

WAIKATO CONSERVATION BOARD

TE PAPA ATAWHAI O TE ROHE O TAINUI

Annual Report

For year ended 30 June 2013



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FOR PRESENTATION TO THE
NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Cover photograph

Photograph: Department of Conservation

Waharoa (gateway), Rangiriri Pa

Rangiriri is the site of one of the most decisive battles of the New Zealand land wars and took place on November 1863. In 2009, the New Zealand Transport Agency began working in partnership with Waikato-Tainui to restore the Rangiriri Pa site

ISSN 1172 9023 (Print)

ISSN 1175 186X (Online)

Waikato Conservation Board

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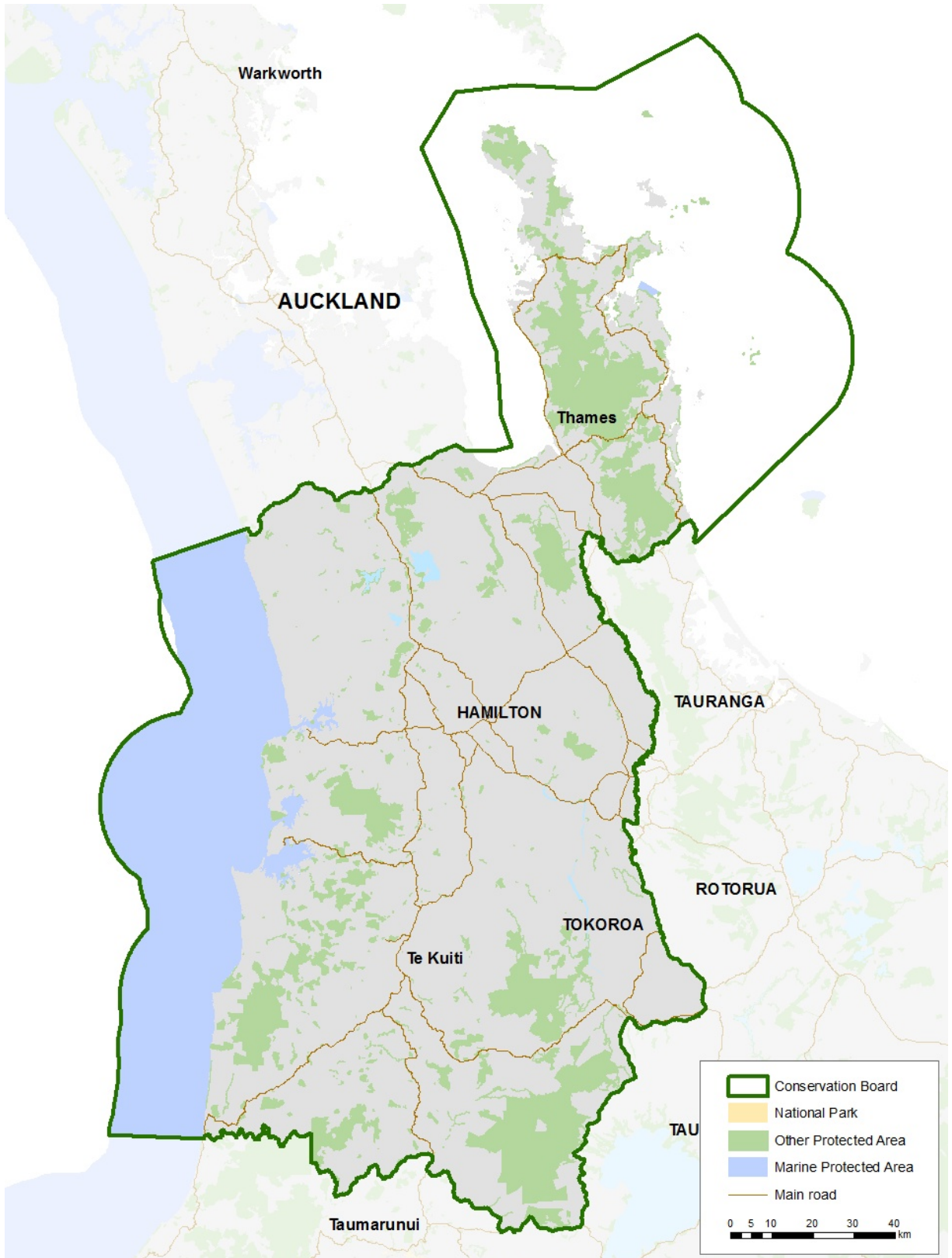


Figure 1: Map of Waikato Conservation Board area

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

In last year's Annual report I referred to a sense of frustration felt by Waikato Board members at the challenges faced by the Department of Conservation. Reference was made to ongoing structural reviews and funding cuts and 12 months later the position is worse. It is an appalling position to be in, particularly for a country that has one of the worst extinction records in the world. The latest restructuring and the changes still being put in place, means that our endangered species will continue to decline along with the rest of our unique native species.

Our sympathies lie with the Department's staff, who are responsible for managing on our behalf, one third of New Zealand's land. The apparent short-sightedness of Government policy regarding conservation and the funding of it, it does not bode well for our native species.

On a more positive note it is pleasing to record the progress made on Waikato's Conservation Management Strategy and I record with gratitude the effort of staff and members of the public who have contributed to this process. Where this will fit with the new structure remains to be seen but being "*place based*", all the important Areas have been highlighted.

It is with concern the Waikato Board notes that the future and the structure of the Conservation Board remains to be decided. Quite rightly, the focus has been to ensure staff appointments are attended to but, from our perspective, the Conservation Board's liaison and advisory roles are an extremely important part of linking with an increasingly concerned public.

Again this year I acknowledge the increased information we receive from the New Zealand Conservation Authority. While we would always welcome more contact, it was a privilege to have Professor Mick Clout at one of our meetings. It was disappointing not to have a Chairpersons' conference this year and I would urge that this be looked at in the future – assuming we have one.

My thanks are due to my fellow Board members and the staff of the Waikato Conservancy. It has been a privilege to work with you and I admire and commend your commitment to conservation. This is also extended to all community conservation groups throughout the Conservancy who continue to do an amazing amount of very important work.

In conclusion, I would like to record the sincere thanks of the Waikato Board to Greg Martin, our Conservator who for the past 17 years has led the Waikato Conservancy. We have really appreciated his diplomacy, his knowledge of Conservancy-wide issues, and especially his wonderful power point presentations at our meetings. His 40 years of service to conservation has been immense and we applaud him for his dedication to the Waikato region in particular and also to nationwide Conservation.

While the coming year will again be challenging for Conservation, together we can make a difference!



Arthur Hinds
CHAIRPERSON
August 2013

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 in the Waikato Conservancy. 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.

The Minister of Conservation appoints members to the Board for terms not exceeding three years. Members can be appointed for subsequent terms.

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.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP 2012/2013

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 2013.

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."

MEGAN CAMPBELL, Hamilton, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Megan has qualifications in Arts, Policy, and Commerce. She has worked in policy and communications roles for a number of central government organisations, within Parliament, as well as the not-for-profit sector. Megan currently owns a research consultancy as well as an import distribution company. Megan has broad governance experience and serves on a number of communities and national-level boards. She has strong interests in community-focused conservation projects, native and productive garden projects, tramping, fishing, and mountain-biking.

SALLY DAVIS, Pukekohe, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Sally is a widely-experienced senior manager in both central and local government and served as Chief Executive for Franklin District Council from 2007-2010. She has also held senior positions at Hamilton and Christchurch City Councils and was a founding member of the NIWA executive team. As past president of the NZ Limnological Society (now Freshwater Sciences Society) Sally has worked extensively in freshwater fisheries research and was involved in securing water conservation orders for the Rakaia, Rangitata, and Maitara Rivers. Sally is also keen on fishing, hiking, camping, and gardening.

ARTHUR HINDS JP, Whitianga, appointed 2004; present term expires 30 June 2013.

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 remained in that role for the 2012/2013 year.

DELL HOOD, Hamilton, appointed 2006; present term expires 30 June 2013.

Dell is Medical Officer of Health for the Waikato District Health Board, with long-time interests in tramping and voluntary Conservation work, including foundation

membership (and is a past chairperson) of the Friends of Tiritiri-Matangi. Dell has been a member of the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust for many years and a QEII covenanter (Coromandel property) since 2001. She is involved in restoration work at several local reserves including Kakepuku and Whewell's Bush, and is a member of the Moehau Environment Group.

ANDRA NEELEY, Otorohanga, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Andra has been a farm partner for many years and a regional office holder for New Zealand Federated Farmers, with extensive background in environmental management, policy, planning, and analysis. As a Waikato Regional Councillor from 1998-2012, Andra has been chair of catchment services and was instrumental in the establishment of catchment advisory committees throughout the Waikato Region. Andra is a strong advocate of pest management for both biodiversity and bovine TB gains. She is also a certified Resource Consent Commissioner.

GAYLENE ROBERTS, Hamilton, appointed 2007; present term expires 30 June 2013.

Gaylene represents Kahui Ariki (the Maori Sovereign, King Tuheitia) on the Board in terms of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1995. Of Ngati Raukawa and Ngati Mahanga affiliations, Gaylene is a strong advocate for Iwi involvement in environmental issues. She is currently a member of Te Kauhanganui o Waikato, Iwi Maori Council of the Waikato District Health Board, a member of the Waipa District Council Regulatory Committee, Waikato District Health Board Kaumatua Kaunihere chairperson, and Maungatautari Ecological Island Trustee. Gaylene is programme coordinator for environmental management studies at Te Wananga o Aotearoa.

KEVIN JAMES ROBINSON, Thames, appointed September 2011; present term expires 30 June 2014.

Kevin is a self-employed dairy farmer from Thames with an extensive background in farming company management. He is a member of NZ Federated Farmers National Dairy Executive and chairperson of the Hauraki / Coromandel Province Dairy Section. He is experienced in dealing with environmental issues (effluent disposal, large developments) at local authority level. Kevin also has past experience in forestry planning and management, particularly with the former New Zealand Forest Service and Te Mata Forests. He has spent many years hunting, fishing, and tramping on the Coromandel Peninsula.

DAVID TAIPARI, Ngatea, appointed 2008; present term expires 30 June 2013.

David is General Manager of the Ngati Maru Runanga and also has affiliations with Ngati Whanaunga, Ngati Tamatera, Ngati Paoa, Tumutumu, Ngati Awa, and Te Patuwai. He is Ngati Maru representative 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 is also a keen golfer.

INTRODUCTION TO BOARD DISTRICT

The Waikato Conservancy Office is situated in Hamilton, with overall responsibility for the administration of 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.

The Conservancy 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. Waikato Conservancy also manages water-related issues for that part of the Waikato River catchment north of the Waikato/Auckland Conservancy boundary.

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

The Conservancy is divided into three management Areas – Hauraki (office at Thames), Maniapoto (office at Te Kuiti) and Waikato (office at Te Rapa). Hauraki also contains Field Bases at Coromandel, Kauaeranga Valley, and Whitianga, while Maniapoto has a Field Base at Pureora. The Conservancy employs 118 staff [2013 figures], of whom 66 are located in Conservancy Office/Shared Services, 21 at Waikato Area, 15 at Hauraki/Peninsula Field Bases, and 16 at Te Kuiti/Pureora. (Figures subject to slight variations).

[Note the Conservancy structure changed at 1 July 2012 with the introduction of Shared services centres at Wellington, Christchurch, and Hamilton.]

BRIEF SUMMARY BY AREA

Waikato

The Waikato Area encompasses the geographical area from Port Waikato to Kawhia on the West Coast, east to Tokoroa and generally northwards following the Waihou River to Thames. Dominant features of the Area are: three internationally significant wetlands (Firth of Thames, Kopuatai Peat Dome and the Whangamarino Wetland) and an extensive network of wetland reserves within the Lower Waikato and Hauraki Plains; terrestrial forests associated with the Hakarimata and Hapuakohe Ranges, the volcanic cones of Maungatautari, Kakepuku, Pirongia and Karioi and the karst landforms of Te Kauri; coastline and estuarine areas of the Firth of Thames, Waikato River delta, Whaingaroa, Aotea and Kawhia Harbours on the Western Waikato coast.

There are large rural and urban centres (Hamilton, Te Awamutu, Morrinsville, Cambridge, Matamata, Raglan, and Ngatea) within the Area supporting a regional population of some 400,000 people. Industrial development, intensive use of land for agriculture and increasing demands for outdoor and recreational opportunities and experiences from growing populations, pose challenges for the retention of indigenous character and biodiversity within the Waikato landscape.

Hauraki

The Hauraki Area covers the scenic and wonderfully diverse Coromandel Peninsula. The Peninsula is traditionally known as Te Tara o Te Whai (the jagged barb of the stingray), and is the figurative ama (outrigger) that has Mount Te Aroha as its prow and Mount Moehau as its stern. The area is known for its kauri-cloaked volcanic ranges, rocky coastal headlands, sandy beaches, bays, and estuaries. The coastline is dotted with islands and nationally significant sites for many of our threatened species. The area has a rich history of Maori settlement dating back 800 years, followed by European settlement and with it the kauri logging and gold mining industries. The Peninsula is a popular weekend destination, especially for the exodus of people escaping Auckland to enjoy the natural and historic heritage that is “the Coromandel.”

Important features of the Area include

Coromandel Forest Park; Northern Coromandel Farm Parks; Te Whanganui-A-Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve; Predator-free off-shore islands.

Maniapoto

The Maniapoto Area encompasses the geographical area from Kawhia Harbour to Tokoroa and generally south following State Highway 32 to Kuratau and across to the Mokau River mouth. Important features of the Area are: nationally significant ecosystem restoration project within Waipapa ecological area; nationally important kokako management project at Mapara Wildlife Reserve; locally endemic Mahoenui giant weta and *Awaroa hebe* populations, and nationally important populations of *Dactylanthus taylorii*, long and short-tailed bats, kaka, kokako, Archey’s frogs, and tainui; Ruakuri Scenic Reserve site, Waitomo Caves and other nationally unique karst sites.

CONSERVATION BOARD MEETINGS

The Board in the past has generally planned their meeting venues in order to cover as much of the Conservancy as possible. During this year, four one-day meetings were held, in the Waikato Conservancy, Hamilton. The Board now has a policy that two-day meeting involving an inspection on the second day will go ahead only if a quorum of members is available for the inspection.

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Field Inspection</u>
27 September 2012	Hamilton	No
14 December 2012	Hamilton	No
7 March 2013	Hamilton	No
16 May 2013	Hamilton	No

Members' attendance record at meetings 2012-2013

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

Mark Brough (4); Megan Campbell (4); Sally Davis (2); Arthur Hinds (4); Dell Hood (4); Andra Neeley (3); Gaylene Roberts (2); Kevin Robinson (4); David Taipari (2)
The meetings have been held when the majority of the Board members could attend and when we had a forum.

Conservation Board Meeting Summary

27 September 2012, Meeting

- The September meeting spoke about the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust, they were very excited about hosting Sirocco for six weeks in August to September; the Kakapo team from the South Island were flown to support Sirocco's stay. The staff was very impressed with the facility the Trust provided, and all the slots were fully occupied. DOC's partnership with Air New Zealand regarding the Great Walks is working very well and is very pleased to provide a service to transport our native species around the country. Sirocco was greeted by a Trust volunteer dressed up as a kakapo.
- Jan and Laurie Hoverd of Cambridge were given an Annual Conservation Award for the outstanding work they have done for several years with falcons in the Waikato. Forty falcons were released in the Waikato Region from their property. A grant of \$2000 and a bouquet of flowers were given to mark this small but a very significant event.

14 December 2012, Meeting

- The December meeting included Waikato Community Conservation Fund, Mark Brough, and Arthur Hinds met with Jan Simmons, Community Outreach Coordinator; to process the 24 applications received. The fund has \$45,000 available for applications and the combined applications came to \$96,000.

Mark said it was great to be involved in the allocation process and to get a better understanding of what many community Conservation groups are involved in.

- DOC's Science advisor, Cynthia Roberts provided a report to the Conservation Board on the status and response to PTA (Kauri Dieback) in the Waikato Conservancy area. There is no evidence yet that PTA is present in the Waikato. Waikato Regional Council has responded to seven reports of dead or dying Kauri in recent months, all of which proved to be not PTA.

7 March 2013, Meeting

- The March meeting included a joint presentation (with the Waikato Regional Council) of the Dr Stella Frances Memorial Scholarship for 2013, now in its eighth year. Dr Stella Frances had been the Waikato Conservator and had previously been an elected Waikato Regional Councillor. After her death in August 2003, the Department and Environment Waikato (*now known as Waikato Regional Council*) had come together and established the scholarship to encourage students for their final year of a master's degree at the University of Waikato in researching Environmental issues within the Waikato region. The scholarship's value is of \$5000.00 which is split between the Department of Conservation and Waikato Regional Council.

Alexandra Keyte Beattie, a worthy recipient of Dr Stella Frances Memorial Scholarship for 2013 She has an outstanding academic record and has excellent communication skills. Her research titled "The Function and Role of Empodisma Robustum Canopy in Ecosystem Exchanges of Carbon and Water at Kopuatai Bog" is directly relevant to the Waikato investigating the internationally recognised and, nationally significant Kopuatai peat bog. It is potentially applicable and transferable to other peat bogs in the Waikato. Her proposed research methodology is robust, and the work compliments other existing research priorities. Beat Huser (Waikato Regional Council), Lois Livingston (Waikato Regional Council), Oliver Overdyck (Department of Conservation), and Alexandra's friend Anna, attended the meeting.

- The official opening of the Timber Trail Cycleway by the Conservation Minister, Hon Dr Nick Smith. The Olympic cycling gold medallist and official ambassador for the New Zealand Cycle Trail, Sarah Ulmer attended the opening on 30 March 2013. Other officials including families also attended. Many people cycled parts of the Timber Trail.
- Fonterra and Department of Conservation announced a \$20 million community investment. This will initially focus on five key catchments in the significant dairying regions. The Waikato Conservator, Greg Martin, and the Minister, Hon. Dr Nick Smith, attended the official launch of this ten year investment at Lake Areare, a Peat Lake in the Waikato.
- The Parks Forum has awarded 12 parks across New Zealand and Australia, the prestigious International Green Flag Award. DOC has two; the Pureora Timber Trail and Karangahake Gorge, located in the Waikato Region.

16 May 2013, Meeting

- The May meeting was attended by New Zealand Conservation Authority's Waikato liaison member, Professor Mick Clout, where he provided members an update on NZCA issues.
There was an interesting discussion on Predator-Free New Zealand. The aim is to have New Zealand Predator Free by 2050, focusing on possums, stoats, rats and mustelids. As a pilot experiment they will first target off-shore islands like Great Barrier Island and Stewart Island.

- Mark Brough and Kevin Robinson were on the Waikato Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) hearings panel for three days along with Rachel Kelleher, Chair (DOC, Waikato Community Support Manager) and Ray Scrimgeour (DOC, Maniapoto Area Manager). The Waikato CMS hearings finished on 23 May, 2013.

Other Board Activity

Farm Environments Awards (Andra Neeley)

A field day event was held on 15 May 2013, at Walton, where Grant Wills and Karen Preston, were winners from the Waikato for Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

The National Sustainability Showcase is in Hamilton, Waikato on the 22 June 2013.

National Wetland Trust (Andra Neeley)

The World Wetlands Day local celebration was on 3 February 2013, at Lake Serpentine. David Lawrie, Keith Thompson (the bog-man), Gordon Stephenson, who helped found the National Wetland Trust in 1999 attended the event, along with many others. The event was largely run by the National Wetland Trust, with support from Waikato Regional Council and Department of Conservation. Several other agencies were present offering their information and services.

Andra provides updates at each meeting on the progress being made by the National Wetland Trust to establish a National wetland centre at Lake Serpentine, south of Ohaupo Village.

Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust (Arthur Hinds)

Arthur served as Board representative on the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust and provided regular updates on this internationally significant project.

The past year was dominated by controversy among adjoining landowners who no longer want the 47 kilometres of predator-proof fence on their properties. Despite that, significant Conservation progress is being made, with successful translocations of native species continuing, and most recently the release of saddleback (tieke) to the island.

The fabulous new Maungatautari Visitor Centre - “Manu Tioriori” is now open seven days a week.

Malcolm Anderson is the new General Manager and is making excellent progress.

BOARD FUNCTIONS SECTION 6M CONSERVATION ACT 1987

Section 6M(1)(a) Approval of Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) The Board welcomed a resumption of the CMS review process and the CMS sub-committee met with Department planning staff several times during the year.

Section 6M(1)(b) Conservation management plan approval, review, and amendments: No amendments or reviews were undertaken during the year.

Section 6M(1)(c) Advice on the implementation of CMS and CMP: No action.

Section 6M(1)(d)(ii) Advice to the New Zealand Conservation Authority or the Director-General on any other Conservation matters: The Board's concerns about the nature and extend of DOC's restructuring was made known to the NZCA.

Statutory Land Management: The Board was not asked to provide the Department with advice on any land exchange proposals during the year.

Resource Management Issues: The Board received regular updates from the Department on its involvement with Resource Management Issues.

Concessions: The Board received regular updates from the Department on its involvement with the Concessions issues.

Section 6M(1)(e) Advice on proposals for new walkways: The Board made no recommendations to the Department regarding new walkway proposals, though it notes the progress being made on the Timber Trail development between Ongarue and Pureora. Several members took the opportunity to inspect the new formation in April.

Section 6M(1)(f) Liaise with Fish and Game Council on Board-related matters: No formal discussion with Council took place during the year.

POWERS OF BOARD SECTION 6N CONSERVATION ACT 1987

6N(2)(a) Advocate interest at public forums and statutory planning processes The Board made no formal submissions during the year.

6N(2)(b) Appoint committees and delegate them functions and responsibilities:

The Te Whanganui-A-Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve Committee was established in 1993 and functions as a sub-committee of the Waikato Conservation Board under section 6Nb of the Conservation Act 1987.

Te Whanganui A Hei Marine Reserve Committee consists of nine members, four from Ngati Hei, one from the Mercury Bay Community Board, three from the local area and one from the Waikato Conservation Board. This committee can only operate within the mandate of the Conservation Board and any recommendations need to be formally approved by the Board.

The committee meets in March, July, and November to discuss issues relating to the Reserve. An operations report is given at each meeting including monitoring results and any instances of fishing within the Reserve.

A report is also received from the Friends of Te Whanganui A Hei Marine Reserve Trust.

OTHER BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 6Q (1) Conservation Act 1987: Co-opting Members: The Board does not presently include any co-opted members.

Section 17G Conservation Act 1987: Procedure for preparation and approval of Conservation Management Plans: The Board did not consider any Conservation management plans this year.

LIAISON

With the Public

The Board had no formal opportunities for liaison with the public during the year. All four meetings were of one-day duration held in Waikato Conservancy, Hamilton.

With Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Council

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.

The Harrier Hawk has been taken off the protected list.

With other Boards/Organisations

The Board maintains contact with neighbouring Conservation Boards through the exchange of meeting agendas and minutes. A report on each neighbouring board's minutes is given at each Board meeting and also once the minutes are finalised are uploaded on the DOC website.

Liaison members during the year under review were
East Coast Bay of Plenty Board – Dell Hood;
Tongariro / Taupo Board -Mark Brough;
Taranaki / Whanganui Board - Mark Brough;
Auckland Board – Sally Davis

With the New Zealand Conservation Authority

Minutes from the New Zealand Conservation Authority meetings are circulated to members with the Board's own meeting agenda papers and are commented on by the Board/NZCA liaison member at the meeting. Professor Mick Clout, the Waikato liaison member; receives copies of Board agendas and meeting minutes. Professor Mick Clout attended the Board's March meeting.

With Iwi Authorities, Maori Trust Boards, and Tangata Whenua

Meeting minutes and agendas are circulated to the Maori Trust Boards. Kahui Ariki (The Maori King) is represented on the Waikato Conservation Board (presently by Gaylene Roberts) as a condition of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1995.

Board minutes are also available to the wider public via the Department of Conservation website.