

# WAIKATO CONSERVATION BOARD TE PAPA ATAWHAI O TE ROHE O TAINUI

## Annual Report 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015

Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority pursuant to Section 6(0) of the Conservation Act 1987



Cover photograph:

Back row: Grant Cushman, Arthur Hinds, Mark Brough (Chair), Mick Clout (NZCA liaison)  
David Taipari, Alan Cockle

Front row: Elisa Karwowski (Board Support Officer), Nicola Douglas (Director, Partnerships),  
Dell Hood, Fiona Gower, Joyce Birdsall, Kate Cherrington

Absent: Kevin Robinson

Photographer: Joanna Fitzgerald

ISSN 1172 9023 (Print)  
ISSN 1175 186X (Online)

Published by:  
Department of Conservation  
Hamilton Office  
73 Rostrevor St  
Private Bag 3072  
Hamilton 3240

## Foreword from the Chair

It is my privilege to report on the 2014 / 2015 year on behalf of the Waikato Conservation Board.

The Waikato Conservation Board is a very active Board which isn't afraid to identify and tackle the big issues that face conservation in our rohe and we are not short of these.

A significant and positive event of this year was the Waikato Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) becoming operational in September 2014. I would like to acknowledge the work done by key members of the Board who have been on this journey since 2006. I would also like to acknowledge the support and expertise provided by staff of the Department of Conservation. It is now up to the newer members of the Board to fulfil the role of monitoring the implementation of its milestones which will see public conservation land within the Waikato CMS boundary achieve their conservation outcomes.



This has been a big year for the Waikato Conservation Board, with five new members joining the Board in July 2014 and all of us together as a team, getting to know or improving our knowledge of the issues and activities occurring within the Waikato CMS boundary.

We spent time in the Coromandel Peninsula, an area coming under increasing recreation and conservation pressure from New Zealand's largest city, Auckland. In addition, kauri die-back *Phytophthora taxon Agathis* being confirmed as a presence on the Peninsula was disheartening. However, what is promising is that kauri die-back has been recognised for the devastating disease that it is with the Government providing significant resources to stem the advance and devastation on our native kauri forests. Treaty Settlements are ongoing in this area and the Board looks forward to engaging with iwi as the Department becomes involved in cultural redress.

The Board also visited the Waitomo Caves and walked a length of the Timber Trail in Pureora Forest. These Places feature significantly in the Waikato CMS and the Board enjoyed getting to know the activities and issues facing these two destinations. I personally live in Aria, south of Pureora Forest and can confirm this is becoming a real success story not just for recreational users but also the small communities that surround the trail who have made use of the opportunities this trail provides. Well done DOC!

At the end of this year, we farewelled two of our longest serving members, Arthur Hinds, 2004 – 30 June 2015 and Dell Hood, 2006 – 30 June 2015. Both were outstanding in their commitment to the Waikato Conservation Board and to conservation in general with both

greatly involved in conservation groups or projects. Arthur is well known as the Chairman of Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group, a trust promoting the welfare of kiwi and their habitat on conservation and private land covering some 4000 ha, between Tairua and Hot Water Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula. Dell would be unsurpassed in her passion for conservation and is equally well-known as a foundation member (and past chairperson) of the Friends of Tiritiri-Matangi, an island wildlife sanctuary and one of New Zealand's most important and exciting conservation projects located just east of central Auckland. We wish Arthur and Dell well in their future conservation endeavours.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of Department of Conservation staff members who are a continuous source of inspiration. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board for their personal commitment to conservation and support to me. I feel the Waikato Conservation Board is in good heart and am looking forward to the year ahead.

Nga mihi



Mark Brough

## **1. Introduction**

The Waikato Conservation Board is an independent advisory body established in October 1990 by the Minister of Conservation under Section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987 (as amended by the Conservation Amendment Act 1990, the National Parks Act 1980, and the Walkways Act 1990).

The Board is responsible, under this Act, for shaping Conservation Management through the development of a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) and Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) for land administered by the Department of Conservation. The Board provides advice to the Department on policy, acts as a liaison body between the Crown and the public, and advocates for conservation values on land not administered by the Department.

In late 2013, the Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Conservation presented a report on the review of Conservation Boards, being the first review since 1990. This came at a time when the Department of Conservation (the Department) was implementing significant changes to the way it was structured and organised to deliver conservation outcomes. This included significant boundary changes; however Conservation Boards boundaries remained unchanged and continue to reflect their respective CMS's.

The Minister of Conservation appoints members to the Board for terms up to three years having regard to their experience, expertise and links with the local community including tangata whenua. Members can be appointed for subsequent terms. Due to the impending restructure of the Department in 2012/13, the Minister of Conservation cancelled the 2013 Board appointments process and extended the terms for those members of Conservation Boards whose terms ended on 30 June 2013. An appointment round occurred at the end of 2013 with five members being reappointed as from the 1 May 2014, four new members being appointed as from 1 July 2014 and a new Kahui Ariki (King Tuheitia representative) appointed as from 1 May 2014.

This Annual Report is submitted to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA), the national parent body for Conservation Boards, under Section 6 (O) of the Conservation Act 1987.

## **2. Waikato Conservation Board District**

The Department of Conservation introduced new boundaries as part of its restructure in September 2013. Its areas are now described in Regions, with offices, while having responsibilities in their local districts, also working with each other on a regional and inter-regional basis.

The Waikato Conservation Boards' area of administration now straddles the new Northern North Island Region and the upper most part of the new Central North Island Region (see Figure 2). This area is serviced by Conservation Service teams based in the Te Kuiti Office, Te Rapa Base, Hauraki Office and Whitianga Base. In addition, under the new structure, there are Partnerships teams located in Te Kuiti Office (1 x King Country/Taupo Partnerships ranger), Hamilton Office (Waikato Partnerships team), Hauraki Office and Whitianga Base (Coromandel Partnerships team).

The Board's boundaries extend from a point at the Waikato River mouth, north-east to Miranda, taking in the whole of the Coromandel Peninsula (including the Mercury and Aldermen Island groups and Cuvier Island), south to Waihi Beach, west to Paeroa then generally south following the Waihou River to Tirau. The boundary then follows Highway One south to Atiamuri, the Waikato River west to Whakamaru, Western Bays Highway 32 to Kuratau, Highway 41 west to Ohura via Taumarunui; then north to Panirau before generally following the Mokau River west to the coast, and thence north to the Waikato River mouth.

The Board's area of responsibility is nearly 270,000ha of public Conservation land (12% of the total area 2,250,000 hectares). The land is described in more than 500 separate parcels for various purposes, including forests, wetlands, caves, marine reserves, offshore islands, historic sites, wildlife protection, and recreational areas.

Culturally, the Conservancy falls mainly within the rohe of Tainui waka and the Hauraki, Waikato, Maniapoto and Raukawa Iwi/hapu.

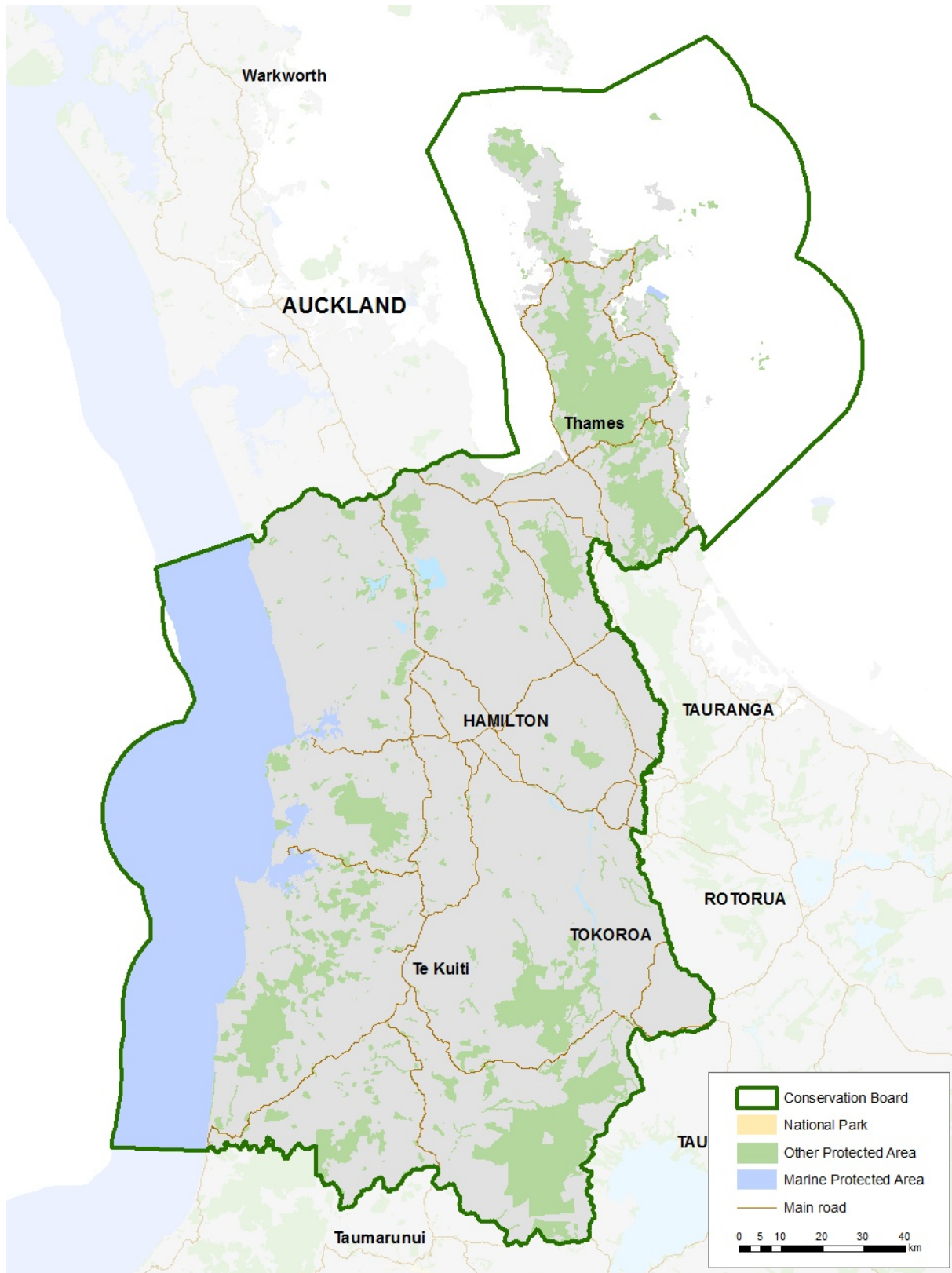


Figure 1: Map of Waikato Conservation Board area

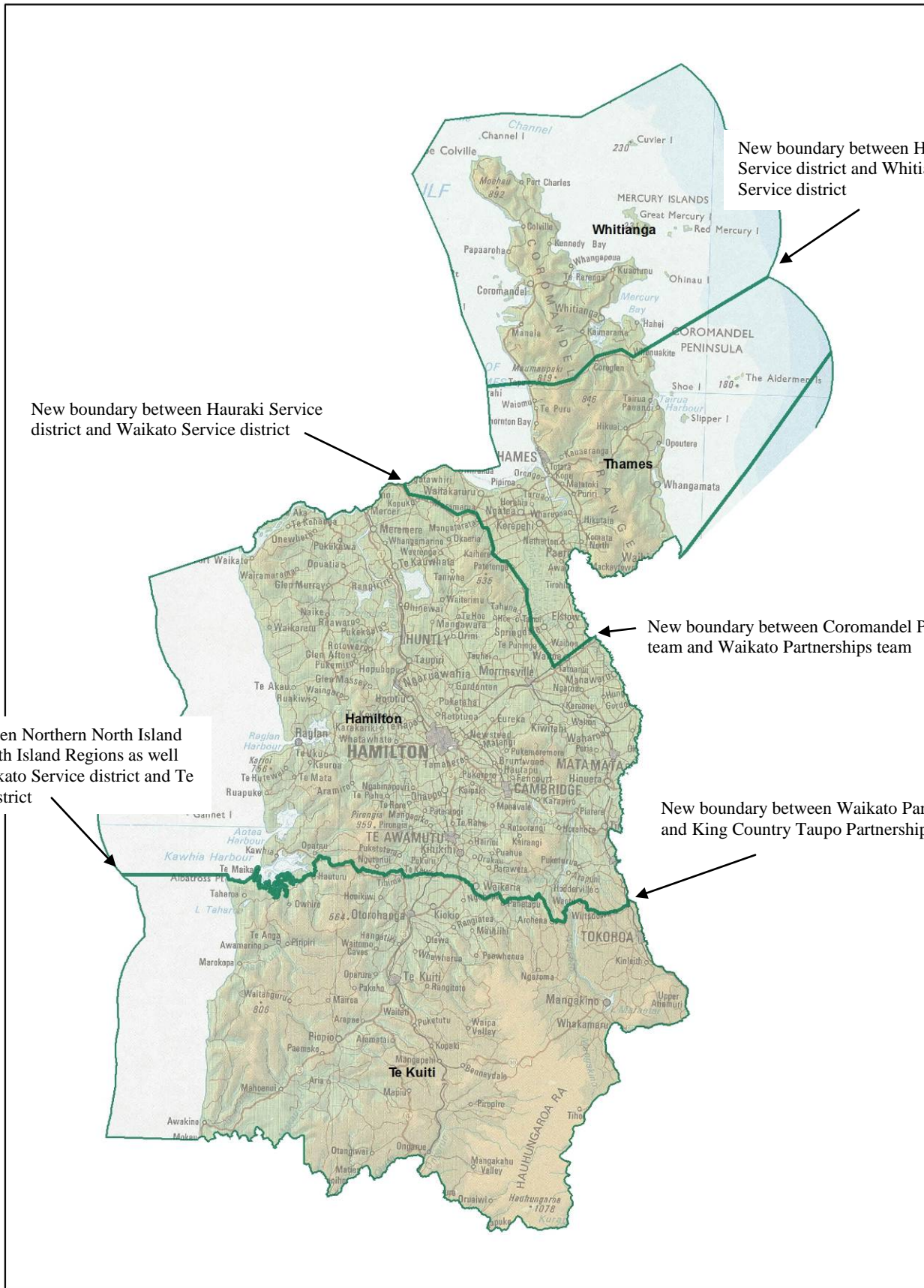


Figure 2: Waikato Conservation Board area showing DOC's Partnerships and Service boundaries



### 3. Membership

The Minister of Conservation, by various notices in the New Zealand Gazette, appointed members to the Waikato Conservation Board as follows:

**MARK BROUGH** appointed January 2011; present term expires 30 June 2016.

Mark was raised on a King Country farm at Aria, and has been farming in his own right for the past 20 years. A keen outdoors person, Mark has a strong interest in Conservation and native bush protection and has been involved in various Conservation projects over the years, including Clean Streams and Green Plan forestry. He is a member of Environment Waikato's Central King Country steering group for pest control, has been a member of the Waitomo Search and Rescue organisation for many years, and enjoys hunting, tramping, and kayaking in his "spare time." Mark was appointed Board Chairman as from 1 May 2014.

**ARTHUR HINDS JP**, Whitianga, appointed 2004; present term expires 30 June 2015.

Arthur is a farmer at Whitianga, with some 15 years experience as a director on dairy company boards, including the New Zealand Dairy Group 1991-2000. He is a former Environment Waikato councillor and, as chairperson of the Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group, a strong supporter of community conservation initiatives. Arthur is a former president of the Hauraki Justices of the Peace Association and Whitianga Lions Club. His recreational interests include clay target shooting, hunting, and fishing. Arthur was elected Board chairperson in August 2009 and performed this role up until 30 April 2014.

**DELL HOOD**, Hamilton, appointed 2006; present term expires 30 June 2015.

Dr Hood is a public health medicine specialist. She has long-time interests in tramping and voluntary conservation work, and is a foundation member (and past chairperson) of the Friends of Tiritiri-Matangi. She has been a member of the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust for many years and owns a QEII covenant property in the Coromandel. She is involved in restoration work at several local reserves such as Kakepuku and Whewell's Bush and is a member of the Moehau Environment Group. Her outdoor recreation interests are tramping, kayaking and cycling.

**KEVIN JAMES ROBINSON**, Thames, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2017.

Kevin is a self-employed dairy farmer. He has extensive knowledge of the history and recreational activities in Waikato. He has extensive governance experience in the region as current president of the Hauraki-Coromandel Federated Farmers, vice chair of National Federated Farmers and director of many companies. He is well connected to farming and rural communities. His outdoor recreation interests are fishing, hunting and tramping.

**DAVID TAIPARI**, Ngatea, appointed 2008; present term expires 30 June 2016.

David is the General Manager for Ngati Maru Runanga. He is a representative for Ngati Maru on the Hauraki Maori Trust Board, and a trustee of Matai Whetu Marae. He is also a technical officer for the Hauraki Gulf Forum, manager for the Hauraki Collective and chairman of the Independent Maori Statutory Board for the Auckland region. He has an understanding of cultural values associated with the environment and has an understanding of public processes and the relevant legislation. His outdoor recreation interests include fishing, golfing and hunting. He is of Ngati Maru, Ngati Whanaunga, Ngati Tamatera, Ngati Paoa, Rongo U, Te Patuwai, Ngati Awa and Tuhoe iwi.

**KATE CHERRINGTON**, Papamoa, appointed 1 May 2014; present term expires 30 June 2016.

Ms Cherrington is a nominee of the Head of Kahui Ariki. She is the director of Puata Hou Ltd, an education and community consultancy. Ms Cherrington has skills in strategic planning, conflict

resolution, consensus building and management, and has previous board experience. Her outdoor recreation interests are gardening and organics. She is of Ngati Hine, Nga Puhi and Ngati Raukawa iwi.

**Joyce Birdsall**, Tairua, appointed 1 July 2014: present term expires 30 June 2016.

Mrs Birdsall has extensive community connections through environmental and conservation-related groups. She has knowledge of public processes from her roles on various committees in the area and is the current chair of Tairua/Pauanui St John's Association, and is a member of Tairua Environment Society, Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group and Guardians of Paku Bay Association. Her outdoor recreation interests are walking and golf.

**Alan Cockle**, Hamilton, appointed 1 July 2014: present term expires 30 June 2017

Mr Cockle is a business owner providing Maori Land Research and Administration Services. He has a background in mediation, facilitation and financial and property management. Mr Cockle has governance experience as a trustee and board member, and extensive iwi affiliations. He has expertise in tribal histories and is an orator within Ngati Maniapoto. He is of Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Kahungunu, Te Ati Awa and Ati Haunui A Paparangi iwi.

**Prof Grant Cushman**, Raglan, appointed 1 July 2014: present term expires 30 June 2017

Professor Cushman was formerly a Professor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism at Lincoln University. He has particular expertise in public policy development, including public processes and relevant legislation relating to conservation, recreation and tourism. He has skills in park policy and provision; outdoor recreation behaviour, and tourism planning and development. His outdoor recreation interests are tramping, waka ama, running and fishing.

**Fiona Gower**, Tuakau, appointed 1 July 2014: present term expires 30 June 2015 (*subsequently reappointed for a further 3 years*)

Miss Gower is a pest Surveyor for SGS New Zealand Ltd. She is well connected to rural women at regional and national levels. She has gained experience of public processes from serving on many local community boards. Her outdoor recreation interests are whitebaiting, surfcasting, bush walking, camping, four-wheel driving and shooting.

## 4. Conservation Board Meetings

### Budget, fees and allowances

The Board's budget for 2014/15 was \$25,000. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. Board members are paid a daily meeting fee of \$180 and the chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$240. Members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged on Board business.

### Conservation Board Meetings

The Waikato Conservation Board held four general Board meetings during 2014/15. The locations for Board meetings are chosen to ensure as wide a coverage as possible is made of the region to familiarise members with Waikato CMS 'Places' and Department of Conservation staff who deliver conservation on PCL legislated under the Waikato CMS.

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Place:</b>	<b>Field Inspection:</b>
25 August 2014	Hamilton: Te Rapa Base	Nil
18 November 2014	Hamilton: Rostrevor St	Nil
17 February 2015	Waitomo: Waitomo Caves Conference Centre	Pureora Timber Trail
19 May 2015	Thames: Kauaeranga Visitor Centre	Cathedral Cove

The Board acknowledges and appreciates the hospitality accorded to it by staff of the Department of Conservation in hosting the Board at its Waikato Offices during the year. By taking advantage of the Department of Conservation Offices to hold meetings, the Board not only saves money but also, more importantly, has the opportunity to mix and mingle with the Department's staff at each location. This is invaluable in raising the profile of the Board and Board Members in each location, and offers important opportunities to engage with staff and look at opportunities for the Board to support programmes and projects within each location.

### Members' attendance record at meetings 2013-2014

#### Member attendance at the four meetings held during the year was as follows

Mark Brough (4); Arthur Hinds (4); Dell Hood (4); Kevin Robinson (2); David Taipari (4) Kate Cherrington (3); Alan Cockle (4); Fiona Gower (4); Joyce Birdsall (3); Grant Cushman (4)

Meetings were held on a regular basis i.e. the third Tuesday of every third month to allow Board members to plan their personal diaries well in advance. This schedule adopted for the 2014 – 2015 year increased Board members attendance and a quorum was easily achieved for each meeting.

### Conservation Board Meeting Summary

#### 4.1 25 August 2014, Meeting at Te Rapa Base, Hamilton

The August meeting was hosted by Nicki Douglas, Director Partnerships and Brigitte Meier, Partnership Manager, Waikato. Also in attendance were Dion Patterson, Service Manager, Te Rapa Base, Natasha Hayward, Partnerships Manager, Taupo/King Country and Paul Hardy, Partnerships Ranger, Waikato.

A review was conducted of current liaison with other groups and organisations, firstly identifying the three groups the Board has statutory obligations under the Conservation Act 1987 to engage with; Iwi (Treaty Partners, Sec. 4), Fish and Game (Sec 6B(i)) and Te Whanganui-a-Hei (subcommittee of the Board). Most liaisons were considered as still beneficial to continue and new members were identified for lead liaison roles.

The Board met with four mayors of the southern Waikato district; Brian Hanna, Mayor Waitomo District Council, Jim Mylchreest, Mayor Waipa District Council, Max Baxter, Mayor Otorohanga District Council and Don Cameron, Mayor Ruapehu District Council. This provided valuable information sharing between District Councils, DOC and the Board on common interests, issues and desired outcomes. Natasha Hayward, Partnerships Manager Taupo/King Country provided the visiting mayors and board members with a presentation on DOC's special places in the lower Waikato region. Key places identified in the Waikato CMS are Waitomo, Karioi to Whareorino and Pureora. Natasha was able to describe why these places were important requiring significant and integrated management (but noted this does not exclude management from remaining sites, however these require less detailed direction).

Dion Patterson, Service Manager, Te Rapa Base provided an update on the recent 1080 pest control operation on Pirongia including rationale for the control, the consultation process and how it was completed. He introduced the Battle for the Birds concept to the Board and described a trial conducted on Pirongia in 1996 comparing ground and aerial control which the Board found very interesting.

Mark Brough introduced concerns around the whitebait industry, brought to him by his local community. This was to be an ongoing topic throughout 2014-15.

Paul Hardy, Partnerships Ranger Waikato, tabled an issue with freedom camping at Te Toto Gorge in Raglan and advised after looking at various options, DOC was recommending prohibiting freedom camping at this location. Grant Cushman, who lived in Raglan, had met with the co-chairs of the Raglan Coastal Advisory and an iwi representative who confirmed their unanimous support of the change. After discussion the Waikato Conservation Board accepted the recommendation to prohibit freedom camping at the gateway/carpark of Te Toto Gorge. This was subsequently gazetted and adopted.

#### **4.2 12 November 2013, Meeting at Hamilton Office**

The November meeting was hosted by Nicki Douglas, Director Partnerships NNI and Brigitte Meier, Partnership Manager, Waikato. Mick Clout, Waikato liaison attended for the NZCA. Also in attendance was Tahira Rangiawha, Pou Tairangahau Waikato, Wayne Green, Partnerships Ranger, Waikato and John Rich, Partnerships Ranger Coromandel.

The November meeting kicked off the Board's concern regarding the whitebait industry in earnest. Nicki Douglas provided a recent evaluation of the status of the five species collectively known as whitebait which generated significant concern from the Board. Nicki also explained DOC's responsibilities/authority and actions taken so far by the Department in its approach to the Government to review white-baiting regulations.

Catherine Beard, Science Advisor based in Hamilton presented to the Board on the developing issue of increasing demand for access to native floral resources on PCL. She advised there is a lack of understanding of the effect of this on our ecosystems. The Board was very interested in the information provided by Catherine, particularly Fiona Gower who is a member of the Rural Women's Network and

keen to take this information to the rural community. The Board subsequently in a later meeting requested DOC take a conservative approach when approving honey bee concessions.

Paul Hardy, Partnerships Ranger Waikato, provided a presentation on Stewardship land within the Waikato CMS boundaries. This had been requested by the Board in response to the Minister's letter of expectation. In his presentation, Paul explained what Stewardship land meant under the Conservation Act, how Stewardship land came about and the process involved in reclassification. He provided an account of Stewardship land found within the Waikato CMS boundaries which generated discussion of these lands.

Lisa Ferguson, Senior Policy Advisor based in National Office provided a presentation to the Board on DOC's involvement in Treaty Settlement processes. This was a very informative presentation and was valuable in assisting the Board to understand DOC's responsibilities in the cultural redress area of Treaty Settlements.

#### **4.2 17 & 18 February 2015, Meeting at Waitomo Caves Conference Centre and site visit to Pureora Place**

The February meeting was hosted by Gemma White, Partnerships Manager Coromandel who was later joined by Ray Scrimgeour, Service Manager Recreation/Historic Te Kuiti Office. Also in attendance was Laurie Burnett, Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board member and Stuart Kneebone, invited guest. The Waitomo Caves were chosen as a venue as they feature in the Waikato CMS milestones.

Tinaka Mearns, Recreation Advisor provided a presentation on the Department's recreation work. She provided the Board with an insight into the frameworks DOC uses for prioritising its recreation work and achieving the Intermediate Outcome "New Zealanders and visitors have an enhanced experience in the outdoors"

A particularly significant presentation for the Board during the year was provided by Bronwyn Barnard, Legal Services Manager, National Office on the Treaty of Waitangi and application of Section 4 under the Conservation Act. Board members learnt the importance of conservation land and species to Maori and what 'rangatiratanga' means. She described the Treaty principles in relation to Section 4 requirements and how effective partnerships with tangata whenua can enhance the preservation of natural, historical and cultural heritage. An outcome of this presentation was for the Board to recommend the Department be independently audited on how it gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as per Section 4 of the Conservation Act within the Waikato CMS boundary.



*Board members experiencing Ruakuri track after the Board meeting and learning about the local bush and history of the area.*

*Photographer: Elisa Karwowski 2014*

The following day, the Board met at Pa Harakeke tourist centre in Pureora and were shuttled to an access point on the Pureora Timber Trail *Nga Haerenga*. John Gaukrodger, Partnerships Ranger, (who has had many other roles during his time in DOC) was our guide for the day and provided much historical, current, biodiversity and recreational information, not to mention many amusing

stories along the 7kms of the Trail the Board walked. Thanks to John, the Board learnt a lot about the history of Pureora Forest Park and then back at the Pureora Base, Erana Stevens, Partnerships Ranger provided information on current issues and activities on and in this Forest Park. The Board gained a great deal from the visit which will be helpful in understanding reporting on CMS milestones in Pureora Place.



*About to set off on the Timber Trail. Behind is a view of the catchment of Ongarue to the south end of the trail, onto Okahukura maunga and Mt Taranaki  
Photographer: Pa Harakeke shuttle bus driver*



*Erana Stevens discussing current issues and activities in Pureora "Place" at Pureora Base  
Photographer: Elisa Karwowski*

#### **4.3 19 & 20 May 2015, Meeting at Kauaeranga Visitor Centre and site visit to Hahei Coast and Marine Reserve Place**

The May meeting was hosted by Nicki Douglas, Director Partnerships NNI and John Rich, Partnerships Ranger, Coromandel. Mick Clout, Waikato liaison was in attendance for the NZCA. Also in attendance was Anna Mackersey, Bay of Plenty Conservation Board member. The Coromandel Peninsula features significantly in the Waikato CMS with much of Waikato PCL located in this region.

Discussion continued further on the whitebait issues including a reminder from David Taipari, the Hauraki Collective, being in Treaty Settlement negotiations, is yet to put forward its views (regarding the whitebait industry) as part of the Waikato Conservation Management Strategy process.

The Board heard from Ian Mitchell, Relationship Manager, Kauri Dieback Project who gave a national overview of the programme. This is a significant issue for Coromandel and Northland DOC staff and community groups and the Waikato and Northland Conservation Boards who are all focused on working to stop the spread of this disease and decimating its kauri forests. *"Effective kauri dieback disease prevention measures are in place for kauri forest sites in Waikato"* is a year 3 Waikato CMS milestone.

The Board then heard from Nick Heslop, Partnership Ranger Coromandel who introduced the new track upgrade section of the programme. Kevin Carter, Service Ranger Hauraki showed what this programme looks like on the ground on the Coromandel Peninsula.

The Board travelled to Hahei for the night where they spent the evening fare-welling two of its longest serving and most dedicated members; Arthur Hinds and Dell Hood (*see Chair foreword*).

The following day they met with some Te Whanganui-a-Hei marine reserve committee members including Peter Johnson, of Ngati Hei. Here they heard of the issues and concerns of the committee (a

sub-committee of the Waikato Conservation Board). On the agenda was a review of the sub-committee; whether it was still relevant and if so, did the terms of reference need amending/updating? This was a most informative meeting and further discussion as a result of this meeting will occur at the August 2015 Board meeting.

Peter Johnson was invited to provide an overview of the history and importance of Cathedral Cove area to Ngati Hei. This perspective will be important to consider in any future decision making of this Place. The Board then met with Gary Towler from Thames Coromandel District Council to hear the Council's vision of the Coastal Walkway. John Rick then provided the DOC perspective with John Gaukrodger contributing to the discussion

The Board then visited Cathedral Cove which is the smallest "Place" in any CMS which reflects the magnitude of integrated management required in this small but significant cultural site and tourist destination. The visit was to provide visibility of this Place and possible CMS direction to the Board i.e one of the CMS milestones which may be deferred as the integrated plan is to be reviewed as part of the Hauraki Treaty settlement.



*Checking out Cathedral Cove and the interpretation and warning signs mentioned as visual pollution by Ngati Hei  
Photographer: Alan Cockle*

## **5. Advocacy and Liaison**

### **5.1 General Public**

The Board had no formal opportunities for liaison with the public during the year. A key focus for the 2015-16 year will be to encourage public awareness and engagement with Board meetings.

### **5.2 Farm Environments Awards**

This liaison was reviewed in the August 2014 meeting. Following on from this, Arthur Hinds met with Martin Wallace who confirmed they would welcome continued representation from the Conservation Board for the Waikato branch which would help to keep the environment as a focus of the awards.

### **5.3 National Wetland Trust (Dell Hood)**

When reviewing this liaison in August 2014, Nicki commented this is very relevant to the CMS. Dell Hood was to contact the group and get a sense of the value of the relationship, however this was not completed before Dell's term expired. At the August 2015 meeting, a new liaison representative will be nominated.

### **5.4 Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (Kate Cherrington)**

There is no longer provision on the trust board for a Conservation Board representative. Kate Cherrington, Waikato Conservation Board Kahui Ariki, put in an application to become a Community representative trustee but was unsuccessful. Unfortunately, liaison with this group has lessened with the loss of the Conservation Board representative. The November 2015 meeting is tentatively planned to be held at Pohara Marae, close to Maungatautari with a site visit to the maunga the following day. Effective liaison with this group will need to be discussed further at future meetings.

### **5.5 Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Committee (Arthur Hinds)**

The Waikato Conservation Board's rohe includes Te Whanganui a Hei (Cathedral Cove) marine reserve. A sub-committee of the Board made up of four Ngati Hei representatives, four community representatives and a conservation board representative meet three times per year to discuss issues relative to the reserve. With Arthur's term expiring on 30 June 2015, Joyce Birdsall commenced attending the meetings along with Arthur. She will be formally nominated at the Waikato Conservation Board representative on the committee at the August 2015 meeting.

The Board met with the committee as a site visit for their May 2015 meeting in Thames. This was to assess the need to retain this sub-committee and if so, to review the terms of reference. Further discussion will occur at the August 2015 meeting.

### **5.6 Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council (Mark Brough)**

A report on Fish & Game Council meetings is given by Board liaison member Mark Brough at Board meetings. The Waikato Conservation Board's agenda and minutes are sent to the executive officer, who similarly provides the Board with agendas and minutes.

### **5.7 Boards/Organisations**

The Board maintains contact with neighbouring Conservation Boards through the exchange of meeting agendas and minutes. Laurie Burdett, Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board attended the February 2015 meeting in Waitomo. Her report showed similar issues although different locations e.g. freedom camping. Anna Mackersey, Bay of Plenty Conservation board member was a welcome visitor to the May 2015 meeting in Thames. Fiona Gower attended an Auckland Board meeting in her capacity as the liaison for this Board.



## **5.8 New Zealand Conservation Authority**

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

The Board is honoured to have Professor Mick Clout as the NZ Conservation Authority liaison with the Waikato Conservation Board. The Board acknowledges the importance of this link between the NZCA and the Board and appreciates the knowledge and experience Mick brings, particularly in conservation ecology

Mick was able to bring the Board up to speed with activities and issues the NZCA was engaged in and most importantly take back to the NZCA issues and concerns facing the Waikato Conservation Board.

The Board greatly appreciated Mick's informative contributions at the two Board meetings he attended on November 2014 and May 2015 and the special effort he made to attend Arthur and Dell's farewell dinner in Hahei.

## **5.9 Iwi Authorities, Maori Trust Boards, and Tangata Whenua**

Kate Cherrington, Ngati Hine, Nga Puhi and Ngati Raukawa, succeeded Gaylene Roberts as the Kahui Ariki (Maori King representative) on the Waikato Conservation Board. This role is a condition of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1995. Kate was appointed and commenced on the 1 May 2015.

The appointment of Alan Cockle, of Ngati Maniapoto, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Kahungunu, Te Ati Awa and Ati Haunui A Paparangi descent in July 2014, has provided a strong link with south Waikato iwi.

David Taipari, of Ngati Maru, Ngati Whanaunga, Ngati Tamatera, Ngati Paoa, Rongo U, Te Patuwai, Ngati Awa and Tuhoe descent, continues to provide the Board links with Pare Hauraki

## **6. Associate Minister of Conservation's 2014/15 Letter of Expectation**

### **6.1 Conservation Management Strategy**

The Conservation Management Strategy for Waikato became operative on 29 September 2014.

Subsequently, the Waikato Conservation Board, along with Northland and Auckland Conservation Boards worked with Nicki Douglas, Director Partnerships NNI in the development of a template CMS milestone implementation monitoring report. In Waikato's case this was presented to the Board by Nicki Douglas at their May 2015 meeting. The Board consequently accepted the proposed CMS monitoring template and approved the adoption of the framework for the Department to use to report on CMS milestones.

One of the concerns of adopting this framework was the Department would focus on reporting on the milestones and overlook other key activities that may sit outside the milestone framework. Awareness of these activities was valuable when Board's were communicating with their local communities or groups of interest. Nicki was able to reassure the Board, there was provision for the framework to include this work.

The Board looks forward to commencing the formal implementation monitoring process at its August 2015 meeting.

Planned Board actions as per the Waikato Conservation Board Workplan (attached as Appendix i) were achieved

### **6.2. Stewardship Lands**

The Board requested and received a presentation on Stewardship land by Paul Hardy, Partnership Ranger, Waikato at the November 2014 meeting in response to the Minister's letter of expectation.

In his presentation, Paul explained what Stewardship land meant under the Conservation Act, how Stewardship land came about and the process involved in reclassification. He provided an account of Stewardship land found within the Waikato CMS boundaries which generated discussion of these lands.

In the Minister's 2014 letter of expectation, the Board was requested to be prepared to give advice on any priorities for reclassification of stewardship land with its region.

The Board believes to arrive at a considered recommendation to the Minister as to the priority of stewardship areas for reclassification within the Waikato CMS boundary, an assessment of the relative values of the various stewardship areas will be required. The Board would need to consider how this assessment would be undertaken and its role in such an exercise. It would need to confirm with the Department the criteria to be used for the assessment and the staff resources available to assist with this exercise.

The Board has not been advised of any effects of Treaty Settlement on stewardship land status during 2014 – 15.

### **6.3 Other Functions**

In regards to other functions for the Waikato Conservation Board, no advice has been received from the Department in regards to any proposed changes of status of nationally and/or important internationally important areas found in the Waikato CMS boundary.

## 6.4 Advocacy

In regard to its advocacy role, each Board member has worked hard in their individual local communities and groups of interest. Some key advocacy has included;

Kate Cherrington, in her work nationally and internationally has had many opportunities to engage with groups with similar interests and issues. After talking about the Maungatautari model to groups in Hawaii, a foundation and a non-profit group subsequently visited Maungatautari to look at applying similar technology to regenerate their native forest on their mountain. She has been particularly interested in learning and engaging with DOC staff at various events over the whitebait issue. After a presentation on how DOC engages with its recreation work, Kate brought a very different iwi perspective to the discussion.

It was members of the community, coming and talking to Mark Brough who raised concerns over the whitebait industry and the survival of our native species. Mark was also instrumental in inviting the four south Waikato mayors to the August meeting and discussing similar issues and activities and looking for synergies. Mark has attended Fish and Game meetings and is also a member of the new Animal Game Council.

Alan has been involved in the Outside In programme and provided orator services at a Living Waters Hui at Wharekawa Marae on behalf of DOC. Alan is very proactive with his local iwi in Maniapoto and often provides insights and perspectives from our Treaty Partners in the south Waikato.

Grant Cushman was able to talk to a number of local key community members about freedom camping at Te Toto Gorge carpark. Through this he was able to confirm the Raglan community's view towards this issue which helped the Board in coming to a decision to approve the prohibition of freedom camping at this site.

David Taipari has a strong relationship with Pare Hauraki and will often bring to the table, views and perspectives from our Treaty Partners on the Coromandel Peninsula. This means the Board is better informed on topical issues and its decision making.

Dell Hood continued to liaise with QEII Trust and National Wetland Trust. She attended the QEII celebration of its 4000<sup>th</sup> covenant in May 2015 and the Ramsar-focused symposium in Hamilton co-hosted by the National Wetlands Trust and the DOC Arawai Restoration Programme.

Kevin Robinson has had a strong interest in the Kauri die-back issue in his whenua of Hauraki. His involvement with Federated Farmers has provided the Board with a strong link to the farming community and has enabled him to bring to the table perspectives from this community.

Fiona Gower is involved in the Rural Women New Zealand's network both on a local and national level. Issues such as the growing industry of honeybees in New Zealand and the lack of knowledge of the increase of this industry on our ecosystems was of particular interest which she took back to this rural group.

Joyce Birdsall is very involved with conservation issues and activities in or affecting her local community of Tairua in the Coromandel Peninsula. Joyce is always eager to engage and become better informed about local issues such as the New Chum subdivision application and has put her hand up to take over from Arthur on the Te Whanganui-A-Hei marine reserve committee.

However the Board acknowledges it needs to do more in terms of awareness in local communities and to encourage public engagement and attendance at its general meetings. This is to be an agenda item at its next meeting in August 2015.

The Board continues to offer to the Department its attendance at public meetings to support conservation outcomes if appropriate. So far this has not occurred.

The Board discussed engagement with neighbouring Conservation Boards. It was felt there would be efficiencies and more value to leaving this engagement i.e attendance of neighboring Board meetings for when there were specific issues of mutual concern. However they greatly enjoyed the visits of Laurie Burdett, Tongariro/Taupo and Anna Mackersey, Bay of Plenty.

## **6.5 Increased Engagement with Tangata Whenua**

The appointments in May and July 2014 of Kate Cherrington and Alan Cockle respectively, have helped build the Board's capacity to engage with our Treaty Partners. Through David Taipari, there has been a strong link to iwi on the Coromandel Peninsula but not in central Waikato or south Waikato. Iwi liaison was reviewed at the August 2014 meeting when it was confirmed David will continue to be the Board liaison member for Pare Hauraki, Kate as Kahui Ariki, the liaison member for Waikato Tainui and Alan liaison member for Maniapoto.

However the Board realises this is an area it can still improve on and that it needs to talk to tangata whenua across the full Waikato CMS boundary (or as relevant) when it has concerns, to understand iwi's perspective and views. This is particularly relevant on the Coromandel Peninsula. The Waikato CMS was being reviewed while the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process for Hauraki Whanui was under active negotiation. This meant it was not possible for this iwi to engage with the CMS process and for the implication of their particular values and interests including in establishing the draft management objectives to be considered.

The Board found Bronwyn Barnyard's presentation on the Treaty of Waitangi of immense value and most members requested this presentation in hard copy form to refer to later. This helped clarify the requirements under Section 4 of the Conservation Act and what it means for members on the ground and in their role.

While the Board did not manage to hold a meeting on a Marae during the 2014-15 year, it has booked its November meeting to be held at Pohara Marae, near Maungatautari.

## **7. Conclusion**

This has been a great year for the Waikato Conservation Board with increased engagement in all areas of the Board's role and responsibilities. A lot of this can be attributed to the increased engagement by the Department of Conservation in response to recommendations from the Conservation Board Review 2013. This will only go from strength to strength as current relationships are built on and new relationships forged along with an increase of skill, experience and knowledge by Board members.

One of two 'standouts' for 2014/15 was the introduction of the Minister's letter of expectation and Conservation Boards developing a workplan using the letter as a guide to their work for the year. The Waikato Conservation Board found this a positive move and appreciated the guidance and focus it provided. The Board looks forward to this year's Minister's letter of expectation and responding to its contents over 2015/16.

The second significant event of 2014/15 was progressing from almost ten years of Waikato CMS review to having this important document become operational in September 2014 and then moving into an era

of monitoring the implementation of its milestones. There has been considerable work done by the Department in the development of a robust and transparent framework to report and monitor milestones and outcomes. The Board is excited to be moving into this new phase and will have its first formal monitoring session in August.

Most notable during this year, was the appointment of five new members which built the Waikato Conservation Board's capacity and representation of the Waikato region. All new appointees have brought something unique to the team along with passion, enthusiasm and energy to engage and support DOC and their local communities in the conservation arena. Their addition has created a Board that is committed and passionate about its role and will be looking forward to the challenges and success of a new year.

*Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei*

Seek the treasure you value most dearly: if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain



Mark Brough  
Chairman

WAIKATO CONSERVATION BOARD

30 June 2015