas. This scope includes historic and scientific areas of interest.
D	Plan public /community based workshop and/or information events, which aim to build authentic relationships within communities and raise the Boards profile.

4.2 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *Fulfil the Board's advocacy role in relation to concession applications and legislative processes, including under the Resource Management Act.*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Provide Board input and submissions in respect of its statutory and regulatory functions
B	A standing committee/s will consider applications and advocacy opportunities and provide advice to the full Board.

PART B:

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

5. Working with the Department

5.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *Engage strategically within the Board's area to provide advice and leadership in terms of the Board's statutory functions and from a community perspective*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Continue to include senior Department Managers and other staff as required in Board meetings at a strategic level
B	Attend Departmental events when invited to support departmental initiatives to build strong community relationships

6. Ministerial Priorities for the Department

6.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *Continue to support the Department's Kiwi recovery and protection programmes*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Support efforts for Kiwi survival in the Tongariro Forest Park and other kiwi recovery projects through advocacy for this work.
B	Review, and if necessary comment on, the adequacy of predator control operations in the region to protect and enhance Kiwi populations through receiving regular reports from the Department

7. Working with adjoining Conservation Boards and the New Zealand Conservation Authority

7.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *To liaise with neighbouring conservation boards to progress cross boundary CMS issues and other matters of mutual interest*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Appoint Board members to liaison roles with neighbouring Conservation Boards.
B	Invite Bay of Plenty, Taranaki Whanganui, East Coast Hawkes Bay, Waikato, and Wellington Boards Member Liaisons and NZCA Liaison to attend meetings and receive appropriate documentation relating to Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board (supported by Board Support Officers).
C	Circulate agenda and meeting dates for Bay of Plenty, Taranaki Whanganui, East Coast Hawkes Bay, Waikato and Wellington boards to Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board liaison members to attend as agreed by the Board.

8. Giving effect to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and Treaty Settlements

8.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *To support the Department and Board in meeting their obligations under Section 4 of the Conservation Act and in relation to treaty settlement processes.*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Seek to meet with Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Rangī and Ngati Uenuku at least once a year on their respective marae
B	Develop relationships to enable the Board to discuss and understand their aspirations and discuss matters of significance relevant to the Board's role and functions, particularly in relation to Tongariro National Park
C	Support Board members in developing cultural capability and engaging with iwi/whanau/hapu

9. Engagement with the local community

9.1 BOARD OBJECTIVE: *To liaise with entities such as local authorities, NGOs and community groups to develop good working relationships in relation to conservation issues of mutual interest and concern.*

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

A	Individual Board members to continue to develop strategic relationships with local bodies and community entities and engage as appropriate on local conservation issues and initiatives
B	Identify relevant tourist and economic development organisations and where appropriate engage with them on a regular basis and in respect of the review of the CMS
D	Continue to support the Conservation Awards, Good Sorts nominations, Mahi Aroha Summer programme, conservation partnerships, youth education programmes, and other special events where the Board can increase its effectiveness and grow authentic engagement within communities

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES

PART C: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

10. Risks for the Board

A	Delays to the CMS review process will reduce the appropriateness of it as the guiding strategic document for the protection, management and use of public conservation land. This will hinder the ability of the Board to effectively monitor the state of the conservation land within its region.
B	The ecosystem health of the Kaimanawa Forest Park could decline further without further strategic investment in this place.
C	The natural and cultural values of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing from visitor pressure are at risk if options for mitigation/management of these effects are not considered and implemented
D	Delays to the proposed review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan will reduce the appropriateness of it as the guiding strategic document for the protection, management and use of the Park. It also does not necessarily reflect the pressures and expectations for the Park.
E	A focus on economic development and the promotion of recreation and use of public conservation land, especially Tongariro National Park, are significant risks to the overall protection of the natural and biodiversity values of the protected areas within the Board's rohe,

11. Opportunities for the Board

Identifying opportunities to collaborate to progress government and ministerial priorities within the Stretch goals

A	Develop relationships with the Iwi of the region
B	Second additional members with iwi connections
C	Commence the CMS process

Annual Calendar of common Conservation Board activities

1 July – 30 June

Timeframe	Event
1 July	New Board member appointments take effect
31 July	Annual report from previous year due with the NZCA
Second half of August	Minister's Letter of Expectation sent to Boards
Mid-late September	Board chairs – annual meeting in Wellington to discuss Minister's Letter of Expectation and prospective work programmes.
Mid November	Board chairs send work programme to Minister, via DDG Conservation Partnerships
Early – mid December	Public notices calling for nominations called for next year's appointments (closing date of 28 days from date of first notice)
By mid February	Departmental recommendations provided to SBU for collation and clearance with DG or delegate.
Early May	Minister's proposed Board appointments considered by Appointments and Honours Committee then Cabinet
Mid May	Board appointments made by Minister of Conservation
Late May	Press releases issued
Late June	Board pages updated on DOC website

