

Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

Te Poari O Te Papa Atawhai O Te Rohe O Te Waiariki

BAY OF PLENTY CONSERVATION BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority
Pursuant to Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987
Serviced by the Department of Conservation
Taupo Office – PO Box 528 – Taupo 3351

1.0 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ki te Minita o Te Papa Atawhai.

Tena ra koe i runga i nga tini ahuatanga o te wa. Ahakoa nga ngaru nunui i papaki mai nei, kei te kaha pupuri ki te ohaki a o tatou tupuna "kia kaha, kia toa, kia manawanui".

No reira, tangihia ratou ma kua haere ki tua o te arai. Kua waihongia mai e ratou he tohu hei arahi mai.

Kia tika te hoe a to tatou waka ki te pae tawhiti ki te onuitanga.

Tihei mauri ora!

On behalf of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board, it is a pleasure to present the following report on the performance of the Board.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow Board members for their contributions over the period. They deserve significant recognition for their commitment to their roles and for the work they do. All members have other vocations and calls on their time, heoi, their commitment to the Board and to the conservation outcomes we collectively seek to achieve is a credit to them all.

We have been fortunate to have a continuity of members with a solid foundation of knowledge, experience and governance navigation, complimented with new expertise, capability and a confidence in each other, and collectively that we are better equipped to deal with some key challenges, both for the Board and the Department.

Forging positive relationships with Iwi, driven to some extent on the one hand by various Treaty Settlements, has required a different way of thinking about managing our Public Conservation Land (PCL), but on the other hand, it has seemed almost incomprehensible that our Parks, Reserves and PCL have not previously benefited from the added knowledge, mātauranga, manaaki and kaitiakitanga of the Department's Treaty Partners. The overlaying, weaving expertise of mātauranga a Iwi, and the experience, technical knowledge and resources of the Department is a mutual recognition of the many strands needed to weave a korowai of sustainable future practice.

An example of such a relationship is that which the Board has fostered with Ngāti Whare throughout the drafting of the Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park Management Plan (CMP) - a positive relationship of mutual confidence and respect, and pulling it together, keeping it on track with the depth of knowledge and expertise provided by the Department staff.

An increasing pressure point within our rohe is the cumulative demands of a growing population, increasing tourism numbers, and more and bigger events that are impacting upon the infrastructure, our car-parks, trails, toilet/waste management facilities, huts, waterways, mountains and forests. Sustainable environmental foot printing, has provided opportunity and managed growth in some areas, while in others it has outstripped infrastructure capacity. We are at a critical strategic cusp of a Healthy Nature, Healthy People values framework, where some cultural differences of Healthy Nature Healthy People may not always align with our environmental kaitiakitanga. Clearly, we have some tensions that need to be balanced within our Conservation Management Strategy (CMS).

Concession triggers, concession monitoring and the risks or opportunities cascading within this area has provided some challenging considerations. For example, the alignment or otherwise with Iwi aspirations and Treaty Settlements, or grazing, educational, or other concessions on Stewardship Lands. Concessions, concessionaires, and concession monitoring has required a review lens-over, with the long-term future strategic positioning very much in mind.

The Board have undertaken several field trips this year and these have proven to be very important in establishing a connection to the range of places that make up the Board rohe, and connectivity with the staff working within our takiwā. With such a large and diverse region, and with members drawn from the full spread of the area, we consider it important that we continue to visit places within the region that are relevant to the issues we have oversight of and to this end we plan to undertake a similar number of field visits over the coming year.



Our Board continues to work in a positive constructive manner with our Department District Offices and staff, with a developing relationship of mutual confidence and trust. It is apparent that some areas are under some capacity pressure, as the Department continues to carry and fill vacancies. This has, to some extent, impacted on the Board's ability, strategically, to achieve all that it would like. We urge the Department to actively recruit, build and fill its vacancies to complete the Department's organisational capacity.

Notwithstanding the capacity issues, I would like to convey my thanks to the staff of the Department. They have made themselves available, they have extended beyond ordinary realms, engaged with the Board in a positive and constructive manner, and continued to provide the Board with knowledgeable support.

Naku noa na

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken Raureti'.

**Ken Raureti Chairperson
BOP Conservation Board**

2.0 MEMBERSHIP ON THE BOARD

Board Members	Home Location	Meeting Attendance				
		Board	Field Trips	Sub-committees	Workshop	Liaison
Ken Raureti (Chair)	Rotorua	5	1	1	1	0
Anne Mackersey (Deputy Chair)	Tauranga	5	1	1	1	1
Dr Julian Lee	Opotiki	4	1	2	1	1
Heidi Lichtwark	Maketu	5	1	0	1	0
Steve Morris	Papamoa	2	0	1	1	0
William (Bill) Clark	Whakatane	5	1	1	0	1
Mark Copeland	Rotorua	3	1	1	1	0
Mawera Karetai	Whakatane	5	1	0	0	0
Kura Paul-Burke	Whakatane	3		1		

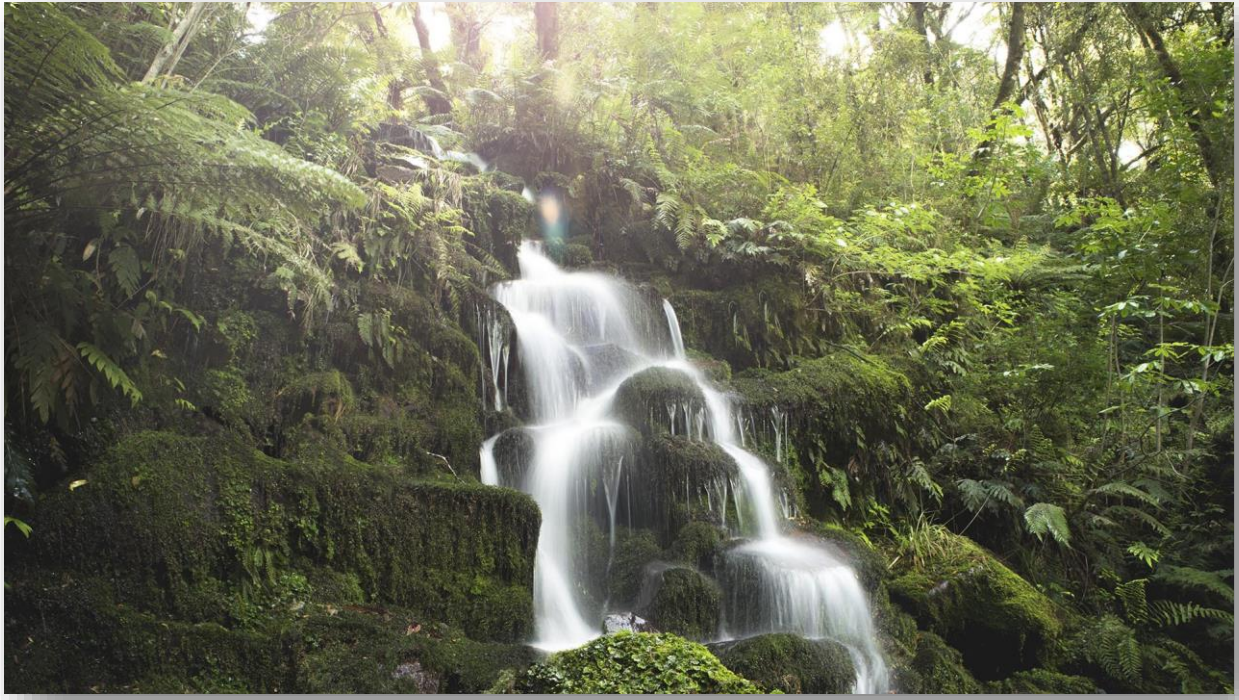
Following the resignation of our marine specialist Board member, we agreed to co-opt marine ecologist Phil Ross of Waikato University to guide the Board with respect to coastal and marine ecosystems values and risks. This appointment was confirmed in June 2017 and Phil's knowledge will be integral in the development of the Conservation Management Strategy around coastal and marine places.

3.0 THE BOARD'S AREA

The Bay of Plenty Conservation Board area is complex, diverse, extensive and rich in history. The richness and values of the Public Conservation Land within this rohe is reflective of the first inhabitants of the Mataatua, Tainui and Te Arawa waka that through to this day, continue to reside, harvest and utilise the resources of the environment.

Whilst the boundary lines drawn on the following map show the BOP Conservation Board area is quite stencilled in takiwa, rohe boundaries for iwi is a bit more complex. So, through an iwi generic landscape viewfinder, the broader area is defined as *Mai Nga Kuri a Whareki ki Tihirau*, from the Waihi/Bowentown/Western Bay of Plenty, to Cape Runaway, *tae atu ki a Tuwatawata, Whirinaki te Pua-a-Tane*, through to Tuwatawata and the Whirinaki, *mai Maketu ki Tongariro*, from Maketu to parts of the Tuwharetoa, *tae atu kite Pare Hauraki*, and stretching over to Tokoroa, Matamata, Waharoa and Paeroa generally.

From the many mountains, volcanoes, podocarp forests and hinterlands, from the fresh water tributaries, geothermal features, lakes and freshwater systems, through to the mangroves, estuaries and the great ocean of Toi, therein lies the diversity, complexities, and the richness of our BOP Conservation Board area.



Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne – Waterfall on loop track
Image: Neil Hutton

The forests of Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne, Raukumara and Kaimai, Mamaku Conservation Parks are enjoyed by a wide range of recreational users from around and beyond the region. These ancient ranges are connected intimately with significant coastal forest and dune-lands that lie at the fringes of the Board's area and continue into the depths of the marine world through to various islands and beyond. Two marine reserves are located within the Board's rohe being Tuhua and Te Paepae o Aotea Marine Reserves.

Wetland features, associated vegetation and the geothermal wonders of the Rotorua Lakes and surrounding reserve network also provide unique features to an area that is as diverse in species as it is in people groups and communities.

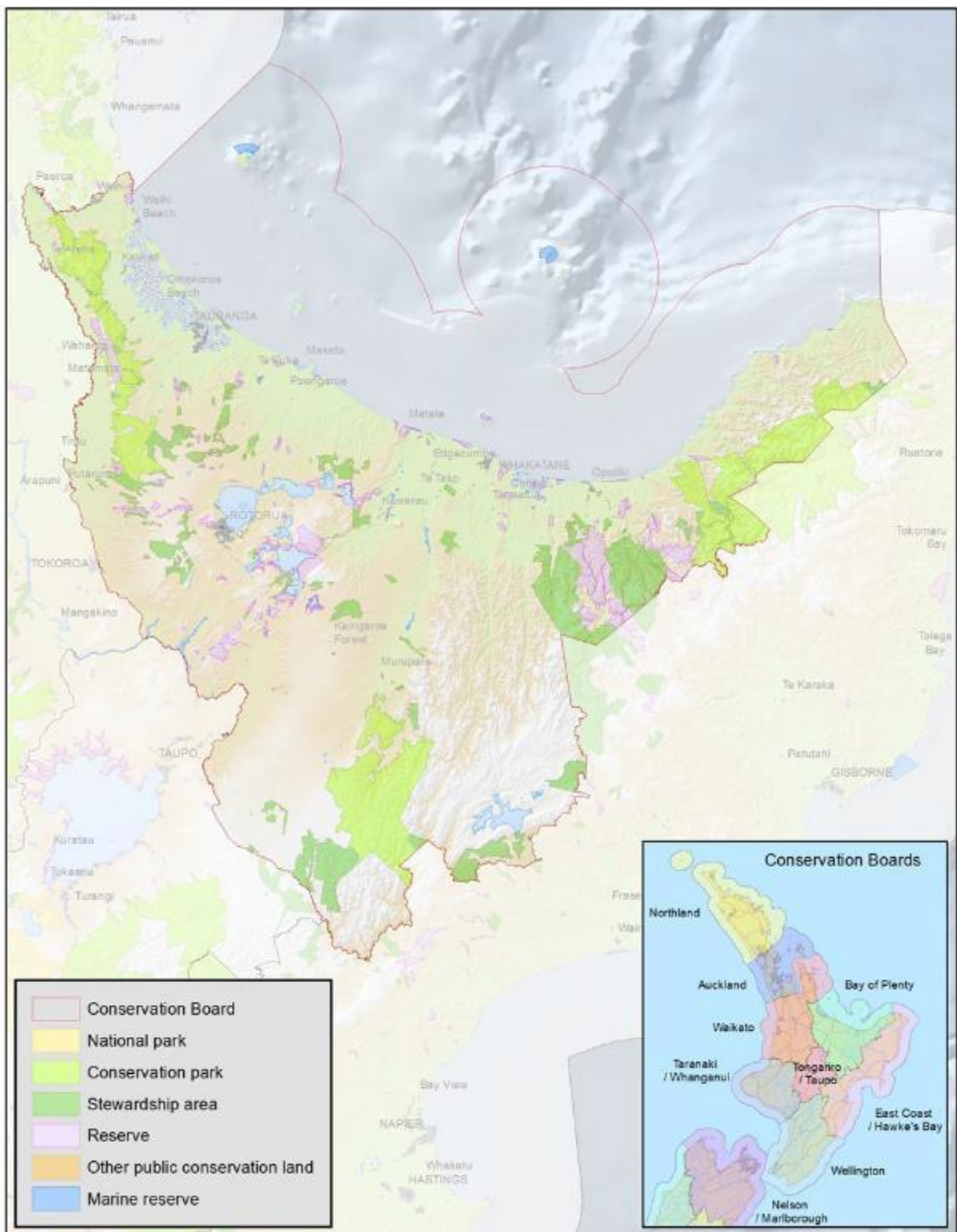
This physical location represents our ongoing responsibility to iwi under the Treaty of Waitangi as the Board's area is homeland to the whanau, hapu and iwi of Pare Hauraki, Tauranga Moana, Te Arawa and Mataatua Waka.

A broad sample of key conservation challenges and focuses within the region are:

- wilding pines
- battle for our birds - kiwi, kokako, whio
- rapid population increase and resulting balance of recreations versus ecosystem protection

Within the region Treaty Settlements are at varying stages of pre- settlement to post-treaty settlement. The Departments staff and iwi have been initiating discussions around co-governance of a number of significant areas of Public Conservation Land in anticipation of these arrangements following settlements.

The Bay of Plenty region hosts a large range of water catchments and lake reservoirs that flow out to the coastal ecosystems and the Pacific Ocean. Lastly, a significant boundary is shared with the East Coast/Hawkes Bay Conservation Board along the Raukumara Ranges.



Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

New Zealand Government
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

0 25 50 100 Kilometres



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4.0 BOARDS FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

4.1 BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting date	Meeting Venue
25 July 2016	Department of Conservation, Rotorua
11 October 2016	Department of Conservation, Whakatane
29 November 2016	Department of Conservation, Tauranga
21 February 2017	Department of Conservation, Rotorua
16 May 2017	Department of Conservation, Whakatane

4.2 FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip date	Field Trip Destinations
November 2016	Wairere Falls, Mt Te Aroha, Karangahake Gorge car park. Looking at the impact of tourism, scope of Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park (KMFP), and discussion around the need for pest control programme throughout the Park.
May 2017	Nukuhou Salt Marsh, Ohiwa Harbour

NOVEMBER 2016 FIELD TRIP TO KAIMAI MAMAKU FOREST PARK

The Board spent the day with Jeff Milham, Operations Manager, Tauranga/Rotorua, gaining a better understanding of the Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park.

This started at the very busy Wairere Falls carpark, followed by a trip up Mount Te Aroha in the hope of a view over the whole park. Unfortunately, cloud obscured the view, however the Board received a very interesting and insightful talk from ranger Warren Geraghty on the challenges facing the biodiversity within the park and options available to address them.

The Board went to Karangahake Gorge for a lunch stop and viewed first-hand the large number of visitors stopping to enjoy the history and scenery there.



Operations Manager Jeff Milham in discussion with Ken Raureti & Bill Clark at Wairere Falls Carpark

MAY 2017 FIELD TRIP REPORT – NUKUHOU SALT MARSH

Nukuhou is the last remaining salt marsh ecosystem in Ohiwa Harbour and is one of the Board's top five Stewardship Land priorities proposed for a change in designation. It comprises 60ha and is managed by the Nukuhou Salt Marsh Care Group formed in 2003. Their main tasks have been weed removal, revegetation, pest control and bird monitoring.

They have also constructed a public viewing platform, interpretation signs and boardwalk access, working closely with DOC, BOP Regional Council, Opotiki and Whakatane District Councils. The Care Group maintain comprehensive records dating back to 2003 and through their efforts have boosted fernbird, banded rail, Australian bittern, and wader populations throughout the salt marsh.

Over the first eight years of the Care Groups operation they have trapped 240 stoats and weasels. Bird counts indicate a five-fold increase in fernbird numbers. It was very apparent that this is a well organised and committed group of volunteers making a significant difference to a vulnerable environment.



5.0 ADVOCACY AND STATUTORY WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE BOARD

In response to the Regional Pest Strategy discussion document developed by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council a sub-committee of the Board prepared a submission on this document. Key elements of this submission included:

1. BOP Regional Council need to be the lead agency for pest control in the BOP.
2. All animal and plant pests damaging to our native flora and fauna need to be included in the plan with appropriate management tasks allocated to them.
3. "Working with Others" is critical to the scope and success of this plan. Other agencies, iwi, communities and organisations all play key roles and need to be working together.
4. It is important the agencies commit to funding plan actions, to achieve significant outcomes.
5. Other pests the Board would like to see included are Canada Geese, Black Swan, Wallabies and with respect to the Ohiwa harbour, starfish.

Although we are unaware of Kauri Dieback in our region the Board notes that the Department has taken the responsibility of mitigating Kauri dieback very seriously. They have been pro-active in the upgrade of tracks, re-routing tracks and establishing foot baths at track entrances with information to inform the public of the disease.

5.1 STATUTORY PROCESSES

Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

Early in the year a Board Sub-Committee was established comprised of Julian Lee, Anne Mackersey, Steve Morris and Heidi Lichtwark (Phil Ross, co-opted June 2017).

Departmental Management planning availability and lag in the completion and notification of other Board CMS's deferred the development of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Management Strategy. The process is now underway, with community engagement planned for the second half of 2017. The CMS sub-committee has worked with the department staff to identify key documents for reference and information leading into the CMS development.

The CMS sub-committee met several times during the year with a focus on developing an understanding of the CMS approach that would best suit the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board area as well as some initial thinking around defining our Places. A landscape model incorporating the diversity of ecological habitats appears to well suit the region with some changes to be recommended from the regions earlier Conservation Management strategies.

Seven or eight places based on principal ecological and landform characteristics have been proposed for further discussion and debate with strategic partners, including iwi and community groups. The Board has also initiated thinking on what the regions 25-year vision might look like, especially cognisant of a strategy that deals effectively with increasing pressures of urban development, tourism, pest incursions, climate change among other environmental drivers. From the refreshingly insightful Te Kawa o Te Urewera, and from the Boards interactions with Ngati Whare in developing the latter's strategy for Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tane, comes a desire for greater emphasis to be placed on people's behaviour and management for benefit of the Land itself.



Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

The Board sub-committee has continued to work closely with Ngāti Whare and the Department’s planning team over the past 12 months since notification of the Draft Conservation Management Plan (CMP) in June 2016. A total of 19 submissions were received and a hearing panel comprised of a Department Manager, Conservation Board and Ngāti Whare representative heard those submitters who sought to present in person.

As a result of this process amendments to the plan were proposed and agreed between Ngāti Whare and the Conservation Board. Good communication channels between the Board, Ngāti Whare, and the Department in responding to submissions from a wide range of interested parties, along with several face-face meetings throughout the year culminated in approval of the plan by Ngāti Whare and the Conservation Board in May 2017 with an operative date to be confirmed. A celebratory launch of the Whirinaki CMP with Ngāti Whare is scheduled for late October 2017.

Te Tapui Tokotoru Conservation Management Plan

The Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005 required the Minister of Conservation to delegate certain reserve management powers to recognise Ngāti Awa values and relationships within three places – Moutohorā (Whale Island) Wildlife Management Reserve, Ōhope Scenic Reserve and Tauwhare Pā Scenic Reserve. The reserves are administered by a Joint Management Committee established by the 2005 Act which is known as ‘Te Tapatoru-ā-Toi’ (TTāT).

This committee has three members representing Ngāti Awa, two representatives of the local community appointed by the Minister of Conservation and a representative of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board. Bill Clark was nominated on the 21 February 2017 as the Conservation Board’s representative on the Joint Management Committee.

On the 9th November 2016 BOP Conservation Board Chair, Ken Raureti, was hosted by Te Tapatoru-ā-Toi in Whakatane. The purpose of this meeting was for Ken to receive the Te Tapatoru-ā-Toi 2015/16 Annual Report on behalf of the Minister of Conservation who was not able to attend. This occurred at Moutohorā Wildlife Management Reserve on a beautiful summers day. The opportunity was taken to take Ken on a guided excursion to several key sites on the Island and share some of its unique cultural history and biodiversity protection and regeneration successes. A great day of re-affirming the key relationship between the two committees.



The Te Tāpui Tokotoru Conservation Management Plan (CMP), approved in October 2008 for a 10-year term, a key tool utilised by the Department to support the deliverables and responsibilities relating to the Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005 and the requirements for reserve management planning under the Reserves Act 1977 and the Conservation Act 1987. During the 2016-2017 year, planning commenced toward revising the current plan and developing a CMP for the 2018-2028 period.

Conservation Board members on the committee have participated in the initial discussions and TTāt look forward to their continued input into the revision of the CMP through its members participation in the review and approval process.

Concessions

The Board were asked to provide strategic advice on one concession application this year being a hut within the Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park to be operated by the Kaimai Ridgeway Trust. The Board were supportive of this proposal and provided comments back to the Department on specific elements of the proposal.

5.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Stewardship land

The Board continues to push for greater clarity on protecting conservation benefits of the many parcels of land, large and small, categorised as Stewardship Land within the Bay of Plenty Conservation area. Concern has centred on the evolved and heightened awareness of conservation benefits in the future, the risk that the fate of small blocks may be overlooked in the national process, and positioning of the large area of Stewardship Land in the upcoming revision of the Bay of Plenty CMS.



Two years ago, the Board working with the Department, prioritised from an extensive list, 21 stewardship land areas deemed to have significant conservation value. Subsequently the top 5 have progressed to the national list. The Board has requested the Department to review two priority areas at each Board meeting, and where appropriate include a field visit to these sites (See Nukuhou salt marsh field trip). Individual Board members have also visited various small sites such as the Huntress Creek salt marsh ecological area near Opotiki. Many of which are undoubtedly at risk, and in the case of Huntress Creek are also important Whitebait habitat.

Other areas such as Otanewainuku, between Tauranga and Rotorua, are struggling to balance the increased pressure from random recreation activity with a long established ecological programme focussed on pest control and Kokako/Kiwi recovery. Recently the Department presented a refresh of the top 21 list for the benefit of new Board members.

5.3 POLICY

Section 4, Conservation Act 1987

The Board has continued to receive regular updates from the Department on Treaty Settlement progress within the Bay of Plenty. The Board has maintained an active interest in the changing Settlement landscape and how this may shape future management arrangements for public conservation land.

6.0 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY THE BOARD

In the Bay of Plenty we have continued to take an interest in how our parks and Islands can be used appropriately for recreation. We have tried to ensure local people and their whanau have a connection to local activities in outdoor spaces. The 'virtually on track' project, a collaboration between DOC, Sport BOP and local councils, continues to host a number of successful activities. In the past year, an outdoor treasure hunt type app called 'goose chase' was used by over 1000 families on gem sites in BOP. The 'colour' quest also encouraged families to use parks and green space to identify special icons and the history of the land while being physical active. These initiatives provide pathways and support for BOP people leading to healthy and active lifestyles through outdoor recreation. The board has been briefed on and supports these approaches.

7.0 SPECIFIC LIAISON ROLES

The Board liaison for East Coast/Hawkes Bay (Julian Lee) continued to meet annually with the East Coast-Hawkes Bay Board, and interchange meeting agendas and meeting minutes. Information sharing and discussion across many common issues for both Boards continues to be of value. Specifically; the role and experiences of Board members in guiding the development of their respective CMS's, the processes defining Places, classification of Stewardship Land, Departmental reporting, cross-boundary co-ordination and overviews of activities such as Nga Whenua Rahui and QE II Trust.

The Board's Waikato liaison, Anne Mackersey, has also retained her connection with the Waikato Board and continued to meet annually where information, ideas and practices were shared and discussed. The Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park, lies within the Bay of Plenty Boards Region, but remains of significance to both Boards through iwi and catchment connections. As Treaty settlements progress, governance and management of the Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park remains of considerable interest in both Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions.

Board members continue to liaise with their respective communities as individuals in addition to building stronger working relationships with local and regional council staff and councillors.