

# Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board

Te Poari Papa Atawhai  
o Tongariro/Taupo

## Annual Report

1 July 2013 - 30 June 2014

Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority  
pursuant to Section 60 of the Conservation Act 1987

Serviced by the Department of Conservation

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## Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board Members

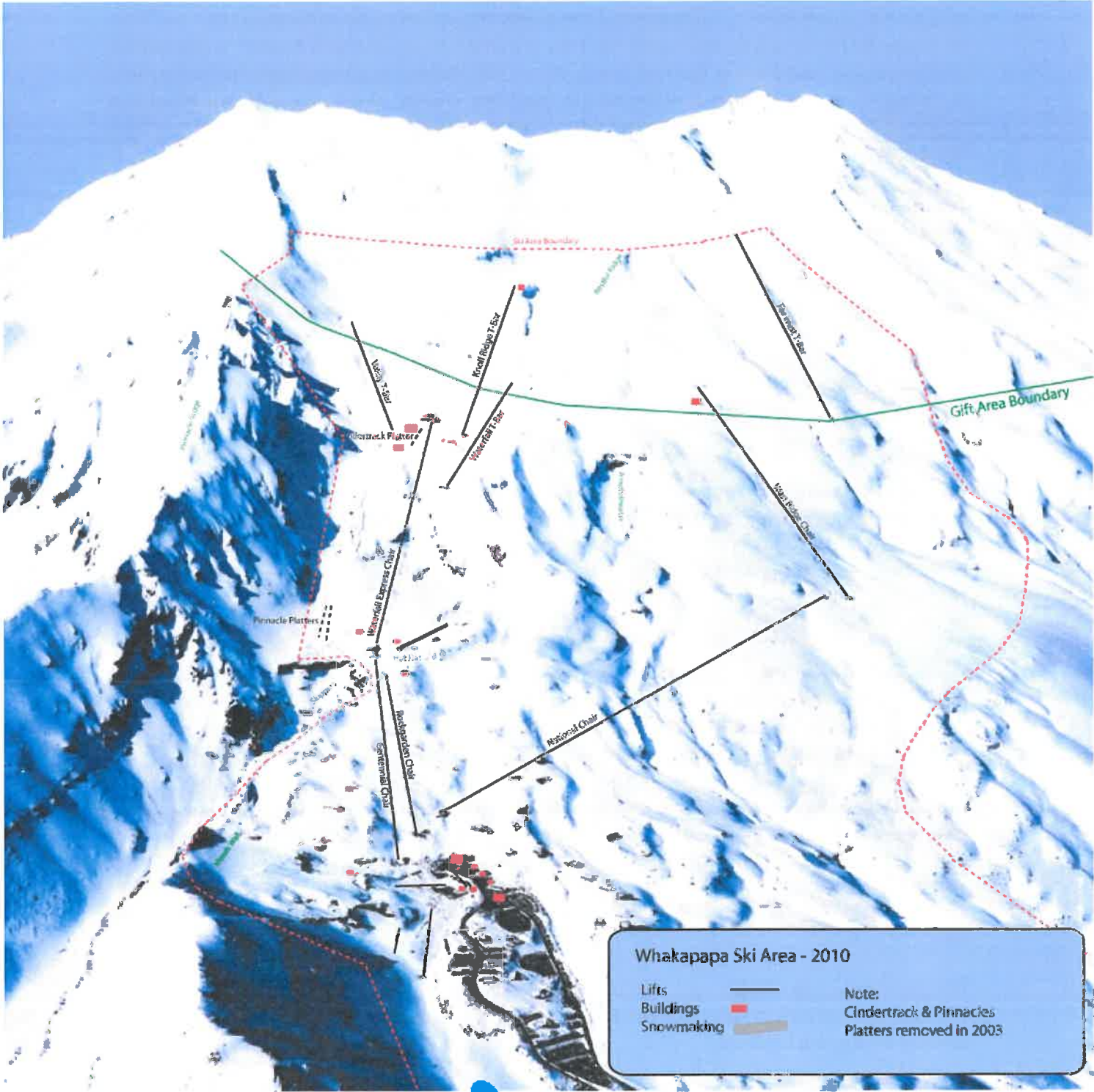


### Whakapapa Village Site Visit- TTCB Members 2011-2014

**From left to right:** Darryn Ratana- *Taranaki Whanganui Board Chair- May 2013*, John Bishara, Cam Speedy, *Louise Davies-Doc May 2013*, Barbara Morris, Colin Paton, Ellen Forch, Pete Masters – Chairperson, Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, Te Ngaehe Wanikau, Don Cameron & Neville Young.

*Dinny Snowdon-Rameka- Board Support Officer- DOC*

Cover Photo: Eastern Terrain Renewal Project



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board**

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board is an independent statutory body, appointed by the Minister of Conservation. It was established by section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987.

November 2013 the Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Conservation presented a report on the review of conservation boards being the first review since 1990. Coming at a time when the Department of Conservation (the Department) endured a significant change to the way it is structured and organised to deliver conservation outcomes. Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board is one of 4 conservation boards within the newly restructured Central North Island Region.

The Board has the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the conservation management strategy (CMS) and conservation management plans (CMPs) for its region. As well as providing for interaction between the public and the Department of Conservation at the conservancy level, the Board also acts as an advocate for the protection of conservation values. Its prime role is to advise the Department and the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

The functions of the Board are set out in Sections 6M of the Conservation Act 1987, and in the National Parks Act 1980 and the Reserves Act 1977.

### **Area of Responsibility**

The Board's current area of responsibility covers the Department's Ruapehu and Taupō-nui-ā-Tia Areas within the greater Central North Island Region (refer to the map). The area in question encompasses 818,700 hectares, of which approximately 221,000 hectares is administered by the Department of Conservation (representing almost 27% of the total area of the Board's district). The Board's district is unique in that it has no ocean coastline and includes the Lake Taupo sport fishery.

The Board's district is dominated by the volcanic landscape of Tongariro National Park, the beech forest and tussock ranges of Kaimanawa Forest Park and by New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo. Tongariro, Erua and Rangataua Conservation Areas to the east and south of the national park offer a diverse range of ecological features and recreational opportunities.

Tangata whenua have long had a special relationship and history with the mountains, lakes, waterways and geothermal features of this area. Tongariro, New Zealand's first national park grew from the Ngati Tuwharetoa *tukua* of its mountains to the nation in 1887. The park received World Heritage status in 1988 for natural landscape values and in 1993 for its cultural landscape values, recognising the special significance of the mountains to Ngati Tuwharetoa and Whanganui iwi.

The district contains many rare, uncommon, vulnerable or threatened native plants, birds, communities and ecosystems. Managing these in light of weeds, predators, fires and other threats remains an ongoing challenge.

Lake Taupo and its tributaries provide opportunities for world-class fishing and numerous other forms of water recreation. The sports fishery is managed by the Department although the lake and river beds are owned by Ngati Tuwharetoa.

The landscape of the area is unique in New Zealand and large numbers of national and international visitors come here for sightseeing and recreation. Tongariro National Park is the most visited national park in New Zealand and numbers are expected to rise further. In contrast,

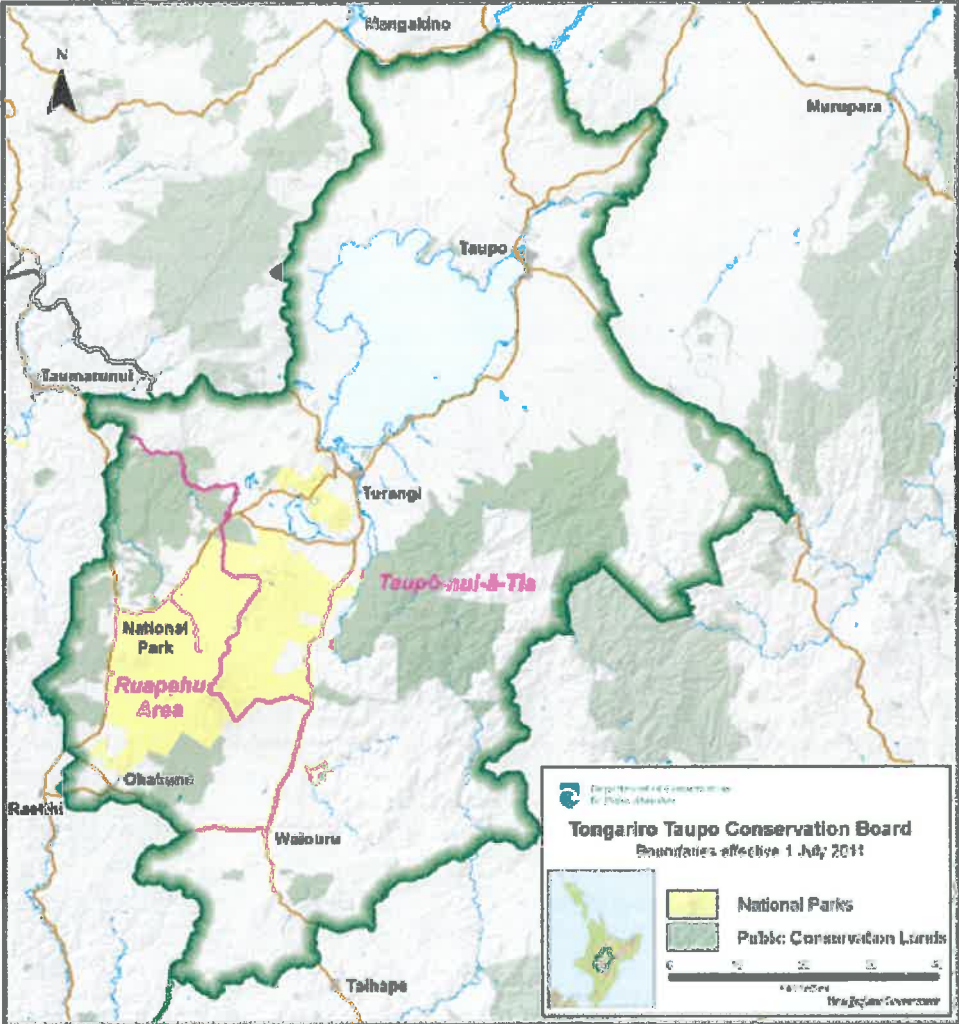


the surrounding mountain ranges retain a feeling of remoteness and isolation which is increasingly sought by recreationists – New Zealanders in particular.

A large number of issues occur on these lands which are of interest to the Board. These include:

- management of plant and animal species such as the blue duck (whio), kiwi (western North Island Brown), and 3 species of mistletoe.
- management of recreational facilities such as huts and tracks
- management of historic sites
- concession activities, including those relating to recreation and tourism, grazing, research, and leases.

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board has a responsibility to the people of the Tongariro/Taupo district, and the wider New Zealand population, to ensure these lands and the biodiversity which they contain are protected and enhanced.



Map of Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board Area



Map defining all 14 conservation geographical areas- April 2014

### Membership of the Board

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board consists of ten members who are appointed for up to a three year term by the Minister of Conservation, however due to a review of the Department in Sep 2013 a review of the conservation boards was under taken to align to the same outcomes,

therefore terms of office were extended. Included on the board is the mandated appointment for the paramount chief of Ngati Tuwharetoa. The remaining nine public appointments are made having regard to their experience, expertise and links with the local community including tangata whenua. Members may have knowledge of nature conservation, natural earth and marine sciences, cultural heritage, recreation, tourism, and Māori perspectives. This process ensures a diversity of experience and background and a spread across the main geographical and ecological zones within the board's area.

The Minister did not conduct an appointment round for the 2013 calendar year but extended the term of appointment for those members whose terms were due to expire at 30 June 2013 for an additional year (i.e. until 30 April 2014). The Minister appointed new board members from 1 May 2014 creating an overlap of incoming and outgoing members.

The names, locations of the members of the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board, and attendance record at meetings from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 ( includes two 2014 newly appointed members) were as follows:

<b>Appointed Member</b>	<b>Year Appointed</b>	<b>Home Location</b>	<b>Meetings Attended (5 held)</b>
John Bishara	2011	Wellington	2
Don Cameron	2008	Ohakune	3
Dr Ellen Forch	2011	Auckland	5
Peter Masters	2008	Taupo	5
Barbara Morris	2011	Taupo	3
Colin Paton	2011	Taupo	5
Cam Speedy	2011	Turangi	5
Sir Tumu Te Heuheu	1998	Taupo	0
Te Ngaehe Wanikau	2011	Turangi	1
Neville Young	2011	Wellington	5
Snow Rameka	2014	Taupo	1
Laurie Burdett	2014	Taupo	1

At its December 2013 meeting, Pete Masters was re-elected as Chairperson for a further twelve months, then extended to March 2014 due to the conservation boards review process. Barbara Morris was elected as Chairperson for the remaining term to the last scheduled meeting in May 2014.

### **Conservation Board Meetings**

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board held five meetings during the report period. A combined discussion and field inspection with Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board was scheduled to coincide with one of the meetings. The meetings were as follows:

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Meeting Venue</b>	<b>Location</b>
16 August 2013	Whakapapa Fire Station	Whakapapa Village
20 September 2013	Tongariro National Trout Centre	Turangi
6 December 2013	Devon Hotel Conference Centre	New Plymouth
7 March 2014	Turangi Field Base	Turangi
16 May 2014	Ruapehu District Council Chambers	Ruapehu

### **Field Inspections**

The Board regards inspections as an important part of exercising its functions because they provide opportunities to discuss management issues on site and share ideas with Department

staff. Wherever possible, field inspections are arranged to coincide with topical conservation issues so that the Board can be provided with relevant background information.

*16 August 2013:* There was no site visit planned however in conjunction with its CMS Monitoring Report on the Tongariro National Park Management Plan, board members had conducted a site inspection of various Whakapapa Village amenities only ten months earlier.

*20 September 2013:* No site visit planned

*6-7 December 2013:* Members from both the Taranaki/Whanganui and Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Boards gathered at the Devon Hotel conference centre New Plymouth for a joint board discussion and their individual board meetings.

The combined meeting included discussions on the He Kaupapa Rangatira, with an update on the Te Urewera Implementation Plan, Conservation-wide Strategic Projects, Shared Values and Treaty Negotiation progress updates.

Unfortunately due to bad weather the site visit to Sugar Loaf Island with Chaddy Charters was cancelled. The site visit was replaced with a video presentation, led by the Wanganui Taranaki Board chair, Rex Hendry shared his knowledge and experience in his recent excursions to Antarctica and the affects the increased tourism industry is having on the environment.

*7 March 2014:* No site visit planned.

*16 May 2014:* No site visit planned

#### **Guest Speakers and Presentations**

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

##### **August 2013**

- TWT Strategic Projects
- Taupo Fisheries
- Delivery Review

##### **September 2013**

- Tokaanu Hot Pools
- Conservation Awards
- New Taupo Office update
- RAL works approval application

##### **December 2013**

- He Kaupapa Rangatira
- Strategic Projects
- TWT Shared Values Project

##### **March 2014**

- Tongariro National Park Management Plan Review

##### **May 2014**

- Annual report, Whakapapa rubbish removal
- Stock take working with communities



The Board is grateful for the time and effort staff and guest speakers put into preparing and delivering these very informative presentations.

**Budget, Fees and Allowances**

The Board's budget for 2013/14 was \$18,000. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Allowances Act 1951.

## STATUTORY FUNCTIONS – CONSERVATION ACT 1987

### Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 states “This Act shall so be interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. As a body established under the Conservation Act 1987, section 4 applies to the Board in the discharge of its functions.

#### Functions of the Board

##### **(a) Recommend the Conservation Management Strategy for approval**

A conservation management strategy (CMS) is a 10-year statutory document that implements General Policy and establishes objectives for the management and protection of the natural and historic features and wildlife of the region, and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. Conservation Boards are actively involved in the preparation, review and amendment and approval of the CMS.

The Tongariro Taupo Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) was approved in May 2002 and had a lifetime of ten years. The CMS was replaced by one CMS for Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy that would manage the Ruapehu, Whanganui, Taranaki and Taupō-nui-ā-Tia Areas.

No further progress has been made since August 2011, when the Board formally endorsed the deferral of the TWT CMS Review until progress had been made for the development and implementation of *He Kaupapa Rangatira* (A Joint Initiative)

##### **(b) Approve Conservation Management Plans**

The Board did not approve any conservation management plans (CMPs), or their review and amendment, in this reporting period. The board did however, request for a partial review process in August 2013 but was advised that the proposed changes would not commence until after Treaty Settlement due to a lack of resources. The Department advised it has to priorities its management planning work, considering many factors including review dates of plans, Ministerial directives, the need for change, and obligations to meet Treaty Settlement. They also proposed that once the new Board appointments were made it would be of value for both the board and the Department to spend time discussing matters and agreeing on how best to progress the work on the partial reviewing of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan.

##### **(c) Advise on the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy and Conservation Management Plans**

The Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board implements a system of monitoring categories and places within the CMS and CMPs on a three yearly reporting cycle.

The Board was briefed as follows:

Ruapehu Mountain Club Association & RAL promoted the board to request a partial review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan.

The board noted the key points from RAL were to provide a wider range and higher quality of experience to visitors which would provide greater value to the community and companies who could operate more months of the year

The clubs proposed ways to make better use of unused beds by other clubs, the Department acknowledged the growing desire to position operators for future sustainability, however advised the management plan to maintain the status quo. The board requested an investigation into a partial review and based the changes around tweaking and wording rather than philosophy

changes. A list of discussion topics were tabled at the September meeting for the partial review of the TNPMP, the board made recommendations and forward them onto the Department. The response to the partial review acknowledged the positive and productive working relationship with the Board, particularly in the context of developing and implementing the Nation Park Management Plan. The Department highlighted the need to prioritise the management planning work, considering many factors including the review dates of plans, Ministerial directives, the need for change, and obligations to meet Treaty Settlements. The Department proposed the new Board appointments would be asked to spend time discussing on how to best progress this work. The Board's frustration centred on the length of time it would take to address reviewing the Plan, arguing a period of up to nine years for the public and the Department to wait was unexpected.

#### **(ii) Advise on any other conservation matters**

The Board is provided with a summary of concession applications at each meeting and is consulted when the application meets the Board's concession trigger criteria including:

- a proposed activity that is the first of its kind in the conservancy
- a proposed activity that is not provided for or envisaged in the relevant CMS/CMP, or it is unclear
- a proposed activity that is considered high impact or requires public notification

Accordingly, and on behalf of the Board, the Concessions Committee advised on a concession application from Waimihia Forest Hapu Cluster Trust, Motutaiko St & Kaimanawa St Taupo lease, Streven Resources Ltd, Skotel Alpine Resort new lease, and a works approval application from Ruapehu Alpine Lifts.

#### **(f) Liaison with Fish and Game Council**

An Eastern Fish and Game Council representative continues to be informed of the Board's work through agenda papers and minutes. Board member Colin Paton was elected as the Board's representative to attend all Eastern Fish and Game Council meetings. He has regularly updated the Board. There were no matters arising from the liaison which required direct Board input.

#### **(g) Ministerial Delegations**

The Minister appointed and reappointed members to the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board in April 2014 and assigned the chairperson, he also agreed to increase the board fees.

### **Powers of Boards**

#### **(a) Advocacy**

When appropriate the Board may advocate on issues relating to conservation values on both public and private land such as the protection of indigenous flora and fauna, landscape, cultural and historic values, water quality, and environmental degradation. Advocacy is generally performed by way of providing comment on discussion documents from other Government organisations and statutory plans developed by regional and district councils.

#### *Treaty/Iwi Relationships*

The Board has a statutory requirement to include the paramount chief of Ngati Tuwharetoa and has several other Board members with local iwi affiliations. These connections play a vital role in improving the Board understandings of iwi perspectives.

## Submissions

The Board had no submissions.

### (b) Establishment of Committees

The Conservation Act enables the Board to establish committees and delegate to them functions and powers. The committees active during the reporting period were:

Recreation, Historic and Concessions	Barbara Morris; John Bishara; Pete Masters; Neville Young
Volcanic Hazards	Colin Paton; Ellen Forch; Pete Masters
Management Planning and Policy	John Bishara; Pete Masters; Cam Speedy
Statutory Planning	Don Cameron; Pete Masters; Neville Young
CMS Review ( <i>jointly with TWCB</i> )	Pete Masters; Don Cameron; Tumu Te Heuheu (ex-officio); Ellen Forch; Cam Speedy; Neville Young
Tangata Whenua	Te Ngaehe Wanikau; Cam Speedy; Barbara Morris
World Heritage	Tumu Te Heuheu; Don Cameron; Ellen Forch; Cam Speedy
Conservation Awards ( <i>jointly with TWCB</i> )	Cam Speedy; Pete Masters

## FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

### (a) Recommend National Park Management Plans, Reviews or Amendments

The Board did not recommend any national park management plans. They considered partial reviews in the reporting period which are yet to progress.

## RESERVES ACT 1977

There were no matters raised under the Reserves Act 1977 that required consultation with the Board during the reporting year.

## LIAISON

All Board members receive the minutes of NZCA meetings and liaison is maintained through NZCA. The Board is very grateful to Catherine Tudhope, Katrina Edwards & Aprille Gillon, Statutory Bodies Advisors, for keeping regular contact with the Board.

The Board has continued liaison with adjoining Conservation Boards through an exchange of minutes and shared correspondence on matters of national importance. The Board Chairs from both the Tongariro/Taupo and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Boards had a reciprocal agreement to attend meetings.

Board minutes are distributed to a number of individuals, groups and organisations and Board members also liaise with their own communities of interest during the reporting year. This liaison is seen as a very important way of providing an interface with the community.



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



2013-2014, saw the Department head towards a more collaborate strategic vision as the Conservation Boards entered a national review process. Board reappointments were held over pending the review recommendations. It was regrettable that some very experienced and valuable members were passed over in the Ministers reappointments, this being my only regret.

I support and encourage the Board to continue their work with the ability to be flexible and adaptable to a changing climate.

I thank outgoing board members for their past contributions and their tremendous efficient and engaging efforts and welcome new members to the all important conservation work.

I would also like to thank the many DOC staff who have done much of the background work that assist in our monitoring and reporting statutory functions and the efficient services we regularly receive from the support staff. Finally, I wish the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board all the very best for their future endeavours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Masters'.

Pete Masters  
Chairperson  
May 2014

### Adoption of Report

**Moved:** that the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board adopt the Annual Report for 2013/2014 to be forwarded to the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required under section 6(0) of the Conservation Act 1987

*John Bishara/Te Ngaehe Wanikau CARRIED: 12 September 2014*

