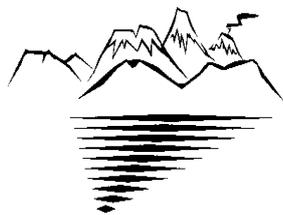


# Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board Annual Report 2024-2025



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



**Tongariro/ Taupō Conservation Board Meeting  
Te Poari Papa Atawhai o Tongariro Taupō**

Annual Report of the  
Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board  
Te Poari Papa Atawhai o Tongariro Taupō

For the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

*Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority / Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O  
Aotearoa pursuant to section 60 of the Conservation Act 1987*

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*Photographer: Karen Rainbow*

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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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Edward Ellison  
Chairperson, New Zealand Conservation Authority  
PO Box 10420  
Wellington 6143

Tēnā koe Edward

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha, tēnei te mihi nui ki a koutou katoa. E tika ana kia tuku i ngā kupu whakawhetai ki a Papatūānuku rāua ko Ranginui mō ō rāua manaakitanga, ā, kia whai whakaaro hoki tātou ki te tiaki me te manaaki i te Taiao mō ngā uri whakatupu.

It is my privilege to present the 2024-2025 Annual Report on behalf of the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board (TTCB). This year has been marked by challenge and change, legislative reforms, budget constraints, and ongoing uncertainty around the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS). Despite these pressures, the Board has remained committed to kaitiakitanga and to ensuring the voices of tangata whenua and local communities are heard in conservation decision-making.

I acknowledge our Regional Director, Damian Coutts, and the DOC team, especially Karen Rainbow, Louisa Meredith, Dave Conley, Libby O'Brien and George Taylor, for their professionalism in a demanding year. We also mark with sadness the passing of senior manager Dave Lumley, whose dedication and generosity will be long remembered.

Ngā mihi nui to my fellow board members for your commitment and wisdom. We especially thank outgoing members Hinemoa Wanikau and Kylie Simpson, and co-opted member Aiden Gilbert, whose contributions have been invaluable. We warmly welcome new and reappointed members. The partnership between iwi representatives and statutory-appointed members remains one of our greatest strengths, weaving mātauranga Māori with conservation science for stronger outcomes.

Finally, I acknowledge our NZCA liaison, Tak Mutu, and regional liaisons Jill Sheehy, Laura Crossman, and John Maneer, whose advocacy has amplified the Board's voice. Our public forums remain vital touchpoints, grounding our work in the perspectives and experiences of the people we serve.

Government fast-track reforms and proposed changes to conservation planning represent a fundamental shift. The proposal to merge national policies and replace CMS, CMP, and NPMP documents with Minister-approved area plans risks weakening local checks and balances.

The CMS is of particular concern. Despite funding being allocated, readiness testing and procedural delays continue to stall progress. With iwi support, an engaged planner, and collaborative work through The Catalyst Group, the Board is ready to proceed. Any future approach must retain the ability to reflect the uniqueness of our rohe, or risk losing place-based priorities in generic templates.

The Board has closely followed developments at the ski fields of Tūroa (now under Pure Turoa Ltd) and Whakapapa (now under Whakapapa Holdings Ltd). Both sites are of immense cultural, environmental, and economic significance, and must be managed in ways that uphold cultural values and protect environmental integrity.

The Chateau Tongariro remains unresolved. We support solutions that preserve its heritage while ensuring a sustainable future. The removal of redundant infrastructure also remains a pressing need across the park.

Biodiversity threats continue, particularly from ungulates in Kaimanawa Forest Park, where canopy collapse is imminent. The Board remains active in monitoring and advocating for robust responses. Visitor management, especially at the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, remains a priority. While work has begun on visitor caps, progress has been slowed by wider challenges at Mt Ruapehu. The Board supports efforts to balance access with the protection of cultural and natural values.

Conservation funding remains constrained. Outdated statutory planning documents, CMS, NPMP, and FPMP, remain unfunded, limiting the Board's ability to meet legislative responsibilities. Despite this, DOC staff, volunteers, and community partners continue to deliver vital conservation work with resilience.

This year has highlighted both the challenges and the opportunities for conservation in our rohe. Legislative reform, funding pressures, and the urgent need for updated planning documents remain pressing issues. Yet through strong iwi partnerships, community voices, and the dedication of DOC staff, the Board continues to uphold its role as kaitiaki for Te Taiao.

Looking ahead, we are determined to progress the CMS, strengthen biodiversity outcomes, and ensure community perspectives remain central to decision-making. Our kaupapa is clear, and our commitment to the mauri of this place remains unwavering.

Ngā mihi nui,



Georgina (Honey) Winter  
Chair, Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to the 2024/25 Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board Annual Report.

Section 6(O) of the Conservation Act requires conservation boards to provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority (the Authority) with an annual report as soon as practical after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement, the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board (the Board) submits this annual report.

Conservation boards are 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 conservation boards to carry out those functions, are under 6(N) of the Act.

Conservation boards are independent advisory bodies, established by statute. They represent the community and offer interaction between communities and the Department of Conservation (the Department), within their area of jurisdiction.

Conservation boards have several statutory roles under various Acts, including:

- 1) the recommendation of the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) to the Authority for approval.
- 2) advising the Department and the Authority on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice.
- 3) reporting on the implementation of the CMS.
- 4) the approval of Conservation Management Plans (CMP).
- 5) the recommendation of National Park Management Plans (NPMP) to the Authority for approval.
- 6) advising the Department and Authority on conservation matters, and proposed changes to status of land of national and international significance.
- 7) liaising with the regional Fish and Game Council on conservation matters.
- 8) carrying out other powers delegated by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

Conservation boards also have several functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. These functions include recommending the review or amendment of NPMPs and recommending approval of these plans by the Authority.

## 2. ROHE

The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board's area of jurisdiction covers the area of 819,013.24 hectares. The area also 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. Public conservation land and waters make up 26.72% of all the Board's total district. This consists of 218,877 hectares of Public Conservation Land.

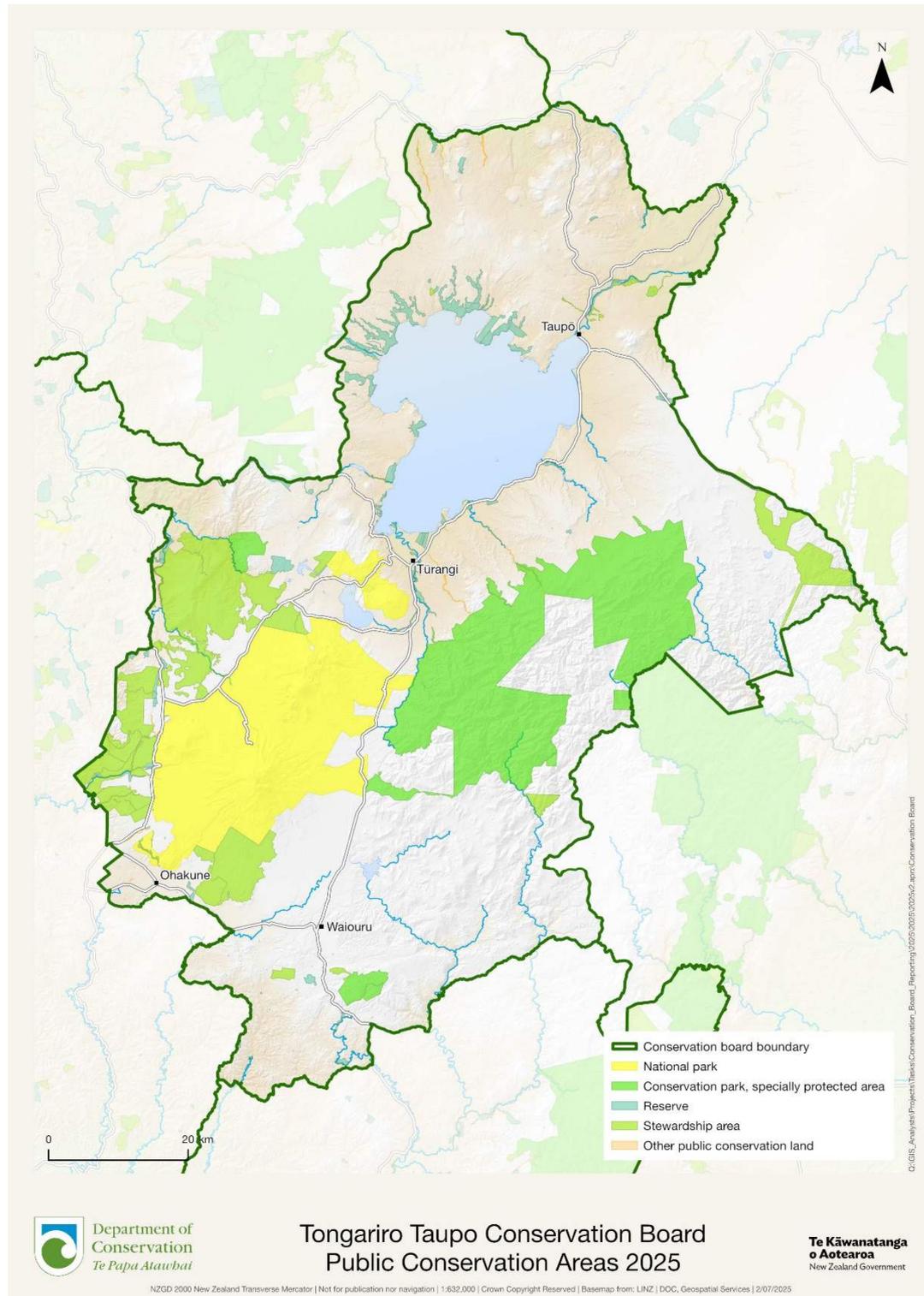


Figure 1. Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board Jurisdiction

The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board area is dominated by major landscape features with Lake Taupō forming the headwaters of the Waikato River. This expansive body of water has tributaries which are in large part fed by the mountains that hold centre stage in the region, Mt Ruapehu, Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro. The mountains and their slopes form the core of the Tongariro National Park, which is New Zealand's first National Park and only dual World Heritage site. Areas to the east including the Kaimanawa Forest Park and adjoining rugged mountain ranges which remain more remote, containing giant podocarp and beech forests, clear rivers and rare wildlife. The Tongariro Forest Park is located just northwest of the park and is home to a national Whio security site and a North Island Brown Kiwi sanctuary. On the western side of the National Park, the Ruapehu Conservation Area consists of the Erua Forest and Southern Tongariro Forest. The largest population of short tail bats in New Zealand is found in the Rangataua Conservation Area near to the township of Ohakune on Mt Ruapehu's southern slopes.

## 2.1 Tāngata whenua

The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board rohe covers an area from Taupō through to Ohakune and beyond. The iwi with interests in this rohe includes:

- Ngāti Tūwharetoa
- Ngāti Hāua
- Te Korowai o Wainuiārua (Uenuku, Tamahaki, Tamakana)
- Ngāti Rangī

There are representatives of all four iwi on the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board as either statutory appointments or co-opted members.

## 2.2 Conservation features of the area

The main features of Public Conservation Land and Waters within the Board's boundaries are:

- Tongariro National Park - 78,847 ha
- Kaimanawa Forest Park - 74,540 ha
- Kaweka Forest Park - 40 ha
- 53 Scenic Reserves - 8,588 ha
- 52 Stewardship Areas - 50,642 ha
- 23 Recreation Reserves - 1,131 ha
- 5 Marginal Strips - 453 ha
- 3 Other Reserves - 355 ha
- 2 Specially Protected Areas - 2,194 ha
- 1 Ecological Areas - 1,901 ha
- 1 Historic Reserves - 186 ha

## 2.3 Conservation issues in the area

Approximately 1.52% of all public conservation land in Aotearoa lies within the region. These PCL make up 26.74% of all land in Tongariro/Taupō (219,331.53ha).

The large number of issues that are of interest to the Board includes:

CMS - After many attempts to progress the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Management Strategy, including seeking options to go 'independent' and employ our own planner to undertake the work (as DOC is under-resourced with planning staff, it seems). The Tongariro Taupō CMS is now undergoing 'Readiness Testing'. We await the results of this 'readiness testing' with interest and the Modernising Conservation Land Management proposal to determine the existence of CMS and the role of Conservation Boards in the development of area plans.

Tourism - Impacts of tourism numbers are increasing again since the decline during the COVID pandemic. This has raised the usual issues of 'overuse' of our precious areas. Work has been done and commented on by the TTCB around bookings for the Tongariro Crossing. Otherwise, we await further outcomes of the 'Reset' for conservation.

Ungulates - The impact of ungulates in Kaimanawa Forest Park is an ongoing and increasing concern. Canopy collapse (which may be due to natural causes and the lack of regenerative vegetation) seems to be the inevitable outcome. The HOSI proposal seems to hold as many concerns as likely positives.

Budget - Or lack thereof - is an ongoing and tiring issue with the Government commitment to public representation being gradually reduced in the conservation realm. We constantly express our concern that we cannot undertake our legislative requirements and obligations in this area. To no avail. Budgets have stagnated in an economy of rising costs, making even Ministerial expectations impossible to achieve.

Whakapapa & Tūroa Skifields - The ongoing issues with Whakapapa and Tūroa ski areas have taken much of the TTCB time as we attempt to provide public representation. Our Deputy Chair (now Chair) has attended concession hearings, which was a huge commitment. The Concessions have been granted and are now operational, but ongoing problems and issues are being addressed by the Ruapehu Projects Team. The redundant infrastructure removal is a huge undertaking for DOC and the government, and the TTCB are taking a strong interest in how this work both unfolds and is funded.

The Chateau Tongariro and many ancillary buildings continue to sit unused and deteriorating and generate operational costs to conservation as they do so. We still see no positive outcome on this matter. Public 'will' seems to be to 'Save the Chateau' with much talk in the district about doing so, but DOC seems unable to achieve this outcome. There are at least two serious potential leases waiting in the wings - but we hear no reports of progress with their possible negotiations with DOC.

## FUNCTIONS

### 2.4 Board functions under section 6(M) of the Conservation Act 1987

The functions of the Board are:

- 1) To recommend the approval by the Authority of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies, under the relevant enactments.
- 2) To approve conservation management plans and review an amendment of such plans, under the relevant enactments.

- 3) To advise the 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 Authority or the Director-General on any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance.
- 5) To advise the Authority or the Director-General on any other conservation matter relating to any area with the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 6) To liaise with any Fish and Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 7) To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.

## **2.5 Board power under section 6(N) of the Conservation Act 1987**

- 1) Every conservation 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 conservation board may –
  - i. Advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process; and
  - ii. Appoint committees of members and other suitable persons and delegate to them functions and powers.
- 3) 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.

## **2.6 Board functions under section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980**

- 1) to recommend management plans, and the review or amendment of such plans, for parks within the jurisdiction of the Board in accordance with sections 45 to 47.
- 2) to consider and determine priorities for the implementation of management plans for national parks.
- 3) to make recommendations to the Minister for the appointment of honorary rangers under section 40.
- 4) to review and report to the Director-General or the Authority, as appropriate, on the effectiveness of the administration of the general policies for national parks within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 5) to advise the Director-General or the Authority—
  - i. on the interpretation of any management plan for a park; and
  - ii. on any proposal for the addition of land to any national park or the establishment of a new national park; and
  - iii. on any other matter relating to any national park, within the jurisdiction of the Board.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

The Minister of Conservation appoints Board members under section 6(P) of the Conservation Act 1987. The process of appointment ensures that a range of perspectives, life experiences, and knowledge contribute to the advice provided and decisions made by the Board.

Board members are appointed for 3-year terms and may be re-appointed, unless they are appointed in replacement of a prior member's term. There were 12 Board members for the reporting year. Honey Winter continued as the Chairperson, and Clint Green was the Deputy Chairperson in this reporting period.

The number of member positions includes the statutory position held by Te Ariki Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, and were appointed by the Minister of Conservation for the reporting year.

The following table lists the membership of the Board between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025:

Board Member	Area	Term start	Term end
Te Ariki Sir Tumu Te Heuheu	Tūwharetoa	1 September 1998	Life Member
Georgina (Honey) Winter	Raetihi	1 July 2018	30 June 2025
Clint Green	Tūrangi	1 July 2021	30 June 2027
Te Ngaehe Wanikau	Tūrangi (Ngāti Tūwharetoa Representative)	1 July 2019	30 Jun 2025
Karen Grimwade	Ohakune	7 July 2020	30 June 2026
Michael Richardson	Taupō	1 July 2022	30 June 2025
Hannah Rainforth	Whanganui	1 July 2023	30 June 2026
Martin Wikaira	Tūrangi	1 July 2023	30 June 2026
George Potaka	Raetihi	1 July 2024	30 June 2027
Jacqueline Iorangi	Tūrangi	1 July 2024	30 June 2027
Jamie Grant	Taupō	1 July 2024	30 June 2027
Graham Bell / Kuru Ketu (Co-opted Member)	Ngāti Hāua Representative	1 July 2021	30 June 2025

### 3.1 Members profiles

**Te Ariki Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, Statutory Position:** Sir Tumu is Paramount Chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa and is a direct descendant of Horonuku Te Heuheu who in 1887, as Paramount Chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, *tukua* the mountains of Tongariro to the people of New Zealand. He is the Chairperson of the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Lake Taupō Forest Trust, and Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust.

He sits on many national boards as either chair or a member. In the 2004/2005 honours list, he was made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, as New Zealand's delegate to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee he was elected Chairperson in 2006.

**Georgina (Honey) Winter, Chair:** Mrs Winter was Chair of the Taupō Tongariro Conservation Board (TTCB) till June 2025, is committed to enhancing the natural environment through thoughtful conservation strategies that respect the interconnected needs of people and nature. Her approach reflects a steadfast belief in the importance of collaboration and integrated governance to achieve meaningful and lasting outcomes.

Georgina's leadership spans across health, conservation, and community development, highlighting her passion for fostering sustainable and resilient systems

Her leadership reflects her belief that the wellbeing of people, communities, and the environment are deeply interconnected. She is committed to working in ways that leave a positive and lasting legacy for her children, mokopuna, and future generations.

Georgina's work is driven by a vision where conservation, health, and community development are integrated to create thriving ecosystems and empowered communities. Whether in governance, conservation, or health, Georgina approaches each role with dedication and a deep sense of responsibility to the people and places she serves.

**Clint Green, Deputy Chair:** Mr Green (Ngā Wairiki and Ngāti Apa) is a former teacher and tourism operator providing close relationships with the local community. He is familiar with the conservation estate in the boards' rohe, having spent much of his life enjoying outdoor recreation activities in the Tongariro National Park and Kaimanawa Forest Park.

**Te Ngaehe Wanikau, Statutory Appointment & Board Member:** Mr Wanikau is a nominee of Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa. He has experience in environmental policy, planning and analysis, and consultation with local governments and authorities. His particular interest is in providing a cultural perspective to conservation board deliberations. His outdoor recreation interests are fishing and food gathering.

**Karen Grimwade, Board Member:** Ms Grimwade is a researcher/writer and conservation advocate. She has been actively engaged in work to progress management planning in her last four years on the conservation board. She has taken a leadership role in the CMS Review work, which is a high priority for the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board. Karen has previously worked for the Department of Conservation, has a degree in History and a master's degree in Cultural Heritage Management. She currently is on the Project Tongariro executive board, the Te Pae Ao co-governance committee.

**Michael Richardson, Board Member:** Mr Richardson offers a background in geotechnical and structural engineering, with extensive experience in wastewater and stormwater including stability and issue assessments on Public Conservation Land. He is well connected with the local community being involved with a number of conservation groups including Greening Taupō, Kiwis for Kiwi, Forest and Bird, and as a volunteer on many Taupō-based Predator Free Projects. Mr Richardson is also well connected in the Alpine/Skiing community, being involved in the management of the Alpine Club Hut.

**Hannah Rainforth, Statutory Appointment & Board Member:** Mrs Rainforth (Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, Ngāti Hinemanu, Ngāti Hauiti, and Ngāti Rangī) is a nominee of Ngā Waihua o Paerangi Trust, Ngāti Rangī. She works as a Kaupapa Taiao Specialist with Kahu Environmental Ltd and has wide experience in iwi-led research on fish, kōura and kākahi populations, iwi-led ecological restoration plans, iwi and hapū-led freshwater monitoring plans and projects, iwi values in the national policy space, and communication between science and iwi groups.

**Martin Wikaira, Board Member:** Mr Wikaira (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu, and Te Hikitū hapū) is the Divisional Manager of the Māori Policy Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade NZ (MFAT). Mr Wikaira has extensive experience in senior Māori management positions and knowledge of land issues pertinent to iwi, hapū and whānau.

**George Potaka, Board Member:** Mr Potaka (Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, Ngāti Waikarapu) works as a Kaupapa Māori Mental Health & Addictions Kaituhauora for iwi provider Te Puke Karanga Hauora and Vice-Chair of Dream Makers Trust, both based in Raetihi. He believes that by combining the work of the Tongariro/Taupō Community Board with the energy and creativity of young people, the region can thrive sustainably for years to come.

George aims to ensure that the voices of residents are heard, and that initiatives reflect the values and aspirations of the Tongariro/Taupō region and is also committed to fostering a culture of transparency and inclusivity.

**Jacqueline Iorangi, Board Member:** Mrs Iorangi (Ngāti Tūwharetoa) was raised in the bush in National Park, she has an interest in conservation and sustainable kai gathering. Her professional background is in educational programme development, social services, project management, cultural and strategic vision, and providing administration and governance servicing for Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Jacqueline contributes to and advocates for indigenous people's rights in conservation and the environment abroad.

**Jamie Grant, Statutory Appointment & Board Member:** Mr Grant (Uenuku, Tamakana, Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Tama) is a nominee of Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, he is a trustee for Te Mano o Te Whenua Trust and the environmental Pou for Uenuku Charitable Trust. As Lake Taupō Harbourmaster, he ensures the well-being, maintenance, and public safety of Taupō Moana, working with the Tūwharetoa Trust Board and local hapū. Jamie's expertise includes senior marine engineering, project management, legislation compliance, and operational planning.

**Graham Bell, Co-Opted Member, Ngāti Hāua Trust:** Graham (Ngāti Hāua) has a background in law, attending Sacramento State University (1986) and Waikato University (1991) being admitted to the BAR in 1996. He is the chairperson of whānau land under a Ngā Whenua Rāhui covenant since 2001 as well as being a Whanganui River Māori Trust Board Trustee for 14 years working on the Whanganui Awa Claim, which has made the awa a legal entity in its own right. Graham also has experience working for the Department as a Field Centre Manager in Taumarunui for 3 years.

Graham retired in 2021 after serving 20 years working with Te Puni Kokiri/Ministry of Māori Development. He is pleased to represent Ngāti Hāua iwi on the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board and is presently attending as a co-opted member. Graham enjoys mountain & road bike riding, spending time on the whānau land in Tangarakau, and spending time with whānau & friends.

## 4. MEETINGS AND FIELDTRIPS

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The Board held six meetings during the reporting period. Venues for the meetings vary each year to ensure a wide coverage and enable members of the public in the district to attend meetings and access the Board.

Meeting date	Location/Venue
22 August 2024	National Park, Ruapehu
17 October 2024	Taupō, DOC Office
12 December 2024	Ohakune, Council Chambers
23 January 2025	Tūrangi, DOC Office
13 March 2025	Ohakune, Te Pae Tata
8 May 2025	Tūrangi, DOC Office

### 4.1 Agendas

The Board hosted and engaged with external speakers at its meetings, including:

- 12 Dec 24 - Tim Maule (Project Mgr) & Candace Graham (Volunteer Coordinator), SIKA Foundation, to discuss the Herds of Significant Interest Project proposal.
- 12 Dec 24 - Willy Bryan, Carers of the Tongariro Forest, to discuss the CMS.

Regional and District staff attend all board meetings, including the Regional Director Operations, Statutory Manager and Operations Managers. In addition, other Department personnel attended and presented on a range of topics, including:

- Pure Tūroa Concession Process
- Future Visitors Network
- Te Mana o Te Taiao Implementation Plan
- Tongariro Kiwi Sanctuary
- Kaimanawa Horse Operation
- SIKA Foundation, HOSI Proposal
- Integrated Regional Plans
- Mt Ruapehu risk management
- Redundant infrastructure project
- Whakaipo Bay project
- Regulatory modernisation work programme
- Herds of Significant Interest process
- The establishment of Ruapehu Projects
- Whakapapa Holdings Ltd concession application
- DOC Regulatory Modernisation Programme
- DOC change process and the International Visitors and Tourism Levy
- CMS and funding

- Fast Track Approvals Bill
- Introduction to the next Operations Manager for Tongariro
- Jobs for Nature
- Bio Invest
- Tongariro Alpine Crossing Sustainability Project
- Whakapapa Ski field concession decision
- Conservation Board boundaries proposal to combine Whanganui Tongariro Taupō Board
- Ditch Track and Mangatepopo Hut

The agendas and minutes from all Board meetings can be found on the Board's webpage.

#### 4.2 Field trips and workshops

Field trips are an excellent opportunity for Board members to become more aware of conservation issues within their region. Workshops offer the Board dedicated time and a space to deeply engage with critical topics that demand focused attention.

- 18 Oct 24 - The Board hosted the NZCA and conducted a field trip of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, around Whakapapa Village and the redundant infrastructure project (Chateau Tongariro and Ancillary Buildings).
- 22 Jan 25 - The Board held a workshop to discuss the proposed changes to conservation law and the 2 discussion documents, modernising conservation land management and exploring access charging.
- 28 Mar 25 - The Board held an online workshop to discuss the 5-Year Integrated Plans and special places', Whakapapa Holding Limited Concession Application and Te Ara Mangawhero Concession Application. Feedback from the Board was provided to the Department towards both concession applications.
- 10 Jun 25 - The Board held a workshop to discuss the discussion documents, Implementing New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy 2025-2030 and Predator Free 2050 strategy review and the position of the Board regarding readiness testing towards progressing the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Management Strategy. The Board made a submission on both decision documents.

### 4.3 Members' Attendance 2024/25

Board Member	Meetings (total 6)	Fieldtrips/workshops (total 4)
Te Ariki Sir Tumu Te Heuheu	0	0
Georgina (Honey) Winter	6	3
Clint Green	5	2
Te Ngaehe Wanikau	4	0
Michael Richardson	6	4
Karen Grimwade	6	4
Hannah Rainforth	4	2
Martin Wikaira	5	2
George Potaka	3	0
Jacqueline Iorangi	3	1
Jamie Grant	3	1
Graham Bell / Kuru Ketu	2	1

## 5. MAHI

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### 5.1 Board Committees

The Conservation Act 1987 enables the Board to establish committees to carry out functions or tasks delegated by the Board. Committees that were active during the reporting period, and members involved in those committees included:

#### CMS Subcommittee:

Appointed members - Karen Grimwade and Honey Winter

The purpose of the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board CMS Subcommittee is to advise the Department on conservation management processes including CMS review, CMS Monitoring, NMP, FPMP and business planning as required by the Conservation Act 1987. This function cannot be carried out as legislated for in the Conservation Act, as the CMS, NPMP and FPMP are so out of date that they are no longer functioning as intended. Although they are a precious information resource and are still highly valued as archival documents.

Honey's tenure on the Conservation Board is about to expire, and Karen has less than one year to go. Several years of experience and commitment to the CMS is soon to end, and we will be passing the baton to other board members. The TTCB would like to commend the time and effort these members have committed to this work. The

dedication to producing an up-to-date, highly workable and forward-looking document will be a legacy.

### **Te Pae Ao Joint Committee:**

Appointed members - Karen Grimwade and Honey Winter

Te Pae Ao is a joint committee established by the Ngāti Rangī Claims Settlement Act 2019 to administer 9 Crown-owned reserve sites in the rohe of Ngāti Rangī.

Te Pae Ao has four members who are appointed for a term of three years from 28 September 2023, two members appointed by Te Tōtarahoe o Paerangi and two members appointed by the Director-General of Conservation. During their appointed term, Te Pae Ao are responsible for the preparation of the Te Pae Ao reserve management plan and operational management plan, the granting of authorisations for activities on the reserve sites, and the administration of the beds of the Rotokura lakes (where relevant).

The planners have been appointed (June 2025) and are proceeding with the mahi. Several wānanga have been held (and attended by Karen and Honey).

## **5.2 Special events**

- Oct 24 – Hosted the NZ Conservation Authority
- Feb 25 – Sat on the Whakapapa Holdings Ltd Concession Hearing Panel
- Feb 25 - Attendance of submission hearings for WHL
- Feb 25 - Dave Lumley's funeral
- Mar 25 – Fast Track Approvals Bill Workshops
- Jun 25 – Opening of Te Hangaruru

## **6. STATUTORY ACTIVITY**

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### **6.1 Annual Work Plan**

For the 2024-25 year, the Minister set four clear priorities to enhance the care and protection of Aotearoa New Zealand's natural environment and historic and cultural heritage. Of these priorities the Boards focus was to *'Strengthen relationships with Iwi/hapū for better conservation outcomes. We will work closer with Iwi/hapū and others to meet our Tiriti o Waitangi - Treaty of Waitangi settlement commitments and achieve shared goals for conservation and kaitiakitanga.'*

The priority of the TTCB has been to continue the development of our working relationship with mana whenua, including through exploring and understanding the new settlement instruments across the rohe.

#### **Government and ministerial priorities**

The TTCB had a presentation on the proposed changes to the implementation of the Te Mana o te Taiao – the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy. Many of the TTCB board members had concerns about the proposed changes to prioritising species management. This seems to be a big step towards centralization of decision making – not localization.

The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board worked hard to achieve its own priorities and made good progress. The Minister's expectations were addressed where possible and where funded.

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

### **The Treaty/Te Tiriti**

TTCB have sought to consider the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti and Section 4 of the Act in all our work.

### **Lower Carbon Conservation Model**

We cannot contribute to this work as we are not resourced to do so in any meaningful way. Although we all consider 'costs' with travel and accommodation.

### **Understanding Ungulates**

We are well aware of the catastrophic problems being caused by ungulates – Kaimanawa Forest Park being a particular concern to us.

### **Whānau, Hapū, Iwi & Mana whenua**

We are represented by four of the iwi of our rohe on the TTCB and so whānau, hapū, iwi views are well represented and always received with genuine interest and acted upon when possible, within the TTCB remit.

## **6.2 Tongariro Taupō Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)**

The TTCB has been ready to proceed with work on our CMS for some time. We only lack resourcing. We have explored options for bypassing DOC and proceeding with our own planner via settlement funds, but this was halted by DOC Head Office (see letter dated 20 Nov 24 attached to this report).

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring the CMS is somewhat meaningless, as we have stated over and over again, the CMS is so out of date, and we have no access (despite requests) to planner assistance. We continually state that the planning system would work - if DOC would resource and support it adequately. Constant 'modernising' and 'simplifying' seems to be a strategy to waste time and money – that time and money could be spent more positively to support the current system, which is still a legislative requirement.

### **Legislation and Planning Reviews**

The TTCB tries to stay abreast of the stream of proposed and possible legislation changes and planning reviews. We submit on all that relates to conservation. This activity takes a lot of time and is not funded by the Department. We seek, as always, to represent our communities and iwi. Refer to the list of submissions in section 7.3 of this report.

## **6.3 Tongariro National Park - National Park Management Plan (NPMP)**

As stated in our last report, the Tongariro National Park Management Plan (NPMP) remains out of date. Another year goes by with no progress. In a similar situation to our CMS, it is a source of continuing frustration to the TTCB. The outcome is that DOC staff and interested members of the public must operate with an outdated guiding document. This situation is particularly frustrating in view of the recent challenges faced in the region, where current planning to guide DOC staff and the public would have been a huge advantage.

## **7. ADVICE AND ADVOCACY**

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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 other groups and agencies:

## 7.1 Board and Authority liaisons

The Board holds a liaison relationship with neighbouring conservation boards. Liaison roles for the reporting year were held by:

- Karen Grimwade - Liaison Whanganui Taranaki Conservation Board
- Michael Richardson - Liaison to Waikato Conservation Board
- Clint Green - Liaison Hawkes Bay Conservation Board
- Hannah Rainforth - Liaison Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

The Authority has a liaison member with the Board to facilitate communication. The Authority liaison attends Board meetings and reports to the full Authority on matters raised. Tak Mutu was the Authority's liaison for the reporting year.

## 7.2 Advice to the Department

The Board provided advice to the Department on the following issues:

- Future Visitors Network
- Te Mana o Te Taiao Implementation Plan
- Herds of Special Interest Proposal
- Access charging and modernising conservation land management
- Ruapehu redundant infrastructure project
- Fast Track Approvals bill
- Bio Invest
- Integrated Regional Plans
- Tongariro Alpine Crossing Sustainability Project Update
- Mangatepopo Track and Hut
- Implementing New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy 2025-2030
- Predator Free 2050 strategy review
- Various concession applications

## 7.3 Submissions

The Board advocated its interests during the reporting period through several submissions, available to read on its webpage:

- Feb 25 - TTCB Submission on Modernising Conservation Planning/Proposal to Charge for Access
- Jun 25 - 2025- 2030 National Predator Free Strategy
- Jun 25 - Implementation Plan for Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy and Predator Free Strategy.

Throughout the reporting period, the Board issued the following letters:

- Sep 24 - Letter to the Director Operations regarding the budget allocation for the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Management Strategy.
- Jan 25 - Letter to Minister Potaka regarding site-specific funding for Whakaipo Bay Taupō

- Jan 25 - Letter the Department of Conservation providing feedback towards the Te Ara Mangawhero Phase 2 Concession Application
- Apr 25 - Advice regarding the Whakapapa Holdings Ltd Concession Application

#### 7.4 Community advocacy and involvement

The Board believes that engaging with members of the public is very important. Meetings were held in different parts of the Tongariro Taupō region and opportunities for the public to attend Board meetings were advertised.

Members of the public attended the Public Forum at several of the year's meetings and a range of issues were raised. The Board appreciated their input and efforts made to attend the meetings and responded by letter with a response to questions asked or concerns raised.

Public forum issues raised were:

Dec 25 - Willy Bryan - Carers of the Tongariro Forest

- Requested a review and update of the Tongariro Taupō CMS
- Consider a review of the Tongariro Forest Plan, specifically the reclassification of the Tongariro Forest, which is currently categorised as stewardship land.
- Requested permission to audit the huts built illegally in the Tongariro Forest to understand the status of the huts.

#### 7.5 Community visibility

The Board maintains a presence on the Department's website and via the quarterly Conservation Board Newsletter. Members attended community events when considered important. It should be noted that Board community engagement is not funded.

#### 7.6 Iwi liaison and advocacy

There are representatives of all four iwi with interests in the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board rohe on the Board, and each board meeting offers the opportunity for the iwi representatives to update their fellow members on current topics of interest or areas of concern.

## 8. FEES AND ALLOWANCES

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Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. The Chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$330, and other Authority members receive a daily meeting fee of \$250.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Board would like to acknowledge the leadership shown and contribution of our departing member and chair, Honey (Georgina) Winter. Honey's style of leadership is unique, being both personable and warm, whilst strong and no-nonsense! She brought to the table a huge depth of knowledge, combining both Te Ao Māori and overall knowledge of our rohe to keep the Board on track and cohesive.

The Board wishes to record the great support it has had from the DOC team in the Tongariro Taupō region, led by Damian Coutts, the Regional Operations Director. Alongside him, always going the extra step has been Karen Rainbow, the Regional

Statutory Manager, and Board Support Officer Louisa Meredith. Operations Managers, Dave Conley and Libby O'Brien and Ruapehu Projects Team Lead George Taylor have been regular attendees at meetings, and their advice is much appreciated. We also acknowledge Dave Lumley for his years of service (50 years), many of them advising and assisting the Conservation Board.

We have appreciated the involvement of Tak Mutu, our liaison member from the New Zealand Conservation Authority, who has been a regular participant in our meetings and the regular participation of Jill Sheehy (Taranaki Whanganui CB Liaison)

Although we may seem less than pleased with some of the outcomes of our main reason to exist via the Conservation Act, we do not lay the blame at the door of local staff; they all work hard to achieve what they can for conservation, given the circumstances and current budgetary environment. Staff are always professional and hugely supportive of us as a Board, and we take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed to the Board over the past year. We acknowledge the challenges faced by many.

## Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board Work Programme

1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

### Work Programme overview

#	Task	Action	Progress
1	Te Tiriti Relationship with Iwi	<p>Develop and enhance relations with our four main Iwi.</p> <p>Continue the development of the working relationship with mana whenua, including by way of exploring and understanding the new settlement instruments across the rohe.</p>	<p>TTCB continues to build on already established relationships and communication with iwi.</p> <p>All four main iwi in the rohe are represented on the TTCB and thus communication channels are strong. All iwi support the need to progress the CMS and other planning documents</p>
2	Conservation Management Strategy	<p>Provide advice to the Department, the NZCA and the Minister of Conservation on the implementation of a new and updated Conservation Management Strategy. Continue to seek funding and resources from the Department to fulfil our statutory role as guardians of the CMS. This has proved impossible in recent time – we seek a way forward.</p> <p>The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board is working to ensure the continuation of the four main iwi within the rohe are sitting around the Conservation Board table. Also, The Board is working with iwi representatives on the Board, and local iwi on the principles required to undertake a review of a new CMS to replace our outdated one.</p>	<p>The TTCB continue to seek a way forward to progress our CMS and other planning documents – all of which are over a decade out of date. We are constantly frustrated in this process. We continue to log CMS issues and options and stay in touch with our proposed planner.</p> <p>Our previous Chair, Honey Winter, took a proposal to the Chairs Conference, supported by Tak Mutu of NZCA, saying that we are ‘ready to go’ in terms of iwi support and board intention, that we are enabled to make a start. The only update we have had on that is that the TTCB will be ‘Readiness Tested’ for the CMS proceeding.</p>

		<p>To continue to work with the Catalyst Group on bringing together all parties who are working on how to progress our CMS. The aim is to formulate shared principles and values to make a start.</p> <p>In consultation with Iwi partners begin reviewing some key issues and new policy requirements or gaps in advance of beginning the formal review of the CMS.</p> <p>Establish the foundations of the CMS from the above towards the creation of a current and fit for purpose CMS</p>	<p>In summary, a similar comment to last year, much effort has been made, but no progress as yet. We are hopeful of a go ahead.</p>
3	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<p>Provide an overview and advice to the Department on the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Support the community and the Department where necessary in conversations about predator control actions. Monitor management of deer populations by the Department and hunter groups.</p> <p>Understand further the pressures and impacts of ungulates throughout the Tongariro-Taupō rohe as required by the Minister of Conservation's letter of expectation. We plan to do this via regular contact with the community, including the Sika Foundation and a field trip to see the worst of the damage by ungulates in place – the Kaimanawa Forest Park.</p>	<p>The TTCB members, individually and collectively, constantly take an active interest in the state of biodiversity both locally and nationally. Good news is scarce.</p> <p>We were presented with a new scheme to implement the Te Mana o Te Taiao/Biodiversity Strategy, but we had concerns about the prioritisation of species being undertaken at a national level, rather than local.</p> <p>It should be noted that Biodiversity mahi is over and above Board meetings and is not funded by the Department in the coming year.</p>
4	<b>Visitor and tourist management and facilities</b>	<p>Overview of the impact of visitors on the conservation land and natural taonga within the Board's rohe and the provision, use and maintenance of the facilities they need.</p> <p>Take advantage of the reset in visitor numbers as a result of Covid-19 and the closure of borders to promote new policies which allow enjoyment of national park/world heritage area by the community while controlling impact.</p>	<p>The TTCB continue to receive updates on the proposed booking system for the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Improvements are being undertaken to reshape the sometimes overcrowded carparks at the track ends, and how they operate. We await with interest data on how these actions have improved overuse on the TAC.</p>

		<p>This is mainly being achieved by consulting with the Department and other stakeholders in working towards a cap on the number of visitors using the Tongariro Alpine Crossing.</p> <p>It should be noted that extra advocacy in this mahi is not funded by the Department. Also that the cap on the Visitor Numbers on the TAC has been put on hold due to the situation with Mt Ruapehu.</p>	<p>Other work on the post-covid 'reset' of the visitor experience has yet to emerge.</p>
5	<p><b>Liaison roles – other boards, statutory relationships; Fish &amp; Game etc.</b></p>	<p>Appoint Board Members to Liaison roles, including neighbouring boards and encourage regular contact.</p> <p>Invite representative from other boards to attend TTCB meetings.</p> <p>Participate in conservation board chair hui.</p> <p>The Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board notes how vitally important liaison with iwi, community, stakeholders and other Conservation Boards is. But it must be noted that this mahi is not funded nor enabled by the Department.</p>	<p>Liaison with Neighbouring Conservation Boards</p> <p>Despite this being an expectation in the Minister's last Letter of Expectation, due to funding cuts, funding of 'in-person' attendance of neighbouring board meetings is no longer funded. It is fair to say that this is a demotivator to attend meetings.</p> <p>Despite this, we have appointed liaisons who attend via Teams when able to</p> <p><b>Chair Hui</b></p> <p>Our Chair attended the last Chair Conference.</p> <p><b>Liaison with our communities</b></p> <p>Our Board notes how important liaison with iwi, hapū, whānau and local communities is. It must be noted that this mahi is not funded nor enabled by the Department. Board members do attend events, such as the opening of the Te Hangaruru Bike Track, but are not paid</p>
6	<p><b>Working with the Department</b></p>	<p>Provide advice to the Department on any Concessions or issues they require consideration from the Board.</p>	<p>The TTCB provides advice and opinions when sought by the Department and raises community concerns as they relate to conservation and Department activities.</p>

		<p>Advocate on behalf of the community and the Department where necessary for anything that enables the Department to fulfil their roles and obligations in the Tongariro Taupō region.</p> <p>Advocate for the environment locally and nationally. The TTCB Board members will all aim to work to advocate for the environment and conservation locally and nationally. It must be noted that this mahi is not funded by the Department which limits what work can realistically be undertaken by the TTCB.</p> <p>Strengthen operational/governance relationships through a culture change in the Department, with a greater emphasis on the implementation of statutory planning documents.</p>	<p>The Department do not involve TTCB in operational matters but provides operational updates and information for bi-monthly board meetings.</p> <p>As noted over the last few years; the TTCB continues to seek the implementation of up-to-date statutory planning documents, the Department does not enable nor fund this function. This is frustrating as it is a key legislatively required function.</p> <p>The TTCB notes that our local DOC staff are unfailingly helpful and work as best they can in the circumstances of constant resourcing/budget. The reduction in Conservation budgets is of concern to us for our own work and that of the dedicated local staff.</p>
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This report is presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority as required by the Conservation Act 1987 and distributed to interested parties. Members of the public are welcome to attend conservation board meetings.

If you would like more information on the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board please see the website [www.conservationboards.org.nz](http://www.conservationboards.org.nz) or contact the Board Support Officer for Central North Island, at the Department of Conservation via e-mail [lmeredith@doc.govt.nz](mailto:lmeredith@doc.govt.nz).

