

Southland Conservation Board Te Rōpū Atawhai o Murihiku

Annual Report

1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024



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Front Cover: Mirror Lakes on Milford Road
Photo Credit: Alison Broad

Southland Conservation Board Te Rōpū Atawhai o Murihiku

Annual Report

1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

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



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1. Chairperson's report

2023-24 has been a year of great activity for the Southland Conservation Board/Te Rōpū Atawhai o Murihiku. We held 5 in person meetings and 1 virtual. A real highlight of our meeting schedule was a joint meeting with the Otago Conservation Board and a pōwhiri at Ōtākou marae to develop a shared understanding of how we can best give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti as required by Section 4 of the Conservation Act. We have put in a lot of work to providing advice to the Milford Opportunities Project as they finalised their proposal for the relevant Ministers. We continue to advise the Department of Conservation on permission and concession applications and engage with Environment Southland on Coastal Permit Applications in the Fiordland marine area.

We welcomed two new board members, Joanne Bagrie and Keith McRobie, from Mātaura and Gore respectively and with a wealth of knowledge in the tourism and recreation space. They are already contributing a great deal to the Board's activities. We wish to acknowledge those who left the board this year, Jerrie Valli, Claire Jordan and Estelle Pērā-Leask. All three brought enthusiasm, skill and experience to the board and their perspectives and their care for the environment will be greatly missed. I would also like to recognise my Deputy Chair Alison Broad for her help and support to me personally and her commitment to a supportive and collegial Board culture. I would particularly like to recognise our longstanding Ngāi Tahu Iwi Representative, Stewart Bull for his wisdom and generosity with his time. His contribution is a taonga without measure.

Areas of focus for us this year included continued engagement with the Subantarctic Islands visitor allocation process, understanding and responding to the Masterplan produced by the Milford Opportunities Project, submitting on the proposed Fast Track Bill both as a board and jointly with all the other boards in the country. Stewart Bull and I travelled to Wellington to speak to our submission and our comments were picked up by a national news outlet.

Highlights of the year were joining the celebration of 25 years of Whenua Hou being predator free held on Rakiura, the chance for me as chair to join the Conservation Boards Working Group with a number of other board chairs and work more strategically with DOC senior management. The Board gained a lot from visiting Ōtākou marae and learning from mana whenua, and from visiting the Burwood Takahē breeding facility outside of Te Anau to understand more about DOC's work with these special manu. We also enjoyed visiting the Waiau Restoration Trust's Inanga project.

We welcomed a new Board Support Officer, Eleanor Kettink, whose organisational skills made her invaluable in a short space of time. Eleanor looks after us and the Otago Board, and we find this is working very well. We would like to acknowledge the support we receive from: Aaron Fleming (Southern Operations Director), Donna Shepard (Statutory Manager), the four Operations Managers (John Lucas, John McCarroll, & Jennifer Ross, Deirdre Vercoe) and all the DOC Staff who have facilitated the Board in its work.

Finally, my special thanks to the Southland Conservation Board/Te Rōpū Atawhai o Murihiku members, your passion, enthusiasm and integrity make this board a pleasure to lead.



Shona Sangster
Chairperson

2. Introduction

This is the 34th Southland Conservation Board Annual Report.

The Southland Conservation Board had 11 members for the 2022-2023 year appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Conservation Act 1987. Shona Sangster was Chair and Alison Broad Deputy Chair for the year.

Conservation Boards are independent advisory bodies, established by statute. The Southland Conservation Board represents the community and offers interaction between communities and the Department of Conservation, within the area of jurisdiction of the Board.

The Board has several statutory roles under various Acts including:

- The recommendation of Conservation Management Strategies (CMS) to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) for approval
- Reporting on the implementation of the CMS
- The approval of Conservation Management Plans
- 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 nationally and internationally significant land.
- Liaising with Fish and Game Councils on conservation matters
- Carrying out other powers delegated by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

Board functions are outlined in section 6(M) of the Conservation Act 1987 and the powers, which enable the Board to carry out those functions, are under 6(N) of the Act. Boards also have a number of functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980.

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987 requires Conservation Boards to provide the NZCA with an annual report as soon as practicable after the 30th June each year. In recognition of this requirement, the Southland Conservation Board submits this annual report.



3. Conservation Board Region

The Southland Conservation Board’s area of jurisdiction covers the area of 7,008,166.28 hectares as displayed in the map below. This extends out to the 12-nautical mile limit with respect to coastal and marine issues, and out to the 200-nautical mile limit with respect to protected species. This includes the areas around the Auckland, Snares, Campbell, Antipodes and Bounty Islands

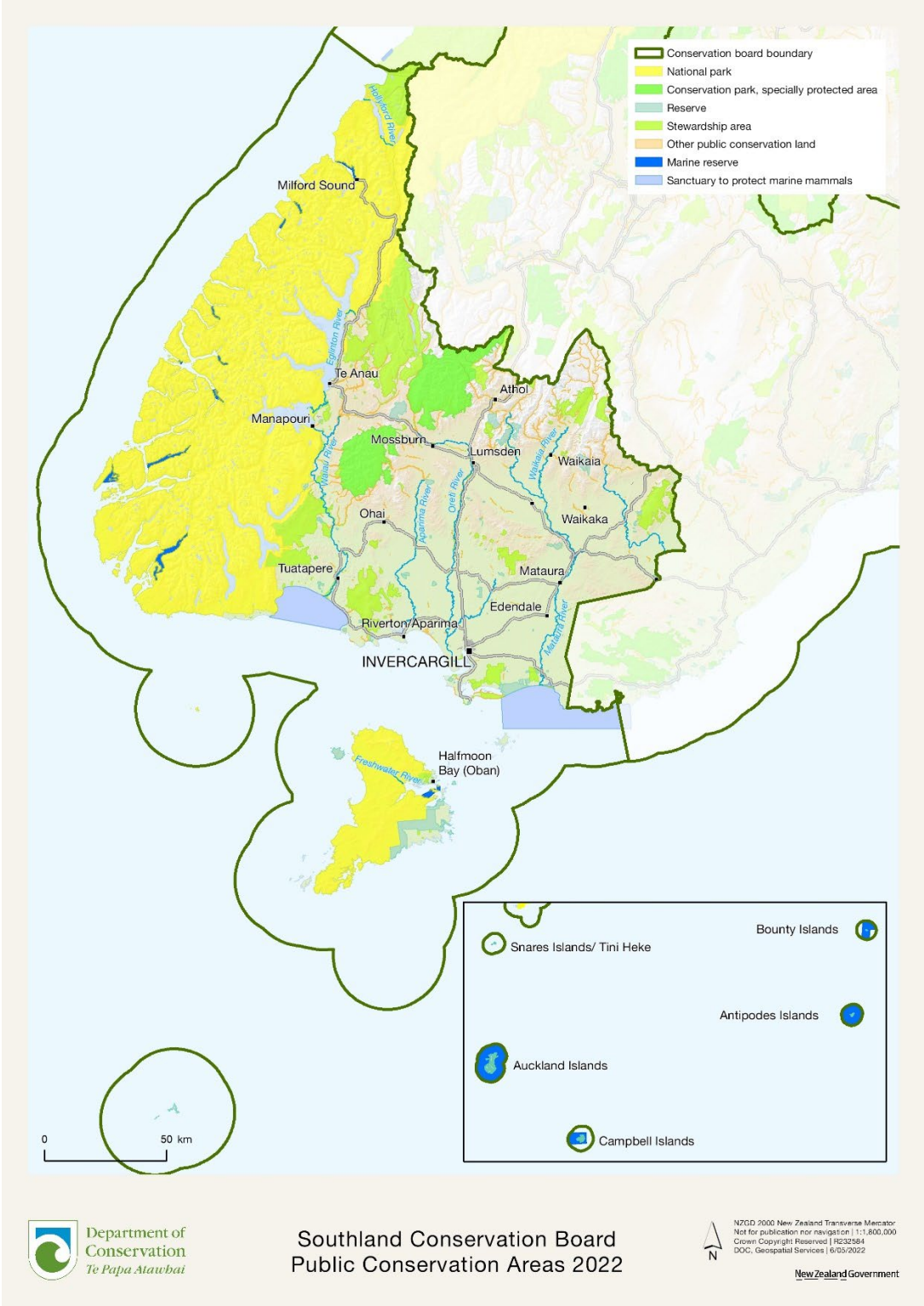


Figure 1. Southland Conservation Board Jurisdiction

There is a large number of issues which are of interest to the Board, these include;

- Indigenous ecosystem enhancement and the management and enhancement of our many threatened species e.g. hoiho, kākāpō, takahē, kiwi, rock wren, snipe, and mistletoe, etc.
- Management of recreational and tourist facilities
- Management of historic sites
- Concession activities, including those relating to recreation and tourism activities, grazing, industrial use, beaches, filming, and gravel extraction
- Marine protection
- Climate change mitigation

Approximately 24.23% of New Zealand's public conservation land and area lies within the Southland Conservation Boards jurisdiction. The total area of the Southland Council Region comprises of 5,523,807 ha. Of this total, 96.8% (5,347,631 ha) is contained within the boundary of the Southland Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction.

Public conservation land and areas make up 49.85% of all land in the Southland Conservation Boards rohe. This consists of:

- 1,882,868.11 hectares of Public Conservation Land
- 658,556.90 hectares of Sanctuaries to Protect Marine Mammals
- 951,919.43 hectares of Marine Reserves

3.1 Conservation features of the Area

- Fiordland National Park – 1,278,986.65 ha
- Mount Aspiring National Park – 3.94 ha
- Rakiura National Park – 140,357.89 ha
- Eyre Mountains/Taka Ra Haka Conservation Park – 65,583.88 ha
- Catlins Conservation Park – 2.92 ha
- 72 Scenic Reserves – 26,951.80 ha
- 16 Recreation Reserves – 317.67 ha
- 3 Historic Reserves – 465.83 ha
- 15 Marine Reserves – 951,919.43 ha
- 3 Marine Mammal Sanctuaries – 658,556.90 ha
- 5 National Nature Reserves
- 1 Ecological Area – Lindsay Ecological Area – 126.93 ha
- 350 Stewardship Areas – 235,829.25 ha
- 2 Wilderness areas -Pembroke and Glaisnock Wilderness Area – 141,712 ha
- 2 World Heritage Areas – Subantarctic Islands and Fiordland part of Te Wāhipounamu
- 1 Ramsar site - Awarua Wetland
- 1 Dark Sky Sanctuary
- 700 Archaeological Historic Sites
- 120 Huts
- 1,200 Km of Track
- 3,600 Structures



4. Board Functioning

4.1. Board Functions Under Section 6m of the Conservation Act 1987

The functions of the Board are:

- 1) To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies, under the relevant enactments
- 2) To approve conservation management plans, and the review of amendments of such plans, under the relevant enactments
- 3) To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on the implementation of conservation management strategies and conservation management plans for the area within the jurisdiction of the Board
- 4) To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director-General
 - a. On any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance; and
 - b. On any other conservation matter relating to any area with the jurisdiction of the Board
- 5) To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board
- 6) To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.

4.2. Powers of the Board under Section 6n of the Conservation Act 1987

- 1) Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.
- 2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), each Board may –
 - a) Advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process; and
 - b) Appoint committees of members and other suitable persons, and delegate to them functions and powers.
- 7) The power conferred by subsection (2)(a) shall include the right to appear before courts and tribunals in New Zealand and be heard on matters affecting or relating to the Board's functions.

4.3 Board Functions under the National Parks Act 1980

There are two national parks within the Board's region: Fiordland National Park and Rakiura National Park. The Board also advocates on cross-boundary issues with Mount Aspiring National Park (which is the responsibility of the Otago Conservation Board).

4.4 Board Membership

There were 11 Board members for the reporting year appointed by the Minister of Conservation; Four whose terms expired on 30 June 2024,

The following table lists the membership of the Southland Conservation Board between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024 and their term of office.

Table 1: Board Membership

Board member	Area	Term start	Term end	Term served
Alison Broad	Invercargill	01/07/14	30/06/24	10 Years
Mark Bryan	Winton	01/07/21	30/06/24	3 Years
Stewart Bull	Invercargill	01/05/09	30/06/25	15 Years
Claire Jordan	Tuatapere	01/07/18	30/06/24	6 Years
Estelle Pērā-Leask	Bluff	01/07/18	30/06/24	6 Years
Joanne Bagrie	Mataura	01/07/2023	30/06/2026	1 Year
Shona Sangster	Rakiura	01/07/18	30/06/25	6 Years
Jerrie Valli	Winton	01/07/21	30/06/24	3 Years
Keith McRobie	Gore	01/07/2023	30/06/26	1 Year
Alexandra McCrossin	Queenstown	01/07/22	30/06/25	2 Years
Jennifer McGirr	Queenstown	01/07/22	30/06/25	3 Years

4.5 Member Profiles

Shona Sangster of Stewart Island (Chairperson)

Appointment term: 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2025

Shona is a Stewart Island/Rakiura resident who cares deeply about conservation. She grew up in the Waitakere Ranges in West Auckland which gave her a passion for the positive impact of predator control on native bush. Shona is the Chair of the Stewart Island/Rakiura Community and Environment Trust, which controls pests and weeds around the Halfmoon Bay area. She co-edits the monthly Stewart Island News and works part-time for Glowing Sky Merino and the Southland District Council. Shona is also a member of the Rakiura Marine Guardians and has volunteered for the Kākāpō Recovery Programme. Shona holds a Master of Arts in Philosophy from The University of Auckland and a Trinity College London Certificate in TESOL. Her interests include tramping, fishing, beekeeping and making art.

Alison Broad of Invercargill

Appointment term: 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2024 (Co-opted)

Alison is a consultant in community projects and processes, with a Masters degree in Education. She has expertise in strategic thinking, policy development, advocacy, and development and governance for community benefit. Alison has extensive governance experience and currently serves in a chair or trustee role for several community-based organisations. Her outdoor recreation interests are walking, kayaking, and biking.

Mark Bryan of Winton

Appointment term: 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Mark is a rural veterinarian, farmer, and business owner. He is a Senior Lecturer of Dairy Cattle Medicine at Massey University, Director of Aquila Sustainable Farming Group, and has experience in a number of other executive and governance roles.

Stewart Bull of Riverton

Appointment term: 1 May 2009 to 30 June 2025

Stewart is of Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Māmoē, and Waitaha descent and was nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. He was the former Chair of Ōraka-Aparima Rūnanga, a member of the Whenua Hou committee, Fiordland Marine Guardians, former Chair of Te Ao Marama, iwi resource management committee, Chair of the Rakiura tītī committee, and a member of the Rakiura tītī administering body. Tangata tiaki/kaitiaki, customary fisheries management, Stewart has always had an interest and participated in environment and resource management throughout his adult life and has always felt the concept of Kaitiakitanga/stewardship is a responsibility he feels he has an absolute obligation to. Stewart believes many hands make light of the work and if we all participate in a positive manner, then he is sure the world will be a more comfortable living space for us and the future generations to come; he says, "we must not fail while on our watch as there will be consequences!".

Claire Jordan of Tuatapere

Appointment term: 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2024

Claire is an environmental planner and scientist who has worked in policy and science roles in central and local government and as a consultant. Claire is the third generation of her family to live on their dairy farm, 30 km north-west of Tuatapere on the western bank of the Waiau River. Claire is an active member of the Waiau Rivercare Group, which advocates on behalf of the Waiau River and the surrounding community. Claire holds an First Class Honours Degree from the University of Canterbury in Chemistry and Environmental Science. Claire currently divides her time between her young family and studying towards a Master of Resource and Environmental Planning Degree through Massey University.



Estelle Pērā-Leask of Bluff

Appointment term: 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2024

Estelle is of Ngāi Tahu, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Ruanui descent and was nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Estelle is a member of the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust (BHMET) and the current chair. She is a Director on the Board of Predator Free 2050 Limited, a Trustee on the Predator Free NZ Trust and Awarua Rūnanga representative on the Whenua Hou Komiti. She is a Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu trustee on Mauri ora Kākāpō Trust and supports the Department of Conservation Kākāpō Recovery Programme. She is also a Ngāi Tahu representative on Te Puka Rakiura Trust supporting Predator Free Rakiura, and a Trustee on the Kea Conservation Trust.

Joanne (Jo) Bagrie of Mātaura

Appointment term: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026

Jo is an environmental scientist, with a BSc in Ecology and Zoology and has operated a tourism business on public conservation land. She brings knowledge and exposure to the Treaty / Te Tiriti via studies and work experience and would fill several of the skill gaps on the Board. Ms Bagrie is from Eastern Southland where there is currently no Board representation.



Jerrie Valli of Winton

Appointment term: 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Jerrie has eight years' experience in a senior leadership role for Sport Southland, providing skills in strategic direction and operational delivery, as well as an understanding of local government processes and experience working alongside resource management policy staff. She was previously a journalist, and has extensive experience in communications, marketing, and advocacy.

Alexandra McCrossin of Queenstown

Appointment term: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025

Alex holds extensive knowledge of National Parks and DOC reserves after 12 years of film permitting and photography in the South Island. Ms McCrossin also brings 20 years of experience in managing film crews to capture New Zealand's outstanding landscapes, whilst working closely with the Department of Conservation to preserve and support nature conservation efforts.

Jennifer (Jen) McGirr of Queenstown.

Appointment term: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025

Jen holds experience in environmental science which includes environmental monitoring, data management, and interpretation. She brings project management and policy writing skills to the Board, alongside implementation experience and knowledge of iwi environmental plans.

Keith McRobie of Gore

Appointment term: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026

Keith has a planning background and particular experience in large-scale riparian planting. He has worked for a number of councils in the Southern South Island in parks and recreation management.



4.6 Board Meetings

The Southland Conservation Board held six meetings during the reporting period. Generally, various venues are used for the Board meetings to ensure wide coverage and enable members of the public in the district to attend meetings and access the Board. Opportunities for members of the public to attend Board meetings was made available at all Board meetings.

Table 2: Board meeting dates and location

Board meeting date	Meeting location and venue
24 August 2023	Department of Conservation office Invercargill
26 October 2023	Department of Conservation office Invercargill
7 December 2023	Gore District Council Chambers
22 February 2024	MS Teams
22 March 2024	Joint meeting with OCB Department of Conservation office, Dunedin
22 May 2024	Department of Conservation, Invercargill



Adult Takahē- Photo credit: Servane Kiss- DOC

4.7 Attendance

The table below summarises the number of Board meetings attended by members out of the total number of meetings held during the year.

Members attended other meetings and events in their role as Board members, including subcommittee meetings and representative roles.

Table 3: Member Attendance

Board Member	Board meetings	Field Trips
Alison Broad	6	3
Mark Bryan	5	0
Stewart Bull	6	3
Alexandra McCrossin	3	1
Claire Jordan	5	2
Estelle Pērā-Leask	3	0
Joanne Bagrie	5	2
Shona Sangster	6	3
Jerrie Valli	6	3
Keith McRobie	4	2
Jennifer McGirr	6	3



4.8 Board Committees and Representation

In July 2017 it was moved at a Board meeting that all sub-committees be closed, except the Whenua Hou committee, as it is a requirement of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.



4.8.1 Whenua Hou Committee

This subcommittee was established under section 331 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, as a part of a joint approach to the management of Whenua Hou. The Committee consists of one representative from each of the four Murihiku papatipu rūnanga and four from the Southland Conservation Board.

Table 4: Whenua Hou Committee

Board representatives	Rūnanga Representatives
Jerrie Valli	Deborah Paterson (Waihōpai)
Stewart Bull	Estelle Pērā-Leask (Āwarua)
Shona Sangster	Tāne. Davis (Ōraka-Aparima)
Claire Jordan	Rodney (Hom) Ryan (Hokonui)

4.9 Representation

Members of the Board have strong links with many community groups in Southland and are active participants in a range of Conservation activities.

Table 5: Summary of the representation

Organisation/Activity	Board Member
Whenua Hou Committee	Jerrie Valli
Whenua Hou Committee	Claire Jordan
Fish & Game	Claire Jordan
Waiau Working Party	Claire Jordan
Waiau Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Trust	Claire Jordan
Waiau Rivercare Group	Claire Jordan
Awarua Rūnanga	Estelle Pērā-Leask
Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust	Estelle Pērā-Leask
Environment Southland	Estelle Pērā-Leask
Kea Conservation Trust	Estelle Pērā-Leask
Predator Free Bluff	Estelle Pērā-Leask
Predator Free Rakiura	Estelle Pērā-Leask
Predator Free 2050 Ltd	Estelle Pērā-Leask
DOC Animal Ethics Committee	Mark Bryan
Gore District Council	Keith McRobie
Predator Free Rakiura	Shona Sangster
Rakiura Marine Guardians	Shona Sangster
Stewart Island Rakiura Community & Environmental Trust	Shona Sangster
Ulva Island Trust	Shona Sangster
Whenua Hou Committee	Shona Sangster
Environment Southland	Stewart Bull
Fiordland Marine Guardians	Stewart Bull
Predator Free Rakiura	Stewart Bull
Rakiura Tītī Committee	Stewart Bull
Rakiura Tītī Islands Administering Body	Stewart Bull
South West Endangered Species Charitable Trust	Stewart Bull
Te Ao Marama Inc	Stewart Bull
Whenua Hou Committee	Stewart Bull



4.10 Training for members

The Board was keen to send members to attend Te Pukenga Atawhai courses as has been possible in the past but there was no opportunity for that this year. We did have the opportunity to join the OCB in a hui at Ōtākau marae in Dunedin

The Board also receives regular updates on the Department's activities provided in status reports which are considered at each meeting. Topics covered this year were:

- Fiordland National Park current state
- Fiordland National Park Management Plan Review
- Predator Free Southland
- Sea lion monitoring
- Hoiho monitoring
- Permissions and statutory land management processes
- CMS Milestone updates
- Subantarctic Island visitor monitoring
- Tūturiwhatu/southern New Zealand dotterel protection

4.11 Community and DOC Involvement in Board Meetings

Public forums are offered at most Board meetings for members of the community to raise conservation issues with the Board.

The Board welcomed presentations from members of the public and Department staff at the meetings during 2023/2024. Presentations were received from:

- Chris Goddard – Milford Opportunities Project.
- Zane Moss – Fish & Game
- John de Lury - Rakiura Hunters Hut Trust
- Richard Seed, Department of Conservation – (DOC) Hoiho & Sealions
- Deidre Vercoe, Department of Conservation – (DOC) Takahē

4.12 Annual Work Plan

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the full Board Annual Work Programme.



4.13 Field Trips and site inspections

The Board had four field trips in the past year.

Field Trip date	Field Trip destination and purpose
7 December 2023	Dolamore Park in the Hokonui Hills near Gore. We had a very worthwhile walk and talk with a representative of the local Jobs for Nature project run by Hokonui Runaka who have been doing predator control in the park with rangatahi.
21 March 2024	Joint workshop with Otago Conservation Board at Ōtākau marae with Ngāi Tahu papatipu runaka to explore Treaty partnership and strengthen relationships
10 th April 2024	Burwood Takahē Centre to understand the work of the Takahē Recovery Programme
22 May 2024	Visit to Waiau Inanga Habitat restoration project and coastal erosion site at Bluecliffs





Photo previous page: The Southland Conservation Board members visit to Waiau Inanga habitat restoration – Photo credit: Roger Hodson

Top: The Southland Conservation Board members attending the joint workshop with Otago Conservation Board in Hakuiao at Ōtākou marae – Photo credit: E Kettink

Bottom Right: The Tamatea meeting house Ōtākou marae – Photo credit: E Kettink

5. Statutory activity

The Southland Conservation Board is very passionate about advocacy. During this year we have followed the communications strategy we implemented last year ensure our communications are effective.

In the past year, the Board made one media release publicly thanking the Department of Conservation for its dedicated work towards the survival of our taonga species, including kākāpō and kiwi. We also formulated a position on the Milford Opportunities Project's Masterplan.

5.1 Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

There are two CMSs in the Southland Conservation Board's area: The Southland / Murihiku CMS and the Rakiura CMS.

The Southland / Murihiku CMS was approved and published in 2016, the Rakiura CMS was approved and published in 2011.

5.2 Management plans

There are two National Park Management Plans in the Southland Conservation Board Area, the Rakiura National Park Management Plan and the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan review has yet to begin. The Board has put a lot of effort into preparing for the review over the past year and are disappointed that this review has yet to begin. The Rakiura National Park Management Plan and CMS are also due for review as of 2022.

5.3 Implementation monitoring

The Board has worked closely with the Regional Business planning team to achieve greater integration between DOC's business planning process and the implementation of the management plans and strategies for Rakiura and Murihiku. This is still a work in progress.

6. Advice and Advocacy



All Board members have responsibility for liaising with other groups when opportunities arise, and some members have specific roles in liaison.

The Board appointed various members to liaise with groups and agencies.

6.1 Liaison

Table 7: Liaison persons

Liaison Person	Group, agency or organisation
Stewart Bull	Fiordland Marine Guardians
Estelle Pērā-Leask	Predator Free Rakiura Governance Group
Claire Jordan	Fish and Game Southland
Shona Sangster	National Sealion Advisory Committee
Keith McRobie	Gore District Council

6.2 Other Conservation Boards liaison

The Southland and the Otago Conservation Boards hold a close relationship. There are two liaison members, The Chair of the Southland Conservation Board and Rebecca Begg of the Otago Conservation Board. The Southland Conservation Board's Chair keeps in close contact with Otago Conservation Board Chair – Rachel Cooper. The two Boards share a Board Support Officer, Eleanor Kettink which increase the opportunities for working closely. The Southland Board is also in regular contact with the West Coast/Tai Poutini Board, and their Chair, Mike Legge has attended meetings of the Southland Board.

The annual Board Chairs conference hosted by the NZCA is a great opportunity for Board networking nationally.

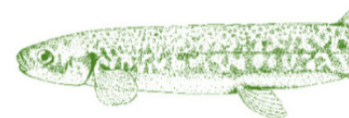
6.3 New Zealand Conservation Authority liaison

The Southland Conservation Boards NZCA liaison is Tāne. Davis who attends most Southland Conservation Board Meetings. The Chair also receives regular letters from the Chair of the NZCA as well as their agendas and minutes which are passed onto the Board.

6.4 Department of Conservation advice

The Board provided both formal and informal advice to the Department on the following issues:

- Rakiura National Park
- Fiordland National Park
- Milford Sound
- Feral Cat Research
- Notified Concession applications
- Stewardship Land Policy
- Wildlife Act



6.5 Community advocacy and involvement

The Board believes that working with conservation organisations and members of the public is very important. This year meetings were held in Invercargill, Gore & Dunedin with both physical and virtual opportunities for the public to attend Board meetings made available and advertised.

6.6 Community visibility

The Board maintains a presence on the Department's website. Information on being on a Conservation Board was also developed and advertised/displayed at <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/>. As part of the Board's communications strategy columns were published in the Southland Express on March, April, May, June 2024

6.7 District and Regional Councils advocacy and advice

The Board appreciates the opportunities to meet with representatives of the four local Councils as there are several regional issues in which it is interested.

Over the past year the Board has communicated with the local councils via email, the Board also has Estelle Pērā-Leask and Stewart Bull on the regional council – Environment Southland.

6.8 Iwi liaison and advocacy

Two members of the Board are nominated by Ngāi Tahu as required under the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act 1998. The Boards Ngāi Tahu representatives are Estelle Pērā-Leask and Stewart Bull.

The Whenua Hou Management Committee (a Board subcommittee under the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act) met four times during the year. Areas of interest for the Committee include the Whenua Hou Diving Petrel project, the archaeological site at hydro creek and the Kākāpō breeding programme.

Celebration of 25 years of Predator Free Whenua Hou was held on Matariki holiday weekend in Rakiura organised by the Whenua Hou Komiti (a subcommittee of the Southland Conservation Board)

Chair Shona travelled to Wellington with Ngāi Tahu representative Stewart Bull to speak in support of our submission to select committee on Fast Track Bill



Top Left: Members of the Whenua Hou Komiti and Southland Conservation Board attending the celebration of 25 years of the island being predator free. Left to right: Claire Jordan, Alison Broad, Jerrie Valli, Deborah Paterson, Stewart Bull, Shona Sangster, Estelle Pērā-Leask, Tāne Davis. Photo Credit: Jason Hosking

Top Right: Estelle Pērā-Leask, Shona Sangster and Tāne Davis in front of art created by Janet de Wagt. Photo Credit: Jason Hosking.

Below: Chair Shona Sangster with Ngāi Tahu representative Stewart Bull speaking in Wellington in support of our submission to select committee on Fast Track Bill

7. Conclusion

In the past 12 months, the Board has achieved a lot. They have put a lot of effort into preparing for the Fiordland National Park Management Plan review and have also formulated a position on the Milford Opportunities Project's Masterplan and have also engaged well with the Southland community, advocating on a range of issues on their behalf.

The Board is looking forward to another year where they can achieve more for conservation. Attached is the Board's work plan for the year ending 30 June 2024 with a full record of what was set out to be achieved and what was achieved.

Appendix 1: SCB Workplan 2023-2024



1 May 2023

Ref: 23-B-0143

Shona Sangster
Chairperson
Southland Conservation Board
shona.zvezda@gmail.com
southlandconservationboard@doc.govt.nz

Tēnā koe Ms Sangster

Annual Letter of Expectations for 2023-24 – Southland Conservation Board

I would like to thank you and your board members for your ongoing efforts to serve the Southland community and for continuing to be local conservation leaders.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm my expectations for your board. These expectations should inform the development of your board's planning process for the year. This letter also sets out a framework for successfully working with the Department of Conservation (the Department).

The basis for my expectations originates in the statutory functions set out in section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987 (the Act), section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980, and the Reserves Act 1977. As reflected in these statutes, the focus of conservation boards is policy issues, strategic direction, and planning, not the day-to-day operations of the Department.

Government and ministerial priorities

For the 2023-24 year, my priorities for conservation boards are to:

- Support the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao – the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy
- Embed the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in accordance with the obligations of section 4 of the Act in all aspects of work
- Support the transition to a lower-carbon conservation delivery model, having regard to the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019.

Board-specific priorities

For the 2023-24 year, my priorities for the Southland Conservation Board are to:

- Support the Department to be ready to commence the review of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan
- Work within the framework of Te Mana o te Taiao – The Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy to enable significant projects within the board's area, such as Predator Free Rakiura, to become a reality

- Advocate for sustainable tourism activities in the conservation estate, referenced to environmental and social sustainability, reflecting Treaty obligations and incorporating carbon minimisation
- Maintain strong working relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and mana whenua
- Continue to increase Board engagement and networking with the community, in particular to understand and reflect their interests in the work of the Board.

I expect these priorities to be reflected in your 2023-24 Strategic Annual Work Plan and that you will work with the Department on its priorities, and look forward to seeing the outcomes in your annual report.

I have been informed by my officials that your priorities for the 2023-24 year include:

- Advocating for the prioritisation of greater protection of indigenous biodiversity (taonga species) enabled by Predator Free Rakiura and Predator Free 2050
- Focusing on ungulate control, especially deer and pigs in the National Parks to restore the mauri of the ngahere on Rakiura and in Fiordland especially
- Promoting the carbon sink value of native ecosystems
- Continuing to strengthen board members' relationships with tangata whenua and their understanding of te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Progressing the Fiordland National Park Management Plan, Southern Rakiura Wilderness area gazettal, and assist with the stewardship land review in the Southland rohe
- Advocating for sustainable tourism activities in the conservation estate, referenced to environmental and social sustainability, reflecting Treaty obligations and incorporating carbon minimisation.

Resources

The Department services conservation boards in accordance with section 6V of the Act. This includes providing resources developed by the Department to help boards achieve the highest standards of conservation leadership. These are published and updated as appropriate at www.conservationboards.org.nz.

Your community

As board members, you represent the public interest in conservation. It is integral that you are active and visible in your communities, so that you bring a well-informed community voice to the table. New Zealand communities are becoming increasingly engaged with conservation and are increasingly aware of the importance of preserving and protecting our natural environment. I expect your board to continue to encourage, nurture and facilitate this interest.

Working with the Department of Conservation

The Department is focused on the delivery of quality conservation work, which aligns with the conservation leadership role you play within your local communities. I expect you to work collaboratively with the Operations Director and Statutory Manager to maintain a strong working relationship with the Department. This relationship is important in providing advice

to the Department on conservation matters within your area. I expect you to report on what is working well for you, and areas that require improvement.

Working with other conservation boards and the NZCA

Conservation is a nationwide challenge, and work on conservation matters, management strategies and plans frequently requires working across boundaries with other conservation boards. I encourage you to continue to develop effective ways of working together with other conservation boards to establish a consistent and efficient approach and avoid a duplication of efforts. The New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) is a source of support for conservation boards to draw upon in relation to the national and policy context for conservation issues.

No surprises

I expect to be informed well in advance of any material or significant events relating to the board, whether positive or negative. Examples of matters that may fall within the 'no surprises' policy could include, but are not limited to, imminent media coverage of any activities that could attract critical media comment, or any matters I could be asked to express a view on.

Understanding conservation boards' legal obligations

I expect that all conservation board members fully understand their legal obligations under conservation law, including the hierarchy of priorities that should be taken into account when making decisions. Conservation boards' legal obligations are covered in section 5 of the Conservation Board Manual.¹

Planning

I expect you, with the Operations Director, will be finalising your work plan in the near future. Your work plan should align with your statutory obligations under the Act, the National Parks Act 1980, and the Reserves Act 1977. I expect that your finalised work plan would include measures and milestones, demonstration of what success will look like for each priority, and how your board will be able to support the Department's priorities.

I appreciate the effort and commitment of your board to conservation in your community and wish you a successful year.

Nāku noa nā



Hon Willow-Jean Prime
Minister of Conservation

¹ <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/conservation-board-manual/conservation-board-statutory-functions-and-powers/>

Southland Conservation Board Work Programme

1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024

Work Programme overview

This Work Programme has been developed in response to the Letter of Expectation from the Minister of Conservation.

Part A: Government and ministerial priorities

- Support the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao – the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy
- Contribute to any reviews of national park management plans and Conservation Management Strategies (CMSs) and support their progress effectively to promote strong conservation outcomes
- Embed the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in accordance with the obligations of section 4 of the Act in all aspects of work
- Support the transition to a lower-carbon conservation delivery model, having regard to the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019
- Support and advocate for any Biodiversity credits / offset system to drive reinvestment in conservation and biodiversity back into the Southern South Island region.

Part B: Board-specific priorities

- Advocate the review of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.
- Work within the framework of Te Mana o te Taiao – Te Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy to enable significant projects within the board's area, such as Predator Free Rakiura, to become a reality.
- Advocate for sustainable tourism activities in the conservation estate, referenced to environmental and social sustainability, reflecting treaty obligations, and incorporating carbon minimisation.
- Advocating for the prioritisation of greater protection of indigenous biodiversity (taonga species) enabled by Predator Free Rakiura and Predator free 2050.
- Focus on ungulate control, especially deer and pigs in the National Parks to restore the mauri of the ngahere on Rakiura and in Fiordland especially.
- Promote the carbon sink value of native ecosystems.
- Continue to strengthen Board members' relationships with tangata whenua and their understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Advocate and support the Fiordland National Park Management Plan, support the investigation of the Southern Rakiura Wilderness area gazettal, advocate for the board's participation in the stewardship land review process in the Southland rohe.

Part C: General Expectations

- Your community – being active and visible in our local communities.
- Working with DOC – maintain a good working relationship with senior management.
- Working with other conservation boards & the NZCA – develop good working cross border relationships.

Part D: Risks/issues from the Board's perspective, and opportunities for conservation growth that are not covered above.

Status indicator

Colour	Indicates
Green	Completed
Yellow	Started and is ongoing
Red	Not started yet

PART A: GOVERNMENT & MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES

1 Support the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao – the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

1.1 Board objective:

The Board will monitor the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao, the Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy and the Department's collaboration with iwi & hapu, community organisations and councils.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress Commentary
A	The Board will support the progress the Department is making on implementing the Te Mana o te Taiao Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy and encourage progress with this important work		Board has had little opportunity to support progress but an update on TMotT is on the agenda for the July 24 meeting

2 Understanding the Board's contribution to giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi

2.1 Board objective:

The Board will embed the principles of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi in accordance with the obligations of Section 4 of the Act in all aspects of our work

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	To have at least one meeting on a marae and be in active discussion with Ngā Rūnanga ki Murihiku.		Participated in a hui organized by Otago Conservation Board to explore Tiriti partnership and Board/NZCA/DOC Section 4 obligations at Ōtākou Marae in March. Committed to hosting a follow up hui in Murihiku.
B	Prioritise the Board's relationship with Ngā Rūnanga ki Murihiku and Ngai Tahu and Makaawhio.		Work on this relationship is ongoing.
C	To send at least one Board member to Te Pukenga Atawhai and seek other avenues for building cultural knowledge, awareness and appreciation of Board members.		Te Pukenga Atawhai places have not been available for board members for some years, but we have built the cultural knowledge, awareness and appreciation of Board members through other avenues, such as involvement with the Whenua Hou Komiti.
D	The Board will continue to support the implementation of Section 4 of the Conservation Act.		

E	The Board will investigate whether a co-chair arrangement might be suitable for us.		The chair has explore this and identified that the time is not currently right for this.
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2.2 **Board objective:**

The Board will support the transition to a lower-carbon conservation delivery model, having regard to the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	The Board will support and monitor the Department & concessionaires transition to a lower carbon conservation delivery model and consider opportunities to cut carbon use and offset carbon.		The Board has done this to the best of our ability.

PART B: BOARD SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

3 Statutory Functions

3.1 Board objective:

Support the Department to be ready to commence the review of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
	The Board will continue to advocate that the review of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan be started.		The Board has done this to the best of our ability. However, the review is still some way from commencing.

3.2 Board objective:

The Board will continue to advise the Department on the reclassification of Stewardship Land in our rohe and on the consideration of concessions that meet the Board's triggers.

The Board will continue to further our relationship with Southland Fish & Game

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	The Board will continue to advocate that all stewardship land that is within the Te Waipounamu		The Board have advocated for this, however we note that there has been very little progress in this space.

	World Heritage Area, along with all stewardship land within the Awarua wetland complex and Rakiura, be appropriately reclassified.		
B	The Board will meet with Fish and Game at least once a year to further our relationship and reflect our legal obligations and areas of common interest.		Southland Fish and Game Manager spoke to the August meeting.
E	The Board will advocate to the Department to fulfil its statutory role in increasing indigenous biomass within Public Conservation Land.		The Board has consistently advocated for this.
F	The Board will continue to support the Whenua Hou Committee and advocate for adequate resourcing		The Board has consistently advocated for this.

3.3 **Board objective:**

Advocate for sustainable tourism activities in the conservation estate, referenced to environmental and social sustainability, reflecting Treaty obligations and incorporating carbon minimisation

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	The Board will advise the Department on concession applications that meet the Board's triggers. The Board will follow up with the Department on whether the advice was heeded.		Advice has been provided when requested.
B	The Board will support the creation of the Hump Ridge Great walk and will advise the Department through any statutory changes.		Advice has been provided on request.

C	The Board will advocate for maximum conservation outcomes in the next stages of the Milford Opportunities Project and against precedent setting special legislation which overrides conservation values or requirements of management planning system.		The board has engaged fully and frequently with MOP and made our views very clearly known.
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3.4 **Board objective:**

Work within the framework of Te Mana o te Taiao – The Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy to enable significant projects within the board's area, such as Predator Free Rakiura, to become a reality

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	The Board will support and advocate for Predator Free Rakiura		The Board has advocated for this, including using a column in the Southland Express to raise public awareness.
B	The Board support Predator Free Southland to advocate for the predator free cause in Southland		The Board has advocated for this.
C	The Board will support and advocate for other predator free initiatives such as Maukahuka /Auckland Island		The Board has advocated for this.
D	The Board will support and advocate for community conservation groups.		The Board has advocated for this.

3.5 **Board objective:**

In conjunction with the Department the Board will determine priorities for the implementation of the Murihiku/Southland Conservation Management Strategy, the Rakiura Conservation Management Strategy and the Rakiura National Park Management Plan.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress Commentary
A	The Board will continue to work with the Department and the community on the Milestone in the Rakiura CMS on the gazettal of a Wilderness Area in the Southern Place Rakiura.		No progress has been made here.

B	The Board will carry out its statutory role monitoring and reporting on the Murihiku/ Southland CMS to make sure it has achieved the five-year milestones.		The Board is working with the Department to ensure the milestones that are most important are included in the business planning process.
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4 **Advocacy**

4.1 **Board objective:**

The Southland Conservation Board will advocate strongly for conservation to the local Territorial Authorities and Regional Council

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress Commentary
A	The Board will advocate strongly on Regional Resource Management Act 1991 policy documents. Including the Regional Coastal Plan Review.		The Regional Coastal Plan Review has not yet entered the formal consultation phase.
B	The Board will submit on relevant, Resource Management Act 1991, consent applications where we have been deemed an affected party.		The Board has submitted on a number of applications.
C	The Board will advocate strongly for the importance of forest/ecosystem health for the mitigation of climate change and the positive carbon implications of controlling introduced browsing species.		The Board has advocated for this.
D	The Board will advocate for improved water quality in Southland and the enhancement and restoration of our wetlands.		The Board has advocated for this.
F	The Board will advocate on the threat of wilding conifers to biodiversity, and for responsible carbon farming.		The Board has advocated for this.

PART C: GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

5 Working with the Department

5.1 **Board objective:**

Board members will maintain and develop good working relationships and open dialogue with directors, managers, board support officers and other staff in order to engage strategically in conservation for the region.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	A good working relationship with the Operations Director, Partnership Director, Statutory Land Manager, Board Support Officer and Operations Managers is helpful for the Board to make any worthwhile gains in conservation.		The Board has a positive relationship with DOC staff.
B	Continue relationship building with relevant DOC staff.		Work on these relationships is ongoing.
C	The Board in conjunction with the Department, will continue the process where the Board gains an understanding of the Department's budgetary planning and can have input at a strategic level. This may involve the Department providing an update on the 'thirdly budget reporting' which should include an analysis on how the work programme is tracking against the Department's priorities and Statutory Plans.		This work has made good progress but is threatened by DOC staffing reductions in this area.

6 Taking into account Ministerial priorities for the Department

6.1 **Board objective:**

The Board will support Ministerial and local priorities

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	The Board will give advice to the Department and will advocate where possible on the threat of wilding conifers		The Board has not had much opportunity for advice or advocacy in this area this year.

	and other invasive weeds in Southland.		
B	The Board will publicly support the National Eradication Programme in the Southern South Island Region.		The Board has provided this support.
C	The Board will continue to support proposals to ensure adequate protected habitat for endangered species such as Whenua Hou diving petrel kuaka, Kākāpō, Takahē, Tūturīwhatu.		The Board has provided this support.
D	The Board will continue to advocate for resources to reverse the decline in critically endangered species		The Board has advocated for this, including using a column in the Southland Express to raise public awareness.

7 **Working with adjoining Conservation Boards and the Authority**

7.1 **Board objective:**

Board members will liaise with neighbouring conservation boards in order to progress cross boundary issues and other matters of mutual interest.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	To have at least one joint meeting with the Otago Board to discuss cross-boundary issues especially Park Plans, as well as appropriate.		Held joint meeting with Otago Conservation Board in Dunedin in March 2024
B	The Board to develop a relationship with the West Coast Board		Ongoing
C	The Board Chair to continue to liaise with the Otago Board and West Coast Chairs.		Regular contact between Board Chairs occurs.
D	Ensure ongoing participation in the Chair's conference.		

8 **Engaging with the community, including raising the profile of the Board**

8.1 **Board objective:** Maintain strong working relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and mana whenua

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	Board members support the aspirations of whanau, hapu of community groups in Murihiku to exercise their kaitiakitanga in conservation issues such as predator free, catchment and wetland improvement, and climate change.		Work to support the exercise of kaitiakitanga in Murihiku is ongoing.

8.2 **Board objective:**
Board members will liaise regularly with other conservation entities, such as district and regional councils, NGOs and community groups, in order to enhance the profile of the Board and pursue good working relationships on issues of mutual interest and concern.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	Board members support the mahi of community groups in Southland working on conservation issues such as predator free, catchment and wetland improvement, and climate change.		Work to support this is ongoing.
B	The Board works with regional authorities to promote conservation within the community.		The Board works with ES, including using a column in the Southland Express to promote conservation in the community.

8.3 **Board objective:**
Continue to increase Board engagement and networking with the community, in particular to understand and reflect their interests in the work of the Board.

Planned Board activities, success measures and key milestones

	Action	Status	Progress commentary
A	The Board may initiate informal community meetings in the region to engage with members of our community and promote conservation projects.		
B	The Board will hold a public forum at most of its meetings		

C	The Board may liaise with the Department to enable Board members attend public functions held by the Department and to enable opportunities to support DOC in the field.		
D	The Board investigates the use of social media to raise the Board's profile.		The Board has decided that social media is not the right space for the Board.
E	The board will write a regular column in the Southland Express.		The Board has written a column in the Southland Express to raise public awareness of the Board and conservation issues in the region.

PART D: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

9 Risks from the Boards perspective

A	Hopefully the Fiordland National Park Plan Review will be underway this year. This will lead to increased work for the Board or frustration if the review is further delayed.
B	There is a lot of work done by Board members outside of our bimonthly meetings. This can lead to Board fatigue.
C	MOP possibility for precedent setting special legislation which overrides conservation values or requirements of relevant Park Plan.
D	Under resourcing of board budget not permitting us to fulfil our statutory functions

10 Opportunities for conservation growth

A	See workplan above
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