

TARANAKI WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD
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ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED
30 JUNE 2013

Presented to the NZ Conservation Authority
pursuant to
Section 60 of the
Conservation Act 1987

Serviced by the Department of Conservation
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**Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation
Board Members
2012/2013**



From left to right: Barney Haami (June- Dec 2012); Dave Digby;
Louise Davies (Board Servicing Officer June 2012 -Feb 2013);
Rex Hendry (Chairperson Current); Rachel Steele; Dr Christine Cheyne;
Darryn Ratana (Chairperson-June- Dec 2012)

Absent: Bernadine (Dinny) Snowdon-Rameka- Board Support Officer



Absent: Anne-Marie Broughton

Table of Contents	<i>page</i>
1. Introduction to the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.....	5
2. Membership of the Board	5
3. Board District.....	6
4.1 Overview & Map of Board Area.....	6
4. Budget, Fees and Allowances.....	7
5. Board Meetings and Inspections	7
6. Functions Under the Conservation Act 1987.....	8
7.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987	8
7.2 Functions of the Board.....	8
(a) Recommend the Conservation Management Strategy	8
(b) Approve Conservation Management Plans.....	8
(c) Advise on implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy And Conservation Management Plans	8-9
(d) (i) Advise on any proposed change of status or classification	9
(ii) Advise on any other conservation matters.....	9
(e) Advise on walkways.....	9-10
(f) Liaison with Fish and Game Council.....	10
(g) Ministerial delegations	10
7. Power of Boards	12
(a) Advocacy.....	12
(b) Establishment of Committees	12
8. Functions under the National Parks Act 1980	12
(a) Recommend National Park Management Plans, Reviews or Amendments	
(b) Have special regard in respect to Whanganui National Park.....	13
9. Reserves Act 1977.....	14
10. Liaison	14
11. Chairperson’s Comment.....	15-16



Cover Photo: Fire fighting Raranga March 2013 Whanganui

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TARANAKI/WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board is an independent statutory body appointed by the Minister of Conservation. It was established by section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987. Although the Department formally amalgamated the Tongariro/Taupo and Whanganui Conservancies to become the Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki (TWT) Conservancy in December 2010, both the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board continue to exist as separate bodies.

The Board has the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the conservation management strategy (CMS) and conservation management plans (CMPs) for its region. As well as providing for interaction between the public and the Department of Conservation at the conservancy level, the Board also acts as an advocate for the protection of conservation values. Its prime role is to advise the Department and the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA).

The functions of the Board are set out in Sections 6M of the Conservation Act 1987, and in the National Parks Act 1980 and the Reserves Act 1977.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

Members of the Board are appointed by the Minister of Conservation for up to a three year term having regard to their experience, expertise and links with the local community including tangata whenua. Members may have knowledge of nature conservation, natural earth and marine sciences, cultural heritage, recreation, tourism, and Māori perspectives. This process ensures a diversity of experience and background and a spread across the main geographical and ecological zones within the board's area.

The Minister did not conduct an appointment round for the 2012 calendar year and extended the term of appointment for those members whose terms were due to expire at 30 June 2012 for a further year (i.e. until 30 June 2013).

Membership of the Board remained fixed at eight for the 2012/13 reporting year. Two of these appointments are statutory and selected in consultation with the Minister of Māori Affairs on the recommendations of the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board and the Taranaki Maori Trust Board.

It was with great sadness that Board members paid tribute to their long-serving colleague Barney Haami, following his death in December 2012. Mr Haami had held the statutory appointment upon the recommendation by the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board since 1998. The remaining statutory iwi position remained vacant during the reporting term.

Rex Hendry was elected Chair in December 2012 following the resignation of outgoing Chair, Darryn Ratana.

Appointed Members	Year Appointed	Home Location	Meetings/Workshop Attended (5 held)
Anne-Marie Broughton	2011	Whanganui	5
Dr Christine Cheyne	2004	Palmerston North	4
Dave Digby	2006	Stratford	3
Barney Haami ¹	1998	Whanganui	-
Rex Hendry (incoming Chair)	2008	New Plymouth	5
Darryn Ratana (retiring Chair) ²	2005	Whanganui	2
Rachel Steele	2005	Taumarunui	2

¹ Died whilst in office

² Resigned during reporting year

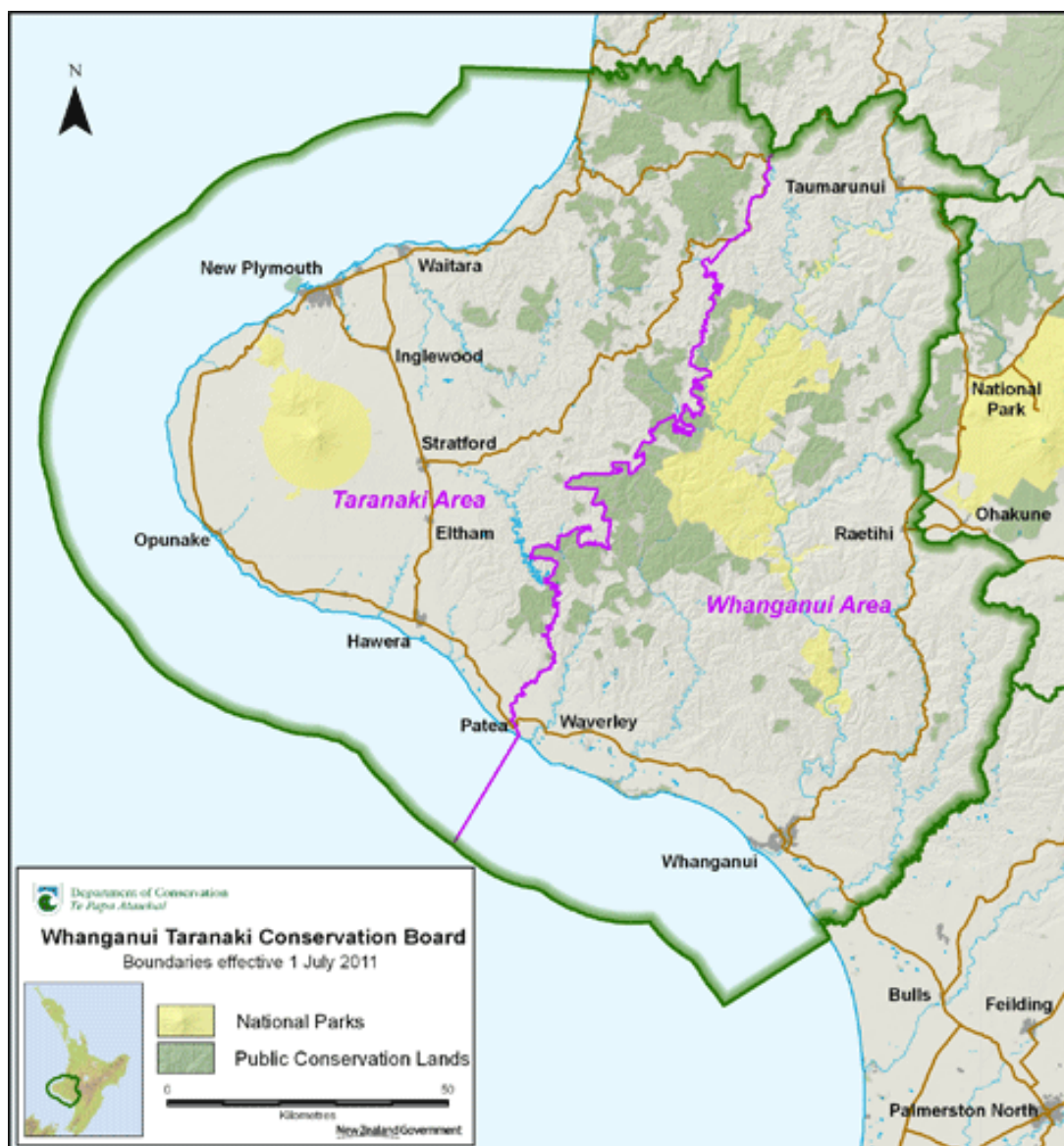
3. BOARD DISTRICT

3.1 The Board's area of responsibility covers the Department's boundaries for the Whanganui and Taranaki Areas within the greater Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki Conservancy. It encompasses some 15,000 square km of land extending from the Mokau River in the north to the Turakina River in the south and inland to Ohura and Taumarunui (refer to the map). Approximately 298,000 hectares of public conservation land is administered by the Department which represents almost 20% of the total area of the Board's district.

In addition to a number of scenic, historic and recreational reserves, the district includes both the Egmont National Park and its associated array of recreation opportunities, and the Whanganui National Park with its unique history and strong cultural connections.

The coastal boundary that extends along the Board's district includes the Tapuae and Paraninihi Marine Reserves as well as the long established Nga Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Protected Area.

Volcanoes, wild and scenic rivers, huge tracts of forest, rugged mountain ranges and a dynamic coastline provide for a great diversity of landscapes, habitats, plants and animals.



Map of Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board Area

4. BUDGET, FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The Board's budget for 2012/13 was \$18,000. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. Board members are paid a daily meeting fee of \$140 and the chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$190. Members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged on Board business.

5. BOARD MEETINGS AND INSPECTIONS

As in previous years the Board has continued to alternate Board meetings between Whanganui and other locations throughout the Board district to give local people the opportunity to attend meetings and raise any issues. There is time set aside at the start of each Board meeting for a public forum that allows Board members to become familiar with local conservation issues. The relevant DOC Area Manager provides Board members with a briefing on work undertaken as well as any current issues in the area where the Board meeting is held. This enables the Board to gain a greater understanding of the Department's work in the field and an opportunity to meet field staff.

Wherever possible, the Board implemented its policy of focusing meetings, and any associated field inspections, around a strategic theme related to key conservation issues agreed by the Board for its reporting year. Guest speakers were invited to provide the Board members with a range of views on the conservation issue.

The Board scheduled four formal meetings and one workshop for the report period. A combined workshop and field inspection with Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board was scheduled to coincide with one of the meetings. The meetings were as follows:

Date of Meeting	Meeting Venue	Location
7 September 2012	Hawera Community Centre	Hawera
2 November 2012	New Plymouth Sport Fishing & Underwater Club	New Plymouth
7 December 2012	Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuit Centre of NZ	Tongariro
22 March 2013	Whanganui Area Office	Whanganui
24 May 2013	Central Park Motor Inn	Taumarunui

Field Inspections

The Board regards inspections as an important part of exercising its functions as they provide opportunities to discuss management issues on site and share ideas with Department staff. Wherever possible, field inspections are arranged to coincide with topical conservation issues so that the Board can be provided with relevant background information.

7-8 December 2012: Members from both the Taranaki/Whanganui and Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Boards gathered at the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuit Centre (OPC) of NZ for a joint board discussion and their individual board meetings. With the two-day meeting including discussions on Kaupapa Maori and the Engagement Growth Strategy for the wider conservancy, board members conducted a site visit of the Mangatepopo road-end to discuss cultural values regarding activities conducted upon local maunga and to Whakapapa Village to discuss its role as the gateway to the majority of visitors to Tongariro National Park and the role of businesses in the future development of the village.

Led by Board member Cam Speedy, members were treated to a trek along the Mangatepopo River to view whio in their natural habitat and were informed of the outcomes achieved to date through the recent partnership between the Department and Genesis Energy Ltd for its national Whio Recovery Programme.

6. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

6.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 states “This Act shall be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. As a board established under the Conservation Act 1987, section 4 applies to the Board in the discharge of its functions.

6.2 Functions of the Board

(a) Recommend the Conservation Management Strategy for approval

A conservation management strategy (CMS) is a 10-year statutory document that implements General Policy and establishes objectives for the management and protection of the natural and historic features and wildlife of the region, and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. Conservation Boards are actively involved in the preparation, review and amendment and approval of CMSs.

The current Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Whanganui Conservancy was approved in April 1997. Although work had been undertaken by the Board to prepare a new draft CMS for public notification, this was put on hold in 2009 pending the development of a national framework for CMSs. A new template was formally approved in late 2010.

Following the merge of the Tongariro Taupo Conservancy with Whanganui Conservancy in 2010, the Department proposed that one CMS was produced for the Tongariro Whanganui Taranaki (TWT) Conservancy that would manage the Taupō-nui-ā-Tia, Ruapehu, Whanganui and Taranaki Areas.

In March 2012, the Board formally endorsed the deferral of the TWT CMS Review until progress had been made for the development and implementation of a section incorporated in the Tongariro/Taupo CMS entitled *He Kaupapa Rangatira* (A Joint Initiative) and subject to receiving a regular monitoring report on its progress and implementation; and the development of a framework for conservation management within the rohe of Taranaki and Whanganui iwi.

At its September 2012 meeting, the Department outlined the TWT Conservancy Strategic Direction including the development and proposed implementation of 12 key projects for TWT. It is intended that these 12 key projects would provide a better understanding of community and Place needs and would provide the foundation for work on the proposed Generation 2 TWT CMS. The Board was provided with progress updates on the strategic projects in subsequent meetings throughout the year.

(b) Approve Conservation Management Plans

The Board did not approve any conservation management plans, or their review and amendment, in this reporting period.

(c) Advise on the implementation of the Conservation Management Strategy and Conservation Management Plans

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board implements a system of monitoring categories and places within the CMS and the Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) on a three yearly reporting cycle. The board was briefed as follows:

- *Section 20 Land Management*

Section 25 Landscape & geological protection

Section 26 Information Base

The Board noted that progress toward achieving milestones with regard to land management is difficult to measure given the ongoing Treaty settlement process and outstanding claims.

The Department reported that it had recently centralised its provision of scientific expertise to areas and it was intended that these changes will improve the organisation's ability to deliver applied conservation research. The Board commented that this appears to be a good outcome however its level of success cannot yet be determined.

The Board recommended that the Department maintains its work on disposing small pockets of low value lands either through sale or partnering with like-minded groups.

- *Section 3 Kaupapa*
Section 4 Tangata Whenua
Section 5 European Conservation Ethic
Part C Treaty of Waitangi

The Board noted that the report did not include comments on progress for the Taranaki Area. It did comment however that there are good lines of communication, strong relationships and significant achievements apparent in the Whanganui/Ngati Rauru regions but this progress is hindered to a degree by out-of-date objectives and the Treaty settlement process which has not yet been completed.

The Board commented that the Department appears to have a plan and priorities for moving some of the kaupapa projects forward this year through its work on a number of key strategic projects and would like to be engaged with this work when appropriate.

- *Egmont National Park Management Plan*

The Department engaged an independent reviewer for an update on the implementation of the Egmont National Plan. The use of an independent reviewer provided a more objective view of progress to date. Overall the plan seems to be achieving its objectives, mainly because the plan was written well in the first instance, with reasonably clear and mostly measurable outcomes.

It is noted that a full review of the plan is on hold while the CMS and Destination Management Plan unfold.

- *Section 11 Matemateaonga*
Section 14 Taumarunui

The report on this section of the CMS was somewhat subjective and did not clearly indicate where conservation gains were made or, more specifically, where the greatest losses were. This report has highlighted the need for Department staff to clearly understand the role and function of the board, and for the staff and the board to work closer together to ensure that the quality of these reports is improved, within the limitations of the objectives that progress can be measured against.

In addition to the monitoring reports, the Board is provided with a Conservator's report that gives a brief overview of work being performed and improvements/changes made and

completed throughout the conservancy. The Board is also provided with a presentation from the relevant Area Manager at its meetings.

Other Departmental staff and guest speakers are invited to give presentations to the Board. The Board received the following presentations for this reporting period:

September 2012

- TWT Strategic Projects
- Natural Heritage Management System (NHMS)

November 2012 (Marine workshop)

- Maui's dolphin Threat Management Plan
- Offshore mineral exploration (*Guest speaker*)
- Crown Minerals Act (*Guest speaker*)
- Environmental Protection Agency (*Guest speaker*)
- Taranaki Regional Council (*Guest speaker*)

December 2012

- TWT Shared Values Project
- Growing Conservation through DOC/Business partnerships
- TWT Engagement Growth Strategy
- Delivery Project
- Waverley Wind Farm (*Guest speaker*)

March 2013

- Destination Management Framework
- Implementation progress of Whanganui National park Management Plan
- Monitoring Report on Egmont National Park Management Plan
- Update on progress of Maui Dolphin Threatened Species Management Plan

May 2013

- Partnerships
- Mining proposals in North Taranaki
- A field visit to the Hinengakau workshop and an introduction in their involvement in the Kia Wharite Project.

The Board is grateful for the time and effort staff and guest speakers put into preparing and delivering these very informative presentations.

(d) (i) Advise on any proposed change of status or classification

There were no proposed changes of status or classification of any area of national or international importance within the reporting year.

(ii) Advise on any other conservation matters

Review of the Maui's dolphin Threat Management Plan

Having sought and considered the professional and community advice presented at its 2 November 2013 marine workshop, the Board submitted on the review of the Maui's dolphin Threat Management Plan (TMP). The Board emphasised the appalling lack of objective research and knowledge around the Maui's (and Hector's) dolphin and the relationship between the two sub-species.

The Board recommended that urgency be given to undertaking further research including the distribution and range of both species along the West Coast of the North Island; the population characteristics; breeding grounds and population recruitment/recovery rates; and population modelling. Given the public and international interest on the state of the Maui's dolphin, the Board also recommended that relevant information be promulgated more effectively. In all decisions, the Board stated that a precautionary approach is paramount.

Taking into consideration the information on the current distribution of Maui's dolphin from a number of sources, the Board believes the present extent of the West Coast North Island Marine Mammal Sanctuary is adequate and any proposed changes should be predicated on robust research.

Crown Mineral (Permitting & Crown Land) Bill

Following on from previous submissions regarding the review of the Crown Minerals Act (CMA) 1991 and the Schedule 4 stock take, the Board provided feedback on the Crown Mineral (Permitting & Crown Land) Bill in November 2012. In its submission the Board stated its opposition to mineral and petrochemical exploration and associated activities on conservation land and in the coastal marine area, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf until there is proper recognition and valuing of the terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystem services.

Land Transport Management Amendment Bill

The Board raised concerns on a number of aspects of the proposed Bill including the removal of representatives from the Regional Transport Committees; emphasis on Roads of National Significance; funding; partnerships; and requested greater emphasis upon regional commuter rail. The Board supported the amalgamation of the Regional Land Transport Strategy and the Programme into one plan.

Resource Management Act (RMA) Reform 2013

Given that the RMA Reform 2013 (*Improving our resource management system*) and the Freshwater Reform 2013 will have significant implications upon conservation management and planning in New Zealand, the Board noted its discontent with the consultation process and the inadequate time allowed for submissions. Overall, the Board commented that the proposals in the discussion document focused on some simplistic solutions that will, in the long-term, result in much poorer performance in terms of the goals for sustainable management and improved planning outcomes.

Freshwater Reform 2013 & Beyond

In its submission, the Board strongly opposed proposals to reform the RMA that would make amendments that weaken or remove the protection currently afforded to freshwater habitats and fisheries and for recreational use and amenity value; and were also opposed to limited appeal rights. The Board endorsed more collaborative planning (but did not support a statutorily mandated process) and supported (with urgency) independent reviews of the Freshwater National Policy Statement and use of National Environmental Standards for clean water.

(e) Advise on walkways

The Board formerly had the function of advising the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on proposals for new walkways. This function was repealed by section 82 of the Walking Access Act 2008.

(f) Liaison with Fish and Game Council

Liaison has been maintained with the local Fish and Game Council through an exchange of agendas and minutes of meetings. There were no matters arising from the liaison which required direct Board input.

(g) Ministerial delegations

The Minister did not delegate any ministerial powers or functions to the Board during the reporting period.

7. Powers of Boards

(a) Advocacy

The Board considers it has an important role to play in:

- Information sharing with iwi authorities
- Promoting public understanding of and fostering support for the protection of the natural and historic heritage of New Zealand
- Raising public awareness of conservation boards and their roles, through meeting members of the public and representatives from other agencies and groups
- Making submissions on issues relevant to the Board.

Treaty/Iwi Relationships

The Board has a statutory requirement to include members who can represent Taranaki and Whanganui iwi. In addition, there are other Board members filling the public vacancies that have iwi affiliations. These connections play a vital role in improving the Boards understanding of iwi perspectives.

Treaty settlement has been completed for Ngati Tama, Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Ruanui, Ngati Rauru, and Ngati Apa.

Progress in Treaty settlement negotiations continues with an Agreement having been signed for the Whanganui River. Agreements in principle have been signed for Te Ati Awa Iwi Authority and Ngati Ruahine, with Taranaki iwi having signed a letter of agreement.

Tapuae Marine Reserve Advisory Committee

In February 2010 the Minister of Conservation approved the establishment of an advisory committee for Tapuae Marine Reserve under section 56 of the Conservation Act 1987. A submission to the Minister seeking approval of nominations selected from local iwi, fishing groups, the Taranaki Regional Council, and the Board has been undertaken during the reporting year. Rex Hendry is the appointed board representative on this committee.

Submissions

The Board did not provide comment on discussion documents from other Government organisations and statutory plans developed by territorial authorities and regional councils during the report period.

(b) Establishment of Committees

The Conservation Act enables the Board to establish committees and delegate to them functions and powers. Board members were allocated to the following committees (and further revised at its February meeting following the departure of two members):

- *Marine* Darryn Ratana, Rex Hendry

- *CMS* Darryn Ratana, Christine Cheyne, Rex Hendry, Rachel Steele
- *Whanganui National Park Management Plan Review* Darryn Ratana, Rachel Steele, Anne-Marie Broughton
- *Statutory Planning* Christine Cheyne
- *Biodiversity* Darryn Ratana, Rachel Steele
- *Section 4* Barney Haami
- *Concessions* Darryn Ratana, Rex Hendry, Barney Haami

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

In accordance with the Ngati Tama Claim Settlement Act 2003, the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was established under the Act to advise on the management of Whitecliffs and other nearby conservation areas, including Parininihi Marine Reserve. JAC committee members include representatives from Ngati Tama, the Department of Conservation and the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.

Following the gazettal of Parininihi Marine Reserve in September 2006, the JAC was delegated the Board's power to approve, review or amend any conservation management plans for the reserve, in accordance with section 6N (2) (b) of the Conservation Act 1987. In its August 2007 meeting, the Board resolved that the JAC be the governing body for the Parininihi Marine Reserve (a preferred choice of Ngati Tama), rather than establishing a separate marine reserve committee.

This committee has met sporadically since 2007.

8. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

(a) Recommend National Park Management Plans, Reviews or Amendments

The review process for the Whanganui National Park Management Plan (the Plan) formally commenced on 28 July 2003. Following considerable consultation between the Department and Whanganui iwi in the ensuing years, and collaboration on text in its latter stages, the Board endorsed all recommended changes to the Plan at its extraordinary meeting held in November 2011.

Representatives of the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board, the Department, and the Board formally presented the draft Plan to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) during its visit in February 2012. Following a number of editing changes and the Board's formal response to feedback and comments made by NZCA on the Plan, it was forwarded to the Minister of Conservation for comment before being considered once again by the NZCA.

At its August 2012 meeting, the NZCA formally approved the Whanganui National Park Management Plan. In recognition of the kaitiaki role of Whanganui River iwi, and the work undertaken by the Department, iwi, and the community to develop the shared vision for the Whanganui National Park, the Minister joined with the Chair NZCA, departmental staff and tangata whenua in Whanganui to celebrate its approval.

(b) Have special regard in respect to Whanganui National Park

At its 22 March 2013 meeting, the Department outlined the engagement framework incorporating Rōpū Mana Whenua and Rōpū Rautaki, supported by Rōpū Mahi that provides for the Department's strategic and operational engagement across the Whanganui iwi confederation, as well as with specific rohe.

It was through the Rōpū Mahi forum that Whanganui iwi and the Department have agreed on a set of four priorities for the first 1-2 years of implementation of the WNPMP, in particular exploring the concept of a Whanganui Māori National Park. The Board will be kept updated on implementation progress.

In keeping with its shared aspirations as discussed with tangata whenua at Pipiriki in April 2009, the Board sent a letter to Te Rōpū Mana Whenua pledging its continued support for the concept of a Māori National Park.

9. RESERVES ACT 1977

There were no matters raised under the Reserves Act 1977 that required consultation with the Board during the reporting year.

10. LIAISON

All Board members receive the minutes of NZCA meetings. Ian Buchanan was appointed as liaison member until his resignation and has been replaced by Jo Breese. The Board is very grateful to Catherine Tudhope and Katrina Edwards, Statutory Bodies Officers, for keeping regular contact with the Board.

The Board has continued liaison with adjoining Conservation Boards through an exchange of minutes and shared correspondence on matters of national importance. As a result of the amalgamation and a need to discuss whole of conservancy outcomes, the Board Chairs from both the Tongariro/Taupo and Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board have a reciprocal agreement to attend meetings.

Board members liaised with a number of individuals, groups and organisations throughout the reporting period. This liaison is seen as a very important way of providing an interface with the community. Board members were given the opportunity to report back at each board meeting.

Liaison included:

Anne-Marie Broughton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maori Agribusiness Network • Agri-Women's Development Trust • Ngati Rauru Land & Water Forum • Maori Law Review
Christine Cheyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Network Manawatu • Manawatu Forest and Bird • Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club
Dave Digby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Taranaki Forest & Bird • Stratford Tramping Club • Mountain Safety – Taranaki • Taranaki Tree Trust
Barney Haami (<i>until Dec</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamaupoko Link (Chairperson) • Tupoho Whanau Trust • Tamahaki Inc. • Ngati Rangi Trust • Hinengakau Development Trust • Whanganui River Maori Trust Board • Whanganui Maori Regional Tourism Organisation • Maori Sector of Regional Partnership Programme (Whanganui, Rangitikei, Ruapehu District Councils)
Rex Hendry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand Alpine Club & Advocacy Committee • Taranaki Regional Transport Committee • Taranaki Land Search & Rescue (Search Manager) • Western Institute of Technology (WITT) Board • LandSAR NZ (National Director)

Darryn Ratana (<i>until Dec</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ngati Rauru Iwi Authority • Taranaki Iwi Chairs Forum
Rachel Steele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Committee • Taupo Forest & Bird

Members of the public were provided with an opportunity to raise issues with the Board via letters, and/or public forums at each Board meeting. None were raised during the reporting period.

11. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT

“Ka hinga te totara o te wao nui a Tane”. Sadly, Barney Haami died in early December 2012. Barney has been a member of the Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board since 1998. He was a calm, clear and sensible member of the Board with very sound and wise counsel around matters relating to Iwi. If Barney leaned across and quietly stated “you might want to think about that” then you knew you had to think about it! He was a key contributor to the process of developing the Whanganui National Park Management Plan and was resolute in his desire for Iwi engagement around conservation. I had known Barney for close to 30 years, with his involvement, previously, on the Iwi Advisory Committee for Wanganui District Council. He will be greatly missed. *E noho ra, e hoa.*

In November, Darryn Ratana took up the role of Project Leader for the Taranaki Destination Management Plan and stood down from his role as Chair of the Board. Darryn’s steady hand has facilitated the board to continue its fine work and remain active with advocacy and its statutory functions. Fortunately he has not been lost to conservation in the region.

The key piece of work to come to fruition in the past year was the Whanganui National Park Management Plan, when it was approved and returned from the NZ Conservation Authority, with support of the Minister of Conservation, Hon Kate Wilkinson, on 10th August 2012. This plan is now into its implementation phase and solid progress is being reported at each meeting subsequently. The Board looks forward to ongoing engagement and involvement in this implementation, especially around to discussion and formation of a “Maori National Park” as this concept unfolds.

At the time of writing, the Board itself is currently very under-resourced with only 5 members. Both Iwi representation positions are vacant and the Ministerial appointments for these positions, and the annual re-appointment of general board members, are now lagging by many months. This makes it difficult for the formation of critical mass for quorums, advocacy and subcommittee work.

It is extremely disappointing, and indeed frustrating, for the Board that very little progress is being made on the review of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) or the Egmont National Park Management Plan (ENPMP) review due to factors outside its control. The CMS is contingent on the resolution of Department-Iwi relationships in the Central North Island for us to advance a full conservancy-wide CMS. The ENPMP is contingent on the development of the Taranaki Destination Management Plan, which has now seems to have been overtaken by a wider tourism strategic planning exercise.

Both the CMS and the ENPMP are critical statutory documents that are central to the function of the board. The CMS is now 16 years past its review date and has had 2 working drafts of the CMS in the past 12 years or so, which have not been completed. This has engendered a level of disbelief in community stakeholders. In the meantime, we work with the Department to improve the monitoring and reporting of the incumbent documentation, so that we can fulfil our obligations under 6M of the Conservation Act.

The current restructuring of the Department looks to go deeper and harder into its work and culture, and has certainly affected people as significantly as the 1997 restructuring. We have serious concerns now about the loss of both conservation and community knowledge, and key personnel through this process. It does seem that some work has slowed and parts of it stalled.

With the formation of the new DOC regions it is, at the time of writing, not known what geographical area the Conservation Boards will cover in the near future - in fact, it is not known how many Conservation Boards there will be, going forward. It is a time of uncertainty for everyone with possible detrimental consequences for conservation work and advocacy.

The ongoing liaison between the Taranaki-Whanganui and the Tongariro-Taupo Conservations Boards is gaining momentum, with each Chair joining the meetings of the other Board. Subsequently, processes are becoming more uniform and issues, whether local or conservancy-wide, are being identified and discussed.

The Kia Wharite project remains a shining jewel in the crown of conservation, with the joint relationship with DOC, Horizons, Tangata Whenua and landowners. It looked possible that Horizons Regional Council was going to remove a substantial amount of funding for this project. Fortunately, most of this funding was returned after strong submissions to the contrary.

The plight of the Maui Dolphin is a topical issue again with a review of the Hector's and Maui Threatened Management Plan. The area now set aside for the Maui, within the West Coast North Island Marine Mammal Sanctuary, is close to 10,000 square kilometres. We are advocating a precautionary approach to the protection of this species and have strongly requested that research is undertaken urgently to discover the range, habitat, recruitment, and population dynamics and modelling. We await the outcome of the plan review.

Trust power is developing the concept of a wind farm at Waverley. We are monitoring this as it unfolds and look forward to further engagement when they seek resource consent.

The sand mining on the sea floor off South Taranaki and other proposals for mining on land in North Taranaki continue to develop. The Board is well informed on the sand mining proposal but find ourselves on the fringe of some of the other proposed development discussion.

Unfortunately we have recently lost the services of our board secretary Louise Davies as she voluntarily exited the Department in this last restructuring. Louise's work has been sterling over the years, with her finger on the pulse of a range of issues and topics, backed by great facilitation and organisational skills. We wish her well with her new job at Wanganui District Council.

And we welcome Dinny Snowdon-Rameka as our joint board secretary with the Tongariro-Taupo Board. Nau mai, Haere mai.

We acknowledge all of the great work of DOC staff throughout this turbulent period, and wish them well, whatever their future holds. I would like to single out Mark Davies for his astute and persistent support of the Board, and the sound and salient advice he provides.



Rex Hendry,
Chairperson,
July, 2013.

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board adopted this report on 2 August 2013.