

Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board

Te Poari Papa Atawhai
o Tongariro/Taupo

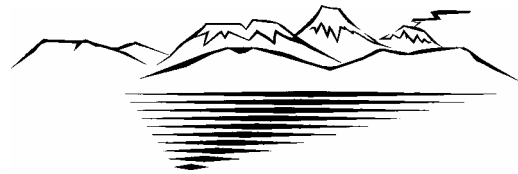


Annual Report

1 July 2002 - 30 June 2003

Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board

Te Poari Papa Atawhai
o Tongariro/Taupo



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

Serviced by the Department of Conservation

Turanga Place,
Private Bag,
Turangi

Front Cover: Mt Ruapehu with flowering heather (*Culluna vulgaris*) in the foreground. In April the board visited a site in Tongariro National Park where the department is trying to establish the European heather beetle to control this pest plant.

Photo: Peter Blaxter

Chairperson's Report

In 2001/2002 the board reported that the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) had been approved. The board is now in the process of developing a protocol for monitoring the implementation of the CMS.

During this reporting year the board has devoted considerable time and energy to the Tongariro National Park Management Plan review process. Board members have attended numerous public consultation meetings and departmental workshops and the board was represented on the hearings committee. The department is currently working on a final draft.

The issue of the threatened lahar from Mt Ruapehu's Crater Lake is ongoing. In January the board wrote to the New Zealand Conservation Authority and the Director-General of Conservation, re-stating its view that the risks to the natural and cultural values posed by aggressive engineering at the crater rim make such intervention unacceptable. The board was pleased to learn in May that the Minister of Conservation decided not to review the previous Minister's decision to avoid engineering intervention at the crater rim. The department continues to inform the board on matters relating to the threatened lahar and the board has established a Crater Lake committee which keeps up to date with the issue.

The board maintains an active interest in the management of visitor pressures on Tongariro National Park, in particular the Northern Circuit and the Whakapapa and Turoa ski areas. Tongariro National Park attracts the largest number of visitors of any conservation area in New Zealand. This heavy loading threatens to put at risk the very values that attract visitors in the first place. The board acknowledges that in the future a debate may be needed on the continuing and unfettered freedom of access to areas such as the Tongariro Crossing.

The board continues to wait for a response from the Crown Law Office on the question of ministerial fetter, specifically whether the Minister of Conservation is able to override the provisions of conservation management plans (CMPs) or strategies. The board's view has been that the Minister can not act contrary to a CMS or CMP and that if the Conservation Act does not quite say this it should be promptly clarified to ensure that it does.

During 2002/2003 the board operated within its financial budget – though this was only achieved because board members from outside the conservancy (four in the past financial year) have agreed to a considerably reduced travel reimbursement rate in order to keep costs down. This situation is unlikely to remain tenable in the future, given the expected increase in demand on board resources as a result of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan and pending Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan review processes.

In December 2001 the board resolved to adopt a Maori translation of its name. In February 2002 the board received advice from the Minister of Conservation's office that it did not require formal approval to adopt the by-line. Since February 2003 the board has used the name 'Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board: Te Poari Papa Atawhai o Tongariro/Taupo' on all official correspondence.

I would like to thank the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy staff for their support, assistance and cooperation during the past year. Special thanks are due to Paul Green, Paddy Gordon, Greg Carlyon, Dave Lumley, Mark Davies, Anthony Birks, Jodine Hood and Rowena Cudby.

John Nankervis, NZCA liaison member, actively maintains contact with the board and I thank him for his efforts during 2002/2003.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the board for their contributions over the past year. I salute in particular Pete Masters and Trevor Hunt for their hard work during their respective terms as board chair.

J. A. Wilson
Chair

1 Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board Members

The following people were appointed by the Minister of Conservation to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board during 2002/2003:

Chair

Pete Masters (to December 2002)
Trevor Hunt (December 2002 – April 2003)
James Wilson (Alex) (April 2003 – present)

Board Members

Lynette Brown, Taupo
Laurie Burdett, Taupo ¹
Bettine Davies, Taupo
Murray McKee, Wellington
Les Molloy, Wellington
John Nankervis, Wellington
Richard Pirere, Ohakune
Warwick Silvester, Hamilton

Ngarau Tarawa, Taumarunui
Tumu te Heuheu, Taumarunui
Kathryn Uvhagen, Taupo ³

¹Resigned 1 September 2003

²Term ended upon appointment to the NZCA on
1 July 2002

³Term ended 21 November 2003



(left to right) Pete Masters, Warwick Silvester, Bettine Davies, Richard Pirere,
Ngarau Tarawa, Alex Wilson, Trevor Hunt, Murray McKee.
Absent: Lynette Brown, Les Molloy

2 Functions and Powers of the Board

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board is an independent advisory body appointed by the Minister of Conservation under section 6P of the Conservation Act 1987. 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 Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy. The board provides advice on policy to the department, acts as a liaison body between the Crown and the public, and advocates for conservation values on land not administered by the department.

3 Introduction to the Board District

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy covers 780,000 hectares, of which approximately 217,000 hectares are administered by the Department of Conservation. The conservancy is unique in that it has no sea coastline and includes the Lake Taupo sport fishery.

Tongariro, New Zealand's first national park, grew from the Ngati Tuwharetoa gift of its mountains to the nation in 1887. The park received World Heritage status in 1988 for natural landscape values and in 1993 for its cultural landscape values, recognising the special significance of the mountains to Tuwharetoa and Wanganui iwi.

Flanking the national park are Kaimanawa Forest Park and the Tongariro, Erua and Rangataua conservation areas which attract an increasing number of recreational users.

The Tongariro, Central Volcanic Plateau and Kaimanawa ecological regions and parts of the Moawhango, Eastern Volcanic Plateau, King Country and Taranaki ecological regions lie within the conservancy. These areas contain several rare, uncommon, vulnerable or threatened native plants, birds, communities and ecosystems.

Lake Taupo and its tributaries provide opportunities for world-class fishing and numerous other forms of water recreation.

Tongariro/Taupo's volcanic and thermal features are major tourist attractions and although the conservancy has a small permanent population base, it receives a high number of visitors each year.



Whakapapa Village,
Tongariro National Park

4 Meetings 2001/2002

Meetings (6)

16 August 2002	Department of Conservation, Turangi
11 October 2002	Department of Conservation, Turangi
6 December 2002	Department of Conservation, Turangi
21 February 2003	Aotearoa Thermal Resort, Tokaanu
11 April 2003	Tukino Lodge, Tukino Ski Area
20 June 2003	Department of Conservation, Taupo

Inspections / Workshops

21 February 2003	Mt Pihanga/Rotopounamu Restoration Area
11 April 2003	Eastern Tongariro National Park/Tukino Ski Area

Board members attendance at meetings was as follows:

Lynette Brown	3*
Bettine Davies	4*
Trevor Hunt	5
Murray McKee	5
Pete Masters	6
Les Molloy	2*
Richard Pirere	4
Warwick Silvester	5
Ngarau Tarawa	5
Tumu te Heuheu	2
Alex Wilson	6

* Board members appointed
21 November 2002



Site visit by board members to Tukino, Tongariro National Park – Vodaphone/Genesis communications installation to the left.

5 Board Functions under Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987

5.1 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – SECTION 6M(1)(A)

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) has been operational since its approval in May 2002.

The board received a final copy of the document in February.

5.2 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS – SECTION 6M(1)(B)

The department has worked on the Tongariro National Park Management Plan (the plan) review process during 2002/2003 and the board has been briefed regularly. Many board members attended a round of public consultation meetings in early 2002. Board members each received a full copy of public submissions to the plan and members of the board's management planning committee sat on a hearings committee in May 2003. In June 2003 the board was well represented at a departmental workshop to discuss the public submissions to the plan.

The Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan review will be held upon the completion of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan review.

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF CMS – SECTION 6M(1)(C)

The board has initiated the process of establishing a regime for monitoring the implementation of the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Management Strategy.

5.4 ADVICE TO THE NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CONSERVATION ON CHANGES TO LAND STATUS – SECTION 6M(1)(D)(I)

There has been no progress on the addition of Rangataua Forest to the Tongariro National Park or the gazettal of Tongariro Forest as a conservation park. These areas are currently subject to a Treaty of Waitangi claim.

The gazettal of the proposed scenic reserves Huka Falls, Alum Lakes and Craters of the Moon are still on hold due to outstanding Treaty issues and the settlement of the Crown's obligations to Contact Energy Limited. Although the proposed Crown settlement with Contact Energy Limited has fallen through, the department's role at Wairakei Tourist Park has been recognised and work is currently underway to give further significance to that.

In April the board recommended to the New Zealand Conservation Authority that two parcels of land within the Hapuawhenua Valley be added to Tongariro National Park.

5.5 ADVICE TO THE NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CONSERVATION ON CONSERVATION MATTERS RELATING TO ANY AREA WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD – SECTION 6M(1)(D)(II)

The board continues to be well-informed on the issue of the threatened lahar from Mt Ruapehu's Crater Lake. In January the board re-stated to the New

Zealand Conservation Authority and the Director-General of Conservation its view that the risks to the natural and cultural values posed by aggressive engineering Mt Ruapehu's crater rim make such intervention unacceptable. The board is of the view that any risk to life resulting from failure at the crater rim and an ensuing lahar is able to be mitigated to acceptable levels through the Eastern Ruapehu Lahar Alarm Warning System and the embankment adjacent to the Whangaehu River.

5.6 ADVICE TO THE NZ CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW WALKWAYS – SECTION 6M(1)(E)

The board maintains an interest in the possibility of a walking track around Lake Taupo.

In early 2001 the board was advised that the department was investigating the establishment of new tracks/routes within the Kaimanawa Forest Park to circumnavigate privately owned land in the area. The department has since carried out preliminary marking of an appropriate route from Te Wai-o-Tupuritia Saddle, across Maungaorangi to the Waitawhero/Oamaru confluence. It is intended that this route will be marked with orange triangle markers by Taupo Tramping Club members in late 2003. The route over Maungaorangi will be poled so that it can be followed in poor visibility and also to deter people from straying off the route into the adjoining private land.

Alternative routes between Junction Top and Ngapuketuria have also been investigated but no suitable routes have been identified to date.

5.7 LIAISON WITH FISH AND GAME COUNCILS – SECTION 6M(1)(F)

The board continues to liaise, by means of agendas and minutes, with Eastern Fish and Game Council.

6 Board Powers under Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987

6.1 REPRESENTATION AT PUBLIC FORUMS AND STATUTORY PLANNING PROCESSES – SECTION 6N(2)(A)

Board members attended public forums and advocated the board's interest in statutory planning processes as follows:

- Mighty River Power's renewal of resource consents;
- Genesis/Tongariro Power Development renewal of resource consents;
- Contact Energy's renewal of resource consents;
- Lakes and Waterways Group, Lake Taupo and catchment areas water quality;
- Transit New Zealand's application for resource consent for the operational use of Calcium Magnesium Acetate on the Desert Road, State Highway 1;
- Standards New Zealand's draft Specifications for Walking Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures;

- Lake Taupo water quality issues, including management of lake weed *Egeria densa*;
- Draft Taupo District Plan process;
- Lake Taupo Variation to the Waikato Regional Plan;
- Transit New Zealand’s application for resource consent to carry out a road realignment at Mangamate/Mangatawai streams, State Highway 1.

6.2 APPOINTMENT OF BOARD COMMITTEES – 6N(2)(B)

The board operated the following committees:

Concessions	Pete Masters (facilitator), Richard Pirere, Ngarau Tarawa, Lynette Brown.
Crater Lake	Murray McKee (facilitator), Alex Wilson, Richard Pirere, Warwick Silvester.
Management Planning	Warwick Silvester (facilitator), Murray McKee, Tumu te Heuheu, Les Molloy.
Statutory Planning	Alex Wilson (facilitator), Ngarau Tarawa, Lynette Brown, Bettine Davies.
CMS Monitoring	Les Molloy (facilitator), Murray McKee, Pete Masters, Bettine Davies.
Farm Environment Award Trust	Alex Wilson.

6.3 MATTERS AFFECTING OR RELATING TO THE BOARD’S FUNCTIONS – SECTION 6N(3)

The board was informed on the following issues and topics of note:

- The Tongariro National Park Management Plan review process;
- Ongoing matters related to the stability of Mount Ruapehu’s crater rim, installation of the Eastern Ruapehu Lahar Alarm System and construction of the Whangaehu Embankment;
- 2001/2002 Business Planning priorities;
- World Heritage Periodic Reporting;
- Priorities for increased recreation funding;
- Results of the 1080 pest control operations carried out in 2001;
- Progress on the draft 42-Traversal Operations Plan;
- Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy Summer Nature Programme;
- Departmental educational programmes;
- Kiwi project, Tongariro Forest Kiwi Sanctuary;
- Proposed Taupo Arterial Bypass;
- Draft Nga Akiakitanga Nuka Kaupapa Maori a Te Papa Atawhai;
- Formation of the Waikato River Ecological Trust;

- Formation of the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust;
- Public access through Kaimanawa Forest Park;
- Upgrade of Kaikawaka (Slab) Hut;
- Planned willow control operations in Rotoaira Basin;
- Mt Pihanga/Lake Rotopounamu Restoration Project;
- Weed spraying and track maintenance;
- Taupo Fishery Area track maintenance and fishing access issues;
- Review of department's concessions processing SOP;
- Department's work with community groups at Pukawa/Omori and Mt Pihanga/Lake Rotopounamu;
- Proposed Mangatepopo Power Station;
- Taupo Landing Reserve issues;
- Public opposition to aerial 1080 operations;
- Visitor numbers on Tongariro Crossing;
- Deer control issues;
- Tauranga Taupo River flood and erosion protection works;
- Proposed Huka Falls cycle track;
- Whangamata Stream weed control work.

... and provided input to/responded to/acted on the following:

- Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy 2002/2003 business planning priorities;
- Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy Conservation Awards 2002;
- Tongariro National Park Management Plan public consultation meetings;
- Departmental workshops on Tongariro National Park Management Plan;
- Tongariro National Park Management Plan Hearings Committee;
- Conservation Week 2002;
- Farm Environment Awards Trust;
- Congestion issues on Ohakune Mountain Road;
- Human waste in Desert Road parking areas;
- Department's Draft Recovery Plan for *Powelliphanta* land snails;
- Nomination of Tongariro Natural History Society for 2003 Loder Cup Award;
- Grazing licences on public conservation land;
- Illegal dumping of refuse on public conservation land.

7 Board Responsibilities under Other Sections of the Conservation Act 1987

7.1 ANNUAL REPORT – SECTION 60

The board's 2001/2003 annual report was provided to the NZCA in August 2002.

7.2 STATUTORY MEMBERSHIP OF NGATI TUWHARETOA PARAMOUNT CHIEF – SECTION 6P(5)(B)

Tumu Te Heuheu, ariki of Ngati Tuwharetoa since July 1997, is a statutory member of the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board.

7.3 CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS SECTION 6Q(1)

The board did not co-opt any members during 2002/2003.

7.4 CONCESSIONS – PART IIIB

The board's concessions committee continues to assess those applications forwarded to the board by the department – that is, all those applications that require advertising and all others as thought necessary by the department or requested by the board. A concessions schedule is presented at each board meeting and at the first meeting of each financial year members receive a full annual summary. The department provides feedback to the board on all applications with which the board's committee has been involved.

During 2002/2003 the concessions committee considered applications from:

- Vodafone NZ; Establishment of a cell site facility within Turoa Ski Area.
- Geonet; Installation of earthquake monitoring equipment in Tongariro National Park.
- Telecom Mobile; Co-location of telecommunications infrastructure at Whakapapa and Turoa ski areas.
- Telecom Mobile; Location of cell site at the Chateau Exchange.

8 Board Responsibilities Under Other Acts

No actions were taken by the board under the New Zealand Walkways Act 1990.

The board responded to all concessions applications, where these involved Tongariro National Park, in terms of the National Parks Act 1980.

9 Liaison

All board members receive the minutes of the New Zealand Conservation Authority meetings. Through the year contact has been maintained with NZCA liaison member John Nankervis.

Agendas and minutes from neighbouring conservation boards are provided to individual liaison members who raise items of relevance and occasionally attend other boards' meetings.

The board continues to liaise with numerous organisations including:

Environment Waikato;
Taupo District Council;
Ruapehu District Council;
Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board;
Ngati Rangi Trust;
Genesis;
Mighty River Power;
Taupo-nui-a-Tia Management Board;
Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society;

Federated Mountain Clubs;
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association;
Lakes and Waterways Action Group;
Eastern Regional Fish & Game Council;
Wellington Fish & Game Council;
Tongariro Natural History Society;
Tongariro River Advocates Inc.



Lake Rotopounamu, Tongariro National Park board visited in Feb 2003 and discussed the proposed Mt Pihanga/Lake Rotopounamu Restoration Project

10 The Board's 2002/2003 Financial Year

Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board 2002/2003 Expenditure

Resource	Expenditure
Board Member Fees	15,480
Postage/Freight & Courier	103
Conference/Seminars	44
Domestic Travel – Other Cost	4,009
Office Supplies	108
Purchase Field Supplies	182
Printing and Publishing	685
Catering & Entertainment	1,506
Ex-Gratia / Koha	124
Total	22,241

11 Adoption of Report

Moved:

That the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board adopt the annual report for 2002/2003 and forward it to the New Zealand Conservation Authority by 31 August 2003, pursuant to section 60 of the Conservation Act 1987.

Trevor Hunt/Bettine Davies

Carried

15 August 2003

