

Community & Services Committee
24 September 2024
Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [4]

Department: Community Services

Title | Taitara: Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan for adoption. The trail network plan was developed in partnership with the Coronet Forest Recreational Working Group.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That the Community & Services Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Adopt** the Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan (**Attachment A**)

Prepared by:



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Title: Parks and Open Spaces Planning
Manager
4 September 2024

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Kenneth Bailey
Title: General Manager Community Services
4 September 2024

Context | Horopaki

1. The Coronet site is located on the lower slopes of Coronet Peak close to Arrowtown. The 400 hectare site is freehold and administered by Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). The site is steep with southerly and northerly aspects. The site has one entrance via Alan Reid Road, which is a formed gravel road off Malaghans Road (**Attachment B**).

2. Approximately 172 hectares of the Coronet site was planted in Douglas fir from 1984 - 1996. In 2017, Council approved its early harvest as the forest was a significant seed source contributing to the wilding pine issue. The harvest operation occurred from 2020 to 2023.
3. The Council plans to revegetate the south facing slopes with native species. This is a unique opportunity leading a large ecological restoration project in Otago. The first trees will be planted in early 2025 and the project is expected to take approximately seven years to complete.
4. The vision is to establish an indigenous ecosystem, while providing a recreational space for the local community and visitors. The revegetation project has been designed to achieve the following key objectives:
 - Promote the natural regeneration of native vegetation and provide biodiversity and a habitat for native wildlife.
 - The reforestation will meet the Emissions Trading Scheme requirements.
 - Prevent the establishment of Douglas fir seedlings and other weedy noxious species.
 - Meet the expectations of the community and provide recreation for future generations to enjoy through the establishment of walkways, biking tracks, horse trekking trails and picnic areas.
5. The horse-riding community have been using the site since the mid- 1980's. Before the trees were harvested the Wakatipu Riding Club had a formal licence with Council to allow for horse riding within the forest. During this time there were no official mountain bike or walking tracks within the forest.
6. The paragliding community historically gained access to take-off sites on the ridge of the Coronet site via the forest until the trees matured and their height prevented this activity. This site was popular for 'hike and fly' as the Flight Park provide a landing field for paraglider and hang-gliding pilots directly below the forest.
7. The site has extensive recreational opportunities and once the harvest began community groups indicated to QLDC they were interested in understanding and discussing access and activities that could utilise the site.
8. Council held its first engagement workshop with representatives from interested community groups in October 2020. The community groups agreed that a network plan should be created to provide a clear vision for the development of the site. The Coronet Forest Recreational Working Group was formed and a subgroup of highly motivated volunteers created the first draft plan.
9. The group visited the site and continued to refine the Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan. In December 2023 the wider group was asked to review the plan and provide feedback on the design.

10. The Queenstown Mountain Bike Club (QMTBC) was engaged to incorporate the feedback into the network plan. The QMTBC's design had to consider the context of the landscape, utilising exiting forestry tracks where possible to minimise the requirement for further earthworks across the site. The QMTBC's objective was to provide opportunities for a range of recreational users in a safe and sustainable way. The goal was to remove the risk of conflict between users at the site and to accommodate shared use where possible.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

11. The draft network plan provides a vision for the site which can be used as a guide to establish a network of trails. The draft plan is intended to provide a framework which will influence the development, design and construction (Attachment A). Having a well-designed plan in place for the trail network means that QLDC can construct trails when funding opportunities present and before the site is revegetated with trees. Trail construction before planting means there is a greater chance plants won't have to be moved at a later date to accommodate a trail.

Description of the plan

12. Many of the trails will have shared use, with the design providing for loops of varying lengths and difficulties, while providing uphill and downhill trails opportunities. The trail network provides the following:
- Consideration of wider connections, links into Bush Creek, future links to Arrowtown, and Queenstown trail Trust routes
 - A ridgeline route for walkers
 - Beginner and advanced loops for horse riders and walkers
 - Skills areas for horse riders
 - Intermediate trails for mountain bikers
 - Progressive loops for mountain bikers
 - Advanced climbs for mountain bikers and walkers
 - Skills areas for mountain bikers
 - Return trails for mountain bikers and walkers
 - Access walking track for paragliding launch sites
 - Picnic points/ lookouts and rest areas within the site
 - The main road across the block will provide shared access
13. The trail network prioritises the physical separation of horse riders and uphill and downhill mountain biking routes by removing any dangerous conflicts.
14. Due to the terrain and steepness of the site the network accommodates intermediate to advanced mountain bikers. The trail network is similar to the trails provided at 12 Mile Delta near Queenstown.

15. The trail design provides a threshold or limit to the trail development. The group assessed what is sustainable within the context of the landscape and has accommodated an appropriate number of trails within the site.
16. Future facilities would include toilets, drinking water and formal car parking.
17. A deer fence is to be installed around the perimeter to prevent invasive pests such as goats and rabbits from entering the site. The fence is not a complete predator-free fence which would exclude all pest mammals (such as stoats, rats and possums). The fence line follows the existing forestry tracks and there are several gate locations to access the site. While some trails must pass through the fence, this has been accommodated within the design.
18. A natural hazard and Geotech assessment was completed to understand the landscape. The assessment provides control measures that need to be considered in the construction of new trails to mitigate the likelihood of slope instability.
19. The design will incorporate construction of engineered retaining walls or reinforced earth slopes to reduce future maintenance costs.
20. Most of the recommended measures to mitigate the slope instability are relatively cost-effective. The main objective of revegetating slopes over time will provide the greatest erosion protection.
21. Implementation of the plan will help provide a world-class experience for recreational uses of different technical skill levels and experience.

Construction

22. The trail construction and design considers the topography, landforms, ground conditions, future vegetation cover and landscape. Having a network of trails in place before areas are planted allows the planting design to accommodate the trail network opportunities, reducing the requirement to remove plants later to accommodate trail changes.
23. A high-level estimate to build the network has been calculated at \$1.5 million (this estimate includes contingency but excludes the carpark, toilets, drinking fountains and hardstand facilities). The high-level estimate was based on the cost to construct trails of this nature at similar sites. A full cost estimate which evaluates the designed design is yet to be determined.
24. The revegetation will take place over multiple years and the trail network plan can also be staged across many years. Some trails will require intensive construction with machinery and other can be built by hand. This allows for resources, such as capital funding, revenue opportunities or direct labour to be utilised in targeted and strategic ways that have the most positive long-term impacts.
25. Having a sustainable plan and framework in place early enables QLDC to take advantage of any early funding opportunities that may arise. Funding opportunities may be through the Community

groups, Central Lakes Trust, Lotteries commission or Tāhuna Ride and Conservation (TRACT) trust. Further opportunities that could be explored include potential partnerships or third-party investments.

26. There are volunteer opportunities to be explored which could facilitate the sense of creation and ownership of the site among users and the wider community. In the future QLDC can explore management of the site via community participation and guardianship.
27. Commercial concessions, grants and corporate sponsorship activities can be explored in the future by working with stakeholders. QLDC does not need this detail prearranged and can explore and consider opportunities as they arise.

Maintenance

28. Maintenance will be required on the trails to preserve the intended standards. Maintenance will not be required on new trails within the first three years as the trail development will be to a standard where it's not required
29. The cost of annual maintenance is estimated at \$150,000 per year, which has been calculated from the total build cost. Annual maintenance is dependent on usage and weather events.
30. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by Section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Option 1 Adopt the Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan

Advantages:

- Adopting the Draft Trail Coronet Network Plan will enable the future development of the site to happen sustainably, aligning and meeting the community's expectations.
- The plan has been informed by engagement with a range of stakeholders and will meet their recreational requirements, providing significant environmental, social and cultural benefits.
- It is practical to implement the trail plan before trees are planted at the site.
- The plan aligns with the conservation and ecological restoration aspirations for the site, leading to more people engaging with the habitat and the surrounding areas in positive and sustainable way.
- The implementation of the plan provides a range of recreational activities which benefit the social wellbeing and health of the local community.
- The plan would provide a positive economic impact and would add to the already growing mountain bike tourism industry of Queenstown and the wider district.
- Having a detailed trail network plan that has a limit to the maximum trails on the site allows QLDC to plan and calculate future maintenance costs and budget requirements.
- The site will provide safe area for horse riding, as there are currently limited riding opportunities on QLDC trails.

Disadvantages:

- Ongoing management and maintenance of the site.
- Facilitating the construction of the trail network without future maintenance funding secured.

Option 2 Do not adopt the Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan.

Advantages:

- No Council time or resource is required for management or maintenance

Disadvantages:

- There will be no clear plan for how the Coronet trail network will be built and established leading to the building of pirate trails that might not meet the required standard.
- Recreational benefits associated with wellbeing will not be realised.
- Council will not meet the community's expectation that Coronet site will provide recreation opportunities for future generations to enjoy.

31. This report recommends Option One for addressing the matter because this will provide the community a clear plan that directs and guides the site's future use and development. The trail network plan meets a variety of community objectives including social, economic and environmental.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

32. This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2021 because of the high community interest in the development and revegetation of the Coronet site.

33. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are users of the reserve, residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes district and the Arrowtown community, visitors to the Whakatipu and local recreation and conservation groups.

34. The Council has undertaken engagement and workshops with representatives from community stakeholder groups since 2020 to inform the Draft Coronet Trail Network Plan.

35. There are approximately 40 members of the Coronet Forest Recreational Working Group who represent the following community and recreational groups:

- Queenstown Trails Trust
- Southern Lakes Sanctuary
- Queenstown Mountain Bike Club (QTMBC)
- Wakatipu Walkers
- Whakatipu Reforestation Trust
- Arrowtown Choppers
- Wakatipu Riders
- Wakatipu Pony Club

- Arrowtown Village Association
- Southern Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club
- Flight Park

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

36. Council officers have informed Aukaha and Te Ao Marama of the Coronet Forest Revegetation Project. To reflect mana whenua values, Council will continue to engage and consult with iwi on the trail network plan.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

37. This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK10005 Ineffective planning for community services or facilities within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.

38. The approval of the recommended option will allow Council to avoid the risk. This will be achieved by creating a clear plan for how Council intends to provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities use of the site.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

39. The QLDC Long Term Plan (LTP) 2024-2034 does not include capital or operational budgets to implement the trail network plan. The proposed and current LTP has budget for the revegetation of the site over the next 8-10 years (until 2032).

40. Maintenance costs for the trail network are not expected within the next three years due to the staging of the trail network and use at the site during the revegetation project.

41. If the trails network is constructed it is anticipated that future maintenance costs will be considered need to be considered in the next LTP 2027 -2037. As there is a limit or cap to the number of trails across the site this detail can be forecasted accurately.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

42. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Vision Beyond 2050: Our Vision and Mission - QLDC
- Local Government Act 2002.
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021.
- Climate and Action and Biodiversity plan

43. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies. It aligns with thriving people | Whakapuāwai Hapori as it provides community connection through social and recreational opportunities. The network plan allows for pride in sharing our places | Kia noho

tahi tātou katoa by allowing the community to enjoy and connect to a large innovative restoration project.

44. This matter is not included in the Long Term Plan. It is not anticipated that the trail network will require council funding within the next three years. The trail network plan is to be staged and the cost of construction is to be explored through external funding streams such as trusts and volunteer opportunities.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

45. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

46. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Coronet Trail Network Plan
B	Coronet Forest Map

Draft Coronet trail network Plan - Framework - September 2024

This document sets out the framework of how the Coronet Trail network plan will be implemented and provides a vision, and guiding principles to inform the management of the site at this stage of the development.

This document details:

- Ecological restoration and biodiversity
- Network plan
- Sustainability development framework
- Maintenance

1. Ecological restoration and biodiversity

The vision is to establish an indigenous ecosystem, while providing a recreational space for the local community and visitors. The revegetation project has been designed to achieve the following key objectives:

- Promote the natural regeneration of native vegetation and provide biodiversity and a habitat for native wildlife.
- Meet the expectations of the community and provide recreation for future generations to enjoy through the establishment of walkways, biking tracks, horse trekking trails and picnic areas.

2. Network plan

The revegetation will take place over several years and the trail network plan is to be staged. Many of the trails will have shared use, with the design providing for loops of varying lengths and difficulties, while providing uphill and downhill trails opportunities. The trail network provides the following:

- Consideration of wider connections, links into Bush Creek, future links to Arrowtown, and Queenstown trail Trust routes
- A ridgeline route for walkers
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- Skills areas for mountain bikers
- Return trails for mountain bikers and walkers
- Access walking track for paragliding launch sites
- Picnic points/ lookouts and rest areas within the site
- The main road across the block will provide shared access

The trail network prioritises the physical separation of horse riders and uphill and downhill mountain biking routes by removing any dangerous conflicts.

The network will provide opportunities for a wide a range of users in a sustainable and manageable way that does not compromise its landscape or natural value.

Due to the terrain and steepness of the site the network will accommodate intermediate to advanced mountain bikers.

A deer fence is to be installed around the perimeter to prevent invasive pests such as goats and rabbits from entering the site. The fence is not a complete predator-free fence which would exclude all pest mammals (such as stoats, rats and possums). The fence line follows the exiting forestry tracks and there are several gate locations to access the site. While some trails must pass through the fence, this has been accommodated within the design.

The trail design provides a threshold or limit to the future trail development. The plan details what is sustainable within the context of the landscape and has accommodated an appropriate number of trails within the site.

In the future the site should be accessible by transport other than cars i.e consideration of wider connections, links into Bush Creek, future links to Arrowtown, and Queenstown Trail Trust routes.

3. Sustainability development framework

The following guiding principles are to inform the construction and development of the site:

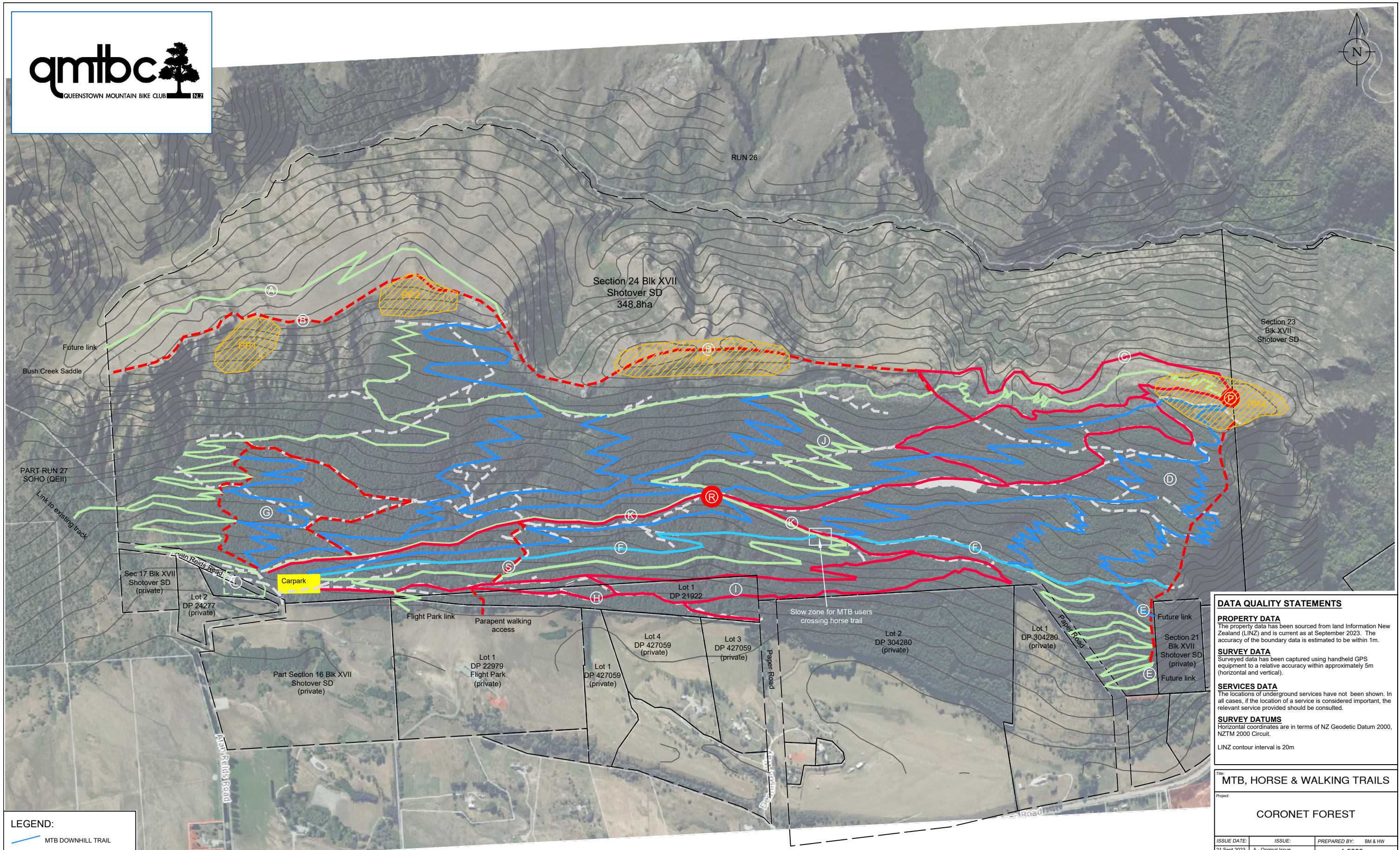
- Trail planning, design, construction and maintenance must adopt methodologies that are sustainable and mitigate landscape impacts and ensure effective implementation.
For example:
 - appropriate planting around trails for site lines and future maintenance
 - mitigate the visual impact of new and existing trails on the landscape
 - water management across trails
 - retaining which supports slope stability
- Trail construction and maintenance standards will be developed to inform the construction works. This will be guided by the sustainability framework and considers both handmade trails and machine-built trails.
- The community (both local and wider) will be encouraged to get involved in volunteering activities, including biodiversity management and trail maintenance and management on a ongoing basis, creating long term positive impacts.
- Consult with iwi on wayfinding and opportunities for sharing mana whenua histories, narratives and cultural identity through pūrakau/stories and mana whenua interpretation panels.
- Ecological health of all waterways and sites of significance will be protected to respect cultural connections. This will be through clear guidelines which will inform design of trails in proximity to streams and gullies.
- Slope mitigation measures which must be considered during construction:
 - Adjust the trail network to avoid the more at-risk areas and any overland flow paths.
 - Where trails must cross overland flow paths, ensure adequately sized culverts with appropriate erosion protection are installed to minimise the risk of ponding water and scouring.

- Limiting earthworks to form the trail including minimising the amount of fill placed on the mapped areas of fill and avoiding cutting into the toe of the high-risk areas and any steep slopes.
- Re-grading over steepened areas of soil and existing fill areas to more stable batters. Consideration could be given to removal of fill from more active/higher risk overland flow paths.
- Construction of engineered retaining walls or reinforced earth slopes where limiting earthworks are not possible.
- Construction cut off drains to divert surface water away from any steep slopes.
- These drains should be outlet to an appropriate location with adequate erosion protection.
- Revegetating slopes and/or covering the surface with erosion protection such as coconut matting or riprap.
- A detailed overland flow review to determine if the forestry tracks and associated earthworks could trigger wider slope instability by overland flow diversion and/or drain/water table blockage.

4. Maintenance

Key maintenance objectives to be met:

- Trail maintenance must be guided by robust guidelines related to minimising impacts on to landscape, ecological health and biodiversity.
- Trail maintenance and management must take into account issues that relate to the type of trail to ensure that works consider spatial variability with soils, vegetation, exposure and usage.
- Maintenance and management must be guided by effective standards relating to trail grading, design and construction.
- Maintenance and management of the site must be founded on the vision of a regenerating native forest and consider the objectives of ecological restoration and pest control in all decisions.



- LEGEND:**
- MTB DOWNHILL TRAIL
 - MTB UPHILL/WALKING TRAIL
 - - - WALKING TRAIL
 - MTB DH RETURN TRAIL
 - HORSE RIDING TRAIL
 - - - LOGGING ROADS
 - LINZ 20M CONTOURS
 - REST / PICNIC SPOT

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Bush Creek Saddle Link - MTB & Walkers (B) Ridgeline route - Walkers (unformed poled route) (C) Advanced loop - Horses (D) Advanced zone - MTB (E) Potential future link to Arrowtown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (F) Main return trail - MTB (G) Progression loops - MTB (H) Skills area - Horses (I) Progression trails - Horses (J) Advanced climb - MTB & Walkers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (K) Shared access - main road (including emergency access) (L) Skills area - MTB (P) Picnic point / Lookout (R) Rest area (S) Paragliding walking access |
|---|---|--|



Proposed Track Stats:	
Horse Trails	11km
Walking Trails	6km
MTB Climbing trails (incl. shared use)	14km
MTB Downhill only	20km
Total:	51km

DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS

PROPERTY DATA
The property data has been sourced from land Information New Zealand (LINZ) and is current as at September 2023. The accuracy of the boundary data is estimated to be within 1m.

SURVEY DATA
Surveyed data has been captured using handheld GPS equipment to a relative accuracy within approximately 5m (horizontal and vertical).

SERVICES DATA
The locations of underground services have not been shown. In all cases, if the location of a service is considered important, the relevant service provided should be consulted.

SURVEY DATUMS
Horizontal coordinates are in terms of NZ Geodetic Datum 2000, NZTM 2000 Circuit.
LINZ contour interval is 20m

Title: MTB, HORSE & WALKING TRAILS

Project: CORONET FOREST

ISSUE DATE:	ISSUE:	PREPARED BY:	Scale
21 Sept 2023	A - Original Issue	BM & HW	1:5000 @ A1
1 Nov 2023	B - Wikipu Horse Riders Input		1:10000 @ A3
3 Feb 2024	C - Trail expert reviews		
16 Feb 2024	D - Additional notes		
21 Aug 2024	E - Parapent takeoff zones		
5 Sept 2024	F - Paragliding correction		

DRAWING & ISSUE No. COFO.10.1F

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