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Te Rūnanga Whakauka o Kahurangi ki Kaikōura

NELSON/MARLBOROUGH CONSERVATION BOARD



Herea kia Kōtahi - Working Together



Walkers – Abel Tasman National Park

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005

Presented to the NZ Conservation Authority
pursuant to Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board is one of fourteen appointed by the Minister of Conservation under section 6(P) of the Conservation Act 1987. Board functions are outlined in section 6(M) and the powers, which enable the Board to carry out those functions, are under 6(N) of the Act.

The Conservation Act specifies the Board's role to:

- recommend the approval of conservation management strategies;
- approve conservation management plans;
- advise on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice;
- advise on proposed changes to the status of land areas of national and international significance;
- advise on proposals for new walkways;
- liaise with Fish and Game Councils on conservation matters; and
- carry out other powers delegated to them by the Conservation Minister, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

The Board has a number of functions under s30 of the National Parks Act. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of national park management plans and recommending approval of such plans by the New Zealand Conservation Authority.

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires Conservation Boards to provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority with an annual report as soon as practicable after the 30th June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board submits this, its 7th annual report.

2. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board has a membership of twelve, appointed by the Minister for Conservation. Two of these are on the recommendation of Ngai Tahu. Two members retired from the Board this year. These were Robin Manson and Graeme Coates. The new members joining the Board were Tracey Osborne and Philip Simpson. Conservator, Neil Clifton and Community Relations Manager, Jo Gould, have given valuable support throughout the year. Beverley Freer worked in a part-time capacity as Board Support Officer until taking up a full-time role as Community Relations Officer – Concessions in May 2005. Louise Dowdell has been working as Board Support Officer since May 2005 on a permanent part-time basis.

Six Board meetings were held during the year:

- 19 August 2004 in Picton
- 19/20 October 2004 in Karamea
- 16 December 2004 in Nelson
- 10/11 February 2005 in Anakiwa
- 18 April 2005 in Motueka

- 16 June 2005 in Nelson

Meeting attendance by Board members is shown below. In addition to this, Board members attended various subcommittee meetings throughout the year.

Board Member	Home Town	Meetings Attended
Ropata Taylor (Chairperson)	Motueka	6
Edwin Pitts (Deputy Chairperson)	Blenheim	5
Maurice Manawatu	Kaikoura	5
Tracey Osborne	Takaka	5
Philip Simpson	Takaka	4
Darcia Solomon	Kaikoura	4
Glenice Paine	Picton	5
Bill Gilbertson	Nelson	4
Harley McNabb	Karamea	4
Judy Hellstrom	Picton	5
David Melville	Dovedale	5
Carl Elkington	Picton	4

3. MEMBERS INTERESTS

Darcia Solomon, Maurice Manawatu, Carl Elkington, Ropata Taylor and Glenice Paine all bring an iwi perspective to the Board. These members also bring a rich and wide range of community, business, tourism, resource management and education skills to the Board. Edwin Pitts brings knowledge of farming and the high country. Bill Gilbertson provides a link to the Forest and Bird Society and contributes specialist skills in recreation and conservation planning. David Melville has extensive experience in nature conservation and natural resource management with specialist skills as an ornithologist. Judy Hellstrom is an active advocate for conservation in the Marlborough Sounds, both land and marine-based, and has experience in plant pest eradication and bush restoration. Harley McNabb provides an important link to the Karamea and West Coast Communities which is helpful in the Board's work with Kahurangi National Park issues. Tracey Osborne provides expertise in marine science and use of the marine environment and Philip Simpson is a botanist with special interest in New Zealand plants and ecology.

The following subcommittees were reconfirmed by the Board at its December meeting:

1. Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan (*Bill Gilbertson (convenor), Philip Simpson, Judy Hellstrom, David Melville, Glenice Paine*).
2. Concessions (*Edwin Pitts (convenor), Tracey Osborne, Carl Elkington, Bill Gilbertson*).
3. Marine Conservation (*Glenice Paine (convenor), Maurice Manawatu, Tracey Osborne, Carl Elkington and Darcia Solomon*).
4. Long Island Marine Reserve (*Glenice Paine*)
5. West Coast Liaison (*Harley McNabb (Kahurangi), Bill Gilbertson*)
6. South Marlborough (*Edwin Pitts (convenor), Philip Simpson, Maurice Manawatu, Bill Gilbertson and Darcia Solomon.*)
7. Kahurangi Air Access Strategy (*Bill Gilbertson and Harley McNabb*).

8. Puponga/Farewell Spit Management Plan (*David Melville (convenor), David Melville, Ropata Taylor, Tracey Osborne and Bill Gilbertson*).
9. Marlborough Sounds Fisheries Management Working Group (*Board representative - Glenice Paine*)
10. Queen Charlotte Track Working Group (*Judy Hellstrom and Glenice Paine*)
11. Abel Tasman Advisory Forum (*Bill Gilbertson*)
12. Tasman Environmental Trust (*Board representative - Tracey Osborne*)

4. THE BOARD'S AREA

The Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction covers the entire Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy and oversight of the whole of Kahurangi National Park. This includes the western third of the park, which is managed by the West Coast Conservancy. This necessitates a working relationship between the Board and Department staff from that area.

5. FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 6M OF THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on Implementation of Conservation Management Strategies

Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) Implementation

The Board has continued to receive briefings from the department on the implementation of CMS 'strategic directions' as agreed in August 2001.

The year's schedule of departmental reports on the implementation of the CMS was agreed in April 2004. This was amended in August 2004 to allow for the presentation of the annual report on the implementation of the CMS in August each year. As agreed the Board received its annual CMS monitoring report at its August 2004 meeting. Throughout the year the Board received CMS Monitoring Reports on:

- Land Status
- Historic Heritage
- Consultation and Cooperation with Tangata Whenua and
- Community Involvement, Awareness and Education

To approve Conservation Management Plans, and the review and amendment of such plans

Puponga Recreation Reserve/Farewell Spit Nature Reserve Management Plan

Work has started on the draft of the Puponga and Farewell Spit management plan, with the department working closely with the Board subcommittee. The Board is disappointed that the department has not been able to progress this plan within the estimated time-frame. The Board recognises that the department is putting considerable effort into other management planning priorities, including, in particular, the Abel Tasman National Park management plan. The plan is aligned closely with the

requirements of the new Conservation General Policy and focuses on planning for outcomes at places, based on the values present.

Te Waikoropupu Springs Management

The Board has been briefed on the progress of the draft management plan for Pupu Springs Scenic Reserve (Te Waikoropupu Springs). The plan is proposed to be an integrated conservation management plan, regional plan and iwi management plan. A working group, comprising representatives of the department, Tasman District Council and Manawhenua Ki Mohua iwi has been working on the plan.

Advice of any Proposed Change of Status of any Important Area

Kaikoura Conservation Land Status

In February 2005 the Board was asked by the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) to comment on a proposal from the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society. The proposal involved seeking Conservation Park status for the Kaikoura Ranges and adjoining areas managed by the Department. After considering the issue and being briefed by the Department the Board advised the NZCA in May 2005 that, while it agreed in principle with the proposal, it felt that any Conservation Park should be limited to existing conservation land and not incorporate existing Reserve Act lands. The Board considered that while the idea had merit the timing of the proposal required consideration. It felt that creation of a conservation park in Kaikoura at the current time would put pressure on existing resources and would require a reprioritisation of effort. The Board recommended the proposal be reviewed in 2-3 years time.

Advice on any other Conservation Matters

Marine Conservation

Glenice Paine continues to represent the Board on the Marlborough Sounds Fisheries Management Working Group set up at the Marine Conservation hui initiated by the Board in October 2002. The Working Group is still considering a number of options regarding conservation of the marine environment in the Marlborough Sounds, and ways to progress the proposed management plan. The Board continues to monitor progress.

Marine Reserves

There have been very few issues or scientific applications this year for Long Island/Kokomohua Marine Reserve which has meant the committee has not formally met this year. Feed back and discussion has occurred via the telephone with individual committee members. The ongoing monitoring programme in the Long Island Marine Reserve (1992-2005), the longest running programme on marine reserves in New Zealand, has indicated a huge increase in lobster numbers in the reserve in recent years after a five year lag time. The size and density of blue cod have also increased significantly.

Glenice has co-ordinated the Board's advice on the proposed advisory committee for the North Nelson (Horoirangi) Marine Reserve.

In relation to marine reserve management, the Board has expressed the view that non-compliance in marine reserves should not be tolerated and that, wherever possible, prosecutions should be followed through.

Queen Charlotte Track Management

A working group was formed to discuss issues associated with managing the Queen Charlotte Track. Issues include the impacts of people accessing the track from seaward entry points and the general increase in numbers of people walking and biking the track. The Board supports the Department's view of the need for better information and research, and therefore supports the current research to gain baseline data of track visitors.

Abel Tasman National Park

The concessions subcommittee expressed concern about the increase in concessions approved for Abel Tasman National Park and the Board has strongly supported a proactive approach in the forthcoming management plan. It recommended the plan include clear statements of desired outcomes at place and sets targets for the number of visitors. The management plan sub-committee has been working closely with the department on the preparation of the draft plan. The Board continues to monitor concession activity in the park.

The Board welcomed the new hut and camp booking system for the park as an additional management tool in managing the impacts of visitors on the park. The proposed concessionaire identification system will also be a step forward.

The Board also looks forward to working closely with the department, iwi, and the Tasman District Council to progress the management of the Abel Tasman foreshore.

2003/2004 Business Plan

The Board was briefed in December 2004 on the Conservator's aspirations and priorities for the upcoming business planning round and asked to provide comment. The Board agreed with the priorities of marine protection, high country parks network, ecosystem restoration and gaining community support for conservation. The Board added that their priorities also included the completion of Management Plans already in progress: Abel Tasman National Park, Farewell Spit Nature Reserve and Puponga Recreation Reserve, Te Waikoropupu Springs and Air Access Strategy. The Board also received a briefing at its February 2005 meeting on the Conservancy's Management Planning Priorities to June 2006.

Concessions, leases and licences

The Board has provided advice to the Department on a range of tourism, filming and organised recreation concessions. The concessions subcommittee has functioned well, providing advice on a number of applications. The trigger mechanism agreed to between the Board and the department is working well and enables the Board to focus on significant concession issues. Examples of cases that have been referred to the sub-

committee include an application from the Bus and Coach Association for a national concession and new concession applications from existing operators in Abel Tasman National Park. At each meeting, the Board receives a full report on concessions applications, including summaries of the sub-committee's advice.

The Board received a comprehensive "overview" briefing on concessions at its February 2005 meeting. This explained the legal background, types and numbers of applications, and processing procedures, as well as current trends and issues. The Board supports the department in its move to a more proactive approach to concessions processing with an increased emphasis on planning and monitoring, in line with the Concession Review Project.

6. POWERS UNDER SECTION 6N OF THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

Advocating Board Interest at any Public Forum

Marine Conservation

Marine Conservation has been a priority for the Board over the past year. In February 2005 submissions were made to the Ministry of Fisheries on the draft Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement and Implementation Plan, ("MPA Policy"), and the Stock Strategies Consultation Document.

Other issues

The Board was consulted on a wide range of other issues over the year. Items included TrustPower's proposed hydro scheme on the Wairau River and pest control/eradication.

7. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT

Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan Review

The Board had agreed with the department's earlier decision to place the management plan for the national park on hold, while it progressed with the process to reserve the foreshore adjoining the national park. The intention was to enable the preparation of complementary management plans for both the national park and the foreshore. However, the proposal to reserve the foreshore was placed on hold in December 2004 due to the national discussions about the foreshore and seabed. The Board then agreed to the department's proposal to progress the revision of the management plan for the national park and this has progressed well.

Air Access Strategy for Kahurangi National Park

Bill Gilbertson, from the Board's sub-committee, has worked closely with the Department on intensive consultation with key stakeholders on a framework for a managing air access (aircraft landings) in Kahurangi National Park. Although the strategy itself will be a non-statutory document, the need to prepare it is signalled in the Kahurangi National

Park management plan. The Board's intention is that, ultimately, the strategy will be incorporated into the management plan through a publicly notified process.

8. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE WALKWAYS ACT

The Board had no formal business in relation to the Walkways Act during this reporting period.

9. LIAISON

New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)

The Board's current NZCA liaison person is Kerry Marshall. Kerry attended two meetings during the year: 16 December 2004 and 18 April 2005. At both meetings he updated the Board on recent NZCA issues.

West Coast Community/Conservation Board

The Board held its 19/20 October 2004 meeting at Karamea. Although no West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board members were able to attend this meeting there were representatives from the West Coast Conservancy office and a number of community residents present. Hamish MacBeth, Chair of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board, attended the 16 June 2005 Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board meeting in Nelson. He provided the Board with an update from the West Coast. Harley McNabb and Bill Gilbertson have continued to act as West Coast Liaison for the Board, particularly in relation to the Kahurangi National Park.

Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Council

In June 2005 the Board held a joint meeting with the Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Council at Fairfield House, Nelson. Issues discussed included: public access, Molesworth Station, freshwater issues, Wairau hydro scheme, Kahurangi air access, Gowan hydro proposal and wetlands management/enhancement. Both the Board and the Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Council shared and debated concerns during this meeting.

10. FIELD INSPECTIONS

Honeycomb Caves and Marble Arches

At the Board's 19/20 October 2004 meeting in Karamea a field trip was taken to the Honeycomb Caves and Marble Arches. The Oparara Valley Trust operates the only concession approved for the Honeycomb Caves. The Board was briefed by a Trust guide and Martin Abel (Biodiversity Programme Manager), of the Department of Conservation, Buller-Kawatiri Area Office.

Queen Charlotte Sound

On the 10th of February 2005 the Board carried out a field inspection in Queen Charlotte Sound. This included visits to Long Island Marine Reserve, Motuara Island and Furneaux Lodge. Board members were briefed by Roy Grose (Area Manager) and Robin Cox (Community Relations Programme Manager) of the Department of Conservation, Sounds Area Office.

11. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Toitu te marae a Tane
Toitu te marae a Tangaroa
Toitu te Iwi

When the domain of Tane and the realm of Tangaroa are conserved and sustained, so too is the future of humanity.

I am pleased to report that the Board has maintained its progress with monitoring the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy and providing the department with strategic advice on the plethora of issues within our conservancy.

We are fortunate to have such a diverse range of skills and expertise amongst Board members, which in turn influences our focus and activity. This range of interest has been beneficial in the attainment of the Board's objectives and the fulfillment of our statutory responsibilities.

I acknowledge and thank Board members for their collective and individual contribution to conservation. The Board welcomed two new members this year, Tracy Osborne and Phillip Simpson. We are fortunate to have a balance of diverse views that provides for stimulating debate whilst maintaining shared responsibility within our team.

It has been a busy year and the Board has had an active role in management plans for Abel Tasman and Farewell Spit / Puponga. It is satisfying that considerable effort has been applied to the sustainable management of the Abel Tasman, with the new campground and hut booking system, concessionaire identification and foreshore reserve.

Mountain biking in National Parks has created much controversy in our conservancy and we are relieved that the new General Policy for National Parks introduces a mechanism to manage this activity (through management plans), respecting all users whilst encouraging more people to enjoy our wilderness.

Marine conservation continues to be a Board priority. Marine protection in Kaikoura, the North Nelson marine reserve proposal, the Marlborough Sounds Fisheries Management Working Group and impacts upon marine mammals are the principal focus. The pressure aquaculture places on the marine environment and the need to sustainably conserve these ecosystems is of increasing concern to our region.

Other highlights included the protection of Molesworth (180,476 hectares of high country land in Molesworth became recreation reserve on 1 July 2005, to be administered by the

department) and the release of the General Policies on Conservation and National Parks. Conversely, biosecurity threats from exotic pests and pressure on fresh waterways are immediate concerns now and in the future.

Finally, I thank all department staff for the quality of information provided to the Board. Your diligence and passion for conservation is commendable, and has greatly assisted the Board. Thank you.

Noho Ora Mai

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ropata Taylor', enclosed within a thin, hand-drawn oval border.

Ropata Taylor
(Chairman)

This report is presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required by the Conservation Act and distributed to interested parties. Members of the public are welcome to attend Conservation Board meetings. If you would like more information on the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board please contact Community Relations Officer - Board Support, at the Department of Conservation in Nelson phone (03) 546 9335 or see www.conservationBoards.org.nz.