

Te Urewera draft plan out for submissions

Vision of living with land

TE UREWERA Board has invited public submissions on its draft management plan Te Kawa o Te Urewera.

In 2014, Te Urewera Act established Te Urewera as an independent legal identity — essentially meaning the area of Te Urewera (formerly Te Urewera National Park) owns itself. Te Urewera Board speaks for and represents Te Urewera, and day-to-day management is shared between Tuhoe and the Department of Conservation.

Te Kawa outlines the principles that will guide the setting of annual priorities and operational management plans under Te Urewera Act, as well as decisions by the board about activities within Te Urewera.

The management plan was released on Friday.

Te Urewera Board chairman Tamati Kruger said it was written in such a way that the land was speaking, which may seem quirky to some people.

“It acknowledges that land doesn’t really need people, it is the other way around.

“As people we need to adjust our reality.”

Te Kawa formally applies to the previous Te Urewera National Park territory now vested in Te Urewera. It also includes Lake Waikaremoana, whose lakebed is owned by the Tuhoe Charitable Trust and the Wairoa Waikaremoana Trust Board, and has been leased to the Crown and managed by the Department of Conservation.

“Te Kawa does not work the same way as other management plans, which focus on setting rules and stock-taking,” said Mr Kruger.

“That traditional approach can frame nature as a set of discrete resources to be managed and used.

“Te Kawa is different. It asks us to stop and reflect on Te Urewera and what that means as a living system.”

“Te Kawa does not work the same way as other management plans, which focus on setting rules and stock-taking.”

The practical stuff still existed but had moved to a separate document, he said.

“Te Urewera has its own identity that is legal, but also physical, environmental, cultural and spiritual. It is a living system we depend on for survival, culture, recreation and inspiration.

“Te Kawa sets out a vision for bringing all New Zealanders, including Tuhoe, into a closer relationship with Te Urewera, rather than setting out to manage the land itself.

“Te Kawa o Te Urewera is not about short-term thinking. Te Urewera does not work to annual plans, but over seasons and centuries. Our aspiration is in 20 years Te Urewera, Tuhoe and anyone who chooses a relationship with Te Urewera will be part of an effort of living with the land that is local, national and global.

“At this moment in history, we need to consider how we can re-establish our connection as people to the land, and the land’s connection to us. One of the first steps is rebuilding traditional knowledge along with modern research and insights.”

By 2018, Crown appointees on the board would drop from four to three and the Tuhoe iwi membership would increase from four to six.

Existing board members are: Tamati Kruger (chairman), Dave Bamford, Rt Hon Jim Bolger, Jo Breese, Martin Rakuraku Te Pou, Lorna Taylor, Te Tokawhakaeta Temara and Dr John Wood.

Submissions close at 5pm on July 20, 2017.