

National approach for biking

Project update 3, July 2023

A note from the team

Kia ora koutou,

Thank you for your continuing interest in DOC's new approach for biking on public conservation lands and waters! We're wheely glad you're keeping up to date!

In this update, we will cover:

- Project recap (for any newbies)
- Engaging with Conservation Boards
- Establishing an external reference group
- Addressing existing bike tracks
- What's next for the project?

Ngā mihi,

The Management Planning Team

Project recap

We propose each Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) identifies no-go areas where biking won't be considered. CMS will then allow consideration of new biking opportunities in all other areas, excluding national parks. This doesn't mean CMS will allow biking just anywhere else but it allows us to assess new biking proposals against strengthened criteria whereas, currently, we can't even consider them unless they are already provided for in the CMS.

The approach will provide:

- a nationally consistent approach to considering biking opportunities on public conservation lands and waters,
- flexibility for tailoring at a regional level, and
- transparency in terms of criteria to be used to make decisions.

We are developing sample provisions that can be adapted to reflect local values and factors. The

development of criteria to identify no-go areas is central to this. Every region is different, so a one size fits all approach doesn't work. Examples of no-go areas might be areas of high natural or cultural importance.

The sample provisions will also include criteria for considering new biking proposals based on those recently developed and added to the [Otago CMS](#).

Conservation Board engagement

We have been talking with Conservation Boards and seeking their perspectives on biking in their regions and their initial thoughts on our planned approach. The conversations have been extremely useful, and we thank the Boards for their constructive and collaborative approach.

Most Boards were supportive of the proposed approach in principle, particularly its regional adaptability. They consider that criteria for no-go areas and the consideration of new bike tracks will need to be adaptable to specific regions and changes over time.

However, several Boards have said a partial review of their CMS for biking is not a priority and they would prefer a full review of their CMS.

The Boards reiterated the need for effective consultation with an emphasis on comprehensive engagement with iwi, hapū and whānau and aligning the work with other organisations, such as regional councils.

Boards want to see criteria for new bike tracks that are robust and consider:

- conservation values including improvements to conservation values e.g. through pest control along tracks;
- monitoring of effects including cumulative effects and impacts of construction;
- ongoing maintenance;

- new biking technologies;
- associated infrastructure requirements e.g. toilets and shelters;
- conflicts with other track users;
- accessibility; and
- restrictions, including seasonality of tracks.

Most Boards would like to be involved in the review of the no-go area criteria and proposed provisions.

Stakeholder workshops

We are setting up a series of online stakeholder workshops to provide a space to share and gather information on the proposed approach. These will build on the engagement we undertook in 2021. This will help ensure the criteria and provisions we develop are robust, applicable nationally and flexible enough to adapt to regional needs.

If you would like to attend, please contact us at NationalReviewBikingCMS@doc.govt.nz with your name, contact details and a summary of your expertise or interest by 15 August.

The first workshop will be on 17 August at 12:30-2:30pm and there will be four workshops in total. Each session will last 1-2 hours. We look forward to some robust and constructive discussions.

If you can't make it, don't worry! This isn't your only chance to be involved. There will be further opportunities to have your say once the new approach is included in a partial CMS review.

Existing bike tracks

For our purposes, an existing bike track is defined as: *“a bike track already developed on public conservation lands and waters used by bikes (including e-bikes) and excludes extension to existing bike tracks.”*

We are aware some existing bike tracks are not consistent with their relevant statutory documents (e.g. CMS and National Park Plans), causing issues for accessing funding and other unintended outcomes.

DOC is working to understand the extent of this issue and how to manage existing bike tracks consistently. In the meantime, only new bike tracks that are consistent with the relevant statutory documents will be authorised in the future.

Next, we will...

- Test the first draft of no-go area criteria and sample provisions both internally and externally
- Develop a prioritised programme of CMS reviews, which will incorporate the national approach.
- Begin engaging with iwi, hapū and whānau in regions where CMS reviews are identified as a priority.
- Explore how to manage existing bike tracks that aren't consistent with statutory documents.

How to get in touch

We'll keep you updated through the DOC website, where more information on the project can also be found. If you have any questions, or want to be added to our contacts list, please email us at:

NationalReviewBikingCMS@doc.govt.nz

We'll do another update in October so you can keep up with our progress!