

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board

Annual Report 2018 - 2019



Front Cover Photo:

Nga Motu / Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area bordering the Tapuae Marine Reserve
November 21 2018 – photo courtesy of Vicky Dombroski

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board
Annual Report 2018-2019 |
Doccm : 6241277

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board Annual Report 2018 – 2019

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

This report is presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required by the Conservation Act and is distributed to interested parties. Members of the public are welcome to attend Conservation Board meetings.

If you would like more information on the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board, please refer to:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/taranaki-whanganui/>

ISSN 1173-2849 (print)
ISSN 1174-1813 (online)

Published by
Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board
c/- Department of Conservation

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1. Chairperson's Report

In this annual period, the Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board was privileged to have enjoyed the company of Steve Fouhy who, although ailing, continued to attend meetings and without fail always offered a point of difference. Steve passed away during this time. We will remember him for the perspective he brought to the table. He was and shall remain a memorable - likeable character. Okioki e moe.

Beside my departure from the board, Dr Robert-Shaw also has been set free to pursue other interests. Robert brought the experience of public policy and strategy and readily applied these amongst his wide-ranging talents and skills to our collegial approach to difficult conversations and decisions. There is little doubt in my mind that Robert has a passion for doing good things and doing them well. I am sure that he'll be missed at the board table and wish him all the best with his future endeavours.

Our time together with Steve, with Robert and the DoC staff, who continue to provide great support, has gifted us all with fond and positive memories. The baton has now been passed on to the remaining and new members to carry forward the board's strategic direction and activities. With this in mind, the board is pleased to summarise its activities regarding the environment inclusive of the whenua, ngahere, awa, and the moana.

Some who read this report will already know the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board has been involved with the sea-bed mining case that found its way to the Court of Appeal. An important aspect of this activity has been to keep the New Zealand Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation well abreast of the board's decisions and actions. We acknowledge and thank our department support staff for the useful guidance and the level of support received. On another note, the board was provided with timely presentations from Crown officials and iwi lead negotiators involved with treaty settlement negotiations inclusive of Mounga Taranaki and Whanganui land claims with National Parks in line of sight. Indeed, these engagements led to the board considering statutory obligations and responsibilities, co-design, co-governance and co-management issues and challenges.

The board completed two field trips this period which further strengthened the board's approach to engage directly with people at place, to listen carefully to both passion and disappointment, and to contribute wisely. On the otherwise of the work agenda, the board regularly monitored Department of Conservation activities with particular regard for the nature and extent of its relationships with mana whenua, our communities and organisations.

From time to time, we questioned the consent process and related decisions, to formally seek information and feedback from officials and the Minister of Conservation, and to comment on policy proposals to central government agencies. Our one significant disappointment relates to the Conservation Management Strategy which has not been reviewed and revised for some considerable time. I commend this outstanding work task to the remaining board members and its new members. This does need more immediate attention to be progressed while at the same time to be responsive to complexities which the Department of Conservation has raised on several occasions.

Tiakina mai te taiao.

Dr Brendon Te Tiwha Puketapu
Chair 2018-2019

2. Introduction

This is the Taranaki- Whanganui Conservation Board Annual Report as required under Section 6 of the Conservation Act 1987.

Conservation Boards are independent advisory bodies, established by statute. The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board represents the community and offers interaction between communities and the Department of Conservation, within the area of jurisdiction of the board.

The Conservation Board has several statutory roles under various Acts including:

- advising the Department of Conservation and the NZCA on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice
- reporting on the implementation of the CMS
- the approval of Conservation Management Plans
- the recommendation of National Park Management Plans to the NZCA for approval
- advising the Department of Conservation and NZCA on conservation matters, and proposed changes to status of land of national and international significance
- liaising with Fish and Game Council on conservation matters
- carrying out other powers delegated by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act or any other Act

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act requires Conservation Boards to provide the NZCA with an annual report as soon as practical after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board submits this annual report.

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board is appointed by the Minister of Conservation under section 6(P) of the Conservation Act 1987. Board functions are outlined in section 6(M) and the powers, which enable the Board to carry out those functions, are under 6(N) of the Act.

The Conservation Act specifies that the Board's role is to:

- recommend the approval of conservation management strategies
- approve conservation management plans
- advise on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice
- advise on proposed changes to the status of land areas of national and international significance
- liaise with Fish and Game Councils on conservation matters; and
- carry out other powers delegated to them by the Conservation Minister, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

The board has a number of functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of national park management plans and recommending approval of these plans by the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

Section 6 (O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires Conservation Boards to provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after the 30th June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board submits this annual report.

3. Conservation Board Region

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction encompasses some 15,000 sq. km of land extending from the Mokau River in the north to the Turakina River in the south and inland to Ohura and Taumarunui. Approximately 298,000 ha of public conservation land is administered by DOC which represents almost 20% of the total area of the board's district.

In addition to a number of scenic, historic and recreational reserves, the district includes both the Egmont National Park and its associated array of recreation opportunities, and the Whanganui National Park with its unique history and strong cultural connections.

The coastal boundary that extends along the board's district includes the Tapuae and Paraninihi marine reserves as well as the long-established Nga Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Protected Area.

Volcanoes, wild and scenic rivers, huge tracts of forest, rugged mountain ranges and a dynamic coastline provide for a great diversity of landscapes, habitats, plants and animals.

The area also extends out to the 12-nautical mile limit with respect to coastal and marine issues, and out to the 200-nautical mile limit, with respect to protected species.

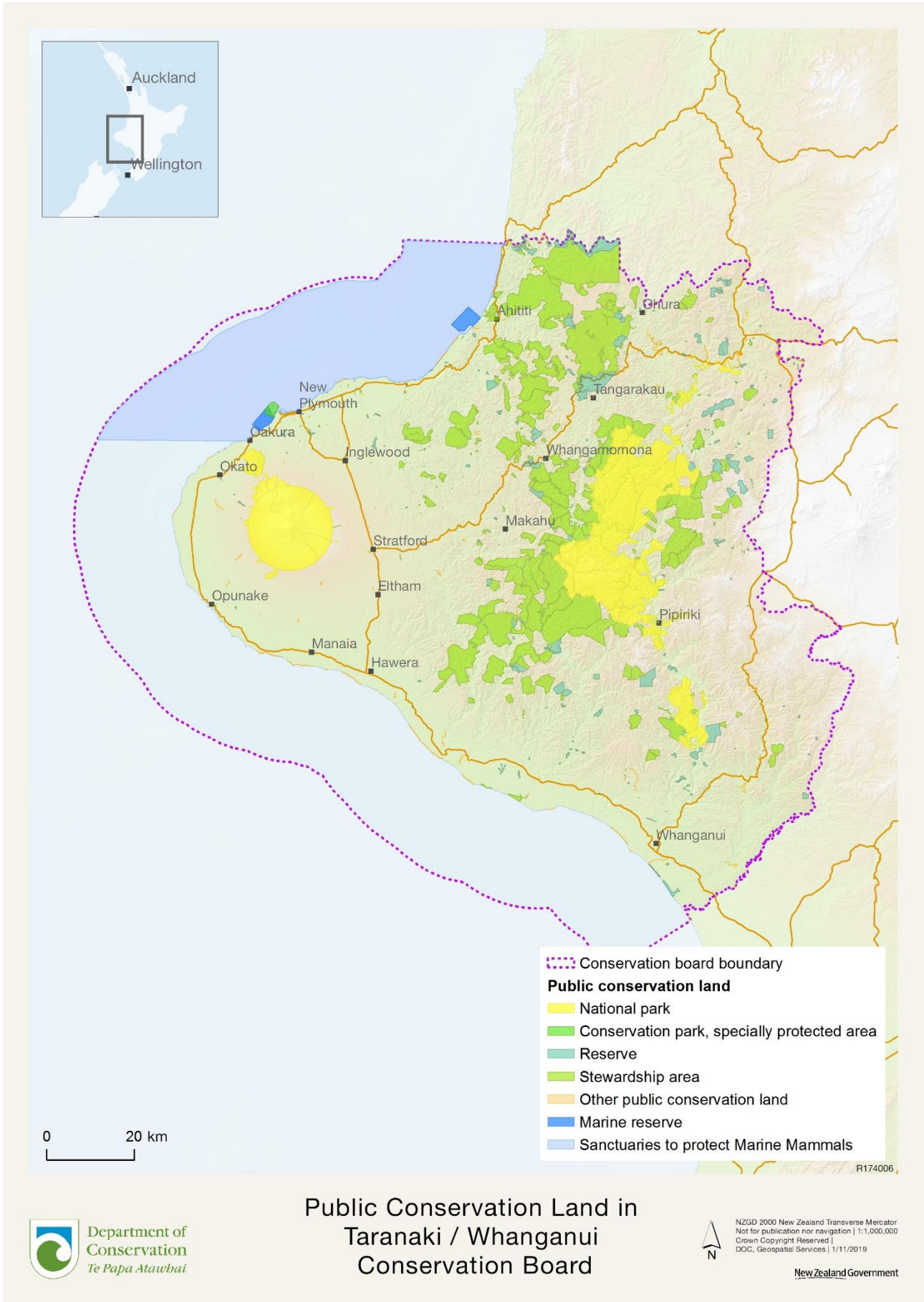


Figure 1. Public Conservation Land in Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board

**Public Conservation Land (hectares by legislative section)
in the Taranaki / Whanganui Board Area – 1ST November 2019**

Recreation Reserve	<i>58.19 ha</i>
Historic Reserve – <i>31.60 ha</i>	<i>31.60 ha</i>
Scenic Reserve (sec 19 1a)	<i>20,078.93 ha</i>
Scenic Reserve (sec 19 1b)	<i>4.72 ha</i>
Conservation Park	<i>723.44 ha</i>
Scientific Reserve	<i>259.4 ha</i>
Government Purpose Reserve	<i>455.85 ha</i>
Sanctuary Ara	<i>1.34 ha</i>
Local Purpose Reserve	<i>168.42 ha</i>
Moveable Marginal Strip	<i>56.24 ha</i>
Fixed Marginal Strip	<i>649.78 ha</i>
Stewardship Area	<i>160,929.93 ha</i>
National Park	<i>108,463.07 ha</i>

3.1. Conservation features of the Area

Main features of Public Conservation Land and Waters within the Board's boundaries are:

- Wetlands, lakes and rivers
- Waverley Lake network
- Island sanctuaries off the coast of New Plymouth
Sugar loaf Islands Conservation Sanctuaries
- North Island West Coast dunes and estuaries
Whitiau Scientific and Scenic Reserves, Tapuarau Conservation Area, Patea Harbour
- Vast area of intact lowland forest
Whanganui National Park, Waitotara Conservation Area, Tangarakau Conservation and Scenic Reserves and North Taranaki Conservation Areas
- Marine reserves
Paraninihi and Tapuae Marine Reserve
- Marine mammals
West Coast North Island Marine Mammal Sanctuary, Maui Dolphin, Proposed Blue Whale Sanctuary and New Zealand Fur Seals
- Whanganui River
Te Awa Tupua Settlement
- Taranaki Mounga
- The Whanganui National Park

The extensive forest of the Park is at the heart of a vast area of intact native forest, the second largest on the North Island. It holds the largest remaining Kiwi population in the North Island. Covering a total area of 74'231 hectares.

The large number of issues which are of interest to the Board include:

- Taranaki Mouna
- Wetlands, lakes and rivers
- Island sanctuaries off the coast of New Plymouth
- North Island West Coast dunes and estuaries
- Vast area of intact lowland forest
- Marine reserves
- Marine mammal
- Whanganui River
- Large scale pest control
- Intensive management of endangered species
- Consents
- Recreational Activities and Tourism
- Biosecurity

4. Board Functioning

4.1. Board functioning under 6M of the Conservation Act 1987

The functions of the Board are:

- 1) To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies, under the relevant enactments.
- 2) To approve conservation management plans, and the review and amendment of such plans, under the relevant enactments.
- 3) To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on the implementation of conservation management strategies and conservation management plans for the area within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 4) To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director-General.
 - a) On any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance; and
 - b) On any other conservation matter relating to any area with the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 5) To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 6) To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.

4.2. Powers of the Board under Section 6n of the Conservation Act 1987

- 7) Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.
- 8) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), 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.
- 9) The power conferred by subsection (2)(a) 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.

4.3. Responsibilities under other Sections of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 states “This Act shall be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”.

As a Board established under the Conservation Act 1987, section 4 applies to the Board in the discharge of its functions.

With two statutory member appointments and other members with Iwi roles, the Board is well abreast of the treaty landscape and advises the Department of key tangata whenua issues when relevant.

4.4. Board Functions under the National Parks Act 1980

There are two national parks within the Board’s region: Mt Egmont National Park and Whanganui National Park. Both National Parks will be subject to Treaty Settlement Negotiations in the coming years.

4.5. Board membership

The Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board had nine members for the 2018-2019 year appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Conservation Act 1987.

There were two reappointments to the board, Ms Novena McGuckin from Whanganui and Samuel (Sam) Tamarapa from Waitara.

Dr Brendon (Tiwha) Puketapu was appointed as Chair at the meeting on 24 August 2017, for a term of 18 months (August 2017 – February 2019).

At the board meeting held on the 30th May 2019, Vicky Dombroski was appointed as Chair, for a term of 12 months (February 2019-February 2020) and Donald (Don) Robinson was appointed Vice Chair, for a term of 12 months (February 2019 – February 2020).

There were nine board members for the reporting year appointed by the Minister of Conservation.

The following table lists the membership of the board between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019 and their term of office.

Table 1: Board membership

Board Member	Area	Term Start	Term End	Term served
Puketapu, Dr Brendon (Te Tiwaha)	Whanganui	21/11/2013	30/06/2019	6
*Fouhy, Stephen (Steve)	Whanganui	01/05/2014	30/06/2019	4
Dombroski, Vicky	Waitara	01/05/2014	30/06/2019	5
McGuckin, Novena	Whanganui	01/05/2014	30/06/2021	5
Poutu, Liana	New Plymouth	01/07/2015	30/06/2019	4
Robinson, Donald (Don)	Whanganui	07/07/2015	30/06/2021	4
Shaw, Dr Robert	Stratford	01/07/2016	30/06/2019	3
Tamarapa, Sam	Waitara	01/05/2014	30/06/2021	5
Vujcich, Mathew	Inglewood	01/07/2017	30/07/2020	2

*Resigned November 2018

4.6. Members profiles

Dr Brendon (Te Tiwaha) Puketapu of Featherston

Appointment term: 21 November 2013 to 30 June 2019

Dr Puketapu is involved with hapū and iwi matters relating to conversation lands and national park areas in the Whanganui region. He has experience in management and governance roles with not-for-profit, private sector and public sector organisations. He has a working background in public policy, Treaty claim negotiations, organisational change, governance and management. He is currently a member of the board for Te Atihau Whanganui Incorporation and he is the chair for Te Atihau Charitable Trust. He is of Whanganui Te Atihau a Paparangi, Ngāti Rangī, Ngā Rauru, Ngāti Ruanui, Ngā Ruahinerangi, Taranaki nui tonu, Te Atiawa descent.

Steve Fouhy of Whanganui

Appointment term: 1 May 2014 to 30 June 2019

Mr Fouhy is a top-dressing pilot, environmentally conscious farmer and contractor. He has knowledge of government processes and boards having been a Rangitikei District Councillor. His outdoor recreation interests are farming, fishing and planting.

Vicky Dombroski of Waitara

Appointment term: 1 May 2014 to 30 June 2019

Ms Dombroski has over 20 years' experience in management and leadership. She has an extensive background working with boards, councils and committees in the local community. Her career in economic, community, tourism and environmental development along with her extensive networks and passion for Taranaki and its people, give her an ideal background for a role on the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board. Her outdoor recreation interests are monitoring the health of the sea and local reefs, kayak fishing, horse riding, and tramping. She is of mixed indigenous South American, English, Cornish and German.

Novena McGuckin of Whanganui

Appointment term: 1 May 2014 to 30 June 2021

Novena McGuckin has over 15 years of Governance and Management experience and works for Te Tumu Paeroa, who administer over 2000 Land Blocks. Novena travels extensively, meeting with owners supporting them to achieve their aspirations for their land. Novena is a Trustee on the Whanganui Lands Settlement Trust and is a member of other various land trusts in the Whanganui Region.

She actively supports conservation and is an advocate of protecting indigenous ecosystems on Māori land and encouraging private landowners in New Zealand to protect special natural and cultural features on their land with open space covenants particularly with Ngā Whenua Rāhui. Novena enjoys outdoor recreation and walking and annually canoeing the Whanganui River, researching and visiting historical sites.

She is of Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngāti Patutokotoko, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Maniapoto Iwi.

Liana Poutu of New Plymouth

Appointment term: 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019

Ms Poutu has a legal background with a strong focus on Treaty of Waitangi, Treaty Settlement negotiations, Māori land and Māori governance issues. She has represented iwi groups before the Māori Land Court and Waitangi Tribunal, specifically in the Wai 262 Flora and Fauna, Aquaculture, Foreshore & Seabed, Management of Petroleum, and National Park inquiries. She is currently the Chair of Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa Trust (the post settlement governance entity responsible for managing Te Atiawa's Treaty Settlement). Ms Poutu also holds a number of other governance roles including National Science Challenge Sustainable Seas Kāhui Advisory Group Chair. She is of Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Whanganui and Maniapoto descent.

Donald (Don) Robinson of Whanganui

Appointment term: 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020

Don Robinson is a director on the Atihau Whanganui Incorporation, chair of the Pipiriki Incorporation and Ngā Poro Waimarino Forest Trust. Don has sound experience in governance, leadership, environmental management and has an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi relating to conservation outcomes.

Don has a personal passion for the conservation and preservation of flora and fauna on both conservation and private lands; including involvement with Ngā Whenua Rahui, DOC, regional and district councils to ensure positive outcomes in these areas. He is of Ngati Uenuku, Ngati Kurawhatia, Ngati Rangi o te Manganui o te Ao, Atihaunui a Paparangi, Nga Rauru descent.

Dr Robert Shaw of Opunake

Appointment term: 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019

Dr Shaw is an experienced member of city and regional councils. He was a civil servant for 18 years in Wellington in several ministries, including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology. He was a professor in the School of Business at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and at present he works as a mediator and counsellor at Family Works Taranaki. His current research draws upon continental philosophy and relates to social and environmental issues. He is active in conservation issues in South Taranaki and is a member of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand and the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Samuel (Sam) Tamarapa of Waitara

Appointment term: 1 May 2014 to 30 June 2021

Mr Tamarapa is an iwi communications officer for the Taranaki Regional Council. He has a broad knowledge of public policy, legislation, the Treaty of Waitangi, and board governance. He has experience in environmental management and has a strong personal interest in native freshwater species protection. His outdoor recreation interests are fishing, diving, hunting and sport. He is of Ngati Ruanui, Nga Rauru, Te Ati Haunui-a-Paparangi, Ngati Maru, Te Atiawa, Taranaki Iwi and Te Arawa iwi

Mathew Vujcich of Inglewood

Appointment term: 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020

Mr Vujcich has over 30 year's involvement in local and regional government. He has experience in parks and recreation management and has expertise in biodiversity restoration and pest eradication projects. He has a strong personal interest in integrating farming and sustainability issues and currently farms in Inglewood.

4.7. Board Meetings

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board held four board meetings and two extraordinary meetings during the reporting period. Venues for the board meetings vary each year to ensure a wide coverage and enable members of the public in the district to attend meetings and access the board.

Table 2: Board meeting dates and location

Board meeting date	Meeting location and venue
29 August 2018	Taranaki Regional Council 47 Cloten Road, Stratford
27 September 2018 (Special Meeting)	Department of Conservation 34-36 Taupo Quay, Whanganui
9 th November 2018 (Special Meeting)	Department of Conservation 73 Rostrevor Street, Hamilton
22 November 2018	Department of Conservation 55a Rimu Street, Strandon, New Plymouth
28 February 2019	Blue Duck Café 4265 Oio Road, Whakaharo, Owhango
30 May 2019	Department of Conservation 34-36 Taupo Quay, Whanganui

4.8. Attendance

The table below summarises the number of board meetings attended by members out of the total number of meetings held during the year.

Members attended other meetings and events in their role as board members, including subcommittee meetings and representative roles.

Table 3: Board Member Attendance

Board Member	Board Meetings	Field Trips	Workshops
Puketapu, Dr Brendon (Te Tiwaha)	4 / 4	1 / 2	1 / 1
Fouhy, Stephen (Steve)	1 / 4	0 / 2	1 / 1
Dombroski, Vicky	3 / 4	1 / 2	1 / 1
McGuckin, Novena	3 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 1
Poutu, Liana	4 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 1
Robinson, Donald (Don)	3 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 1
Shaw, Dr Robert	4 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 1
Tamarapa, Sam	3 / 4	1 / 2	1 / 1
Vujcich, Mathew	4 / 4	2 / 2	1 / 1

4.9. Board Committees and Representation

Table 3: Board Committees and Representation

Sam Tamarapa	Maui and Hector's Dolphin Stakeholders Threat Management Plan Review
Sam Tamarapa	Ngāti Tama Joint Advisory Committee
Vicky Dombroski / Dr Robert Shaw	Review of DOC regarding the internal process for TTRL Application

4.10. Field trips and site inspections

Field trips are an excellent opportunity for board members to become more aware of conservation issues within their region

Table 4: Field trips and site inspections

Field trip date	Field trip destination and purpose
21 November 2018	Ngā Motu (Sugar Loaf Islands) Marine Reserve, New Plymouth
21 November 2018	Rotokare Scenic Reserve, Eltham
27 February 2018	Blue Duck Station, 4265 Oio Road, Whakaharo, Owhango

Wednesday 21st November 2018 (Morning)

The purpose of the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board's field trip was to gain a better understanding of the Marine environment off the Taranaki coastline.

It was overcast and rainy when the board and Department of Conservation staff boarded 'Chaddy's Charters' for a visit to the Ngā Motu (Sugar Loaf Islands) Marine Reserve off the coast of Ngāmotu (New Plymouth), which are now jointly vested in Te Atiawa and Taranaki Iwi but managed by the Department.

During the trip we were led by running commentary from the very experienced marine biologist Callum Lilley from the Department of Conservation, who alerted us to all the different features of the Islands, the wildlife and the boundaries of the Tapuae Marine Reserve.



Figure 2: Tapuae Marine Reserve: Image V. Dombroski Nov. 2018

About half-way through the trip the weather took a turn for the worst and we were rocking and rolling like the proverbial cork. This gave Callum the perfect opportunity to reinforce to the board the message that it can and does take lots of time to monitor and do their work in Wild West coast unpredictable conditions.

It was a huge relief to be back in the relative calm waters of the Port Taranaki harbour, where the picture was taken of us all before a change of clothes was required before heading to Rotokare Scenic Reserve in Eltham.



*Figure 3: Chaddy's Charters: Port Taranaki – Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board, Nov 2018. Image (V Dombroski 2018)
Chaddy's Charters: Port Taranaki 2018
Image: (V. Dombroski, 2018)*

Wednesday 21 November 2018

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board members then travelled to the very beautiful and amazing Rotokare Scenic Reserve and Sanctuary based slightly north of Eltham in Taranaki, where members had the opportunity to meet with Reserve Trustees and learn more of the predator control work/projects undertaken.

Sanctuary Manager Simon Collins and one of the trustees hosted us and delivered a small PowerPoint presentation to explain the history, fencing, the logistics of growing and nurturing multiple species and translocation challenges associated with the sanctuary.

The main message to take away from this initiative is that it was, and still is, a proud Community Led project in protecting local and national biodiversity. In the main it is still a project run by volunteers with only 3.8 permanent staff on site. We then went for a short walk, yes in the rain again, where we heard but didn't manage to see the Tieki (saddleback). An amazing place to hear, and if you're lucky- see, birds that are more or less extinct in most other parts of the country.

Many thanks to Department staff, our hosts for the day and the varied and interesting information and insights gained from the places we visited.



Figure 4: Rotokare Scenic Reserve- Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board, Nov. 2018, Image: (V. Dombroski)

Rotokare Scenic Reserve
Image: (V. Dombroski, 2018)



Figure 5: Stitchbird/hihi: NZ Native Land Bird. Image courtesy doc.govt.nz

27 February 2019

On Wednesday, 27 February 2019, Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board members met at Blue Duck Station, at Whakahoro, 2913 hectares (7200) acre high country property owned by Dan Stelle. This station has the Kaiwhakauka and Morinui Rivers running through it.

Hosted by Dan, and accompanied by DOC staff from the Whanganui District Office, the board spent the afternoon on the Kaiwhakauka Track, where they were briefed on the history of the area, observed remnants of native forest that once existed throughout the region, viewed newly established riparian plantings, to improve water quality, and learnt more of the biodiversity work Dan is doing to improve habitat for native species i.e. native bats, fish and the blue duck (whio).

Members were shown the DOC landing/toilets and were briefed on the mitigation work completed, and ongoing, to keep busy tourist tracks open, and of tourism and recreational opportunities within the rohe.

Dan Steele attended the board's 'public forum' the next day, where he spoke of his aspirations for the future, his desire to 'educate' to be 'relevant' and to have 'goals'.

The board was impressed with Dan's commitment and felt he should be in the 'national spotlight' as a conservation advocate; his inspiration was a reminder as to why we are involved in conservation. The board agreed that they needed to find ways to support people like Dan to continue the good work.



Figure 6: Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board Members /DOC, February 2019

4.11. Training for members

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board held one workshop in August 2018 to complete a 'reinduction' and finalise their Annual Work Plan 2018-2019.

4.12. Department involvement in Board meetings

Department staff attended throughout the year. Director Operators HWT, Operations Managers at site, Acting Statutory Manager and Board Support Officer attended board meetings.

5. Statutory Activity

In addition to the regular updates on the Department's activities provided in the status report, which is considered at each meeting, the board received additional briefings and updates.

Meeting Thursday 22 November 2018

Ian Hicks – Taranaki Maunga Negotiation Manager, Office of Treaty Settlements and Kayla Wilson – Senior Policy and Negotiations Advisor - DOC, met with the board to discuss the progress of the Taranaki Maunga negotiations.

Meeting – 30 May 2019

Representatives from Te Korowai o Wainuiārua (TKoW), Crown Negotiations Team and DOC Treaty Team met with the board to provide an update on the TKoW Agreement in Principle.

Crown Negotiation attendees were:

Katherine Gordon (Chief Crown Negotiator)

Lu McGregor (Negotiations Manager)

Annie Broughton (Analyst)

Te Korowai o Wainuiārua negotiation team attendees were:

Chris McKenzie (Lead Negotiator)

Aidan Gilbert (Chair)

Steve Hirini (Project Manager)

Paora Haitana (Negotiator)

Moana Ellis (Office Manager and Negotiator)

DOC Treaty team attendees were:

Stephen Karaitiana (Treaty Negotiations Manager)

Peter Robertson (Senior Policy and Negotiations Advisor)

Huia Forbes (Senior Policy and Negotiations Advisor)

Conservation Board Seabed Mining

The hearing was held 24 – 26 September 2019 and has now concluded. The President of the Court of Appeal, Kos P, presiding over the three-member bench of the Court of Appeal, indicated that a decision would be likely before the end of the year.

In August 2018, the High Court quashed the marine consent granted to Trans-Tasman Resources Limited (TTRL) by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for TTRL to undertake seabed mining in the South Taranaki Bight. In doing so, the High Court upheld appeals by the Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board and others against the marine consent. The High Court found that the EPA, through its Decision Making Committee (DMC), had erred in allowing TTRL to use an “adaptive management approach” to its consent – when that approach was not allowed for a marine discharge consent under the EEZ Act.

TTRL appealed the High Court’s decision to the Court of Appeal, seeking to overturn the High Court’s decision and reinstate its mining consent.

The Conservation Board resolved to defend the High Court’s decision, as well as to cross-appeal in order to have the High Court’s decision confirmed on other grounds.

The Conservation Board co-ordinated closely with other cross-appellants, in particular Iwi and Fisheries interests, in the hearing before the High Court. Joint submissions were presented, with the Conservation Board’s Counsel, Mr Gardner-Hopkins, taking the lead on a question of law relating to how the “nature and effect” of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) should have been “taken into account” by the DMC. The issue is an important one, given that most of the effects of TTRL’s proposal will fall within the Coastal Marine Area, and some of those effects were identified as “significant”. For example, the DMC found that there would be “significant adverse effects within ecologically significant areas” within the Coastal Marine Area. The RMA and NZCPS weigh very heavily against allowing such effects.

Board Chair, Vicky Dombroski, said ‘the Board is pleased to have had its concerns heard by the Court of Appeal, and looks forward to the Court’s decision, which it has indicated should be released before the end of the year’.

‘The issues are very important to the Board, given its conservation management functions which extend into the EEZ as well as applying to the Coastal Marine Area. It welcomes the guidance that will be given by the Court of Appeal as to what is required to meet the EEZ’s “protect from pollution” purpose, the duty to make decisions on the best available information and apply the precautionary principle.’

‘The Board also specifically sought to clarify how the EPA should have taken into account the Resource Management Act and in particular the strong directives of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, which weigh heavily against allowing the significant effects in the Coastal Marine Area that the DMC found would occur.’

The Board is an independent statutory body constituted under the Conservation Act. Its functions include conservation management and the Board was concerned to ensure that the EPA’s decision

was made in accordance with the statutory tests established under the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) legislation.

By way of background, TTRL lodged this (second) application for marine consents with the EPA in August 2016. The EPA's decision to grant TTRL's second application was made in August 2017 and required a casting vote from the chairperson of the EPA's four-member Decision Making Committee.

This also followed an earlier application by Trans-Tasman Resources for the same activity, lodged in November 2013 and declined by the EPA in June 2014. The Board had also opposed that earlier application.

Ngati Tama 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 Whitecliff's 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 gazettal of Parininihi Marine Reserve in September 2006, the JAC was delegated the Board's powers 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.

Board Member Sam Tamarapa was appointed by the Minister of Conservation as the Taranaki Whanganui Board representative in 2017.

5.1. Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

Implementation monitoring

Conservation Boards have a critical role in the operational Management Strategies and with preparation, review, amendment and approval of statutory planning documents (Conservation Management Strategies (CMS's) and Conservation Management Plans (CMP's) and National Park Management Plans (NPMP's).

The operative Whanganui Conservation Management Strategy, 1997-2007, is currently overdue for review.

In each Board meeting the TWCB considers the Whanganui Conservation Management Strategy as per the statutory functions and requirements of the board. At the time of this report the CMS is 12 years overdue. Tellingly, even in the name of the Wanganui Conservation Management Strategy appears as an affront to modern day senses by not having the 'H' included.

Since 2014 the TWCB has reviewed the CMS document once and made some general observations and feedback, which are in themselves possibly now null and void, given the time that has lapsed and the myriad of changes both physically (ie Climate Change) and politically (changes to Government and how the department operates) since that review. Trying to monitor the changes against an outdated strategy is time consuming, confusing and lacks a consistent approach - both by the Board and the Department.

Given the importance of the CMS and how the department should be giving effect to it. We as a Board decided that we must do something more to meet our statutory obligations. We have looked at a few ideas and have been advocating to split the two regions that make up the Wanganui Conservation Management Strategy (Taranaki and Whanganui)

Considering the changes identified above, and changes to the Departments operational areas of responsibility (half of the TWCB area, Whanganui, is in the Central North Island Rohe and the other half, Taranaki, is in the Hauraki/Waikato/Taranaki Rohe the changes that we have advocated for are logical and would assist with aligning CMS objective 48.1 against work that the Department is actually doing.

Below, from the Wanganui Conservation Management Strategy

48.1 Objective:

Ensure that the CMS is a current and effective policy document through on-going monitoring, subsequent amendment and review.

48.3 (iv) Review or amend the CMS when:

- directed by the Director General of Conservation
- when general policy or government directions represent a significant departure from provisions of the CMS
- when CMS monitoring indicates that its provisions are impractical or have been superseded by new information or evidence
- if the Department intends to prepare a conservation management plan but there is no provision for it in the CMS.

As a consequence of the CMS challenges that the Board has faced this year, we were unable to meet our objectives from the Annual workplan. (See project five objectives)

5.2. Management plans

The functions of Boards are set out in Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987 and in the National Parks and Reserves Acts.

We acknowledge that the Egmont National Park Management Plan is also out of date. However, given that there are treaty negotiations are still ongoing with regards to the governance and management of the Taranaki Maunga and its surrounding park and the fact that we have been kept abreast of those negotiations, its feels prudent to wait for the outcome of the negotiations before embarking on the process of updating a new NPMP- indeed it may not even be the role or function of the Board to do so in the future.

5.3. Concessions

The TWCB had overview and comments to make on some of the concessions being considered during the year. When needed, we have advocated on behalf of our communities as there still doesn't seem to be a weighting system for providing communities and people who live in the area to have first right of refusal to/for concessions. It is especially important when considering our role under section 4 of the Act.

6. Advice and Advocacy

6.1. Other Conservation Board Liaisons

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board's immediate neighbours are the Waikato, Taupo/Tongariro and Wellington Conservation Board. The board agendas and meeting papers are electronically forwarded to neighbouring liaisons.

Mr Jim Rainey, Wellington Conservation Liaison, has attended two of the four Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board meetings throughout the year.

6.2. New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)

Mark Brough is the New Zealand Conservation Authority appointed liaison to the board and has attended two of the four meetings throughout the reporting period.

Agenda's, meeting minutes and the bi-monthly letter from the New Zealand Conservation Authority are forwarded to members electronically as they arrive.

6.3. Community advocacy and involvement

The board believes that working with conservation organisations and members of the public is very important. Meetings were held in different parts of the Taranaki Whanganui region and although meetings were advertised in local newspapers public attendance at forums was low.

The board are keen to see increased community engagement at the public forum sessions. When time is available in the next year, we will endeavour to make more progress with implementing a communications plan, rather than just advertising our meetings we need to be inviting organisations to attend our public forums. Especially if they help us and the manuhiri (guests) to understand and learn more about each other.

The board is also a member of 'Wild for Taranaki'- a Regional Biodiversity Trust, that gives a voice to all the people and organisations that work in the conservation, environmental areas. The department is also a member. This forum is a very good place to learn about the work being undertaken in the Region.

6.4. District and regional council advocacy and advice

The board has had limited opportunity to meet with representatives of the six local Councils in the last reporting year. However, individual board members have from time to time been able to provide feedback to the board by providing information gained during their normal day to day employment.

6.5. Iwi liaison and advocacy

The board has two statutory appointments based on recommendations from the Taranaki Maori Trust and the former Whanganui Maori Trust Board (now the trustees of Nga Tangata Tiake o Whanganui. (Conservation Act S6P).

In addition, there are other board members filling public vacancies that have iwi affiliations. These connections play a vital role in improving the board's understanding of iwi perspectives.

6.6. DOC Community Fund

This is a fund set up by the Department to help fund community groups to do conservation work. Novena McGuckin and Vicky Dombroski served on the panel that reviewed and provided recommendations for successful recipients.

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Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board Work Programme 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019

Project 1: We seek better outcomes for the environment with respect to sea-bed mining and will engage with legal and other processes in relation to the current application of Trans-Tasman Resources Limited to process the South Taranaki Bight and any similar applications which may eventuate.

Project 2: We must give effect to the undertaking we gave at a Parliamentary Select Committee to actively contribute to decision-making regarding the Whanganui River in accordance with the *Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017*.

Project 3: We will follow and contribute, when appropriate, to the Conservation Management issues and challenges associated with the Crown/Iwi Settlement for Mounga Taranaki.

Project 4: We will contribute to the Department of Conservation’s development project on departmental decision-making concerning the RMA and EEZ legislation, in particular in relation to community involvement in all stages of the decision-making.

Project 5: We will actively pursue the establishment of a modern, comprehensive Conservation Management Strategy for our *rohe* in accordance with our statutory responsibility.

Performance indicators

To ensure we actively engage with our priority projects throughout the year, the following performance indicators were adopted.

Priority project	Performance indicator
Project 1 To oppose sea-bed mining and Trans-Tasman Resources Limited.	1. In relation to Project 1, at every regular meeting of our Board, we shall formally agree our response to advice from the Department of Conservation and information from our community.
Project 2 To give effect to <i>Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017</i> .	2. In relation to Project 2, at every regular meeting of our Board, we shall formally agree our response to advice from the Department of Conservation and information from our community.
Project 3 To contribute to the Crown/Iwi Settlement for Mounga Taranaki processes.	3. In relation to Project 3, at every regular meeting of our Board, we shall formally agree our response to advice from the Department of Conservation and information from our community.

Project 4: To contribute to the Department of Conservation's decision-making concerning the RMA and EEZ legislation.	4. In relation to Project 4, at every regular meeting of our Board, we shall formally agree Our response to advice from the Department of Conservation and information from our community.
Project 5 To advance a Conservation Management Strategy.	5. In relation to Project 5, at every regular meeting of our Board, we shall formally agree our response to advice from the Department of Conservation and information from our community.

Performance indicators:

Performance indicator	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
1	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved
2	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved
3	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved
4	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved
5	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved	Achieved OR Not achieved

Status indicator

Colour	Indicates
	Completed
	Started and is ongoing
	Not started yet