



Northland Conservation Board
Te Runanga Papa Atawhai O Te Taitokerau



Tui in Kowhai Tree, Northland

Photograph by David Monro

2008/09
Annual Report

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Chairperson's Foreword

I have much pleasure in presenting the Northland Conservation Boards Annual Report for 2008-2009.

Once again this has been an interesting and productive year for the Board. As in previous years, the Board looked to continue and enhance the traditions that have been established over the years, particularly its close working relationship with Northland Conservancy staff. Of particular note was the outstanding support provided to the Board by Jeannie Hogarth and Hilary Aikman. I would like to acknowledge the co-operative and positive manner in which the Northland Conservator, Chris Jenkins and his Team have ably supported the Board throughout the year.

Since our last report, the Board has been particularly active across the Conservancy with all members involved in guiding the strategic direction of conservation at our local level. We continue to measure our statutory role against our board priorities and the Department of Conservation's Statement of Intent. This work will continue going forward to ensure our contribution is as effective as possible and that we are proactive instead of reactive.

The Board has begun preparation for the review of our Conservation Management Strategy and is well under way including the potential of a Kauri National Park being discussed which is an exciting addition and very timely for the CMS process. We are excited about embarking upon the review and ensuring the final product will be as relevant and user friendly as possible. The Board's CMS field visits continue to provide for an invaluable insight into the great work that is being done for conservation throughout Northland by the Department, Landcare Groups, Community Groups, local iwi and passionate individuals. They also highlight the issues and future challenges we need to help overcome.

The Board continues to be a voice for the community for conservation and environmental issues and continues to advocate "sustainability" concepts and this year extended an invitation to Mr Fred Lichtwark where a weeklong series of meetings were well attended by a large number of groups, agencies and communities from throughout Northland and were enthusiastically received and a great success.

The hui held with Te Iwi O Te Roroa was positive and enlightening and set the scene for building a positive and productive future relationship with the Board now the Treaty settlement process has been completed.

It is disappointing to see again major delays in the implementation of the Marine Protected Area Policy, as we continue to see no action being taken to progress this extremely important subject.

We saw one new Board member join our Team and, unfortunately, had to farewell two members, Mike Horne & Julie Gordon whose contribution and commitment have been invaluable and will be greatly missed.

As the Board meets the challenges of the forthcoming year, I would like to thank the Board Members, the Conservator Chris Jenkins and his Team of staff, who have helped in numerous ways to make it possible to achieve the Board's undertakings over the last year.

Sincerely



Kevin Evans
CHAIRPERSON



Kevin Evans, Chairperson

Photograph by Terry Conaghan

Introduction

The Northland Conservation Board is one of thirteen^[13] bodies appointed nation wide by the Minister of Conservation under Section 6P of the Conservation Act 1987.

The functions of the Board are outlined in Section 6M and the powers that enable the Board to carry out those functions are under 6N of the Act.

The role of the Conservation Boards as laid out in the Conservation Act 1987, is as follows:

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

Section 6O of the Conservation Act requires that every Conservation Board provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement, the Northland Conservation Board submits its Annual Report for consideration.

1 The Board's Area

The Northland Conservation Board's area of responsibility covers the same boundaries as the Department of Conservation's Northland Conservancy.

Northland is a long narrow peninsula, the features setting it apart from the rest of the country being its subtropical climate and 1,700km of indented and very scenic coastline. The Region covers a land area of 1.25 million hectares, supporting a population of just over 150,000.

Northland's economy is based on pastoral farming, forestry and horticulture, with well over half the region's land area devoted to beef and sheep farming. Northland is a popular holiday destination, making tourism a significant industry.

In ecological terms Northland is notable as home to two high profile species - the Kauri and the Kiwi. One of the most magnificent trees in the world, the Kauri, was prolific in the north but much of the region's Kauri forest is now gone. A number of relatively large Kauri dominated tracts do remain, principally the

Waipoua/Mataraua/Waima ecosystem and the Puketi/Omahuta/Maungataniwha complex but other individual forests as well.

Kiwi too are an important ingredient that makes Northland special, but the North Island Brown is under threat and special effort is required to maintain several large viable populations in the region.

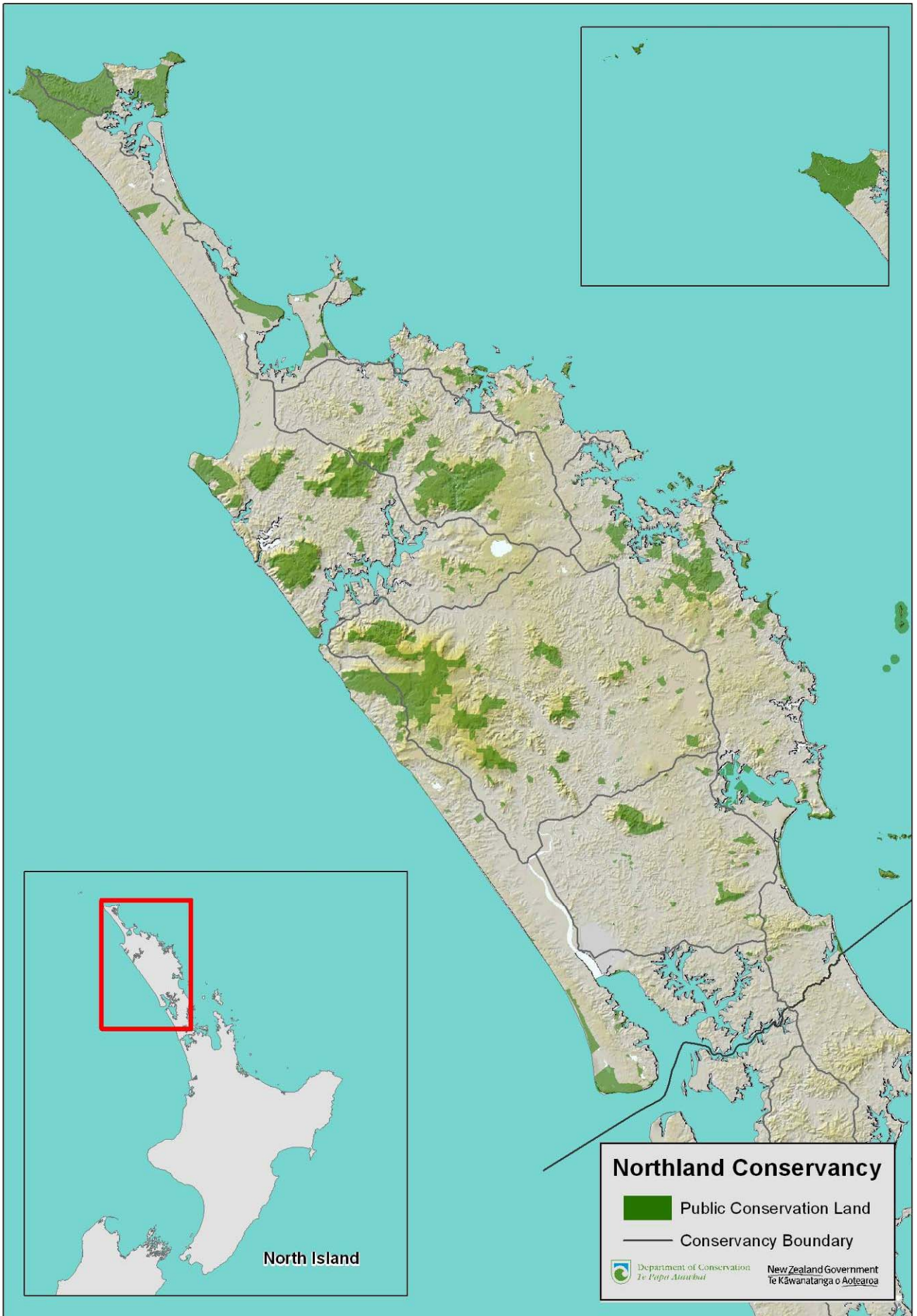
Notable are the harbours, headlands, islands and reserves of Northland's eastern seaboard, the islands that provide offshore sanctuary to the very best of New Zealand's natural treasures and the wild and rugged yet beautiful west coast.

However, Northland also has the dubious distinction of being the region with more native plants and animals at risk than anywhere else in the country. The arrival of new pests which is not an uncommon occurrence, pose great risks to our native biota.

In terms of history and culture, Northland was the cradle of both the Maori and European settlement of New Zealand. For both cultures the North has a long, fascinating and sometimes turbulent past and the region's historic sites and buildings still reflect this history.

The majority of historic places are of Maori origin, with many holding a deep spiritual significance amongst the region's iwi. On Crown administered land alone almost 3,000 historic places have been recorded. The sites include fortified pa, traces of ancient gardens, coastal middens and sculptured, terraced hillsides. Around Kerikeri and Waitangi there are a number of significant historic buildings relating to early European settlement in the area.

The Conservancy is split into four Areas – Kaitaia, Bay of Islands, Kauri Coast (including Trounson Kauri Park Mainland Island) and Whangarei. Each Area has its own Area Manager.



Membership

The Board welcomed one new Member and return of two reappointed Members in 2008/09

▪ Robin Lieffering



Robin brought with her an abundance of enthusiasm, commitment and background experience in local government politics. This background proved invaluable during the year as the Board engaged in submissions on a number of key resource management proposals. Her astute mind and experience in the submissions and hearings process enabled the Board to take advantage of opportunities to input into important legislative changes e.g. the Resource Management Act Amendment Bill. Within a very short space of time, Robin demonstrated she would be a valuable asset to the Board.

▪ Judi Gilbert



The Board was delighted to welcome Judi back for a further three year term. Judi has demonstrated that you do not have to be loud to be effective. She is a person who quietly gets on with the job and her methodical, painstaking approach, particularly in relation to community projects and issues, ensures that whatever she produces has left no stone unturned. Judi is a valued contributor in all phases of the Board's business and long may this continue.

▪ Ken Ross



The Board was delighted to welcome Ken back for a further three year term. Ken holds a key position on the staff of the Far North District Council and this background has proved valuable in discussing a wide range of local community issues. Ken has also demonstrated a willingness to take the lead on difficult issues and is not afraid to stand up and be counted when faced with controversial issues.

Robin, Judi and Ken are three Members of a very committed, enthusiastic, hard working Board speaking for the wider community of Northland.

Farewell to Mike Horne & Julie Gordon

Mike Horne

- While welcoming Members to the Board it was also time to say farewell to Mike Horne who had played such a significant role during his time on the Board. Mike's contribution as Deputy Chair was also valuable as was his keen business sense and background and experience in marine related issues. Mike's ability to bring with him his commercial background and use this to great effect for conservation and the environment took the Board to a new level, and this would be missed. The Board wished Mike and his family well for their future in Auckland.

Julie Gordon

- In April 2009, the Board regretfully farewelled Julie Gordon. Julie had almost completed two full terms on the Board but, due to health issues and other commitments she resigned from the Board.

Julie was another "quiet achiever" of the highest quality. Her rural background enabled her to contribute in a positive manner to issues relating to rural sustainability. Her family farm received recognition in the 2008 Ballance Farm Awards. The Board wished Julie well for the future.

Conservation Board Meetings

The Northland Conservation Board held four[4] meetings during the reporting period. The venue for Board meetings is chosen to ensure as wide a coverage as possible is made of the region and to enable members of the public throughout Northland to have access to the Board.

| | | | |
|---|------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 08 August 2008 | - | Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei |
| 2 | 03 October 2008 | - | Kauri Coast Area Office, Dargaville |
| 3 | 20 February 2009 | - | Kaitaia Area Office, Kaitaia |
| 4 | 22 May 2009 | - | Kauri Coast Area Office, Dargaville |

Members Attendance

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--|
| ▪ Kevin Evans | Dargaville | 3 from 4 |
| ▪ Ian Faulkner | Bay of Islands | 3 from 4 |
| ▪ Judi Gilbert | Whangarei | 3 from 4 |
| ▪ Julie Gordon | Waipu | 3 from 3[resigned April 2009] |
| ▪ Mike Horne | Bay of Islands | 1 from 1[term ended 31 August 2009] |
| ▪ Jeroen Jongejans | Whangarei | 3 from 4 |

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ John Kenderdine | Kaitaia | 4 from 4 |
| ▪ Helene Leaf | Hokianga | 3 from 4 |
| ▪ Robin Loeffering | Whangarei | 3 from 3 [appointed September 2009] |
| ▪ David Monro | Whangarei | 4 from 4 |
| ▪ Waitai Petera | Kaitaia | 0 from 4 |
| ▪ Ken Ross | Bay of Islands | 4 from 4 |
| ▪ Richard Shepherd | Whangarei | 2 from 4 |

Induction Day

On 03 October 2008 the Board held a half day Induction Day at the Kauri Coast Area Office in Dargaville. As there was only one new Member [Robin Loeffering] the Board decided to reduce the Induction Day to a half day, which was followed by a half day formal Board meeting.

The dynamics of Board Members and Department of Conservation staff changes each year as current Members become more confident in their role and new Members get a glimpse of things to come. Opportunity is also taken to include Members leaving the Board to attend and give their perspective of what it has meant to be a Member of the Northland Conservation Board, to highlight successes, and to draw attention where the Board can be more effective.

Although reduced in time the opportunity to introduce Robin to the workings of the Board and to her fellow Board Members, was valuable and set the foundation for the year ahead as well as being an opportunity for the Board to consider future projects and how the Board can add value to conservation outcomes in the coming year.

The opportunity to meet in an informal setting, without the presence of the public, ensures full, frank and robust discussion can take place in a non threatening and positive environment.

2008/09 Year in Review

Overall, the Board can take pride in its achievements during the 2008/09 year. Opportunities were available for individuals to take the lead in projects in which their background and experience was used to the full. The Board took the opportunity to input into resource management proposals, community plans and programmes as well as engaging in discussions and projects lead by the Department.

The Public Forum section at Board Meetings continued to provide an opportunity for members of the public to place issues before the Board and to air their views on a wide variety of conservation, ecological and cultural issues. The Board welcomed this continued interaction with the community and it was particularly pleasing to note the “regulars” who followed the Board meetings at the various locations.

Site visits, lead by staff of the Department of Conservation, continued to provide the Board with hands on experience of issues in the field, particularly those related to the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy. The opportunity to engage with members of the community during these site visits was of particular note. The Board appreciated these opportunities and many of the discussions held on site were carried over into the Board meetings and beyond.

Board Members saw the value of continuing engagement with Department of Conservation staff in the Areas outside of formal Board meetings and site visits. This approach was also taken with Members of the public when Board Members elected to follow through on issues raised at Board meetings and visiting the sites to gain first hand knowledge of the issues facing the communities in Northland.

The relationship between the Board and staff of the Department continued to grow during the year and Board Members expressed their admiration for the work staff were undertaking with such passion and enthusiasm.

The need for Government to progress the settlement of outstanding Treaty claims within Northland was highlighted during discussions held with Hapu/Iwi during the year. The positive outcomes from the implementation of the Te Roroa Treaty Settlement are already being demonstrated and it is hoped that further settlements will be completed in the 2009/10 year.

Although the Board is delighted with the positive outcomes from the Te Roroa Settlement and the progress being made with the *whenua ngahere* concept with Te Runanga o Te Rarawa, these successes have come at a cost to conservation programmes in the region.

The Board wrote to the Minister of Conservation urging the Minister to ensure that adequate and appropriate compensation/reimbursement is made to the Department as a result of the costs of implementing Treaty Settlements and participating in the negotiation process. The costs involved are significant and unless addressed adequately, a number of key programmes within the region will need to be curtailed or, in some cases dropped altogether, due to lack of resources that have been redirected to Treaty settlement implementation.

The review of the Conservation Management Strategy is a key issue for the Board and during the 2008/09 year Board Members engaged in attending a large number of pre-consultation hui held throughout the region.

The public release of the Draft Conservation Management Strategy was delayed to enable resources to be diverted to the development of a proposal to establish a National Park in Northland based on the Kauri trees [including *Tane Mahuta*] in the forests of Waipoua. The Board accepted the need for the CMS to take a back seat to the Kauri National Park proposal and notes that while the process has slowed down opportunity is being taken in the Areas to refine sections of the Draft CMS so that when it is released to the public it will be a robust and user friendly document.

While concentrating on issues within the Northland Region, the Board was committed to doing its bit in terms of “climate change” and to concentrate efforts wherever possible to minimise carbon footprints as it went about its work.

Climate change is an issue that encompasses all work programmes and the Board continues to maintain an interest in and commitment to developing ways and means to address climate change within the region. To achieve this the Board will continue to input into Regional and District Plans to ensure that every effort is made to address climate change at all levels in a positive and practical way. The Board recognises the need to *walk the talk* and monitor programmes related to addressing climate change to ensure that these are able to be implemented and not just words on paper.

The Board takes seriously its responsibilities as the voice of the community of Northland for conservation and the environment. It does not shirk from this responsibility and will continue to engage in advocacy programmes, within its mandate, to achieve positive conservation and environment outcomes for the region.

Conservation Management Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Field Inspections 2008/09

The Board continued to focus site visits on sites related to objectives set out in the Conservation Management Strategy.

The Board also took into account the need to *walk the talk* in relation to “carbon footprints” and every effort was made to minimise the use of vehicles and to schedule site visits in conjunction with Board meetings and other programmes being undertaken.

Kaitaia Area – 18/19 February 2009

In February 2009, the Board spent two days in the Kaitaia Area to view a wide range of conservation programmes and, in particular, the upgrade undertaken at Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga. As well, the Board was keen to engage with local communities, particularly Hapu/Iwi in the Area, especially those who are in the process of negotiating Treaty Claim settlements.

Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga

For some Board Members it was their first visit to Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga for a very long time. For most it was the first visit since the major reconstruction work had commenced.

Department of Conservation staff and representatives from Ngati Kuri escorted the Board during the visit,



Board Members, NZCA representative & DOC Staff at Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga with Cape Maria Van Diemen in the mist

outlining the changes that have been made and those still to be completed. The input into the redevelopment from Transit New Zealand was also noted and appreciated.

The Board was overwhelmed at the transformation of Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga. The revegetation programme and track upgrade to the Lighthouse was amazing. The impact from walking through the newly constructed portal was breathtaking and the experience was both spiritual and visually amazing.

The pride in the transformation of the site was evident in the manner in which staff of the Department and representatives from Ngati Kuri enthused over the progress that had been made and the future development of the site. The Board also noted the incredible partnership that had been developed between the tangata whenua and the Department as a result of this project. This was an even greater achievement than the transformation of the site.



Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga Photo by D Monro

While acknowledging the cooperative work being undertaken between the Department and the local community, the Board was keen to promote even greater opportunities for local involvement. The Board noted that often the locals were the last to benefit from tourist destinations such as Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga, and the Board intends to continue to advocate the engagement of local resources throughout Northland wherever possible and practical.

During the Board's visit there were a large number of visitors also present and the conversations overheard while walking the track were all positive and as most of the visitors were from overseas, the impression being gained would no doubt auger well in terms of promoting the region.

Puwheke and Maitai Bay



The Board met with representatives of Ngati Kahu to discuss a wide variety of issues, including outstanding Treaty claims. The site visit to Puwheke to discuss possible outcomes from the Treaty settlement provided the Board with an opportunity to view, first hand, the land under claim

and discuss implications post settlement.



Dr Margaret Mutu, Ian Faulkner and Victor Holloway at Maitai Bay
[Photo by David Monro]

The visit to the Maitai Bay Campground, accompanied by representatives from the Department and Ngati Kahu, also enabled the Board to see first hand the developments that have taken place at the site and to discuss issues of concern with the tangata whenua.

The Board appreciated the time taken by these representatives to make themselves available to meet the Board and reinforced the value that *face to face* meetings have in providing opportunities for free and frank discussion and, at the same time providing foundations for developing relationships.

The Board acknowledges the hospitality and effort that Department of Conservation staff put into these site visits. This opportunity to interact with staff is greatly appreciated by the Board and highlights the passion, commitment and hard work that staff of the Department continue to carry out. The Board is in awe of this passion and commitment and appreciates the sincerity and zeal of staff of the Department.

One of the Board's main objective in participating in site visits, [while focused on the Conservation Management Strategy] is to get out there amongst the community and engage *face to face* with individuals and organisations to obtain a first hand understanding of the issues facing the community. The Board is committed to do its part to ensure that community concerns are taken seriously and to encourage the Department and other agencies to develop opportunities within the communities to raise the socio economic standards as well as conservation and environmental awareness.



Relaxing at Rarawa Beach during Kaitaia site visit

[Photograph by David Monro]

Kauri Coast Area – 21 May 2009



Helene Leaf, Hilary Aikman, Meirene Hardy-Birch & Jeroen Jongejans at Tane Mahuta carpark
[Photo by David Monro]

Through the leadership of the Kauri Coast Area Manager, the Board was invited to meet with representatives of Te Iwi O Te Roroa to discuss the implementation of the Treaty Settlement and, most importantly, to develop a relationship with Te Roroa.

The Board was aware there was a “history” between the Northland Conservation Board and Te Iwi o Te Roroa. Previously the Board had not been welcome within the rohe of Te Roroa as Te Roroa did not accept the existence of the Board nor its mandate. This had been made clear to a previous Board in 1992 and given the time frame the current Board knew there was a great deal of bridge building to be done to establish a relationship with Te Iwi o Te Roroa and to move this forward.

The Board was aware there was a “history” between the Northland



Board Members, DOC staff & Stephen King at Tane Mahuta
[Photo by David Monro]

The welcome accorded the Board by the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Te Iwi O Te Roroa was warm, friendly and set the scene for a positive and enlightening hui. No one who was present at the hui left without feeling that they had been part of something very special both on an individual and group basis. The relationship developed during the course of the hui has set the scene for a very positive and productive future between Te Iwi o Te Roroa and the Northland Conservation Board.

The Board acknowledged that the Crown settlement of the Treaty claims with Te Roroa had opened up a whole new forum for moving forward and the manner in which Te Roroa had moved forward since the Settlement was extremely positive for the community, Northland and the country as a whole. The Board also was pleased to note the relationship that had been built up between Te Roroa and the Department, which was already reaping great benefits for conservation.

The Board also wanted to acknowledge the significant role that the Conservator Northland, Chris Jenkins had played in engaging with Te Roroa pre Treaty Settlement and his valuable input into ensuring the implementation post Settlement progressed to the satisfaction of all concerned. The Board noted that this was no small

accomplishment as the road to successful settlement was fraught with difficulties, but with good will of all involved and the leadership that Chris Jenkins demonstrated, made for a positive outcome.

S.4 Treaty of Waitangi

The Board continued to seek opportunities to engage with the Hapu/Iwi of Northland. The positive success from the hui with Te Iwi o Te Roroa was a highlight for the year. The ongoing good relationship with Te Runanga o Te Rarawa is also good to note.

It was also good to engage with representatives from Te Iwi o Ngati Kahu and Te Iwi o Ngati Kuri during the course of the site visit to Kaitaia. All these opportunities add yet another block to the relationship foundation.

While interaction with other Iwi on a formal scale has not been undertaken in 2008/09 the Board will continue to seek opportunities for this to happen as a priority. The support and assistance provided by the Maori Board Members is invaluable in this regard.

As mentioned earlier in the Report, the issue regarding reimbursement to the Conservancy for costs associated with Treaty Settlements [pre and post settlement] is of concern to the Board. The ever diminishing conservation cake can ill afford to have its operational funding diverted to issues relating to the settlement of Treaty Claims, [worthy as these are] without guarantee of reimbursement.

Northland is a region with multiple outstanding Treaty Claims in various stages of negotiation and settlement. It is, therefore, accepted that a large amount of Department of Conservation resources will be diverted to assist in these processes. The Board will continue to advocate the reimbursement to the Conservancy for all these costs.

Board Functions Under Section 6M of the Conservation Act

6M1 The functions of each Board shall be

- (c) *To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on the implementation of Conservation Management Strategies and Conservation Management Plans for areas within the jurisdiction of the Board:*

Conservation Management Strategy Review

The need to postpone the public release of the Conservation Management Strategy, to allow more time to prepare a robust draft, and the need to release key staff to undertake work on the proposal to establish a Kauri National Park in Northland, was understood by the Board. However, it was pleasing to note that the document was still being worked on in the interim and that the delay would, in effect, give staff the opportunity to revisit key issues and result in a more robust Draft.

(d) To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General –

- (ii) On any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board:*

Natural Heritage

- The Board was pleased to be kept informed on progress with the *Project Island Song* rodent eradication programme in the Bay of Islands. The Board is looking forward to viewing the results from this project when it visits the Bay of Islands in March 2010.
- The Board noted with concern the rogue rat incursion on the *Hen and Chickens Islands* in the Whangarei Area. However, the Board was impressed with the speed, efficiency and professionalism of Whangarei Area staff in handling this unexpected and unwanted incursion. The fact that monitoring has found no further rats on the *Islands* is very pleasing to note.

Kauri National Park for Northland

- The Conservator Northland provided the Board with information regarding the establishment of a Kauri National Park for Northland. Prior to its election, the current Government made it clear that once in office as part of its environmental policy, it intended investigating the establishment of a National Park based on the Waipoua Kauri Forests.

The idea of establishing a Kauri National Park in Northland is not new. In the early 1990's a Section 8 Report [under the *National Parks Act 1980*] was prepared covering 32 areas throughout Northland. Earlier Boards had been part of the initial Section 8 Report.

An interim report by the NZ Conservation Authority (NZCA) was tabled with the then Minister of Conservation in 1995 describing a proposal known as the "Hokianga model". This proposal was not approved as a result of concerns about the impact of the proposal on unsettled Treaty claims in the region.

The Board will follow the progress of this new proposal with interest as the 2009/10 year unfolds.

Marine Protected Areas Policy

The Board was disappointed at the decision by National Office to delay the implementation of the Marine Protected Areas Policy, pending further analysis. It was frustrating to have the project languishing and the Board took the matter to the New Zealand Conservation Authority to take it up at a National level.

Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserves Advisory Committee

The Board was invited to be represented on the Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve Advisory Committee. The Committee was set up following the establishment of the Reserve. It covers two separate areas, one a rocky shore and deep water site in the main channel of the Harbour around Motukorora [Passage Island], and the other a mudflat and mangrove area at Waikaraka.



David Monro, Chair, Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve Advisory Committee explaining the creatures to be found in a Marine Reserve to future marine conservationist, Grace Candy.

David Monro accepted the challenge to represent the Board on the Committee and was subsequently elected Chair by the Members of the Committee. David kept the Board informed of progress following meetings of the Committee.

The community acceptance of this new Marine Reserve has been pleasing to note and it is hoped that there will be many more new Marine Reserves in the Northland region in the coming years.

Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve & Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve

The application, supported by the Board, to have the *Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve* and *Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve* declared World Heritage Sites, is still being progressed. The Board hopes that the final outcome will see these iconic sites included in the World Heritage Site list.

National Marine Park for Northland

Jeroen Jongejans continues to advocate for a Marine Park in Northland and the Board sees merit in this approach and will take the opportunity to foster this idea as appropriate and timely. The concept was enthusiastically received by the New Zealand Conservation Authority back in February 2008. The Board continues to draw this option to the attention of the Authority with the hope that it may come to fruition in the not too distant future.

The Board believes that with the current Government push to establish National Parks the time is opportune to push the Marine National Park concept.

Species Management & Predator Control

- The Board was pleased to be involved in the initial stages of the Northland Regional Council Pest Management Strategy Review that, for the first time, included a specific section on marine pests. The Board was able to make comment on the initial concept and hopes to make a more in-depth submission when the full Strategy is released for formal review later in 2009.
- **Phytophthora Taxon Agathis [PTA]**

The Board was kept informed of the progress being made in relation to the response to PTA in Kauri. The Conservation Support Manager continued to update the Board on a regular basis through her Report to each Board meeting. The frustrations experienced in getting action on the ground was noted. The response was a joint agency one with the Ministry for Agriculture & Forestry.

During its visit to the Waipoua Forest in May 2009, the Area Manager, Kauri Coast discussed the impacts of the pathogen, PTA and the action being taken by the Department to protect the site and taonga in Waipoua Forest. The Board viewed a major project being undertaken at that time to remove the gravel and compact material that had been laid originally and that now as seen as a potential carrier of pathogens.

- The Board was kept informed of progress being made with the rat eradication programme, *Project Island Song* in the Bay of Islands and the 1080 poison aerial drop in Waima Forest and it was great to watch the development of both these projects and the final outcome. The Board was impressed with the professionalism of staff of the Department in both these projects and, in particular, the community buy in and involvement.
- **Pigs** being released onto the conservation estate continued to be a problem the Board saw as adversely impacting on the ecological values within the region. The Board asked the Department of Conservation to consider establishing hunting preserves for pig hunters to alleviate the problem of hunters releasing pigs into the wild to promote continued opportunities to hunt. The Board noted the action being taken by the Department and the emphasis on public education and working with other agencies [e.g. the Northland Regional Council through the Council Pest Management Strategy]. The Board will continue to follow up this issue in the 2009/10 year.

Historic Heritage

Kororipo-Kerikeri Basin

- The Board was delighted to see the long awaited opening of the Kerikeri Bypass and the removal of the vehicle bridge access to the Kerikeri Basin. The further

development of this Historic Precinct will be watched keenly by the Board and a formal inspection of the Kerikeri Basin and environs is scheduled to take place early in 2010.

6N[f] *To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.*

▪ **Northland Fish and Game Council**

Ian Faulkner continues to represent the Board at meetings of the Northland Fish and Game Council. This is providing the Board with ongoing updates on activities of the Council and identifying issues where the Board and Council could collaborate to achieve positive outcomes for conservation. A highlight was an invitation for Ian to join Members of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council for its inspection tour of Northland in May 2009.

Rudi Hoetjes, Manager, Northland Fish and Game Council is similarly invited to attend meetings of the Northland Conservation Board.

The Board was pleased to provide a letter of support for funding to upgrade the Wairoa River Wildlife Management Reserve at Hikurangi in Whangarei. This site has significant biodiversity values, including mudfish and rare plants. This type of positive engagement and co-operative working together is something the Board will continue to foster with the Fish and Game Council in the future.

The Board acknowledges the work undertaken by the Northland Fish and Game Council and will continue to proactively engage with Council at every opportunity.

Key Liaison

▪ **NZ Conservation Authority**

The Board is delighted to have Yvonne Sharp as the NZ Conservation Authority Northland representative attending meetings and site visits. Yvonne adds great value to discussions and provides wise counsel on a number of issues, particularly relating to linking into the Authority to further specific issues.

Yvonne [previously Mayor of the Far North District Council] brings with her a depth of knowledge and experience that is extremely valuable and we are grateful to the Authority for encouraging this interaction and, most of all, to Yvonne for making herself available at and outside of meetings.

The Board also acknowledges the ongoing liaison with Hally Toia [previous Chair of the Board and now NZ Conservation Authority Member representing the Auckland region]. Hally continues to keep a keen interest in all things associated with Northland and the Northland Conservation Board. The Board considers itself

doubly fortunate to have the calibre of Yvonne and Hally representing the region on the NZ Conservation Authority.

The Board continued to seek guidance and support from the NZ Conservation Authority on a range of issues during the year, particularly the concept of a Marine National Park for Northland.

- **Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society**

The Board appreciates the representation at its meetings by Members of the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society. The Society is well served by its local Members and Suzi Phillips from the Helensville Branch with specific interest in the Kaipara Harbour.

- **Department of Conservation**

The Board greatly appreciates the support, assistance, advice and hospitality from all staff of the Department in Northland Conservancy.

The Conservator Northland, Chris Jenkins and his Team of Managers and their staff play an integral role in the activities of the Board to enable it to carry out its mandate in a positive, practical and transparent manner. The good relationship that has been built with all staff is very important to Board Members, particularly in terms of encouraging interaction with staff outside of Board Meetings and Inspections. This opportunity is still not as well established as it could be and is something that each Board Member intends to pursue more rigorously in the next year.

The passion, commitment and professionalism of the Department's staff is not in question. From the A Band Ranger in the field to the Conservator, this attitude shines through and is obvious in the major conservation gains being made in the Conservancy. The Board is pleased to note a big gain in terms of community involvement in conservation programmes. The Board believes the involvement of the community is crucial to achieve maximum gains for conservation in the region and will continue to encourage and support the Department to make this happen and grow.

The Board appreciates the time and effort made by staff to provide reports for Board meetings and to host the Board for field inspections. At every inspection the Board continues to be impressed by the professionalism of Area staff from the Area Manager down and the manner in which the work is carried out and all programmes/projects carefully explained to the Board. These visits are crucial to enable the Board to fulfil its mandate to monitor the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy in Northland.

The current review of the Conservation Management Strategy will be taking on Board the comments, criticisms, suggestions made by the Board during the course of these

inspections and the Board will follow up on how these have been integrated into the revised Conservation Management Strategy.

General Liaison

- The Board takes every opportunity to liaise with as wide a group of individuals and organisations as possible. The composition of the Board assists greatly in terms of establishing networks and opening up opportunities for the Board to engage in a wide range of issues within its mandate.
- Use of the DOC Website is a medium the Board is slowly taking advantage of to raise its profile and to enable as wide an audience as possible to link into details of meetings, promotions, agenda and minutes from meetings as well as contact details for all Board Members and support staff.

- **Public Forum**

The Board extends this liaison to Members of the Public who attend Board Meetings to discuss specific issues, by following up on the issues raised and linking into the various groups represented. The Board hopes that by laying this type of foundation the public will be better informed of what the Board represents and consequently raise the profile of the Board.

As reported earlier, the Public Forum section of Board meetings continues to be well attended and has provided the Board with a large volume of information on a wide variety of issues affecting the wider community in Northland. Issues such as the

- Ngunguru Sandspit – currently being considered for possible land exchange.
- Vehicles on Beaches – adverse impacts on species [particularly shorebirds]and habitats.
- Recreation opportunities – opening of closed tracks; maintenance issues.
- Effluent Disposal - treated effluent into harbours.
- Tourism impacts - increased number of visitors to conservation areas – coping with these impacts on the natural environment.
- Predator control - weeds, possums, Argentine Ants

The Board will continue to encourage members of the public to attend Board meetings and assure them of a warm welcome and fulsome hearing and response.

CONSERVATION LAND USE

Concessions

The Department continues to involve the Board in reviewing major concessions for use of Department of Conservation administered land in the region. During the year the Board took the opportunity to draw to the attention of the Department the need to consider recommending a change in the legislation to provide a mechanism whereby local people were given special consideration over all others in terms of concession applications.

The Board understands that the current process allows for anyone to make an application for a concession and has no problem with that fair and equitable approach. The Board understands and appreciates that current legislation does not allow for this but, having noted first hand opportunities at such sites as Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga for the locals to derive direct benefit from the opportunities provided at the site, it believes that such opportunities should be endorsed.

Meridian Energy Epakauri Wind Farm Proposal

The Meridian Energy Concession Application to construct and operate a wind farm in Northland, was provided by the Department to the Board for comment. The Board appreciated this opportunity to comment on a concession that could have major impacts on the conservation values at the site in the Far North of Northland.

The Board has always made it clear that it is not “anti” development and applauds initiatives to provide economic and social benefits to the region. However, at all times the need to ensure that any development must be balanced with the protection of the conservation values and minimise the impact on the environment are the key factors for the Board.

In the case of the Meridian Energy application, the Board sought additional information from the Department on potential environmental and ecological impacts and, once this was provided and considered, the Board agreed to support “in principle” progressing the application to “First Determination Report” phase of the process. In providing this qualified support the Board wrote to the Department advising it had serious reservations and concerns regarding the possible adverse impacts on the ecology and habitats as currently exist at the planned site for the wind farm.

The Board will follow this application with interest as the process develops.

SUBMISSIONS

Resource Management Act Amendment Bill

- The Board was pleased to be able to make a submission on the Resource Management Act Amendment Bill and to be given the opportunity to be heard by the Select Committee.

The Board supported, in principle, efforts to make the Appeal process less cumbersome and less subject to abuse; the reduction in costs and delays arising from submissions and appeals that were frivolous or vexatious or motivated by anti-competitive behaviour and the reduction in the time taken to reach decisions on proposals of national significance while still maintaining effective public participation and promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The Board strongly supported the retention of the clauses in the current *Resource Management Act* that provide for the balance between environmental protection and development.

The Board did not support measures that would alter the balance of the current *Act* in favour of development at the expense of environmental protection and public participation.

The Board also did not support removing the Minister of Conservation's decision making role in respect to restricted coastal activities.

Board Member Robin Lieffering prepared an oral presentation in support of the Board's submission in readiness for attendance at the Select Committee Hearing. The Board was dismayed to be given 24 hours notice of attendance before the Select Committee and even more dismayed that this would be by way of a teleconference with a member of the Select Committee for a duration of 10 minutes only.

The Board expressed its concerns to the Select Committee regarding the lack of adequate notice and length of time available but, short time and duration that it was, Robin Lieffering effectively spoke to the Board's submission via teleconference. The Board appreciated the effort Robin made to ensure the Board's concerns were relayed and understood by the Select Committee.

Northland Regional Council Pest Management Strategy Review

- The Board was pleased to be invited to make comment on the marine pest management section of the Northland Regional Council Pest Management Strategy Review.

The Board was pleased to see the Council addressing marine biodiversity which showed major foresight with the possible impacts of the burgeoning aquaculture industry and the constant push for more marine tourism opportunities.

The Board applauded the inclusion of marine biodiversity and the proactive approach taken in dealing with pest management issues that might have been seen to be ‘optional’

Northland Regional Council Draft Community Plan 2009/2019

- The Board chose to focus on the issue of genetic engineering/genetic modification when commenting on the Northland Regional Council Draft Community Plan 2009/10 [LCCTP].

The Board has continued to maintain a vigilant role in terms of genetic engineering/genetic modification and was concerned that the Draft Plan appeared to be diminishing the emphasis on the need to take a very precautionary approach to this issue by removing key narrative from the existing Plan.

The Board requested that Council include the Council’s adopted precautionary GMO policy, in full, as contained in the current LCCTP relating to genetic modification, as well as incorporating the proposed advocacy roles outlined in the draft 2009/19 LCCTP Plan.

The Board supported the Council participating in the work programme of the Inter-Council Working Party on GMO Risk Evaluation and Options.

Walkways Act

6M[e] *To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on proposals for new walkways in any area within the jurisdiction of the Board.*

The Board was not called on to advise the Authority on any proposals for new walkways in 2008/09. However, there were two major “walking tracks” that created a great deal of public interest, which were presented to the Board for consideration.

Te Araroa Trail

- At its meeting in August 2008, the Board was treated to a very informative and impassioned presentation on the status of the “Te Araroa- The Long Pathway” walkway from Cape Reinga to Bluff, by Te Araroa representative, Fiona McKenzie.

The Board was pleased to hear the progress being made and the fact that local communities were being encouraged to become involved to use their local knowledge as guides for visitors who may not have the confidence to walk the track on their own. The socio-economic opportunities once the Trail was established were positive and note was taken that the need to protect the ecological values where the trail was being laid was entrenched in the project.

Promotion

- **Loder Cup**

The Board was disappointed that its nomination of Mr Guy Bowden of Tawapou Coastal Natives Nursery at Tutukaka was not successful in 2008. However, it was pleased to be able to re-nominate him for consideration in 2009. Mr Bowden has dedicated his life to conserving New Zealand's natural flora. His Nursery is now recognised as one of the best in the country. Mr Bowden also has a deep love for the *Poor Knights Islands Nature Reserve* and was a leader in initiating a strategic plan for the eradication of environmental weeds on the Islands.

- **Visit by Fred Lichtwark**

As a positive follow on from the very successful Rural Sustainability Forum hosted by the Board in 2006, the Board extended an invitation to Mr Fred Lichtwark an international speaker on integrated catchment management and one of the driving forces behind the Whaingaroa Catchment Management Project for the Raglan Harbour. Initiated in the mid 1990's, the Group of concerned residents in association with Landcare Research and the Regional Council, Environment Waikato tackled the problem of sedimentation and reduced water quality in the Raglan Harbour.

A Ministry for the Environment Grant in 1996 supported the Group's activities, which included fencing off hundreds of kilometres of riparian margins and planting over half a million plants. The success of the project is evidenced by the clearer waters and recovering shellfish and fish stocks.

Fred accepted the invitation to come to Northland for a series of meetings around the North to talk with farmers, land and coast care groups, local authorities and anyone who felt passionately about protecting and enhancing the environment – particularly from the perspective of catchment management. With groups around the North currently drafting plans for catchment management plans to protect our beautiful harbours, this was a great opportunity to learn about the Raglan Project and how a community can be engaged to take effective action.

To say that Fred's visit was a success is to put it mildly. The meetings were well attended, the message enthusiastically received and debated. The week long series of meetings covering the Bay of Islands, Taipa and Omapere culminated in an extremely well attended meeting at Parua Bay in Whangarei, followed by a site visit to view riparian planting and catchment management in action as well as identify areas that would benefit from this type of programme.

The Board was delighted at the success of this visit, particularly in the engagement with a large number of groups, agencies and communities throughout Northland. It was an excellent opportunity to enhance the outcomes from the Rural Sustainability

Forum and, importantly, an opportunity to raise the profile of the Northland Conservation Board. The Board acknowledged the support and enthusiasm for this visit from the various groups and organisations who worked alongside local Board Members to maximise Fred's visit.

The Board appreciated Whaingaroa Landcare releasing Fred to make the visit and to Fred personally for his enthusiasm, passion and commitment to the major issue of



Fred Lichtwark, Hugh Cole-Baker & Mike Farrow during the Whangarei site visit

riparian enhancement and catchment management. His message was well received and his inspirational presentations have laid the foundation to adopt the practices that have been so successful for Raglan for the Northland region. The Board appreciated the generosity of local groups

and organisations who gave of their time and resources to ensure that the visit was the success it turned out to be.

The Board will continue to seek similar opportunities to spread the conservation message covering a wide range of issues within the region along the same lines as those for the Fred Lichtwark visit. The visit has set the benchmark for future programmes of this type for the Board to host.

■ **Environmental Defence Society 2009 Conference, Auckland**

The Board was pleased to be able to send two representatives [Robin Lieffering and Judi Gilbert] to cover the 2009 Environmental Defence Society Conference. The focus of the 2009 Conference was "*Reform in Paradise – Threat or Opportunity*". The umbrella consideration and discussions centred on the future structure of governance in the environmental protection sphere in New Zealand.

Both representatives partook fully in the Workshops and discussion groups provided at the Conference and the feedback provided reinforced the value of the Board's continued representation at this type of forum.

2008/09 Northland Conservation Board Members



Back row: Helene Leaf, Jeroen Jongejans, David Monro, Ken Ross, Kevin Evans, John Kenderdine
 Front row: Judi Gilbert & Robin Loeffering
 Absent: Ian Faulkner, Richard Shepherd & Waitai Petera
 [Photo by Terry Conaghan]



Jeannie Hogarth,
 Board Support Officer

Comments from Board Members - Highs and Lows for Year Under Review

Board Members were asked to identify the *highs* and *lows* for them for the year. The following is a collation of the highlights submitted by Members *in their own words* :-

Robin Loeffering

My first year on the Northland Conservation Board.

I must first mention the very professional level of support the Board receives from the local DoC staff. This includes those staff operating away from the Conservancy Office who are doing the work on the ground and who have organized such well worthwhile field trips.

Further, the majority of my fellow board members work very hard in between our infrequent meetings. I find the electronic communication on which we rely on between meetings, has its short-comings but with the very sharp responses and assistance we all get from our “secretary”, the process is well managed.

I have found the Board's active participation on behalf of the northland community, in preparing submissions to other authority's plans on environmental matters really rewarding and a pleasure to participate in.

I would like to see the Board have a higher public profile and perhaps we need to address this through budgeting, for a professional writer to do this for us. As volunteers, we all have heavy commitments.

I was personally delighted to attend the Environmental Defence Society conference on behalf of the Board with my fellow Board member, Judi Gilbert. There are major governance changes about to be made by this new government, at central and local government level in dealing with the NZ environment, and the Board's need to be aware of these, is critical.

Ken Ross

Visit to Ngati Kahu at Maitai Bay, and the impassioned address by Dr. Margaret Mutu. I heard some one describe what Margaret said as an "out burst", and heard what she said dismissed by the comment that she always behaves in that way. I felt quite honoured in a way to have the anguish and discontent spelt out. Too often, I believe, Maori are polite and patient when they could be excused for expressing rage. I identify with the hurt in Maoridom and the tragedy that sees an intelligent race of people alienated from much of their land by means that were far from fair. If I were a young Maori male, I would be more than a 'radical activist'. Dr Mutu did us a favour by presenting another perspective.

The Board consideration of the Meridian proposal for Epakauri. To me, this provided an opportunity to get to grips with a higher level challenge, because it initiated the debate and discussion around the strong ecological approach to sustainability, and exposed how we trade off the environmental need when it is pitted against an 'economic necessity'.

The visit of Fred Lichtwark to Northland was an example of conservation in action at a broader level. It grew out of the sustainable land management workshop (also a NCB initiative), and it pitched at the heart of the problem - from the hill/mountain top to the sea floor. We were above the level of the dotterels and skinks (and I'm not knocking that level of activity) and getting a 'whole of environment' appreciation of problems and solutions.

The Hui with Te Roroa at Waipoua. The work that has been done by the Department is highly commendable, and sets a model for further collaboration. I was hugely impressed by the presentation of the Te Roroa CEO. Wayne Bissett. He showed a prodigious understanding and wisdom for such a young man. I appreciate similar work is being done with Te Rarawa in Herekino etc, but I guess it was the holding fast to a vision, and the patient but painstaking work that brought the Te Roroa situation to a satisfactory conclusion for both parties, which stood out.

David Monro

The lowlight for me was the Board's failure to broker a compromise and resolution that would have met the needs of both the Northland Conservancy and those Members of the Public who wished the Tangihua Ridge Track to remain open. It seemed to me that the Conservancy's rationale was flawed, and that the opportunity to engage the Public's services as volunteers to maintain the track was missed.

Highlights included:

Being privileged to see the enthusiastic and joyous way in which Kaitaia Area Staff and Ngati Kuri personnel worked together and shared in the tasks done at Te Rerenga Wairua/Cape Reinga, and to witness the warmth of the relationship between the Kauri Coast Area Staff and members of Te Iwi o Te Roroa. It is gratifying to see the obvious degree of sensitivity with which Staff of the Conservancy have addressed issues of co-operation and ownership between tangata whenu and tauwi.

Being the recipient of the benefits of Jeannie Hogarth's superb secretarial and organizational skills, her constant care in the field, her wonderful sense of humour, and her sound advice on many occasions.

Jeroen Jongejans

Pleased to see progress with Treaty Settlement issues, clearing the way to a positive future for all participants.

Great to see the embracement of sustainable use of the Conservation environment to promote tourism opportunities that invariably lead to greater understanding and job opportunities for communities.

Encouraged to see the open mind engagement with other opportunities that come along either on Conservation estate (eg Meridian windmills) or outside (Kaipara Harbour Turbine proposal) and provide positive critical thinking based on a smarter desire for sustainable outcomes. (not being too myopic).

Frustrated at the very slow progress to create more Marine protection, more Marine reserves and lack of visionary leadership on this issue.

Impressed with commitment of both DOC staff and members of the NCB to find ways forward to deliver outcomes that benefit conservation and communities.

Conclusion

The Board looks back on the 2008/09 year with pride on the achievements it has made and the gains made in terms of raising its profile and networking with other agencies. The Board can also take pride in the way in which all Members worked together, pooling their not insubstantial skills and experience to ensure that opportunities to fulfil the Board's mandate were optimised.



Kevin Evans
BOARD CHAIRPERSON
30 June 2008