

**QLDC Council  
28 July 2016**

**Report for Agenda Item: 6**

**Department: Property and Infrastructure**

**Management of tracks on Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider accepting responsibilities for the management of new and existing tracks on Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations.

**Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Agree to accept the request from the QEII National Trust to undertake responsibility for the management of the following tracks on Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations; maintaining them to the associated track standards:
  - Long Gully Track – Coronet Peak Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards
  - Green Gate Track – Coronet Peak Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards
  - Deep Creek to Coronet Creek Track – Coronet Peak Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards
  - Bush Creek – Coronet Peak Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards
  - Water Race Trail (to be formed) – Coronet Peak Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards
  - Sawpit Gully – Coronet Peak Station: Back Country Adventure or Back Country Comfort standard as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures
  - New Chum Gully – Glencoe Station: Back Country Adventure or Back Country Comfort standard as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures
  - Saddle Exit Trail (to be formed) – Coronet Peak Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards

- Tobin's Drop – Glencoe Station: Back Country Adventure standard as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures
- New Chums Ridge Track – Glencoe Station: Grade 3 or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards
- Peters Way – Glencoe Station: Back Country Adventure or Back Country Comfort standard as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures
- Miners Trail – Glencoe Station: Back Country Adventure or Back Country Comfort standard as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures
- Brackens Gully – Glencoe Station: Back Country Adventure or Back Country Comfort standard as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures

subject to the following conditions:

- a) Tracks being formed by Soho Property Limited to the to the above standards;
- b) A QLDC agreed representative oversees the formation of the tracks and inspects the tracks following their formation to ensure their compliance with the above standards;
- c) The QEII National Trust being the controlling authority for the public access easements over the tracks;
- d) A memorandum of understanding between the QEII National Trust, Soho Property Limited, the Department of Conservation, the Queenstown Trails Trust, the Arrowtown Village Association and QLDC being established;
- e) QLDC being represented on a governing body made up of representatives of the memorandum of understanding to agree decisions for any events or commercial activities on the tracks, track upgrades or major repairs proposed, or any other decisions impacting the use, maintenance funding and standard of the tracks;
- f) Queenstown Trails Trust to obtain resource consents as required to develop the trails;
- g) Soho Property Limited maintain all tracks for the first three years following all track formation; and
- h) The QLDC contribution to the maintenance of the tracks to not exceed \$10,000 per annum, and to be effective three years from completion of all track works. This maintenance budget could be supplemented by revenue from events or commercial activities.

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14/07/2016

## Background

- 1 In May 2014, Soho Property Limited (SPL) entered into four covenants with the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust (National Trust) to protect more than 53,000 hectares of land across Motatapu, Mount Soho, Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations in the Queenstown District. These Mahu Whenua covenants were registered in March 2015.
- 2 As a condition of purchase by SPL of Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations the Overseas Investment Office (OIO) stipulated that SPL work with the NZ Walking Access Commission (WAC) to develop and secure public access tracks. This obliges SPL to form a series of new tracks to a back country standard and to guarantee public access on some already formed tracks.
- 3 The OIO conditions stipulate that the track system must be provided for by easement agreements. The National Trust is working with the WAC, which will establish walkway easements under the Walking Access Act 2008.
- 4 In recognition of the importance of these covenants and its partnerships with SPL, and to integrate the track system into the management of the covenants, the National Trust has agreed in principle to become the controlling authority for all new public access easements on Coronet and Glencoe Stations following their registration with Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) by the WAC.
- 5 In 2013, Council accepted the controlling authority status for the public access easements between Bush Creek, Long Gully, Deep Creek and Coronet (Eight Mile) Creek. As per the letter documented in Attachment A, the National Trust has since decided to become the controlling authority for all tracks on the stations on the understanding that QLDC and the Department of Conservation (DOC) is prepared to support their role. The Trust propose that should QLDC and DOC agree to take over responsibility for day to day management for parts of the track network, this agreement will be documented between the parties.
- 6 It is intended that all tracks are formed prior to QLDC taking on their management. There is no expectation from the National Trust that the tracks will be formed to the standards of the Queenstown Trail. Whilst some of the tracks, including those that make up the Coronet Loop Trail, will be formed to a Grade 3

or 4 standard as per the New Zealand Cycle Trail Standards, others will be maintained to their existing standard, which is in accordance with Back Country Comfort (BCC) to Back Country Adventure (BCA) standards as per SNZ HB 8630:2004 – Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures.

- 7 The National Trust has requested that DOC manage other tracks on the stations. The tracks that DOC have been requested to manage are as follows:
  - Hayes Creek Track – Coronet Peak Station
  - Big Hill Track – Coronet Peak Station
  - Coronet Peak to Arrowtown via Brow Peak – Coronet Peak Station
  - Macetown Miners Track
  - Advance Peak Track
  - Polnoon Track – Coronet Peak Station
  - Crown Peak
  - Crown Peak to Crown Saddle
- 8 The National Trust is developing signage and interpretation material for the tracks prior to QLDC and DOC accepting management responsibilities.

### **Comment**

- 9 The tracks across the stations are currently and, when further developed, will be an increasingly significant recreational asset for residents and visitors to the District. Their formation will be at no cost to ratepayers and the QLDC maintenance contribution will not exceed \$10,000 per annum. This maintenance budget could be supplemented by revenue from events or commercial activities.
- 10 Following a meeting between the National Trust, WAC, DOC and QLDC officers, a report was jointly commissioned by WAC and QLDC to review the proposed and existing tracks proposed to be managed by QLDC. The purpose of the report titled *Coronet Peak & Glencoe Station Tracks* dated 26 November 2015 (Attachment B) is to inform Council of the preferred construction standards and the maintenance requirements prior to agreeing to accept ongoing management.
- 11 The recommendations in this report are largely in accordance with the recommendations of the commissioned report.
- 12 Since the report was commissioned late last year, there have discussions held with various interested parties. Discussions included the following considerations:
  - Queenstown Trails Trust (QTT) has advised that they will obtain resource consents as required to form the tracks.

- SPL has advised that they will form all tracks requiring upgrading or formation and will maintain tracks for three years following their formation.
- The Arrowtown Promotion and Business Association (APBA) are supportive of the tracks and are planning an Eco-Centre for Arrowtown that will complement and enhance the track visitor experience. An interim initiative is to use the old policeman's hut next to Butlers Green to provide interpretation and way-finding material.
- The Arrowtown Village Association (AVA) has expressed interest in establishing a community group to continue the maintenance of the tracks.

13 The overwhelming consensus amongst stakeholders is that the tracks will be a positive asset for the local community, the wider District and for visitors. The conditions as recommended, and the community support, will ensure that the tracks are maintained to the expected standards and that the costs can be met.

### **Options**

14 Option 1 Accept the management of tracks as per recommendation

#### *Advantages:*

- 15 The tracks will continue, and add to, the recreational benefits experienced by the community and visitors.
- 16 Maintenance budgets will be required three years after completion of all tracks works.
- 17 There will be an acceptable level of responsibility in managing the tracks by fostering a partnership approach through the memorandum of understanding and governing body.
- 18 There is assurance for the community and for LINZ who are to issue the easements that the tracks will be managed.

#### *Disadvantages:*

- 19 Budget is required to maintain the tracks three years after completion of all tracks works.
- 20 There is an increased responsibility for QLDC in managing the tracks.

21 Option 2 Accept the management of some tracks but not others

#### *Advantages:*

- 22 Some of the tracks will continue, and add to, the recreational benefits experienced by the community and visitors.
- 23 Less cost is required to manage the tracks.
- 24 There is less responsibility in managing the tracks.

*Disadvantages:*

- 25 There is no assurance for the community or for LINZ that some of the tracks will be managed.
- 26 Some of the tracks may not continue, or will not be developed and therefore will not add to, the recreational benefits experienced by the community and visitors.
- 27 Option 3 Decline to manage all tracks

*Advantages:*

- 28 No cost is required to maintain the tracks.
- 29 There is no responsibility in managing the tracks.

*Disadvantages:*

- 30 There is no assurance for the community or for LINZ that the tracks will be managed by others.
- 31 The tracks may not continue, or will not be developed and therefore will not add to, the recreational benefits experienced by the community and visitors.
- 32 This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing the matter because the tracks will continue, and add to, the recreational benefits experienced by the community and visitors, the tracks will be able to be managed within existing budgets and there is an acceptable level of responsibility in managing the tracks.

### **Significance and Engagement**

- 33 This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because due to the extent that the matters being considered impact on the environment of the Queenstown Lakes District and the extent to which organisations in the community are affected by the decision.

### **Risk**

- 34 This matter related to the operational risk OR002 and OR010b. OR002 relates to an increase in expenditure and OR010b relates to damage or loss to third party asset or property as documented in the Council's risk register. The risk is classed as moderate.
- 35 This matter relates to the OR002 risk because managing the tracks will increase Council's expenditure on maintenance.
- 36 The OR010b risk is due to the fact that the tracks are a risk of being damaged due to exposure to environmental factors, and from inappropriate use.

## **Financial Implications**

37 Managing the tracks will be funded from maintenance budgets three years after the completion of all track works. The maintenance budget of these tracks will not exceed \$10,000 per annum to ensure that the management of the tracks is affordable.

## **Council Policies, Strategies and Bylaws**

38 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Significance and Engagement Policy – this decision is considered of low significance.

## **Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions**

39 The recommended option:

- Will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses by enhancing a reserve area and providing history on a notable historic Local who provided service to the community.
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies.

## **Consultation: Community Views and Preferences**

40 Stakeholders that have been consulted at various stages include the QEII National Trust, Soho Property Limited, Walking Access Commission, Department of Conservation, Queenstown Trails Trust, Arrowtown Village Association, Arrowtown Promotion and Business Association and Queenstown Mountain Bike Club. It is understood that all stakeholders are supportive of the recommendation.

## **41 Attachments**

- A Letter from the QEII National Trust dated 7 March 2016
- B Coronet Peak & Glencoe Station Tracks report dated 26 November 2015