

Taranaki / Whanganui Conservation Board (Te Tai Hau-a-uru)

Annual Report 2009 - 2010

AUGUST 2010



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

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1. Functions and Powers of the Board

The Board has the responsibility for shaping conservation management throughout Whanganui Conservancy by advising the Department on the development of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) and Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) for public conservation lands. The Board also acts as an advocate for the protection of conservation values 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 and reported on in detail further in this report. The Board's current strategic plan for 2010-2015 may be found at Appendix A.

2. Board District

- 2.1 The Board's district covers the Department's Whanganui 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 the western Ruahine Ranges, north to the edge of the Kaimanawa Forest Park, across SH49 to Raetihi and northwest to Taumarunui.



Map of Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board Area

2.2	Within the Board's district are:	
	National Parks (Egmont & Whanganui)	108,401 ha
	Conservation Parks – Ruahine Forest Park (western side) and Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area	54,936 ha
	Sanctuaries	2,357 ha
	Conservation Areas	162,159 ha
	Marginal Strips	932 ha
	Scenic Reserves	22,873 ha
	Historic Reserves	39 ha
	Recreation Reserves	149 ha
	Local Purpose Reserves	260 ha
	Other Reserves	880 ha
	Wildlife Reserves	181 ha
	Wildlife Refuges	254 ha
	Marine Reserves	3,248 ha
	Total Area (hectares)	356,670 (approx.)

2.3 The total area under the Board's jurisdiction is approx 356,670 hectares (plus 3 Walkways gazetted under the NZ Walkways Act)

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

3. Introduction to Board Members

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

Appointed Members	Year Appointed	Home Location	Meetings Attended
Darryn Ratana (Chair)	2005	Whanganui	3
Richard Steedman (Deputy Chair)	2008	Taihape	4
Ian Bell	2005	Whanganui	4
Christine Cheyne ¹	2004	Palmerston North	3
Dave Digby	2006	Stratford	4
Barney Haami	1998	Whanganui	2
Rex Hendry	2008	New Plymouth	4
Wikitoria Keenan	2009	New Plymouth	1
Donald McIntyre	2008	Inglewood	4
Rachel Steele	2005	Taumarunui	4
Jonathan Procter ²	2003	Palmerston North	1

¹ Unable to attend Jun meeting due to short-notice change of date

² Retiring member who did not seek reappointment – could only attend one meeting within the reporting period

4. Board Meetings and Inspections

4.1 As in previous years the Board has continued to alternate Board meetings between Whanganui 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 that allows

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.



Dave Rogers (Programme Manager Visitor Assets/Historic, Taranaki Area Office) provides members of the Board with a briefing on the long-term development plans for Dawson Falls Visitor Centre Photo: DOC

The Board also adopted a policy of focusing meetings, and any associated field inspections, around a strategic theme related to key conservation issues agreed by the Board for 2010. Wherever possible, guest speakers were invited to provide the Board members with a range of views on the conservation issue.

- 4.2 The Board scheduled four meetings for the report period. Field inspections were scheduled with two of the meetings and a workshop with one of the meetings - the meetings were as follows:

Date of Meeting	Meeting Venue	Location
9 October 2009	Taranaki Area Office	New Plymouth
4 December 2009	Ngapuwaiwaha Marae	Taumarunui
12 March 2010	Konini Lodge, Dawson Falls	Egmont National Park
11 June 2010	Whanganui Conservancy Office	Whanganui

- 4.3 The Board regards inspections as an important part of exercising its functions because they provide opportunities to discuss management issues on site and share ideas with Department staff. Field inspections were also arranged to coincide with topical conservation issues so that the Board could be provided with relevant background information.

Saturday, 9 October 2009: Departmental staff presented and sought feedback via a workshop on the draft functional strategies for Recreation, Natural Heritage, and Cultural & Historic.

Saturday, 5 December 2009: Having been provided with a joint update on the Kia Wharite Project from Horizons Regional Council and the Department at their meeting the previous day, the Board was able to view the Department's work from the Steele's property at Whakahoro, as well as inspecting part of the intended cycleway on the Kaiwhakauka Track. The Board was accompanied by Whanganui Area Manager, Nic Peet, and staff from the Whanganui Conservancy.



*Members of the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board walk part of the Kaiwhakauka Cycle Trail
Photo: DOC*

Friday, 12 March 2010: The Board visited the road-ends at both Dawson Falls Visitor Centre and North Egmont Visitor Centre. Dave Rogers (Programme Manager Visitor/Historic Assets, Taranaki Area Office) briefed the Board on the visitor centres and outlined their respective long-term development plans.



View of Mt Taranaki from the Dawson Falls Visitor Centre Photo: DOC

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 current Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Whanganui Conservancy was approved in April 1997, and is now due for review. Some work has been undertaken by the Board to prepare a new draft CMS for public notification.

At the Board's April 2009 meeting, the Department announced its intention to delay the planned public notification of the draft CMS for the Whanganui Conservancy. This anticipated the Department's decision in September 2009 to place on hold all public notification of CMSs nationally. Dialogue continued between the Department and the NZCA throughout 2009/10 to determine the style and content of CMSs. This issue was discussed at the NZCA Chairperson's Conference in May 2010 and, at its June 2010 meeting, the Board provided feedback on the proposed CMS template.

As a result, progress on the draft Whanganui Conservancy CMS has been limited; however, at its October 2009 meeting and workshop, the Board was invited to provide feedback into the three draft *Te Hikoī Whakamua* functional strategies that had been developed for Recreation, Natural Heritage and Historic/Cultural management. These documents contain the detailed strategies and objectives that the Department will use to guide the development of the draft Whanganui CMS. At its December 2009 meeting, the Board was advised that its feedback was being incorporated into the respective draft functional strategies.

During the reporting year the Board was advised that informal consultation with tangata whenua and key stakeholders had continued to be undertaken throughout the Conservancy. The Board was advised that once the draft CMS was publicly notified the formal public consultation phase would commence.

Regardless of the national timelines for re-commencing CMS work, the Board was advised that the Whanganui CMS project will also be delayed by the intended amalgamation of the Whanganui and Tongariro/Taupo Conservancies.

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

The Whanganui National Park Management Plan is the only conservation management plan currently under review. This is addressed later in the report under Section 7.

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 implementation of the CMS. This required the Department to prepare a report focusing on one or two different ecological districts/regions covered by the CMS for each board meeting. The template outlines the relevant performance indicator, the monitoring method, a report on progress and the updated information over time.

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

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

- October 2009 – North Taranaki, Matemateaonga Ecological Districts and Moawhango and Rangitikei Ecological Regions
- December 2009 – Taumarunui Ecological District and Egmont Ecological Region
- March 2010 – Manawatu Plains Ecological District and Manawatu Gorge, Ruahine Ecological Regions
- June 2010 – Moawhango, Rangitikei & Foxton Ecological Districts

The Board received the above reports and discussion took place at the meetings on items of interest. Concern was expressed that there appeared to be more focus on output monitoring rather than outcome monitoring; however, the Board was assured that specific measurable objectives (3, 5 and 10 year) were being included in the draft functional strategies, and that these were expected to be incorporated into the revised Whanganui Conservancy CMS.

In addition to the monitoring reports, relevant Area Managers are invited to attend each meeting and provide the Board with a presentation on item/s of interest.

The Board is also provided at each meeting with a Conservator's report which gives a brief overview of work being performed, and improvements/changes made and completed across the Conservancy.

Other Departmental staff and guest speakers are invited to give presentations to the Board. The Board received the following presentations for this reporting period:

October 2009

- Business Planning Overview 09/10 for Whanganui Conservancy
- National Cycleway Project
- Draft Recreation, Natural Heritage, and Historic/Cultural Functional Strategies

December 2009

- Update on Kia Wharite Project (*Guest speaker*)
- Current use & research on 1080

March 2010

- Long-term development issues at major road-ends in Egmont National Park
- Update on "Operation Egmont" 1080 project
- Conforming Activities Schedule

June 2010

- Coastal Protection in the Whanganui Conservancy

The Board is grateful for the time and effort staff and guest speakers put into preparing and delivering 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.***

6M(1)(d)(i)

6M(1)(d)(ii)

Walking Access Commission

In December 2009 the Board made a submission to the NZ Walking Access Commission on the Draft National Strategy for Walking Access and the Draft NZ Outdoor Access Code. In addition to expressing support for the national strategy, the Board stressed the importance of disseminating reliable information on walking access for recreational users. The Board also suggested that iwi should be identified as a significant partner. With regard to the draft NZ Outdoor Access Code, the Board supported the promotion of 'personal responsibility' in the outdoors. Lastly, the Board felt that both the strategy and code should acknowledge that the identified parcels of land contain intrinsic values greater than just walking or outdoor recreation access.

Licensing of Crossbow Users

In November 2009, a letter of concern was written to the Minister of Police requesting that consideration be given to the introduction of licensing laws for crossbows and their users so that this may become a condition of acquiring a hunting permit on public conservation lands for safety reasons.

Review of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act

Following an announcement from the Minister of Energy & Resources regarding a review of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act, the Board sought further clarification of the scope and purpose of the review. Further, the Board raised particular concern at the possibility that some of New Zealand's most ecologically valuable land, currently excluded from mining, might be made available for mining access as a result of the review. In May 2010, the Board provided feedback on the Crown Minerals Act Schedule 4 Stocktake, endorsed the Minister of Conservation's concept of the conservation economy and re-iterated concerns about the threat to conservation values associated with prospecting and mining on some public conservation lands.

- 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***

This function was repealed on 30 September 2008, by the Walking Access Act 2008 which established the Walking Access Commission.

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.

5.7 ***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 agreed to elect Darryn Ratana as its representative for the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) established under the Act to advise on the management of Whitecliffs and other nearby conservation areas. (see Section 6N(2)(b) for more information on meetings held by the JAC).

5.8 ***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.*

6.1 ***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.
- Making submissions on issues relevant to the Board.

Treaty/Iwi Relationships

Board agendas and minutes are sent to iwi regularly and they are advised of meeting dates and venues in their area. In December 2009 the Board was warmly welcomed onto Ngapuwaiwaha Marae, Taumarunui for their meeting. The Board thanks iwi and marae committee members for their generous hospitality.

The Board is legally obliged to include members who can represent Taranaki and Whanganui iwi. As well as this, several members have iwi affiliations. These connections play a vital role in improving the Board's understanding of iwi perspectives.

Five deeds of settlement have been signed within the area covered by the Board with four having had settlement legislation enacted. The Department presented its final evidence and faced cross-examination at the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal hearings held in Whanganui during June 2009 and now await the outcome of that settlement process.

Following the successful establishment of a regional forum with Taranaki iwi, the Board was advised in its October 2009 meeting that a similar forum had been formed with Whanganui iwi. It was evident that iwi wished to be involved at the highest level of engagement with regard to the CMS and national park management plans.



*Te Pou Whenua o Nga Ruahine
Dawson Falls Visitor Centre Photo - DOC*

Board Advocacy

The Board has provided 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 submissions/comments on the following documents:

Horizons Regional Council 'One Plan'

Progress of the Proposed One Plan (the new combined Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plan and Regional Coastal Plan for the Manawatu-Whanganui Region) has been followed by the Board since July 2005. The Board submitted on the Proposed One Plan in September 2007 and members of the Statutory Planning sub-committee presented to the hearing panels on the Overall Plan (July 2008) and Coast (September 2008). All hearings have now concluded for the Proposed One Plan. The Commissioners' decisions are awaited.

Regional Land Transport Strategy for Taranaki - Taranaki Regional Council

In its September 2009 submission the Board advocated for greater priority to be placed on public transport, walking and cycling opportunities, and to include full planting programmes with all roading projects to ameliorate the effects of greenhouse gas emissions.

Cycleway Proposals for Taranaki – Taranaki Regional Cycleways Group

Following a request at its December 2009 meeting, the Board resolved to support, in principle, the efforts to develop cycleways in Taranaki.

6.2 *6N(2)(b)*

Board sub-committees

These sub-committees were active in the co-ordination and drafting of submissions:

- Marine
Darryn Ratana, Rex Hendry
- Recreation/Walkways
Christine Cheyne, Rachel Steele, Dave Digby and Rex Hendry
- CMS
All Board members
- Whanganui National Park Management Plan Review
Darryn Ratana, Ian Bell, and Rachel Steele
- Statutory Planning
Christine Cheyne, Ian Bell
- Biodiversity
Ian Bell, Darryn Ratana, Rachel Steele, Richard Steedman and Donald McIntyre
- Section 4
Barney Haami, Richard Steedman
- Concessions
Darryn Ratana, Rex Hendry, Barney Haami

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

In accordance with the Ngati Tama Claim Settlement Act 2003, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was established under the Act to advise on the management of Whitecliffs and other nearby conservation areas, including Parininihi Marine Reserve. JAC committee members include representatives from Ngati Tama, the Department of Conservation and the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board. Following the expiry of Karen Schumacher's term on the JAC, the Board elected Darryn Ratana as the Board's representative at its December 2009 meeting.

Following the gazettal of Parininihi Marine Reserve in September 2006, the JAC was delegated the Board's power to approve, review or amend any conservation management plans for the reserve, in accordance with section 6N(2)(b) of the Conservation Act 1987. In its August 2007 meeting, the Board resolved that the JAC be the governing body for the Parininihi Marine Reserve (a preferred choice of Ngati Tama), rather than establishing a separate marine reserve committee.

The JAC met formally once during the reporting period. Matters discussed included the delay in progressing the Whanganui Conservancy CMS; monitoring and management planning for the Parininihi Marine Reserve; an update on the 1080 Operation Egmont; Ngati Tama pest control results; as well as discussion on the future of kokako in the Taranaki region.

7. **Board Functions Under the National Parks Act 1980**

30(1) In addition to the functions specified elsewhere in this Act of in any other Act, the functions of each Board shall be-

- (a) *To recommend management plans, and the review or amendment of such plans, for parks within the jurisdiction of the Board in accordance with sections 45-47 of this Act.*

- (b) *To consider and determine priorities for the implementation of management plans for national parks*

30(2) The Board having jurisdiction in respect of the Whanganui National Park shall, in carrying out its functions,-

- (a) *Have regard to the spiritual, historical, and cultural significance of the Whanganui River to the Whanganui iwi; and*
- (b) *Seek and have regard to the advice of the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board on any matter that involves the spiritual, historical, and cultural significance of the park to the Whanganui iwi.*

7.1 30(1)(a) and (b)

The review process for the Whanganui National Park Management Plan formally commenced on 28 July 2003 and the original draft was notified in 2006. A sub-committee of the Board was established to report on the review. Their role includes ensuring that public feedback had been incorporated into the draft management plan; and that the Department were working with the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board to meet Section 4 obligations. Members of the sub-committee attended public hearings in late 2006 and subsequent meetings with the Department to resolve major issues.

At its March 2010 meeting the Board were briefed on changes made to meet the requirements of Section 30(2), in response to the issues raised by the 3 Whanganui iwi submissions on the draft plan.



At its June 2010 meeting the Board agreed to further changes to reflect the major progress that has been made with the Kia Wharite and National Cycleway projects since the plan was originally drafted. The Board was informed that subject to formal endorsement from Whanganui iwi, and a final legal check, the revised draft plan would then be ready for its recommendation to send to the NZCA for approval.

DOC staff trial part of the National Cycleway project that includes the Bridge To Nowhere, Whanganui National Park.
Photo: DOC

7.2 30(2)(a) and (b)

As resolved at its meeting of April 2009, the Board supported the Department's approach to working with Whanganui iwi on the draft Whanganui National Park Management Plan. The final draft plan is now to be presented to the Whanganui iwi working group to check that it adequately addresses their submissions, prior to the final draft plan being re-presented to the Board for its recommendation that it proceeds to the NZCA.

In April 2009 the Board was briefed on changes made to Sections 1 & 2 of the draft plan. These address the issues raised in three iwi submissions, which are seeking better recognition of the park's cultural values, and more co-operative management mechanisms with tangata whenua.

In October 2009, the Board was advised that there had been no further significant progress on the plan. The death of Charles Mareikura, the Department's Pou Kura Taiao, had been a terrible loss. In addition to this, the newly created iwi working group was still establishing its structure, role and priorities, and was focussed on the concurrent Waitangi Tribunal's Whanganui District Inquiry hearings.

In its December 2009 meeting, the Board was advised that Whanganui iwi representatives had informally indicated their satisfaction with the direction signalled by the current draft plan and have not made any further comment on the plan's content.

Following the Board's endorsement in its June 2010 meeting for the amendments made to the draft plan, the Department was asked to seek formal endorsement from the Whanganui River Iwi Forum prior to a final legal check on those changes.

8. Board Advocacy and Liaison

The Board has welcomed the attendance of its NZCA liaison, John Nankervis, at its meetings and appreciates receiving the NZCA Chairperson's memo and minutes which are circulated to members.

The Board is very grateful to Catherine Tudhope, Manager of the Statutory Bodies Unit, (and in her absence, Allan McKenzie) and Elena Sedouch, Statutory Bodies Officer, for keeping regular contact with the Board.

Following the joint Kia Wharite Biodiversity Project that was signed in July 2008 between the Department and Horizons District Council, the Board was invited to select 1-2 representatives to form part of an advisory group who will oversee the project. Both Rachel Steele and Darryn Ratana represent the Board. Rachel Steele was also elected to represent the Board on the Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Committee.

The Board has continued liaison with adjoining Conservation Boards through an exchange of minutes and shared correspondence on matters of national importance.

Board members liaised with a number of individuals, groups and organisations throughout the reporting period. This liaison is seen as a very important way of providing an interface with the community. Board members were given the opportunity to report back at each board meeting.

Liaison included:

Ian Bell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanganui Museum Botanical Group • Wanganui Branch Ornithological Society – Birding Wanganui • Whanganui Summer Programme Trust • Wanganui Forest & Bird • Friends of Gordon Park • Wanganui Rock & Mineral Club Inc • The Parkinsonism Society Wanganui Inc
Christine Cheyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Network Manawatu • Manawatu Forest and Bird • Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club • Manawatu Te Araroa Trust • Sustainable Manawatu Taskforce
Dave Digby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Taranaki Forest & Bird • Stratford Tramping Club • Mountain Safety – Taranaki
Barney Haami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamaupoko Link (Chairperson) • Tupoho Whanau Trust • Tamahaki Inc. • Ngati Rangī Trust • Hinengakau Development Trust • Whanganui River Maori Trust Board • Whanganui Maori Regional Tourism Organisation • Maori Sector of Regional Partnership Programme (Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu District Councils)
Rex Hendry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand Alpine Club & Advocacy Committee • New Zealand Outdoor Instructor's Association • New Zealand Recreation Association • Taranaki Regional Transport Committee • Taranaki Land Search & Rescue • Western Institute of Technology (WITT)
Wikitoria Keenan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Atiawa Iwi Authority • Te Atiawa (Taranaki) Settlements Trust • Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum • Taranaki Maori Trust Board • Puke Ariki Land Trust • Ngati Te Whiti Ahi Kaa Trust
Donald McIntyre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taranaki TB Free Committee • Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust • Taranaki Tree Trust • Taranaki Federated Farmers Inc • Taranaki Farm Forestry & Shelter Association
Darryn Ratana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nga Rauru Iwi Authority
Richard Steedman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otaihape Maori Komiti Inc • Te Runanga O Ngati Whitikaupeka • Te Runanga O Ngati Tamakopiri • Te Runanga O Ngati Hauti • Te Runanga O Ngai Te Ohuake (Interim) • Aorangi Awarua Land Trust • Owahaoko B & D Land Trust • Aorangi Experiences Ltd • Environmental Working Party of Ngati Whitikaupeka & Ngati Tamakopiri
Rachel Steele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Committee • Taupo Forest & Bird

Members of the public were provided with an opportunity to raise issues with the Board via letters, and/or public forums at each Board meeting. None were raised during the reporting period.

9. Chairperson's Comment

In reviewing the 2009/10 reporting year it is evident that any significant progress by the Board has been severely inhibited by a number of factors.

Firstly, the Board commenced their reporting year with the knowledge that the Department of Conservation was facing a reduction of \$13.5 million each year from Vote Conservation for the next four years.

In response to the funding reduction, the Board wrote a letter of concern to the Minister of Conservation stating:

“while we appreciate the difficult economic conditions, we consider that this latest funding cut seriously impedes the Department’s capacity to fulfil its statutory obligations in our Conservancy” ...and...

“we applaud the commitment of the staff whilst they attempt to deliver the strategic outcomes required by the Government on a very stretched budget but we cannot ignore the potentially damaging impact this continual financial pressure will have both on staff, and conservation in general”.

Within the Whanganui Conservancy the approach taken was to avoid reducing front line outputs by reducing service and support functions however funding levels had made some cuts to front line delivery outputs unavoidable. As part of the significant cuts across all output classes, the Conservation Board budget was also reduced, and with it, the frequency of meetings. The Board considers this impedes its ability to effectively undertake its own statutory requirements in monitoring the departments ability to implement the CMS and National Park Plans.

Secondly, in September 2009, the Department announced its intention to place on hold all public notification of CMS’s nationally while discussion on their style and content continued with NZCA. Although it is anticipated that CMS work will re-commence later this year, it is likely that the Whanganui CMS project will be delayed further by the amalgamation of the Whanganui and Tongariro/Taupo Conservancies.

Lastly, any progress of the Whanganui National Park Management Plan (WNPMP) has been negligible. It is deeply disappointing and frustrating for the Board to witness the loss of momentum that had been gained through the Board’s meeting with iwi at Paraweka Marae in April 2009. Given the length of time spent drafting the WNPMP it came as no real surprise when the Board was advised in their March meeting that part of the draft plan had to be rewritten and updated to include the Department’s progress with the Kia Wharite and National Cycleway projects.

It has however, been a pleasure to receive reports from the Conservator and Area Manager’s at each Board meeting that detail the initiatives, work, and successes of the Department throughout the Conservancy. A few of note include:

- the development of the Kaiwhakauka and Mangapurua Tracks as part of the National Cycleway Project
- the ongoing success of the joint Kia Wharite Project with Horizons
- establishment of Te Amo Taiao (Whanganui iwi business unit) run by Hinengakau Development Trust to increase skill development and employment opportunities in and around conservation land in the Whanganui area

- continuing success with protection and breeding programmes of kiwi and whio
- Minister's approval to set up a Tapuae Marine Reserve Committee
- ongoing & successful collaboration with key stakeholders and community groups for work on public conservation land.


Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I extend gratitude to my board members for their continued support and commitment to board matters of both local and national importance, as well as their all important links back to the community – all of which takes time and energy.

I must also thank our NZCA liaison, John Nankervis, who has maintained a constant and valuable link to the NZCA; and the Statutory Bodies team at the Departments National Office who have provided advice and support.

The board are always receptive to widening their knowledge and views of conservation matters, and we are grateful to have received insightful presentations by both Departmental staff and guest speakers who have contributed to our meetings during the year. I must also give thanks to the whanau of Ngapuwaiwaha Marae for their hospitality in hosting our meeting in December, and to Dan Steele and his staff for their assistance with a successful field trip on his Whakahoro property.

Finally, to the Conservator and his team of staff throughout the Conservancy – thank you for your assistance, guidance and participation in board matters. A special thank you also to Louise our Board Support Officer, for her administrative support to the Board.



Darryn Ratana
Chairperson
August 2010

Footnote: Please note that the opinions expressed under the Chairperson's Comment 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 on 3 September 2010

Section 6M Conservation Act 1987

- a) To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of conservation management strategies and amendment of such strategies under the relevant enactment.
 - b) To approve conservation management plans and the review and amendment of such plans under the relevant enactment.
 - c) To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director General on the implementation of conservation management strategies and conservation management plans within the jurisdiction of the Board.
 - d) To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director General on (i) any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance and: (ii) any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board.
 - e) Repealed, on 30 Sep 2008, by section 82 of the Walking Access Act 2008.
 - f) To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.
 - g) To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.
2. Every Board shall have such functions as are conferred on it by or under this Act or any other Act.

CONSERVATION BOARD POWERS**Section 6N Conservation Act 1987**

- 1) Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.
- 2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1) of this section each Board may:-
 - a) Advocate its interests 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.
- 3) The power conferred by sub-section (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.

TARANAKI/WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010–15

THE BOARD'S ROLE

The functions and powers of the Board are laid out in three Acts of Parliament: the Conservation Act 1987, the National Parks Act 1980 and the Reserves Act 1977. The Board's major role is to advise the Department of Conservation and the New Zealand Conservation Authority on matters of policy, strategic direction and planning.

In pursuit of its role the Board has two primary responsibilities:

- 1) To oversee the development and implementation of conservation policy and objectives within the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservancy.
- 2) To represent the community interest in the work of the Department and conservation generally within the Board's area.

VISION

This Board's focus is within the area defined as the Wanganui Conservancy. Its vision is reflected in the Conservation Management Strategy for the Wanganui Conservancy. The Board's vision is that:

- The conservation of native species in the Taranaki-Whanganui Conservancy is improved by the partnership developed between the Board, the Department of Conservation, Tangata Whenua, local government and key stakeholders.
- The enjoyment of areas under conservation is enhanced by the role of the Board representing community interests.
- Conservation policy and outcomes are developed and monitored closely by the Board in achieving this vision.

KEY ISSUES (as at 2010)

The Board members have identified key issues that influence achievement of the Board's vision and conservation management objectives and policies. These are:

Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

- The Department's progress on implementing the CMS.

Treaty of Waitangi

- How the Board and the Departments meets their Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

Biodiversity, threatened species and environmental protection

- Lack of resources to deal adequately with, and the need to secure, the ecological integrity and protection of natural ecosystems, with particular emphasis on the protection of kiwi.

Tourism, recreation and development pressure

- How to balance increasing recreation and tourism use of high value conservation areas without compromising the quality of the environment and, at the same time, reducing the impacts of cumulative pressure.

KEY BOARD TARGETS, ACTIONS AND THEMES

CMS monitoring and performance

1. Whanganui National Park Management plan final draft is presented to the NZCA by December 2009.
2. CMS reporting (e.g. reporting frequency, use of graphs and other "visuals", reporting on exceptions) is enhanced.
3. Progress against the CMS is monitored and reported, when appropriate, to the NZ Conservation Authority (NZCA) or Director General.
4. CMS is revised and presented to NZCA for approval in September 2011.
5. Prepare for review of Egmont National Park Management Plan 2011.
6. Board progress is monitored annually against this strategic plan and its contribution to conservation outcomes is assessed.

Treaty of Waitangi

7. Board members request and receive comprehensive information about treaty settlements with iwi in this Conservancy and implications for the Board.
8. A mechanism where the Board can monitor its own progress against its Section 4 obligations is developed and implemented.
9. Board members understanding of Tikanga Maori continues to expand.

Biodiversity, threatened species and environmental protection (all in one grouping)

10. The plight of kiwi is advocated nationally and regionally, for their own preservation and as an iconic species for nature conservation.
11. Resources for adequate baseline protection of high value conservation areas are advocated for. This implies that areas of low conservation value may no longer be resourced.
12. The Board is actively engaged in making submissions on the strategic and recovery planning
13. for the key species in the conservancy.

Tourism and recreation development

14. NZCA and the Ministers of Conservation and Tourism are lobbied for greater return of revenue from overseas tourists into conservation and conservation-recreation.
15. The cumulative impacts of visitors are monitored closely for Whanganui and Egmont National Parks.
16. Volunteer programmes and opportunities are in place and promoted through Board networks.
17. Board members use their networks for education about recreation opportunities in conservation areas.

Ongoing advocacy, relationship building and individual roles

18. Collaborative relationships are developed with other organisations, such as regional councils, community groups, NZ Fish and Game, and other conservation boards, to resolve topical issues in conservation.
19. The Board is engaged in making submissions on key issues within the conservancy and actively seeks constructive communication with controlling authorities. These issues currently are:
 - Wind-farming
 - Energy efficiency
 - Eel protection and conservation
 - Regional Council(s) temporal [e.g. annual, LTCCP] and elemental [e.g. Land, Air, Water, Coastal, Transport] planning
20. Support is provided to the Department that strengthens goodwill, mutual trust and enduring relationships between the Department and local Maori, where these will help achieve conservation outcomes.

SECTION 4 CONSERVATION ACT 1987

The Board has specific responsibilities under the Act to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in all its activities. To this end the development of a shared conservation ethic with Tangata Whenua will be pursued as the two treaty partners look toward a common future.

Relationships with Tangata Whenua will be fostered and may take many forms, depending on the circumstances. Partnerships will be appropriate to local circumstances and based on good faith and co-operation. Where appropriate, protocols and agreements with Tangata Whenua will be negotiated and implemented, primarily with the Department with the Board in a supporting role, but at times the Board might take a lead role in such activity.

In pursuit of its Section 4 obligations, the Board will endeavour to see that:

- a) Board members are conversant with and understand the principles of the Treaty.
- b) Board members are conversant with all relevant sections of the Taranaki/Whanganui CMS and National Park Management Plans for this Conservancy.
- c) The Board conducts its business in a spirit of mutual respect and partnership.
- d) Board members improve their understanding of Tikanga Maori and develop an appreciation and acceptance of each other's values and rituals.
- e) Where appropriate, the Board supports Departmental consultation with Tangata Whenua, and initiates consultation if necessary and appropriate.
- f) Where matters of substance between the Tangata Whenua and the Board are dealt with, written records shall be taken and retained.
- g) The Tangata Whenua are informed of departmental and Board projects that may interest them.
- h) The Board seeks to avoid actions that might create a grievance or prevent the redress of a claim.

SUB COMMITTEES

Ad hoc sub committees will be formed and authorised by the Board to deal with specific issues between meetings and report to the board at each meeting. Unless otherwise instructed, sub-committees will settle their own rules and procedures within the accepted norms.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND ADVOCACY

By virtue of representing the community interest the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board has an important role as a public conservation watchdog and in educating the public about the benefits of conservation generally. To this end the Board:

- Is mindful that members are appointed by the Minister to represent the community interest in conservation and not their own interests or the views of those who nominated them.
- Welcomes the public to its meetings and encourages them to use the Board's public forum to discuss matters of mutual interest or to bring matters of conservation concern to the Board.
- Is more than happy to meet with specific interest groups and organisations to discuss or follow up specific issues.
- Will advocate its interests at any public forum or statutory planning process when that is deemed appropriate.
- Will advise the Director General or the New Zealand Conservation Authority about any conservation matter relating to the area within the Board's jurisdiction when that is deemed appropriate.

Signed on behalf of the Board,
Darryn Ratana, Chairperson



October 2009

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board adopted this strategic plan at their meeting 9 October 2009