

## **Future Recreational Opportunities – draft Westland Tai Poutini NPMP**

There are a number of new recreational opportunities identified in the draft Westland Tai Poutini national park management plan. This paper gives some further context and details on these proposals.

### **Visitor Access and Carparking**

Significant increases in the number of domestic and international visitors to Westland Tai Poutini is expected to continue. Existing and future recreational opportunities will need to be managed to ensure visitor experiences are not impacted by this.

The Department is currently investigating options for managing carparks at popular and accessible Icon Destinations sites such as Lake Matheson/Raumati and the Glacier Valleys. It is not preferable to increase the size of car parks at these locations and other workable options to maintain visitor experiences at these sites is being investigated. The options could include charging for car parking, time limits, off-site carparks, park & ride and seasonal parking. The Department is currently undertaking a trial to determine the preferred option.

### **Managing Waste**

Consistent with the principles of *Leave No Trace New Zealand*, the Department are promoting the pack-out approach for human waste from alpine (non-organic soil) areas. This will be reviewed at various times throughout the life of the plan.

Additionally, the Department are seeking to minimize the amount of refuse disposed of within the park and encourage its disposal at suitable sites outside the Park boundaries. This will be achieved by working with concessionaires, local business and councils to investigate future sustainable options.

### **Future Recreational Opportunities**

#### *Multi-Day Backcountry Lowland Tramping Experience*

The draft plan identifies a potential safe multi-day backcountry lowland tramping experience between Ōkārito and Gillespies/Waikōhai Beach - within Ngā Puna Ora (Lowlands) Place. This is currently a known route by backcountry trampers. The precise location of this track is yet to be determined, and any future proposal may include a new hut. This potential future track would be an addition to the range of recreational opportunities within the park and has the potential to increase average length of stay and encourage year round recreation opportunities.

#### *Walking Track to Lake Gault*

The Department are investigating options to reinstate an existing walking track to Lake Gault, within the Ngā Puna Ora (Lowlands) Place. Opening this track will provide further recreation activities within the Fox Glacier/Weheka area.

#### *Purpose built mountain biking track*

Through the draft plan the Department is providing for the investigation of an integrated purpose-built mountain biking track to be located from Saltwater to Fox Glacier township, within the Nga Puna Ora (Lowlands) Place. This proposal is to facilitate the extension of the *Te Ara Pounamu/The South Westland Wilderness Trail*. Where possible the purpose built track would utilise existing

forestry roads and tramway routes. There may be a requirement for a new hut as part of this proposal.

In order to facilitate this proposal there may be a need to have mountain biking on some existing walking tracks such as Ōkārīto Trig and Three Mile pack Track. The initial part of the three mile pack track is currently on legal road managed by Westland District Council.

The three mile track is an actively conserved historic pack track. The Department will need to get the track assessed as to what standard it would currently meet in terms of track classification for mountain biking. An assessment of all values such as natural, cultural including mana whenua cultural values and historic values will be undertaken. The Rowi Sanctuary is within this location and any adverse effects will need to be considered within this context.

#### *Potential tramping and overnight opportunity at Mt Fox*

With the increasing challenges of maintaining safe access to view points in the Fox Valley the future opportunity exists to create a new tramping track and overnight opportunity at Mt Fox within the Te Hiritiri o te Moana (Glaciers) Place. A loop track of approximately 20km in length back to Fox/Weheka township is proposed. The climb to the tops is approximately 900m with stunning panoramic views of the Southern Alps/Ka Tiritiri o te Moana. There is opportunity for a private/public partnership providing chalet style overnight accommodation from fully catered luxury rooms through to back-packer style bunks.

#### *Access to the Glaciers*

Providing ongoing safe access to retreating glaciers that are located in dynamic and changing environments as well as managing visitor experience and visitor safety is a significant issue for this Plan to address. Alternative ways of accessing the glaciers from the traditional walking access in the glacier valleys are already being used and are proposed in this Plan. Increased use of aircraft to take visitors onto the glaciers has occurred since walking access to and onto the glaciers has become unsafe. Please refer to the aircraft topic paper on the website for more details.

#### *Dogs*

Opportunities for recreational dog walking are being tested through the draft plan. Four tracks have been identified for recreational dog walking, subject to strict controls to protect Park values: Tateré Tunnels Track, Callery Gorge Track, Canavans Knob Track and Neils Creek Track. Dogs are not used for recreational hunting in the park. Further details are in the discussion box in the draft plan (page 77).

#### *Proposed Amenities Area in Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hinehukatere valley*

The draft plan provides details of a proposed amenities area within the Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hinehukatere valley. The Department is testing this through a discussion box to seek specific feedback from the public as to whether an amenities area should be gazette at this location, to facilitate a gondola proposal. Further details are in the discussion box in the draft plan (page 122).