



Northland Conservation Board
Te Runanga Papa Atawhai O Te Taitokerau



Annual Report
2009/10

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Chairperson's Foreword

2009/10 has been another good year for the Northland Conservation Board due mainly to the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of my fellow Board Members and support provided by Jeannie Hogarth our Board Support Officer.

This Team environment within the Board was invaluable as on a personal note I was required to delegate my Chair responsibilities for a major portion of the year to my Deputy, Helene Leaf, who more than ably filled the gap.

I was particularly pleased with the way the Board engaged in significant issues e.g. the potential increased opportunities to mine the conservation estate – an issue that the Northland Conservation Board vehemently opposed and continues to oppose.

The Board took every opportunity to make submissions on a wide variety of Regional and District Plans during the year to good effect. Opportunity was made available to meet with Northland Regional Council staff to discuss a wide range of issues, including genetic engineering/genetic modification - an issue dear to the hearts of this and previous Boards. The Northland Conservation Board has long been an advocate for a 'GE Free Northland' and continues to take this stance at every opportunity. In the absence of affirmative action by Councils to declare Northland "GE-Free" the Board continues to vigorously advocate for Councils to take a "precautionary" approach and for this to be clearly articulated in Regional and District Plans.

My interest [well, more my lifes work!] in Pateke/Brown Teal continues to take up a great deal of my time. It has also highlighted a desire on my part to seek ways for the Board to target biodiversity issues as a major project in the coming year, together with promoting and facilitating marine protection proposals throughout Northland.

Northland has so many unique ecological, historic and cultural features that the Board, on behalf of the people of Northland, will continue to advocate for maximum protection and enhancement. The Board supports in principle the proposal to establish a Kauri National Park in Northland and will do all it can to assist all parties to achieve a positive outcome.



I would like to recognise the added value that the presence of Yvonne Sharp, [NZ Conservation Authority representative] and Craig Brown, [Northland Regional Council representative] at Board meetings. Our Board acknowledges and appreciates the time and effort that these two tireless workers devote to join with the Board as often as possible. Their contribution certainly enhances the opportunity to link the activities of the Board with those of the Authority and the Regional Council.

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.

In summary, the Northland Conservation Board can look back on the 2009/10 year with a great deal of satisfaction and pride. Everything that has been achieved has come about by the selfless efforts of individual Board Members working together to serve conservation in Northland. I thank each and every one for all the hard work that has been undertaken to improve the protection and enhancement of conservation values in the region.

I also thank my Board colleagues for their support to me during what has been a very trying year personally. The continued ill health of my Father has placed a major burden on me [one I carry willingly]. However, it has meant that I have not been able to fulfil the role of Chairperson as fully as expected. The fact that the Board has achieved such good outcomes for the year speaks volumes for the calibre of the Board Members who have picked up and run with the business of the Board lead in no small part by the Board Support Officer.

2010/11 will be my final year on the Board, having completed 11 years on the Board – 6 of these as Chairperson. I look forward to this final year and the challenges in front of the Board. With the excellent Team behind me there is no reason not to believe that like the one just passed, 2010/11 will definitely be another “Good Year”.



Kevin Evans
CHAIRPERSON

Introduction

The Northland Conservation Board is one of thirteen[13] bodies appointed nationwide by the Minister of Conservation under s.6P of the Conservation Act 1987.

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

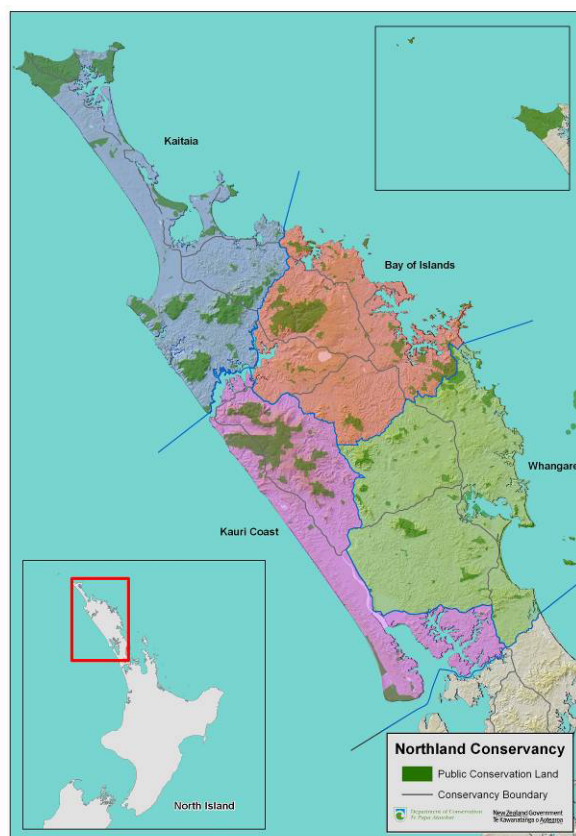
Section 6O of the Conservation Act requires that every Conservation Board provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement, the Northland Conservation Board submits its Annual Report for consideration.

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 three new Board Members all from the Bay of Islands Area and each appointed for a three year term.

Maria Tau

Maria brought to the Board a strong connection with Te Iwi o Ngati Toro in the Bay of Islands. Her appointment provided continuity in terms of cultural and historic background, which is so important to the overall composition of the Board. Unfortunately, Maria's tenure was short lived due to the need for her to tender her resignation early in her term for personal reasons. She was not replaced during 2009/10 but her vacancy was taken into consideration during the 2010/11 Board appointment process.

William Goodfellow

William filled the void from the retirement of Jeroen Jongejans in terms of tourism and marine conservation and endorsed the importance of maintaining a strong tourism component on the Board. William and his family have strong connections with the Bay of Islands and, in particular, Urupukapuka Island. Although based in Auckland, William spends a major portion of his time in the Bay of Islands and has been able to attend all meetings in 2009/10.

Ian McGill

Ian brought with him a wide background in local government and business management – key ingredients to add value to the composition of the Board. Early in his tenure Ian proved he was willing to go the extra mile and took over representation of the Board on the Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserves Advisory Committee [replacing retired Board Member, David Monro].

- **Kevin Evans continues as Chair until 31 August 2011.**

While pleased to welcome the three new Members the Board sadly bid a fond farewell to four Members who had each in their own unique way, made a significant contribution during their tenure.

Jeroen Jongejans

Jeroen completed two terms on the Board and it was with sincere regret that he was farewelled at the end of this six year tenure. However, the sad was tempered with the glad in that Jeroen had agreed to be a Co-opted Member when required. This was particularly pleasing to note given his significant contribution over a wide range of issues but most particularly the Conservation Management Strategy implementation and monitoring and the current review process.

As well and of similar significance is the need for continuity in the marine advocacy process of which Jeroen has been at the forefront. Jeroen's vision for a "Marine National Park" to be established in Northland will continue to be a focus for future Boards. The Board appreciates the ability to co-opt Jeroen for the future. He has been an integral part of the Board's structure. His sound judgement, common sense approach and personable nature have endeared him to all and his presence and contribution on a regular basis will be sorely missed.



Jeroen Jongejans being presented with a marine habitat map on his retirement from the Board.

[Photo by Terry Conaghan]

Robin Lieffering

While Robin's time on the Board was short, she more than left her mark in terms of adding value to all aspects of the Board's business. Her strong background in local government politics was invaluable and provided the Board with the impetus it needed to engage in robust and often contentious local issues with confidence and competence. Robin made a significant contribution to submissions into local government documents during her time on the Board. Robin's overall contribution was considerable and along with her exuberant personality will be missed.

David Monro

David played a significant role on the Board with his strong leadership and motivational skills. His quiet dignity, ability to relate to all people at all levels, his humility and unbounding intellectual capacity made him a person held in the highest regard by all. His ability to communicate at all levels, including in Te Reo [his karakia to open meetings



Chair, Kevin Evans flanked by retiring Board Members David Monro and Jeroen Jongejans.
[Photo by Terry Conaghan

is legendary] made him the ideal front person for the Board at meetings and hui. Aside from all that, his photography was also of the highest standard and graced the Board's Annual Report during his tenure on the Board. A great man with big shoes left to be filled.

Richard Shepherd

Richard complemented David at every turn during his time with the Board. He and David were a class act and both contributed significantly to the mana of the Board. Richard's quiet dignity and cultural and historic background, added great value to the business of the Board. He was also quick to provide expert advice in terms of Te Reo and the need to address issues relating to the Tangata Whenua in the appropriate manner and terminology.

All four departing Board Members were farewelled with thanks and the very best wishes for their future.



Class of 2008/9 – Back row : Helene Leaf, Jeroen Jongejans, David Monro, Ken Ross, Kevin Evans, John Kenderdine;
Front row : Judi Gilbert, Jeannie Hogarth, Robin Lieffering.

[Photo by Terry Conaghan]

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.

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|---|------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 07 August 2009 | - | Northland Conservancy Office, Whangarei |
| 2 | 06 November 2009 | - | Pakanae Marae, Hokianga |
| 3 | 05 March 2010 | - | Bay of Islands Area Office, Kerikeri |
| 4 | 28 May 2010 | - | Kauri Coast Area Office, Dargaville |

Members Attendance

▪ Kevin Evans	Dargaville	4 from 4
▪ Ian Faulkner	Bay of Islands	4 from 4
▪ Judi Gilbert	Whangarei	4 from 4
▪ William Goodfellow	Bay of Islands	3 from 3**
▪ Jeroen Jongejans	Whangarei	1 from 1*
▪ John Kenderdine	Kaitaia	4 from 4
▪ Helene Leaf	Hokianga	4 from 4
▪ Robyn Loeffering	Whangarei	1 from 1*
▪ Ian McGill	Bay of Islands	3 from 3
▪ David Monro	Whangarei	1 from 1*
▪ Waitai Petera	Kaitaia	0 from 3**
▪ Ken Ross	Bay of Islands	3 from 4
▪ Maria Tau	Bay of Islands	1 from 3***

* **Retiring Board Members final meeting.**

** **New Board Members [first meeting November 2009]**

*** **Resigned after first meeting.**



Class of 2009/10, DoC staff and Members of the Public at a Board meeting held on 28 March 2010 at Kauri Coast Area Office, Dargaville.

[Photo]

Induction Session

A half day Induction Session was held at the Pakanae Marae on Friday, 06 November 2009. The Board appreciated the opportunity to welcome new Members in such a magnificent setting as the Hokianga and by such gracious hosts as the Pakanae Hapu.

The Induction programme included presentations from all four Area Managers and provided an opportunity for Board Members to ask questions of all Department of Conservation staff present and to gain an understanding and appreciation of what being a Member of a Conservation Board entailed. The Induction programme based on an “in house” non public approach, provided the right informal setting to put all Members at ease [particularly the new Members] and get to know key Department of Conservation staff who would provide the necessary local contact for Members during the course of their term on the Board.

The Induction process continues to provide an annual platform for existing and new Board Members to become familiar with Department of Conservation processes and to establish and/or reinforce the “housekeeping” aspects of Board Membership.

The Board expressed its appreciation to the Pakanae Hapu for inviting the Board to the Marae and for their wonderful hospitality and contribution to a very successful Induction programme.



Hokianga Heads: Photo Terry Conaghan

2009/10 Year in Review

The year in review will be best remembered for the consolidation of relationships within the Board and with Department of Conservation staff, local authorities and Iwi. It was also a year where Board meetings were reduced to 4 [previously 5], which provided challenges in terms of continuity and contact.

Of particular note was the ability of all Board Members to contribute to the business of the Board and, in particular, capitalise on the previous year's activities e.g. the visit to Northland by Fred Lichtwark and his riparian management project presentations. The impact of this initiative was still being felt throughout the region and some major positive initiatives were being established based on what had been learnt from Fred's presentations.

Northland is entering a major phase of Treaty Settlements and the Board was pleased to be able to discuss possible post settlement scenarios with Iwi in Northland, in particular Te Runanga o Te Rarawa and its Whenua Ngahere joint management concept.

Opportunity was taken to input into local government plans and strategies during the year and to participate in Workshops and other group activities.

The Board was quick off the mark to express its displeasure and concern at the Government's decision to look at increasing opportunities for mining on the Conservation Estate including National Parks. The Board voiced its concern initially by letter and then by formal submission. It was good to see all Conservation Boards throughout the country, along with other key agencies and individuals making submissions opposing the Government's proposal to open up more areas of conservation land to mining.

The issue of genetic modification was again brought to attention and the Board continued its long held position on the need to ensure that local authorities took this issue seriously and continued to lobby for stringent measures regarding genetic modification be included in all plans and strategies within the region.

Overall the 2009/10 year could best be summed up as a year of consolidation for the Board. It also highlighted the impact of external commitments on Board Members that continue to impact on the ability for all Members to contribute to the business of the Board at equal level.

Conservation Management Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Field Inspections 2009/10

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.

Site Inspection – Eastern Bay of Islands and Waitangi – Bay of Islands Area

Rolien Elliot, Area Manager, Bay of Islands and her Team hosted the Board on a one day site visit to view the impacts from the successful rat eradication programme *Project Island Song* in the Eastern Bay of Islands. As well as noting the success of the programme a highlight for the Board was the successful partnership that the Department had established with the Bay of Islands community and Iwi, which would enhance the visitor experience and the level of protection for conservation values in the area.

The Board appreciated the opportunity to see first hand the work being undertaken by the Department throughout Northland and acknowledged the work that Area Managers and their Teams put into ensuring that the Board maximised these visits. Seeing first hand issues facing the Department and the way these issues were being managed is invaluable for the Board and essential to it fulfilling its mandate.

Opportunities to engage with communities on their home turf is always welcomed by the Board. This ongoing relationship building is very important, not just for current Board Members but for the future.



Urupukapuka Eradication Photo Terry Conaghan

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S.4 Treaty of Waitangi

▪ Treaty Settlements

The Board acknowledged the financial implications on the Department in terms of Treaty Settlements. Northland is now in the throes of seeing some major Treaty Claims reaching settlement e.g. Muriwhenua Incorporation and Te Runanga o Te Rarawa in the Far North. The Board will continue to monitor the situation and lobby Government to ensure that the Department receives fair and equitable reimbursement for the operation funding that is currently being diverted to Treaty Settlement 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. The local postponement was followed by a decision from National Office to halt all Conservation Management Strategy Reviews until such time as a universal template could be constructed for all Conservation Management Strategies.

The Board expressed its concern at the delays to the review process and tempered its concern with the hope that the final outcome would be positive and worth the delay and time and effort that has gone into the review process.

Draft Auckland CMS Structure

The Board appreciated the opportunity to comment on the draft Auckland Conservation Management Strategy Structure. It saw merits in the new format and looked forward to the implementation of the structure across all Conservancies.

(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 presence of *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* [‘PTA’] in Northland’s forests was noted with concern by the Board. The proactive approach being taken was applauded and the Board appreciated the regular updates provided by Hilary Aikman, Conservation Support Manager on progress with this major threat to Northland’s unique Kauri Forests.



Dr Tony Beauchamp, Department of Conservation Scientist, viewing evidence of PTA in Waipoua Forest.

[Photo by Terry Conaghan]

Kauri National Park for Northland



The Government's directive for the establishment of a Kauri National Park in Northland was supported by the Board. Department of Conservation staff in Northland continued to keep the Board updated on progress with the proposal on a regular basis. The need to engage and gain the support from local Iwi, particularly Te Iwi o Te Roroa was noted and endorsed.

Ngunguru Sandspit

The future protection of the Ngunguru Sandspit continues to be drawn to the attention of the Board by individuals within the community and, in particular, the Ngunguru Sandspit Protection Society.

The need to provide ongoing protection for this unique site has been an issue strongly supported by successive Board over a number of years. The efforts made the Department of Conservation and, in particular, the Conservator Northland, Chris Jenkins, have been noted and appreciated. The Board recognises that the land is privately owned and appreciates the willingness of the present owners to negotiate a potential sale. It is obvious that the current financial crisis is not helping to resolve this issue. However, the Board will continue to support all efforts to achieve a positive conservation values based outcome.



Figure 1 : Ngunguru Sandspit, Whangarei

Northland's Drought

Northland experienced its worst drought in years with little or no rain falling from September 2009 to March 2010. This had serious implications across the region with all sectors suffering as a result. The extreme situation highlighted the need to actively promote water conservation and sound, long term water management programmes so that the region is adequately prepared for future such occurrences.

- **Water**

The Board will continue to vigorously advocate with local authorities to ensure that appropriate and adequate plans are in place to provide continuous water of the highest quality throughout Northland.

- **Fire**

With the drought came the inevitable extreme fire risk to the region and the ensuing fires proved costly in terms of environmental impacts and stretched resources throughout Northland.

The decision by the Department to take the lead to have the removal of fire safety margins in Northland has reaped its rewards with major savings being made in terms of staff time and resources in relinquishing the control of significant fire safety margins that are now under the control of local authorities. The Department continues to assist and support the suppression of fires on non conservation land, but the cost to the Department with the removal of the fire safety margins has been drastically reduced.

The Board records its thanks to Chris Jenkins, Conservator Northland for leading this initiative.

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 acknowledged the valuable input made by retiring Board Member David Monro in representing the Board on this Committee. David also Chaired the Committee for the entire time of his tenure on the Board and feedback provided indicated that his contribution had been considerable.

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. A final decision is still awaited.

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 and it will continue to advocate for this at the appropriate time.

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 pleased to be able to make a submission on the final Strategy and to note its recommendations were adopted in the final document.

- **Taranga Island Rodent Eradication**

The Board was pleased to be advised of the *Agreement* between the Department of Conservation and the Ngatiwai Trust Board over the future management of Mauitaha, Araara and Taranga Islands in the Whangarei Area.

The *Agreement* enables the Department to proceed with the eradication of *kiore* on Taranga Island. The Board has been advocating for this eradication programme for some time and it was delighted with the positive outcome and especially the relationship that has been established with Ngatiwai, which augers well for future conservation gains within the rohe.

The Board looks forward to monitoring the progress of the eradication programme and the expected significant conservation gains associated with the removal of the *kiore* from Taranga Island.

▪ **Department's Pest Management Programme**

The issue of the use of 1080 toxin in pest management programmes is one that has and continues to be debated across the country.

The Board appreciated the presentation given by Peter Davis, Technical Support Officer [Pest Management] on the Department's Pest Management Programme and the part the use of 1080 plays in the programme.

The Board acknowledges that the use of toxins will always be a controversial one, but it also endorses the use of such toxins in appropriate areas as a means of restoring the conservation values in these areas.

Flow on effects from the Northland Conservation Board sponsored visit by Mr Fred Lichtwark in June 2009 – Riparian Management

As reported in the 2008/09 Annual Report, the Board hosted a very successful visit to Northland by Mr Fred Lichtwark, a leading promoter of riparian management. During his visit Fred demonstrated the success of riparian management in the Raglan District. Opportunities were provided for Fred to *spread the word* far and wide in Northland and to meet as many individuals, groups, organisations as possible during his week in Northland.

Those who attended Fred's presentations were highly impressed, and it is fair to say his presentations have helped shape the planning activity that has occurred since. Action being taken following Fred's visit include -

- Riparian planting has been conducted on sections of the Otiria River margins and young people from Moerewa have been actively engaged in this work.
- A Group of like minded individuals has combined to develop a Community Development and Integrated Catchment Management Plan for the Whangaroa area [Whangaroa Harbour]. While the role of this Group is mainly focused around completing the Plan, a potential early project has emerged (from this planning group) that can be directly attributed to Fred's influence. The planning group is currently in discussion with a local landowner who owns a gully adjacent to SH10 near Kaeo. The Group is planning to restore this previously drained gully, to its former status as a natural wetland. The Group acknowledges that Fred's inspirational work in the Whangaroa Harbour Catchment, is the catalyst of the proposed wetlands project.
- David Clarkson, who coordinated a meeting in the Bay of Islands, said Fred's presentation was very valuable, and directly responsible for the active formation

of the BayCare Working Group (a sub-group of The Bay of Islands Maritime Park Inc), which intended dealing with marine sedimentation and methods of reducing it.

- In Taipa, two activities have developed in the area since Fred's visit -
 1. The Integrated Catchment Management programme now being run by the Far North Environment Centre and the Doubtless Bay Marine Protection Group. Finance has been obtained by this group from the Min for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund for a 3 year programme to restore the Doubtless Bay catchment area. The funding will be used to establish a community led Catchment Management Plan, to support engagement with landowners who own strategic riparian areas, and to initiate the establishment of a nursery to produce plants for riparian plantings.
 2. The environmental planning of the Taipa Community Planning group which has a broad kaupapa, but is also working on issues of water quality in the area with NRC and FNDC. The environmental focus of this group includes riparian planting activity to reduce nutrient and sediment loadings in streams entering Doubtless Bay.
- The Hokianga Harbour Care Group, have also taken on Fred's message and are active in riparian planting (they incidentally had an earlier visit from Fred a few years ago so were already educated converts), and Fonterra has also been active in the area encouraging swale plantings to filter dairy runoff.

Attempts are being made to purchase 3 hectares of land adjacent to the existing sewerage ponds and this would be planted in cabbage trees, nikau, and flax with the latter being a source of fibre for local weaving projects.

FNDC is currently investigating a bio-remediation system that will significantly reduce the problem of nutrient loading at the Rawene plant.

It is success stories such as these that reinforce the value of the Board engaging and advocating *best practice* to assist communities to achieve significant conservation gains throughout the region. These gains are a legacy of what can be achieved when like minded people, armed with the best possible knowledge and experience, come together to achieve mutually achievable goals.

Biosecurity

- **Genetic Engineering/Modification**

The issue of genetic engineering/modification has long been at the top of the Board's "hit list". The presence of representatives from GEFREE Northland at Board meetings indicated that the community supported the strong advocacy approach with regard to this issue.

The Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Northland Regional Council attended the Board meeting in the Bay of Islands in February 2010 and provided those present with a fulsome presentation on the Council's policy on genetic engineering/modification and confirmed its "precautionary approach" and the emphasis of the need for central government to be accountable for the adverse outcomes of genetic engineering/modification projects.

The Board was appreciative of the move by Council to discuss this issue with the Board at a public meeting and endorsed Council's approach. However, the Board also reinforced its position with Council that any policy must be robust and measurable and should be recorded in all Council Plans and other documents in order to ensure for the future that the implications from genetic engineering/modification projects must be acknowledged and any such applications rigorously reviewed and stringent enforceable regulations attached before any applications are approved within the Northland Region.

Historic Heritage

Kororipo-Kerikeri Basin

- The removal of the vehicle bridge across the Kerikeri River beside the historic Kororipo-Kerikeri Basin precinct in the Bay of Islands was a milestone that the Board supported and applauded. An aesthetically pleasing pedestrian over-bridge situated slightly north of the old vehicle bridge now spans the River and is already creating favourable feedback from users and locals in the community.



Kereikeri Basin Footbridge: Photo Terry Conaghan

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

Fish and Game Council Northland

- Ian Faulkner continued to represent the Board at regular meetings of the Fish and Game Council, Northland. The Board appreciates the opportunity for this ongoing liaison and is pleased to support the conservation projects undertaken by the Council e.g. the Wairua Wetland project at Hikurangi in Whangarei.
- It was also pleasing to note the presence of Rudi Hoetjes, Manager, Fish and Game Council Northland at Board meetings. The Board looks forward to enhancing this ongoing liaison in 2010/11 with possible site visits to Fish and Game Wetland sites and other locations of mutual interest to both organisations.

General Liaison

Liaison with individuals, groups, agencies is a high priority for the Board. It is pleasing to report the continued attendance at Board meeting by representatives from a wide range of interest groups. By holding Board Members at different locations throughout the Conservancy, opportunities are available for a wide range of representation to attend meetings and be heard. The Board welcomes these opportunities and never ceases to be amazed and humbled by the commitment, passion, enthusiasm, dedication and selflessness of these individuals.

The Board acknowledges the significant contribution to conservation that is made – all on a voluntary basis – by these individuals and groups and offers its support in any way possible to assist and add value to projects being undertaken.

▪ **Department of Conservation**

The commitment, passion, dedication and enthusiasm of the public is only matched by that of Department of Conservation staff throughout Northland.

The Board continues to be impressed by the work that the Department is undertaking in Northland, given the continued reduction in resources and the need to get *more bangs for our bucks* [the bucks becoming less and less each year].

The genuine care and concern of staff to do the best they can with the resources available is commendable. During the course of site inspections and meeting with staff when Board meetings are held in the various Area Offices, Board Members are able to get alongside individual staff at all levels. The dedication and commitment of staff is unquestionable and the Board recognises how fortunate the Department as a whole is in recruiting and maintaining staff of this calibre. The constant changes within the Department do affect all staff and it is under this constant “change” umbrella staff continue to produce quality results.

The leadership of Chris Jenkins, Conservator Northland, has a major bearing on the conservation achievements within the region. His commitment and personal

contribution to achieving positive outcomes is significant, particularly in the area of relationship building between key agencies and Iwi. The success of major initiatives could easily have been scuttled without the sensitive and intuitive handling by the Conservator. The Board acknowledges the positive achievements Chris Jenkins and his Team have, and continue to make, in the region, as well as the good relationship between the Department and the Board.

Public Forum

The Public Forum segment within each Board Meeting Agenda, continues to be a highlight at meetings. The diverse discussions that are held at this time have proved to be enlightening and, at times, entertaining. Again, the passion, commitment and enthusiasm of individuals [whether they be representing their own interests or those of a group etc] is outstanding. Wherever possible the Board has picked up on the issues raised and supported the work that was being done.

The Board acknowledges the valuable contribution these individuals make and will continue to honour this commitment and provide whatever support and assistance it can. It also appreciates the opportunity to hear issues of major concern and conflict and wherever possible has offered its support to assist in achieving resolutions and positive outcomes.

Local Authority Attendance

Councillor Craig Brown, Northland Regional Council

- The presence of local authority representatives at meetings is welcomed by the Board. Of note is the regular attendance by Councillor Craig Brown, Northland Regional Council, who gives of his valuable time to attend all Board Meetings no matter where they are held [missing only one in the 2009/10 year through illness]. Councillor Brown's contribution has been significant and has provided the Board with much needed wise counsel on local authority issues. His sage advice, tempered with a modicum of "wit" has lifted many a meeting and the Board expresses its appreciation to Councillor Brown for giving so generously of his time and advice.

Richard Alspach, Deputy Mayor, Kaipara District Council

- Richard is a previous member of the Northland Conservation Board and has not missed attending a meeting of the Board when it is held within his region. It is always good to continue relationships with previous Board Members and more so that this level, which provides the Board with an insight into local authority politics from a person who is well aware of the Board's mandate and where it and local authority politics can work effectively to achieve positive outcomes.

As with Councillor Craig Brown, the Board acknowledges the time given by these local authority representatives to attend Board meetings – this is appreciated and welcomed. Long may this liaison continue.

Rongo Bentson, Te Runanga o Te Rarawa

- Rongo Bentson has continued his long association with the Board representing Te Runanga o Te Rarawa in the Far North. This ongoing, regular interaction is of immense value to the Board, particularly in view of the imminent Treaty Claim Settlements in the area of significance to Te Rarawa. The Board acknowledges the importance of this relationship that Rongo has continued to forge with successive Boards. This continuity is greatly appreciated and will serve the Board well during the course of the implementation of the outcomes from Treaty Settlements. Board Members change but, fortunately, the Rongo Bentson's of the region will continue to provide this much needed continuity and relationship building role.

CONSERVATION LAND USE

CONCESSIONS

- There were no major concessions presented for the Board to comment on in the 2009/10 year. The Board is aware that the Department has undertaken a major review of the concession process and looks forward to a presentation on this at the 2010 Induction Day.

SUBMISSIONS

The Board made submissions on the following documents in 2009/10

- Northland Regional Council Pest Management Strategy Review
- Northland Regional Council Proposed Marine Pest Management Strategy for Northland
- Establishment of the New Zealand Game Animal Council
- Northland Regional Council Annual Plan
- Crown Minerals Act Schedule 4 Stocktake
- Increased opportunities for mining on the Conservation estate.
- Local Government Options for Northland
- Regional Policy Statement for Northland

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.

Promotion

- **Loder Cup**

The Board was disappointed that its re-nomination of Mr Guy Bowden of Tawapou Coastal Natives Nursery at Tutukaka was not successful. The Board will continue to seek potential nominees from the Northland Region for consideration for future Loder Cup opportunities.

- **Northland Conservancy Weedbusters Awards**

Board Member Judi Gilbert [Judge Judi!] officiated as a Judge of the Northland Conservancy 2010 Weedbusters Awards.

- **Northland Conservancy Conservation Awards**

In 2011 the Board is looking to promote a **Board Supreme Award** from successful nominees at the 2011 Northland Conservancy Conservation Awards.

- **Environmental Defence Society 2010 Conference, Auckland**

Board Member Ken Ross represented the Board at the 2010 Environmental Defence Society Conference in Auckland. The Board sees this representation as valuable – not only for the quality of the Keynote Speakers, but for the opportunity to network and interact with a wide range of conservation and environment minded people at all levels.

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* :-

Helene Leaf

- We have had a great and productive year covering many important issues e.g. waterways and harbour pollution, marine sustainability collaboration, genetic engineering/modification, beginning of work on the Kauri National Park for Northland and the responses to the many crucial local issues that were presented to the Board].
- The Board has worked productively and respectfully together on many fronts.
- The positive relationship with staff of the Department of Conservation is a particular high for me. The exceptional workload they all carry, especially our Board Support Officer, Jeannie Hogarth.



Ken Ross

- “I guess for me the last year has had several ‘stand-out’ issues/situations.

“Firstly, we seem to have had a very high legislative/compliance workload. While we were poised to start a massive amount of work on our own Conservation Management Strategy document, it seemed that every other agency in the country with a smidgen of interest or a role in conservation needed to have its strategy document critiqued or activities challenged, from Heli-hunting and pest control to Regional Strategies and Schedule 4 land mining, to Resource Consents for sewerage disposal.



“A second issue [and one that is very close to my own heart] is the “big picture stuff”. The last couple of years have provided the opportunity [in our Board at least] to consider broader issues and examine the context of “conservation”. While I am as keen as the next person to save Kauri from PTA or Kokako from rats, I believe that is mainly the role of the Department of Conservation staff, while an important role of a Conservation Board is to create a climate in which that is possible.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to work with communities with my ‘Board’ hat on; to play a role in bringing Fred Lichtwark to the North to stimulate better management of land and water, to participate in the marine conservation work driven

by Vince Kerr of the Department and David Clarkson of the Bay of Islands Maritime Park and to help raise awareness of sustainability and conservation issues in communities.

“Finally, a third and more serious issue. I have been involved in environmental work for approximately 45 years. New Zealanders on the whole have come a long way in that time in terms of their environmental understanding, attitudes and actions. The Department of Conservation has played a major role in this shift and is now actively engaging communities in local conservation work. This change in DOC’s approach is to the advantage of the community, the environment, DOC’s limited purse and the nation.

“My concern, however, is how ‘deep’ this public attitudinal shift runs. There is ample evidence to suggest that the next 50 years will be very unlike the last 50 in which our country enjoyed a reasonable level of economic prosperity and most people were gainfully employed. It was a time when people had “spare time” and “spare dollars”. Conservation can flourish in such a benign environment. My concern is that our general public’s conservation ‘ethic’ is not an ethic at all but a veneer. Vernacular societies had strong environmental ethics reinforced by tapu.

I shudder to think how our fauna will fare when we are hungry. I guess the only way through this is to do a lot more of what DOC is already doing and that is engaging communities in their local conservation issues and work, because we have to go beyond conservation work being something ‘nice’ that you think about and do occasionally, to something ‘deep’ and ‘ingrained’ that you do naturally all the time. Then we might get through.”

Judi Gilbert

Highs

- The conservation knowledge gathered from meetings and reading copious amounts of papers.
- Learning of the harmonious relationship and understanding between DOC & many Iwi and Hapu.
- Experiencing the commitment and professionalism of DOC staff with their assistance and presentations to the Board, particularly that of the Board’s Support Officer.



Lows

- Being aware of the constraints put on DOC due to severe cost cutting measures and having Board meetings reduced to four per annum.
- Wondering if the existence of the Board makes any difference to conservation.
- The disappointment that there is limited input from Board members between the infrequent meetings.
- The despair when I read DOC’s new direction or vision, “*New Zealand is the greatest living space on Earth*” and wondering how to sell this core conservation message.

Conclusion

While it is fair to say that 2009/10 was not a “spectacular” one for the Board, nonetheless the commitment, hard work, dedication and enthusiasm of Board Members did not wane. The effort that went into developing submissions on a wide variety of topics was commendable.

It is sad to farewell long term Board Members whose contribution has been so significant and just when they were really making a difference. However, the new Members who come on Board each year seem to take very little time to assimilate into their roles. It is really important for the future for Boards to be able to pick up on the excellent work of all Board Members so that when their term is over the transition is seamless and the significant contribution each has made is built on by successive Boards.

The Northland Conservation Board can take pride its in achievements in 2009/10 and the way in which it is laying down the foundations for successive Boards to build on to ensure that the conservation and ecological values of Northland are provided with the highest level of protection possible.



Kevin Evans
BOARD CHAIRPERSON

“The Garden”

By Gloria Rawlinson¹

*In Maoriland, in Maoriland, the little breezes pass
Through the English clover, buttercups and cocksfoot grass
In every little garden the English flowers grow,
You will find them nodding gaily down any road you go.
The lavender, the lilac, snap-dragon, mignonette
The honeysuckle, tea-rose, daffodil and violet.
The very names are fragrant with an English garden scent;
Here a breath of Devon, there a little bit of Kent,
And we know, who tend the gardens planted by an English hand,
That their roots are deep in England, in dear old Mother England,
Their roots are deep in England, tho' they bloom in Maoriland.*

*In Maoriland, in Maoriland, the native blossoms swing,
Little piki-arero, my lady of the spring,
Hinau, koromiko, and a gleam of kowhai gold,
Bush trees studded scarlet by the rata's clinging hold,
And the red pohutukawa that bends down to kiss the sea
Oh you'll always feel them tugging at the hearts of you and me!
And when, in summer gardens, one may say in sweet content,
“My people came from Devon,” and another “Mine from Kent,”
The native trees will whisper low, as tho' they understand,
“Ah! Your roots are deep in England, in your dear old Mother England –
Your roots are deep in England, but your heart's in Maoriland!*

¹ Poem from a book of poems by Gloria Rawlinson entitled “The Perfume Vendor” published in 1936.