

Southland Conservation Board Te Rōpū Atawhai o Murihiku

Annual Report

1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016



Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority
pursuant to section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987

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Front Cover: The Southland and Otago Conservation Boards, accompanied by Department of Conservation staff exploring the Catlins area – Photographer: Lloyd Esler

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1 Introduction

Conservation Boards are independent bodies established by section 6(L) of the Conservation Act 1987. Board members are appointed by the Minister of Conservation under section 6(P) of the Conservation Act 1987.

The primary role of a Conservation Board is to advise the Department of Conservation and the New Zealand Conservation Authority. Conservation Boards provide interaction between their local communities and the Department of Conservation.

Conservation Boards focus on planning and strategic direction. A major responsibility for each board is overseeing the conservation management strategy in their region. Other work of Conservation Boards includes; developing and reviewing national parks and other management plans, advising on proposals for marine reserves, considering the impact of concessions for tourism and other activities on conservation land, looking at the range of recreation opportunities in the region, advising on the proposals to change the protective status or classification of areas of national or international importance.

The functions of Conservation Boards are outlined in section 6(M) of the Conservation Act 1987 and powers of Conservation Boards are outlined in section 6(N). Conservation Boards have a number of functions outlined in section 30 of the National Parks Act 1996.

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires that every Conservation Board provides the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after 30 June each year.

In recognition of this requirement the Southland Conservation Board submits this Annual Report for the New Zealand Conservation Authority's Consideration

2 Chair's Report

The past year has finally seen the recommendation of the Southland / Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA). This has been a major achievement for the Board. The new CMS highlights the importance Ngai Tahu's partnership with the Department of Conservation and their relationship with the southern lands.

The Board will look forward with interest to see if the new CMS will further the interests of conservation and stand the test of time.

The Board's Stewardship Land Report was forwarded to the NZCA and then to the Department. Hopefully there will be a reclassification to a more protected status of Southern Stewardship lands.

The Board enjoys a good working relationship with the Otago Conservation Board and had a productive joint meeting and field trip to the Catlins. I find the annual Board Chairs' meeting in Wellington always useful and the networking invaluable in discussing common national issues.

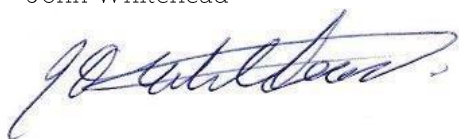
I would like to acknowledge and thank the two retiring Board members, Helen McPhail and Peter Jones for all their work they have put into conservation while on the Board, may their enthusiasm continue.

It was with regret that we farewelled our long serving Board support officer Yvonne Service who retired this year. And we welcome Kathryn Roberts, with her smile and efficiency, to the role.

The Board has been cheered by the constantly improving relationship with Departmental Staff and acknowledges the support given by the senior management team; Alan Munn, Tony Preston, Greg Lind & Bridget Baynes.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Board members for their commitment to conservation and all the behind the scenes work that is carried out on the Board's behalf.

John Whitehead



Chairman
Southland Conservation Board

3 Southland Conservation Board Jurisdiction

The Southland Conservation Board has the largest area of jurisdiction of all Conservation Boards in New Zealand (Figure 1). Over half the land within the province of Southland is managed on behalf of all New Zealanders by the Department of Conservation. The Southland Conservation Board's jurisdiction is vast, encompassing a total of 1.9 million hectares of land that is administered by the Department of Conservation and 574,286 hectares of marine reserve, also administered by the Department.

There are five significant areas of land within the Southland Conservation Board's jurisdiction; the Sub-Antarctic Islands are a world heritage sites, Awarua Waituna wetlands is a wetland of international importance, Rakiura National Park and Fiordland National Park which is part of Te Waipounamu, a world heritage site.

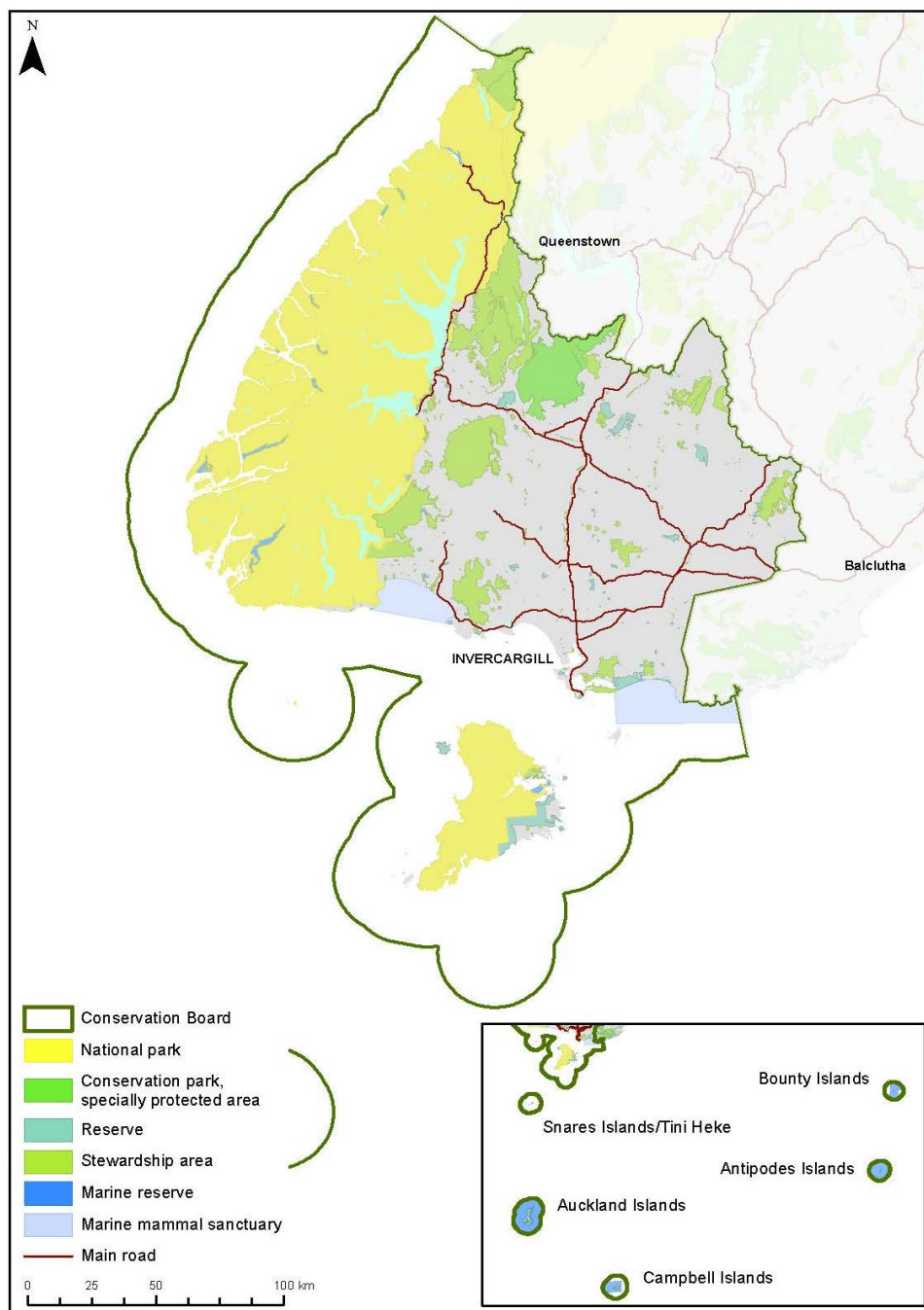


Figure 1. Southland Conservation Board Jurisdiction

3.1 World Heritage Area the Sub-Antarctic Islands

The Sub-Antarctic Islands consist of the five southernmost groups of New Zealand's offshore islands; the Bounty Islands, the Antipodes Islands, the Snares Islands, the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island. The Sub-Antarctic Islands were described by the United Nations Environment Program as "the most diverse and extensive of all Sub-Antarctic archipelagos." The Sub-Antarctic Islands were granted World Heritage Site Status in 1998, they are also a National Nature Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. These islands are home to number of rare species of birds, plants, marine mammals and invertebrates.

3.2 World Heritage Area Fiordland National Park

The Fiordland National Park was established in 1952 and is the largest national park in New Zealand at 1,260,200 hectares. The Fiordland National Park is at the centre of Te Waipounamu the World Heritage Site, and is home to the Takahē Recovery programme. Fiordland National Park has three of New Zealand's Great Walks; the Kepler Track, Milford Track and the Routeburn Track.

3.3 Rakiura National Park

The Rakiura National park was opened in 2002, this is New Zealand's fifth largest and newest National Park. It encompasses 139,000 hectares of land, and covers around 85% of Rakiura. Rakiura National Park also includes many offshore islands in Port Pegasus and Paterson Inlet.

3.4 Awarua-Waituna Wetland Ramsar Sites

Southland was the first place in New Zealand to have a wetland officially recognised under the Ramsar Convention (an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands) when 3500 hectares of the Waituna Wetland Scientific reserve was registered in 1976. A further 15,400 hectares was added in 2008 which included three major estuaries; Toi Toi, Awarua Bay and New River. Awarua-Waituna Wetland is one of the largest remaining wetlands in New Zealand. This site includes four major wetland types; coastal lagoons, freshwater swamps, extensive peatlands and estuaries. The Department forms part of the Waituna Partners Group which also includes Ngāi Tahu, Environment Southland and the Southland District Council to support a collaborative approach for agency involvement in the catchment. The Department also supports work in the wetland via the Arawai Kakariki programme and the catchment via the Living Water Partnership with Fonterra.

3.5 Marine Reserves and Marine Mammal Sanctuaries

There are fifteen marine reserves and three marine mammal sanctuaries within in the Board's jurisdiction. These include the Catlins Coast Marine Mammal Sanctuary, Te Waewae Bay Marine Mammal Sanctuary, Auckland Island Marine Reserve and Marine Mammal Sanctuary, Moutere Hauriri (Bounty Island) Marine Reserve, Te Wharawhara (Ulva Island) Marine Reserve, Moutere Mahue (Antipodes Island) Marine Reserve, Moutere Ihupuku (Campbell island) Marine Reserve, Te Tapuwae o Hau (Long Sound) Marine Reserve, Taumoana (Five Finger Peninsula) Marine Reserve, Moana Uta (Wet jacket Arm) Marine Reserve, Teipari Roa (Elizabeth I) Marine Reserve, Te Awaatu Channel (The Gut) Marine Reserve, Kutu Pārera (Gear Arm) Marine Reserve, Kahukura (Gold Arm) Marine Reserve, Hāwea (Clio Rocks) Marine Reserve, Te Hāpua (Sutherland Sound) Marine Reserve, Piopiotahi (Milford Sound) Marine Reserve. The Southland Conservation Board has more marine reserves and marine mammal sanctuaries than any other Conservation Board.

3.6 Other Conservation Land in Southland

In addition to the National Parks, World Heritage sites and Ramsar Wetlands, the Southland Conservation Board's jurisdiction includes large forested mountainous areas such as the Tākitimu, the Eyre and the Blue Mountains. It also includes diverse coastlines, important estuaries and wetlands areas such as Curio Bay. There are areas in the jurisdiction which are special as they are used in breeding programmes for endangered species such as Burwood Red Tussock Reserve where there is a Takahē breeding unit, Codfish Island/Whenua Hou where the kakapo breeding programme has taken place for some time and has recently been extended to Anchor Island.

4 Board Membership

The following table lists the membership of the Southland Conservation Board between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016 and their term of office.

Name	Area	Term Start	Term End	Time Served
Gail Thompson*	Bluff/Awarua	16/10/2006	30/06/2018	9.5 years
Helen McPhail	Gore	31/08/2008	30/06/2016	8 years
Stewart Bull*	Riverton/Aparima	04/06/2009	30/04/2016	7 years
John Whitehead	Te Anau	01/01/2011	30/06/2019	5.5 years
Fiona Black	Te Anau	01/01/2011	30/06/2018	5.5 Years
Andrew Bowmar	Gore	01/05/2014	30/06/2018	2 years
Alison Broad	Invercargill	01/07/2014	30/06/2017	2 years
Lloyd Esler	Invercargill	01/05/2014	30/06/2018	2 years
Nick Humphries	Te Anau	01/07/2014	30/06/2017	2 years
Peter Jones	Gore	01/05/2014	30/06/2016	2 years
John Twidle	Te Anau	01/07/2014	30/06/2017	2 years

*Ngāi Tahu Representative

5 Board Meetings and Field Trips

During the 2014/2015 financial year the Southland Conservation Board held six formal day meetings. For each formal meeting board members receive \$180 per day, and the chair receives \$240 per day.

5.1 Attendance

Name	Area	Meetings	Field Trips
Gail Thompson*	Bluff/Awarua	3 out of 6	2 out of 4
Helen McPhail	Gore	6 out of 6	3 out of 4
Stewart Bull*	Riverton/Aparima	4 out of 6	3 out of 4
John Whitehead	Te Anau	5 out of 6	3 out of 4
Fiona Black	Te Anau	5 out of 6	2 out of 4
Andrew Bowmar	Gore	6 out of 6	4 out of 4
Alison Broad	Invercargill	6 out of 6	3 out of 4
Lloyd Esler	Invercargill	6 out of 6	4 out of 4
Nick Humphries	Te Anau	5 out of 6	4 out of 4
Peter Jones	Gore	4 out of 6	0 out of 4
John Twidle	Te Anau	4 out of 6	4 out of 4

*Ngāi Tahu Representative

5.2 Board Meetings Dates and Locations

Date	Location
20 August 2015	Invercargill
15 October 2015	Invercargill
11 December 2015	Invercargill
18 February 2016	The Catlins
22 April 2016	Invercargill
16 June 2016	Invercargill

5.3 Field Trips

During the past year the Southland Conservation Board undertook four field trips. These provide the Southland Conservation Board with the opportunity to become familiar with their jurisdiction area, conservation issues, and provide opportunities to discuss management and implementation issues with staff from the Department of Conservation and with members of the local community.

5.3.1 Curio Bay (August 2015)

The Southland Conservation Board travelled to Curio Bay with the Associate Minister for Conservation Nicky Wager. They viewed sea lion pups, yellow eyed penguins and looked at the visitor centre development.

5.3.2 Dean & Rowallan forests (December 2015)

This trip was based around stewardship land reclassification. Dean and Rowallan is the biggest block of stewardship land in the Board's area. The Board went on a helicopter flight to a high point to view the extent and values of the area. Due to time of year, the mistletoe was in flower, which board members said was a beautiful thing to see.

5.3.3 The Catlins (February 2016)

The Southland Conservation Board and the Otago Conservation Board had a combined meeting and field trip in the Catlins. The field trip was organised by Fergus Sutherland, a past Board chair. The Boards visited the hidden wonders of the Catlins, including the Catlins River and the Papatowai Boardwalk. There was lots of opportunity for good discussions with locals during this trip.

5.3.4 Stewart Island (April 2016)

The Board travelled to the Sanford Salmon farm in Big Glory Bay off Stewart Island and was given a very in-depth tour of the farm. The Board also went to Ulva Island where they looked at and discussed the impact of increasing tourism numbers with local DOC staff. On Stewart Island there was a public meeting held where conservation issues on the Island were discussed.

5.4 Community Involvement in Board Meetings

Throughout 2015/16, the Southland Conservation Board welcomed presentations at their meetings and during field trips from a number of different organisations and individuals.

- Hilary Lennox and Anita Dawe – *Environment Southland*
- Shona Sangster – *Stewart Island / Rakiura Community & Environment Trust (SIRCET)*
- Tommy Foggo and Philip Nicolson – *Sanford*
- Ken Swinney – *Environment Southland*
- Mark O'Connor – *South Port*
- Maria Pera, Jason Arnold and Kirsty Huxford – *Te Rūnanga O Ngāi Tahu*

6 Southland Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

Throughout 2015/16, the Southland Conservation Board was involved in the drafting of the New Southland Murihiku CMS, incorporating the Sub-Antarctic Islands. This year, on the 8th of June, the New Zealand Conservation Authority approved the new CMS, after a four-year process. The Southland Conservation Board is looking forward to the CMS becoming operative on September 1st 2016.

7 Implementation Issues

One of the Board's key roles, as set out in section 6(M) of the Conservation Act 1987, is overseeing the implementation of national park management plans and conservation management strategies. Over the past year the Board has provided advice to the Department on implementation issues for the Fiordland National Park Management Plan, the Mainland Southland West Otago CMS and the Sub Antarctic CMS.

7.1 Fiordland National Park Management Plan

The Board receives an implementation report from the Fiordland office in regard to the Fiordland National Park Plan around the end of each financial year. The Board reviews the report and gets an opportunity to report back to the appropriate Operational Managers. The report for the 2015/16 year is expected by the end of October 2016, the Board will review and report back in the December meeting, and forward their report on to the NZCA.

7.2 Rakiura CMS and National Park Management Plan

The Southland Conservation Board receives two implementations plans toward the end of each financial year from the Rakiura team, one for the Rakiura CMS and another for the Rakiura National Park Management Plan. The Board reviews these reports and gets an opportunity to report back to the appropriate Operation Manager. The report for the 2015/16 year is expected by the end of October 2016, the Board will review the report in the December meeting and forward the report on to the NZCA.

7.3 Mainland Southland/West Otago CMS 1998 - 2008

The Board has been working with the "old" 1998 - 2008 CMS. There have been difficulties as it has become obsolete as the "new" Southland Murihiku CMS has been developed.

7.4 Sub Antarctic Islands CMS 1998 - 2008

The Board has been working with this CMS for some time it has started to become obsolete as the "new" Southland Murihiku CMS document has been developed and will include the Sub Antarctic Islands.

7.5 Southland Conservation Board Work Programme

Please see Appendix 1

8 Conservation Advocacy

Under section 6(N) of the Conservation Act 1987, the Southland Conservation Board may advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process.

During the 2015/16 year the Southland Conservation Board made the following submissions or attended meetings in relation to:

- 10 Year Plan 2015-2025 - *Southland District Council*
- Freedom Camping - *Southland District Council*
- Future management of the recreational blue cod fishery in Doubtful, Thompson and Bradshaw Sound - *Ministry for Primary Industries*
- Long Term Plan 2015-2025 - *Invercargill City Council*
- Erection of heritage centre at Curio Bay - *Southland District Council*
- Regional Pest Management Plan - *Environment Southland*
- Proposed New Marine Protected Areas Act - *Ministry for the Environment*
- Fiordland Marine Pathway Plan - *Environment Southland*
- Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan - *Environment Southland*
- New Zealand Sea Lion / Rāpoka Threat Management Plan - *Department of Conservation*

9 Sub-Committees

9.1 CMS Sub-Committee

9.1.1 Members

John Whitehead (Chair)

All other board members

9.2 Concession Sub-Committee

The concession sub-committee has been very active in providing advice to the department. A list of triggers exist, which the Department uses to determine which concession applications should come to the Board for advice. During the 2015-16 year the board has provided advice on six concession application:

- Milford Sound Infrastructure
- Blackmount Amenities Group
- Carbon Farming
- Adventure Centre at Deep Water Basin
- Run Safaris
- Hollyford Valley Walks

9.2.1 Members

Andrew Bowmar (Chair)

Fiona Black

Alison Broad

Lloyd Esler

Helen McPhail

John Whitehead

9.3 Whenua Hou Committee

The Whenua Hou Committee is a sub-committee of the Southland Conservation Board, established under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, section 331, as part of a joint approach to manage the island. It consists of one representative from each of the four Murihiku papatipu rūnanga and four members of the Southland Conservation Board. In 2015/2016 there was one meeting in August 2015, other meetings were scheduled, however these were either cancelled or postponed.

9.3.1 Members

Tane Davis (Chair) – *Te Rūnanga o Ōraka Aparima*

Rodney (Hom) Ryan – *Hokonui Rūnanga*

Cyril Gilroy – *Waihōpai Rūnanga*

Estelle Leask – *Te Rūnanga o Awarua*

Fiona Black – *Southland Conservation Board*

Stewart Bull – *Southland Conservation Board*

Lloyd Esler – *Southland Conservation Board*

Helen McPhail – *Southland Conservation Board*

10 Liaison

10.1 New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)

The Chair receives minutes and agenda from NZCA meetings. The Board's liaison person is Jan Riddell.

10.2 Other Conservation Boards

Helen McPhail is the Board's liaison representative with the Otago Conservation Board. Most boards within the South Island share agendas and minutes.

10.3 Iwi Liaison

The Deed of Settlement between the Crown and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 requires Conservation Boards within Ngāi Tahu takiwā to consult with and to have particular regards to the views of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

Gail Thompson and Stewart Bull are Ngāi Tahu representatives on the Board (appointed on the nomination of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu as established by Section 6 of the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996).

10.4 Fish and Game Council

The Board continues to liaise with the Southland Fish and Game Council on both a formal and informal basis.

10.5 Liaison with Other Organisations

Members of the Board have strong links with a number of community groups in Southland and are active participants in a range of conservation activities

Organisation/Activity	Board Member
New Zealand Aluminium Smelter Interdepartmental Committee (Board rep.)	Alison Broad
Hollyford Conservation Trust	Andrew Bowmar
Manapouri Doubtful Sound Commercial User Group	Fiona Black
Deep Cove Education Trust	Gail Thompson
Pest-free Rakiura Governance Group	Gail Thompson
South East Marine Protection Planning Forum	Gail Thompson
Wakatipu Reforestation Trust	Helen McPhail
Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group	Helen McPhail
Deep Cove Education Trust	John Twidle
Guardians of Lakes Te Anau, Manapouri and Hauroko	John Twidle
Leslie Hutchins Conservation Foundation (Board rep.)	John Twidle
Manapouri Doubtful Sound Commercial User Group	John Twidle
Wilmot Pass Road User Group	John Twidle
Community Conservation Partnerships Fund	John Whitehead
Pomona Island Charitable Trust	John Whitehead
Waiiau Wildlife & Fisheries habitat Enhancement Trust	John Whitehead
Waiiau Working Party (Board rep.)	John Whitehead
Game Animal Council (Board rep.)	Lloyd Esler
Omaui Tracks Trust	Lloyd Esler
Otatara Landcare Group	Lloyd Esler
Southland Natural History Field Club	Lloyd Esler
Environment Southland	Peter Jones
Fiordland Marine Guardians	Stewart Bull
Fiordland Marine Guardians Management Group	Stewart Bull
Pest-free Rakiura Governance Group	Stewart Bull
Rakiura Titi committee	Stewart Bull
Rakiura Titi Islands Administering Body	Stewart Bull
South West Endangered Species Charitable Trust	Stewart Bull

10.6 Media

Reporters from the Southland Times regularly attend Southland Conservation Board meetings and a number of items have appeared in newspapers following meetings.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Work Programme Implementation Report

Appendix 1 – Work Programme Implementation Report

Southland Conservation Board Work Programme Implementation Monitoring Report

July 2015 – 30 June 2016.

Introduction

The Southland Conservation Board Work Programme was approved by the Board on 15 October 2015 and was valid until 30 June 2016. The programme has been developed in response to the letter of Expectation from the Associate Minister of Conservation dated 31 August 2015. This report has been generated as a part of the Southland Conservation Board's Annual Report, and is to identify implementation issues in any plans the Board uses.

This programme was structured in three parts;

Part A: Planned Board activities aimed at meeting the regional work programme contained in the letter.

Part B: Planned Board activities aimed at general expectations contained in the letter.

Part C: Risks and issues from the Board's perspective and opportunities for conservation growth that are not covered above.

Report compiled by the Southland Conservation Board Support Officer with information supplied by the Southland Conservation Board Members.

Part A: Regional Work Programme

1. Review/Development of statutory management plans including Conservation Management Strategies.

The Board is disappointed that the Southland Murihiku CMS was not implemented by the Department this year. The Department supplied the Board with a summary of the implementation of both National Parks' Plans. The Board was able to review this and give their advice. The Board was pleased that the Department agreed to start the review of the Fiordland National Park Plan in early 2017. The Board is looking forward to working on this.

2. Stewardship Land

The Board completed the draft Southland Stewardship Land Report and handed it to the Department. The Board is continuing to advocate to the Department what prioritised Stewardship Land should be reclassified within the next three years.

3. Other Statutory Functions

The Board, mainly through the Chair has had informal liaison with Fish and Game New Zealand, Southland Region This is something the Board will aim to improve in the future. The Board has continued to advocate for the establishment of a "wetland of international importance" for the wetlands of the Te Anau Basin. Unfortunately, it is not a top priority for the Department and the Department doesn't have funding available. The Board still feels this is a worthy project.

The Board has given advice on a wide range of issues to the Department, some of which is not heeded. Advice has been given on such issues as; Shark Cage Diving, Carbon Farming, and the Resource Legislation Amendment Bill which aims to bring concessions issued under the Conservation Act into line with resource consent processes under the Resource Management Act.

4. Advocacy

The Board has submitted on draft plans, and consent applications to both Environment Southland and the Southland District Council. These included the Regional Pest Management Plan and the Marine Pathways Management Plan. The Board gave advice on the "Dirty Dozen Pest Plants", attended the AGM and field trip of the New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Group.

The Board has supported the Undaria Eradication Project in Sunday Cove.

Part B: General Expectation

5. Working with the Department

The Board chair meets with Department senior staff on an irregular basis, usually when the chair is in town or when urgent issues arise. However, the Board keeps up to date with operations within the Department by getting regular updates at each meeting and having discussions with staff at meetings. The Board continues to invite relevant staff and the Board Support Officer on field trips. Department staff in the region are supportive of the Board which has helped build a good relationship between the Department and the Board.

6. Taking account of Ministerial Priorities for the Department

The Board is pleased with the national recognition of kiwi conservation in the region. The Board has continued to support and advocate for the Mason Bay marram grass eradication and wilding conifer control programmes.

One of the Board members is on the SE Marine Protection Forum, which helps keep the Board is aware of local marine issues, and the Board advocates for the protection of marine resources where possible.

The Board supports the Healthy Parks Healthy People programme and have identified opportunities that have yet to be actioned.

7. Working with Adjoining Boards and the NZCA

The Southland Conservation Board has a positive relationship with the Otago Conservation Board, and had a combined meeting with the it in the Catlins in February 2015 to discuss cross-border and general conservation issues. The Board believed they adhered to the Code of Practice over the last year, however the Board did not revisit nor update their Strategic Plan from 2012.

8. Understanding the Board's contribution to giving effect to the principles of the treaty of Waitangi

The Board did not hold a meeting at a marae last year and it feels it could improve on its relationship with Kaitiaki Rōpū. Two Board members attended the local pūkenga atawhai course in the last year.

9. Engaging with the community, including raising the profile of the Board

The Board held two public forum sessions in the past year.

The Board has two Councillors as members (Lloyd Esler on the Invercargill City Council and Peter Jones on the Southland Regional Council) and have invited Regional Council Senior Planning staff to a meeting to introduce ourselves and learn more about the consenting and planning processes.

The Board continues to have a Southland Times reporter attend all Board meetings which has helped build a good relationship with the public.

Part C: Risks and Opportunities

10. Risks from the Board's Perspective

The Board was concerned that there was potential for members to get overloaded with work, and as a result some work falling through the cracks. In particular the concession sub-committee chair has worked very hard with all applications and there is potential for this process to be refined.

11. Opportunities for Conservation growth

The Board has worked in conjunction with the Department on many projects that have and will produce incremental conservation growth in the Southland Region.