

WEST COAST *TAI POUTINI* CONSERVATION BOARD

Annual Report
1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009



Cover Photo

The photograph is of members of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board and Department of Conservation staff inspecting a block of coastal kahikatea forest in the Waiho River Valley. This was one of the sites which the Board visited on the field trip associated with its May 2009 meeting at Franz Josef.

Photographer: Les Wright (Board member).

**WEST COAST TAI POUTINI
CONSERVATION BOARD**

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Functions

The West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board is an independent advisory body for public conservation land while the Department of Conservation is the day-to-day manager. The Board has a number of statutory roles under various Acts including:

- the recommendation of a West Coast Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) for approval
- advising the Department of Conservation and the NZCA on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice
- monitoring the implementation of the CMS
- the approval of Conservation Management Plans (CMP's)
- the recommendation of National Park Management Plans to the NZCA for approval
- advising the Department of Conservation and NZCA on conservation matters, and proposed changes to the status of land of national and international significance.
- liaising with the Fish and Game Council on conservation matters, and
- carrying out other powers delegated to it by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

Area of Responsibility

The area of responsibility for the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board is the West Coast from north of Karamea south to Big Bay (refer to the map at the end of the report). This area corresponds to that of the West Coast Conservancy, South Island, except for Kahurangi National Park (which is the responsibility of the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board), Arthur's Pass National Park (Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board) and Mt Aspiring National Park (Otago Conservation Board). The area also extends out to the twelve-nautical mile limit with respect to coastal and marine issues, and out to the 200 nautical mile limit with respect to marine mammal issues.

Westland/*Tai Poutini* National Park and Paparoa National Park lie completely within the Board's jurisdiction. The overlap of the Nelson/Marlborough, Canterbury Aoraki and Otago Conservation Boards with the West Coast Conservancy necessitates close co-operation with those Boards and at times the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board advocates for cross-boundary issues. The Board's area also shares common boundaries with the Southland Conservation Board.

Approximately twenty-five percent of all public conservation land in New Zealand lies within the West Coast Conservancy. A large number of issues which are of interest to the Board include:

- management of plant and animal species such as the Westland petrel/*taiko*, the white heron/*kotuku*, blue duck/*whio*, rowi (formerly Okarito brown kiwi), Haast *tokoeka* and great spotted kiwi/*roa*
- management of recreational facilities

- management of historic sites
- concession activities, including those relating to recreation and tourism activities, grazing, industrial use, baches, filming, gravel extraction, and
- mining and access arrangements.
- marine protection

The West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board has a responsibility to the people of the West Coast, and the wider New Zealand population, to ensure these lands and waters, and the biodiversity which they contain, are protected and enhanced.

The total area of the West Coast Conservancy comprises 1,913,000 ha. Of this total approximately 84% (1,610,000 ha) is contained within the boundary of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction.

Features of the Area

Paparoa National Park	39000 ha
Westland <i>Tai Poutini</i> National Park	127000 ha
Victoria Conservation Park	198500 ha
Scenic Reserve – 110	86447 ha
Historic Reserves – 18	12475 ha
Ecological Areas – 60	215800 ha
Amenity Areas – 22	17200 ha
Stewardship	872600 ha
Recreation Reserve – 90	395 ha
Wilderness Areas – 4	118400 ha

Membership

The names, locations of the members of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board and attendance at meetings from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 are shown below. The Board was pleased to welcome new member Kim Thomas (Westport/Kawatiri) and welcome back Hamish Macbeth (Karamea) and Richard Nichol (Westport/Kawatiri) at its October 2007 meeting.

Di Hooper*	1
Clare Backes	5
Jim Costello	6
Anne Hall	6
Kori Hutana	4
Warren Inwood	5
Hamish Macbeth#	6
Richard Nichol#	4
Stewart Robertson	5
Terry Scott	5
Les Wright	6
Kim Thomas#	5

* Members whose term expired at 31 August 2008.

Members newly appointed or reappointed 1 September 2008.

At times some members were not always able to attend the planned field inspections but overall attendance by members has been high.

Conservation Board Meetings

During the reporting period the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board held six formal meetings, and two field inspections. The Board used one of its field inspection days for a CMS workshop in December 2008. Members have used email extensively to consider advice, submissions and other issues in between Board meetings.

This year the Board took the opportunity to develop an annual strategy which highlighted four areas on which the Board could focus during the year. The first was work on the CMS, and the other three were the promotion of conservation values, public relations and the Treaty of Waitangi issues.

1 August 2008

This meeting was held in Harihari, in the Franz Josef *Waiau* Area and included a field inspection the previous day. Members walked the Harihari Coastal Walkway, complimented the Department on the standard of interpretation and the public consultation about the future of access to the eroding Doughboy Rock. Members also inspected the community plantings along the La Fontaine Creek. The Board received the first parts of the revised draft of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Management Strategy, plus a summary of the relevant submissions and the Department's responses. As it was Di Hooper's last meeting the Board thanked her for her work and made a presentation.

Six members of the public attended to discuss 1080, public access, private accommodation and road clearance issues.

17 October 2008

The Board met at Hokitika where it took the opportunity to welcome new member Kim Thomas and to welcome back Hamish Macbeth and Richard Nichol. Mike Browne, NZCA liaison member for the West Coast, was also welcomed to the meeting. Presentations on land exchanges and disposals, and the Denniston Historic Area upgrade were provided by the Department. The Board received further parts of the revised Conservation Management Strategy, and responses to submitters. It decided to dissolve the CMS Committee so that all members could be involved in the considering the revised draft. Three members of the public attended the public forum and raised issues about 1080 and proposed mataitai reserves.

5 December 2008

The December meeting in Hokitika was preceded by a workshop on the revised Conservation Management Strategy. A number of issues were discussed including a proposed timeline, 'Places', sustainable development, climate change, mining, milestones, public access, and cumulative effects. Approaches to these issues were proposed and discussed at the Board meeting the next day. The Board received a briefing about the work of the Marine Protection Forum. Three members from an anti-1080 group attended the Public Forum.

13 February 2009

This meeting was a regular meeting held in Hokitika. Warren Inwood was re-elected as Chairperson for the year. Anne Hall stood down as Vice-Chairperson and Clare Backes was elected to that position. This was an important meeting for the Board because it recommended the revised draft CMS to the NZCA for approval. The Board and the Department had worked through a number of issues at a workshop held the previous day and proposed responses to a number of issues were discussed at the meeting, including that for private accommodation. The approval of the CMS meant the conclusion of the first focus topic in its Annual Strategy. Members from two anti-1080 groups attended the Public Forum and talked about that, availability of material on the Board WebPages and 1080.

1 May 2009

The Board met in Franz Josef. On the day before the meeting the Board inspected the work that had been done on the Franz Josef Glacier Road preparatory to it being sealed, looked at proposed control of weeds along Docherty Creek and visited a stand of coastal forest which had been proposed for purchase by the Nature Heritage Fund. In the evening Board members attended an illustrated talk from Franz Josef staff on work with rowi.

At this meeting the Board Chair reported back on the presentation of the CMS to the NZCA. A presentation on a proposed hydro-electric power application was provided by representatives from Solid Energy. The Board discussed a paper on the promotion of conservation values – the second focus topic in the Board's Annual Strategy. Mike Browne was in attendance. Six members of the public attended the Public Forum and addressed the Board on matters including heli-hunting and the Wild Animal Recovery Operations review, 1080 and public access issues.

19 June 2009

This meeting was a regular meeting held in Hokitika. Members received a briefing from the Department on the Marine Protected Area consultation which was to begin in July 2009. The Chair reported on discussions that had been held with members of the NZCA's West Coast Tai O Poutini CMS committee earlier in the month. The Board discussed public relations, one of the focus topics in its Annual Strategy. It was agreed that Treaty of Waitangi issues would be held over until the Board's November 2009 meeting at Punakaiki. A briefing about a proposed 'Southern Paparoa Journey' was provided by a consultant employed by the Department and the Board considered concept plans for an upgrade of the recreational facilities at the Hokitika Gorge.

Six members of the public attended the Public Forum and addressed the Board on 1080, the Marine Protected Areas process, access to information about the Board on the website, and public access issues.

STATUTORY FUNCTIONS - CONSERVATION ACT

Conservation Management Strategies

This year was a momentous year for the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board with regards to the CMS. Reviewing the revised draft document and responses to submitters was a major task for the Board this year involving extensive consultation by email and phone. From August 2008, the Department provided chapters of the revised draft CMS and the responses to submitters. Board members considered the proposed changes to these documents and consulted with the Department when necessary. Two workshops were used to provide time for the Board and Department to consider substantive issues such as private accommodation, mining, climate change, places, monitoring and milestones and a number other issues. Mike Browne, a member of the NZCA's West Coast Tai o Poutini CMS committee attended one of these workshops. The Board found his input invaluable. The Board Chairperson and the two Ngai Tahu Board members joined the Department in a meeting with Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu to discuss the Department's response to the Ngai Tahu submission.

At the Board February 2009 meeting the Board agreed to recommend the revised draft of the CMS to the NZCA subject to a legal review and once this had been completed, the Board referred the CMS to the NZCA for approval. The Board Chairperson and staff from the Department presented the Revised Draft CMS to the NZCA on 8 April 2009.

A meeting was held in Hokitika on 2 June 2009 with two representatives of the NZCA CMS Committee who sought further clarification as to why the Board and the Department had taken certain approaches to some issues. Discussions with the NZCA and the Department will continue into the next financial year.

Section 4

The Board identified Treaty of Waitangi issues as a focus topic in its Strategic Plan. Discussion on this topic has been scheduled into its meeting programme for the 2009-2010 financial year.

The Board continued to receive reports from the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy's Pou Kura Taiao for most meetings. These reports informed the Board about activities and issues pertinent to the West Coast. Reports provided by the Department include details of Section 4 issues involved in both conservation and resource activities, based on the NZCA template.

Richard Nichol took the opportunity to attend a five day Pukenga Atawhai course held at Te Kauraka Waka a Maui marae at Bruce Bay in October 2008. Board members who have taken part have found these courses very useful and informative.

Change of status or classification

The Board continued to receive proposals for the exchange or disposal of public conservation land through out the year. It often recommended that land exchanges proceed, especially if there was an obvious conservation gain. However it continues to have difficulty with applications for the disposal of public conservation land and it has decided to develop a set of guidelines for assessing the information on these applications provided to the Board by the Department. Issues that concern the Board include the future potential of the land for regeneration and maintenance of public access. Some of the applications considered by the Board during the year include:

Mitchells – Lake Brunner

This application was for the exchange of 17ha of freehold land adjoining a scenic reserve, for approximately 8000m² of public conservation land adjoining a lodge. The applicant wished to shift a road onto the area of conservation land. The Board recommended to the Department that this exchange proceed for the protection that it would provide to the Carew Falls Track.

Ahaura – Kopara

This application was for the revocation of a specially protected area near the township of Ahaura in the Grey Valley to enable the exchange of 11ha of freehold land containing regrowth beech-podocarp forest for 6.5ha of public conservation land consisting of partially developed pasture which had been grazed for many years. The Board recommended to the Department that this application proceed.

Nancy Tass Block and Kotuku

This exchange was part of the agreement between the owners and the Nature Heritage Fund to purchase 300ha of rare forest and wetland in the Upper Ahaura River area. The Board recommended that the application proceed but asked that an extensive riparian strip be required to maintain the freshwater values of the creeks involved and opportunities for public access be maintained or improved if possible.

Westland Tai Poutini National Park & Potae and Van Der Poel

This application involved the exchange of 12ha of grazed land in the Westland Tai Poutini National Park near Lake Mapourika, Franz Josef. The applicants were offering to exchange 20ha of freehold land consisting of hillslope land adjoining the Park which formed part of the habitat for rowi. The Board agreed to recommend to the Department that this application proceed after a satisfactory report was received from a Board member who visited the site with local staff and the applicant.

McCallums Road – Karamea

This application was for the revocation of North West Nelson Forest Park status to allow the disposal of a narrow strip of developed pasture land and tidy up the entrance to the Oparara Valley. The rest of the block would become public conservation land for ease of management. A Board member inspected the area and reported that the conservation values were low and the Board agreed that this application should proceed.

Ahaura-Kopara

This application involved land near the township of Ahaura in the Grey valley. The proposal was for the exchange of 11ha of freehold, beech-podocarp regrowth forest on a hill slope adjacent to an ecological area for 6.5ha of public conservation land which was partially developed pasture, had few natural values and limited potential for regeneration. The Board recommended that this application proceed.

Advice on Other Conservation Matters

The Board was consulted by or gave advice to the Department and NZCA on the following:

Concessions

The Board provided advice to the Department on the concession applications that met the concession trigger mechanisms. One of the applications resulted in the updating of the concession protocols between the Board and the Department to allow the consideration of concessions for activities which might not be new to the Conservancy but were new to a 'Place'.

The Department continued to provide fortnightly summaries of concessions received. This summary allowed the Board to be aware of concession applications that would be sent to the Board in the future and also allowed it to signal to the Department any application that it would like to see. The Board received draft determination reports for comment which provided more information on which to base considered advice. Regular reports on concessions continued to be provided by the Department for Board meetings.

The Board has provided advice on range of concessions. Some of the more topical ones are included below:

Provision Security Ltd

This was a concession application to allow a private security firm to patrol conservation areas surrounding mining areas occupied by Solid Energy NZ Ltd at Stockton, Denniston and Upper Waimangaroa. The Board agreed that no filming be allowed but were concerned that approaches to members of the public by security personnel would adversely affect the enjoyment of the area and believed that the security guards should be confined to private property. It recommended to the Department that the application be declined.

Jacksons Retreat Scenic Jet

The Board considered an application for a proposal to set up a jet boat tour operation on the Taramakau River. It was satisfied with the conditions and recommended that this application proceed. As a result of this application the concessions protocols were updated.

Westroads Greymouth Ltd, Blaketown, Greymouth

This was an application to legalise an existing activity of crossing a marginal strip to access Westroad's gravel licence site. It recommended that limiting the access across the marginal strip to one point, with appropriate signage, would limit any effects on the recreational use of the area. It recommended that the Department grant this licence and any conditions be strictly monitored.

Blue Dog Events Ltd

This concession application was for a new annual commercial mountain bike race from Canterbury to the West Coast via Harper Pass. The route would cross some public conservation land. The Board recommended that the Department ensure that the parts of the route on public conservation land be well marked, that the activity be monitored, that a didymo awareness campaign be included and that the number of competitors be reviewed after each annual race.

Griffin Creek Hydro Ltd

This was an application to construct and operate a small hydro power station at Griffin Creek, near the Taramakau River. The Board agreed that the effects on public conservation land would be minor and noted that public access to the area would be improved once the scheme was operational.

Barber Bach, Ohinemaka

The Board considered an application for a concession for private accommodation under the proposed policies in the Revised Draft West Coast Tai O Poutini CMS. It recommended that the Department clarify the words 'where appropriate' in the conditions for public use of the facility and that the possible effects on the wider recreational activities of the local community should be considered.

Access Arrangements

The Board also provides advice on access arrangements applied for under the Crown Minerals Act 1991. As these concern access to public conservation land the applications needed to be considered under the Conservation Act 1987 and therefore the Board is consulted. A set of trigger mechanisms for the Department to refer access arrangement applications to the Board was approved at its June 2009 meeting.

The Board received one access arrangement application on which to provide advice. The application considered by the Board involved access to public conservation land for exploration drilling by Heaphy Mine Limited, Westport. The Board recommended that this application not be authorised because it considered that the application was incompatible with the natural values of the ecological area and that the cumulative effects of mining and drilling had not been addressed.

Visitor Assets

The development of visitor assets continued to interest the Board. It received a regular report on progress with capital projects at its two monthly meetings and was invited to provide comment to the Department on the capital visitor asset planning programme. It also considered proposals by the Department to nominate tracks as part of the conforming activity schedule.

The Board was pleased to learn that funding had been approved for the sealing of the glacier access roads and the provision of pedestrian and cycle access to the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers. The Board was impressed with the preparation work being done on the Franz Josef Glacier access road when members visited Franz Josef Area in April/May 2009.

The Department invited the two local Board members to join a field inspection of the proposed new car park developments at Lake Matheson and also the new car park and camping facilities at Gillespies Beach.

Species and Other Issues

The Board received regular species updates in the Conservator's Report which is presented at every meeting, including information on Powelliphanta snails, freshwater fish and inanga, bats, kiwi species, marine mammals, mohua, kea, whoio protection, some plant species and predator control.

Liaison with Fish and Game Councils

Two members of the Board shared attendance at Fish and Game Council meetings. The two organisations exchanged copies of minutes and agendas and issues of interest were noted at Board meetings.

Powers of Boards

The Board used its powers to advocate for conservation both on and off public conservation land and for both local and national conservation issues. It also maintained two committees and a series of topic leaders.

Conservation Advocacy

The Board is on the mailing list of all West Coast local authorities and received copies of notified resource consent applications, proposed changes to or reviews of district plans, Long Term Community Council Plans and reports on other regional issues or programmes. It used its resource consent trigger mechanisms to identify those matters likely to have significant impacts on conservation values and to decide whether or not to make a submission.

This year fewer resource consents were received than in previous years. The Board received 7 resource consent applications - 2 for subdivisions, 4 land use applications and 1 hydro-electric power station application. Also received were 2 notices of requirements and 2 plan changes. The Board took the opportunity to comment on 4 Long Term Council Community Plans, a review of the Westland District Plan, the draft Regional Land Transport Programme and a report on the South Island Aviation Noise and Health.

The Department kept the Board informed about planning issues through regular reports at Board meetings.

Some of the more significant resource consents and planning matters in which the Board was involved are listed below:

Mokihinui Hydro-electricity proposal

Last year the Board opposed a resource consent application from Meridian Energy for a hydro electric power station in the Mokihinui River valley, near Westport, because of the Board's assessment of the affected area as having outstanding value as a natural landscape, and also from the loss of conservation values. The Board attended the hearings this year and were invited to comment on new evidence and proposed conditions. This matter is ongoing.

Red Car Holdings Ltd

The West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board had opposed this resource consent application the previous year. A site visit took place in October and no further action was needed as the Board's concerns over the proposed settling ponds, public access to the 10-Mile Valley and rehabilitation of the area once mining had ceased had been resolved.

Franz Josef Heliport

The Board's interest in this application related to the fact that the application might affect aircraft overflying or landing in the Westland Tai Poutini National Park. It took a neutral stance on this application but asked that its views on the impact of increased noise on another part of the Franz

Josef township and the need for Council to find a permanent site for servicing the needs of all aircraft servicing tourism in the area be taken into account.

The Board was able to explore this issue further in comment to the Westland District Council on a recent report on the South Westland Aviation Noise Issues and Public Health. It urged the Council to find a better location for an airfield so that excessive aircraft noise did not affect residents in Franz Josef and Fox Glacier. It expressed concerns at what seemed the intention to not comply with the recommended decibel levels for residential areas in Franz Josef and Fox Glacier. The long term future of tourism depends on the unique features of Westland Tai Poutini National Park and public conservation land.

Jennian Homes

This resource application was for the construction of a two storey house on land near the northern end of the Cape Foulwind walkway. The Board opposed this application because of the outstanding nature of the landscape involved and the visibility of the proposed residence from the adjacent, very popular walkway. A site visit was made and this matter is ongoing.

Hydro Development Ltd

This application was for consents for the construction of a hydro-electric power station using water from the Stockton Plateau near Westport. The Board supported this application because it involved the production of energy from a renewable resource and would deal with ongoing environmental pollution problems relating to acid mine drainage and involved highly modified public conservation land. An invitation was accepted by a number of Board members to attend an Open Day on site. This matter is still ongoing.

Subdivision at Hans Bay, Lake Kaniere

The Board took a neutral stance on this application but was concerned about the issue of clustering, and asked that conditions be applied to protect the visual continuity of the larger portions of the areas on the terrace with the adjacent landscape. The Board wrote separately to the Council about the need to review rules about establishing rural subdivisions. It was concerned about possible clustering small parts of the section together leading to a housing density not envisaged in a rurally zoned area.

Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes.

An exchange of letters on this issue began the previous year and the Board has continued to press the territorial authorities to address this issue in district and regional plans. The Board remains concerned that without the identification of outstanding natural features in each district these areas remain vulnerable to inappropriate development. This concern was reinforced in submissions to the Councils' Long Term Council Community Plans.

Review of Westland District Plan

Two Board members represented the Board at a meeting with the Council's Planning and Regulatory Committee to discuss issues relating to a review of the District Plan. Issues discussed included outstanding natural features and landscapes, aircraft noise, and significant natural areas.

Review of the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme

The Board took the opportunity to encourage the West Coast Regional Council to co-ordinate the activities of several agencies for outcomes for State Highway 6 relating firstly to the tourism industry.

Westland District Long Term Council Community Plan

The Board asked that the Council consider the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity in the District and that money be set aside to complete the identification of significant natural areas, in turn leading to an appropriate plan change. It also asked that the Department of Conservation be recognised as a contributor to community outcomes including education, safety, the local economy and identity.

Buller District Long Term Council Community Plan

The Board raised the lack of outcomes for water quality and noted the proposed reduction in effort for the significant natural area programme. The Board reiterated these issues in its submission to the proposed review of the Buller District Plan.

Grey District Council Long Term Council Community Plan

The Board made comments on the roading and environmental sections of the proposed plans. It asked that the Council consider working with other territorial authorities on the West Coast towards a common integrated approach to access and visual amenity standards which would enhance the tourist experience throughout the whole region, and outstanding natural features and landscapes.

Other Conservation Issues

1080

The Board has been lobbied at every meeting this year by members of anti-1080 groups who sought the Board's opinion on the use of 1080 and particularly its aerial application. The Board has sought and passed on information from the Department and other agencies such as the Animal Health Board and ERMA.

It has reconfirmed its stance on the use of 1080 as a pest control method and also reconfirmed its previous stance on the aerial application of 1080 by the Department, especially on rugged country.

The Board facilitated a meeting held at the West Coast Regional Council office between the anti-1080 groups, the Department of Conservation, the Animal Health Board and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society to see if groups were able to reach common ground. Any further meetings have been put on hold.

WARO Review

The Board has been involved in the current review of the Wild Animal Recovery operations concessions review. At its August meeting in Franz Josef some concerned members of the hunting fraternity spoke to the Board about this issue and that of trophy heli-hunting. The Board sought clarification from the Department about activities surrounding WARO and helicopter usage on public conservation land in the West Coast and made a submission on the proposed framework. It wished to see more clarity about the activities involved and remains opposed to the concept of trophy heli-hunting because it impacts on natural quiet. There are also no positive conservation benefits attributable to the activity and it considerably diminishes the experiences of other user groups such as trampers, climbers, hunters who have arrived on foot and also hunters who have been positioned by helicopter via other concession processes.

Appointment of Committees

The following committees functioned until June 2009.

Committee

Concessions

Planning

Conservation Management Strategy *

Membership

Clare Backes (Chairperson), Anne Hall, Jim Costello and Warren Inwood (ex officio)

Stewart Robertson (Chairperson), Terry Scott, Les Wright and Hamish Macbeth, Kim Thomas and Warren Inwood (ex officio)

Anne Hall (Chairperson), Hamish Macbeth, Clare Backes, Terry Scott and Warren Inwood (ex officio)

* The CMS Committee was disbanded later in the year and a topic leader was appointed. See below.

Special Interest Topics

Conservation Management Strategy

Anne Hall

Historic

Les Wright

Science and Biodiversity

Warren Inwood

Tangata Whenua Liaison

Terry Scott

Recreation

Richard Nichol

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER CONSERVATION ACT

Co-opting Members of the Board

No members were co-opted on to the Board this year.

BOARD FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT

Implementation of National Park Plans

Exclusion of land from National Park

The Department consulted the Board about a proposal to exclude an area of land from Westland/*Tai Poutini* National Park and asked it to recommend this to the NZCA for approval.

This was an application from the NZ Transport Agency to take land from the existing road corridor through Westland Tai Poutini National Park to allow urgent realignment work on State Highway 6 south of Franz Josef. Members of the Board knew the area and had no issues with this as the proposed realignment would increase road safety.

Aircraft Noise

The Board continued to consider aircraft noise and the protection of natural quiet an important issue this year. When notified by the Department about concessions received, the Concessions Committee has asked about the possible aircraft landings, especially those relating to trophy heli-hunting and some recreational activities. The Board believes that protection of natural quiet outside the glacier valleys is also important. It was able to raise the issue with the Westland District Council in relation to a report on 'South Westland Aviation Noise Issues and Public Health'. The proposals for aircraft are considered when making submissions on relevant national park management plans and resource consents.

LIAISON

General Comment on Liaison

The Board considers that contact by members of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board with the community is very important and the webpage has been used to good advantage with contact details for members, confirmed minutes, the Conservator's report from each meeting and access to annual reports being provided.

Board members also have contact with a broad range of people, community groups and organisations. Several Board members maintain contact with conservation groups, recreation groups, the tourist industry, and agricultural organisations. Board members either attend meetings or receive minutes and agendas and report back to Board meeting about any concerns of interest to the Board.

A Board member attended meetings of the Thar Liaison Group. Another Board member, who is a member of the Historic Places Trust, reports back to the Board on issues. There has been a representative from the Board at the Stockton Environmental Consultative Group meetings. This group is concerned about water quality issues on the Stockton Plateau and related catchments which have been affected by years of coal mining. The Board is supplied with copies of the presentations made at these meetings and also received a briefing at a meeting about Solid Energy's water quality programme.

Public forums continue to be offered at each Board meeting with half an hour being set aside for members of the community to raise conservation issues with the Board. Public forums were well used by the public this year with members of the public present at all meetings. Issues raised by the members of the public included the use of 1080, baches, roadside clearing, mataitai coastal marine areas, tahr, availability of agendas and reports, heli-hunting and the Department's review of WARO, and access issues.

The media on the West Coast were sent copies of the Board's agendas and were invited to attend all Board meetings. A representative of the media attended part of the June meeting. A press release from the Board was prepared after most meetings but these were not always published in full. Articles relating to the use of 1080 and heli-hunting appeared in local papers in May.

Other Boards & the NZCA

Liaison with neighbouring Boards was maintained principally through the exchange of minutes and agendas. The Board made a submission on the Draft Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan and began preparing a submission on the Partial Review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan in June. The Board also acknowledged a letter from the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board about renewable energy. It also wrote to all conservation boards on natural quiet and aircraft noise seeking to join other boards in advocating to the Civil Aviation Authority for more control of flights over national parks and wilderness areas.

The Board commended the Otago Conservation Board for its feedback the New Zealand Transport Agency's proposed new Gates of Haast redevelopment and asked that Board to ensure that parking facilities for recreationists in the area are not lost in the developments.

Mike Browne, the NZCA liaison person for the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation attended one meeting and has attended other meetings for short time. He was able to attend a CMS workshop and also met with the Board in June as part of the NZCA's West Coast CMS committee. The Board was please to see a local West Coast resident appointed to the NZCA and to have him as a liaison person.

Community

The West Coast is a region of small communities. Board members are often well known in their local communities and have regular contact with members of the public. Where possible the Board tries to meet with local community groups while on field inspections. The Board was invited to attend the opening of the new Franz Josef Police Station and members joined members of the public at local consultation meetings about the proposed marine area protection areas and mataitai reserves. Three members attended the opening of the new Oparara Valley recreational facilities at the invitation of the Oparara Valley Project Trust.

Board members are invited to join in activities organised by the Department to celebrate national events. This gives members a chance to interact with other groups and to learn more about the Department's work.

Local Government

The Board appreciates the opportunities to meet with representatives of the four local Councils as there are a number of regional issues in which it is interested. The Board has had regular contact with all territorial authorities through its concerns about outstanding natural features and landscapes, significant natural areas, proposed reviews of district plans and getting involved in consultation over the councils' Long Term Council Community Plans.

Iwi

The Board is working to further develop its relationship with the Papatipu Runanga on the West Coast and Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu. Two members of the Board are nominated by Ngāi Tahu, as required under the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act 1998. They provide input on iwi issues and a Maori perspective to other issues. The Board is kept informed at each meeting about issues raised at the Roopu meetings which are held regularly with the Department. A regular report from the Pou Kura Taio is provided for each meeting. One Board member was able to attend a Pukenga Atawhai course. A member also attended a meeting at the marae to learn about Te Runanga o Makaawhio issues. The meeting was also attended by representatives from local authorities.

The Board will be learning more about Treaty of Waitangi issues when it considers its fourth focus topic at its November 2009 meeting.

Members of Parliament

None of the Members of Parliament were able to attend any meetings. Minutes and agendas were provided.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Reflecting on the year

This has been a year with a very high workload for the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board.

One of the Board's major tasks was the receipt of the draft Conservation Management Strategy from the Department that incorporated the changes resulting from the public submission process. When the Board and Department reached agreement with these changes the CMS was ready to be forwarded to the New Zealand Conservation Authority who appointed a special committee to go through the document. I was accompanied to Wellington by Mike Slater (Conservator), Chris Hickford (Community Relations Manager) and Anna Gerraty (Management Planner). Mike spoke to the authority on the West Coast and what made it special, Chris covered the history of the CMS, Anna covered the layout and I covered the Board's involvement, particularly how we handled the submission process. The NZCA gave us a very good reception.

The NZCA CMS Committee raised five substantial areas for discussion with the Board and many minor issues that were easily dealt with. Of the substantial issues four have been resolved but one issue remains unresolved; this is the only issue on which the Department and the Board have a different view. Further negotiations will occur that include the NZCA.

While work on the CMS was progressing, the usual work of giving advice to the Department carried on. This covered such things as concessions, access arrangements, exchanges, disposals and a raft of other issues such as visitor assets, capital expenditure, marine protection public access - to name a few. Much of this work was discussed by email and phone.

This year the Board took the opportunity to bring together its ideas and produced an annual strategy. This gave the Board a chance to focus attention on four important areas. Board members have prepared papers on three of the issues and appropriate actions were carried out.

In August Di Hooper finished her six years on the Board and I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution she made. In September Kim Thomas joined the Board and has already made her mark. Having Hamish Macbeth and Richard Nichol reappointed as Board members has assisted the continuity with Board work.

One of the concerns of the Board during the year were the issues surrounding 1080, particularly the aerial use of 1080. At the public forums at each meeting many people expressed their views to the Board and as a result a lot of time and effort was spent on trying to get more dialogue going between these people and groups with the Department of Conservation and the Animal Health Board.


I would like to acknowledge the help given to the Board by Conservancy staff during the year which was always of a high standard. Our field trips are always looked forward to by Board members as an opportunity to meet local staff and to gain some insight into their work and to see the excellent conservation work being achieved. Special thanks are due to Lara Kelsen, (Acting Board Support Officer) who relieved in the position during the first part of the year, Janet Orchard (Board Support Officer), Mike Slater (Conservator), and Chris Hickford (Community Relations Manager.) The team from the Conservancy who worked on the CMS during the year also deserve a special mention.

Board members have put in a huge amount of time and effort during the year and I acknowledge this. Mike Browne of Fox Glacier was appointed to the NZ Conservation Authority during the year and has given a lot of help to the Board.

The Coming Year

When the CMS becomes the Board's document discussions will be held with the Department on the timing and scope of progress reports on outcomes, objectives and the usefulness of policies. Building on this year's experience with developing an annual strategy will assist with this work.

The Board may also be involved in the preliminary work for the review of the Paparoa National Park Management Plan. The coming year will no doubt throw up many challenges but I am confident the Board will be able to meet these



Warren Inwood
Chairperson