

Waikato Conservation Board Annual Report 2023 - 2024



Joint hui: Auckland and Waikato Conservation Board, 15 March 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

I orea te tuatara ka puta ki waho
A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions

Tena koutou

The 2023 - 2024 year for the Waikato Conservation Board (the Board) has been a busy year complicated by three changes to the Chair role, firstly with the loss of Alan Cockle having completed three terms the last two as Chairperson. The role then changed again twice until my appointment (Rob Chappell) in March 2024.

The Board Support Officer position was very capably filled by Tanya Hadfield in 2023 as Adrienne Corfe moved on from the role.

Standing alongside Tanya has been our replacement Statutory Manager for Michelle Lewis, Ritesh Chandra. As a result, the role of supporting the Board has been in very capable hands and our Board has flourished.

When I joined the Board in 2020 it seemed a very stable group who had melded into a great Whanau working closely together, however once again one cannot become complacent and in this last year we have lost Fiona Gower, Wayne Jensen, Clare St Pierre, and in the last months, Judge Gary Collins, Ngawai Smith and Dr Cadence Kaumoana.

The Board is appreciative of the efforts made by the Waikato Department of Conservation staff, especially Tinaka Mearns Director for HWT for her regular support for the Board and other Departmental staff as we travel in their rohe.

Despite all these changes the Board has still managed to meet on a two/three-month cycle.

As Chair, I am grateful to my colleagues Deputy Chair Charlotte Muggeridge and our team Flora Bartholomew, Gaylene Roberts, and Shelley Langton-Myers for keeping me grounded and making some sense.

We have been blessed with not losing our last Chairperson Alan Cockle, but rather being approved to co-opt Alan on for support and advice after so many changes. I am extremely grateful for the support Alan has given in this role. Regretfully this all changes as the co-opted positions concludes in 2024.

Board Field trips have been limited this year with just a visit to the Maungatautari Fenced Sanctuary, where Board members were hosted on a guided walk through the regenerating forest amid the wonderful sound of the bird song of Aotearoa, Tuis, Bellbirds, North Island Tiki (Saddleback), Kokako and Piwakawaka.

The team arrived back in the Visitor Centre to meet first hand one of the Kakapo released into the Sanctuary. Sadly, this one was caged and headed back to the Island from where it came, as he kept escaping to the neighbouring farmland. A very special experience for the Board though.

A second joint Auckland / Waikato Board overnight visit to a local Marae had to be abandoned at the last minute despite the best preparation by our Board Support Officer, Tanya Hadfield, and both Boards opted to undertake a joint hui at DOC's Hamilton Office instead.

The Board has been involved in producing a number of submissions both to the Government's (Fast-Track Bill and Tourist Visitor Levy) and the Waikato Regional Council (Regional Coastal Plan review and the Long-Term Plan review).

The coming summer will see some movement forward on the access to the iconic tourist venue Cathedral Cove destroyed during Cyclone Gabrelle, with the very welcome Ministers announcement that funding has been made available to start the reinstatement of the track.

Rob Chappell

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Rob Chappell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Chairperson
Waikato Conservation Board

2. Introduction

Section 6(0) of the Conservation Act requires Conservation Boards to provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) with an annual report as soon as practical after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement the Waikato Conservation 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:

Provide strategic, independent advice to the Regional Operations Director/s and NZCA via their Liaison person for conservation outcomes within the Board's boundary

Liaise with regional Fish and Game Council on matters within the Board's boundary

Liaise with Review and amend Conservation Management Strategies, and recommend these to the NZCA for approval

Review, amend, and approve Conservation Management Plans

In total, New Zealand has 15 Conservation Boards working across the regions.

Support for the Board is provided by Tinaka Mearns, DOC Director Regional Operations, Hauraki, Waikato, Taranaki (HWT).

3. Board boundary

The Waikato Conservation Board's boundary (area of jurisdiction) extends from the west coast of the North Island between Port Waikato and Mokau, across to the western edge of Lake Taupo and north to the Coromandel Peninsula. It is characterised by a variety of landscapes, resulting from a history of uplifting, sea level change, volcanism and the influence of major river systems, such as the Waikato River.

Stand-out features of the Waikato include the west coast harbours - Kawhia, Aotea and Raglan; spectacular coastal cliffs at Moeatoa and Te Toto Gorge, Waitomo karst system; volcanic cones such as Pirongia and Karioi, and the exposed volcanic plugs (remnants of older volcanoes) on the Coromandel range; the lakes and wetlands of the Waikato and Hauraki plains; and rugged coastline, including the many islands off the Coromandel Peninsula.

The range of landscapes, altitude and east-to-west contrast provides for a great diversity of ecosystems, including the southern limit for some species, such as kauri, and northern limit of others, such as subalpine vegetation found at its northern-most limit on Moehau. Historically rare ecosystems, such as Kopuatai Peat Dome and Waitomo karst, are internationally important. Some ecosystems are well represented, such as the tall podocarp-broadleaf forests of Pureora (including the largely intact forest at Waipapa), whereas other once widespread ecosystems, such as lowland kahikatea forest, are now threatened. These ecosystems in turn provide habitat for a wide diversity of native flora and fauna.

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.

The Board's area of responsibility is nearly 270,000 ha of Public Conservation land (12% of the total area 2,250,000 hectares). The land is described in more than 500 separate parcels for various purposes, including forests, wetlands, caves, marine reserves, offshore islands, historic sites, wildlife protection, and recreational areas.

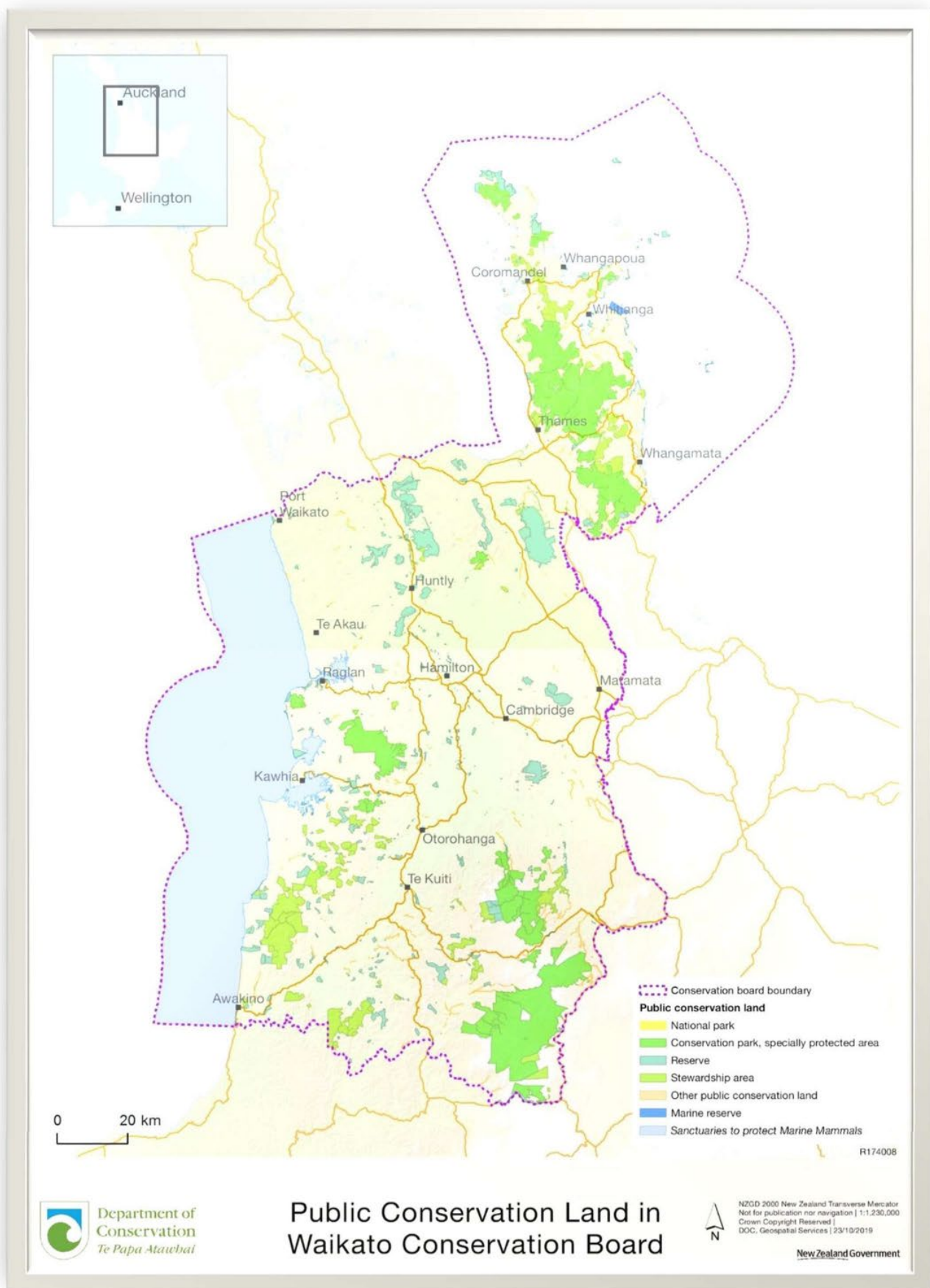


Figure 1: Waikato Conservation Board Jurisdiction

Public Conservation Land (hectares by legislative section)

- Recreation Reserve - 6,328.76 *ha*
- Historic Reserve - 275.66 *ha*
- Scenic Reserve (sec 19 1a) - 27,286.03 *ha*
- Conservation Park - 162,993.98 *ha*
- Nature Reserve - 446.10 *ha*
- Ecological Area - 42,407.85 *ha*
- Scientific Reserve - 1,776.93 *ha*
- Government Purpose Reserve - 21,746.03 *ha*
- Sanctuary Area - 494.78 *ha*
- Local Purpose Reserve - 5,822.42 *ha*
- Moveable Marginal Strip - 83.35 *ha*
- Fixed Marginal Strip - 2,725.91 *ha*
- Stewardship Area - 62,670.67 *ha*
- Marine Reserve - 878.93 *ha*
- Sanctuaries to protect Marine Mammals - 407,153.86 *ha*

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

- Important Māori and European historic resources
- Three internationally significant wetlands (Ramsar Convention)
Whangamarino Wetland, Kopuatai Peat Dome and the Firth of Thames/Tikapa Moana



DOC image - Whangamarino

- Coastline and estuarine areas
(Firth of Thames, Waikato River Delta, Raglan Harbour (Whaingaroa), Aotea Kawhia, Whitianga, Tairua and Whangamata Harbours)



DOC image - Kawhia

- Large tracts of virgin forest
(Manaia Kauri Sanctuary, Moehau, Waihaha and Waipapa)
- Terrestrial forests associated with the Hakarimata and Hapuakohe Ranges, the volcanic Cones of Maungatautari, Kakepuku, Pirongia and Karioi and the karst landforms of Te Kami
- Sites of significant regional and national tourism
(Waitomo, Cathedral Cove and Pureora Timber Trail)



DOC image – Pureora Forest park

- Reptile and seabird communities on offshore islands (Tūturiwhatu/ NZ Dotterel, Ngutuparore/Wrybill)
- Rare and endangered species (Kōkakā, Mahoenui Giant Wētā, Whitebait, Māui Dolphin, Coromandel Brown Kiwi, Archey's and Hochstetter's Frog)



DOC image – Māui Dolphin

4 Board functions

4.1. Board membership

There were 10 Board members for the reporting year appointed by the Minister of Conservation. Wayne Jensen was elected as Chairperson until his resignation in January and Rob Chappell was elected Chairperson and Charlotte Muggeridge was elected Deputy Chairperson.

The following table lists the membership of the 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
Rob Chappell	Coromandel	07/07/2020	30/06/2026
Charlotte Muggeridge	Hamilton	01/07/2021	30/06/2024
Flora Bartholomew	Te Kuiti	01/07/2019	30/06/2025
Gaylene Roberts	Hamilton	01/07/2019	30/06/2025
Dr Cadance Kaumoana	Pirongia	01/07/2023	30/06/2026
Clare St Pierre	Pirongia	01/11/2018	30/06/2024
Dr Shelley Langton-Myers	Pokeno	01/07/2021	30/06/2025
Ngawai Smith	Hamilton	01/07/2021	30/06/2024
Wayne Jensen	Waitomo	01/07/2021	22/01/2024
Judge Garry Collin	Hamilton	17/08/2023	30/06/2026

4.2. Members profiles

Rob Chappell of Coromandel

Appointment term: 7 July 2020 to 30 June 2026

Robin brings strong nature conservation, marine science, and governance skills to the Board. He is a former DOC employee and spent five years working on the Chatham Islands. Mr Chappell provides good support to the Board Chair in the governance space. He also has a good understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Charlotte Muggeridge of Hamilton

Appointment term: 2 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Charlotte is a resource management lawyer. She has extensive experience in property law and governance, having sat on a number of environmental and community boards at local, regional, and international levels. In 2019, she was awarded the Zonta's Women of Achievement Award.

Flora Bartholomew of Te Kuiti

Appointment Term: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2025

Flora is a self-employed dairy farmer and holds a Certificate in Biology, a Bachelor in Horticultural Science, and a Diploma in Business Management. She has five QEII blocks on her property and is a member of Rural Women NZ, Federated Farmers and Dairy Women's Network. She has a Certificate in Sustainable Nutrient Management in NZ Agriculture from Massey University.

Gaylene Roberts of Hamilton

Appointment term: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2025

Gaylene (Ngāti Raukawa, Waikato Tainui) was nominated by the head of Kahui Ariki. She is on the Board in terms of the Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1995. She has strong governance experience and is currently a chairperson and member on several boards and trusts, such as the Raukawa Settlement Trust, Waipa District Council Iwi Consultative Committee.

Dr Cadence Kaumoana of Pirongia

Appointment term: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026

Dr Cadence Kaumoana (Waikato-Maniapoto, Apakura, Te Atiawa) is the Chief Executive for the Public Health Association of New Zealand and has worked in governance for over 15 years. She has completed IOD Directors training and has appointments on Environmental, Education, Māori Development and Crown entity Boards, Cadence brings a range of diverse and specialised skills to the Waikato Conservation Board.

Cadence is an accredited RMA Commissioner and amongst other Chair roles, is Chair of a large whānau Trust overseeing several large land blocks in the Waikato-Maniapoto area. She leads a number of Taiao events that support the health and wellbeing of the environment using Kaupapa Māori practises and approaches.

Clare St Pierre of Waikato

Appointment term: 1 November 2018 to 30 June 2024

Clare lives in Pirongia Village, close to where she grew up, and is an elected Councillor for Waipa District Council. She is a Resource Management Hearings Commissioner, a former chair of Waipa District Council's Audit and Risk Committee, and a member of Local Government New Zealand's National Climate Change Advisory Panel. She has a Bachelor of Business Studies (First Class Honours) majoring in management with post-graduate specialisation in Advanced Environmental Management and Sustainability. She is the founding chairperson of Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society, which has won multiple awards including the 2018 Biosecurity Community Award, and the 2017 Green Ribbon Award for biodiversity protection for their kōkako work. She has over 20 years' experience leading successful community-based environmental action and enjoys a good working relationship with Ngati Apakura and Ngati Rereahu. Her interests include gardening, tree crops, cycling and creative pursuits.

Dr Shelley Langton-Myers of Pokeno

Appointment term: 2 July 2021 to 30 June 2025

Shelley is an Ecologist, Entomologist, and Lecturer for the EcoQuest Education Foundation Te Rarangahau Taiao. She brings a conservation science background to the Board, and is well versed in conservation issues, policy, and eco-tourism.

Ngāwai Smith of Hamilton

Appointment term: 2 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Ngawai is of Te Roroa and Ngāti Hine descent. She is a Maori communications specialist and currently works at the Ministry of Education as a Senior Regional Engagement Advisor. She has experience developing, engaging, and maintaining relationships with Maori stakeholders, and personal academic networks in Mātauranga Māori.

Wayne Jensen of Waitomo

Appointment term: 2 July 2021 to 30 June 2024

Wayne is of Maniapoto descent and is a farmer and Manager for Ngāti Maniapoto Marae Pact Trust. He holds a post-graduate Diploma in Maori and Business Management and was previously an RMA commissioner.

Judge Garry Collin of Hamilton

Appointment term: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026

Judge Collin presides as a District Court Judge on the Hamilton District Court. His appointment would bring extensive governance, judicial and community expertise to support the Board's work.

4.3 Board meetings

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

Table 2: Board meetings and location

Board meeting date	Meeting location and venue
29 September 2023	DOC Hauraki Office, 3/366 Ngati Maru Highway, Thames
17 November 2023	DOC Hamilton Office, 73 Rostrevor Street, Hamilton
15 March 2024	DOC Hamilton Office, 73 Rostrevor Street, Hamilton
14 June 2024	DOC Te Kuiti Office, 78 Taupiri Street, Te Kuiti

4.4 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.

Table 3: Board Member attendance

Board member	Board meetings	Field Trips
Flora Bartholomew	4 / 4	1/1
Rob Chappell	4 / 4	1/1
Wayne Jensen	3 / 4	1/1
Shelley Langton-Myers	3 / 4	1/1
Charlotte Muggeridge	3 / 4	1/1
Clare St Pierre	4 / 4	1/1
Gaylene Roberts	2 / 4	1/1
Ngāwai Smith	4 / 4	1/1
Cadence Kaumoana	2 / 4	1/1
Garry Collin	4 / 4	1/1

4.5 Field trips

Field trips are an excellent opportunity for Board members to become more aware of conservation issues within their region and to meet with community members undertaking conservation activities.

Field Trip	Field trip destination
17 November 2023	Maungatautari Sanctuary

The Board visited Maungatautari Sanctuary, greeted by the Sanctaury's staff and management. The Board spent time to understand the organisation's work and toured the regenerating forest amongst the wildlife with a biodiversity ranger.



The Board listening to the Sanctuary's work

4.5 Training for members

During February 2024, the Board held a workshop to discuss the Annual work plan and Board succession planning, held at DOC's Waikato District office.

4.6 Special Events

During March 2024, the Board held a joint Boards hui with Auckland Conservation Board at DOC's Kirikiriroa/Hamilton office. Board members jointly discussed the Hauraki Gulf Bill and participated in presentations from the Hauraki Gulf Forum and the Northern Seabird Trust.

4.7 DOC involvement in Board Meetings

DOC staff who regularly attended meetings include:

Tinaka Mearns – Director Regional Operations, HWT

Tanya Hadfield – Board Support Officer, HWT

Ritesh Chandra – Statutory Manager, HWT

4.8 Annual Work Plan 2023-2024

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the Board's Annual Work Plan.

Waikato Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

The Board continues to monitor the milestones in the Waikato CMS with the Director of Regional Operations and Operation Managers attending meetings to provide updates on key operational matters that have occurred in the rohe.

Submissions

The Board made submissions on Waikato Regional Council's Regional Coastal Plan review and Long-Term Plan review, advocating for conservation and seeking better funding support.

The Board also made submissions to the Government's Fast-Track Bill and the International Visitor Levy review.

5 Liaison, advocacy and communication

The Waikato Conservation Board maintains contact with neighbouring Conservation Boards through the exchange of agendas, meeting papers and the attendance of appointed liaisons to neighbouring Board meetings.

Board members have attended neighbouring Conservation Board meetings held in Taranaki and liaisons have attended Waikato Conservation Board meetings from the Auckland, Tongariro Taupō and Bay of Plenty.

5.1 Advocacy

Board members have the opportunity for liaising with other groups, as needed.

5.2 New Zealand Conservation Authority Liaison

Shad Rolleston is the NZCA liaison to the Board.

NZCA agendas, meeting minutes and letters from the Chairperson are also provided to the Board.

5.3 Community advocacy

The Board believes that working with conservation organisations and members of the public is vital to the Board's purpose as a voice of the community for conservation.

Board member reports are tabled at meetings and the Environmental Scan agenda item allows members to provide updates on any activities they have undertaken to pursue conservation interests, or advocate for good conservation outcomes.

5.4 Iwi/hāpu advocacy

The makeup of the Board includes members who have strong Iwi affiliations.

Gaylene Roberts was appointed to the Board on 1 July 2019 and is recognised as the Kāhui Ariki on the Board.

Wayne Jensen has Te Mana Taiao endorsement, a Mana Whenua collective established by the Iwi of Maniapoto to focus on Environmental matters for Maniapoto rohe.

5.5 Communication

The Board maintains a presence on DOC's website with updates and information for upcoming Board meetings and events.

The Board's agenda and confirmed minutes are also available on DOC's website.

The Board also promotes activities via its Meta/Facebook page.

Acknowledgements

The Board wishes to thank the DOC team for supporting the Board.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the attendance and reports tabled by Tinaka Mearns, DOC Director Regional Operations, HWT.

Ends.

Appendix 1

Waikato Conservation Board

Annual Work Plan 2023/2024

Priorities	Outcome / Impact	Measures	Milestones	Actions
Treaty Partnership	- Enhanced relationships with treaty partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening relationship with Kīngitanga - DOC to provide notification two weeks in advance of any significant iwi events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalising communication between Waikato Conservation board and Kīngitanga - Board members are in attendance to significant Iwi events. - Section 4 of the Conservation Act training (what it means for DOC and the WCB). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kīngitanga appointee to the Board has regular updates with the Queen's office and provides feedback to the Board. - Tinaka Mearns and Managers (HWT) in attendance at meetings to provide updates on treaty partnership work.
	- The WCB gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (section 4 of the Conservation Act).	- All WCB decision making includes an assessment of giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi	- All reports and board papers to include a section on Treaty partnership.	- Tinaka Mearns and Managers (HWT) in attendance at meetings to provide updates on Treaty partnership work.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waikato Conservation Board have a better understanding of the critically endangered species. - Waikato Conservation Board will advocate to address biodiversity decline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the management programme for endangered species. - Boards oversight of CMS is to ensure the protection of key endangered species. 	- To advocate on significant biodiversity issues especially in Fresh water and Marine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tinaka Mearns and Managers (HWT) in attendance to provide updates on biodiversity work. - Waikato CMS includes a list of rare and threatened species.

Priorities	Outcome / Impact	Measures	Milestones	Actions
Improve protection of land with conservation values	Conservation Board is active in Resource Management processes to protect and enhance land with conservation values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocating for private land with conservation value in the planning processes. - Understanding the process and progress of Stewardship land and classification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda item on plan changes and notified consents. - Regular Board updates on Stewardship land progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DOC provides updates on active Resource Management Planning activity currently being led by Regulatory Services Group. - DOC reports provide Board updates on any mining applications.
Communication	Conservation Board communicates with DOC and the public to deliver priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board maintains regular contact with key DOC staff (HWT) - Board contributes to All Conservation Boards newsletter. - Connects with Fish and Game, Waikato Biodiversity Forum and Community groups. - Board maintains DOC webpage and Meta/Facebook page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board Chair and Deputy Chair regularly meets HWT Board Support Officer and Statutory Manager. - Board contributes to newsletters. - Board invites Fish and Game, and community groups to Board meetings. - Board provides updates to DOC webpage and Meta/Facebook page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board Chair and Deputy Chair meets HWT Board Support Officer and Statutory Manager, two weekly, on Teams. - Board agendas and minutes uploaded onto webpage, Facebook page updates (2 monthly). - Every Board meeting is advertised in the Waikato Times noting public forum section for community members to attend Board meetings and discuss conservation matters within the Board's boundary. - Board invites Fish and Game, and community groups to Board meetings (quarterly basis).

Priorities	Outcome / Impact	Measures	Milestones	Actions
Conservation Boards and NZCA	The Board is better connected to neighbouring Boards and NZCA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board members are allocated to attend neighbouring Conservation Boards and NZCA meetings. - Conservation Boards communicate between each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allocated Board member attends neighbouring Board meeting. - Joint meeting with Auckland Conservation Board. - Chairperson attends NZCA Annual Board Chairs Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once a year, the Board aims to run a joint Boards meeting with Auckland Conservation Board. - Allocated Board member attends one neighbouring Board meeting, via Teams. - Chairperson attends NZCA Annual Chairs conference.

