

PROJECT TONGARIRO STRATEGIC PLAN



Authorised by
the Executive
Board
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PROJECT TONGARIRO STRATEGY 2017 – 2022

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1. Strategy at a glance

PROJECT TONGARIRO

VISION

Enjoy, discover, know and care for Tongariro / Taupo

MISSION

Inspiring New Zealanders and international visitors to connect physically, emotionally and spiritually with Tongariro National Park and its surrounds.

GOALS

- Harness and connect like-minded people
- Work together to improve our place
- Create opportunities for others
- Share knowledge and experience in conservation
- Achieve organizational sustainability and resilience

CORE VALUES

Kaitiakitanga

Strong conservation ethics, a spiritual connection to the whenua and caring about our environment.

Maumaharatanga

We value the tradition of our story and that of others.

Manaakitanga – mahi tahi

We value working collaboratively with respect, honesty, integrity and aroha.

2. Executive Summary

Tongariro Natural History Society (aka Project Tongariro) was established in 1984. The organization came into being as a result of a 1982 helicopter crash in Tongariro National Park in which four park staff died.

Project Tongariro (PT) is apolitical. As an entity it has always tried to appeal to a wide range of people in local communities and beyond. For more than three decades the organisation has worked to engage its members and volunteers in a variety of ways including hands-on conservation projects, planting days, field trips, involvement and managing events such as the summer nature programme and numerous conservation projects in support of the Tongariro National Park and wider region.

To appeal to a broader audience, PT has reached a point where it needs to adapt its approach and create new opportunities for people to engage with and support it

PT's support base has evolved over time from full membership, to supporters who give practical help or share their individual area of expertise. The level of support differs from one project to the next, which PT understands and must cater for. PT recognises that these supporters are not only potential members but also advocates and promoters of PT in general. This network of supporters is of great value and could help create future funding opportunities.

This strategy was developed to support PT's aspiration to continue as an influential conservation partner and leader in the Tongariro/Taupo region. The organisation's reputation as being useful, effective and easy to work with is important and assists to attract partners and funders alike on an ongoing basis.

This strategy will guide the priorities and focus of the organisation through the next five years and outline a vision for the next ten years.

In 2017 PT will implement this strategy. PT will continue to build strong relationships with current and new funders and promote its refreshed identity through digital and web mediums. A key focus will be to strengthen our capacity, resources and capability to do the work.

PT's strategic focus is to:

- Implementation of work and strengthening capacity.
- Connect to a broad range of people
- Be relevant to future conservation directions
- Work collaboratively with key groups and the community
- Leverage opportunities
- Offer a range of environmental and recreational opportunities
- Secure long-term funding
- Enhance and add to Government and Department of Conservation (DOC) conservation efforts
- Ensure PT is fit for purpose as an organisation

3. Journey

PT has a defined beginning arising out of the 1982 helicopter crash tragedy in Tongariro National Park. It remains committed to sharing this story, when appropriate, as it forms part of the essence and spirit of the organization.

In the early years PT focused on producing and selling publications as a way to build a funding base. This was successful, allowing the organisation to contribute to

Tongariro National Park in a variety of ways including volunteering, conservation projects, interpretation and education. For more than 20 years PT has funded annual research grants (Memorial Awards).

From the outset, PT has worked with DOC to prioritise projects and at times assisted them with funding. This relationship is based on an enduring Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organisations. PT continues to work with DOC on a number of conservation projects including wetland and forest restoration and recreation events such as Mahi Aroha as well as PT has an annual student intern programme.

PT has seven major biodiversity projects underway with a focus on wetland, forest and riparian restoration in and around Tongariro National Park, as well as two urban restoration projects based in Taupō.

The organisation's strengths are in its people and their connection and drive to care and carry out outdoor activities in the region. PT is a not-for-profit organisation that works in an area that is internationally recognised for its environmental, landscape and recreational values.

Geographically, PT operates from Ohakune in the south to Taupō in the north. See the map on the following page for PT projects.

From the outset PT was a member-based organisation with around 400 members at any time. In the early 2000s it recognized a need to offer other ways for people to be involved in PT. Membership was becoming inefficient to administer and had lost much of its appeal. While recognizing the need to change the executive decided to keep the membership base rather than have it erode due to fee demands.

A 'membership for life' system was instigated which meant that existing members paid nothing further and new members paid a one-off \$50 joining fee.

All members can vote at an AGM. There are no membership privileges other than a close connection with PT, its ideals and opportunities.

To minimize costs all communication with members and supporters is electronic. PT has a supporters category which allows those with an interest, but perhaps not an involvement, in PT can receive our e-newsletter; this category allows PT to reach a wider audience, which is especially important when there is a need to recruit as an example, marshals for an event. The e-newsletter provides an excellent summary of PT's work and projects and is a useful resource to share with funding agencies and for general audiences on www.tongariro.org.nz.

Implementing a marketing plan will provide an opportunity to continue to grow members and supporters.

Geographical Map of Major Projects



4. The Future

There are generally three key elements that make a great organization and/or business. They are; know your point of difference, have a great culture and be agile so you can adapt to the changing technologies and community around you. This strategy was developed to ensure PT remains agile, builds on its existing culture and refreshes its point of difference.

PT's culture and activities need to represent the diversity in the community across a range of activities. Developing a clear strategic plan and a supporting business plan takes into consideration emerging trends and opportunities in the region, how to leverage PT's strengths to achieve long-term sustainability and ensure its effectively leveraging its point of difference effectively.

Future priorities are (but not exclusive to):

- Tongariro National Park (including Ohakune)
- Collaborating with iwi and others
- Projects that maybe small or have shared values
- Supporting recreational opportunities, and
- Identifying PT's capacity for growth.

The emerging trends include preparing and catering for people who are increasingly time poor, constant technological changes, visitors who are hungry for fun and adventure activities which are frequently not family-based.

Of benefit to PT is that it operates in an area that is internationally recognised, is a recreation paradise, has many holidaymakers who have an affinity for the region. Treaty of Waitangi claims are currently being settled in Tongariro National Park and the central North Island generally; this provides new opportunities for PT to work with iwi.

In 2017 PT will implement this strategy. The priority will be to prepare a marketing plan which helps reach more people, increase membership and support in any way that is appropriate to allow the organisation to grab opportunities to work with others as they arise.

5. Partnerships

PT works on a wide range of projects across the Taupo/Tongariro area. These vary in size, length of time and complexity; some are one-off while others are ongoing. PT believes collaboration with a variety of partners is vital to its ongoing existence and success as an organisation.

PT has long-term partnerships with DOC, Pharazyn Trust, Bay Trust and Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. These are key relationships as they provide sustainability and long-term funding for several ongoing biodiversity projects.

The organisation has numerous other relationships with local trusts, organisations and businesses including the Geyser Foundation, Craters of the Moon Trust, Department of Corrections, T B Free NZ, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts, Ohakune 2000, Wairakei Golf and Sanctuary, Bayview International Hotels and Resort (Chateau Tongariro and Wairakei Resort), Waikato and Massey Universities, etc.

PT values all its partnerships and relationships and strives to sustain and maintain these in the future in accordance with its core values. Integrity is important and it's important to partner with organisations and fundraising activities that are compatible with PT's vision. Conservation gains and conservation outcomes are critical.

Because of shared interests and values, PT has a strong desire to continue work with and strengthen its relationships with iwi. It also seeks to expand relationships with other regional organisations such as Taupō District Council, Waikato Regional Council and Ruapehu District Council.

6. Events

PT has a long history of involvement with events in and around Tongariro National Park. For example, Mahi Aroha (previously called the Summer Nature Programme), Kite Day, Tussock Traverse and The Goat.

PT understands that involvement in events fits with its vision – a sense of fun, discovery and adventure in Tongariro/Taupō. Events also bring new people into the region and potentially to the organisation. PT remains committed to supporting recreational opportunities in Tongariro/Taupō.

7. Projects

Ongoing projects include:

- Te Matapuna wetlands (south-eastern and southern shores of Lake Taupō)
Mt Pihanga - Lake Rotopounamu forest restoration
- Greening Taupō (urban restoration project)
- Kids Greening Taupō (environmental education based on Greening Taupō).

While PT is committed to the Tongariro/Taupō region it hopes to give future priority to projects within Tongariro National Park, including the southern side of the park.

PT plays a valuable role in initiating projects and working in collaboration with others. The organization is well connected and its culture positions it well when it comes to getting projects started. An example of this is Greening Taupō.

Defining Project Criteria:

To test a project idea, PT considers the following;

1. Does the project fit a goal? If so, which one?
2. Align with vision, mission and values
3. Will it have member support?
4. Does it align to DOC priorities and have their support?
5. Will it attract collaboration or partners?
6. Are the goals sustainable?
7. Will funding be possible / available and sustainable?
8. Do we have the capability and capacity to project manage and deliver?
9. Does the project have a good story – will it resonate with people?

8. Identity and Opportunities

As an organisation PT has a 'personality'. Many of the current traits of PT's public face are positive and can be retained. That said it should always be ready to adapt to reflect the modern environment.

PT's personality currently evokes the following feelings: 'practical, traditional, experienced and enduring' and mostly appeals to an older generation.

PT's identity needs to

- Inspire connection and involvement
- Be compelling to contribute towards outcomes
- Create a 'Tongariro Utopia'
- Create a spiritual feeling of connection - emotional wellbeing
- Build a sense of community, belonging and team spirit

- Provide opportunities for participation that are unique

This strategy promotes the necessity to adapt and refresh PT's identity within the organisation and how it projects itself publically. PT wants people to connect, understand and identify with its values and inspire them to get involved. This is key to any promotional plan.

Evoking feelings such as 'emotive, holistic, responsive, fun, diverse and collaborative' is a future focus. PT will use more casual language to help resonate with different age groups to help attract interest and engagement from younger people.

9. Resources

People are PT's greatest resource. They have a small team of committed long-term staff, a number of dedicated volunteers and an executive team. Our key focus is an increase in capacity and capability to implement the directions in the strategy.

How we do this can be done in a number of ways. This will be explored in the implementation plan. However, for example - employment is one option, leveraging off networking and relationship building and volunteer efforts in-kind.

10. Implementation

In 2017 PT will prepare an 'implementation plan' in discussion with staff. This plan will detail how the organisation will deliver on its vision. The implementation plan will include set objectives and how to action them.

For the purposes of the strategy, priorities for implementation will be:

1. Prepare a marketing plan that delivers on the direction of this strategy.
2. Increase membership and support through networking, relationship building and leveraging opportunities.
3. Strengthen capacity and capability to deliver directions in the strategy.
4. Successful implementation of this plan would like something like this:
 - *PT has strengthened partnerships with iwi*
 - *New people representing diverse demographics are involved with projects and offering support in several ways e.g. the skiing community.*
 - *PT's increased profile and ability to connect with a wider audience means new resources are available for projects.*
 - *More people available for key roles to undertake project work.*