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Te Rūnanga Whakauka o Kahurangi ki Kaikōura

NELSON/MARLBOROUGH CONSERVATION BOARD

Herea kia Kōtahi - Working Together



Board Members planting trees with the local community at Omaka Marae, Blenheim

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board is one of fourteen 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 the Board's role 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;
- advise on proposals for new walkways;
- 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 a number of functions under s30 of the National Parks Act. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of national park management plans and recommending approval of such plans by the New Zealand Conservation Authority.

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 the 30th June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board submits this, its 8th annual report.

2. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board has a membership of twelve, appointed by the Minister for Conservation. Two of these are on the recommendation of Ngai Tahu. One member retired from the Board this year. This was Edwin Pitts. The new member joining the Board was Ian Mitchell. Conservator, Neil Clifton, and Community Relations Manager, Jo Gould have given valuable support throughout the year. Kaupapa Atawhai Manager Barney Thomas also attended all Board meetings throughout the year and provided beneficial input. Louise Dowdell has continued working as Board Support Officer on a permanent part-time basis.

Four Board meetings were held during the year. A fifth was scheduled for 7 April 2006. This had to be cancelled at the last minute due to the lack of a quorum.

- 20/21 September 2005 in Kaikoura
- 6/7 December 2005 in Takaka
- 8/9 February 2006 in Nelson
- 22 June 2006 in Blenheim

Meeting attendance by Board members is shown below. In addition to this, Board members attended various subcommittee meetings throughout the year.

Board Member	Home Town	Meetings Attended
Ropata Taylor (Chairperson)	Motueka	4
Judy Hellstrom (Deputy Chairperson)	Picton	4
Maurice Manawatu	Kaikoura	3
Tracey Osborne	Takaka	3
Philip Simpson	Takaka	4
Darcia Solomon	Kaikoura	1
Glenice Paine	Picton	3
Bill Gilbertson	Nelson	4
Harley McNabb	Karamea	4
Ian Mitchell	Blenheim	4
David Melville	Dovedale	3
Carl Elkington	Picton	4

3. MEMBERS INTERESTS

Darcia Solomon, Maurice Manawatu, Carl Elkington, Ropata Taylor and Glenice Paine all bring an iwi perspective to the Board. These members also bring a rich and wide range of community, business, tourism, resource management and education skills to the Board. Ian Mitchell brings knowledge of the high country. Bill Gilbertson contributes specialist skills in recreation and conservation planning. David Melville has extensive experience in nature conservation and natural resource management with specialist skills as an ornithologist. Judy Hellstrom is an active advocate for conservation in the Marlborough Sounds, both land and marine-based, and has experience in plant pest eradication and bush restoration. Harley McNabb provides an important link to the Karamea and West Coast Communities which is helpful in the Board's work with Kahurangi National Park issues. Tracey Osborne provides expertise in marine science and use of the marine environment and Philip Simpson is a botanist with special interest in New Zealand plants and ecology.

The following subcommittees were reconfirmed by the Board at its September meeting:

1. Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan (*Bill Gilbertson (convenor), Philip Simpson, Judy Hellstrom, David Melville, Glenice Paine*).
2. Concessions (*David Melville (convenor), Tracey Osborne, Carl Elkington, Bill Gilbertson, Judy Hellstrom*).
3. Marine Conservation (*Glenice Paine (convenor), Maurice Manawatu, Tracey Osborne, Carl Elkington and Darcia Solomon*).
4. Kokomohua/Long Island Marine Reserve (*Glenice Paine*)
5. West Coast Liaison (*Harley McNabb (Kahurangi), Bill Gilbertson*)
6. South Marlborough (*Ian Mitchell (convenor), Philip Simpson, Maurice Manawatu, Bill Gilbertson and Darcia Solomon*.)
7. Kahurangi Air Access Strategy (*Bill Gilbertson, Harley McNabb, Tracey Osborne, Judy Hellstrom, Philip Simpson*).
8. Puponga/Farewell Spit Management Plan (*David Melville (convenor), Ropata Taylor, Tracey Osborne and Bill Gilbertson*).

9. Marlborough Sounds Fisheries Management Working Group (*Board representative - Glenice Paine*)
10. Queen Charlotte Track Working Group (*Judy Hellstrom, Glenice Paine and Ian Mitchell*)
11. Abel Tasman Advisory Forum (*Bill Gilbertson*)
12. Tasman Environmental Trust (*Board representative - Tracey Osborne and Philip Simpson as back-up*)
13. Te Waikoropupu Springs Management Plan (*Ropata Taylor, Philip Simpson and Tracey Osborne*)
14. Horoirangi Marine Reserve (*Board representative – Tracey Osborne*)

4. THE BOARD'S AREA

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction covers the entire Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy and oversight of the whole of Kahurangi National Park. This includes the western third of the park, which is managed by the West Coast Conservancy. This necessitates a working relationship between the Board and Department staff from that area.

5. FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 6M OF THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on Implementation of Conservation Management Strategies

Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) Implementation

The Board has continued to receive briefings from the department on the implementation of CMS 'strategic directions' as agreed in August 2001.

The Board received its annual CMS monitoring report at its September 2005 meeting. The year's schedule of departmental reports on the implementation of the CMS was agreed in December 2005. Throughout the year the Board received CMS Monitoring Reports on:

- Recreation Management.
- Maintaining biodiversity of native species and ensuring no threatened species are lost.
- Making the most of planning opportunities to influence local authority policies and planning for the benefit of conservation

To approve Conservation Management Plans, and the review and amendment of such plans

Puponga Recreation Reserve/Farewell Spit Nature Reserve Management Plan

The Board sub-committee has continued to work closely with departmental staff on the drafting of the management plan for Puponga Recreation Reserve and Farewell Spit Nature Reserve. Farewell Spit is a designated Ramsar Site. This plan is signalled as a

priority in the CMS. Departmental staff from the Golden Bay Area office and the Conservancy have been involved in working through the issues with Board members. The department has led early consultation with Farewell Spit concessionaires, the lessee of Puponga Farm Park and representatives of the Ornithological Society. The department is aiming to notify a draft of the plan in early 2007. Prior to notification, further consultation and dialogue with interested parties will be desirable.

Te Waikoropupu Springs Management Plan

The Board has formed a sub-committee to work with the department and Manawhenua Ki Mohua on the preparation of a management plan for Te Waikoropupu Springs. Given advice that the department is able to manage the waters of the Springs, it is now envisaged that the plan will be an integrated conservation management plan and iwi plan. The Tasman District Council has formally withdrawn from the process, but will continue to be involved in the working group at a staff level. The Board looks forward to further participation in this plan process.

Advice on any other Conservation Matters

Marine Conservation

The Board sub-committee has been involved in all aspects of marine conservation, from writing submissions on various projects and plans to helping facilitate the involvement of community groups in marine conservation. Over the last five years Glenice Paine has represented the Board on the Marlborough based SoundFish group. SoundFish is a community initiated, government endorsed group putting their efforts into marine conservation in the Marlborough Sounds. Biosecurity in our region is fast becoming an area for concern with the increased use of the marine environment. Results of this can be seen in the increasing incidence of unwanted marine pests such as the sea squirt; didemnum vexillum and the clubbed tunicate, styela clava. Sub-committee members endeavour to keep themselves apprised of the issues that make up the ever changing coastal environment.

Marine Reserves

Board members were pleased to participate in the opening of the new Horoirangi Marine Reserve. A moving dawn blessing was held, marked auspiciously by a pod of orca swimming majestically through the new reserve. Later that day an opening ceremony was held, attended by Hon. Mahara Okeroa, Associate Minister of Conservation, and a wide range of community representatives.

The Board has set up a sub-committee with a wide range of representation on it to advise the department on future management of Horoirangi Marine Reserve. The committee held its first meeting in May 2006. Tracey Osborne is the Board's representative on the committee.

The Board has been represented on the Long Island-Kokomohua Marine Reserve committee since the reserve was gazetted in 1993. In March 1992, a biological monitoring programme involving the collection of base line data began in the then proposed reserve. The results of the programme have proven invaluable in providing

robust data comparing the before and after effects of a no-take marine reserve. Ongoing research, surveying and monitoring has continued at regular intervals. Glenice Paine has been a member of the committee for the past 5 years and keeps the Board apprised of the results including the annual blue cod 'catch and release' survey, fish and shellfish density surveys and the biological changes within the reserve. As the reserve is well established, committee meetings are held when they are required.

Queen Charlotte Track Management

Regular dialogue continues with the department's Sounds Area office about management issues associated with the Queen Charlotte track and surrounding reserves. Judy Hellstom has been particularly active in this area and provides the Board with regular reports at meetings. The Board welcomed the results of the research into the value of the Queen Charlotte track to the local economy. The Board supports the need for further research into numbers and types of track users and how best to manage impacts.

Abel Tasman

The Board is pleased to see the proactive approach taken to concessions management and the application of limits in the draft Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan.

The Board looks forward to the creation of the Abel Tasman Foreshore reserve and to working closely with the department on how best to manage issues associated with use of the foreshore.

The Board notes that recent research has confirmed that the national park contributes \$11 million in income to the local economy.

Te Waikoropupu Springs

Following the field trip to Te Waikoropupu Springs in December, the Board discussed the high conservation values of the Springs and the risk that didymo would present to those values if it entered the Springs. The Board recommended a ban on recreational diving and swimming within the Springs, at least until the current biosecurity risk could be effectively managed. The Nelson-Marlborough Conservator subsequently decided to ban all water-contact recreation from the Springs.

Concessions, leases and licences

The Board continues to provide advice to the Department on a range of concessions, including recreation and other commercial activities. The Board has also provided advice on access arrangements for mining, under the Crown minerals Act. The concessions subcommittee has functioned well, with a focus on significant concession issues and working with the department to agree proactive approaches to concessions management. The identification of "hotspots" in the Conservancy where proactive approaches need to be instigated is an important component of this. Key hotspots identified are: Abel Tasman coast track; Queen Charlotte track; Heaphy track; Karamea River/Kahurangi National Park (helicopter landings); Mt Arthur and Angelus huts.

The Board provided comprehensive advice to the Department on an access arrangement application under the Crown Minerals Act for the dolomite quarry at Mt Burnett in Golden Bay. Three members of the Board attended a site visit to the quarry, accompanied by representatives of the department and OMYA. The Board's advice focused on the following: a 15-year time-frame for the access arrangement rather than the 40 years applied for; a bond to ensure full restoration of the site was secured; detailed monitoring requirements; the need for quantifiable outcome measures for performance of restoration work; and options for compensation in the form of contributing to weed and pest control in the area beyond the mine site. The Minister of Conservation granted the access arrangement for a 25-year term with a requirement for rehabilitation and comprehensive weed control on the quarry site. The company is also required to make a significant financial contribution to weed and pest control in the wider Mt Burnett area over the life of the access arrangement. The Board's suggestion of a bond was also adopted.

The Board has also had a significant involvement in a concession application by Tuatara Maori to take guided tours to Takapourewa (Stephen's Island) in the Marlborough Sounds. The Board appointed David Melville to sit on the Advisory Panel which heard submissions on the application and had an advisory role to the Hearing Commissioner. The final decision on the application will be made by the Conservator.

6. POWERS UNDER SECTION 6N OF THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

Advocating Board Interest at any Public Forum

Walking access

In June 2006 the Board sent a letter of support to the Walking Access Consultation Panel who had released a revised proposal for public submissions about improving public walking access.

7. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT

Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan Review

The Board welcomed the notification of the draft Abel Tasman National Park Management plan in January 2006. The Board looks forward to being involved in hearings on submissions on the plan, which are scheduled to take place in August 2006.

Air Access Strategy for Kahurangi National Park

Work on the Air Access strategy for Kahurangi National Park has slowed somewhat with the departure of a key staffperson from the department who had been working on this strategy. Bill Gilbertson continues to have a strong commitment to working with the department on progressing this strategy. Bill has attended a number of meetings with aircraft operators and other stakeholders (including Forest and Bird, Fish and Game, and cavers) to develop workable approaches.

Partial Review of Kahurangi National Park Management Plan

At its September 2005 meeting the Board discussed issues which might warrant a partial review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan. This followed a formal request from Mountain Bike NZ to review the plan to provide for mountain biking on specified routes in the park (including the Heaphy track), following the release of the new General Policy for National Parks. The Board agreed that a partial review could consider the following matters: mountain biking; privately owned accommodation; horse riding; air access; and hunting restrictions.

In terms of timing, the Board is mindful of the need to review the Conservation Management Strategy for the Conservancy and wanted to be fully aware of the implications of progressing management planning priorities on the timeframe for the CMS review before committing to any timeframe for the review of the Kahurangi National Park management plan.

8. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE WALKWAYS ACT

The Board had no formal business in relation to the Walkways Act during this reporting period.

9. LIAISON

New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)

In February the NZCA met in Nelson. During a joint session the Board gave the Authority a presentation on major issues currently facing them. These included concerns with management planning and marine conservation. The Board and the NZCA then shared a combined field trip into the Abel Tasman National Park. This allowed for informal discussion of the draft Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan. The Board also enjoyed the opportunity to socialise with the Authority during the evenings.

Kerry Marshall has continued as the Board's NZCA liaison person. Along with the February meeting Kerry also attended the December meeting in Takaka and provided the Board with a useful update on the NZCA.

West Coast Community/Conservation Board

Harley McNabb and Bill Gilbertson have continued to act as West Coast Liaison for the Board, particularly in relation to the Kahurangi National Park. Harley has provided the Board with regular updates from the Karamea area and in relation to the Oparara Valley Trust.

Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Council

Neil Deans of the Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Council attended the February and June meetings of the Board where he addressed them with current Fish & Game concerns.

10. FIELD INSPECTIONS

Kaikoura – Oaro Wetlands/Peninsula Walkway

After a powhiri at Takahanga Marae in Kaikoura on 20 September 2005 the Board left for a field inspection of the Oaro Wetlands and the Kaikoura Peninsula Walkway. Along the way Board member Maurice Manawatu provided a fascinating insight into historical Maori occupation of the land surrounding Kaikoura. At both Oaro and the Peninsula Walkway Dave Hayes (DoC Area Manager) and Anthony Knevel (DoC Kaikoura Field Centre) provided briefings.

Golden Bay

On the 6th of December 2005 the Board carried out a field inspection in Golden Bay. This commenced with a visit to concessionaire Cape Farewell Horse Treks. The Board was then briefed on the Puponga Farm Park and Farewell Spit management plan at the Pillar Point Lighthouse by John Mason (DoC Area Manager). The Board also visited Wharariki Beach carpark where future development was discussed. The Board were then joined at Te Waikoropupu Springs by local tangata whenua for an informal discussion.

Abel Tasman National Park

The NZCA joined the Board on the 9th of February 2006 for a field trip into the Abel Tasman National Park. Water taxis provided transport into the park and a number of sites were visited. This occasion allowed for discussion of the draft Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan in the field. The group was joined by Colin Wishart (DoC Area Manager) and Paul Thornton (CRO, Supervisor, Concessions).

11. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

**Hinga atu ana he tetekura
Whakaeteete mai he tetekura**

When one fern frond recedes another unfurls

The curled, gently unfurling frond of native ferns are known as *koru*, and are a symbol of ongoing birth and growth. It is appropriate to begin my comments this year with reference to the natural cycle of the environment as a metaphor for the work initiated and continued by the team of members on the Nelson Marlborough Conservation Board – Te Runanga Whakauka o Kahurangi ki Kaikoura.

It has been another busy year for the board with much work focused on our top five priorities – Management Planning, Conservation Management Strategy, Marine Conservation, Abel Tasman National Park and Concessions.

Biosecurity threats to conservation lands within this conservancy resulted in advice to the department to place a ban on recreational contact with the water at Te Waikoropupu Springs in Golden Bay in an attempt to prevent didymo spreading to this ecologically and culturally significant waterway. Other threats include Sea Squirt, Argentine Ants and the Varroa Bee Mite. These are a poignant reminder about the fragility of our regional ecosystem.

We hosted the NZCA on the 8th of February, focusing on regional issues of national significance, bringing attention to funding the management planning process – which has caused considerable concern to the board given the number of plans underway and forecast for the future. Wilding Pines, Marine Conservation and free access to huts for NZ children up to the age of 18 were the other issues presented.

Hearings on submissions for the Abel Tasman Management Plan are scheduled for August and the Board is pleased with the constructive community response to date.

Two highlights this year were the opening of the Horoirangi Marine Reserve bringing the total in our area to four and the success of the Karamea community to source funds for conservation in the southern end of the Kahurangi National Park.

It has been a pleasure to have members compatible with one another whilst all contributing and participating fully in the business of the board, creating robust and interesting debate on the issues.

I also acknowledge the work of the Conservator – Neil Clifton, Community Relations Manager – Jo Gould, Kaipapa Atawhai Manager – Barney Thomas and Board Support – Louise Dowdell for the responsiveness and support given to board members requests and comments throughout the year.

Mauri Ora

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ropata Taylor', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval shape.

Ropata Taylor
(Chairman)

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 Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board please contact Community Relations Officer - Board Support, at the Department of Conservation in Nelson phone (03) 546 9335 or see www.conservationBoards.org.nz.