

TARANAKI / WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD
TE TAI HAU-Ā-URU

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1. Introduction to Board Members

The following members were *appointed* by the Minister of Conservation to the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.

Chairperson: **Karen Schumacher**, *Appointed 2002 -Taranaki*

Deputy Chairperson: **Jenny Steven**, *Appointed 2004 –Taranaki*

Board Members: **Ann Abernethy**, *Appointed 2003 -Taihape*
Barney Haami, *Appointed 1998 - Wanganui*
Stephen Sammons, *Appointed 2002 - Wanganui*
Jonathan Procter, *Appointed 2003 - Palmerston North*
Christine Cheyne, *Appointed 2004 - Palmerston North*
Jenny Steven, *Appointed 2004 – Taranaki*
Janet Gray, *Appointed 2004 – Taranaki*
Huirangi Waikerepuru, *Reappointed 2005 – Taranaki*
Darryn Ratana, *Appointed 2005 - Wanganui*
Dave Digby, *Appointed May 2006*
(to replace Janet Gray) – Taranaki
Ian Bell, *Appointed 2005 – Wanganui*
Rachel Steele, *Appointed 2005 – Taumarunui*
Barbara Arnold, *Reappointed 2002 – Palmerston North*

**Board members who
retired/resigned during
the period covered
by this Report**

Janet Gray, *Resigned October 2005*
Barbara Arnold, *Retired, September 2005*
Stephen Sammons, *Resigned June 2006*

The board did not co-opt any members during the report period.

2. Functions and Powers of the Board

The board has the responsibility for shaping conservation management through advising the department on the development of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Wanganui Conservancy and Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) for public conservation lands whereas the Department of Conservation is responsible for the day to day management of these areas. The board also acts as an advocate for the protection of conservation values on land not administered by the department and it can appear at any public forum, such as planning hearings in this role.

The functions and powers of the board are formally laid out in Sections 6M & 6N of the Conservation Act 1987 (**refer to Appendix A**) and reported on in detail further in this report.

3. Board District

3.1 The board's district covers the department's Wanganui Conservancy. It encompasses some 20,000 square km of land extending from the Mokau River in the north to the Manawatu River in the south and extending inland to include

western Ruahine Ranges, north to the edge of the Kaimanawa Forest Park, across SH49 to Raetihi and northwest to Taumarunui (**refer to map at Appendix B**).

3.2	Within the board district are:	
	National Parks (Egmont & Whanganui)	108,401 ha
	Conservation Parks – Ruahine Forest Park (western side) and Sugar Loaf Islands Conservation Park	54,936 ha
	Sanctuaries	2,357 ha
	Conservation Areas	163,710 ha
	Marginal Strips	965 ha
	Scenic Reserves	23,250 ha
	Historic Reserves	62 ha
	Recreation Reserves	1,695 ha
	Local Purpose Reserves	572 ha
	Other Reserves	881 ha
	Wildlife Reserves	181 ha
	Wildlife Refuges	254 ha
	Total Area (hectares)	357,264 (approx.)

3.3 The total area under the board’s jurisdiction is approx 357,264 hectares (plus 3 walkways)

3.4 The protected lands (as detailed above) within the board district represent approximately 18% of the total area of the district.

4. Board Meetings and Inspections

4.1 The board has adopted a policy of alternating board meetings between Wanganui and other locations throughout the board district to give local people the opportunity to attend meetings and raise any issues. There is time set aside at the start of each board meeting for a public forum. The policy allows an opportunity for board members to become familiar with local conservation issues. The relevant DOC Area Manager provides board members with a briefing on work undertaken as well as any current issues in the area where the board meeting is held. This enables the board to gain a greater understanding of the department’s work in the field and an opportunity to meet field staff.

4.2 The board scheduled six meetings for the report period, three of these were two day meetings as an inspection followed the next day - they were as follows;

2005

Friday 19 August: Devon Hotel, New Plymouth

Friday 28 October: Department of Conservation, Wanganui

Friday 9 December: Opunake Surf Inn, Opunake (*inspection next day*)

2006

Friday 3 March: Maori Landcourt Court Room, Wanganui (*inspection next day*)

Friday 7 April: Central Park Motor Inn, Taumarunui (*inspection next day*)

Friday 16 June: Department of Conservation, Wanganui

- 4.3 The board regards inspections as an important part of its functions because they provide opportunities to discuss management issues on site and share ideas with department staff. The board undertook three inspections during this report period.

2005

Saturday 10 December: The Board visited the Arawhata Local Purpose Reserve and an area adjacent to the Opunake Wastewater Treatment site. Both areas are known for coastal herbfield plants and the *Notoreas* moth which lives in the herbfields. They also viewed the Opunake coastline and gunnera which has become established as a major weed along the coastline. The Board was accompanied by the Board servicing officer and Stratford Area Office staff.



Board Inspection 10 December 2006

Board Members, Visitors and Staff:

Back Row: Bob Schumacher (visitor), Christine Cheyne, Ian Bell, Jon Procter, Jenny Steven, Darryn Ratana, Jim Clarkson (Stratford Area Office), Barney Haami

Front Row: Stephen Sammons, Karen Schumacher, Rachel Steele and Kelley O'Hara CROB

2006

Saturday 4 March:

Board members visited Whanganui National Park. In particular they walked the newly completed/opened Atene walkway to the skyline lookout. The Board viewed the work that had been undertaken on the track since February 2004 storm. The Board was accompanied by staff from Wanganui Conservancy and Whanganui Area Office.



Saturday 8 April:

The Board visited the Taumarunui area of the conservancy. They inspected Ohinepane, a department campsite which is situated next to the Whanganui River. From there, they visited two reserves; Te Peka and Mananui. Both these reserves are controlled by the Ruapehu District Council. The local community give a considerable amount of their time to care for these reserves. The Board was accompanied by staff from Wanganui Conservancy, Taumarunui Field Centre and a member of the local community.

4.4 Attendance levels by board members were as follows:

Meetings for this period were held in August, October and December of 2005 and then March, April and June of 2006. Board members who either did not reapply or were not reappointed attended only one meeting, August 2005. New members who took up their placement at the beginning of September 2005 could attend a maximum of only five meetings – held in October and December 2005 and March, April and June of 2006.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of Meetings attended (6 held)</i>	<i>Number of Inspections Attended (3 held)</i>
Ann Abernethy	5	2
Jonathan Procter	3	1
Barney Haami	4	2
Karen Schumacher	5	2
Jenny Steven	6	3
Christine Cheyne	6	3
Rachel Steele ¹	4	3
Darryn Ratana ¹	5	3
Dave Digby ³	1	0
Stephen Sammons	2	2
Ian Bell ¹	4	1
Huirangi Waikerepuru ¹	1	0
Janet Gray ²	1	0
Barbara Arnold ²	1	0

¹ New members who could attend a maximum of five meetings for the period

² Members who did not reapply or were not reappointed – could attend only one meeting within this period (August 2005 meeting).

³ New member who was appointed in May 2006 to replace a member that resigned earlier in the reporting year – could attend only one meeting within the period.

5. Board Functions Under Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987

5.1 6M(1)(a) To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies under the relevant enactments.

The Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Wanganui Conservancy was approved in April 1997. No review or amendments to the strategy have been made since this date. The Board has been and will continue to be involved in ongoing monitoring of the CMS (see section 5.3).

5.2 6M(1)(b) To approve conservation management plans, and the review and amendment of such plans, under the relevant enactments.

In accordance with the statutory requirements, the review process for the Whanganui National Park Management Plan formally commenced on 28 July 2003 and a sub-committee of the Board was established to report to the Board on the review.

The Board has a statutory role in the review process. The Board recognised the importance for members to become involved in the review as it progresses.

At the date of this report, the latest version of the draft was circulated to the Board sub-committee on 16 May 2006. The sub-committee met on 23 May 2006, along with representatives from Whanganui iwi and Nga Rauru and

received a presentation from the department giving an overview of the plan and the further steps required in its presentation.

Immediately following this meeting, the sub-committee held a separate meeting with iwi to discuss issues of common concern regarding the plan. The Department staff were then invited back for feedback on the outcomes of both meetings. The sub-committee requested that the department allow a further short period of time for the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board to forward any final informal comments to the department before the plan was publicly notified.

No further comments were received by the Department since the meeting and the draft plan is now being prepared for printing, with the aim of having the plan printed within the financial year (by 30 June) ready for public notification in July.

Once submissions close, hearings will be held. The hearing committee will comprise representatives from both the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board and the department.

5.3 *6M(1)(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.*

In November 2004, the board, in conjunction with the department, developed a new template for monitoring the CMS. This required the department to prepare a report focusing on one or two different ecological districts covered by the CMS for each board meeting. This system has now been running for over a year and all ecological districts have been reported on at least once. The template now shows information given in the previous year and new information for the current report. The Board can determine, analyse and discuss with the department the reasons for change (if any).

The report covers the following key issues for each report; land management, Kaupapa Atawhai, native species protection, threats (possums, goats, deer, domestic stock, weeds), historic places, recreation, commercial use and freshwater.

During the report period, the Board considered the following monitoring reports.

- August 2005 – Matemateaonga and North Taranaki Ecological District
- October 2005 – Egmont Ecological District
- December 2005 – Taumarunui Ecological District
- March 2006 – Manawatu/Western Ruahine/Manawatu Gorge Ecological Districts
- April 2006 – Foxton Ecological District
- June 2006 – Rangitikei/Moawhango Ecological District

The Board received the above reports and considerable discussion took place at the meetings on items of interest.

The Board also receives an area manager's report covering the area where the meeting is held. The area manager is invited to attend the meeting and speak to his report.

When applicable, departmental staff are invited to attend Board meetings to speak to the reports they have prepared and other staff are invited to give presentations to the Board. The Board received the following presentations for this reporting period.

- August 2005 Women in Conservation Fund
- Dec 2005 History of Parininihi Marine Reserve Application and the legal steps that must be taken to form a reserve
- March 2006 Sambar Deer Management in Horowhenua, Manawatu, Rangitikei and Wanganui Areas
Parininihi Marine Reserve Update
Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board involvement in the Parininihi Marine Reserve and the Joint Advisory Committee
- April 2006 The functions of a Kaipapa Atawahi Manager and how this is implemented in day to day dealings for the department
- June 2005 Historic Asset Register for the Conservancy
History of Heritage Lodge in the Ruahine and an application for it to be rebuilt

The Board would like to thank the relevant staff for the time in preparing and presenting these very informative presentations.

- 5.4 6M(1)(d) To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director-General:**
- (i) On any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance; and**
 - (ii) On any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the board.**

The Board has appreciated receiving the NZCA Chair's report of authority meetings. The report is sent out to Board members and discussed at the next meeting. Minutes of the authority meetings are circulated to members. Barbara Arnold of Palmerston North is the NZCA Taranaki/Whanganui liaison member and she has provided an update report at every Board meeting. When possible Barbara attends the Board meetings and the Board appreciates her valuable input.

6M(1)(d)(i)

March 2005 (from previous years' report)

The Board made a strong and comprehensive submission to the department on the sites to be included on the World Heritage Tentative List. The Board nominated Egmont National Park/Mount Taranaki.

They believed that this area has natural and cultural significance which fulfill the required criteria.

To date the Board is still awaiting notification to see if this nomination was successful.

August 2005 – Taunoka Land Exchange

A sub-committee of the Board met with the Department to discuss the proposed Taunoka Land Exchange.

At its meeting in August 2005, the department showed maps identifying the area proposed for exchange and explained that the exchange complied with the new Conservation General Policy and was permitted under the Conservation Act (Section 16A (2)).

The Board resolved to support the department on this proposal subject to the department clarifying/resolving issues with local iwi and ensuring that public access was maintained.

6M(1)(d)(ii)

August 2005

The Board wrote to NZCA supporting a hui for Maori Board members. They believed it was important for this to take place and it would give Maori members a chance to hear differing viewpoints and to learn from each other.

August 2005

The Board received from the department the document – Consultation on the Future of Sambar Deer Management in Horowhenua, Manawatu, Rangitikei and Wanganui Gazetted Recreational Hunting Area.

After deliberation the Board decided that as this issue had not been bought to their attention by any outside groups that they did not need to make a submission.

December 2005

The Board wrote to NZCA about the general demise of kiwi in the Conservancy. In this letter, the Board discussed a report that was being prepared entitled ‘The West Coast North Island Brown Kiwi Technical Report’. The board had viewed a draft of this report and had strong concerns surrounding some of the project goals of the report. The Board asked NZCA to endorse a previous resolution that they had made to treat with urgency the decline of the kiwi with the Minister of Conservation.



North Island Brown Kiwi – Photo by Rod Morris

April 2006

The Board wrote to the Minister of Conservation commending him on his decisions surrounding the Whangamata Marina and the establishment of a Board of Inquiry to consider public submissions. The Board believed his actions and initiatives proved that he was trying to protect the public interest in the New Zealand coastline.

June 2006

The Board made a submission on the joint DOC/MFish initial position paper, 'Management Options for White Pointer Shark'. The Board believed that a combination of the Wildlife Act and Fisheries Act provisions would be needed to adequately protect white pointer sharks. They asked that two further approaches be taken – that consideration be given to the threat status and protection of all shark species, rather than considering this on a species-by-species basis and to re-design shark nets so they are effective barriers, not 'kill-traps'.

5.5 *6M(1)(e) To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on proposals for new walkways in any area within the jurisdiction of the board*

Proposed Aramoho to Brunswick Walkway

Over a period of three years the Board has been in discussion with Rotary, Wanganui District Council and Horsley Christie lawyers in relation to this proposed walkway. In July 2004 the Council wrote to the department giving their approval for the walkway to go over council land and at this time accepted responsibility as being the Controlling Authority for the proposed walkway.

In November 2005 the Board wrote to Horsley Christie asking that they ensure that the appropriate iwi/hapu are consulted over the proposed walkway. To date the department has supplied technical advice on site and structure issues for the walkway. The Board will continue to monitor progress with this walkway.

Whitecliffs Track Walkway Realignment

At its October 2005 meeting the Board received a briefing paper from the department outlining the changes to this walkway realignment. The Board supported the walkway realignment subject to it meeting agreed public safety conditions and that the department undertake revocation by way of notice in the Gazette, of that part of the walkway easement route no longer required.

5.6 *6M(1)(f) To liaise with any fish and game council on matters within the jurisdiction of the board.*

Liaison has been maintained with the local Fish and Game Council through an exchange of agendas and minutes of meetings. There were no matters arising from the liaison which required direct Board input.

6M(1)(g) To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.

In accordance with the Ngati Tama Claim Settlement Act 2003 the Board appointed Board member Karen Schumacher as its nominee for the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) established under the Act to advise on the Whitecliffs and nearby conservation areas (see Section 6N(2)(a) for more information on meetings held by the JAC).

6M(1)(h) Every board shall have such other functions as are conferred on it by or under this Act or any other Act.

No other functions were conferred on the Board under this provision.

6. Powers of Boards Under Section 6N of the Conservation Act

6N(1) Every board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.

6N(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1) of this section, each board may:

- (a) Advocate its interest at any public forum or in any statutory planning process; and*
- (b) Appoint committees of members and other suitable persons, and delegate to them functions and powers;*
- (c) The power conferred by subsection 2(a) of this section shall include the right to appear before courts and tribunals in New Zealand and be heard on matters affecting or relating to the board's functions.*

6N(2)(a)

The Board considers it has an important role to play in:

- Information sharing with iwi authorities
- Promoting public understanding of and fostering support for the protection of the natural and historic heritage of New Zealand.
- Raising public awareness of conservation boards and their roles, through meeting members of the public and representatives from other agencies and groups.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Wanganui CMS.
- Making submissions on issues relevant to the Board

Treaty/Iwi Relationships

Four Treaty settlements have been signed within the area covered by the Board and three of these claims have settlement legislation enacted.

The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) formed under the Ngati Tama Claim Settlement Act 2003 has held two formal meetings during the year. Matters discussed included pest control, replacing signage for the walkway and the access signs off SH3, the proposed Parininihi Marine Reserve, weed control and the need for a conservation management plan for the reserve.

The Board Chairperson is the Board's representative on the JAC and she reports that the relationship between all parties is developing and everyone is working in good spirit for the benefit of conservation.

The department undertook a residual trap catch for possums on behalf of Ngati Tama. This has assisted Ngati Tama in the preparation of a detailed pest programme, which they have prepared in partnership with East Taranaki Environment Trust, Taranaki Regional Council and the department.

The company Wildland Consultants was the successful tenderer to prepare the management plan for the areas which have a conservation covenant on them. The JAC will be working through this process during the coming year.

The proposed Parininihi Marine Reserve will change the status of the JAC in the coming year. Once the Reserve is gazetted, the JAC becomes a sub-committee of the Board.

Board agendas and minutes are sent to iwi regularly and they are advised of meeting dates and venues in their area and forwarded reports or presentations which they may have an interest in.

The Board Secretary is still awaiting a meeting with Nga Rauru to discuss the board relationship. This will take place when Nga Rauru are ready.

The Board has been involved in providing comments on discussion documents from other Government organisations and statutory plans developed by territorial authorities and regional councils. During the report period, the board made submission/comments on the following documents:

July 2005 – Biosecurity New Zealand

Draft Animal Welfare (cats) code of welfare 2005

July 2005 – Horizons Regional Council

Regional Plant Pest Strategy Development (discussion paper)

December 2005 – Department of Internal Affairs

The Board wrote to this department supporting an application for funding by Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust. The Trust needed funding to complete the installation of a predator proof fence.

February 2006 – New Plymouth District Council

New Plymouth District Council Draft Coastal Strategy

April 2006 – Taranaki Regional Council

Draft Long Term Council Community Plan 2006-2016

May 2006 – Horizons Regional Council

Draft Long Term Council Community Plan 2006-2016

June 2006 - Ministry of Fisheries

Consultation on the proposal by members of the fishing industry to establish benthic protection areas.

June 2006 – Walking Access Consultation Panel

Walking Access Consultation – The Board wanted to ensure options are kept open for improving public access along waterways and to natural areas.

June 2006 – Adoption of Checklist for LTCCPs

Due to the high amount of LTCCPs and other regional plans the Board received, Board member Christine Cheyne created a checklist to assist the Board in making submissions and to simplify the process. The checklist will be used to establish how well plans address;

- integration of social, economic, environmental and cultural factors
- management of populations and household growth
- alignment of existing council plans and strategies
- the role of other groups and agencies in partnering with local government
- the role of iwi, community organizations and citizens in conservation

Submissions supported conservation initiatives prepared in the draft documents and suggested additional conservation initiatives based on provisions contained within regional policy statements and district plans.

6N(2)(b)

Board sub-committees

At its October 2005 meeting, the Board appointed the following sub-committees:

- Marine
Stephen Sammons, Darryn Ratana, Jenny Steven, Jonathan Procter and Huirangi Waikerepuru
- Recreation/Walkways
Christine Cheyne, Ann Abernethy, Rachel Steele and Dave Digby (June 2006)
- CMS Monitoring
Karen Schumacher, Jenny Steven and Rachel Steele
- Whanganui National Park Management Plan Review
Stephen Sammons, Karen Schumacher, Jenny Steven, Ian Bell and Rachel Steele
- Statutory Planning
Christine Cheyne, Karen Schumacher and Ian Bell
- Biodiversity
Ian Bell, Jenny Steven, Ann Abernethy, Darryn Ratana and Rachel Steele
- Section 4
Jenny Steven, Huirangi Waikerepuru, Jonathan Procter and Barney Haami

These sub-committees were active in the co-ordination and drafting of submissions. The only formal meeting was held by the Whanganui National Park Management Plan sub-committee.

7. Board Responsibilities Under Other Sections of the Conservation Act

There were no board activities under these sections.

8. Board Functions Under the National Parks Act

This section has been addressed earlier in the report under “Board Functions under Section 6M of the Conservation Act.”

9. Board Responsibilities Under the Walkways Act

This section has been addressed earlier in the report under Section 6M(1)(e)

10. Board Advocacy and Liaison

At the Board’s August 2005 meeting it adopted its new five year Strategic Plan. (see **appendix C**).

The board has continued liaison with adjoining conservation boards for the most part by way of exchange of minutes.

Other actions included:

July 2005

The Board wrote to the four adjoining Conservation Boards regarding the draft Horizons, One Plan. The Board has taken a leading role in this plan and has acted as a conduit for other Boards.

October 2005

The Board wrote to Northland Conservation Board regarding the vehicles on beaches – all parties conference held.

February 2006

The Board Chairperson and Board Servicing Officer attended a Taupo/Tongariro Board Meeting. Their attendance was to gain an insight of the issues facing a neighbouring board.

June 2006

The Board wrote to Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board on this Board’s approach to marine conservation, in response to a query from that Board.

Board members throughout the report period liaised with a number of individuals, groups and organisations. This liaison was seen as a very important way of staying in touch with the public. Board members were given the opportunity to report back at each board meeting.

Liaison included:

Taranaki Tree Trust - Karen Schumacher
East Taranaki Environment Trust – Karen Schumacher
Taranaki Farm Forestry Assoc. – Karen Schumacher
Friends of Egmont National Park – Karen Schumacher
Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust – Jenny Steven
Taranaki Kiwi Trust – Jenny Steven
North Taranaki Forest and Bird – Jenny Steven

Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Group – Ann Abernethy
 Rangitikei Forest and Bird – Ann Abernethy
 Rangitikei Environmental Group – Ann Abernethy
 Friends of Mt Stewart – Ann Abernethy
 Wanganui Forest and Bird – Stephen Sammons
 Wanganui Kiwi Conservation Club – Stephen Sammons
 Bushy Park Trust Executive Committee – Stephen Sammons
 Tamaupoko Link (Chairperson) - Barney Haami
 Tupoho Whanau Trust – Barney Haami
 Tamahaki Inc. – Barney Haami
 Ngati Rangi Trust – Barney Haami
 Hinengakau Development Trust – Barney Haami
 Whanganui River Maori Trust Board – Barney Haami
 Wanganui District Council (various committees) – Barney Haami
 Manawatu Forest and Bird – Christine Cheyne
 Palmerston North Tramping/Mountaineering Club – Christine Cheyne
 Manawatu Te Araroa Trust – Christine Cheyne
 Nga Rauru Iwi Authority – Darryn Ratana
 Wanganui Regional Museum Botanical Group – Ian Bell

Members of the public were encouraged to raise issues with the board (via letters and public forums) during the report period. These issues have included:

- Sequoia Action Group of NZ – Redwood Trees adjoining Sunshine Reserve near Taumarunui
- Access to Te Horo Stock Tunnel and Whitecliffs Walkway, north of New Plymouth
- Rubbish on Mt Taranaki
- Proposed Brunswick to Westmere Walkway, Wanganui
- Happenings on the Opunake side of Mt Taranaki
- A presentation from Lake Rotokare Trust members
- Correspondence with an Egmont National Park concessionaire
- Relationships with tangata whenua / Taumarunui Board meeting
- Incentives/encouragement to attract volunteers/hut wardens
-

The above issues were considered by the board on the basis of reports from the department (where necessary) and feedback given to members of the public who raised the issues.

The board is very grateful to Catherine Tudhope, the Manager of the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) for keeping regular contact with the board.

11. Chairperson's Comment

During the year a number of changes took place around the Board table. Four new members were appointed by the Minister and we welcomed Darryn Ratana, Ian Bell and Rachel Steele to the Board. We welcomed back a previous Board member, Huirangi Waikerepuru. Stephen Sammons and I were re-appointed. Changing work circumstances meant resignations were received from both Janet Gray and Stephen Sammons. It was with regret that the Board received these. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Janet and Stephen for the commitment

they made to conservation during their tenure on the Taranaki/ Whanganui Conservation Board. Dave Digby was appointed to replace Janet.

The Board reviewed its strategic plan at the start of the year and has now developed both short and long term directions. This will stand the Board in good stead for the next five years. The high quality, frank discussions and review have assisted the Board in where to place its emphasis going forward. This has guided the Board during the year. More work is required to meet the Board members' expectations over Section 4 reporting, and this is being worked through with the department. For the first year the document has been shown to be robust, a reflection on the hard work put in by Board members in its development.

It is pleasing to finally report that the Whanganui National Park Management Plan is now out for public consultation. The new guidelines, National Policy and the wish to ensure all National Park plans have a national consistency has delayed the process. The department is to be commended on the time and consultation they have undertaken with iwi with this plan. The Board sub-committee had a very positive meeting with iwi, prior to the plan being printed. The coming year will be busy as the plan goes through its statutory process.

It is with sadness that the Board notes the delay of any progress on the kiwi issue. The continued absence of the kiwi recovery plan 2006/16, is of grave concern. The Board continues to strongly believe that additional funding must be made available to preserve the kiwi, not just in sanctuaries but within its own natural native habitat.

On a positive note, it is reassuring to see the growth in community involvement in working to protect the kiwi. The department is working with groups which are actively involved with kiwi protection work in Egmont National Park, in East Taranaki and at Bushy Park. Without this vitally important work, the plight of the kiwi in our area would be continuing to decline. The Board notes the department has been involved with a technical report for the Western North Island Brown Kiwi, and is now considering a management plan for this taxa. The Board has strongly advocated to the department to involve iwi, community groups and the Board in the development of this plan.

Marine reserves activity has been a feature during the year. The Board was involved when the Minister of Conservation had meetings and consultations in the area over the proposed marine reserve at Tapuae. The approval of the Parininihi Marine Reserve was announced during the year. This application has been in the pipeline for around 15 years, and the Board was pleased to see an outcome. This reserve sits within the Ngati Tama rohe, and approval of a management plan for the reserve is vested under Treaty settlement legislation with the Joint Advisory Committee. The Board has a representative on this committee. When the reserve is gazetted, the JAC becomes a sub-committee of this Board. The Board is seeking advice on the appropriate way forward. The Board has had an active involvement with Ngati Tama with the Joint Advisory Committee, through its representative.

Board members have continued to freely give their time in preparing submissions to central, regional and local council plans. Board members take an active interest in the issues which they believe affect conservation values.

Members have been involved with both the national Maori members hui, and the Chairpersons' conference. Both events provide valuable networking and knowledge sharing opportunities. The Board is grateful that the New Zealand Conservation Authority provided the support to allow these important events to occur.

The Board's core function of reviewing the CMS has been clarified during the second year with the template format. It sets out the previous year, plus changes in the current year which highlights where the department is gaining ground or merely holding the line. It is at times sobering to see the amount of conservation land which is receiving little or no active protection. This is something this Board has highlighted in other years, and it is of concern to see that adequate resourcing continues to be a major hurdle. The Board is aware there may be further problems as the Animal Health Board (AHB) funding of possum poisoning for Tb control diminishes.

To the Department's staff and all other people who have given written and verbal reports during the year, thank you for your support and guidance. A special thanks to Kelley our Board Support Officer. You have always been a huge support to the Board and to me with all my queries and those of the Board.

Karen Schumacher
Chairperson
August 2006

Footnote: Please note that the opinions expressed under the chairperson's comments in this report are those of the chairperson and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other board members.

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board adopted this report in October 2006