



Northland Conservation Board

Te Runanga Papa Atawhai O Te Taitokerau

Annual Report

1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

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Cover photograph:

L-R Richard Robbins, Mita Harris (Chair), Tracey Andrew – Smith, Alan Martin, Willie Wright (Dep - Chair), Luana Pirihi and Jeannie Hogarth (Board Support Officer)

Absent: Bronwyn Hunt and Adrienne Tari

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Foreword from the Chair

We face so many challenges in our busy lives here in Northland. And finding a balance between things like, income – family and just time out seems a little out of reach. So I acknowledge the many families and communities in Northland that take part in the endless work of Life.

So I must promote our Natural Areas as being underutilised for health purposes, and our general wellbeing; it's out there waiting for you.

This year, I know for a fact that we are seeing an increasing number of young International visitors to Northland. A lot are here to tramp our trails, visit our sights, and sample our hospitality. It's so pleasing to come across them on Trails in the middle of nowhere.

Which brings me to our Northland population, which is missing? So I guess my message is still the same – “help yourselves to the outdoors Northland”.

The Board has been active in Northland this Financial Year:

- Sustaining Relationships,
- Working with the Department of Conservation and local Government,
- Site visits in Northland,
- Building its profile to the wider Northland Communities,
- Facing Kauri die back Challenges,
- Monitoring the CMS and Ministers Expectations

One of the biggest changes this year has been the establishment of the Te Hiku Settlement Act, which has brought about a new Conservation Board known as Te Hiku Conservation Board. The Boundaries are on the website and the Board members are mostly made up of people living north of the Mangamuka's.

We are looking forward to working with the Board and sharing our experiences. I wish you all the best for your future.



Mita Harris, Chairperson
Northland Conservation
Board

Kauri dieback has been a challenging issue for Northland and will continue to be a challenge. The Board has been working with the steering group and taking part in Education and Events. The Board fully understands the threat this Pathogen has and will continue to make it a high priority in the years to come.

As mentioned in my first few paragraphs, I support the recreation activities that our Natural Areas provide as this builds empathy toward its preservation and sustainability.

This month in June 2016, is my last month on the Northland Conservation Board. It's been not quite five years but an exciting and learning time for me. A highlight has been working with other members past and present. And also meeting and talking to our people about the Challenges they face. I do wish the new Board an interesting and fruitful Future.

I will be taking part in another Challenge as a Trustee on the Te Araroa Trail Trust. I will be part of a movement to encourage our Youth to challenge themselves by walking the length of this great country of ours post leaving school. "Their Right of Passage", "their Personal Challenge" before paying for student loans and Taxes you might say.

Finally, to the fire that kept the board running all of these years, our Support Officer Jeannie Hogarth. Jeannie has been with the Board since 1990, this year (2015/16) we have had the pleasure of her attention through administration and some sound advice. I will miss her, and I'm sure I speak on behalf of past and present members. Arohanui Jeannie, we all wish you the very best.

In signing off, I want to reassert my answer to the many challenges we all face, "have faith, and don't shy away from new ideas".

Nga Mihi – Arohanui



Mita Harris
Chairperson
Northland Conservation Board

1. Year in review

2015/16 was another busy year for all Members of the Northland Conservation Board. Opportunities were taken to increase the profile of the Board with individual Board Members becoming more visible to the communities in Northland and concentrating on organisations and groups not normally considered in terms of “conservation”.

In August 2015, the Board was invited to visit the Ngawhai Geothermal Site and this proved an eye open for the Members. The work the company undertakes is impressive as its conscious acknowledgement of the need to protect, preserve, and enhance the conservation and ecological aspects of this very complex site.

In November 2015, the Board was invited to visit and meet with key staff of NZ Refining at its Marsden Point Refinery site. Again, this was an interesting and informative visit and highlighted the efforts that this big company goes to in order to recognise and take steps to protect conservation and ecological values at the site. The Board Members were impressed with the steps the company takes to ensure the protection of NZ fairy tern and dotterels at the site, particularly during the nesting season even to the extent of closing down work at vulnerable sites while this very important phase of the birds’ life cycle is being undertaken.

Board Members also took the opportunity to hold meetings on Marae – Ngawha Marae in August for the Induction Day and Takahiwai Marae for a korero with Iwi in November 2015.

In Whangarei, opportunity was taken to develop a relationship between the Board and the Pukenui/Western Hills Forest Trust and the Whangarei Quarry Gardens – two significant organisations within the City with backing from Regional and District Councils as well as the Department of Conservation in the case of the Pukenui/Western Hills Forest Trust.

All of the above interactions would not have taken place if it hadn’t been for the work of Board Members in each Region connecting with these organisations that resulted in the invitations for the Board to visit and inspect the work being undertaken and the important connection between this and the protection of species and enhancement of habitat.

Relationship building is seen as a priority for the Northland Conservation Board as, without this, any efforts to improve the protection of species and enhancement of habitats would be extremely difficult. It also recognises the importance of taking an inclusive approach within the Board’s mandated region to ensure that all sectors of the community are engaged with and a connection made with the Board.

All the hard work undertaken in 2015/16 has laid a sound foundation to build on in the future.

At the close of 2015/16, the Board said farewell to three Members who did not seek re-election to the Board and one Board Member who resigned to take up Membership of the newly established Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board in Kaitaia.

Mita Harris – Chair from his very first meeting. This was an amazing situation and one that Mita never flinched at accepting and undertaking. He *hit the road running* and has been an inspirational leader who is held in the highest regard by all of Taitokerau/Northland. The mana in which he is held by Iwi/Maori is significant and inspirational.

Mita has worked tirelessly to draw attention to the plight of the kukupa/kereru and has led the Northland Conservation Board's campaign on behalf of the species.

Mita never shied from standing up for his principles even if it meant making some hard personal decisions. He took a firm stand on the need to come down hard on anyone, no matter their status or position in the community, who broke the law, especially when it involved the illegal hunting and killing of kukupa/kereru. In taking this stance and fronting up on television, being heard on the radio and front page in the newspapers, Mita not only raised the plight of the kukupa/kereru but also that of the Northland Conservation Board.



Mita Harris, retiring as Chair of the Northland Conservation Board (left) and Willie Wright, Deputy Chair of the Northland Conservation Board

The status in which Mita is held by Board Members, associates, communities, Iwi/Hapu and Maoridom in general, is significant and having him lead the Board for six years has been a privilege for the Board and he has left a strong legacy for the future. He leaves big shoes to fill and he has been a role model for future Board Members and Chairs. He

is a “*Man for all Seasons*” and is held in high esteem and great affection by all Board Members.

Tracey Andrews-Smith – has made a significant contribution in terms of her background knowledge and experience in the governance and local government field. She has provided the Board with sound advice and support when addressing regional and district plans.

Her strong cross Iwi/Maori links have been a major asset as has been her contribution to the review of the Conservation Management Strategy for Northland.

Tracey is a unique individual whose personality and passion will be greatly missed.



Tracey Andrews-Smith (left) retiring as Northland Conservation Board member, and Willie Wright, Deputy Chair of the Northland Conservation Board

Richard Robbins has been a tireless advocate for conservation during his seven years on the Board. He, along with Mita and Tracey were key contributors to the review of the Conservation Management Strategy for Northland and the subsequent monitoring of the implementation of the CMS.

Richard leaves no stone unturned and will probe and question issues of significance to the community of Northland.

He is a role model on how to represent all facets of the community and never afraid to ask the “hard questions.”



Richard Robbins (left) retiring as Northland Conservation Board member, and Willie Wright, Deputy Chair of the Northland Conservation Board

Richard has also represented the Northland Conservation Board at meetings of Fish and Game Council Northland. The feedback from the Council has been that it greatly appreciated Richard’s attendance and contribution. Richard can take much credit for the good relationship that has now been established between the Board and the Council.

Mike Finlayson was an extremely passionate Board Member, especially in relation to the “War on Weeds” with Kahli Ginger trembling in its roots every time Mike approached! He was also a strong advocate for the precautionary approach to Genetically Modified Organisms/Genetic Engineering. As well, he took every opportunity to raise the profile of the Board at key events e.g. field days, agricultural and pastoral shows within the region.

Mike was never afraid to take on the “hard” tasks and, in particular, in relation to the need to contain Kauri dieback. He went *into the lion’s den* of the pig hunting fraternity, attending meetings and encouraging pig hunters and their associates to acknowledge the need to contain Kauri dieback and stop its spread through the Kauri forests of Northland.

Mike was based in Kaitaia and when the opportunity came to nominate for membership of the newly established Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board, Mike did not hesitate to put his name forward with the full support and encouragement of Members of the Northland Conservation Board. The Board was delighted when Mike was appointed to the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board, but sad to be losing a strong, energetic, and passionate Board Member. However, we know we have not seen the last of him!



Mike Finlayson resigning as Northland Conservation Board member to become a member of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board

The loss of these four long serving Members will be felt. However, their legacy is the example they each have set on how to be an effective Member of a Conservation Board. Those Board Members continuing on have benefitted greatly from this and they, in turn, will be able to pass on this knowledge and experience to the new Board Members.

All four were involved in the review of the Conservation Management Strategy [CMS] for Northland that became operational in September 2014. They have also taken leading roles in ensuring that new Board Members were fully briefed on the CMS to enable the commencement of the monitoring of the implementation of the CMS to move forward. This is the key mandate for the Board and already Board Members are focused on the monitoring process.

If 2015/16 is anything to go by, 2016/17 looks extremely bright in terms of the Northland Conservation Board honouring its commitment to the communities of Northland to represent them as effectively, meaningfully and measurably.

2. 2015/16 Associate Minister of Conservation *Letter of Expectation*

In developing its response to the 2015/16 *Letter of Expectation* the Northland Conservation Board was mindful of the cost of meeting the expectations within its 2015/16 budget allocation of **\$32,000**.

The Board weighed up its obligations carefully and accepted that it could not do everything it would like to achieve in 2015/16 but was committed to prioritising its programme within the allocated budget.

The Board confirmed its objective to ensure it met its mandated obligation in relation to the monitoring of the implementation of the Northland Conservation Management Strategy [CMS] and the Board has focused any site visits on PLACES within the CMS.

Singularly and collectively, the Members of the Northland Conservation Board will increase the profile of the Board by proactively engaging with communities throughout Northland/Taitokerau.

Singularly and collectively, the Members of the Northland Conservation Board will proactively seek opportunities to engage with Iwi/Hapu throughout the region with the guidance and wise counsel of its Maori Board Members.

Of particular note for 2015/16 was the establishment of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board in the Far North. The Northland Conservation Board looks forward to establishing a strong relationship with the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board in conjunction with that already established with the Auckland Conservation Board in light of the cross boundary issues and issues of mutual concern.

Through the establishment of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board the Board notes that in the Te Hiku legislation **Appendix A 79 – Role and jurisdiction of the Northland Conservation Board to cease** “On and from the settlement date, the Northland Conservation Board set up under Part 2A of the Conservation Act 1987 ceases to have jurisdiction within or over the korowai area.”

The Northland Conservation Board accepts and understands this reduction in its area and looks forward to receiving information on the implications for the Northland Conservation Board in relation to the implementation of the Te Hiku legislation.

The Northland Conservation Board is committed to meeting the commitments it makes as outlined in the response to the *Letter of Expectation*.

3. Part A: Regional Work Programme

3.1 Review/development of statutory management plans including Conservation Management Strategies [CMS]

3.1.1 Board objective

In conjunction with the Department, the Board will determine priorities for implementation of the approved Conservation Management Strategy for Northland and in accordance with the National Implementation Monitoring Guidelines.

3.1.2 Planned Board activities

- a) Review the Department of Conservation Implementation Reports provided to the Board at each Board meeting.
 - The Board has been paying very close attention to the CMS Implementation Monitoring Framework Report that is submitted as part of our agenda for formal meetings. Particularly Board members have noted on more than one occasion where the “Traffic Light” monitoring of milestones and progress do not a line with what is actually in ‘the field’.
- b) Identify and allocate responsibility to specific Board Member[s] for follow up and report back on issues of concern to the Board relating to the implementation of the CMS in line with the Board’s monitoring of the implementation of the CMS mandate.
 - Board members have been allocated regional areas for engagements, specific to their constituency and communities, and thus have a very good idea of what’s happening on the ground within their regions. Because of this, they are able to recognize quickly whether the Implementation report “traffic light” system is in fact up to date and are able to make comment and address the present state of the milestone and progress.
- c) Focus site visits on PLACES within the CMS and/or specific issues relating to the CMS in general either identified by the Board or at the request of the Department.
 - The Board is very focused on visiting areas, regions, and sites that marry with Northland CMS and the Ministers Letter of Expectation.

- **Water Quality** – the Board has visited the “Living Waters” project in the northern part of the Kaipara Harbour at Hikurangi where the Department of Conservation and Fonterra, in partnership with Councils, communities and Tangata whenua are engaged in securing and protecting remnant wetlands and riparian forest. These include the two main remnant wetland areas [Wairua and Otakairangi] and on-farm remnants.
- **Kauri dieback** – At the request and invitation of the Department of Conservation Board members supported the closure of the Takahē Reserve track to allow contractors to upgrade the track to the standard required to mitigate the spread of kauri dieback disease. Of recent, the Board received a presentation from the Department of Conservation Kauri Dieback Recreation Project Team lead by Richard Balm, Programme Manager.

3.2 Stewardship Land

3.2.1 Board objective

The Board will provide the Minister and Department with advice on priorities for reclassification of stewardship areas that require increased protection because of their significant conservation values.

3.2.2 Planned Board activities

- a) The Northland Conservation Board has resolved to refrain from reviewing any application for reclassification of stewardship areas in Northland/Taitokerau until such time as all Treaty claims have been settled

The Board has resolved that those Treaty Claims that have been settled e.g. Te Uri o Hau the Board will review application for reclassification of Stewardship areas when requested.

The Board was given assurance by the Department of Conservation that they it ia working closely with Te Uri o Hau Governance Entity in land that was to be reclassified within their Treaty Settlement Rohe. The Board maintains a very close watch on future settlements in the North.

3.3 Other statutory functions

3.3.1 Board objective - 1

The Board will nurture ongoing working relationships with Fish and Game Councils regarding issues of mutual interest within the region.

3.3.2 Planned Board activities - 1

- a) Continue to provide representation at meetings of Fish and Game Council Northland.
- The Board is represented on the Northland Fish and Game Council by Richard Robbins, who has held this position for 5 years and, from feedback provided by Rudi Hoetjes, Manager Fish and Game Northland, has added value to Council meetings.
 - Richard retires from the Board on 30 June 2016 and will be replaced by Alan Martin. Both Alan and Richard attended the 10 June 2016 Fish and Game Council meeting in Whangarei where Alan was introduced to the Council. The Council acknowledged Richard's contribution during his time representing the Board and thanked him for his commitment and input.
- b) Engage in meaningful dialogue with Fish and Game Council Northland to building on the current relationship and look for opportunities to meet and work together on issues and projects of mutual conservation and environmental interest.
- The Board was pleased to welcome Rudi Hoetjes, Manager, Fish and Game Northland to its meetings and, in particular, being updated on work undertaken by the Council.

A proactive effort will be made in 2016/17 for the Northland Conservation Board to organise a joint site visit to Puketi Forest with Members of Fish and Game Council with the focus on the containment of Kauri dieback.

The issue of containment of Kauri dieback is of significance to both the Board and the Council given the proximity of wetlands to Kauri forests within the region and the need to mount a strong advocacy campaign amongst fishers and hunters to observe the hygiene requirements across the region.

It is hoped to hold this visit early in the 2016/17 year.

- c) Chair to attend at least one[1] meeting of Fish and Game Northland during 2015/16.
- This issue will be a top priority for the newly elected Chair in 2016/17. The presence of the Chair will complement the representation at all meetings by Alan Martin [replacing Richard Robbins].

3.3.3 Board objective - 2

The Board will advise on proposed changes of status for nationally and internationally important areas, when sought by the Department.

3.3.4 Planned Board activities - 2

- a) Kauri National Park
- i. Acknowledge that “co-governance” needs to be addressed before the proposal to establish a Kauri National Park based on the forests of Waipoua, can move forward.



Tane Mahuta

- ii. The Board acknowledges that “co-governance” is an issue for Te Roroa and the Crown to resolve.
 - The Board continues to observe closely the progress being made in the proposal to establish a Kauri National Park in the region.
 - The Board acknowledges and appreciates the need for the Government, Te Roroa and the Department to address co-governance and other key issues before the proposal can move forward.
 - The Board continues to seek updates on the proposal from the Department of Conservation at each Board meeting.
- iii. Provide ongoing support and advice to Te Iwi o Te Roroa and the Department of Conservation.
 - The Board acknowledges and supports Te Roroa and the Department of Conservation and offers its full support when and as requested.

3.4 Advocacy

3.4.1 Board objective - 1

The Board will pursue all reasonable opportunities to advocate at public forums and in any statutory planning processes.

3.4.2 Planned Board activities - 1

- a) As appropriate and applicable the Board will review and make submission on Regional and District Plans.
 - **National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forest**

In July 2015, the Board lodged a submission to the Ministry for Primary Industries, strongly objecting to provision (6.4) that would allow genetically modified tree stock to be used for afforestation, where it has been approved by the EPA and asked that the provision be removed from the standard.

The Board has worked with Territorial Authorities and Local Councils for over 15 years to establish a regional working policy regarding the management of GMOs and the right to regulate and/or prohibit the use of

GMOs in the environment. The Board was disappointed that the Ministry for Primary Industries now sought to abdicate democratic process and override the power of local Councils authority in relation to the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forests.

- **Regional Policy Statement** - The Northland Conservation Board supported the Northland Regional Council's stand against GMOs in the Regional Policy Statement for Northland.
- b) Individual Board Members will proactively engage with their respective communities to obtain feedback on issues of concern that the Board can take forward and, where applicable and appropriate, include in any submission the Board may make.
- The Northland Conservation Board has been fortunate to have Members who have the background experience and knowledge to assist the Board in responding to opportunities to make submissions or provide comment and input into Regional and District Plans and similar documents.
 - Luana Pirihi supported by Adrienne Tari the Board's "watchdog" in identifying opportunities for the Board to participate in the submission process throughout the region.
 - The Board is mindful of its responsibilities as the advocate for the communities and people of Northland and taking this proactive stance to enable this voice to be heard when opportunity presents itself, is vital to the Board meeting its mandate and fulfilling its roles and responsibilities.
- c) Facilitate a workshop to assist potential applicants for the annual Community Conservation Partnership Fund to understand the criteria and how to complete the application process.
- The Board was represented on the Community Conservation Partnership Fund panel to assist with the analysis of expressions of interest and final applications. Ian McGill ably represented the Board for the two years it has been running.

Local Members participated in workshops held in communities by the Department of Conservation to assist members from the communities in filling out their applications and giving assistance where needed.

The Department has again asked the Board to participate in the process for 2016 and Alan Martin will fill this role.

- d) The Board Chair will meet regularly with Regional and District Council leaders to ensure that the Board is well informed on all regional and district issues.
- The Chair continued to meet with local authority leaders in 2015/16 as well as leaders of other key organisations e.g. Te Araroa Trail and the Puketi Forest Trust. This relationship building is crucial to raising the profile of the Board and identifying opportunities for the Board, local authorities and other organisations to work together on conservation and environment projects of mutual interest.
- e) Individual Board Members will proactively engage with their local Council and feedback to the Board issues of mutual concern and identify programmes that the Board can engage in or make submission on should this be required.
- Individual Board Members have continued to build on relationships already made with local councils and organisations. Board Members have supported communities to raise awareness of local issues and provide advice and assistance when required or asked for. Examples of these for 2015/16 include
 - Te Araroa Trail
 - Puketi Forest Trust
 - Pukenui/Western Hills Forest Trust
 - Ruakaka Coastal Care Group
 - Ngunguru Catchment Group
 - Ngunguru Sandspit Protection Society

3.4.3 Board objective - 2

The Board will proactively advocate, participate, and/or facilitate public forums, workshops etc. related to any statutory planning processes to focus on key national issues

3.4.4 Planned Board activities - 2

- a) Kauri dieback
- i. Ensure that measures to contain kauri dieback in Northland/Taitokerau intrinsically linked in all statutory planning processes and documents.

- The Board is committed to doing all it can to advocate and educate communities regarding the need to contain the spread of Kauri dieback.
- The Chair and Deputy Chair have taken every opportunity to attend meetings and engage in projects to support the mitigation and containment of Kauri dieback, particularly in conjunction with the Department of Conservation. Getting involved with strategic projects provides the Board with an idea on how it can support education initiatives, become involved in a *hands on capacity* in a meaningful and measureable way with our stakeholders and communities and, at Chair and Deputy Chair level, demonstrate a leadership commitment that is tangible and ongoing.



Takahe Track closure due to kauri dieback

b) Regional Pest Management Strategy review 2016

- i. Give meaningful and measurable cognisance to the **‘War on Weeds’ Programme** when making submissions on the review of the Regional Pest Management Strategy in 2016.

The Board is proactive with its intention to support Councils, Crown

agencies and communities in the fight against weeds. Northland is renowned as the “Weeds Capital of New Zealand”. The Board actively participates in all forums to promote and support the destruction of these pests from destroying our forests and whenua.

The Board was invited to review and add to the national “Dirty Dozen” weeds identified by the Department of Conservation. Given the notoriety of Northland’s weed situation, it was not surprising that the “Dirty Dozen” was increased markedly when added to from a regional perspective!

The Board hopes that by inputting into this national review, recognition of the specific problems of weeds in the region will be given a higher priority for addressing in terms of resources and timeframes.

c) Marine protection

- i. Ensure that marine protection is given a high profile in all regional and district strategies and plans to raise the profile of marine protection and gain a Commitment for all agencies to develop and implement a measurable and effective strategy to achieve a realistic percentage of Northland's coastline under sustainable protection within a committed timeframe.
 - The Northland Conservation Board is committed to engaging with all stakeholders, local authorities, Iwi/Hapu and Government Agencies to increase the profile of the need for an effective marine protection plan for the Taitokerau/Northland coastal region.
 - The Board welcomes the Minister’s commitment to making marine protection a high priority and looks forward to engaging in the marine protected areas review.
 - While no specific event was facilitated by the Board in 2015/16 the Board as a whole and individual Board Members in particular, engaged with local community groups to listen to concerns raised in relation to the marine environment with a view to developing opportunities to facilitate workshops or similar events in 2016/17.

d) Water quality/water management

- i. Proactively advocate and attend public forums and workshops in the course of engaging in statutory processes to ensure that water quality and water management is a top priority in all regional and district plans and strategies. This will include appropriate riparian plantings, effective, efficient, and

measurable effluent discharge regulations, and processes.

- Water quality and water management remain a high priority for the Board. In 2015/16, the Board concentrated on liaison with the *Living Water Project* and, in particular, the work being undertaken in relation to farm effluent disposal and runoff.
- The Board is acutely aware of the impact of rural living on Northland's waterways and the need to take a proactive approach to advocate for adequate fencing of waterways and riparian planting.
- The Board's role is to work with all parties involved i.e. landowners, local authorities, Fonterra etc to support the work being undertaken and to identify opportunities for Board Members to enhance the potential of projects geared to improving the water quality in the region. This is an ongoing commitment.
- The Board is fortunate to have links with the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group through its Deputy Chair, Willie Wright, who provides regular updates on issues associated with the Kaipara Harbour [the Hikurangi Catchment being the northern most source and the site of the *Living Water Project*] and being the conduit to get local Board Members involved with the Group through attendance at meetings etc.



Living Waters Project

e) Mining

- i. Before engaging in any proactive action relating to mining within Northland/Taitokerau, the Northland Conservation Board will ensure that it is adequately informed on the implications of any application so that it is able to address the issue in an informed and professional manner. In this respect, the Board will seek advice and assistance from the Department of Conservation and other Conservation Boards that have had experience with mining within their region.
 - The Board still intends liaising with other Conservation Boards who have had previous experience in dealing with mining applications on public conservation land, at the appropriate time.
 - Although taking a proactive approach in seeking information on the implications of mining, specifically within the Taitokerau/Northland region, until such time as applications are made to undertake this work, the Board will continue on a “watching” brief with regards to this issue.
- ii. Proactively advocate and attend public forums and workshops in the course of engaging in statutory processes to ensure that any applications for mining within Northland/Taitokerau are thoroughly examined and key conservation and environmental impacts identified and addressed.
 - No opportunities presented themselves to engage in open forum or workshops relating to mining within the region in 2015/16.
- iii. The Board will vigorously peruse all applications for mining within Northland/Taitokerau and where necessary advocate its opposition to any adverse conservation and environmental impacts any application may incur.
 - The Board maintains a vigilant stance with regarding to any applications related to potential mining or exploration of sites within the region.
 - The Board acknowledges that under the Crown Minerals Act businesses have the right to apply for a mining licence.
 - The Board also acknowledges that the Department of Conservation’s role is to assess any application for an access easement to these sites.
 - The Board will take all steps it can to ensure that the Department keeps it informed of any applications and provides it with an opportunity to comment on any such applications in the interests of the communities of

Taitokerau/Northland.

f) Ngawha Geothermal Site

- In September 2015, the Board accepted an invitation from Top Energy, to visit the Ngawha Geothermal site. The site contains two geothermal lakes and is a unique environment of gumland/wetland/bogland.
- Rare species that call the site home include bittern, banded rail, crake, nationally vulnerable species e.g. Northland mudfish that is only found within 25km of Lake Omapere.
- Top Energy pays for predator control around the perimeter of the site as part of its resource consent.
- Monitoring operations are undertaken by Environmental Protection as part of the Top Energy resource consent condition that includes the rare plant *Baumea*.
- The Board greatly appreciated the opportunity to view the plant and the surrounding public conservation land and lakes. It was also pleased to note the good relationship between Top Energy and the Department.
- The Board will continue to seek opportunities to visit sites within the region that are not obvious conservation targets i.e. to look at sites and organisations where the Board isn't "*preaching to the converted*".

g) Genetic Engineering/GMOs

- i. The Board will continue to advocate for a "**precautionary**" approach to genetic engineering/genetic modification to be included in all regional and district strategies, plans and documents.
 - The Board maintains its position to a "precautionary" approach at this time.

4. PART B: General Expectations

4.1 Working with the Department

4.1.1 Board objective

Board Members will maintain good working relationships and open dialogue with Directors, Managers, and Board Support Officers in order to engage strategically in conservation for the region.

4.1.2 Planned Board activities

- a) Continue to proactively engage with local Department of Conservation [DOC] Managers and staff at all locations in Northland/Taitokerau.
- Relationships between the Board and Department of Conservation staff are improving immensely at all levels and with local offices. Regional members actively engage with staff when and where appropriate. This is witnessed by supporting functions, community activities, planting days, kauri dieback events, Friday afternoon relax times and Christmas get together.
 - The Board views these as excellent opportunities to get to know individual staff members at all levels and encourage staff to look on Board Members as part of the conservation team there to support the great work that is being undertaken at all levels.
 - The Board acknowledges the need to step up on this activity to ensure that Board Members are recognised and known by staff i.e., putting a face to a name. This will be extremely important for new Board Members who will be encouraged to meet the local Department of Conservation Managers and staff on a regular basis.
 - The Board followed with great interest the rollout of the new structure for the Department which saw Services become Operations and Partnerships become more nationally focused on promoting the step growth strategy for the Department.
 - The Board wants to acknowledge the support provided by Nicola Douglas, Director Partnerships during the time she was the direct conduit between the Department and the Board. Nicola was always open and honest with the Board and ready to provide whatever assistance she could to raise the

profile of the Board and keep the Board informed on matters of mutual concern and changes within the Department.

- The Board welcomed the appointment of Sue Reed-Thomas as Director Operations, Northern North Island Region, replacing Chris Jenkins. Sue had previously been known to the Board in her role as Manager Partnerships Northland and had attended several meetings of the Board in that role often deputising for Nicola Douglas, Director Partnerships.
 - Sue Reed-Thomas, Director Operations is now the Board's first point of contact.
- b) Individual Board Members will proactively engage with DOC Managers and staff at their local offices and act as a conduit between DOC and the Board for each respective area and add value to DOC projects and programmes.
- Individual Board Members are being encouraged to step up their contact with local Department of Conservation Managers and staff. The Department staff in turn are being asked to ensure that local Board Members are not forgotten and are invited to participate in local projects when and where appropriate.
- c) Board Chair will meet regularly with the Director Operations Northern North Island to discuss issues and identify areas/projects/programmes that the Board can support, advocate on and assist the Department to achieve positive conservation outcomes.
- The Board Chair and the Director Partnerships Northern North Island met regularly during the 2015/16 year. This was important given the changes taking place within the Department and the need to keep abreast of any transition issues as a result of these changes.
 - The new Board Chair will give priority to seeking regular meetings with the Director Operations, Northern North Island Region during 2016/17.
- d) Board Members will actively engage in volunteer opportunities within their respective area and encourage and support community participation in DOC programmes as appropriate.
- Through Board Member Richard Robbins' involvement with *Project Island Song* in the Bay of Islands, Board members were invited to participate in translations to the Islands in the Eastern Bay of Islands during the course of 2015/16. These proved extremely popular and provided an excellent opportunity to network with a wide range of community groups,

stakeholders, regional and district councils and politicians!

- The Board appreciated the regular invitations provided by the Whangarei Office to participate in volunteer activities within the region. This is an ongoing commitment and one that the Board would like to experience from other Department of Conservation Offices within its mandated area. To effect this, local Board Members are being encouraged to make themselves known at Department of Conservation Offices, i.e., take the first step, and establish a rapport with the local Manager and staff at every opportunity.

General

The Board acknowledges that the 2015/16 year has been a difficult one for the Department as it rolled out the new structure. However, it believes that the new structure is on the right track and will provide whatever support it can to ensure its success.

4.2 Taking account of Ministerial priorities for the Department¹

4.2.1 Board objective - 1

The Board will identify opportunities to support Northland/Taitokerau Community Conservation targeting key species and pest management

4.2.2 Planned Board activities - 1

a) Kauri dieback

- i. The Board will continue its proactive approach to advocate and educate the public of Northland/Taitokerau on the need to engage and participate in appropriate programmes and processes to contain the spread of kauri dieback through our iconic forests.
 - Kauri dieback containment is the number one priority for the Northland Conservation Board. During 2015/16 Board Members consolidated this priority at every opportunity and became involved and engaged in

activities throughout the region advocating the containment of this disease.

- The Board appreciated the strong liaison formed with the Department of Conservation and, in particular, the Kauri Dieback Recreation Project Team, who provide the Board with regular updates of its work through newsletters and presenting updates at Board Meetings.
 - The Board is committed to working with and supporting the Department's efforts to contain this disease and looks forward to increasing this involvement in 2015/16.
- ii. Individual Board Members will specifically target key users of the forests e.g. pig hunters, recreational users etc. to advocate on containment of kauri dieback and the onus on all users to familiarise themselves with the regulations associated with containment and cleaning methods prior to entering the forests. This will be given effect to by attendance at club meetings, field days, public meetings etc.

Board Member, Mike Finlayson lead the charge in engaging with those individuals and groups for whom pig hunting in the forests of Northland is a way of life. On behalf of the Board Mike took the message to the pig hunters offering advice, support, and encouragement to them to take all the precautions necessary to contain Kauri dieback in the Forests of Northland and stressing the need to adopt the hygiene practices in place before and after entering the forests.

This work will be continued by current Board Members as the fight to contain Kauri dieback will be a long one and vigilance, commitment and continual advocacy for containment is essential across the region.



Sue Reed – Thomas (Director of Operations Northern North Island) and Willie Wright (Deputy Chair – Northland Conservation Board) closing the Takahē track at Takahē Reserve

b) ‘War on Weeds’

- i. The Board will proactively advocate and promote the “War on Weeds” programme through statutory processes and public forum opportunities.
 - The Board believes that having all agencies, organisations, groups, etc. working together is paramount to the “War on Weeds”.
 - Northland is the “Weed Capital of New Zealand” and the eradication of weeds is a high priority. While recognising that this is an ongoing and tireless task, the Board will continue to advocate best practice from individuals to remove noxious weeds and promote the planting of native species in place of the “exotic” plants that are, actually, weeds, damaging the region’s habitat.
 - Working with the Department of Conservation, Regional and District Councils, community groups, Iwi/Hapu and all stakeholders will continue to be a high priority task for the Northland Conservation Board.
 - The Board recognises that its role as a conservation and environmental “advocate” is a challenging but extremely powerful one and Board Members will not shirk in their responsibility to play their part in the “War on Weeds”, particularly in Northland.

- ii. Individual Board Members will familiarise themselves with how the “War on Weeds” can be addressed in their respective locations and take ownership to target specific weeds and embark on a proactive programme to address these in 2016.

The Board, through the Chair and Deputy Chair, participated in the review of the “Dirty Dozen” weeds as part of the national “War on Weeds” campaign. The Board was able not only to review the “Dirty Dozen” but markedly increase this number in terms of the priority weeds that required attention in Northland.

Because of its climate, it is not surprising that Northland is known as the “Weed Capital of New Zealand”. When reviewing the “Dirty Dozen” it was also not surprising that the Board was able to add a significant number of other major weeds of high importance in Northland. In doing this the Board hoped that by drawing attention to these at a national level, appropriate attention would be taken and meaningful action promoted with appropriate resources made available to commence a specific War on Northland Weeds programme.

c) *Save the Kukupu Campaign*

- i. The Board will continue to promote its “*Save the Kukupu*” campaign in 2016.

The annual campaign will commence in February 2016 and will include

- Press releases
- Media interviews
- Circulation of the Board’s *Save the Kukupu* poster



Northland Conservation Board
Te Runanga Papa Atawhai O Te Taitokerau



SAVE THE KŪKUPA



Photo: Donald Lamb

Kūkupa, our taonga (treasure), are under threat and need our help. Their disappearance would be a disaster for our native forests as only kākāpū can swallow and disperse large fruit such as karaka, tawa and taraire.

Kūkupa:

- Are large birds – up to 51 cm long and weighing up to 650 g
- Are long-lived birds – they can live up to 20 years
- 'Build' native forests by dispersing seeds
- Are slow breeders – usually one egg per year
- Eat mostly fruit
- Chicks feed on 'pigeon milk' and fruit pulp
- There are two species: New Zealand pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) known as kākāpū, kākū or kererū, and Chatham Islands pigeon (*Hemiphaga chathamensis*) known as parea.

Food/kai:



Threats to kākāpū

- Predators – rats, possums, stoats, and cats eat kākāpū eggs and young
- Illegal hunting – hunting of kākāpū is prohibited and has a high impact on this slow breeding species
- Competition – possums and rats eat fruit and leaves that kākāpū eat
- Grazing – stock and feral goats prevent regeneration of food trees for kākāpū
- Habitat loss



Photo: scullistar, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

Photo: Herb Christophers

You can help kākāpū

- Control predators in your bush by trapping or poisoning
- It is illegal to hunt kākāpū
- Plant native trees (miro, tītoki, tawa, tree fuchsia/kōtukutuku, kōwhai, five-finger, patē, pigeonwood, taraire, pūriri, nikau, wineberry/makomako) to support native animals including kākāpū.

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
New Zealand Government

Individual Board Members will proactively engage with their communities in their respective areas to educate and reinforce that the hunting of kākāpū is illegal

- In 2015/16, the Board continued to promote awareness to the plight of the kākāpū in Northland, particularly during the critical period of February to March each year.
- Numerous copies of the *Save the Kākāpū* poster were distributed and requests were responded to from logging companies to Day Care Centres

and even as far afield as Canterbury in the South Island, with people interested and engaged in the need to address the illegal hunting and killing of this taonga.

- The poster will soon be available in both Te Reo and English and the campaign is now targeting all the schools in Northland to provide each with copies of the Poster and Board Members offering their time to speak to schools when invited to do so.
- The apprehension, arrest and subsequent charging of a high profile Taitokerau leader for the illegal possession, hunting and killing of kukupa gave the issue a significant national focus in 2015/16. Board Chair, Mita Harris lead the charge for Northland in condemning the act and took the opportunity to highlight the plight of the kukupa on the national stage. His leadership at this time was impressive and the Board was extremely proud of its Chair.

4.2.3 Board objective - 2

The Board will identify opportunities for building relationships to support the Department's "Healthy Nature/Healthy People programme"

4.2.4 Planned Board activities - 2

a) Water quality and management

- i. Proactively engage with local communities, regional and district councils and all other agencies to promote and enhance current water quality programmes and identify specific areas of concern that need to be addressed taking a "joint agency/organisation/community" approach.

- **Living Water Project**

The Northland Conservation Board is fortunate to have the Fonterra/Department of Conservation *Living Water Project* within its rohe. It is also fortunate in that the Project Team have proactively engaged with the Board to update Members with the Project and inviting the Board to visit the Hikurangi based site.

Board Members were impressed at the aims and objectives of the Project and the good relationship that has been built between the Department and all the agencies involved. This has significantly enhanced the progress being made with the project and keeping the issue of water

quality and the issue of effluent leakage into our waterways, very much to the forefront.

The Board is committed to providing whatever support it can to the Project and appreciates being kept up to speed with progress and where the Board can link in and lend its hand.

Tim Brandenburg, Fonterra, Manager of the Project and Wendy Holland, Department of Conservation Community Ranger are to be congratulated on the way they are leading the Project and working with all parties in a professional and inclusive manner.



Northland Conservation Board members with “Living Waters Project” team Fonterra and Department of Conservation

4.3 Working with adjoining Boards and the NZ Conservation Authority

4.3.1 Board objective

Board Members will liaise with neighbouring Conservation Boards in order to progress cross boundary Conservation Management Strategy Issues and other matters of mutual interest.

4.3.2 Planned Board activities

- a) Deputy Chair, Willie Wright continues to represent the Board at meetings of the Auckland Conservation Board. Reciprocally, Alex Hawke represented the Auckland Conservation Board and two meetings in 2015/16.

The Northland Conservation Board takes this relationship very seriously and welcomes these opportunities to work alongside other Boards to our mutual benefit.

The Board sees not only the value of relationship building between both Boards but opportunities to learn from one another and share best practice.

With the establishment of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board, the Northland Conservation Board will be offering to act as the conduit between the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board and the Auckland Conservation Board to provide opportunities for all three Boards to work together as all three have much in common and much to share.

- b) Regular liaison with the NZ Conservation Authority representative in Northland/Taitokerau including meeting with Northland Conservation Board Chair between Board meetings.
- Mike Simm, Member, NZ Conservation Authority continued to represent the Authority at meetings of the Northland Conservation Board in 2015/16. The Board appreciated Mike's attendance at Board meetings and providing updates on the work of the Authority and, in turn, providing the Authority with first hand updates on the work of the Board.

The Board looks forward to identifying opportunities outside of Board meetings for Mike to join the Board on site visits and as the relationship between the Northland Conservation Board and the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board is established.



L-R. Back row – John Galilee (DoC), Michael Fitchett (Board Member), Rodney Ngawaka (Board Member), Meg Poutasi (DoC), Glen Wilcox (Board Member), Devon McLean (NZCA -Auckland Member) Ross Aitken (Chair- Board Member), Laurie Beamish (Dep. Chair -Board Member) and Joe Pihema (Orakei Marae Taumata)

L-R. Front row – Alec Hawke (Board Member), Ngahuia Hawke (Orakei Marae) Willie Wright (Dep. Chair Northland Conservation Board), Wayne Pihema (Orakei Trust Board), Maggie Noble (Board Officer), Tania Tarawa (DoC), Luana Pirihi (Northland Conservation Board), Lyn Mayes (Board Member), Emma Eichbaum (Board Member) and Jane Jones (Board Member)

Absent: Innes Logan and Nathan Kennedy (Board Members)

c) **Te Hiku Conservation Board** – once established the Northland Conservation Board will proactively engage with the Te Hiku Conservation Board to develop a meaningful relationship between both Boards and identify opportunities for both Boards to work together to achieve mutually beneficial conservation outcomes.

- The Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board was established on 17 December 2015. The Northland Conservation Board was delighted to note that Mike Finlayson [previously a Member of the Northland Conservation Board] had been appointed to the new Board together with past Department of Conservation Conservator/Director Services, Northern North Island, Chris Jenkins.

- The Northland Conservation Board appreciated the need for the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board needed time to settle and would be ready to engage as soon as the new Board felt the time was appropriate.
- The Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board held an Induction Workshop for its Members on 24 June 2016. The Northland Conservation Board extended an invitation to the Members of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board to be their guests at an informal, Members only, dinner in Kerikeri on 29 June 2016. This informal first get together of Members from both Boards was seen as the ideal platform on which to move forward together.
- The Northland Conservation Board has offered the new Board its full support and any assistance it can provide to ensure that the new Board has the best possible foundation to work from.



Standing L/R: Peter Furze [Te Hiku], Mita Harris [NCB], Mike Finlayson [Te Hiku], Willie Wright [NCB], Abe Witana [Te Hiku], Rangitane Marsden [Te Hiku], Alan Martin [NCB], Darren Edwards [NCB]

Seated L/R: Mike Simm [NZCA], Adrienne Tari [NCB], Bronwyn Hunt [NCB], Mary-Jane Ardley [Te Hiku], Rahuia Kapa

- With the Taitokerau/Northland Region now having two Conservation Boards conservation in the North can only be enhanced and magnified.

- The boundary of the Northland Conservation Board’s mandate has been reduced as a result of the establishment of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board. However, it is hoped that at some time in the future a review of the Auckland, Northland Conservation Board boundary will be undertaken with a view to addressing the mandate for the Kaipara Harbour that is currently shared by both the Auckland and Northland Conservation Boards.
 - As well as a reduction in its rohe as a result of the establishment of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board, the Northland Conservation Board Membership has been reduced from 9 to 7.
- d) The Chair, Northland Conservation Board will establish regular contact with the Chair of the Te Hiku Conservation Board.
- The Chair of the Northland Conservation Board has as a top priority to regularly meet with the Chair of the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board. Both Boards have yet to elect a Chair for 2016/17 [the Northland Conservation Board will do so at its 12 August 2016 Board meeting] as will the Te Hiku O Te Ika Conservation Board when it holds its inaugural public meeting after 15 August 2016].

4.4 Understanding the Board’s contribution to giving effect of the Treaty of Waitangi

4.4.1 Board objective

The Board will understand and support the Board’s and Department’s obligations under Treaty settlements as well as principles under section 4 of the Conservation Act.

The Northland Conservation Board understands, acknowledges, and gives full cognisance to its obligations under section 4 of the Conservation Act.

The Northland Conservation Board is privileged to have a significant proportion of Maori members who provide invaluable advice and support to ensure that the Board fulfils its obligations and undertakes its mandate in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.

4.4.2 Planned Board activities

- a) The Board will continue to proactively engage with Iwi/Hapu throughout Taitokerau and accept invitations to meet on Marae and other appropriate venues.
- b) Individual Board Members will proactively engage with Iwi/Hapu in their respective locations and feedback to the Board issues of concern and identify areas where the Board can provide support and assistance or act as a conduit between Iwi.Hapu and other organisations/groups/agencies etc.
- c) The Board Chair will engage on a regular basis with Iwi organisations and contacts throughout Taitokerau and support individual Board Members meeting with Iwi/Hapu, as applicable.
- d) The Board will facilitate and promote workshops and other similar forums specifically tailored to Iwi/Hapu, to address specific issues of concern to Iwi/Hapu throughout Taitokerau. This will be given effect to in the first instance through individual Board Members in their respective locations.



Northland Conservation Board members participating at the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group Hui – Otamatea Marae

4.5 Engaging with the community, including raising the profile of the Board

4.5.1 Board objective - 1

Board Members will liaise regularly with other conservation entities, such as district and regional councils, Non Governmental Organisations[NGOs] and community groups, in order to enhance the profile of the Board and pursue good working relationships on issues of mutual interest and concern.

4.5.2 Planned Board activities - 1

- a) Proactively liaising and engaging with local authorities, agencies, community groups and Iwi/Hapu is a fundamental for the Board as a whole and individual Board Members.
- The Board continues to build on key relationships with regional and district councils through the Board Chair and Deputy Chair. As well, the Northland Regional Council sends a Council Member to attend all meetings of the Northland Conservation Board. This liaison is invaluable to both entities.
 - Deputy Chair, Willie Wright, was invited by the Northland Regional Council to represent the Northland Conservation Board on the Ngunguru Catchment Group. This is a significant recognition not only of the relevance of the Northland Conservation Board but the efforts the Deputy Chair has gone to raise the profile of the Board to an extent where it is second nature for organisations to have a representative from the Board on committees, interest groups etc.
 - The Deputy Chair has also been instrumental in ensuring that the Board engages and liaises with the Members of the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group (IKHMG) through invitations to attend meetings of the Group. The Deputy Chair is a past President of the IKHMG and through this association has been able to bring the Board into the work being undertaken in relation to the Kaipara Harbour, which is a significant section of the Board's rohe.
 - Similarly the excellent relationship building that has been undertaken by Richard Robbins in terms of the liaison with Fish and Game Council

Northland. This representation is taken seriously by the Council and is appreciated.

Through the efforts of all Members of the Board, opportunities are continually being identified to increase the profile of the Board with a view to drawing attention to key conservation issues e.g. Kauri dieback containment, water quality, habitat management and species protection. The Board believes that only by working together can progress be made in a meaningful way and the more individual Board Members engage in their respective locations making themselves and the Board known and relevant, the more effective they can be in their role.

4.5.3 Board objective - 2

Board Members will take the initiative to meet with community groups and the general public to gauge community reaction to conservation initiatives planned or implemented by the Department of Conservation.

- Retired Board Member, Ian McGill represented the Board on the application analysis Panel for the inaugural Community Conservation Partnership Fund round. His input was greatly appreciated and the Department had no hesitation in requesting that he continue in this role for the second year of the round. Following Ian's retirement, the Board has again been invited to participate in the 2016 expressions of interest and application analysis process.

Board Member, Alan Martin, who participated and supported workshops run by the Department during the 2015 fund round, will represent the Board replacing Ian McGill. The Department welcomed Alan's appointment as he had been seen as instrumental in providing sound advice and support to applicants at workshops the previous year.

By getting alongside individuals and groups throughout the region, supporting them and providing meaningful assistance and advice, Members of the Board are able to demonstrate that they fully understand what being a Member of a Conservation Board means i.e. being the conservation voice of the communities of Northland.

By responding to opportunities provided by the Department to interact with individuals and groups engaging in a wide variety of conservation initiatives, listening to concerns, providing advice and support and, where appropriate, acting as a conduit between the community and the Department, Board Members are giving meaningful effect to the Board's mandate.

5. Conclusion

The Northland Conservation Board Members have put in an enormous amount of time and effort to raise the profile of the Board and key conservation issues and concerns in 2015/16.

Individual Members in their respective locations have proactively sought out opportunities to engage with as wide a section of the community as possible and engage in meaningful discussion at all levels.

Each Board Member can be proud of the work they have undertaken this year over and above what was expected of them and as outlined in the Board's response to the *Letter of Expectation*.

A key factor in the success of the Northland Conservation Board has been the inspirational leadership of the Chair, Mita Harris more than ably supported by the Deputy Chair, Willie Wright.

The role model that the Chair and Deputy Chair have provided has energised the individual Board Members and, as a result, the Board has been seen throughout Taitokerau/Northland as a key player in conservation and environment issues. There is still a lot of work to do to ensure that the Board's very existence is known and understood but the Board has come a long way from a time when the very existence of a conservation board in Northland was unknown.

The success of the Board can also be attributed to the fellowship and camaraderie that has been developed in the current Membership. This has had a significant impact on the ability of Members to work together effectively throughout the region. The obvious friendship between Board Members has been instrumental in drawing attention to the Board and, in turn, to the issues the Board is advocating for.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve and support the Board over the last 26 years.

Jeannie Hogarth

Board Support Officer