



Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc)

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29 April 2011

Community Relations Programme Manager
Raukapuka Area Office
Department of Conservation
PO Box 33
GERALDINE 7956

Attn: Janine Sidery

Dear Janine

FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS SUBMISSION ON:

Recreation Opportunities in Hakatere Conservation Area (Barrosa) Discussion Document

This submission is from the Federated Mountain Clubs Inc. which represents over 80 clubs with some 16,000 members of tramping, mountaineering, climbing and other outdoor recreation organisations throughout New Zealand, and indirectly represents the interests and concerns of many thousands of private individuals who also enjoy recreation in the back country.

The Federation welcomes the opportunity to comment on an area that is well known to many of its members and one that is highly valued by them because the numerous scenic, recreational and conservation features contained within its borders. After consideration of the document, the Federation submits the following:

Comments made in relation to questions raised in the discussion document:

Question Box 1 (p 12, Proposed Access to Mt Barrosa Summit):

Federated Mountain Clubs is supportive of the route as outlined on the accompanying map (p 12). We agree that the access provisions and easements should be for foot traffic only due to the steepness and fragility of the topography. We note, however, that comments made on p 10 of this document make mention of both foot and mountain bike access from Blowing Point and this seems at odds with the aspirations outlined on p 12. Any signage at the Blowing Point car park should include the standard prohibition symbols for mountain biking, horse or vehicular access so that there is no ambiguity.

Question Box 2 (p 13 - Routes from Lake Emily to Stour Bridge):

(A & B) Federated Mountain Clubs supports the proposed route (outlined on Map 3, p 14) from Lake Emily to Stour Bridge. In general, we would have no problems with the route being designated for multi-use purposes (tramping, mountain biking and horses). However, we note that in the vicinity of Lake Emily, the route would cross the path of several water courses that feed the lake. Given the significance of the area's wetlands and Lake Emily's importance to the Australasian Grebe, we would suggest that measures are taken to avoid horses fouling any permanent waterways that feed the lake - e.g. provide designated crossing points, preferably with gravelled banks or a ford, or a place that can be stepped across, rather than have approaches with soft mud or grass. These features should be relatively inexpensive and would help minimise the risk of horses muddying the water or polluting it with their droppings. A small, unobtrusive, wire fence to prevent horses and bikers from straying too close to the lake edge and disturbing nest sites should be investigated unless the terrain and vegetation types that border the lake already act as a suitable barrier/deterrent.

(C) Federated Mountain Clubs has no issues with the proposed high level track for alternative flood access. As this involves sections of hillside side, the terrain should be assessed for suitability to accommodate bikes and horses. If the terrain is unsuitable and if the side track is going to be of lower quality than the main route, then signage specifying that the route is only suitable for foot traffic should be incorporated into the route marking regime at both ends of the detour.

Question Box 3 (p 15 - Manuka Hut to Lake Emily):

(A) Federated Mountain Clubs supports marking track access from Manuka Hut down the West Branch of the Stour River to link up with the farm track from Lake Emily to the Stour River. We do not have any issues with the multi-use nature (trampers, mountain bikers, horses) as proposed in the document.

(B) Given the multi-use nature proposed for this section, we would prefer that it is maintained to 'tramping-track standard' rather than 'route standard.' We do not feel that the latter category would be sufficient to protect the underlying terrain given the potential for the heavier impact of horses/pack animals or mountain bikes that a multi-use designation would allow.

Question Box 4 (p 16 - Woolshed Creek Hut to Manuka Hut via Stour River):

(A) Federated Mountain Clubs strongly supports a marked access route from the Stour River to Woolshed Creek Hut.

(B) If possible, this section should be maintained to 'tramping track standard' rather than 'route standard' to cater for wider range of people of varying abilities to complete the route.

(C) Federated Mountain Clubs feels that the establishment of this new link can only enhance the potential and appeal of the Mt Somers Walkway area rather than detract from it.

(D) *Either* - A basic, short link from where the proposed Stour River route curves northwest, the Woolshed Creek Hut link-route could follow the small stream just to the east of point 890 m (Map 4, p 17) and from there it could traverse the broad spur to meet the Mt Somers Walkway just below point 931 m; *Or* - For a more comprehensive route, that which is proposed by the Mt Somers Walkways Society (see separate submission by Warren Jowett) and incorporating Weta Stream, the East Branch of the Stour River, the saddle into the headwaters of the West Branch of the Stour River, Manuka and Double Huts and concluding at the road end on the south shore of Lake Heron.

Question Box 5 (p 19 - Picnic/Roadside Facilities):

(A) Federated Mountain Clubs has no objection to the provision of picnic tables at the Stour River car park. Signage requesting that users take their rubbish away with them could be useful, especially if waste bins are not included with the picnicking facilities.

(B) Generally the proposed facilities, as outlined in the document, seem adequate. Better car parking and a turning facility at the section of the Castle Ridge Station - Lake Emily vehicle track where the access changes from 2WD to 4WD might make life easier for those users of 2WDs.

Question Box 6 (p 19 - Other Comments):

(A) In general, the recreational opportunities identified for the area are appropriate. It may be that as the area features more prominently with the public, as it becomes more widely known, that other opportunities will present themselves. The proposals in the document form a good basis to start with. Leaving substantial sections of the area with no development is also acceptable since its relative isolation and 'big landscape' features that lack obtrusive man-made structures lend themselves to meeting nature on its own terms rather than having every potential route tracked and marked out.

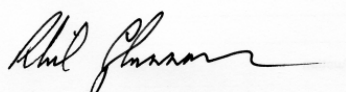
(B) Federated Mountain Clubs strongly supports the addition of the Hakatere Conservation Area into the Hakatere Conservation Park (p 6) and hopes that this can be accomplished as soon as is practicable. We also support the general sentiments expressed under the section 'Commercial Opportunities' on p 20 of the document. The area's low key development to date, and its high-value scenic, landscape and natural qualities are counter to high-impact or noisy commercial activities. In general the potential opportunities identified via the bullet-pointed items on p 20 are appropriate for the area. We also agree with the document's sentiments that some of the potential activities may need to be capped in number or frequency in order to preserve the high quality natural features of the area and to prevent its degradation.

Thank you for your consideration. The Federation is happy to be contacted by the Raukapuka Area Office should the Department desire any follow up with respect to the written comments provided above. Executive member, Dennis Page, is available for this purpose and his contact details are as follows:

Phone: (04) 970 6901 (A/H) or (04) 569 0520 ext'n 2 (B/H)

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Yours sincerely,



Phil Glasson
Secretary