The Department recommends that you contact the Department of Conservation Office closest to where the activity is proposed to discuss the application prior to completing the application forms. Please provide all information requested in as much detail as possible. Applicants will be advised if further information is required before this application can be processed by the Department.

This form is to be used when the proposed activity is the building or use of any private or commercial facility or structure on public conservation land managed by the Department of Conservation. Examples may include lease of land to erect an information centre; authorisation to erect a weather station; or construct or lease a private/commercial campground or lodge. This form is to be completed in conjunction with either Applicant Information Form 1a (longer term concession) or Applicant Information Form 1b (one-off concession) as appropriate.

Please complete this application form, attach Form 1a or Form 1b, and any other applicable forms and information and send to permissions@doc.govt.nz. The Department will process the application and issue a concession if it is satisfied that the application meets all the requirements for granting a concession under the Conservation Act 1987.

If you require extra space for answering please attach and label according to the relevant section.

A. Description of Activity

Please describe the proposed activity in detail – where the site is located, please use NZTM GPS coordinates where possible, what you intend to use the building for, whether you intend to make any changes to the infrastructure.

Please include the name and status of the public conservation land, the size of the area for which you are applying and why this area has been chosen.

If necessary, attach further information including a map, a detailed site plan and drawings of proposal and label Attachment 3b:A.

Description of the experience

Path New Zealand Limited (Path) is a registered company, founded and incorporated in May 2017 by Abbe Hutchins. It trades under the name Path.

Path's vision is for:

- Guests to engage with nature in a meaningful way so that they leave with an increased appreciation of the natural environment
- Path to design, build and operate a sustainable and high value experience that proudly and authentically showcases the best of New Zealand
- Path to support the community in which it operates through:
    - Employing local people and supporting local businesses
    - Helping to combat challenges such as relieving congestion on the Milford Road and in Milford Sound
    - Participating in and raising awareness of local conservation efforts

"The more people experience nature, the more they will value and look after it. We want everyone to be kaitiaki or guardians of the land"

The experience is designed around walking, in a similar way to undertaking one of the Great Walks and staying in either a DOC hut or a lodge for guided walkers. In contrast to the multiday hikes, the Path experience would allow people to take advantage of the numerous short walks and day walks on the Milford Road, before arriving at Path's comfortable, catered facilities.

Path considers that the real value is for guests to experience the naturalness and remoteness of the location, especially during off peak times, such as in the evening, when most people using the Milford Road have returned to Te Anau or Queenstown.

Being located in the upper reaches of the Eglinton Valley, guests would experience impressive mountain vistas looking north, over river flats, towards Melita Peak. The walk to the site is through mature red and silver beech. Fine examples of native mistletoes have established themselves on some of the trees and produce red flowers in summer. The forest is also home to native bats and birds as the beech trees make great roosts for bats. In addition to the bird song, the Eglinton River can be heard as it winds its way along the Valley floor.

These up-close experiences allow guests to leave with an increased appreciation of the natural environment and the value of conservation.

The experience is designed for up to 40 guests and the price point is expected to be similar to the overnight boats in Milford Sound. It would start from a car park adjacent to the Milford Road. Guests would either park their car or arrive by bus. From the car park, they would walk along an access track to the site. It is estimated that this would be an easy 10 to 20 minute walk for most people and would be wheelchair accessible. Guests would have a private room and also the use of common areas, including a library, dining and bar area, outdoor-decked area, marked trails to and from the common area and a short nature trail.

To achieve this, Path is applying for a concession to lease land under section 50 of the *National Parks Act 1980* to build and operate a commercial structure in Fiordland National Park. The application includes the construction and continued operation of four main elements:

- accommodation facilities and associated services
- a car park
- an access track
- a nature trail

Together these elements are referred to as the Proposal.

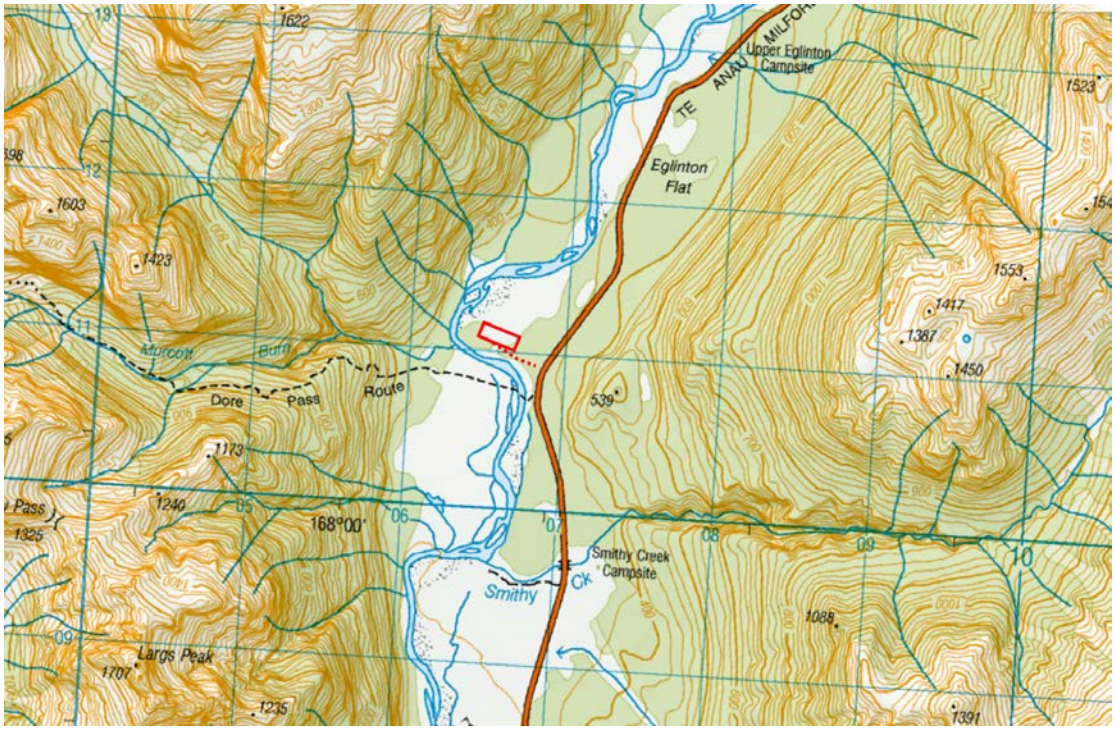
Location of site and status of land

The land to which the Proposal relates is located in the Milford Road Frontcountry Visitor Setting under the Fiordland National Park Management Plan (the Plan). The Plan defines the Milford Road Frontcountry Visitor Setting as:

> *200 metres each side of the road centerline except for the following:*
>
> - *The western boundary for the Milford Road frontcountry corridor, between the Fiordland National Park perimeter and the outlet of Lake Gunn, will be the true left bank of the Eglinton River.* [1]

The site where the buildings are located is marked on the map below:

Map: Location of site



Scale 1km

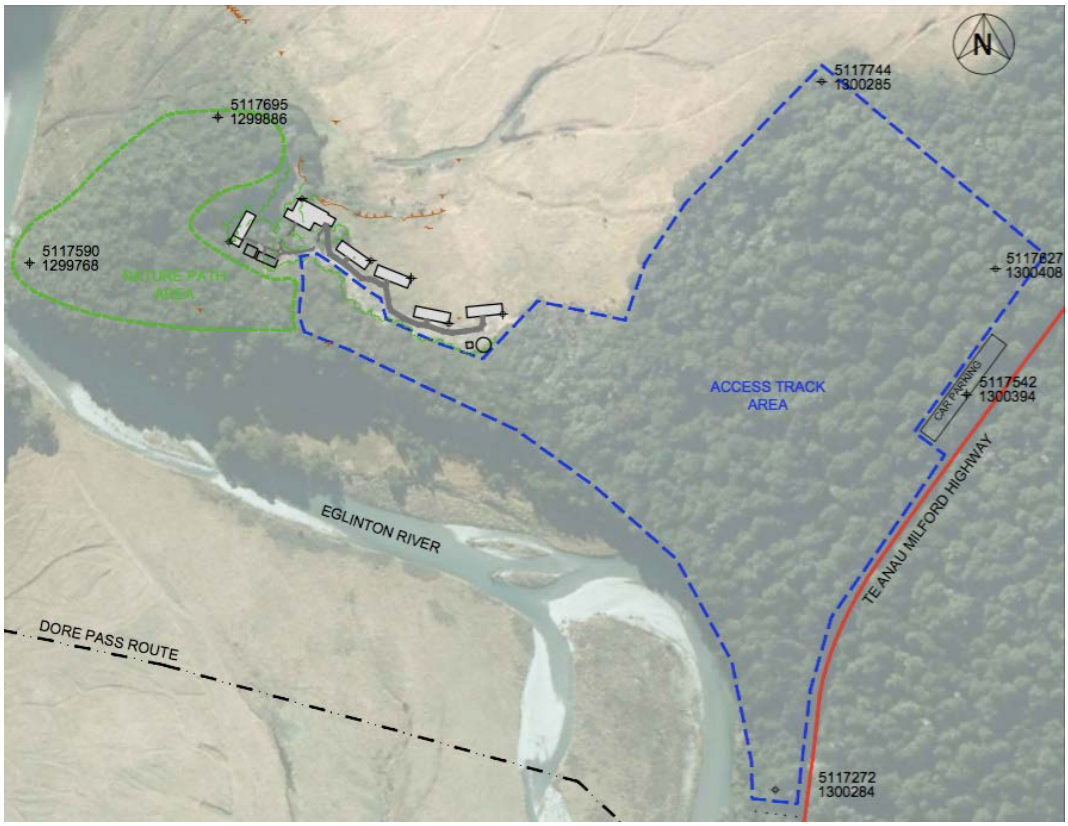
[1] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p171

The NZTM coordinates for the buildings are set out in the image below:

Image: NZTM coordinates for buildings

The NZTM coordinates for the car park, land relating to the development of the access track and the land relating to the development of the nature trail are set out in the image below:

Image: NZTM coordinates for elements of Proposal



All elements of the Proposal are located between the Milford Road and the true left bank of the Eglinton River.

The Plan discusses the general concept of frontcountry:

> *Frontcountry refers to visitor settings that are accessible by vehicles or within easy reach of such access. The settings usually have a substantial infrastructure and include the following facilities: car parks, picnic and camping areas, toilets, water supplies, signs, interpretation panels, viewpoints, wharves, boat ramps, shelters, bridges and easy walking tracks. Travellers' accommodation facilities may also be appropriate in these visitor settings although the preference would generally be to have new facilities located at already modified sites. This is where the majority of the visitors to Fiordland National Park are found and this is reflected in the well-developed facilities. The provision of facilities in the frontcountry encourages accessibility by all and allows an instant immersion-in-nature experience. Facilities are also used to protect the natural values from the impact of large numbers of people. The scenic backdrop, and its natural setting, although not part of this setting, is a very important aspect of the visitor experience. While most visitors to these areas expect high use, they may be sensitive to overcrowding. In some situations it may still be necessary for management to control visitor numbers or patterns of use, but the expansion of facilities within this setting to cope with demand is a much more likely response in this visitor setting than in the others.*[2]
>
> *[Emphasis added]*

Then more specifically the Plan discusses what Frontcountry means in relation to the Milford Road:

> *The Milford Road is a frontcountry visitor setting (refer to section 5.3.9 Frontcountry Visitor Setting) and the intention is that it should continue to absorb the greater part of any increased use of Fiordland National Park. It is recognised that further development may be desirable to effectively manage visitors and ensure a range of quality experiences is available to them. However, proposals must still consider effects on the natural environment and existing recreational opportunities. An important consideration will be the impacts any proposed development might have on landscape vistas and the unique character of this road experience in this popular part of Fiordland National Park, and any alternative sites that could be used to avoid such impacts.* [3]

The Eglinton Valley has already been subject to extensive modification. Originally the Valley floor would have been covered by indigenous tussock and grasses, however, with grazing by stock up until 1999, much of the Valley floor is now dominated by naturalised pasture grasses.[4] The site sits to the south of a grassy wetland that would have been grazed.

With the building of the Milford Road in the 1950s, a Ministry of Works camp was established at Knobs Flat. Today it is budget tourist accommodation although the Milford Road Alliance, which is charged with maintaining the Milford Road, continues to maintain a gravel pit. Knobs Flat also has toilet facilities and parking for coaches and cars. There is also an airstrip that is rarely used. Likewise, Cascade Accommodation House was previously situated a few

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[2] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p 152

[3] Ibid, p172

[4] Lee, W G, *Eglinton Valley Grazing*, Botany Division, DSIR, 21 September 1989, p2

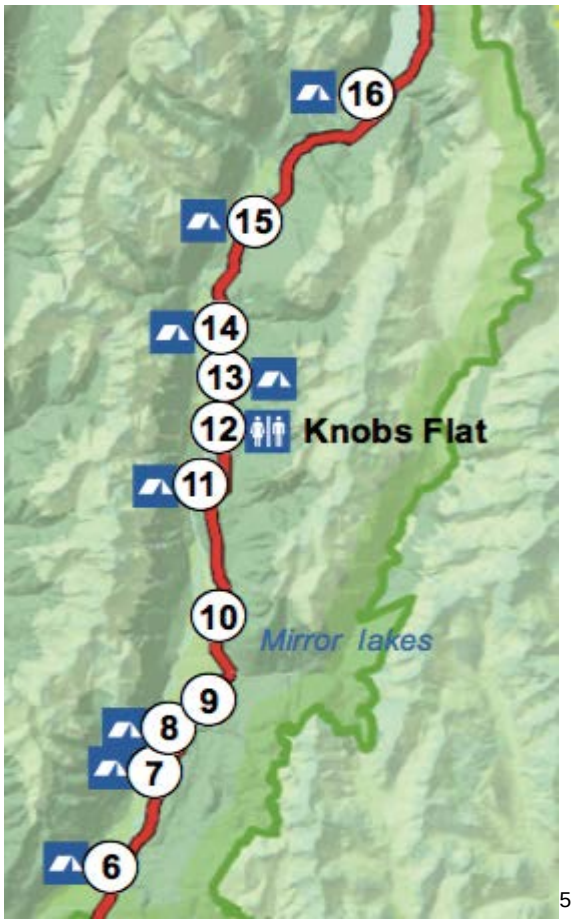
kilometres south of Lake Gunn until it was removed due to risk of flooding. The area is now a large campsite run by DOC.

The site to which this application relates is approximately 3.5 km north of Knobs Flat and approximately 6 km south of Cascade Creek.

Permanent modifications have also been made to protect the road from the river and to allow visitors to stop at various viewpoints on the road. These include the Eglinton Valley lookout, which had a wide uninterrupted view of the valley and the Mirror Lakes, which is a short boardwalk beside water that reflects images of the surrounding mountains on a still day.

In addition to permanent fixtures, there are various campsites beside the Eglinton River that are predominantly used by campervans. These are operated by DOC and can be found on the map below:

Map: Department of Conservation campsites in the Eglinton Valley



[5]

← Site located above 14

Table: Camping sites in the Eglinton Valley

No	Name of Campsite	Number of Campsites[6]
6	Walker Creek	5

[5] http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/fiordland/teanau-milford-highway-map-factsheet.pdf

[6] http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/parks-and-recreation/places-to-stay/campsite-information/campsites-fiordland.pdf

7	Totara	30
8	Mackay Creek	20
11	Deer Flat	3
13	Kiosk Creek	15
14	Smithy Creek	Closed
15	Upper Eglinton	5
16	Cascade Creek	150

Until recently there was a campsite at Smithy Creek and a more extensive one at Deer Flat. However, those campsites are currently closed or their capacity significantly reduced, due to flooding concerns. The campsites are well used and accounted for about 55,000 overnight stays in 2015.[7]

Towards Milford Sound, there are permanent structures at Gunn's Camp in the Hollyford Valley (24 on the map below) and the New Zealand Alpine Club's Homer Hut (near to 28), which accommodates up to 45 people.[8] There are also various buildings on the south side of the Homer Tunnel that are used by the Milford Road Alliance for road maintenance (near to 28).

Map: Milford Road between Eglinton Valley and Milford Sound

[9]

In Milford Sound, there is public accommodation at the Milford Sound Lodge, Ultimate Hikes accommodates guests that have walked the Milford Track in what used to be the Milford Hotel and is now called Mitre Peak Lodge. There are also permanent structures and facilities used by tour boat operators, fishers and a café. Real Journeys' overnight boats also accommodate visitors.

There are a number of day walks and short walks near the Path site. These are of varying levels of difficulty. Further information is provided in the table below.

[7] https://nzta.govt.nz/assets/Highways-Information-Portal/Processes/Corridor-management/Corridor-management-plans/CMP-documents/29-CMP-Frankton-to-Milford-Sound-Final-Jan-2018.pdf Refer p4.

[8] https://alpineclub.org.nz/homer-hut-history/

[9] http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/fiordland/teanau-milford-highway-map-factsheet.pdf

Table: Day walks and short walks near Path site[10]

Name	Description	Difficulty	Approximate travel time from Path site
Gertrude Saddle	4 – 6 hours return. Challenging route from the Milford Road to the Gertrude Saddle, with impressive views towards Milford Sound	Expert	30 minute drive north to Homer Hut
Falls Creek Route	4 hours to bush line, 6 hours to rock bivvy. A challenging route from the Milford Road to the Falls Creek Valley, surrounded by Fiordland Mountains	Expert	20 minute drive north to Falls Creek
Humboldt Falls - Hollyford Track	30 minute walk to a viewpoint of the Falls	Easy	30 minute north to the end of the Hollyford Rd
Lake Marian	3 hour return walk to Lake Marian, an alpine lake in a hanging valley	Advanced	20 minute drive north to Hollyford Rd
Lake Marian Falls Track	20 minutes return walk to Marian Falls	Easy	20 minute drive north to Hollyford Rd
Key Summit – Routeburn Track	3 hour return walk to Key Summit. Key Summit has panoramic views	Intermediate	15 minute drive north to the Divide
Earland Falls – Routeburn Track	6 hour return walk on the start of the Routeburn Track to the Earland Falls. Views of the Hollyford Valley on the way	Intermediate	15 minute drive north to the Divide
Lake Howden – Routeburn Track	3 hour return walk on the start of the Routeburn Track, through beech forest to Lake Howden	Intermediate	15 minute drive north to the Divide
Lake Gunn Nature Walk	45 minute loop through beech forest. Trailhead is at the Cascade Creek Campground	Easy	10 minute drive north to Cascade Creek
Mistake Creek	3 hours to bush line. Challenging track leads from the Milford Road up the Mistake Creek Valley through beech forest and river flats. Carpark and trailhead is adjacent to the Milford Road	Advanced	8 minute drive north
Hut Creek	3 hours to bush line. Challenging track leads from the Milford Road up Hut Creek Valley through beech forest to river flats	Advanced	8 minute drive north
Dore Pass Route	8 hours to Glade House in the Milford Track via Dore Pass.	Expert	Adjacent to access track to site

[10] http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordroad

Name	Description	Difficulty	Approximate travel time from Path site
	Trailhead is beside the access track to the site. Challenging route		
Mirror Lakes Walk	10 minute walk beside small lakes that reflect views of the Earl Mountains	Easy	10 minute drive south
East Eglinton Valley	2 hours to river forks. Challenging route from the Milford Road up the East Eglinton Valley through beech forest	Expert	15 minute drive south

Detailed explanation of the proposed activity

The discussion below works through each of the four main elements of the Proposal.

Accommodation facilities and associated services

To allow for the overnight experience for 40 people, lodging, dining, catering and staffing facilities would need to be constructed. From a physical perspective, the facilities would consist of 6 main buildings, including:

- a common area where among other things, guests would be served an evening and morning meal
- four pods, each with five private rooms with ensuites
- staff accommodation for eight staff
- associated facilities such as a shed for the generator and the quad bike used to service the site, a bore for water, water tank and water pump

To the extent possible, it is proposed that buildings would be prefabricated offsite. Helicopter movements would therefore be required during construction of the buildings and associated facilities.

There would be a facility to treat grey water. Black water would be stored on site and removed by helicopter and disposed of outside the National Park. A report on preliminary wastewater design is provided at Attachment 3b:A:b.

The proposed placement of these buildings is identified on the map in Attachment 3b:A:a. Final location is yet to be confirmed. The priority is to maintain the amenity value of the site and minimise impact on surrounding vegetation. A photo of the site is set out below.

Car park

Accommodating up to 40 people plus staff would require space for approximately 30 cars. On the main road, adjacent to the site, there is an area where a number of trees have fallen down or have been felled to maintain the road. It is proposed that the car park be located there as it is unlikely to have a significant impact. The other advantage of this area is that it is approximately 100 m from a corner and would allow for safe entry and exit for vehicles using the car park.

Example of fallen trees where car park could be located:

There are alternative sites for the car park, such as the old camping area beside Smithy Creek or the clearing opposite, but these would result in a longer access track to the site and potentially more impact on the environment.

In comparison to the car park at Lake Marian, the car park we are anticipating would be smaller and less intrusive. A photo of the Lake Marian car park is provided below:

Access track

The access track would be approximately 500 metres in length, 300 metres if measured by line of site and would be used by guests to walk to and from the site. As set out above, it is anticipated that this would be an easy 10 to 20 minute walk for most people. It is envisaged that the access track would also be of a gradient and formed in a manner that made it wheelchair accessible.

The access track has a dual function: to service the site. It is intended that this be done using a quad bike and trailer. The track would therefore be wide enough to accommodate this sort of vehicle.

In conjunction with DOC, further work needs to be undertaken to identify exactly where the access track should be located. To date we have been entering the site by following a stoat trap line, however, this is unlikely to be suitable for high volumes of foot traffic and the quad bike.

Factors that will be important to identifying the route include:

- where possible, avoiding established trees with a diameter of more than 5 cm
- ensuring that the length of the track and gradient makes it wheelchair accessible
- there are two small incised channels that would likely be bridged. The engineering works involved in these options would be considered and the impact on the environment minimised to the extent possible
- an aesthetically pleasing design similar to existing tracks formed by DOC
- ensuring safe passage for both guests, staff and the operator of the quad bike
- satisfying safety and fire access requirements

This application identifies an Access Track Area but does not identify the exact location of the access track. Should the concession be granted, the proposed access track design so as to be consistent with the criteria identified above and submitted to DOC for approval.

An example of the terrain over which the access track would pass is seen below:

Nature trail

To ensure an immersive in-nature experience for guests it is proposed that a short nature trail be formed. This would allow guests a 10 to 15 minute walk and also provide opportunities to sit and listen to the river and birdsong. Interpretative information would be provided so that guests can identify different trees, shrubs and other features such as native mistletoe and an impressive burr on one of the trees near the site. Similarly, guests would have the opportunity to watch birds and bats in their natural habitat.

It is proposed that the nature trail be on the knob to the west of the site. The forest in this area is open and trees are mature so there would be minimal impact on the land. On visits to the site there have been signs of deer with antler rub on tree trunks throughout this area.

One of the advantages of providing a nature trail is to encourage guests to keep to the trails provided so that they do not unwittingly damage the environment.

Nearby the nature trail is a site that would be suitable for a seepage system that disposes of grey water.

An example of the terrain over which the nature trail would pass is seen below:

Why this site was chosen

Strong amenity value but minimal impact on other users

The site would have high amenity value for guests. Facing north, it has views over the grassy flats towards the river that are typical of many areas of the Eglinton Valley, with impressive views of Melita Peak. This is seen in the photo below:

To the south of the site, there is a stand of red and silver beech trees. These cover the ridge above the river. Looking south through the trees there are views of the Valley towards Knobs Flat and beyond. This is seen in the photo below:

The site selected cannot be seen from the road. To the north of the site, the road passes through beech forest to a river flat. At the point where it enters the river flat, the river is within a few metres of the road but is protected by a flood bank. To the extent that it might have been possible to see the site from that point, the flood bank is sufficiently high to obscure views. Even at night it is unlikely that road users would see lights of the site as it is approximately 1500m away and the flood bank would obscure any light.

The flood bank is seen in the photo below:

As mentioned above, to the south of the site is a stand of predominantly red and silver beech trees. These shield the site so that it cannot be seen from the south or by people on the Dore Pass route.

The only users that might see the buildings would be fishers within the vicinity of the site. For these fishers the site is at least 200 metres from the river and measures can be taken to mitigate any effect on them, including planting tussock around the buildings or shrubs on the river bank to shield the buildings from the view of the fishers.

From an overall amenity perspective, the site is some distance from the road and as a result, traffic noise is minimal and guests are more likely to hear the river and birdsong.

Minimal risk from natural hazards

The building site is situated in a clearing that is slightly elevated above the river flats. The river flats contain a number of overflow channels that would fill up in times of rain. These protect the site from flooding.

Similarly being in the middle of the Valley there is less risk that the site might be hit by rockfall or a tree avalanche.

A geotechnical assessment was carried out and is provided at Attachment 3b:A:c.

Low impact on indigenous flora and fauna

The site where the buildings would be located is in a clearing with some smaller trees, shrubs, bracken, moss, herbs and grasses. Some structures, such as the water reservoir will be located in the forested area but it is unlikely that trees will need to be felled as the understorey is relatively bare and open. With careful placement of the buildings we are hopeful that very few of the trees would need to be removed. At this stage, approximately ten to twenty medium sized trees appear to be located in the same area as the building platform. Where possible, the trees will be retained as they add ambiance to the site and improve the guest experience.

As noted above, the Eglinton Valley was grazed up until 1999 and as a result, the grasslands are mainly naturalised pasture grasses and weeds such as thistles, ragwort and lupins. The forested areas are indigenous but there are extensive signs of introduced animals, particularly evidence of damage from deer and stoats. As indicated by Professor Norton in his report *Path: Vegetation assessment & general comments on terrestrial environmental impacts*, having a more permanent human presence in the area should help restore and protect the forest and birdlife, see Attachment 3b:H.

The Eglinton Valley is home to a number of indigenous birds and bats. Should the concession be granted, the intention is to support programs that monitor the bats, mohua, kaka, whio, pateke and black-fronted terns. Integral to the guest experience will be awareness of biodiversity issues and work being undertaken by the Department of Conservation and volunteers. Path is committed to supporting this work.

The impact on the environment is further discussed below in section H.

Avoids proliferation of the built environment

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan provides that:

> *Further commercial development in this visitor setting which enhance the visitor appreciation of the natural characteristics and values or the national park setting are likely to be acceptable. The Department of Conservation considers that the preference would be for proposals to make use of existing modified sites (e.g. Knobs Flat) and to provide new opportunities that are not offered elsewhere in Fiordland National Park or the surrounding area, but are still in keeping with the national park setting.*[11]

As set out above, the site is approximately 3.5 km north of Knobs Flat, where there are existing structures that provide budget accommodation and campsites. Similarly, the site is approximately 6 km south of the Department of Conservation's Cascade Creek campsite, the largest campsite on the Milford Road.

The Knobs Flat facilities are seen in the photo below:

Path is looking to complement existing infrastructure by providing facilities that would target people with higher disposable income and who appreciate a more comfortable, catered experience. We expect the price point to be similar to the overnight boats in Milford Sound. Given the preferences of this target market, it would not be possible to develop a commercially feasible, high-value product if Path's site was situated within close proximity to campsites and budget accommodation. As a result, Path cannot reasonably share a site with existing operators.

Path considers that the location of the site avoids proliferation of the built environment as it is only a short distance from Knobs Flat and sits between Knobs Flat and Cascade Creek. This is a 10 kilometre stretch of road in the 120 kilometre journey from Te Anau to Milford Sound.

The Cascade Creek campsite is seen in the photo below:

[11] Department of Conservation, Fiordland National Park Management Plan, June 2007, p 173

Assists in managing congestion on the road and popular tracks, avoiding overcrowding

The site is sufficiently close to Milford Sound and trailheads for popular short walks and day walks that guests can visit in off-peak times. This enhances their experience by making those locations less crowded and seem more remote. At the same time it allows for better utilisation of existing infrastructure by spreading flows of people into shoulder periods. For example, in the summer months, guests could start a 3 hour walk to Lake Marian or Key Summit at 3 pm and still arrive at the site in time for dinner.

Year-round use

Compared to other parts of the Milford Road, the site is relatively temperate in that it does not receive a lot of snow and temperatures mean that the ground is unlikely to freeze for any prolonged period of time. This means that the facility could operate year-round.

B. Alternative sites considered

If your application is to **build, extend or add** to any permanent or temporary structures or facilities on public conservation land, please provide the following details:

- Could this structure be reasonably located outside public conservation land? Provide details of other sites/areas considered.
- Could any potential adverse effectives be significantly less (and/or different in another conservation area or another part of the conservation area to which the application relates? Give details/reasons

Path undertook a number of site assessments prior to identifying the Proposal to which this application relates. Sites were assessed in relation to the following attributes:

- Proximity to Milford Sound as this allows for greater use of the shoulder periods in Milford Sound and ease congestion on the Milford Road, allowing for a more remote experience and overall feeling of naturalness
- Proximity to trailheads for popular short walks and day walks on the Milford Road as this has the potential to ease congestion on these walks

- Geotechnical hazards to visitors, staff and buildings associated with the local geology, avalanche, rockfall, flooding, seismic shaking, erosion, alluvial fans etc.
- Impact on other users of the Valley
- Overall amenity value of the location
- Suitability in terms of developing and operationalising the concept with minimal impact

Sites considered outside of Fiordland National Park included:

- At the southern end of the Eglinton Valley, just outside the Park boundary on Te Anau Downs Station (under 6)
- At Te Anau Downs, where there is currently budget accommodation (4)

Map: Alternative sites considered outside the National Park

[12]

Alternative site – Southern end of Eglinton Valley

While the southern end of the Eglinton Valley would position people a little closer to Milford Sound than say Te Anau or Te Anau Downs, the site to which the application relates is an additional 20 minutes north up the road towards Milford, better spreading the flows of people. The other problem with Te Anau Downs Station is that the expansive views of the Valley are blocked by trees within the National Park. As a result, it did not have the amenity value needed to develop a successful overnight wilderness experience.

Alternative site – Te Anau Downs

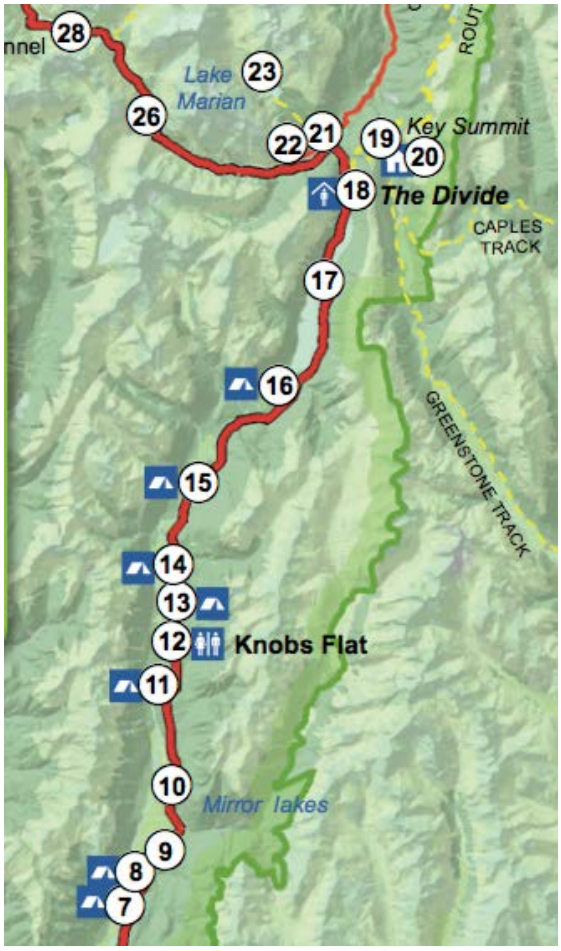
Currently the closest accommodation to the site that is outside the National Park is at Te Anau Downs. It is budget accommodation catering to backpackers. Similar to the site at the foot of the Valley, Te Anau Downs is approximately 30 minutes from the site so is not as well positioned to help spread the flows of people heading to Milford and onto the short walks and day walks. Given the target market, it would also not be possible to locate a high-value experience beside budget accommodation.

Sites considered within Fiordland National Park included:

- Nearby Homer Hut (near 28)
- Nearby Monkey Creek (26)
- Upper Eglinton Campsite (15)
- Across the river from the Dore Pass carpark (near 14)
- Deer Flat Campsite (11)
- Two sites nearby the East Eglinton trailhead (near 9)

[12] http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/fiordland/teanau-milford-highway-map-factsheet.pdf

Map: Alternative sites considered inside the National Park



Other sites within the Park had either geotechnical challenges that would be difficult to overcome without having some impact on the surrounding environment and/or could be seen from the Milford Road, which would intrude on the experience of other road users. Where there was visual impact on other users, it might have been possible to take measures to mitigate this such as planting trees and shrubs to screen buildings, however, this would result in greater modification to the land than at the site selected.

C. Larger area

Is the size of the area you are applying for **larger** than the structure/facility **Yes**

If **yes**, please detail the size difference in the box below, and answer the following 3 questions, if no please go on to the next section:

As noted in the section *Description of Activity*, the Proposal is made up of four main elements:

- accommodation facilities and associated services
- a car park
- an access track
- a nature trail

This area is significantly larger than the structures.

Is this necessary for safety and security purposes? **No**

Is this necessary as an integral part of the activity? **Yes**

Is this essential to carrying on the activity? **Yes**

If the answer to any of the above is yes, please provide details and attach supporting evidence if necessary and label Attachment 3b:C.

The car park and access track are essential to the operation of the experience. The nature trail is integral to the overnight wilderness experience because it allows for up-close experiences with nature, allowing guest to leave with an increased appreciation of the natural environment and the value of conservation. It also helps mitigate potential impact by encouraging guests to stay on formed tracks.

D. Exclusive possession

Do you believe you need **exclusive possession** of the public conservation land on which your structure/building is located, i.e. no one else can use the land during your use of it? **Yes**

(Exclusive occupation requires a lease which requires public notification of the application)

If **yes**, please answer the following 3 questions, if no please go to the next section:

Is exclusive possession necessary to protect public safety? **Yes**

Is exclusive possession necessary to protect physical security of the activity? **Yes**

Is exclusive possession necessary for the competent operation of the activity? **Yes**

If the answer to any of the above is yes, please provide details and attach supporting evidence if necessary and label Attachment 3b:D.

It is unlikely that exclusive possession is required over the access track and nature trail, other than during construction so as to ensure health and safety of people in the area. However, given that access to the area would be improved, if there was not exclusive possession, then the current ban on freedom camping (within 200 metres of the Milford Road) may need to be extended to include the area as the overnight wilderness experience could not operate effectively if freedom campers were in close proximity.

In respect of the car park, exclusive possession may be required to reserve car parks for guests otherwise there is a risk that guests would arrive and be unable to leave their cars. One option to resolve this would be to increase the size of the car park and provide some parks for people that are not guests. Monitoring use would also help identify whether exclusive possession is required.

E. Technical Specifications (for telecommunications sites only)

N/A

F. Term

Please detail the length of the term sought (i.e. number of years or months) and why.

Note: An application for a concession for a period over 10 years must be publicly notified, an application for a concession up to 10 years will not be publicly notified unless the adverse effects of the activity are such that it is required, or if an exclusive interest in the land is required.

This application is for a term of 30 years. Building the structures and associated facilities requires substantial investment. 30 years is required to ensure tenure of such a significant development. A 30-year term is also consistent with the terms given to other operators undertaking similarly substantial investments within Fiordland National Park.

Path proposes that a clause be included in the concession enabling a 5-year rolling renewal of the 30-year term, similar to that included by Ruapehu Alpine Lifts in Tongariro National Park. This would mean that DOC, together with Ngai Tahu, would review the concession every five years and where Path had been meeting the standards expected of a sustainable tourism operator, DOC would extend the concession for the further five years.

The advantage of this mechanism is that it incentivises Path to continue to operate sustainably. It also incentivises Path to continue to invest in the facilities, associated infrastructure and continued operation, which creates the certainty and conditions required for ongoing investment.

G. Bulk fuel storage

Under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act) 'Bulk fuel storage' is considered to be any single container, stationary or mobile, used or unused, that has a capacity in excess of 250 litres of Class 3 fuel types. This includes petrol, diesel, aviation gasoline, kerosene and Jet A1.

Do you intend to store fuel in bulk on the land as part of the activity? **Yes**

If you have answered **yes**, then please provide full details of how and where you intend to store the fuel, and label any attachments including plans, maps and/or photographs as Attachment 3b:G. If your concession application is approved you will be required to provide a copy of your HSNO compliance certification to the Department before you begin the activity.

Should this application be approved, a full plan will be provided to DOC for approval prior to beginning the build.

H. Environmental Impact Assessment

This section is one of the most important factors that will determine the Department's decision on the application. Please answer in detail.

In column 1 please list all the locations of your proposal, please use NZTM GPS coordinates where possible. In column 2 list any special features of the environment or the recreation values of the area. Then in column 3 list any effects (positive or adverse) that your activity may have on the values or features in column 2. In column 4 list the ways you intend to mitigate, remedy or avoid any adverse effects noted in column 3. Please add extra information or supporting evidence as necessary and label Attachment 3b:H.

Location

As noted in the section *Description of the experience*, the Proposal is made up of four main elements:

- accommodation facilities and associated services
- a car park
- an access track
- a nature trail

The NZTM GPS coordinates are also set out in the section *Location of site and status of land*.

All elements of the Proposal are located on public conservation land in the Fiordland National Park.

Description of the Natural Environment

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan recognises the special character of the Eglinton Valley. One of the objectives of the Plan is to provide for and protect:

> *"The Eglinton Valley's open and uninterrupted views of surrounding mountains and valleys and its overall sense of naturalness."*[13]

The Proposal is north of Knobs Flat on a ridge that is the remains of a moraine formed as a glacier retreated from the Eglinton Valley at the end of the last glacial period. Similar moraine landforms are present at Knobs Flat.

The Valley is also important from a biodiversity perspective as it is home to populations of long-tailed and short-tailed bats, mohua, kaka, whio, pateke and blackfronted terns. Trees surrounding the site likely form roosts for bats. On a site visit with Antonia Croft, a Senior Ranger at the DOC, she thought there might be skinks in the area but none were seen.

The site where the buildings would be located has some but not many native trees and is surrounded by red and silver beech forest. This is described in Professor Norton's report, *Path: Vegetation assessment & general comments on terrestrial environmental impacts,* see Attachment 3b:H. One special feature of the trees surrounding the site is that some host native mistletoe.

As mentioned above in section *Location of site and status of land*, the Valley, including the site was farmed for many years and as a result, there are a number of introduced pasture grasses on the site and weeds such as thistles, ragwort and lupins on the river flats are visible from the site. Farming was phased out by 1999.

[13] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p173

Description of the Existing Social Environment

The site where the buildings would be located, the access track, car park and nature trail are unlikely to be used by people, other than those undertaking predator control and possibly fishers seeking to access the river. This is because access is currently via unformed stoat lines.

To the south of the site, on the other side of the river is the route to the Dore Pass. From the Dore Pass car park, trampers must cross the river to get to the other side of the Valley where the marked route starts. It is possible that they could approach the river using one of the stoat lines but Path's observation is that most people cross the river at a point closer to the Dore Pass car park.

The Eglinton River is valued by fishers as it is relatively easy to access yet has a sense of naturalness and remoteness. Fish and Game did not have information on how many of their members fish the Eglinton River, nevertheless, locals have mentioned plentiful fishing holes near the Dore Pass car park, to the south of the site.

There is evidence of deer and rabbits at the site but it does not appear to be known for hunting, presumably because of its proximity to the Milford Road.

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan aims to restrict motorised boating on the Eglinton River, although it is open to concessions for rafting, kayaking and other non-motorised activities.[14] Path understands that concessions may have been granted for rafting on the lower Eglinton River but is not aware of a concession being granted for the stretch of the river that is in close proximity to the site.

Camping would likely be permitted on the site as it is approximately 300m from the Milford Road. Freedom camping is only prohibited within 200m of the Road but there is no evidence of the site being used for camping. This may be due to the fact that it cannot be seen from the Road so most people would be unaware that it is there. Access would also be relatively challenging, as campers and other users would likely use the stoat lines that are marked but not formed. At any rate, the DOC manages a number of campsites on the Milford Road and campers would likely stay there.

The final user group that might be impacted are those that undertake predator control within the National Park. Currently there are a number of stoat lines between the road and the site. These are used by volunteers to check and set the stoat traps. Path is supportive of predator control and should the concession be granted, intends to take responsibility for the area and incorporate it into the overnight experience.

Path reviewed the *Ngai Tahu ki Murihiku Natural Resource and Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2008*[15] and consulted with Te Ropu Taiao prior to submitting this application. We are not aware that the land to which the application relates has particular historical, archeological or spiritual significance. Path is keen to continue to discuss issues with Ngai Tahu to ensure that where possible, any environmental issues and interpretation of Maori history are managed in a way that is consistent with Ngai Tahu values.

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[14] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p239

[15] http://www.es.govt.nz/Document%20Library/Plans,%20policies%20and%20strategies/Regional%20plans/Iwi%20Management%20Plan/Te%20Tangi%20a%20Tauira%20-%20The%20Cry%20of%20the%20People.pdf

Potential Effects of the Proposal

Displacement of other users or negative impacts on other users

Prior to submitting this application, Path consulted a number of stakeholders, including Forest and Bird, the Federated Mountain Clubs and Fish and Game. Initial consultation suggested that concerns were of a more general nature, rather than specific to the Proposal and/or concept design.

Forest and Bird expressed concerns over whether the concept was appropriate for a National Park. Forest and Bird indicated that it was supportive of eco-lodges and recognised that the Path concept was designed to minimise impact; nevertheless, in their view it was not an appropriate development in the National Park. Forest and Bird saw the concept as appropriating public land for private benefit and preventing public access to parts of the conservation estate.

Initial communications with the Federated Mountain Clubs was similar in that they saw this as a private accommodation and therefore, inconsistent with the Fiordland National Park Management Plan and General Policy on National Parks. The overriding concern seemed to be that the proposal privatised public land within the National Park for private profit and could set a precedent.

In response to these general points, Path has a different perspective. The establishment of the facilities would be for public use, not private, albeit guests would have to book and pay to use the facilities. This would be no different from existing accommodation facilities within the National Park, including DOC huts, the New Zealand Alpine Club's Homer Hut and the accommodation for guided walkers on the Milford and Routeburn Tracks.

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan discusses private huts and notes:

> *Private huts are considered inappropriate in national parks as they appropriate public resources for exclusive private benefit and are not consistent with the National Parks Act 1980.*[16]

However, the concept Path is proposing would not a private hut within the meaning of the Plan. Private huts originate from the deer recovery days and are private in the way that a private home or holiday house would be private. The Plan notes that private huts that are owned by non-profit organisations and open to the public may be authorised. The New Zealand Alpine Club's Homer Hut was authorised in this manner and a 30 year concession was granted from 2014 through until 2043.

As set out above, Path is proposing to establish public facilities that are envisaged and permissible under the Plan because the Plan recognises that travellers' accommodation facilities may be appropriate in frontcountry visitor settings.[17] The Plan also recognises the benefit of having private operators establish facilities within the National Park to allow for greater access and enjoyment by the public. For example, in providing reticulated and communal services in Milford Sound, the provider of these services is able to seek a reasonable commercial return from the beneficiaries of these services.[18]

Path is also of the view that the general concerns of both Forest and Bird and the Federated Mountain Clubs, including consideration of the policies set out in the *General Policy on*

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[16] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p289

[17] Ibid, p152

[18] Ibid, p160-161

National Parks 2005,[19] have already been taken into account in the development of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

In early consultation, Fish and Game made a number of comments that were related to the stretch of river near the Proposal. While they did not know how many fishers walked the river, they would be concerned to see the amenity value of the area preserved so as not to have a significant impact on the experience of those that did. Their initial view was that this might be achieved by careful placement of tussock or something similar to break up the line of the buildings or by planting shrubs near the river edge so that fishers were less likely to see the buildings.

As previously mentioned, having walked the Dore Pass route, it would be unlikely that the site would be seen from the route as any view of buildings would be shielded by a stand of beech trees.

Based on current use, it is unlikely that the proposal would displace other users as the site where the buildings would be located does not appear to be used. Similarly, the site where the car park would be located, access track and nature trail are only used by people undertaking predator control and Path would like to take responsibility for this.

Potential disturbance of soils, vegetation, invertebrates, lizards, frogs or nesting birds

The Proposal necessarily impacts the natural environment, however, with careful design and implementation we are hopeful that any impact is mitigated.

In preparation for submitting the concession application. Professor David Norton of the School of Forestry at the University of Canterbury, undertook a vegetation assessment and made some general comments on the terrestrial impact of the project.

Professor Norton noted that all of the plant communities present at the site that are likely to be impacted occur widely in the Eglinton Valley. The grasslands are dominated by exotic species due to the history of pastoral farming. Red beech and silver beech are the dominant species in the forests by the car park, access track and nature trail and these are similar to other forests through the valley. The mossy herb field communities at the site where the buildings are to be located also occur around the forest edges throughout the Valley.

In respect of fauna, while these were not directly observed, other than invertebrate species associated with soils and plants that will be directly impacted by the development, these are unlikely to be affected in any significant way. Invertebrate populations are abundant and as a result, so too are populations of insectivorous birds and bats. Given the recovery of threatened bird and bat species in the Eglinton Valley, in part through sustained pest control by DOC, Professor Norton was of the view that the proposed development would be highly unlikely to have any impact because of its limited nature.[20]

Despite having a limited impact Professor Norton identified the following mechanisms to further minimise the impact:

- Accommodation pods be located on exotic grasslands as much as possible, reducing the impacts on the mossy herb field

[19] New Zealand Conservation Authority, *General Policy on National Parks*, April 2005 http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/about-doc/role/policies-and-plans/general-policy-for-national-parks.pdf
[20] Norton, D, *Path: Vegetation assessment & general comments on terrestrial environmental impacts,* 7 August 2007, p 8-9

- The access tracks/boardwalks between the pods and the common area would themselves mitigate environmental impact by guiding people so that they stay on the track/boardwalk and not impact the surrounding vegetation
- While some vegetation would need to be cleared, to the extent possible the common area and staff quarters would be situated so as to minimise clearance of woody vegetation
- Service structures and access tracks between elements would be located in sites that require minimal clearance of woody vegetation. All tracks will be surfaced to reduce substrate damage
- The use of night lighting would protect the environment by ensuring that external lighting would face downward to minimise any potential disturbance on fauna and to minimise the visibility of the development and light pollution.
- The nature trail would wind through the forest with no clearance of woody vegetation apart from the occasional seedling or sapling. Ground disturbance through track formation would be kept to a minimum and the track will be surfaced to avoid soil erosion. The track would be no more than 1 m wide.

Professor Norton's full report is provided at Attachment 3b:H. Further details are discussed in the Access and Transportation and Construction sections below.

Potentially adverse visual effects

Despite the site being located in an area where it is unlikely to impact other users, Path was aware of the need for the concept to be of a design, bulk, height, form, materials, colour and reflectivity to be consist with minimising visual impact[21] while ensuring an experience that is consistent with and complements the special setting. As a result, Path engaged one of New Zealand's most experienced and award winning architects, Pip Cheshire.

Pip has previously worked with DOC on the restoration of Scott and Shackleton's huts in the Antarctic and in the development of research facilities on the Auckland Islands. Consequently he is well placed to understand the factors that are important when designing for protected environments with special character. Further details on his qualifications and experience are set out in the Other section below.

His brief was to design a concept that would fit comfortably with the landscape, preserving the amenity value of the area and sense of naturalness. In preparation, Pip visited the site and the concept and his artist's impressions are provided at Attachment 3b:A:a.

More specifically the following factors were relevant to the visual aesthetic:

- The buildings have been distributed to avoid excessive height and bulk and better blend with the surroundings
- The backdrop to the buildings is the stand of predominantly red beech trees that grow on the ridgeline to the south of the site and as a result, the buildings are nestled into the site, merging into the landscape, not dominating it
- While building materials are yet to be confirmed, they are likely to be predominantly wood and of a colour palette that complements the landscape so as to minimise visual impact. Wood would be locally sourced and FSC accredited

At this stage, other than planting native grasses and tussock, landscaping is not proposed. One of the reasons for this is that the design, location and building process should minimise the impact of the proposal, for example, at this stage approximately ten to twenty small to medium sized trees will need to be removed. To the extent that the impact is more significant then a remedial landscaping plan would be developed.

[21] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p162

Potential impact from Transport and Access

Access to the site would predominantly be by foot or quad bike. People would leave their vehicles in a car park adjoining the Milford Road and walk along an access track for 10-20 minutes to the site. The access track would also be used to service the site. It is intended that the access track be wide enough for a quad bike but not so wide as to allow a larger vehicle, such as a car. The same access track would be used to construct the buildings.

In respect of the access track, Professor Norton report suggests the following measures to mitigate the impact:

> *The access track will also wind though the forest to avoid large trees and where possible avoid removing any sapling trees with a diameter greater than 5 cm. The track will be surfaced with gravel and wide enough to allow a quad bike but not a 4x4 vehicle. Two steel and timber bridges will be built with concrete foundations to span two streams.*

The car park is the only aspect of the overall concept that is likely to have an effect on other users of the Milford Road because it would likely be seen from the Road. In developing the car park, Path would be sensitive to both the existing environment (it proposes to establish the car park in an area where trees are fallen down) and may be able to mitigate any visual effect through the design of the car park or remedial planting.

Any car park would need to meet the conditions that allow for safe entry and exit to State Highway 94. The proposed location should be suitable as it is at least 100m from a corner. Alternatively, there is a site near the old Smithy Creek campsite but this would require a longer access track and depending on location people may need to cross the State Highway.

The exact location of the car park and the access track are yet to be determined but would be done in conjunction with DOC and the Milford Sound Road Alliance.

Construction

Construction of the buildings, access track, car park and nature trail, all have the ability to have adverse effects in terms of dust, noise, traffic congestion and gear storage.

Traffic congestion might be an issue while the car park is being constructed because construction vehicles would need to enter and exit the main highway. This would only be for a short period of time and careful planning in terms of timing so that vehicle movements happened at off-peak times would help to further mitigate any congestion.

Once the car park was established, the next step would be to construct the access track. Equipment needed for construction could be stored in the car park. To the extent that construction of the access track creates noise and dust, this is unlikely to be significant and should be for a relatively short period of time.

In terms of build process, the approach would be to prefabricate as much of the buildings as possible offsite. These components would then be helicoptered to the site to be assembled. Contractors responsible for the build would access the site from the car park via the access track.

Professor Norton suggested the following measures to mitigate impact:

- The footprint of all elements including the access track would be clearly marked on the ground prior to construction commencing and adjusted as appropriate to minimise impacts (e.g. to reduce cutting of woody vegetation). An ecologist and/or DOC officer would be present and part of the decision making when the footprints are marked

- The access track would be built first and would form the only access route to the site which would be by foot or quad bike
- Construction material would be transported to the site by helicopter and either landed within the actual building footprint, or deposited in a defined area of exotic grassland below the site (avoiding any wetland areas)
- Tracks linking the different elements of the project would be constructed next and would be used for access between them during construction
- In building the different elements, a 1 metre buffer around 3 sides of each footprint would be included in the construction contracts, with penalties included should damage occur beyond this
- Restoration using locally sourced species appropriate to the individual disturbed sites would be undertaken for all areas disturbed during construction.

Professor Norton's full report is provided at Attachment 3b:H.

Path is also mindful that the construction process can result in extraneous materials such as nails, screws and wood chips being discarded. To manage this, we would incorporate requirements into any construction contract that require the building site to be cleared of extraneous materials at the end of every week.

Path does not envisage removing significant quantities of rock, soil or vegetation.

Site restoration

Path is confident that the design of the concept and the careful measures used in construction should mean that any impact is limited. For example, Path is looking to minimise the removal of established trees. Based on the current plans, it looks as though approximately ten to twenty small to medium sized trees would be removed. Likewise, with the access track, care will be taken to avoid trees with a diameter of greater than 5 cm.

The photo below is of the trees that may have to be removed:

Should the impact be greater than anticipated and require restoration, Path would be supportive as it would enhance the experience of guests.

At the end of the concession, all buildings would be removed from the site and a restoration plan would be developed to ensure the site is returned, as much as possible to its natural state.

Water/soil

In designing the car park and access track, drainage would be an important consideration. Where possible, surface water will be guided into existing drains (either natural or man-made). Ensuring that the carpark and access track are properly constructed with an appropriate surface should ensure that rain water or storm water does not contain silt or create slope stability issues. This in turn would ensure that there are no downstream issues.

Currently there is no reason to think that the site where the buildings are to be located would have drainage or slope stability problems. A geotechnical assessment of the site was obtained and is provided at Attachment 3b:A:c. Assuming the concession is granted, further work would be undertaken to ensure the site would cope with rainfall and any storm water.

In terms of supplying the site with water, the preferred option would be to construct a bore as this generally allows for greater security of supply. Given that the site is located beside river flats, this is unlikely to have a significant impact.

Effluent/Waste Disposal

All hard waste would be removed from the site and disposed of outside of the National Park. Preliminary work has been done on effluent systems. Path consulted John Cocks, a wastewater engineer who has previously worked for DOC, Ultimate Hikes and Real Journeys on projects in Fiordland National Park.

John conducted a site visit and dug test pits to access suitability. His assessment was that the site was well suited to treated wastewater, including wastewater treated by septic tank. For grey water, he considered the following land applications: subsurface drip irrigation and soil soakage beds. Black water would be transported off-site either by quad bike or more likely by helicopter.

John recommended early discussions with Environment Southland to find an acceptable solution. His report is provided at Attachment 3b:A:b.

Path is of the view that it is important to initiate the concession process but once we have had positive feedback from those involved in processing the application, we will begin discussions with Environment Southland to better understand their requirements. At this stage, Path would also develop a contingency plan for wastewater should it be needed.

In terms of waste associated with the operation of the facilities, Path is committed to removing all waste from the site and disposing of it appropriately outside the National Park.

Hazardous Substances/Contaminants

Given that the site will be serviced by a quad bike, there is the potential for fuel spillage. Fuel required for the diesel generator could be spilt. As could cleaning products.

To minimise risk from the quad bike and generator, they would be serviced regularly with particular attention paid to possible fuel leakages. If a spillage was to happen, it would be mopped up immediately.

There is a risk that cleaning products could be spilt if they were not handled properly or the containers were damaged. Staff would be given training to minimise the risk of spillage. If products were spilt, like the fuel, spills would be mopped up immediately using appropriate equipment.

It is possible that hazardous substances may also be used in the construction of the facilities. Path would work with the construction company to manage any risks.

Risk of Fire

There is some risk of fire from the kitchen facilities, located in the rear of the common area. Should the concession be granted, a fire plan would be developed as part of an overall health and safety plan.

Creation of noise

The development of the site and construction of associated facilities would result in noise, however, this noise should be intermittent rather than constant and will only be for the duration of the build and any associated ongoing maintenance.

There would be some ongoing noise associated with the facilities once they are constructed, for example, from the generator, quad bike and kitchen. This noise would be minimised as much as possible to ensure guests have a quiet and natural experience. If noise from the generator and kitchen was considered to be a problem, it could be reduced through the use of specific building materials. There may also be options to use batteries to further limit noise at times of the day when less power is required.

Introduction of weeds from seeds/plant materials carried into area

Having recently been grazed, the area already contains a number of introduced pasture grasses. Path considers the risk of introducing new seeds to be low.

Natural waterways or bodies of water adversely affected by activity

Being located next to the river flat, the site is surrounded by water. The river flats themselves contain a number of channels that fill when there is an increased volume of water in the river. The access track to the site may also cut across two incised channels. None of these waterways are likely to be adversely affected by the activity.

Spreading Didymosphenia germinata

Didymo is already found in the Eglinton River. As a result, it is possible that guests could contribute to the spread of didymo when they go to other regions that are not affected. Path proposes to deal with this by having a cleaning station at the car park so that guests can clean their footwear before moving to their next destination.

Monitoring

Appropriate conditions could form part of the concession and be monitored by both the management of Path and DOC.

At this stage, the application indicates that the footprint of all elements including the access track would be clearly marked on the ground prior to construction commencing and adjusted as appropriate to minimise impacts (e.g. to reduce cutting of woody vegetation). An ecologist and/or DOC officer would be present and part of the decision making when the footprints are marked.

Path expects that compliance plans and associated monitoring would also be required for:

- wastewater
- hazardous substances
- health and safety
- fire safety

Path would also monitor usage of the car park, access track and nature trail to determine whether exclusive possession is required or whether challenges can be managed without limiting access.

I. Other

Challenges in the Milford corridor

Milford Sound is an internationally recognized iconic tourist destination. People have been visiting it since the late 19th century. The Milford Road, which is the only road to and from Milford Sound, is considered a destination in its own right, passing through forest and alpine environments that are rugged and remote. There are many opportunities for visitors to stop at viewpoints and undertake short walks.

In 2007, when the current Fiordland National Park Management Plan was adopted, more than 450,000 people visited Milford Sound each year.[22] Today numbers have increased to more than 700,000 and are forecast to continue to increase.

Daily traffic flow on the Milford Road is tidal, with morning journeys towards Milford Sound coinciding with cruise departures and return journeys in the late afternoon and evening.[23] Just over half of visitors travel by coach but an increasing number of are independent and self-driving[24]. Increasing numbers of vehicles results in a critical congestion on the road, at viewpoints and other facilities. There is no excess capacity in the peak season but infrastructure is under increasing pressure during the shoulder season too.[25]

In the same way that flows of people to and from Milford are tidal, so are the flows of people using the popular tracks to do multiday hikes, short walks and day walks. Likewise, increasing numbers are putting pressure on these tracks as well.

This raises a number of issues, including how to:

- continue to ensure a remote, in-nature experience for visitors given increasing numbers
- manage flows of people to and from Milford Sound so that their travels are safe and timely
- manage flows of people on popular short walks and day walks

Previous attempts to find a solution to this problem have included the Milford Dart tunnel and the Monorail. Both proposals were declined by the Minister of Conservation.

The Milford Dart Tunnel was declined on the basis that:

- depositing tunnel spoil would permanently damage the natural and landscape values of the Hollyford Valley
- there would be impact due to new roads and portals at each end
- the engineering works and tunnel was inconsistent with the Fiordland National Park Management Plan and the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan[26]

Similarly the Fiordland monorail proposal was declined on the basis that it was not viable and that it would have a significant impact on the area's flora, fauna and natural heritage.[27]

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[22] Department of Conservation, *Fiordland National Park Management Plan,* June 2007, p171

[23] New Zealand Transport Agency, *Frankton to Milford Sound Corridor Management Plan 2018-2028*, January 2018, p 3 https://nzta.govt.nz/assets/Highways-Information-Portal/Processes/Corridor-management/Corridor-management-plans/CMP-documents/29-CMP-Frankton-to-Milford-Sound-Final-Jan-2018.pdf

[24] Ibid p 4

[25] Ibid p 4

[26] http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2013/minister-declines-milford-dart-tunnel-proposal/

[27] http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2014/fiordland-link-monorail-declined/

Despite the challenges identified above, the increasing number of visitors is economically beneficial, although attention needs to be focused on how to manage the impact. At an economy wide level, benefits include:

- a broader appreciation by the visitors (both domestic and international) of the importance and value of conservation
- economic growth and employment in regional New Zealand
- increased revenue to the government through concession fees and GST
- scope to move visitor markets away from low value, high impact

At an individual or personal level, visitors are likely to leave with:

- a greater appreciation of the power of nature
- a sense of awe
- increased mental resilience
- increased understanding of the value of conservation

In Path's opinion, the challenges associated with increasing numbers of visitors have to be addressed in a sustainable manner that minimises impact. A practical part of the solution should include finding ways to accommodate more people closer to Milford Sound and the trailheads.

Experience – Pip Cheshire

Citation for the 2013 NZIA Gold Medal for Architecture

Pip Cheshire's architectural career, which spans three and half decades and which promises yet further development, has been propelled by a confluence of admirable personal and professional qualities: courage, adventurousness, curiosity, enthusiasm and persistence.

Pip's intellectual honesty and integrity have directed him away from paths of least resistance, and self-belief and a necessary stubbornness have enabled him to follow a course of his own making. At key points in his career he has rejected safe choices in favour of riskier but potentially more fulfilling options. There was nothing capricious about such decisions: one of the abiding and fascinating characteristics of Pip's career is his determination to reconcile his ambition with his desire to pursue meaningful work consistent with his personal principles.

Pip's courtesy and collegiality co-exists with a driven nature. He was a relatively late starter in architecture – he was 26 when he enrolled in the University of Auckland School of Architecture in 1976 – and has often said he feels compelled to make up for lost time. However his earlier studies, business ventures and social activism gave him valuable insights into the political and commercial contexts in which architects operate, and have provided him with experiences that have informed the urbanity of his personality and his practice.

Eager to get his career going, Pip was fast out of the blocks. While still at Architecture School he designed The Melba [1979-80], a city restaurant that anticipated Auckland's awakening appetite for more sophisticated social environments.

On the back of this commission, and as soon as he graduated, Pip, with some fellow students, set up Artifice, an of-its-time architects' collective. If the genesis of Artifice revealed

anti-establishment inclinations, the brevity of its life-span signaled Pip's serious intentions. With Pete Bossley, Pip soon set up Bossley Cheshire, and the new firm quickly won a reputation for, in architectural historian Peter Shaw's phrase, "contriving to shock the bourgeoisie while housing them".

Through the 1980s, in a series of houses including the Turner House [1981], Vernon Townhouses [1985] and Markus House [1988], Pip expressed his impatience with the neo-vernacular style that had dominated New Zealand architecture in the previous decade. Pip has always been skeptical of orthodoxies and, while he has progressively moved closer in the direction of clarity of expression, he has never been afraid of complexity. Thus his architecture has never become frozen in a moment, and resists facile taxonomy.

Pip's ambition and restlessness, and that of Pete Bossley, explains the merging, in 1989, of their practice with JASMaD to form JASMAX. For Pip, larger-scale work was the lure of the alliance; JASMAX became New Zealand's largest practice and Pip, who was a founding director of the new practice, became heavily involved in its administration, serving as managing director from 1999 until 2003, the year in which he departed JASMAX to form his own practice, Cheshire Architects. An important project Pip completed while at JASMAX was the Congreve House [1987-92], a resolutely solid and substantial house on Auckland's North Shore. This house and others designed for the Congreves, and for artists Stephen Bambury [Bambury House, 1995-96] and Terry Stringer [1995-2000], and for Peter Cooper [Cooper House, 1998-2004], testify to the importance of strong client relationships throughout Pip's career.

Pip has always thrived when his forthrightness has been reciprocated, his interest in ideas shared and his commitment matched. Projects such as Q Theatre, Auckland [2002-10], Britomart [2003–], the University of Auckland Marine Laboratory, Leigh [2004-11], and Marsden Cross Heritage Park, Bay of Islands [2004–], are a credit not just to Pip's design skills but also his steadfastness and mature engagement with challenging propositions. There is so much else to Pip's career: his heritage work in Antarctica, and his pro-bono work much closer to home; his teaching and his mentoring of generations of young architects; his writing and publishing and lecturing and presenting. His has a rich architectural career, one in which breadth of reach is equalled by quality of achievement, and one that fully deserves the award of the New Zealand Institute of Architects Gold Medal.

Experience – Professor David Norton

Professor David Norton (School of Forestry, University of Canterbury) has worked at the University since 1985 where he is actively involved in teaching and research in botany, ecology and conservation biology.

His specific research interests are in integrating native biodiversity into farm management, restoration ecology, threatened plant conservation and conservation management planning. David has an extensive knowledge of the flora and ecosystems present throughout Te Wai Pounamu.

As well as studying natural ecosystems, David has also tramped and climbed widely through the South Island mountains and is passionate about nature conservation and the interactions people have with the environment.

David has published numerous scientific and popular articles on botany, ecology and conservation biology and has coauthored two books; ‘Threatened Plants of New Zealand’ (2010) and ‘Nature and Farming’ (2013).