Deep dive on area plans

Conservation Amendment Bill

13 March 2025

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Agenda

- Update on overall process
- Timeframes from here
- Initial thinking on:
  - Area plan boundaries
  - Area plan content

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Update on overall process

- Submissions closed Friday, 28 February 2025 (but still receiving some submissions)
- Submissions analysis is underway
- Policy thinking will be informed by what we hear in submissions

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Timeframes

Deep dives on key policy issues and choices

This is the first of a series of discussions with you in March and April 2025 on key policy issues and choices for the Conservation Amendment Bill.

Date	*Topics for discussion*
Next week	• Concessions process and contractual management
24 March week	• Management planning processes, including role of Treaty partners • Amenities areas • Access charging: where and who to charge
31 March week	• Competitive allocation of concessions • Access charging: regime design
7 April week	• Land exchanges and disposals
14 April week	• Confirmation of all decisions needed for land management Cabinet paper
28 April week	• Content of first NCPS

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Timeframes

Cabinet decisions needed to enable drafting of Conservation Amendment Bill

Cabinet paper 1: Access charging

- Date: ECO, 7 May 2025
- Decisions on: where and who to charge; regime design

Cabinet paper 2: Land management

- Date: ECO, 21 May 2025
- Decisions on: management planning; concessions; exchanges and disposals

Cabinet paper 3: National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS)

- Date: ECO, 18 June 2025
- Decisions on: content for first NCPS; process to draft NCPS including targeted engagement with stakeholders

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Approach for area plan boundaries

- Discussion document proposed replacing CMSs, CMPs and NPMPs with a single layer of area plans.
- Principles guiding approach to boundaries:
    - Upholding Treaty settlements
    - Ease of transition between old and new system
    - Efficiency
    - Single layer of plans
- DG to continue to determine boundaries – ensures system flexibility and future-proofing.

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Approach for area plan boundaries

- To ease transition, use current CMS boundaries as default (with exceptions below that align with other principles).
- All national parks would have their own single area plan – eliminating boundaries cutting through individual parks e.g. CMS boundary through Kahurangi NP.
- Other areas could be included with a national park area plan (e.g. whole of Rakiura could be one area plan, or two adjacent national parks).
- Still determining how plan-related settlement redress relates to boundaries – PSGE engagement.
- Management plans for DOC-managed reserves become area plans (or parts thereof). Reserves managed by others retain their existing management plan arrangements.

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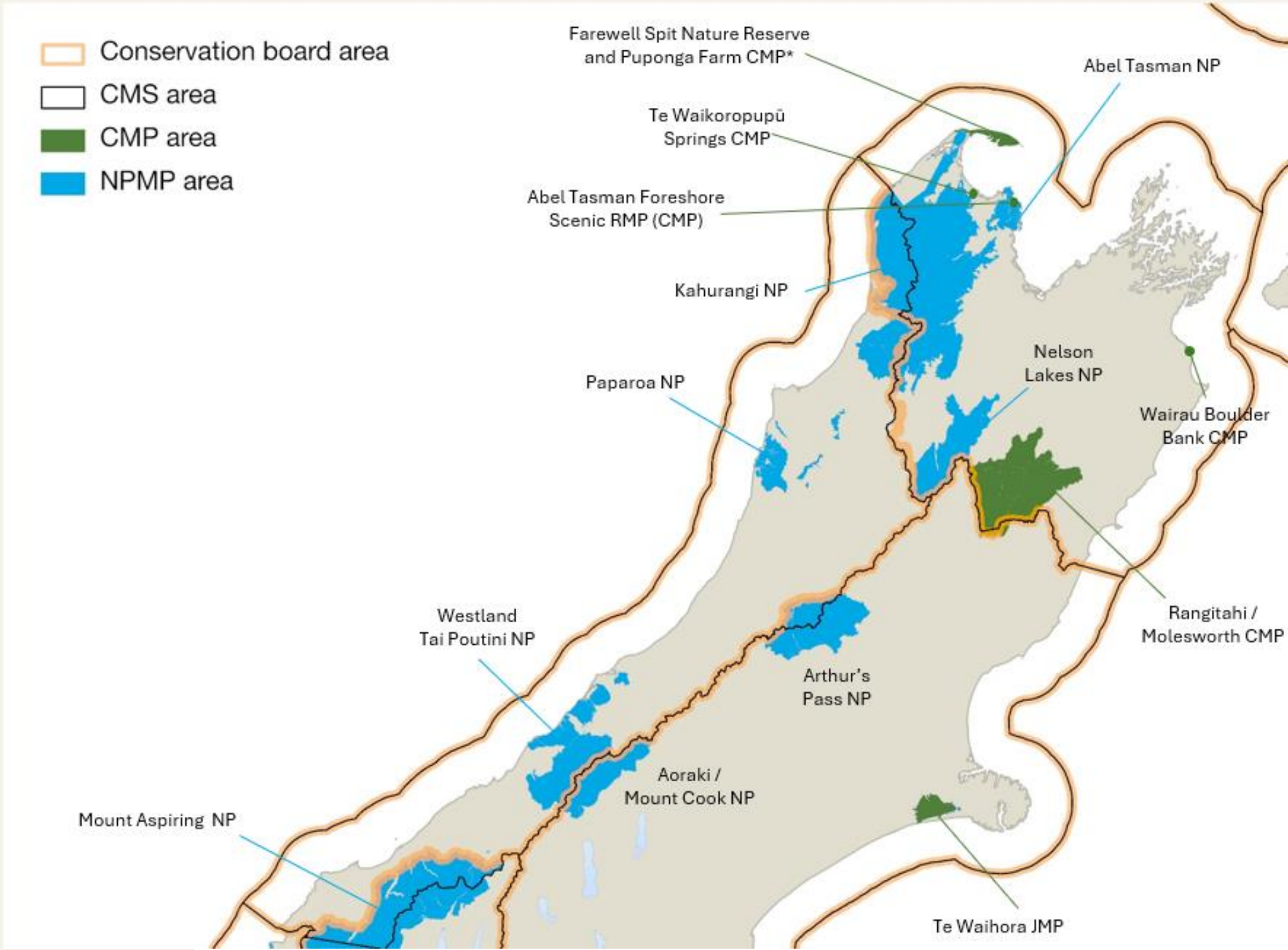
Current boundaries



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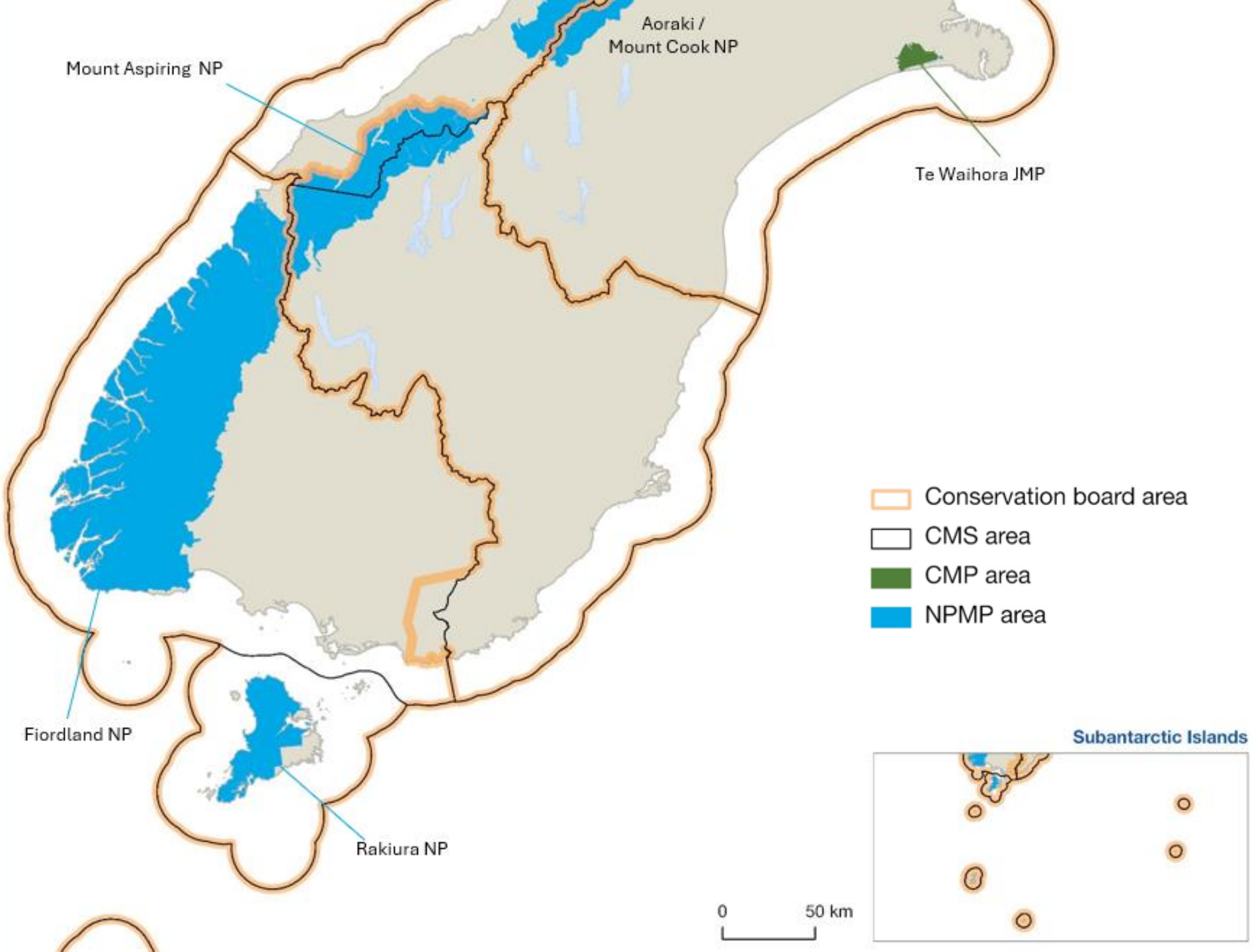
Current boundaries



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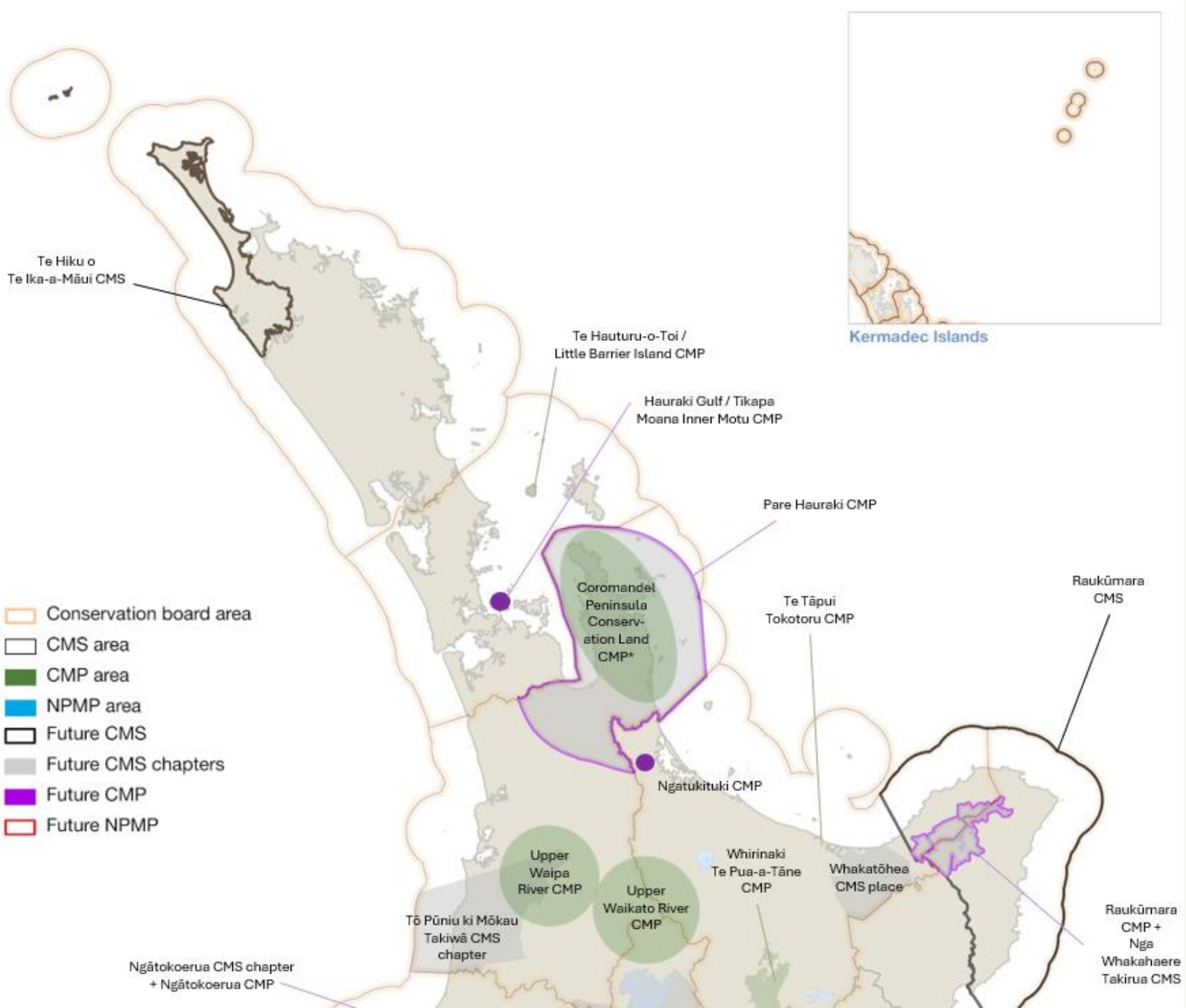
Current boundaries



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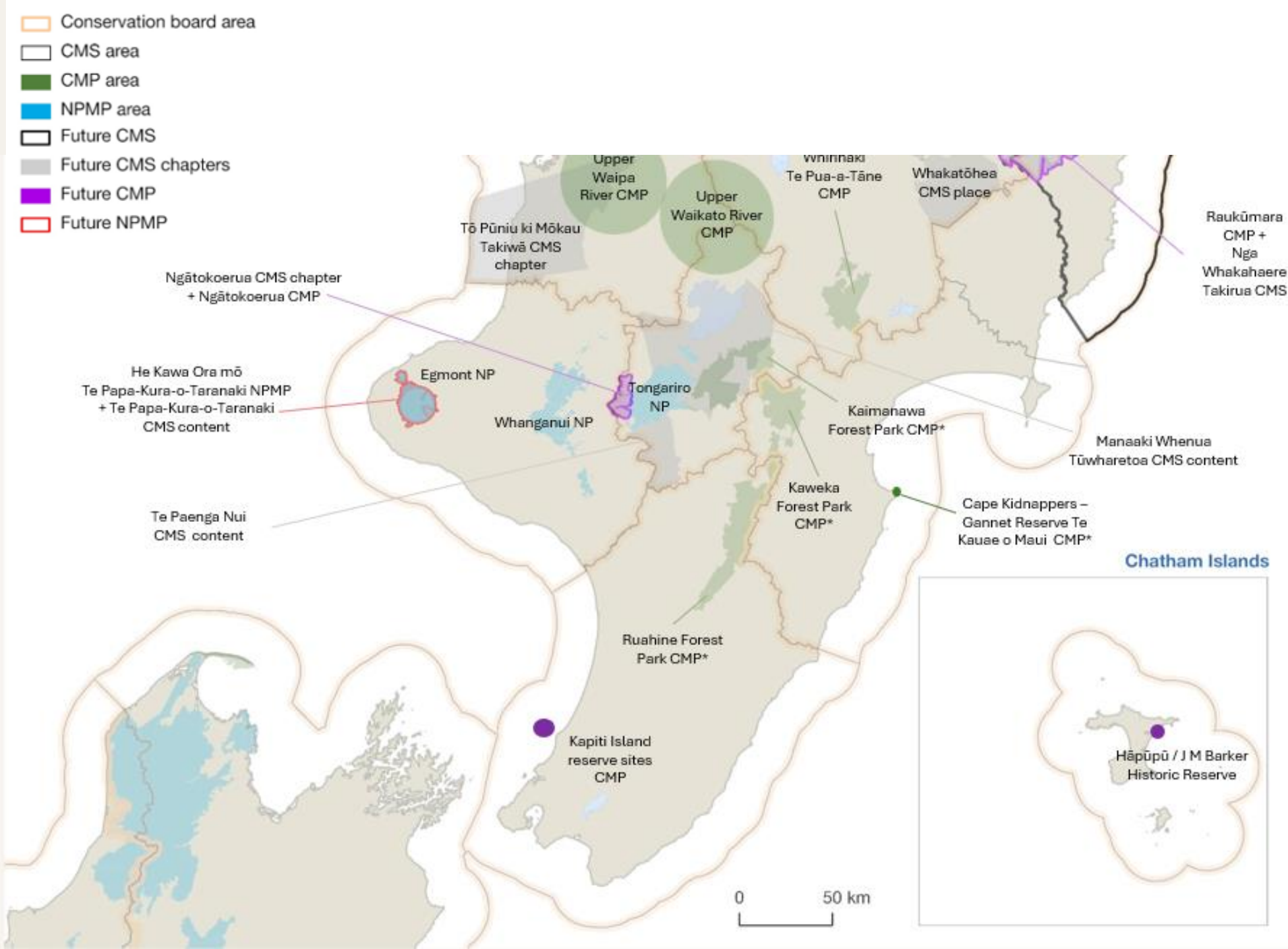
Current boundaries



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Area plan content

Current scope is broad, resulting in lengthy documents with limited practical use.

- Legislation requires CMSs, NPMPs, and CMPs to outline objectives for the management of resources.
- But plans also try to do more:
  - Attempt to direct and prioritise DOC resources by setting actions and milestones that require funding to achieve.
  - Regulate recreational users, which only bylaws and regulations can do.
  - Include redundant content, like repeating legislation.
  - Contain policies that are largely similar across CMSs, suggesting they may be better suited in general policies.

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Area plan content

- We want to make area plans as useful as possible for regulatory decision-making, and recognise their role in Treaty settlements.
- This means:
  - Moving some content from plans to the NCPS where it is more appropriate to set policies at a national level or through a national process.
  - Making area plans more concise and focussed on information that supports regulatory decisions. This means removing some types of information, preserving some, and adding others.
- This will produce area plans that:
  - support faster and more efficient permissions processes,
  - have practical value s9(2)(g)(i) [redacted].

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Area plan content

Changes to make sure area plans are influential and effective

- **Focussing** area plans on place-based objectives and policies.
- Ensuring **concise descriptions** of core values, including cultural values, continue to be included.
- **Adding power** for area plans to make class decisions on concessions (within bounds set by NCPS).
- Requiring any limits on activities to have a **clear rationale** linked to the effects of those activities.
- **Removing content** that does not direct decision-making: actions, milestones, unworkable policies, redundant policies.

[IN-CONFIDENCE]