

Southland Conservation Board Te Roopu Atawhai o Murihiku



Annual Report

To the New Zealand Conservation Authority

1 July 2012 - 30 June 2013

Southland Conservation Board

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1 July 2012 - 30 June 2013

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

Serviced by the Department of Conservation
Southland Conservancy
PO Box 743
33 Don Street
Invercargill 9840

FRONT COVER:

Southland Conservation Board members on Stewart Island, October 2012

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1 Chairperson's Report

The past year has been very busy for the Southland Conservation Board. Members have put in a lot of hard work on the draft conservation management strategy for Southland and the Subantarctic Islands. The Board had been put under considerable pressure to review the CMS within a very short time frame. The release of the plan for public consultation was subsequently delayed due to the restructuring of the Department of Conservation. Whilst a little frustrating, the delay enabled the Department to improve the quality of the document before releasing it for community feedback.

The last year has also been a year of uncertainty. Uncertainty for staff involved in the organisational restructuring of the Department of Conservation. Uncertainty for the Southland community regarding the decisions on the tunnel and monorail concession applications, as well as the future direction of the Department of Conservation. Uncertainty for some Board members, and prospective new members, around Board appointments. And towards the end of the year, uncertainty for the Board over its future and that of Conservation Boards in general.

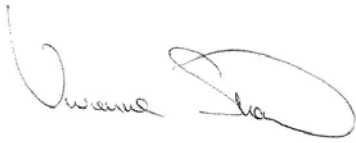
The Board has received updates on the Department's re-organisation throughout the course of the year. We are disappointed that Boards were not consulted at all during the process as the Department seeks to re-orient itself to a more outwardly focussed organisation.

The Auditor General's report on the Department recognised that DOC's greatest strengths are its people. The Board has been impressed with the commitment shown by staff to conservation in Southland under very difficult circumstances. We are saddened that many good people have left the Southland region. However, our loss is another region's gain. We wish all staff members who have moved to other parts of New Zealand, or who have left the Department, well in their new roles. We look forward to developing and maintain good relationships with the staff remaining in Southland as well as with the new people once they take up their positions.

How the new structure will pan out only time will tell, but the Board is committed, in whatever form it exists, to working for the benefit of conservation in Southland.

I would like to thank all Board members for their commitment to conservation in Southland in what has, at times, been quite a challenging year. Members of the Board continue to work hard for conservation, not only through attendance at Board meetings, but also through their work on subcommittees and in many cases by being involved on other community-based, conservation-related organisations.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the staff within the Department of Conservation with whom we have worked over the past year. Special thanks go to Yvonne Service, our Board Support Officer, for her commitment to the Board over the last year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Viv Shaw". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Viv Shaw
Chair
Southland Conservation Board

2 Introduction

The Southland Conservation Board is one of the thirteen statutory bodies appointed by the Minister of Conservation under Section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987.

The functions and powers of the Board as outlined in Sections 6M and 6N of the Act are as follows:

- To review, amend and recommend the approval of Conservation Management Strategies
- To review and approve Conservation Management Plans
- To provide advice on the implementation of Conservation Management Strategies and Plans
- To advise on proposed changes to the status of land areas of national or international significance
- To advise on proposals for new walkways
- To liaise with Fish and Game Councils on conservation matters
- To carry out other powers and functions as delegated to the Board by the Minister of Conservation under the Conservation Act or any other Act
- To advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process and to be heard on matters relating to the Board's functions.

Under the National Parks Act 1996, the Board also has a number of functions as follows:

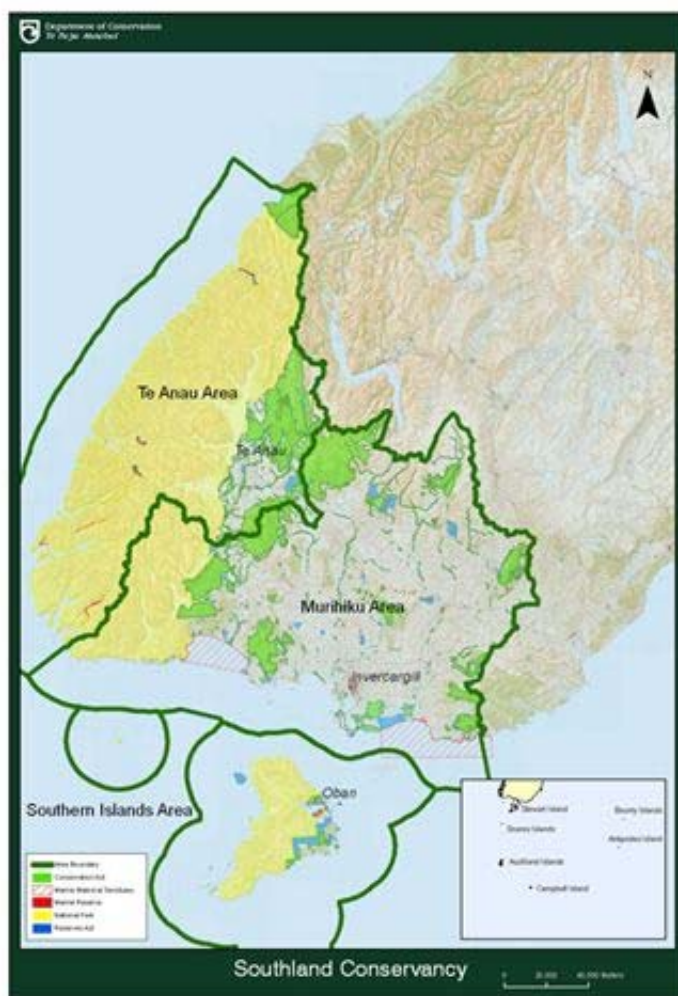
- To review, amend and recommend National Park Management Plans
- To consider and determine priorities for the implementation of Management Plans for national parks
- To make recommendations to the Minister for the appointment of honorary rangers
- To review and report on the effective administration of the general policies for national parks
- To give advice on the interpretation of any National Park Management Plan, on the addition of land to a national park or the establishment of a new national park
- To give advice on any other matter relating to any national park within the Board's jurisdiction.

These functions and powers, where exercised, are noted within this annual report. The report covers the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.

3 The Board's Area

The Southland Conservation Board has the largest area of jurisdiction of all Conservation Boards in New Zealand. Over half of the land within the province of Southland is managed on behalf of all New Zealanders by the Department of Conservation. The Southland Conservancy is vast, encompassing a total of 1.9 million hectares of land that is administered by the Department and 574,286 hectares of marine reserve (of which the Auckland Islands Marine Reserve makes up 562,812 hectares).

Two significant areas of land within the Board's jurisdiction have World Heritage status – the Subantarctic Islands and Fiordland National Park. Another area is an internationally recognised Ramsar wetlands site – Awarua Wetlands.



World Heritage Areas

Isolated, windswept, beautiful and fragile, New Zealand's Subantarctic islands are unique and irreplaceable. Described by the United Nations Environment Program as "the most diverse and extensive of all Subantarctic archipelagos", all

five island groups: the Bounty Islands, the Antipodes Islands, the Snares Islands, the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island were honoured with World Heritage status in 1998. They are also National Nature Reserves under New Zealand's Reserves Act 1977. New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands are located in the Southern Ocean south to south-east of New Zealand. Spanning six degrees of latitude, from 47 to 52 degrees south, the five island groups occupy the stormy latitudes of the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties, known also as the Albatross Latitudes. The islands contain a high degree of endemism and are home to a number of rare species of birds, plants, marine mammals and invertebrates. The New Zealand Subantarctic region supports the most diverse community of breeding seabirds in the southern ocean. Their isolation presents a number of challenges, and a separate Conservation Management Strategy outlines the way in which the islands should be managed.

The Fiordland National Park, established in 1952, is the largest national park in New Zealand (1,260,200 hectares). At the heart of Te Wāhipounamu/South West New Zealand World Heritage Area, Fiordland National Park includes some of New Zealand's most recognised and special places including Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. It has high cultural, historical and biodiversity significance and offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, from scenic viewing points to intense wilderness experiences. The Fiordland National Park Management Plan sets out how the Park should be managed.

Ramsar Sites

Southland was the first place in New Zealand to have a wetland officially recognised under the Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance) when 3500 ha of the Waituna Wetland Scientific Reserve was registered in 1976. A further 15,400 ha was added in 2008 which included the three major estuaries; Toi Toi, Awarua Bay and the New River. These three estuaries are a unique feature of Southland and are still relatively unspoiled compared to similar waterways in other parts of the country. Alarmingly, Waituna has now gained further national attention as being at risk of 'flipping' (becoming irreversibly anoxic) and this is a cause of great consternation to the Board.

National Parks

There are two National Parks within the Board's jurisdiction – Fiordland National Park and Rakiura National Park. Opened in 2002, Rakiura is New Zealand's newest National Park. It encompasses 139,000 hectares of land, and comprises 85% of New Zealand's third main island – Stewart Island/Rakiura. The Park extends from the northwest of the island to South Cape, and includes many offshore islands in Port Pegasus/Pikihati and Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera. The first Rakiura National Park Management Plan has now been approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority.

Other Conservation Land in Southland

In addition to the National Parks, World Heritage Areas and Ramsar wetlands, the Board's area of jurisdiction includes large forested, mountainous areas on the mainland such as the Takitimu, Eyre, and Blue Mountains; diverse coastlines, important estuaries and wetlands areas such as Curio Bay. On Stewart Island/Rakiura, the Board's area of jurisdiction covers conservation lands outside

of the Rakiura National Park. This includes Codfish Island/Whenua Hou, home to the critically endangered Kākapo, which is managed as a Nature Reserve and for which the Board provides management advice through membership of the Whenua Hou Committee.

The Southland Conservation Board has a responsibility to the people of Southland and the wider New Zealand population to ensure that conservation lands within its jurisdiction and the biodiversity they contain are protected and enhanced.

4 Board Membership

The following table lists the membership of the Southland Conservation Board between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013 and their term of office.

Name	Area	Date first appointed	Term ends/ended	Years served
Fiona Black	Te Anau	23/12/2010	30/06/2014	2½ years
Stewart Bull*	Riverton/Aparima	04/06/2009	30/06/2013	4
Paul Duffy	Seaward Downs	01/09/2007	30/06/2013	6
Robin McNeill	Invercargill	01/09/2003	30/06/2013	10
Helen McPhail	Gore	31/08/2008	30/06/2014	5
Karyn Owen	Invercargill	19/09/2011	30/06/2014	1 yr 9mths
Peter Ridsdale	Invercargill	23/12/2010	30/06/2014	2½ years
Viv Shaw (Chair)	Te Anau	01/09/2007	30/06/2013	6
Gail Thompson*	Bluff/ Awarua	16/10/2006	30/06/2015	6
John Whitehead	Te Anau	23/12/2010	30/06/2013	2½ years
Rudi Verplancke	Seaward Downs	23/12/2010	Resigned 2012	1 yr 9mths

(*Ngai Tahu Representative)

5 Board Meetings and Field Trips

During the 2012/13 financial year the Board held five formal full day meetings. For each formal meeting Board members receive \$140 per day, and the Chair receives \$190 per day. Individual Board members' participation in Board meetings and field trips is noted in Appendix 1.

5.1 BOARD MEETINGS

Meeting dates and locations

Date	Location
9 August 2012	Te Anau
12 October 2012	Stewart Island
13 December 2012	Invercargill
14 February 2013	Invercargill
11 April 2013	Invercargill
21 June 2013	Postponed due to bad weather

5.2 FIELD TRIPS

During the past year the Board undertook one field trip. A second field trip planned for June had to be postponed due to bad weather. Field trips provide the Board with the opportunity for members to become familiar with conservation issues and to discuss management and implementation issues with Department staff and members of the local community.

STEWART ISLAND/RAKIURA FIELD TRIP (11 October 2012)

The Board's October meeting was held on Stewart Island/Rakiura with the aim of receiving an annual report on the implementation of the CMS and National Park Management Plan. The meeting was preceded by a field trip to the Rakiura Track. Board members were taken from Half Moon bay to Port William on board the DOC boat Hananui. The Great Walks Hut at Port William was visited and the interpretation panels viewed. Board members walked a re-aligned section of the Rakiura Track to view a set of haulers that have been restored by the Department, before walking back to Lee Bay. Department staff discussed the future plans for the Rakiura Track with Board members both in terms of the heritage values along the track and the opportunities for pest control and re-introduction of native bird species. There was a strong focus on the Department's new partnership with Air New Zealand.

In the evening a public meeting was held at the DOC visitor centre outlining the achievements on the island over the past year since the adoption of the Stewart Island Rakiura CMS. Appendix 4 contains the Department's annual report on the Stewart Island/Rakiura CMS.

SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS FIELD TRIP

In February 2013, four Board members joined Operation Endurance (Phase II) to the Antipodes and Bounty Islands. Viv Shaw, John Whitehead, Fiona Black and Gail Thompson spent four days as guest of the Royal Navy on board the offshore patrol vessel HMNZS Otago. They visited the Antipodes Islands to collect two researchers, build a section of boardwalk and to consider issues relating to the planned eradication of mice from the main island. Two separate half day trips were made to Antipodes Island before a complete circumnavigation of the island group was made aboard HMNZS Otago. The ship

then sailed to the Bounty Islands where Fiona helped with a census count of Bounty Island shags. The islands are small groups of rocky outcrops so no landings were possible.

Board members had the opportunity to discuss the conservation issues facing the Antipodes and Bounty Island with Departmental scientists and rangers. The field trip helped inform the Board's submission on the Subantarctic Islands Marine Reserves Bill.

With the review of the Subantarctic Islands CMS underway, Board members now have a better understanding of the key issues facing these remote island groups. The Board would like to thank the Department and the Royal New Zealand Navy for this opportunity.

6 Community Involvement in Board Meetings

Throughout 2012/13, the Board welcomed presentations at its meetings and field trips from a number of different organisations and individuals.

The Board heard formal presentations from Te Anau Cycling Inc. on mountain biking in Fiordland and from Ngai Tahu Tourism and Ultimate Hikes on their proposed concession for Kepler guided walks.

Daphne Taylor from Save Fiordland, Malcolm McKenzie and Roger McNaughton (both former members of the Southland Conservation Board) expressed their concerns during a public forum at the Te Anau meeting about the Department's consideration of the concession applications for a tunnel and monorail.

Members of the public also attended Board meetings in Te Anau and Stewart Island. In addition, Board members bring concerns to the meetings that have been raised with them by the community.

The Board's agenda and minutes (once confirmed) are sent to groups and individuals on request, and are posted on the Department of Conservation's website:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/nz-conservation-authority-and-boards/conservation-boards-by-region/southland/>

Currently eight people or groups receive the Board's confirmed minutes.

7 Southland Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

Throughout 2012/13, the whole Board has been actively involved in the drafting of the new Southland Murihiku CMS incorporating the Subantarctic Islands. The whole Board has been involved in providing feedback on this important document with John Whitehead coordinating the Board's feedback.

The Board was placed under considerable pressure to provide feedback to the Department within tight timeframes. The public notification of the plan was, subsequently delayed due to the organisational restructuring of the Department. This was frustrating for those Board members who had worked in good faith with the Department's planner. However, the delay enabled improvements to be made to the plan before it went out for consultation. The plan was notified, along with the draft Otago and Canterbury CMSs on 26 June 2013 with a closing date for submissions of 13 September 2013.

The Board has worked constructively with shared services on the CMS and we have had a good working relationship with Katherine Hughes the planner allocated to the Southland Murihiku CMS.

The Department does not, however, require the Board's approval for the CMS to go out for public consultation. The Board identified the following areas of concern in the CMS where there is a difference of opinion between the Board and DOC:

- the Board is not comfortable with the three year SOI informing the ten year CMS.
- the Board supports KR/TRONT's request to include "the nation's greatest asset is its environmental capital" in the vision for Southland Murihiku (Part 1, p10)
- the Board would like to see a stronger focus on young people, families and education throughout the CMS
- the Board does not think that DMF priorities are covered off in the CMS to the same extent at the NHMS priorities - given the Office of the Auditor General's report, the public needs to understand better how DOC is determining its priorities
- the Board wants to see a full list of assets in the CMS appendix and not just a list of Icon and Gateway sites
- the Board is not happy that it has been told that it cannot change template text
- the Board is still concerned at the level of consistency between the CMS and the Conservation Act e.g. the Act allows tourism whereas the CMS encourages business activities

8 Implementation Issues

One of the Board's key roles, as set out in the Conservation Act, is overseeing the implementation of national park management plans and CMSs. Over the past year the Board has provided advice to the Department on implementation issues for both the Fiordland National Park Management Plan, the Mainland Southland West Otago CMS and the Stewart Island/Rakiura CMS and Rakiura National Park Management Plan. The Board has been extremely concerned that, on a number of occasions, the Department has not heeded its advice.

Fiordland National Park Management Plan

Over the last few years the Department and the community have come to the Board with a number of issues relating to implementation of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan (FNPMP). This year the Board has considered a number of matters relating to applications for concessions which are inconsistent with the FNPMP. These include a sporting event on the Hump Ridge Track, which the applicant withdrew following advice from the Board. A concession from Routeburn Guided Walks to increase the numbers on and scope of their operations was approved by the Department, contrary to the Board's advice.

Milford Dart Tunnel

The Board provided advice to the Department on a concession application for the Milford Dart tunnel during the 2011/12 year. The advice noted that aspects of the application were inconsistent with the FNPMP. The Board was of the view that the Department had not heeded its advice so took the unusual decision to write a submission opposing the application. The Board spoke to its submission at the hearings in 2012 and continues to take an active interest in the outcome of the application. At the end of the 2012/13 year, a decision had still not been made on this concession application.

South West Cameron Remote Area - Gazettal of Wilderness Area

At its October meeting, the Board asked the Department to proceed with consultation on the appropriateness of the South West Cameron Wilderness Area after the public consultation process for the Southland CMS. The Board agreed that the process for the Southern Wilderness Area on Stewart Island/Rakiura should be undertaken simultaneously.

Mountain Biking in Fiordland National Park (FNP)

The Board has continued to give consideration to a request from the Te Anau community to allow mountain biking in FNP. Te Anau Cycling Inc presented its case to allow mountain biking on some tracks in the Park to the Board at its August meeting. The Department, with the Board's support, decided to raise the issue in the draft Southland Murihiku CMS. The draft seeks feedback on a number of potential mountain biking opportunities in Fiordland. If there is a high level of interest from the community to allow mountain biking in the national park, a plan change process may be instigated.

Removal of Gut Hut on Secretary Island

The Board has previously advised the Department that the removal of the Gut Hut would be inconsistent with the FNPMP. New information provided by the Department suggests that the hut is in a poor state of repair and that the cost of renovation would be very high. After careful consideration the Board agreed with the Department's request to remove the hut. There is, however, strong community interest in restoring the hut.

60th anniversary of Fiordland National Park

2012 marked the 60th anniversary of the Fiordland National Park. To the disappointment of the Board, there was no significant celebration of this milestone.

MAINLAND SOUTHLAND/WEST OTAGO CMS

Fiordland Link Experience

Advice was provided by the Board in 2012 to the Department on a concession application for a monorail (Fiordland Link Experience) through the Snowden Forest conservation area. The Board raised concerns about the proposed activity's consistency with the CMS and the significant nature of the effects of the activity on other users and biodiversity in the area. The Board was of the view that the Department had not heeded its advice so again made the decision to write a submission opposing the application. The Board continues to take an active interest in the outcome of the application. At the end of the 2012/13, year a decision had still not been made on this concession application.

Ramsar Status for Te Anau Basin Wetlands

The Board supports the Department as it looks to put together an application for international recognition for these important wetland systems.

Stewart Island/Rakiura CMS and Rakiura National Park Management Plan

The Board received an annual report on the Stewart Island/Rakiura CMS and Rakiura National Park Management Plan during its visit to the island in October 2012. A copy of the report can be found in Appendix 4. Members of the local community were invited to attend the presentation.

Southern Wilderness Area

The Board asked the Department to proceed with consultation on the appropriateness of the Southern Wilderness Area on Stewart Island/Rakiura to coincide with consultation on the South West Cameron Wilderness Area in Fiordland National Park.

Conservation Advocacy

Under Section 6N of the Conservation Act, the Southland Conservation Board may advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process. During the 2012/13 year the Southland Conservation Board has made the following submissions or attending meetings on resource consent applications:

- Crown Minerals Bill
- Subantarctic Islands Marine Reserve Bill
- RMA Amendment Bill
- Proposed Plan Change 3 (Deep Cove Mooring areas and berthing Space) to the Regional Coastal Plan for Southland 2008
- Southland District Plan

In 2011/12 the Board submitted in opposition to a resource consent for the Round the Mountain Cycle Trail that traversed the Eyre Mountains Conservation Area. In late 2012, the commissioner decline the section of the trail through this sensitive section of public conservation land. The Board was pleased with this decision.

Over the past year, the Board has also been represented at the following select committee hearing and meetings:

- Select committee hearing on Game Animal Council bill (Robin McNeill)
- Select committee hearing on Crown Minerals Bill (Robin McNeill)

- Select committee hearing on Subantarctic Marine Reserves Bill (Viv Shaw)
- Routeburn Guided Walks hearings (Helen McPhail)
- Deep Cove Moorings meetings (Viv Shaw and John Whitehead)

8.1 SUBCOMMITTEES

The Board has one main subcommittee to provide advice to the Department on concession and mining access applications. Other ad hoc subcommittees are formed to respond to specific issues. For a full list of subcommittees and their membership see Appendix 2.

CONCESSIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

The Concessions Subcommittee has been very active in providing advice to the Department. A set of triggers exists which the Department uses to determine which concession applications should come to the Board for advice. The Board reviewed these triggers during the 2012/2013 year and no changes were made. During the 2012/13 year, the Board has provided advice on eight applications.

The Chair of the concessions subcommittee, Karyn Owen, prepared a valuable paper on how the Board can work effectively with the Department. It has been circulated to other Board and staff within the Department.

The Board receives a progress report on all outstanding concession applications at each meeting. The processing of concessions has now moved to shared services in Dunedin.

The concession subcommittee also reviews mining access applications. During 2012/13, advice was provided on six mining access applications.

The Board has a good working relationship with Department staff with regard to both concession and mining access applications.

WHENUA HOU COMMITTEE

The Whenua Hou Committee is a subcommittee of the Southland Conservation Board, established under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 as part of a joint approach to manage the island. It consists of one representative from each of the four Murihiku Papatipu Rūnaka and four members of the Southland Conservation Board. In 2012/2013, three meetings were held in October, March and June. The minutes of the Whenua Hou Committee are circulated to all Board members.

9. Liaison

9.1 NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Board received minutes and agendas from NZCA meetings. The Board's new liaison person is Sandra Cook. Unfortunately Sandra has been unable to attend any Board meetings because they always clash with NZCA meeting dates.

9.2 OTHER CONSERVATION BOARDS

Helen McPhail is the Board's liaison representative with Otago and has attended several of their meetings. The Boards share agendas and minutes. Board Support Officers are also in regular contact. Over the course of the year Board Chair, Viv Shaw, has had informal contact with the Chairs of the Otago and Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Boards.

9.3 IWI LIAISON

The Deed of Settlement between the Crown and Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 require a number of decision makers, including Conservation Boards within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā to consult with and to have particular regard to the views of Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu.

Gail Thompson and Stewart Bull are Ngai Tahu's representatives on the Board (appointed on the nomination of Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu as established by Section 6 of Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu Act 1996), and are also members of Kaitiaki Roopu. This group of six iwi representatives from the four rūnaka in Southland was established by the Department of Conservation to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act. The Department consults with this group on a regular basis. The Board has good links with Kaitiaki Roopu, and also maintains good relationships with iwi through the Whenua Hou Committee.

9.4 FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

The Southland Conservation Board continues to liaise with the Southland Fish and Game Council on both a formal and informal basis. The Board has also liaised with Fish and Game over the Around the Mountain resource consent application.

9.5 LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In 2012/13, the Board had contact with the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. Two researchers, Karl Beckert and Carl Walrond attended a Board meeting to outline the PCE's work and its forthcoming investigation into the commercial use of public conservation land. They also met informally with the Board Chair

John Whitehead represents the Board on the Waiau Working Party, keeping members informed on issues relating to eels and river flows. Peter Ridsdale is the Board's representative on the Leslie Hutchins Conservation Foundation.

Members of the Board also have strong links with a number of community groups in Southland and are active participants in a range of conservation activities. For a full list of Board members' conservation activities in the community see Appendix 4.

9.6 MEDIA

Reporters from the Southland Times regularly attended Southland Conservation Board meetings throughout the year and a number of items have appeared in newspapers following the meetings. In addition the Board Chair wrote an opinion piece for the Southland Times on the Board's position regarding the tunnel and monorail concession applications.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendance at Formal Board Meetings and Field Trips

Name	Home Town	Meetings Attended	Field Trips Attended
Viv Shaw	Te Anau	5 out of 5	1 out of 1
Robin McNeill	Invercargill	5 out of 5	1 out of 1
Helen McPhail	Gore	5 out of 5	1 out of 1
Gail Thompson	Bluff	4 out of 5	0 out of 1
Paul Duffy	Seaward Downs	5 out of 5	1 out of 1
Fiona Black	Te Anau	3 out of 5	0 out of 1
Peter Ridsdale	Invercargill	4 out of 5	1 out of 1
Rudi Verplancke	Seaward Downs	Resigned September 2012	
John Whitehead	Te Anau	5 out of 5	1 out of 1
Karyn Owen	Invercargill	4 out of 5	1 out of 1
Stewart Bull	Riverton	4 out of 5	0 out of 1

Appendix 2: Subcommittees of the Southland Conservation Board

Concessions

Karyn Owen (Chair)
Helen McPhail
John Whitehead
Fiona Black
Peter Ridsdale
Rudi Verplancke
Viv Shaw (ex officio)

Whenua Hou Committee

Name:

Tane Davis (Chairman)
Rodney (Hom) Ryan
Cyril Gilroy
Estelle Leask
Fiona Black
Stewart Bull
Helen McPhail
Viv Shaw

Representing:

Te Runanga o Oraka-Aparima
Hokonui Runanga
Waihopai Runaka
Te Runanga o Awarua
Southland Conservation Board
Southland Conservation Board
Southland Conservation Board
Southland Conservation Board

Appendix 3: Board Members' Conservation Activities in the Community

Organisation/Activity	Board Member
Fiordland Conservation Trust	Viv Shaw
Pomona Island Charitable Trust	Viv Shaw John Whitehead
Waiau Working Party (Board rep.)	John Whitehead
Waiau Wildlife & Fisheries habitat Enhancement Trust	John Whitehead
Walking Access Commission Mapping Advisory Group	Robin McNeill
Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand	Robin McNeill
Te Araroa Southland Trust	Robin McNeill
South Catlins Development and Environmental Trust	Paul Duffy
Dog Island Trust	Peter Ridsdale
Leslie Hutchins Conservation Foundation (Board rep.)	Peter Ridsdale
South West Endangered Species Charitable Trust	Stewart Bull
Rakiura Titi Komitee	Stewart Bull
Rakiura Titi Islands Administering Body	Stewart Bull
Fiordland Marine Guardians	Stewart Bull
Fiordland Marine Guardians Management Group	Stewart Bull

Appendix 4: Stewart Island/Rakiura Conservation Management Strategy Milestones

(docDM-1096368)

Milestones – 1 year

- *Report produced detailing the forest health of Stewart Island / Rakiura has been written to increase clarity surrounding the impacts of introduced animals within the Stewart Island / Rakiura CMS area:*

Changes in forest vegetation on Stewart Island over the last 30 years and the influence of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

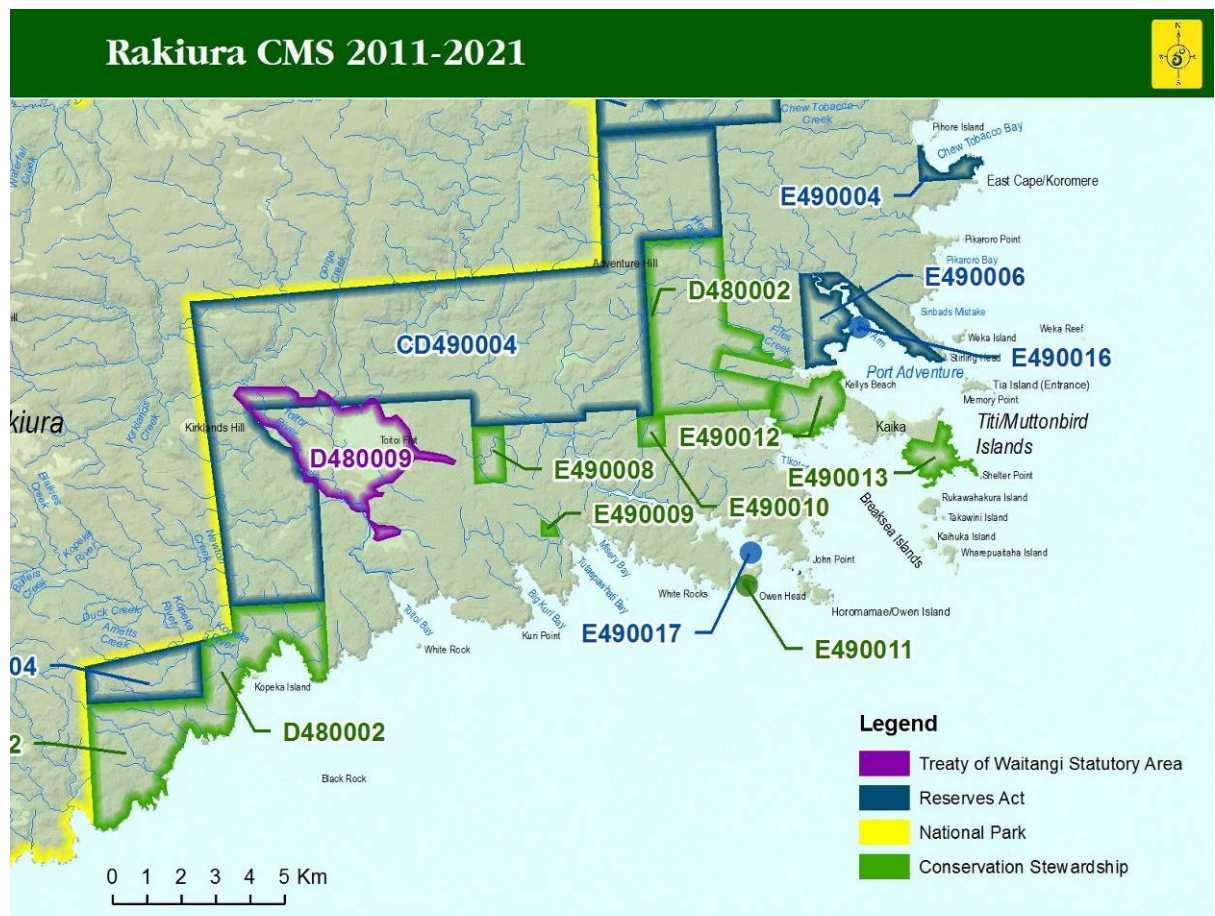
Richard P Duncan, Wendy A Ruscoe and E. Pen Holland
Landcare Research Contract Report: LC0910/103
31 March 2010

This analysis examined the changes since 1979 in the woody vegetation of permanent plots on Stewart Island, where white-tailed deer have been present for over 100 years, and compared this with changes on Bench and Ulva islands, where deer are absent. Forest composition was stable on Bench and Ulva islands over the study period but not so on Stewart Island. In plots in northern Stewart Island and around Port Pegasus tree populations of many species declined, but these declines could not be linked to deer impacts, and successional processes may be important. There was evidence that deer were suppressing seedlings of palatable species, but were not causing significant declines in seedling numbers. In plots around Port Adventure and Chew Tobacco Bay there was evidence that historically high deer densities on these more fertile sites, probably in combination with possums, had shifted tree composition towards less palatable species. Since the plots were established in 1979, however, there has been a marked recovery in the seedling and sapling tiers with all species increasing in abundance, most likely in response to lower deer densities following control in the 1970s and 80s. Exclosure plots in this area showed a significant response of deer-preferred species to deer exclusion. Results suggest that white-tailed deer affect seedling and sapling dynamics in the understorey, but that their impacts vary spatially, most likely due to variation in deer density and the interaction with forest composition, which is influenced by site factors such as fertility. Deer browsing appears to impact tree populations most apparently on higher fertility sites having a greater proportion of deer-preferred hardwood species, where deer densities are also likely to be high.

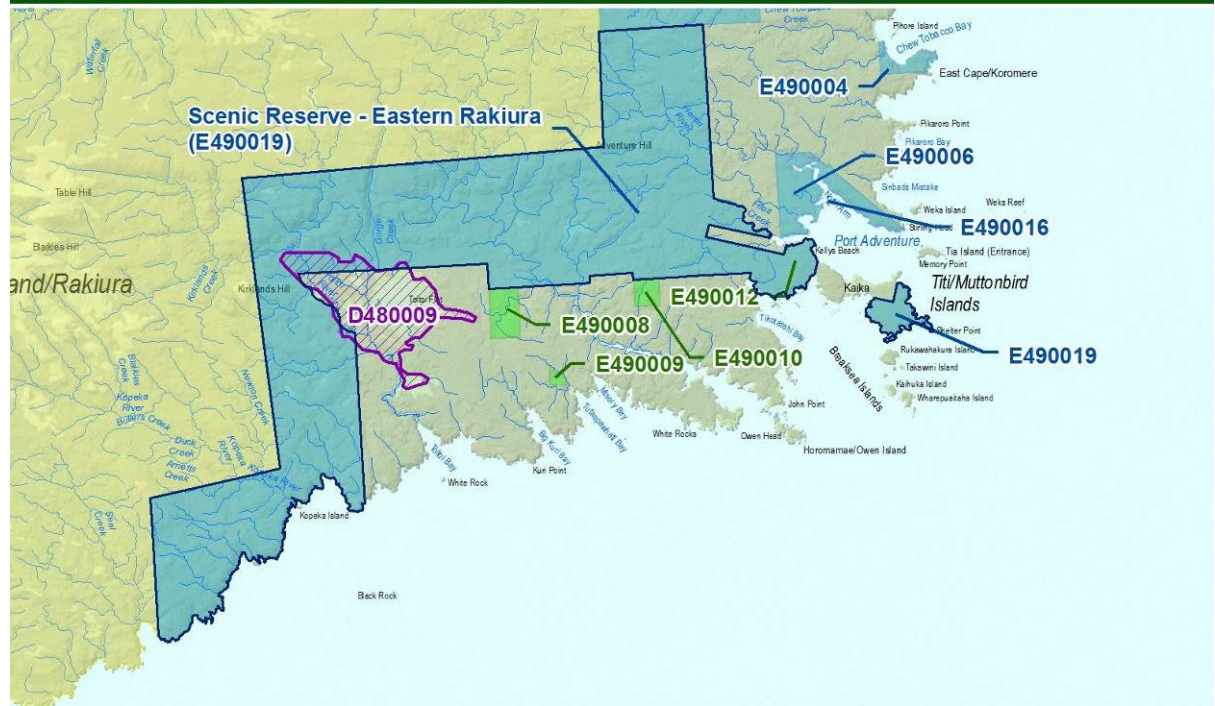
Milestones – 3 years

- *All public conservation land in the Eastern / Tai Rawhiti Place has been gazetted under the most appropriate status and unified where possible:*

This milestone has already been achieved as these before and after maps show:



Rakiura (post gazettal of Eastern reserves)



Path: G:\GIS\Projects\Projects_2012\Stewart_Island_FCI\7215 Rakiura Eastern Gazettal Comparison.mxd

Date Saved: 11/10/2012

Update on implementation of the CMS and the Rakiura National Park Management Plan

Ulva Island Visitor Satisfaction Survey

Executive summary

This report summarises the results of a survey of 383 visitors to Ulva Island carried out in February 2012. The survey was part of an ongoing visitor monitoring program being carried out in Southland Conservancy. In this report the results have been compared to the 2006 Ulva Island survey and to results from other day walks within the region and elsewhere.

The survey found no evidence of any significant effects on the visitor experience from the recent rat incursion and subsequent eradication programme. Respondents were highly satisfied with their experience giving Ulva Island an average overall satisfaction rating of 8.8 out of 10. This compared well with other day visitor sites where this question has been used nationally. Furthermore over 90% of respondents were able to see and hear local birdlife indicating that, from a visitor experience perspective at least, the island's fauna has not been badly affected.

Other aspects of the experience were also rated very highly. Over 90% of respondents indicated that they were able to experience natural peace and quiet and enjoy tracks that suited their level of fitness. Ninety seven percent of respondents felt safe walking the tracks and 96% were able to experience nature and scenery. Only 3% responded negatively to the number of signs and notices on-site.

Satisfaction with most facilities on Ulva Island was high and compared well with other sites however, dissatisfaction with the toilet facilities was comparatively high at 10%. This represents a significant level of dissatisfaction given a further 40% indicated that they were unaware of, or did not use these facilities. There has been no improvement in satisfaction with the toilets from the 2006 survey despite action being taken. It is recommended that further action be taken with regard to the toilets. It is also recommended that future upgrades to facilities on the island consider the needs of older visitors. The survey found that almost half of respondents (47%) were aged over 60 and that the proportion of older respondents had increased substantially since 2006.

Respondents were generally not concerned about the effects of other activities on their experience. Only 6% of respondents were annoyed by meeting commercial / guided groups even though the percentage of visitors who are guided may have increased since 2006. The increased percentage of guided visitors may represent an increase in commercial activity or it may be due to differences in sampling methodology between the two surveys. Visitors to Ulva Island on the whole were also not annoyed or disrupted by boats, planes or helicopters. The level of crowding on Ulva Island (13%) remained very low and has decreased since 2006. It is uncertain whether this is due to the reduction in visitor numbers or due to other factors.

The quality of interpretation provided was identified as an area where the Department could make improvements. Twelve percent of respondents felt that they had not been able to learn about the history of the island. Of more concern given the island's status as an open sanctuary, 9% had not been able to learn about conservation and island restoration and 5% had not been able to learn about the island's plants and animals. These aspects were the lowest scoring in the visitor experience section with means of 5.4, 5.7 and 5.9 out of 7 respectively. They should be considered when the information contained in the self-guide booklet and on signage is next reviewed.

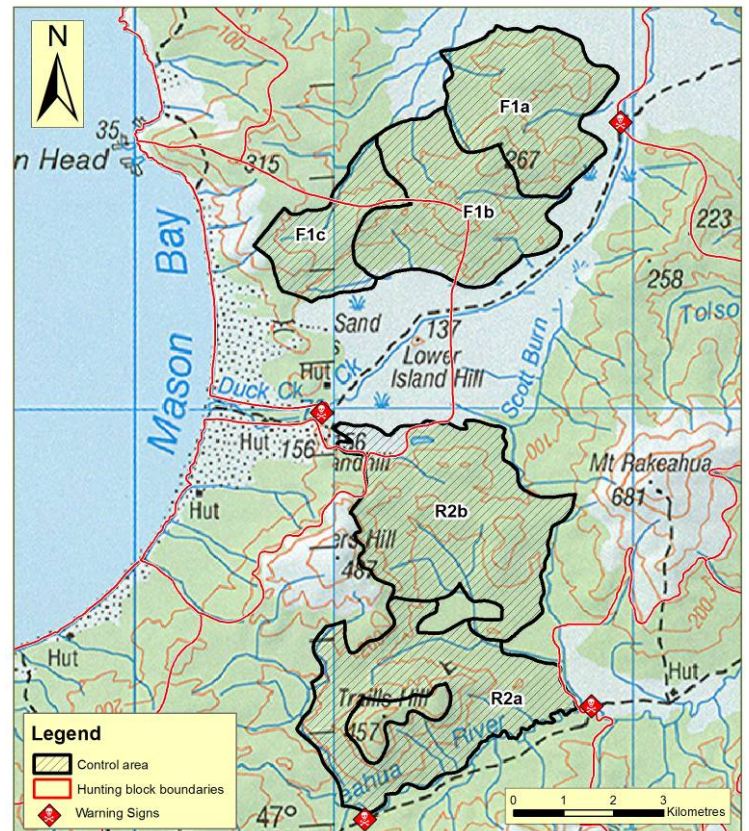
Biosecurity was also identified as an area of concern. It is of crucial importance to the future viability of Ulva Island as a visitor attraction, yet 34% of visitors appeared to have not learnt anything about keeping the Island free of introduced plants and animals. This is a small increase from the 2006 survey. The report recommends that the Department review the way that visitors are informed about their biosecurity obligations, especially in light of recent events.

It is recommended that the survey be repeated in the 2016/17 summer season.

Ulva Island rat eradication - It is now a year on since the Department carried out two bait drops to eradicate rats from Ulva Island, following a reinvasion in 2010. While there continues to be no evidence of rats on the island, another dog check has been scheduled for November. The new biosecurity plan for Ulva is also now in place, with many of the actions (including the installation of a much more extensive trap network on the island) already in place long before the final sign-off of the plan. This plan is to be a living document and will be continuously updated as new information comes to light and new techniques are developed. It will be audited within the next year to check that it is achieving what is set out and to ensure that nothing has been overlooked.

Dotterels - Cat and rat control to protect Southern NZ Dotterels has already begun this season and will continue until the last chicks have departed their sub-alpine breeding grounds in February or March 2013. The Department is working in partnership with Otago University to gather and analyse blood samples from up to 20 of these southern birds to investigate the genetic differences between the North Island and Stewart Island populations. There are significant physical differences between these two populations, (currently regarded as subspecies), and we are keen to know whether there are enough differences at a genetic level for the birds to be classified as separate species. The winter flock count for 2011–12 was 261 birds, 29 birds fewer than in 2008–09. In July a team of experts was brought together to start a process to determine how to build on the work done to date to achieve even better results for dotterel protection. Possible ideas for the future so far include engaging a PHD student, employing new techniques such as self-resetting traps and expanding the control area to take in more dotterel habitat along the Tin Range.

Possum Control – Possum control is continuing on a rotational basis around the island with about 30,000ha under sustained control. During the 2012/13 season contractors will undertake possum control in the F1 & R2 blocks, an area of approximately 4600 hectares in the centre of Stewart Island. This area also received possum control in 2002 & 2006. The control area includes part of the Mason Homestead hunting block, which will be closed for the duration of this operation. Control work in the North Mason Block (F1) will be undertaken between the 10th of December 2012 and the 28th of February 2013. Control work in the Trails Hill (R2) block will be undertaken for one month between the 1st of November 2012 and the 31st of May 2013.



Tieke returned to Titi Islands - In the past year DOC has worked with the Rakiura Titi Island Administering Body (RTIAB) and Rakiura Titi Committee to continue the programme for the long term protection of South Island Saddleback / tieke. A DOC team assisted by birders transferred 30 birds from Kundy Island to Taukihepa / Big South Cape in March 2012 to supplement the 38 birds that were transferred there from Big Island in 2011. In addition to the Taukihepa transfer this year, 10 birds were released on Mokoiti / Little Moggy, which had weka removed in 2007. These transfers were funded by the RTIAB. As part of the same programme the Titi Committee/ Ka Mate Nga Kiore funded the transfer of eight birds from Pohowaitai to Solomon Island. While it had been hoped that more birds would be transferred to Solomon Island, the project was interrupted by the search for the crew of the Easy Rider.

Weeds – The Department continues to work with Environment Southland toward the eradication of Darwins barberry and control of other weed species such as Chilean Flame Creeper, Selaginella and German Ivy to prevent their spread into the national park. Barberry has significantly reduced in density around the township as a result of this work.

Dune restoration - The Department continues to prioritise the removal of marram grass from dune systems within the national park, in an effort to restore the dune systems to a healthy and dynamic native dune system free of invasive species. Mason Bay is a very large dune restoration site that is trialling methods that are being taken up around the country. Again, a strong

level of engagement from the University of Otago has assisted the development of this programme. We are now at a point where we have the confidence to apply techniques across the whole Mason Bay dune system should funding become available.

Management of dogs - The Department continues to advocate for responsible dog ownership and in early 2011 successfully prosecuted a local dog owner whose dogs roamed loose in the National Park over a number of days. There has been a noticeable improvement in dog management around the town.

Wildlife viewing – The Department continues to take a precautionary and conservative approach to wildlife viewing, particularly with reference to kiwi within the Stewart Island / Rakiura CMS area.

Shark Research - Local DOC staff have continued to provide assistance to a combined DOC/NIWA/Auckland University research team studying the movement of White Sharks (also known as Great White Sharks).

Treaty of Waitangi responsibilities - The Department continues to consult with tangata whenua and Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu through a variety of forums to maintain and strengthen relationships.

Public participation in conservation management - Emphasis continues to be put on relationship building and strengthening relationships with new and existing partners. The Department has continued to engage with tangata whenua, the Stewart Island / Rakiura Pest Liaison Group, the Stewart Island / Rakiura Community and Environment Trust and other interested parties regarding introduced animal and plant control and eradication programmes. A public information meeting to present information on the Department's possum control operations, dune restoration work at Mason Bay and the Ulva Island rat eradication was held in the Stewart Island Community Centre in December 2011, where staff member Paul Jacques spoke about the possum control on the island and the plans for rotating blocks over the next five years; Dr Mike Hilton (University of Otago Geology Department) presented and discussed monitoring of the Mason Bay sand dunes and Dr Ian Jamieson (University of Otago Zoology Department) discussed the monitoring undertaken on Ulva Island to assess the impact on the island's birdlife from the baiting operation to rid the island of rats.

Students from the University of Otago returned to Ulva last week to continue their long-term monitoring of the island's robin population. After 11 years, this is the last season planned for this particular research project.

This coming week the Department is also facilitating a visit by philanthropist Gareth Morgan, who has expressed an interest in supporting the community to realise the long-term vision of a feral cat, rat and possum-free Stewart Island / Rakiura, by raising public awareness.

NZDA & DOC collaborative project at Mason Bay - Volunteer teams from the NZ Deerstalkers Association are checking rat trap lines at Mason Bay again this year during the main bird breeding season. On this year's trips they will also assist with a trial of 80 gas powered self re-setting possum traps set out at one-hundred metre spaces along many of the rat lines. These traps, designed and built by Wellington company "Goodnature", are able to re-set immediately after killing a possum. One trap can kill twelve possums before the small CO₂ gas canister needs to be replaced. SIRCET have ten of these traps around Halfmoon Bay, and have recorded up to seven kills off one trap. The NZDA teams will help the Department by ensuring the traps have sufficient lure and carrying out the "body count" during the summer season.

Advisory Groups – The Department continues to work closely with local community based organisations such as SIRCET and landowners such as Rakiura Maori Land Trust and the Dancing Star Foundation, providing input through an advisory group so they can undertake appropriate introduced animal and plant control and ecological restoration initiatives.

Upper Lords River Hunters hut – A new hunters hut has been constructed on public Conservation Land that has now been re-gazetted as Scenic Reserve to reduce the environmental impact of the existing informal and long-standing campsite in this area.

Revamp of Rakiura Track - Work commenced in May to extend North Arm Hut, the second of the two huts on the Rakiura track, New Zealand's southern-most Great Walk. This is the final stage of a major revamp of the Rakiura Track to bring it to a comparable standard with the country's other eight Great Walks. Earlier work has included extensions to Port William hut, realignment and gravelling of major sections of the track, the installation of interesting and informative panels at the huts and historic sites along the way; and the establishment of a new campsite on the ridge above North Arm hut. An online visitor booking system for the huts and campsites on the Rakiura track has been running successfully since October 2010. Occupancy rates have risen 15% since this was introduced. To build on this growth a marketing plan has been developed in line with the Department's branding of the Great Walks, highlighting the many advantages of this particular walk – *an island adventure* that can be walked year-round by anyone with a moderate level of fitness. A major marketing campaign of the nine Great Walks is currently underway in partnership with Air New Zealand, which will also see packages developed with local businesses to make it easy to book a Great Walk Experience. Biodiversity projects around the Rakiura Track will also get a huge boost as part of the Air New Zealand sponsorship package.

Interpretation upgrade - New interpretation panels and flip books have also been prepared for various sites around Mason Bay, to give visitors a greater appreciation of the historical, cultural and natural heritage of the area. A panel is also located at Freshwater Landing. This follows the successful launch of 'Rakiura Heritage' a book commissioned by the Department and written by

Neville Peat , which puts into context the historical sites managed by the Department.

Helicopter landings - Existing Helicopter Concession holders were contacted following the approval of the CMS & RNPMP to advise that they could apply for a variation to have the Homestead Hunters Camp added to their list of permitted landing sites. They were also informed that as the Department's concession policy only allows for the granting of one one-off permit to any given site within a three year period, they may seek to have included in that variation reference to landing at other sites on a very occasional basis, however they would need to ensure that any such application complied with relevant sections of both the CMS and RNPMP.

Freshwater River Concessions - have been reviewed and reissued - with a precautionary approach to the allocation of concessions continuing to be taken.

Alternative Energy – The Department was invited to speak at a workshop in February looking at potential future energy options for Stewart Island. This forum was used by the Department to highlight the CMS and RNPMP and reinforce that these documents incorporate as far as possible the thoughts and ideas of the community, setting out the intent of management of land held for conservation purposes, for the next 10 years and beyond in a manner that is consistent with the Conservation General Policy, General Policy for National Parks and the relevant legislation that directs the Department of Conservation.

Monitoring of the Marine Reserve - Two Southland men apprehended taking blue cod within the Te Wharawhara (Ulva Island) Marine Reserve in Paterson Inlet earlier this year have been prosecuted. A prosecution has also been sought for another Southland man, found fishing in the Marine Reserve in July. DOC staff also took the opportunity to include staff from the Ministry of Primary Industries (previously known as MinFish) on a trip around Paterson Inlet in February scheduled for routine inspections of the hunter and tramper huts in the inlet with representatives of the Rakiura Hunter Camp Trust. A compliance patrol of the marine reserve was carried out as part of this trip, with the intention of demonstrating to any groups or individuals encountered, that the Department works closely with others to ensure compliance. It was pleasing to note at the conclusion of the trip, that everyone spoken to was aware of their obligations, with no one found in breach of any regulations.

Education – The Department continues to offer ranger services to visiting schools, providing quality conservation experiences for primary school children from around Southland and further up the country. The Department offers support to our local school and early childhood centre providing opportunities to access the national park and participate in restoration projects.