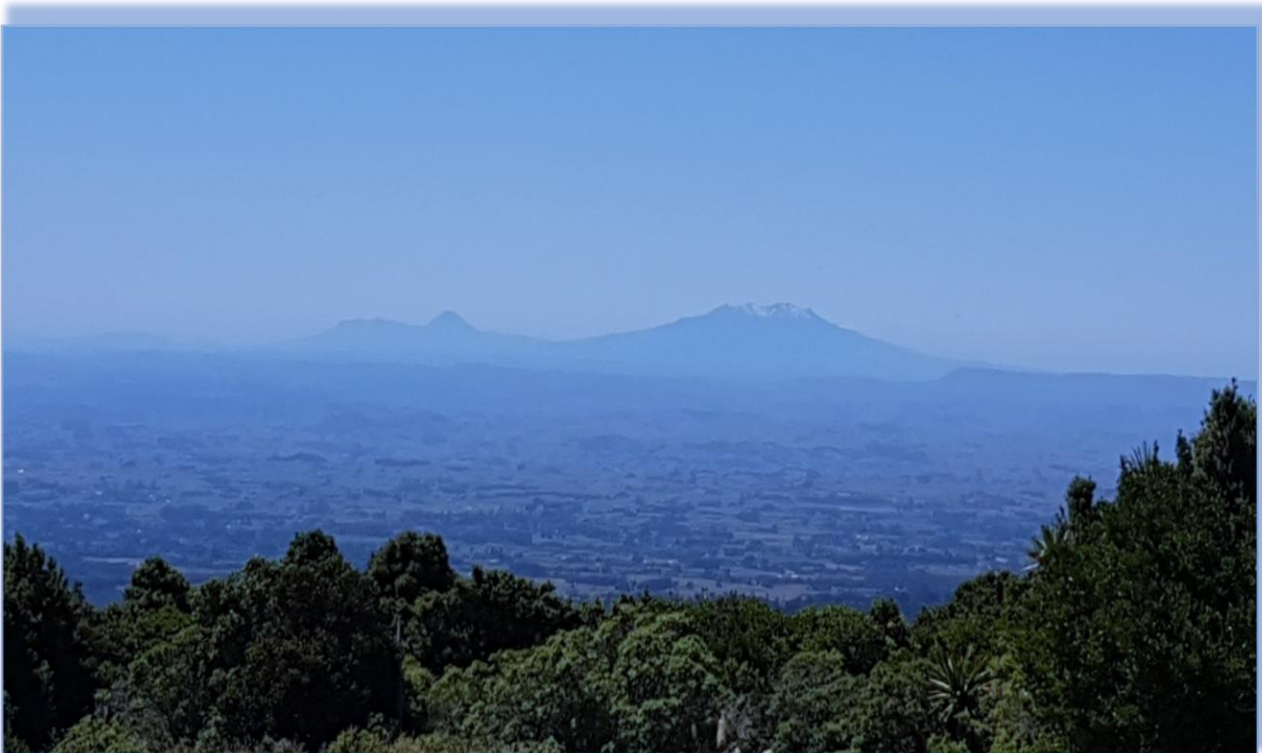


Taranaki - Whanganui Conservation Board Annual Report 2019 - 2020



Front Cover Photo: *View of Ruapehu, Ngāuruhoe, Tongariro*
Photo courtesy of Drew Castle (TWCB) Member

Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board Annual Report 2019 – 2020

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/>

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1. Chairperson's Report

I would like to open this report by acknowledging the input of **Steve Fouhy, Dr Tiwha Puketapu (ex TWCB Chair) and Dr Robert Shaw**, who are highly valued departing TWCB members immediately prior this period. Their individual and combined expertise and approach to their roles on this board have been both inspirational and appreciated.

We welcomed **three new Board members** in the 2019/2020 period Andrew (Drew) Castle, Allan Juffermans, Boy Cribb and they are already providing added value to the Board.

The Department's Statutory Manager for our rohe, Gemma White, left during this period to pursue a law degree. I would like to acknowledge her time with us and the awesome support she was able to give to us through a quite turbulent period. Would also like to extend a warm welcome to Michelle Lewis, Gemma's replacement. Michelle was due to start in the role when COVID 19 first showed up in New Zealand which stalled that process, so to date we have only had one meeting with her.

During the initial COVID response period we had the services of acting Statutory Manger, Erina Stevens, who was very knowledgeable and easy to work with, thank you Erana. We also had a new Operations Director to work with, Daniel Heinrich, who had quite a severe accident just after starting his role with the department. So, we have had a quite disruptive period in the sense of personnel changes and any attempts to nail down timelines to meet statutory processes suffered delays due to these challenges.

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board has, this period, been **exploring options to meet its Conservation Management Strategy responsibilities** and department resource delays in development of second-generation strategies. The Board has been exploring options from a local perspective.ie: Split the Taranaki Whanganui CMS into two parts and complete one rohe at a time before combining the document as one complete strategy.

Trans-Tasman Resources Limited v The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board and others continues to follow the processes available via the New Zealand court system. This Board has been part of the process from submission against the application to the Environmental Protection Authority (2016) through to the High Court, Court of Appeal and will continue to the last available step in the process – Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is expected to hear the matter in November 2020, unless further outbreaks of COVID 19 cause delays to this process.

During this period, we have had an Increase in meeting frequency from four to six hui a year

Board Chairs conference August 2019 - Was informative and allowed for connection with other Board Chairs from around the motu. As a consequence of this conference a Conservation Boards improvement process has been implemented by the Department to better meet the needs of modern Conservation Boards.

Maunga Taranaki negotiations- Taranaki Maunga negotiations with the crown have been ongoing during this period and the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board have been kept up to date on progress.

Whanganui iwi settlements: Still some way to go for the Whanganui settlements process although Te Awa Tupua, the Whanganui River Settlement, statute is in place and operational. Board representation is vested via Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui.**Ngati Maru** treaty settlement, the last of Nga iwi o Taranaki to negotiate its settlement was brought very close to completion during this period.

Ngai Tai decision to give effect to treaty of Waitangi was a ground-breaking decision made in New Zealand courts of law has made way for the Treaty of Waitangi to have much more weight across many Government Departments. Alterations to s4 of the **Conservation Act** were made during this period to better reflect the Courts decision.

Of course, this reporting period included **the initial COVID-19 New Zealand cases and response**. It impacted on our regular Board hui and, quite rightly, shifted the Departments staff attention onto the practicalities of trying to do conservation work remotely. The Board trialled virtual remote meetings, including 'in committee' meetings and whilst the remote hui worked well, we still face challenges around connectivity and remote training for Board members.

To all the Department of Conservation staff- especially our hard-working Board Support Officer Adrienne Corfe- we thank you for providing us with the information and guidance requested in these trying circumstances. We look forward to developing and progressing the CMS process with you next year!

To all the Taranaki Whanganui Board members I thank you for your time, persistence, patience and generosity during this period and look forward to working with you in the next year.

Noho ora mai

Vicky Dombroski

Chair, Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board

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.

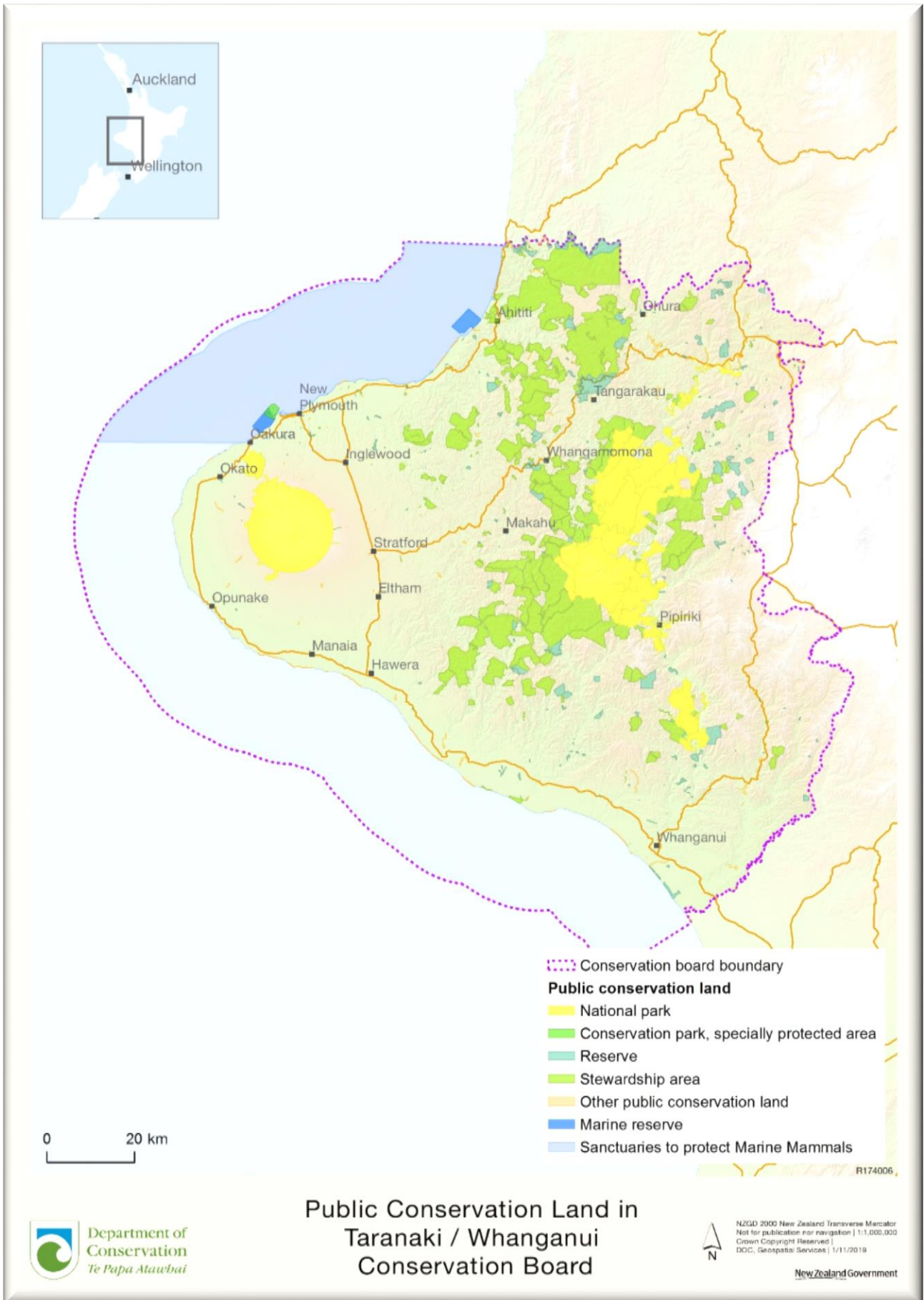


Figure 1. Public Conservation Land in Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board

**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 Mounga
- 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 mammals
- Whanganui River
- Large scale pest control
- Intensive management of endangered species
- Consents
- Recreational Activities and Tourism
- Biosecurity

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 2019-2020 year appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Conservation Act 1987.

There were three new appointments, Mr Andrew Castle from Inglewood, Mr Allen Juffermans from New Plymouth, and Mr Robert Cribb from Whanganui and two re-appointments, Ms Vicky Dombroski and Liana Poutu from Waitara.

At the board meeting held on the 25th April 2020, Vicky Dombroski was appointed as Chair, for a term of 12 months (February 2020-February 2021) and Andrew Castle was appointed Vice Chair, for a term of 12 months (February 2020 – February 2021).

The following table lists the membership of the board between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 and their term of office.

Table 1: Board membership

Board Member	Area	Term Start	Term End	Term served
Dombroski, Vicky	Waitara	01/05/2014	30/06/2022	6
Castle, Andrew	Inglewood	01/07/2019	30/06/2022	1
Cribb, Robert (Boy)	Whanganui	01/07/2019	30/06/2022	1
Juffermans, Allen	New Plymouth	01/07/2019	30/06/2022	1
McGuckin, Novena	Whanganui	01/05/2014	30/06/2021	6
Poutu, Liana	New Plymouth	01/07/2015	30/06/2022	5
Robinson, Donald (Don)	Whanganui	07/07/2015	30/06/2020	5
Tamarapa, Sam	Waitara	01/05/2014	30/06/2021	6
Vujcich, Mathew	Inglewood	01/07/2017	30/07/2023	3

4.6. Members profiles

Vicky Dombroski of Waitara

Appointment term: 1 May 2014 to 30 June 2022

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.

Andrew Castle of Inglewood

Appointment term: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022

Mr Castle is a self-employed IT professional with 20 years' experience in the IT industry and has more recently been involved in other governance activities in the Taranaki community. He is strongly involved in local conservation efforts and is looking towards how IT can support and enhance conservation initiatives. Drew has always had a keen interest in outdoor activities, and is an advocate of habitat protection, repopulation efforts of native birdlife, and the recognition of the uniqueness of local ecologies.

Robert (Boy) Cribb of Whanganui

Appointment Term: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022

Boy is nominated by the Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui Trust. He has strong governance experience and is currently chair and member on several boards/trusts.

Allen Juffermans of New Plymouth

Appointment Term: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022

Allen is an active volunteer and business owner. He has local land and community knowledge and experience in project management, strategy, resource management planning and technical advice. He is currently a member of the NZ Institute of Surveyors, Consulting Surveyors of NZ and Resource Management Law Association.

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-Pāpārangī, Ngāti Patutokotoko, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Maniapoto Iwi.

Liana Poutu of New Plymouth

Appointment term: 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022

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 Rāhui, DOC, regional and district councils to ensure positive outcomes in these areas. He is of Ngāti Uenuku, Ngāti Kurawhatia, Ngāti Rangī o te Manganui o te Ao, Atihaunui a Paparangi, Nga Rauru descent.

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 Ngāti Ruanui, Nga Rauru, Te Ati Haunui-a-Paparangi, Ngāti Maru, Te Atiawa, Taranaki Iwi and Te Arawa iwi.

Mathew Vujcich of Inglewood

Appointment term: 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2023

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
7 August 2019	Extraordinary Meeting (Telephone Conference)
29 August 2019	The Devon Hotel & Conference Centre, 390 East Street, New Plymouth
28 November 2019	The Department of Conservation, 34-36 Taupo Quay, Whanganui
26 February 2020	The Devon Hotel & Conference Centre, 390 East Street, New Plymouth
25 April 2020	Virtual Meeting
25 June 2020	The Department of Conservation, 34-36 Taupo Quay, Whanganui

4.8. Attendance

The table below summarises the number of board meetings (5) and (1) extraordinary meeting 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
Dombroski, Vicky	6/6	2/2	1/1
Castle, Andrew	6/6	2/2	1/1
Cribb, Robert (Boy)	5/6	2/2	1/1
Juffermans, Allen	6/6	2/2	1/1
McGuckin, Novena	6/6	2/2	1/1
Poutu, Liana	6/6	2/2	1/1
Robinson, Donald (Don)	6/6	2/2	1/1
Tamarapa, Sam	6/6	2/2	1/1
Vujcich, Mathew	6/6	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

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has its origin with the signing and ratification of the Treaty of Waitangi Deed of Settlement between the Crown and Ngāti Tama in 2001. This settlement then became law in November 2003.

The JAC is made up of six members, with Ngāti Tama providing three of the six members, the Department of Conservation having two members and the remaining position being a nominee of the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board.

The purpose of the JAC is to provide advice to the Minister of Conservation about the preservation of conservation values and the annual work programme for that part of the Whitecliffs Conservation Area remaining in Crown ownership. It will also approve conservation management plans for the Parininihi Marine Reserve.

The committee will also provide advice to Ngāti Tama on conservation matters affecting the Parininihi/Whitecliffs, Uruti and Mt Messenger sites transferred to Ngāti Tama.

In 2017 Sam Tamarapa was appointed as the Conservation Board member to the JAC. The Ngāti Tama representatives were Greg White (Committee Chair) Davis McClutchie (jnr) and Karla White. The DOC representatives were shared between Darryn Ratana, Gareth Hopkins, Gemma White and Nicola Palmer.

During this period from January through to August the JAC held a number of meetings to discuss the Mt Messenger road options and the possible affects to the Kokako project to reintroduce this taonga back into Taranaki. At this time the JAC also met with members of other parties involved, they were Tiaki Te Mauri o Parininihi Trust, the Kokako Translocation Trust committee, Taranaki Regional Council, the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and the Alliance (contractors group) In November 2017 the NZTA delivered a 3D presentation of the chosen route for the Mt Messenger roading project to the Conservation Board meeting in Whanganui.

From this time onwards the role of the JAC diminished as the discussions in the roading project and the effects to the conservation estate headed towards the Environment Court.

Just recently (15th July 2020) Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Tama Chair, Paul Silich announced the overwhelming support from its registered members for entering agreements with NZTA “Waka Kotahi” that will see a modern \$200 million bypass of hazardous road on State highway 3 over Mt Messenger.

“Most people we spoke with knew the road was no longer fit for purpose. As one of our kuia said, we need to listen to people who know about safer roads and how to build them”. “Our people have lived in this area for many generations, and at one time we were responsible for holding back invasions into Taranaki from the north. This time, we can help protect lives and livelihoods. The new road will benefit all our communities. A win for the environment, for Taranaki and for our iwi” said Paul.

Conclusion: While the outlook for the Mt Messenger roading project and the Kokako reintroduction looks promising, the core purpose and responsibilities of the JAC remain. So somewhere soon it will reconvene and the board will have a role to play.

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
27/11/2019	South Beach, Whanganui
25/01/2020	Egmont National Park, North Egmont Visitor Centre
25/02/2020	Egmont National Park, Taranaki Crossing

Site Inspection – 27 November 2019: South Beach Whanganui

In attendance for this site visit were Department of Conservation staff from the Department of Conservation, Whanganui, Whanganui Iwi, Ngati Apa Iwi and Board members.



South Beach, Whanganui
Photographer courtesy of Drew Castle (TWCB) Member

The purpose of this site visit was to form relationships and strengthen communications between Iwi, the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board and other intended groups, for the purpose of supporting environmental impacts, e.g. flora, fauna, water quality, sand dunes and forestry.



South Beach Whanganui
Photographer courtesy of Drew Castle (TWCB) Member

Site inspection – 25 February 2020: Egmont National Park, North Egmont Visitor Centre (NEVC)



*View of Taranaki, from North Egmont Visitor Centre.
Photo courtesy of Drew Castle (TWCB) Member*

The Board was welcomed to the North Egmont Visitors Centre (NEVC) by the Department of Conservation local staff and discussed a range of topics relevant to this area, including;

- Capacity issues with current facilities due to high usage demand
- Operational oversight of the road and carparking facilities
- Plans for additional carparking facilities partnered with the local district council

Highlighted by the department staff were capacity issues of water caused by high demand from visitors, particularly freedom campers who camp in the carpark at NEVC. Discussed were the departments ongoing funding of replenishing water storage during the summer months as the increase in tourist numbers leads to the current storage being drained through high use, and the limited options available to increase storage or control use by visitors.

Also discussed were the perceived ambiguity in governance of the roading and carparking facilities which fall between the department and the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) due to the boundaries of the park falling in inconsistent areas. The Board also discussed with the department staff the increase in demand for mountain bike usage and how the department manages the expectations of visitors in this regard. Related to this, the recent announcement of additional carparking to be provisioned by the NPDC on the boundary of the national park was expanded on

by the department staff, and how that fits in with the longer terms strategy of managing facilities use at NEVC.



*View of Ruapehu, Ngāuruhoe, Tongariro from North Egmont Visitor Centre.
Photo courtesy of Drew Castle (TWCB) Member*

Site inspection – 25 February 2020: Taranaki Crossing

The Board was welcomed to the starting point of the Taranaki Crossing by staff from the Taranaki Mouna Project (TMP). While there, the Board was briefed on the ground-breaking of the next phase of upgrades to the track, including why the previously used ‘jack mat’ (plastic track matting) was being replaced with more conventional boardwalk. Also highlighted was the relationship that the department has with local residents which border the track along the first 500m of the crossing prior to it entering the National Park, and how the department was working collaboratively with them during the period of unprecedented growth in popularity of the crossing. The Board was also briefed on the upgrades that are planned for the crossing project, and the involvement of the community in its conception and development.

4.11. Training for members

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board held one workshop at the Devon Hotel and Conference Centre in New Plymouth on the 28 August 2019 to complete an induction for new members, Robert Cribb, Andrew Castle and Allen Juffermans and to finalise their Annual Work Plan 2019-2020.

4.12. Department involvement in Board meetings

Department staff that have attended meetings throughout the reporting period have included the Acting and Director of Operations, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki)and Central North Island, Operation Managers - Whanganui and New Plymouth, Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki and Central North Island, Regional Community Operations, Senior Rangers/Community, Pou Tairangahau– Central North Island and Board Support Officer.

There is a weekly phone/virtual conference between the Board Chair, Deputy Board Chair, Statutory Manager and Board Support Officer to discuss information of relevance to the Board. A newsletter is then collated and distributed every Friday.

5. Statutory Activity

The Board have received updates from the Director of Operations, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, and operational reports from the Taranaki/Whanganui Operations staff. Additional to these reports the Board have received briefings on:

29 August 2019	
Gavin Bryce, Senior Policy Advisor, DOC	NZ Biodiversity Strategy Discussion Document
Gemma White, Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, DOC	Auckland Conservation Board (Conservation Management Strategy Progress Report)
Kristina Hillock, Technical Marine Advisor, DOC, (Briefing paper)	The Hector and Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan Review
Arna Litchfield, Strategic Issues Manager, National Support and Advice Team, DOC	Ngā Tai ki Tāmaki Ruling – Supreme Court Decision
Gemma White, Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki (email advisory)	DOC Heritage & Visitors Strategy
28 November 2019	
Darryn Ratana, Partnerships Director, Partnerships Team, New Plymouth, DOC	DOC Partnerships Group Business Priorities – Overview 2019/20
Amy Robinson, RMA Manager, DOC	DOC's RMA and EEZA Advocacy Strategy
Gemma White, Statutory Manager, DOC (Briefing paper)	Ngā Tai ki Tāmaki Ruling – Section 4 and Treaty Partnerships
Jasmine Hessel/Peter Locke, Community Supervisor, DOC	Drones – Whanganui National Park
Novena McGuckin (Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board)	Te Awa Tupua Legislation and Updates
26 February 2020	
Gemma White, Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, DOC	DOC'S Management Planning Team - Work Programme Update
Gemma White, Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, DOC	<u>Consultation Documents</u> Whitebait management Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment – Effect of tourism growth on New Zealand's environment.
Gemma White, Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, DOC (Draft circulated)	DOC's Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (Draft).
30 April 2020	
Erana Stevens-Tulip, Acting Statutory Manager, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, DOC	Loder Cup Nominations

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board completed submissions as follows:

13 March 2020 Ministry for the Environment – National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity
12 March 2020 DOC – Whitebait Management
30 October 2019 Submission to Ministry of the Environment ‘Essential Freshwater Proposal Document’
23 September 2019 NZ Biodiversity Strategy Review -Discussion Document
8 August 2019 The Hector’s and Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan

5.1 Resource Management Issues

Quarterly RMA and Management Planning reports have been received by the Board. These reports provide the Board with an update on active Resource Management Act and Management Planning activity currently being led by the Shared Services Unit, DOC.

Conservation Board Seabed Mining

The Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board (TWCB) has been working with iwi, seafood and other environmental organisations to prevent Trans-Tasman Resources from mining 66 square kilometres of South Taranaki Bight seabed for iron ore.

In a judgement handed down in April 2020, the Court of Appeal upheld the concerns of the various groups, in identifying multiple overlapping errors of law in the approach of the Decision Making Committee (DMC) of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) when initially granting a marine consent to Trans-Tasman Resources Ltd (TTR) to mine sand in the Taranaki Bight. The board worked collectively with other appellants to protect the Taranaki Bight environment, through the consent and court systems in a case which stretches back to 2016.

The three key points in the Court of Appeal judgment for the Conservation Board were:

- The EPA’s DMC failed to assess TTR’s application against the “protect the environment from pollution” purpose in the Exclusive Economic Zone Act.
- The EPA’s DMC not favouring caution, when information from TTR was inadequate or uncertain.
- The EPA’s DMC had not considered whether TTR’s proposal would be inconsistent with environmental “bottom lines” established under the Resource Management Act through the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

5.2. 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.

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, it 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.

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 public forum attendees have presented on:

- Everett Park – Inglewood
Concept Plans for the Park, Advice on the Community group structure
- Whitebait
- Asparagus Fern

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.

TWCB members attended many of the Public Forums held during the year and made submissions to all of these, Whitebait regulations, Freshwater, The Indigenous Biodiversity workshop forum and policy changes, The Maui Dolphin TMP. However, the Board was disappointed with the poorly written and considered Maui and Hector's Dolphin Threat Management Plan.

The disappointment was around the inability of the department to liaise and consult with Nga Iwi o Taranaki as treaty partners and unfortunately, we were unable to get a letter to the Minister of Conservation before this plan was enacted. This was a very busy year indeed with many environmental policy and management plan changes for the Board to consider.

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 Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board continues to be served well by a number of members who have strong connections to the iwi within the boundaries of the conservation board. The two statutory nominees to the Board from Ngā Tangata Tiaki and the Taranaki Maori Trust Board along with an additional three Board members, help provide insights into key matters affecting iwi within the conservation estate and on conservation issues more generally. These insights included clarifying iwi perspectives on various activities of the Department of Conservation and monitoring the Department's responsibilities under section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987. Presentations to the Conservation Board from those iwi currently negotiating Treaty of Waitangi settlements were supported also by Board members engaged directly in those negotiations. With further Treaty settlements set to be completed, the ability to maintain close relationships between the Board and the iwi of this region will be crucial in the ongoing management of Conservation estate.

6.6. DOC Community Fund

Introduction

This fund supports community-led conservation projects on public and private land.

Highlights

The DOC Community Fund is directed towards practical projects aimed at conserving New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity.

Projects are focused on:

- protecting and restoring our natural habitats
- halting the decline of and restoring healthy, sustainable populations of our native species

April 2020

Novena McGuckin chaired the Hauraki Waikato Taranaki Conservation Community Fund Board Applications after priorities had been addresses noted approx. 30 applications

Funding was requested was for a total of \$2,243,790.00 funding available was for

\$4600, 00 per Region. Range of funding requested was between \$148,000 to \$10,126.

Preparation on all the applications and background research is imperative and certainly having a great team who had undertaken a commitment to ensure applications and backgrounds had been read. Certainly made the process easier.

- 13 based on predator Control
- 8 Ecosystems Restorations-
- 5 on Threatened Species
- 2 Other

It was recommended by the team that the amount available in total should be noted when groups are applying for funding.

In terms of the Panel and the workload it was also recommended that a limit be identified for each group to apply for.

Is there an opportunity to limit how much an applicant can apply for?

- Would make it easier for the panel in the future so they aren't having to do as much partial funding reviewing for the big \$ projects, to ensure there is funds to go to more applicants
- Recommendations were also recommended that the applicant apply the following year
- Partial funding also recommended
- A total of approx. 10 groups were successful ranging for \$82,000 to
- Lack of clarity in some areas eg what were the staff outputs were in relation to the funding requested.
- Great levels of community engagement. However unclear on the biodiversity outputs were hard to assess.
- Some applications appeared to be for business purposes

Successful applicants for Taranaki

East Taranaki Environment Trust

Taranaki Kiwi Trust

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Mutunga Trust

Wild for Taranaki

7. Acknowledgements

The Board wishes to thank the Department for their support, Department staff that have attended meetings and provided updates, and staff throughout the rohe that have hosted the Board on field trips.

Appendix I –Annual Work Plan

TARANAKI-WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD

Annual Plan 2019-2020

Who are we?

We advocate about conservation issues, challenges and opportunities that impact on the Whanganui and Taranaki regions. We direct our advocacy at public decision-makers and others who can influence conservation outcomes.

The Board's statutory responsibility relates to conservation management and the presence of regional and local communities in all activities undertaken by persons, groups and legal entities that impact on our environment. With this specific focus, the Board may, from time to time, be an appropriate advocate for the conservation interests of the people of Whanganui-Taranaki.

The Board may choose to engage with public decision-makers and others have roles and activities that can influence positive conservation outcomes.

The Board is an autonomous executive appointed by the Minister of Conservation in accordance with the Statute and we have access to advice and resources from the Department of Conservation.

What challenges us?

We confront a complex ever-changing interaction of social, cultural, political, environmental and economic circumstances.

The challenge is to direct our attention to the most important decisions of the day.

What outcomes do we want to achieve this year?

Outcome 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.

Outcome 2:

We will actively pursue the development of **two** separate Conservation Management Strategies for Taranaki and Whanganui in accordance with our statutory obligations and seek the immediate review of the CMS for Taranaki.

Outcome 3:

We must uphold the undertaking that the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board gave at a Parliamentary Select Committee to support and uphold the mana of the Te Awa Tupua Deed of Settlement and Legislation.

Outcome 4:

We will follow and contribute, where appropriate to the Conservation Management issues and challenges associated with the Crown/Iwi settlement for Mouna Taranaki.

Outcome 5:

We will contribute to the Department of Conservation's policies, strategy and plan development, and reviews.

How we will act:

As we pursue our major projects, we will be guided by ten principles:

1. We shall act collectively.
2. Our actions shall give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (see section 4, Conservation Act 1987).
3. Each Board agenda shall reflect the priorities we hold.
4. Members shall participate in a frank and open way having reflected upon the issues.
5. We shall focus on the significant needs of our *rohe*.
6. We shall ensure our limited resources are used to best effect.
7. We shall consistently focus on scientific evidence.
8. We shall support public and private investment in conservation science, particularly in our *rohe*.
9. We shall participate in decision-making through:
 - (a) Written and oral submissions to public bodies.
 - (b) Written and oral submissions to individuals.
 - (c) Invitations to public bodies and individuals to attend our meetings.
 - (d) Letters to newspapers and media statements.
 - (e) Responding positively to community organizations.
 - (f) Practicing inclusiveness.
 - (g) Supporting democratic processes.
10. We shall advance our learning through an education programme provided by the Department of Conservation.

What else must we do?

1. We hold duties to the Minister of Conservation and the Department of Conservation in accordance with statute. We will respond to their requests in a professional manner.

Potentially, this year the Department may make requests about:

- (a) Specific habitats and species.
- (b) Water quality in our *rohe*.
- (c) Operations Directors Reports.
- (d) Treaty settlement implications.
- (e) The monitoring of departmental activities in our *rohe*.
- (f) Monitoring the Whanganui National Park Management Plan implementation by the Department.
- (g) Monitoring/revising The Egmont National Park Management Plan.

- (h) The Taranaki Maunga Negotiations.
 - (i) Support for the development and approval of the Conservation Management Strategies.
 - (j) Draft policies.
 - (k) Community perspectives.
 - (l) Appointment to our Board of a representative of *Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui*.
 - (m) TTRL: Review of Department of Conservation Decision-Making Processes (Vicky & Robert)
 - (n) Any other matter where the Department considers it needs strategic advice.
2. We will foster the special relationship we hold with the New Zealand Conservation Authority. Our chairperson shall be our principal liaison officer.
3. Our representatives on committees will participate in those committees in an effective manner. Our representatives on committees are:
- (a) Ngāti Tama Joint Advisory Committee –Sam Tamarapa
 - (b) Marine Reserves – To be confirmed
 - (c) Wild for Taranaki – To be confirmed
- Our representatives shall report to us according to our protocol (see Annex 1).
4. We will liaise with other Conservation groups and Regional and Local Government as requested. Our representatives shall report to us according to our protocol (see Annex 1).
5. We may request information and/or advice from the Department of Conservation, having regard to their and our workload, and the extent of community concern. Potential topics for this year include:
- (a) Chilean Needle Grass.
 - (b) Kauri Dieback in Taranaki Whanganui.
 - (c) Myrtle Rust
 - (d) Whitebait.
 - (e) The Department’s “stretch goals”
 - (f) Maui Hector’s Dolphin
 - (g) Bovis
 - (h) Advocate for our policy in the public discussion about 1080.

Performance indicators

To ensure we actively engage with our priority projects throughout the year, we adopt the following performance indicators:

Performance indicators

To ensure we actively engage with our outcomes throughout the year, we adopt the following performance indicators:

Projects:	Performance indicator
Project 1: To participate in the sea-bed mining and Trans-Tasman Resources Limited decision.	1. In relation to Outcome 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 develop two separate CMS's for Taranaki/Whanganui.	2. In relation to Outcome 2, we shall actively advocate with the Minister of Conservation, Director General of the Department of Conservation and the New Zealand Conservation Authority for the development of two separate CMS's for Taranaki/Whanganui.
Project 3: To uphold the mana of the of the Te Awa Tupua (<i>Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act 2017</i>)	3. In relation to Outcome 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 Crown/Iwi Settlement for Mouna Taranaki processes.	4. In relation to Outcome 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 contribute to the Department of Conservation's policies, strategy and plan development, and reviews.	5. In relation to Outcome 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 29 August 2019	Meeting 2 28 November 2019	Meeting 3 26 February 2020	Meeting 4 30 April 2020	Meeting 5 25 June 2020
1	Achieved OR Not achieved	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	Achieved OR Not achieved
3	Achieved OR Not achieved	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	Achieved OR Not achieved
5	Achieved OR Not achieved	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