

Hump Ridge Track

Application for a guiding concession, lease and licence of land/buildings
and easements associated with the Hump Ridge Track

Concession Application

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APPENDICES:

- A** Form 3C – Easement
- B** Form 3B – Commercial accommodation
- C** Form 4A – Land based guiding
- D** Wastewater Resource Consents
- E** Guiding Manual
- F** GPS locations
- G** Noise Abatement Standard Operating Procedure
- H** Okākā Lodge Plans & Port Craig Lodge Plans
- I** Application form 1a

DOCUMENT STATUS

Version	Purpose of Document	Prepared By	Reviewer	Date
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview/Background

This application has been prepared for and on behalf of Hump Ridge Charitable Trust (the Applicant). The Applicant is seeking multiple Authorisations associated with the running of the Hump Ridge Track in Fiordland National Park, which is soon to become a Great Walk. The following Authorisations are sought:

- A concession for land based guided activities within Fiordland National Park;
- A lease and licence for private accommodation and infrastructure associated the Hump Ridge Track Operation within Fiordland National Park; and
- Easements for infrastructure associated with the Hump Ridge Track.

Further information on each of these activities can be found below as well as in the associated Department of Conservation (DOC) Application Forms (attached).

1.2 Scope of Environmental Documentation

This document provides an Environmental Impact Assessment of the application for guiding concession, lease and licence of land/buildings and easements associated with the Hump Ridge Track. The document describes the following:

- **Section 1:** Provides an overview/background of the proposed activity and lists the existing Authorisations and resource consents that the Applicant holds for the site.
- **Section 2:** Provides an outline of the activity location and presents a detailed discussion on the proposal.
- **Section 3:** Provides a description of the Authorisations sought.
- **Section 4:** Provides an environmental impact assessment.
- **Section 5:** Provides an assessment of the proposal against statutory planning considerations.
- **Section 6:** Provides a summary and conclusions.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

In this section, the background to the Authorisations is summarised and an outline of the activity location and a detailed discussion on the proposed activities is presented.

2.1 Background

The Hump Ridge Track and its associated facilities were built by the Tuatapere Community (via the Hump Ridge Charitable Trust), after the community of Tuatapere looked at a way to bring visitors to

the area, after the devastating collapse of the timber logging industry in the late 1980's. The track took nine months and took around 25,000 community volunteer hours to build. The track opened in 2001 and has been maintained and run by the community (via the Hump Ridge Charitable Trust) since. The track offers a 3 day/2night tramping experience over 62km, traversing beaches, coastal forest, historical wooden viaducts and sub-alpine views.

Guided walks are 3 night/3 day experiences and 52km. The walk consists of the following:

- **Day 1 Guided** – Chopper to Flat Creek, walk through coastal beech forest, ascending through mountain beech forest to Okaka Lodge, with 360 degree views of the Southern Fiordland, Stewart and Solander Island.
- **Day 2 Guided** – Enjoy elevated views to Luncheon Rock, descending through mountain and coastal beech forest to the viaducts and tram line through to Port Craig Lodge.
- **Day 3 Guided** – Follow the coast and beach walks back to the start. Lookout for the Hector's dolphins.

Freedom walkers (unguided members of the public) commence the track on private land at the Rarakau Car Park.

Figure 1A shows the Hump Ridge Track.

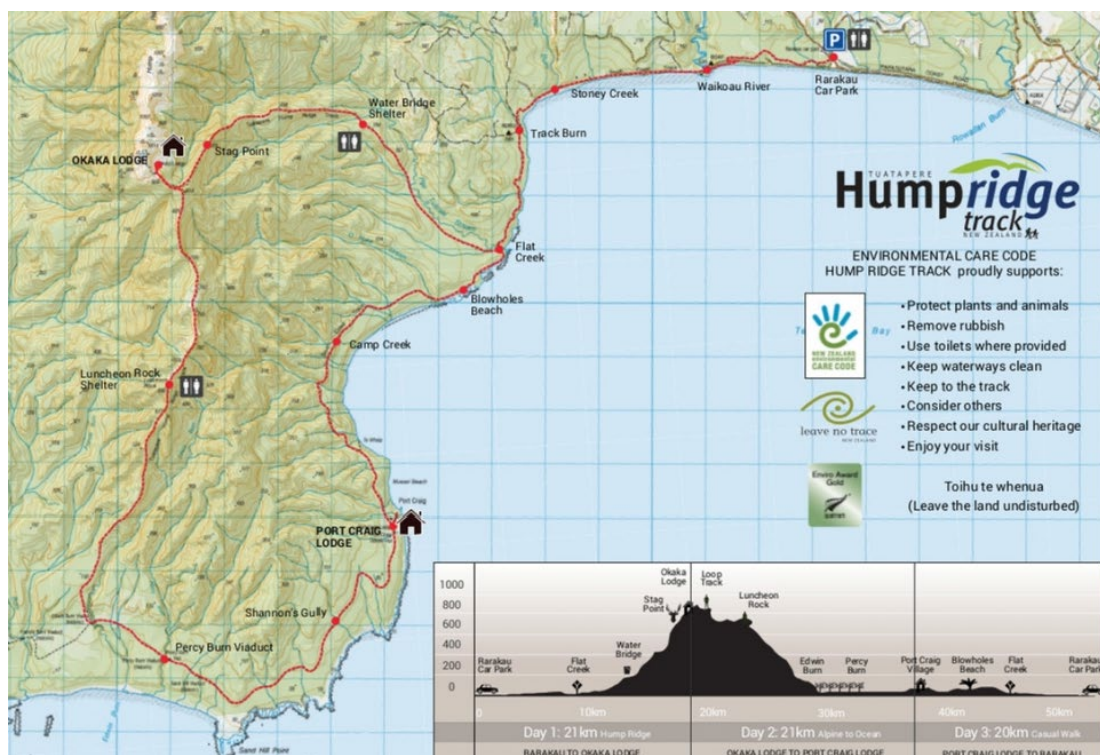


Figure 1A: Overview of the Hump Ridge Track

The Applicant has invested significant capital into the Hump Ridge Track experience since its inception and has maintained the track and its associated facilities to a high standard.

The Applicant's mission is to:

- ***Ensure the long term wellbeing of the environment and community***
 - Support the local business community by buying locally and increasing visitor time in Tuatapere
 - Maintain a strong allegiance to the Sustainable Tourism South project
 - Uphold a strong proactive approach to the conservation of native flora and fauna
- ***Offer a world class outdoor experience***
 - Offer more people the opportunity to experience our wilderness
 - Exceed customer expectations
- ***Respect our environment, our heritage, our people***
 - Endorse the objectives of Leave No Trace
 - Promote the history of the area
 - Provide a positive experience for everyone involved with the Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track

In 2009 the Applicant won the Environment Southland Commercial Environment Award. The Applicant holds Qualmark certification and an Enviro Silver award. Qualmark accredited activities can be booked or bought with confidence having undergone a detailed onsite quality assessment and been found to be professional and trustworthy. Qualmark is New Zealand's official mark of quality for tourism.

In 2012 and 2013 the Applicant was selected by the NZ Ministry of Environment as finalists in the Green Ribbon Awards, which celebrate excellence in Environmental ethos, initiatives, and practices.

In 2019 it was announced that the Hump Ridge Track will become New Zealand's next Great Walk. Great Walks showcase some of the best parts of the country and are a great way to enable more people to enjoy nature. Consequently, the track and facilities are undergoing a major upgrade towards the opening as a Great Walk in the 2023-24 season. The Applicant is working with DOC to bring the track up to Great Walk Standard.

The Applicant holds existing Authorisations for the site, these are:

- **Authorisation 35037-GUI** – Authorises land based guiding activities on various parcels of Public Conservation Land and within Fiordland National Park.
- **Authorisation PAC-14-06-59-01** – Authorises the lease and licence of land associated with the running of the Hump Ridge Track.

The Applicant also holds the following resource consents for the site:

- Southland District Council – **RC1999145** to establish, operate, upgrade and maintain the Hump Ridge Track.
- Environment Southland – **AUTH-20222158** to discharge treated domestic wastewater to land from the Port Craig Lodge.
- Environment Southland – **AUTH-20222218** to discharge treated domestic wastewater to land from the Okākā Lodge.

The water takes are permitted under the regional planning documents with approximately 87L per person per day being used.

Furthermore, the Applicant is in the process of applying for a resource consent from the Southland District Council to establish a helipad (on private land) near the corner of Rowallan Road and the Papatotara Coast Road. The helipad will be used to transfer passengers to private land at the start of the track and as a base for the servicing of the lodges and/or other work associated with the maintenance of the track.

2.2 Description of Proposed Activity

The following section provides an outline of the activity location and a detailed discussion on the Authorisations sought by the Applicant.

The Hump Ridge Track

This application seeks a continuation of the existing arrangement between the Applicant and the Department of Conservation relating to the management of both the South Coast Track and the Hump Ridge Track in Fiordland National Park and on Public Conservation Land in Western Southland. The South Coast Track is shown in Figure 1 and the Hump Ridge Track in Figure 2.

The majority of the two tracks are within Fiordland National Park and other public conservation land, namely the Waikoau Forest Conservation Area (Section 6 Block VIII Rowallan SD SO 3294 & Section 14 Block VII Rowallan SD SO 3293). However, there are sections of tracks on Southland District Council (SDC) road reserve, private land and within the Coastal Marine Area (CMA). Where the tracks cross private land the Applicant has easements in place to enable their continued operation. Figure 3 shows the underlying ownership of both the South Coast Track and the Hump Ridge Track. The existing easements are currently undergoing review and the Department of Conservation is to be included as a party to these agreements.



Figure 1 Shows the South Coast Track (red dashed line)

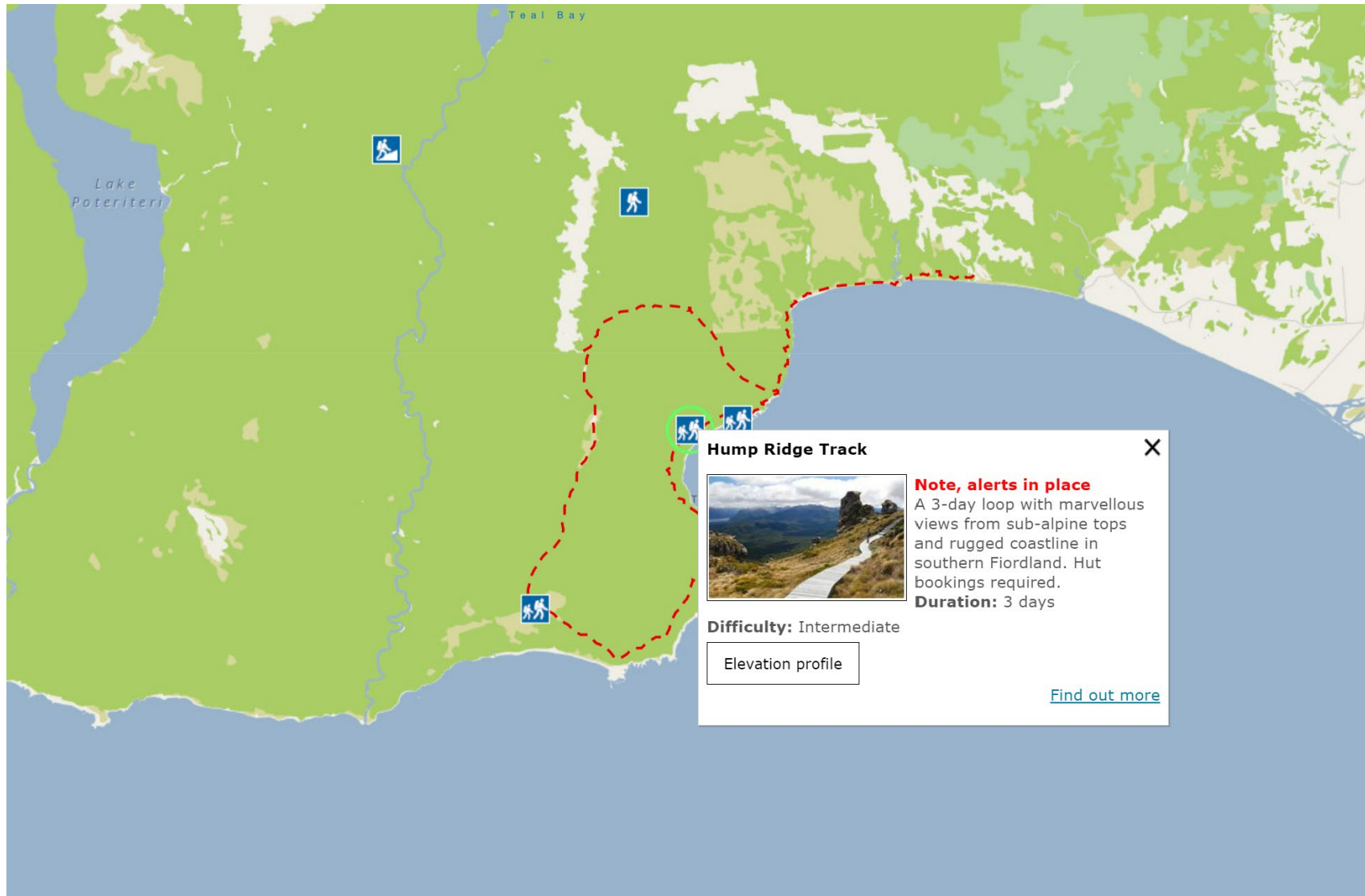
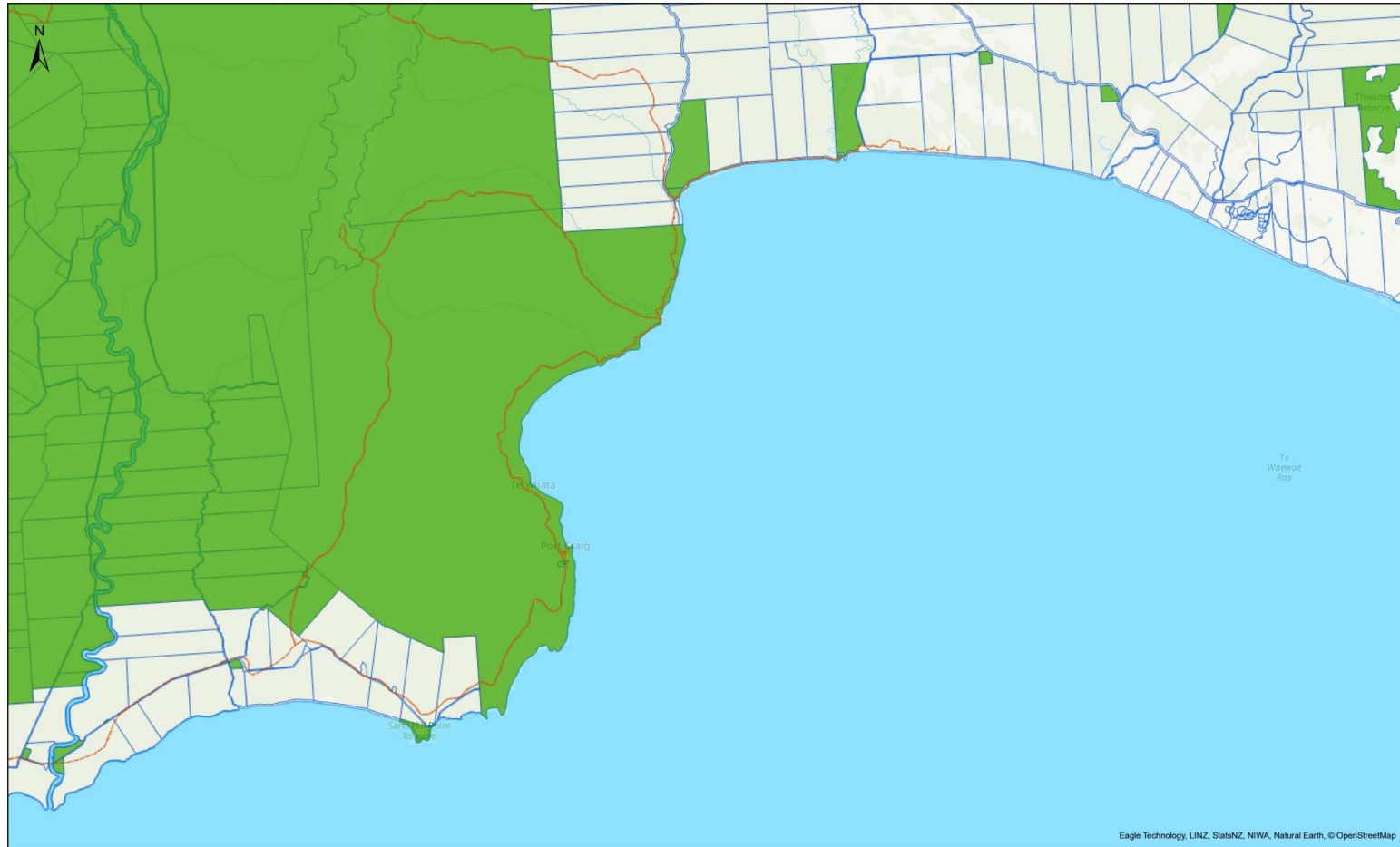


Figure 2 Shows the Hump Ridge Track (red dashed line). Note the track is an advanced track not intermediate as stated in the above figure.



Map key

- Walking & Tramping
- DOC Public Conservation
- Hydro Parcels
- NZ Primary Parcels

South Coast & Hump Ridge Tracks Land Ownership

Map scale: 1:72,224



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Figure 3 Shows the underlying landownership of the Hump Ridge Track and South Coast Track. Red line shows the track, green shading shows National Park, uncoloured land shows private ownership/road reserve

Facilities used by the Applicant (excluding lodges)

Table 1 provides an overview of the facilities on the Hump Ridge Track that are used by the Applicant. They are located on and off public conservation land, as detailed below. There are other locations (e.g., clearings) along the track used for the landing of helicopters for track maintenance and emergency evacuations, however these have not been identified due to their intermittent use and lack of structural elements. Where Table 1 refers to bivvy sites, there is only one permanent bivvy present. Rather bivvy refers to a site that can be used for overnight shelter if required (e.g., for track maintenance). The bivvy at Henderson’s Camp is permanent. Refer also Figure 4.

Table 1 Description of facilities on the Hump Ridge Track

Facility	Location	Use
Percy Burn – Helipad + telecommunications repeater	SDC road reserve	Track maintenance, communications, and emergency evacuations
Edwin Burn – Helipad	SDC road reserve	Track maintenance and emergency evacuations
Henderson’s Camp – shelter + permanent bivvy + clearing where helicopter lands + proposed telecommunications aerial. <i>The bivvy at Henderson’s is undergoing engineering review. This will be forwarded to the Department of Conservation when received.</i> <i>The Applicant intends to update the facilities at Henderson’s camp. These facilities are old and in need of repair. Any updates will be discussed with the Department of Conservation prior to being undertaken.</i>	National Park	Guided walking, track maintenance, communications, and emergency evacuations
Luncheon Rock – shelter + toilet + helipad <i>The shelter comprises a half moon corrugated galvanised structure with internal and external benches attached. The structure forms part of, in that it is secured to, a wooden decking for ease of access, being that the ground is uneven.</i> <i>The toilet is a secured wooden frame and corrugated structure with a removable tank. The toilet roof collects water and feeds into a 1000L water tank for drinking water.</i> <i>It is proposed to upgrade the existing helipad site to a wooden helipad. Any structure design and location will be discussed with DOC prior to being installed.</i>	National Park	Guided walking, track maintenance and emergency evacuations

<p>Water Bridge – shelter + toilet</p> <p><i>The shelter comprises a half moon corrugated and galvanised structure with internal wooden benches. The floor has wood chips to soften the surface. An exterior bench is also attached for seating.</i></p> <p><i>A clearing used for helicopter landings is located approximately 1km from this site towards Flat Creek.</i></p>	National Park	Guided walking, track maintenance, and emergency evacuations
Camp Creek – bivvy site + toilet + helipad	National Park	Guided walking, track maintenance, and emergency evacuations
Flat Creek – DOC toilet + bivvy site + helicopter landing in the CMA	Coastal Marine Area	Guided walking, drop off point for guided walkers, track maintenance, and emergency evacuations
<p>Above Okākā Lodge and above the Loop Track – existing telecommunications repeater</p> <p><i>The repeater is approximately 1m².</i></p>	National Park	Communications

There is one existing telecommunication utility that services the communications for the Applicant. This telecommunication facility, located above Okākā Lodge and the Loop Track, has been in-situ since August 2000. It is powered by small solar panels, having a small surface area of 1m². Maintenance and repair require helicopter access. For purposes of clarity, the facility has been operated for communication services as part of the multiday guided walk (as outlined in Section 2.1 Background) and is also used by jet boat operators on the Wairaurahiri River, Waitutu Lodge as well as maritime emergencies in the Foveaux Strait.



Figure 3A: Shows the radio repeater above Okākā Lodge and the Loop Track.

Two radio antennas are proposed as part of the Great Walk track upgrade, to increase safety for staff and walkers alike. Each will have a small solar panel and a small charging station for radios. One of the proposed antennas is to be located on Southland District Council Road Reserve at the Percy Burn Hut, this will be a 6m aerial. The second proposed aerial with radio antenna will be located at Henderson's Camp on top of the existing facilities, within the National Park.

Figure 4 shows the location of facilities on the Hump Ridge Track (those sites identified in Table 1, including Okākā), with Figures 5, 6 and 7 showing photographs of facilities (Water Bridge facilities, Luncheon Rock facilities, and Henderson's Camp facilities respectively).



Figure 4 Location of facilities on the track. Sites not identified in Table 1 are used solely for track maintenance and emergency evacuations.

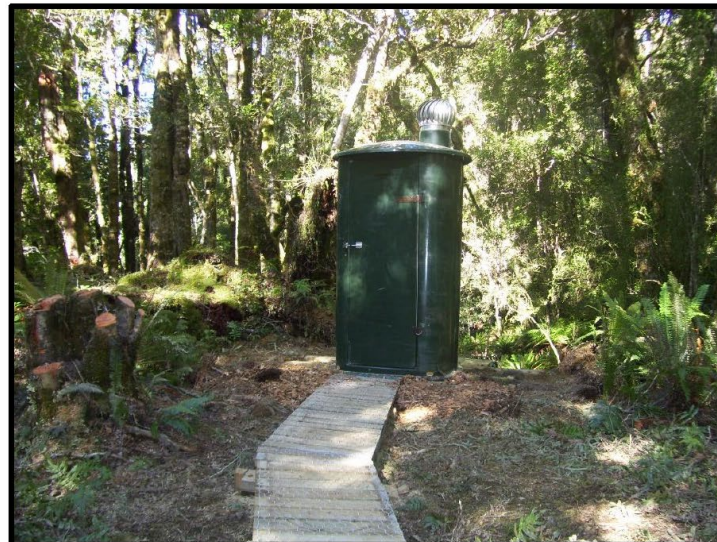


Figure 5 Water Bridge facilities



Figure 6 Luncheon Rock facilities



Figure 7 Existing Henderson's Camp facilities. Note these facilities are old and the applicant intends to discuss with the Department of Conservation the updating of these facilities in the future.

The Lodges

In addition to the above facilities, there are two lodges that have been built by the Applicant and used for the guided walking operation as well as by freedom walkers (unguided members of the public). These lodges are located at Okākā and Port Craig (refer to Figure 4). Both are permanently staffed during the season with a lodge manager and a housekeeper. All lodge facilities (kitchen, toilets, showers etc) are available to all users (guided and freedom walkers). Every night the lodge manager completes a safety briefing for lodge users. The lodge manager holds a Liquor License, and all lodge users of age can purchase limited alcohol. Each lodge can accommodate 44 walkers, in addition to lodging (up to) 3 staff.

The lodges are serviced as required by helicopter (e.g., to move rubbish out, bring in fresh linen and other supplies). Helicopter use is discussed further in section 3.4 of this application.

Users (both guided and freedom walkers) can book space in the lodges. The Applicant manages access to the track and the Okākā and Port Craig Lodges via their website. The applicant currently only commences guiding walking trips on two days per week, despite their current concession providing for more use. The remaining five days per week are open for freedom walkers to commence walking the track. The Applicant seeks to retain the ability to increase their guided walking operations should the demand exist (following Great Walk status) and therefore, under this application, the Applicant seeks the ability to commence guided walking activities on three days per week. The Applicant ensures 50% of the available bed space is available to freedom walkers every night, by having one lodge available for bookings made by guided walkers and one lodge that is only for use by freedom walkers every night that they lodge guide walkers (i.e., out of the 88 beds available across the two lodges, at least 44 spaces are always available for freedom walkers, with 44 spaces available for guided walkers on the days that they require overnight accommodation during their guided walk). Over the course of the week, more than 50% of the available bed space is consequently available to freedom walkers. This is demonstrated in Table 2 which shows how either 44 or 88 bed spaces are available to freedom walkers. Orange shading shows when a lodge can be booked and used by freedom walkers and green shading when the respective lodges can be used by guided walkers. In the event the applicant commenced guiding walking activities on three days per week, there would still be more than 50% of bed space available, across both lodges, each night. Further, over the course of a week more than 50% of available bed space will be available.

Table 2 Shows how the booking system for the track and lodges works (based on commencing guided walking 2 days per week).

Lodge	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Port Craig	Freedom	Freedom	Guided	Freedom	Freedom	Guided	Freedom
Okākā	Freedom	Guided	Freedom	Freedom	Guided	Freedom	Freedom

Port Craig Lodge

The Port Craig Lodge accommodates 44 walkers in 10 rooms. The GPS coordinates for the lodge are 46°13'18.82"S 167°21'41.82"E. The lodge is located within Fiordland National Park.

There are 4 bunk rooms which sleep up to 8 guests each. There are 6 private rooms which sleep up to 2 guests each. There is a manager's quarters (hut) which sleeps up to 2 people and a staff pod which sleeps up to one staff member. No more than 3 staff are accommodated at the lodge each night. Figure 8 shows an overview of the site. There is a helipad located to the east of the lodge, which is used to service the lodge and to transfer bags for track walkers. The GPS coordinates for the helipad are 46°13'18.07"S 167°21'44.78"E.

The Applicant seeks to construct a new shelter in the middle of the courtyard area. It will be 4.8m by 4.8m and will be a simple screened shelter in design, to enable outdoor eating space for lodge users, with a small deck off the front (refer to Appendix H for a plan showing). The purpose is to provide an outdoor eating space, whilst also offering protection from sandflies.

In addition, the applicant seeks to expand the lodge managers facilities with an additional bedroom (refer to Appendix H, which shows). The current set up works well if there is a married couple managing the facilities plus one additional staff member e.g., the walking guide. However, if there are individuals then their own private space is required i.e., space for 3 individuals.

The Applicant also proposes to upgrade the wastewater system and a resource consent has been granted from Environment Southland (AUTH-20222158) for the proposed upgrade, noting that this consent expires in August 2037. The GPS coordinates for the wastewater system are 46°13'17.43"S 167°21'42.86"E. The existing septic system on site consists of two 3,600L septic tanks, two methane gas tanks of 4,500L and 4,800L and a disposal area of 350m² laid with distribution lines. The existing system is authorised under AUTH-20202511. A new system of larger capacity is required as the disposal water throughput exceeds the design capacity for the existing system. This also results in more frequent emptying of solid waste from the system, as there is less area in the septic tanks for anaerobic treatment, which in turn results in increased helicopter movements.

The proposed septic system is designed by a Suitably Qualified Person (Don Moir, a wastewater systems design specialist) in accordance with the relevant New Zealand standard for onsite wastewater treatment systems (AS/NZS 1547:2012). The proposed system will utilise some of the components of the existing system while utilising new components. In summary:

- A large septic tank of 20,000L capacity will be installed for human waste allowing for the biodegrading process to take effect, reducing the need for human handling i.e., removal of solids via helicopter;
- One of the two existing 3,600L septic tanks will be decommissioned and the other septic tank will be utilised as a grease trap for the kitchen on site, noting that the liquid overflow from the grease trap flows to the new large septic tank;
- One of the existing methane tanks will be decommissioned and the other tank will be utilised as emergency storage for the pump chamber – which holds septic waste temporarily before it is pumped/discharged to land;
- The disposal area of 350m² is proposed to be increased to 400m²; and
- A professional drainlayer will be engaged to install the discharge system, to ensure that it is installed in accordance with AS/NZS 1547:2012 and operating appropriately.

Refer to Figure 9 for an overview of the proposed septic system.

Approximately 3,000L of drinking water a day is sourced from the building roofs and a nearby stream. The stream water intake is upriver and gravity fed to the Primary tanks (6 x 2,000L). Water then passes through a filter and is gravity fed underground to the lodge. Port Craig Lodge uses a pressure pump (located under the lodge) to enable satisfactory pressure for showers, toilets and other outlets due to the flat terrain between the tanks and the lodge. There are 2 x 1,000L rainwater tanks (one at the kitchen and one at the ablution block) for emergencies. However, the river supply is fairly constant and provides a secure source of clean water. Refer to Figure 10 for an overview of the water system.

Solar panels are located on the battery shed and dining room roofs.

Photos of the lodge are shown in Figures 11 and 12.

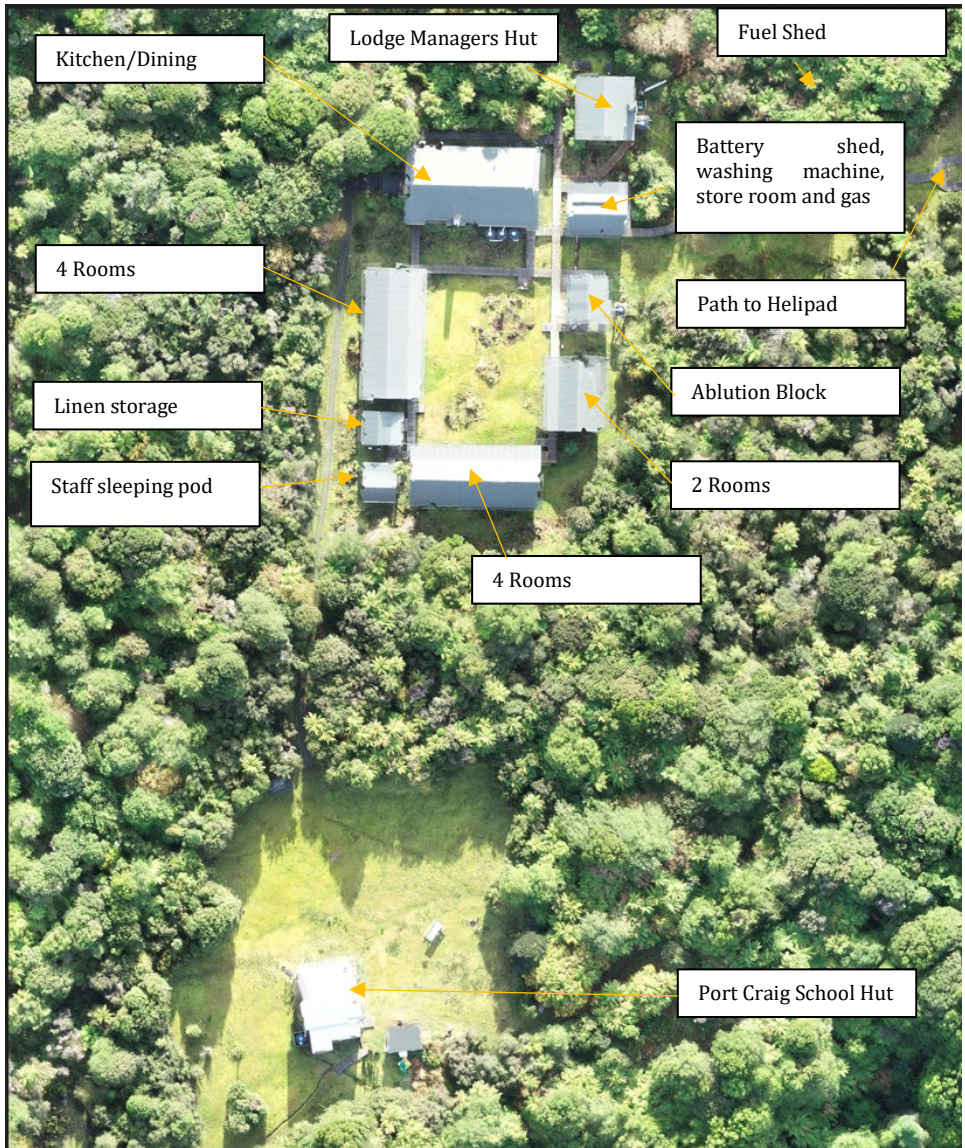


Figure 8 Overview of Port Craig Lodge Facilities. Note the helipad is located off the image to the east.

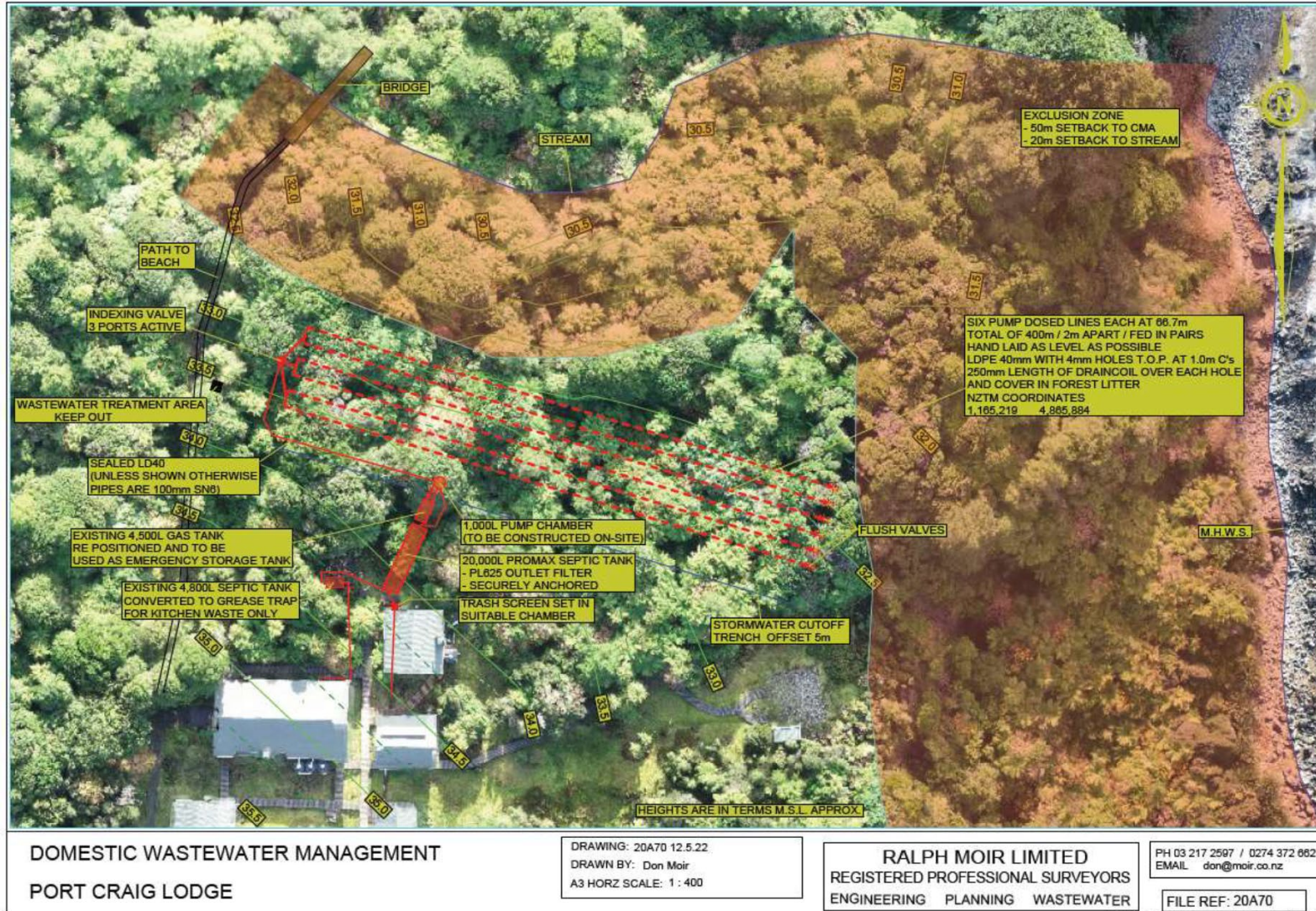


Figure 9 Port Craig wastewater system upgrade



Figure 10 Port Craig water infrastructure



Figure 11 Port Craig Lodge showing location of proposed shelter



Figure 12 Port Craig Lodge

Okākā Lodge

Like the Port Craig Lodge, Okākā Lodge also accommodates 44 walkers in 10 rooms. The GPS coordinates for the lodge are 46°9'32.71"S 167°18'37.01"E. The lodge is located in Fiordland National Park.

There are 4 bunk rooms which sleep up to 8 guests each. There are 6 private rooms which sleep up to 2 guests each. There is a manager's quarters (hut) which sleeps up to 2 and an additional staff sleeping room to accommodate one staff member if required (located within the existing buildings). Figure 13 shows an overview of the site. There is a helipad located to the north of the lodge, which is used to service the lodge and to transfer bags for track walkers. The GPS coordinates for the helipad are 46°9'30.77"S 167°18'35.13"E. The Applicant proposes to construct a new staff sleeping pod at Okākā Lodge, to enable private space for 3 staff members at the site. Construction plans and design of the sleeping pod will be discussed with the Department of Conservation prior to construction.

The Applicant proposes to upgrade the wastewater system and a discharge consent has been granted from Environment Southland (AUTH-20222218) for the upgrade, noting that this consent expires in August 2037. The GPS coordinates for the wastewater system are 46°9'33.46"S 167°18'41.36"E. The existing septic system on site consists of two 3,600L septic tanks and a disposal area consisting of two alternating irrigation lines laid in a bushy area. The existing system is authorised under AUTH-20202511, which was granted in November 2020 until November 2022. A new system of larger capacity is required for the same reasons as discussed above for the Port Craig Lodge. In addition, the higher altitude at Okākā Lodge means a longer period of anaerobic activity is required to break down the solids. An increased holding capacity contributes to the effective breakdown of the solids.

The proposed septic system is designed by a Suitably Qualified Person (Don Moir, a wastewater systems design specialist) in accordance with the relevant New Zealand standard for onsite wastewater treatment systems (AS/NZS 1547:2012). The proposed system will utilise some of the components of the existing system while utilising new components. In summary:

- A large septic tank of 20,000L capacity will be installed;
- One of the existing septic tanks (3,600L each) will be utilised as a grease trap for kitchen waste, the liquid overflow from this tank will flow into the other existing septic tank the solids are extracted and flown out;
- The other existing septic tank will be utilised as emergency storage for the pump chamber – which holds septic waste temporarily before it is pumped/discharged to land;

- The new disposal area will consist of six dosed lines that are 66.7m in length, laid within a 400m² area and covered with forest litter; and
- A professional drainlayer will be engaged to install the discharge system, to ensure that it is installed in accordance with AS/NZS 1547:2012 and operating appropriately.

Refer to Figure 14 for an overview of the proposed wastewater system. The septic tank and fat trap are emptied via helicopter with contents removed from the National Park.

The potable water intake is from below the tarns. It is gravity fed via aboveground pipe (not visible as is below the grass) to Primary (3 x 1,800L) and Secondary (3 x 2,000L) and Emergency Tanks (2 x 25,000L). Approximately 3,000L a day is taken. These are all settling/storage tanks. Waterlines gravity feed to the Lodge Manager's Hut, Ablutions and Kitchen. Back-up rainwater tanks from roofing are at the Lodge Manager's Hut (1,000L), Ablutions (1,000L), Kitchen (3 x 1,000L) and additional reserve (3 x 25,000L). Reserve tanks are pumped to Primary and Secondary when required during dry periods. Refer to Figure 15.

The settling tanks provide potable water for public consumption. Filtration is placed between the primary tanks and the lodge facilities. This capacity provides for firefighting and reserve water should the main line be out of action.

Solar panels are located on the dining room and battery room roofs.

Photos of the lodge are shown in Figures 16 and 17.

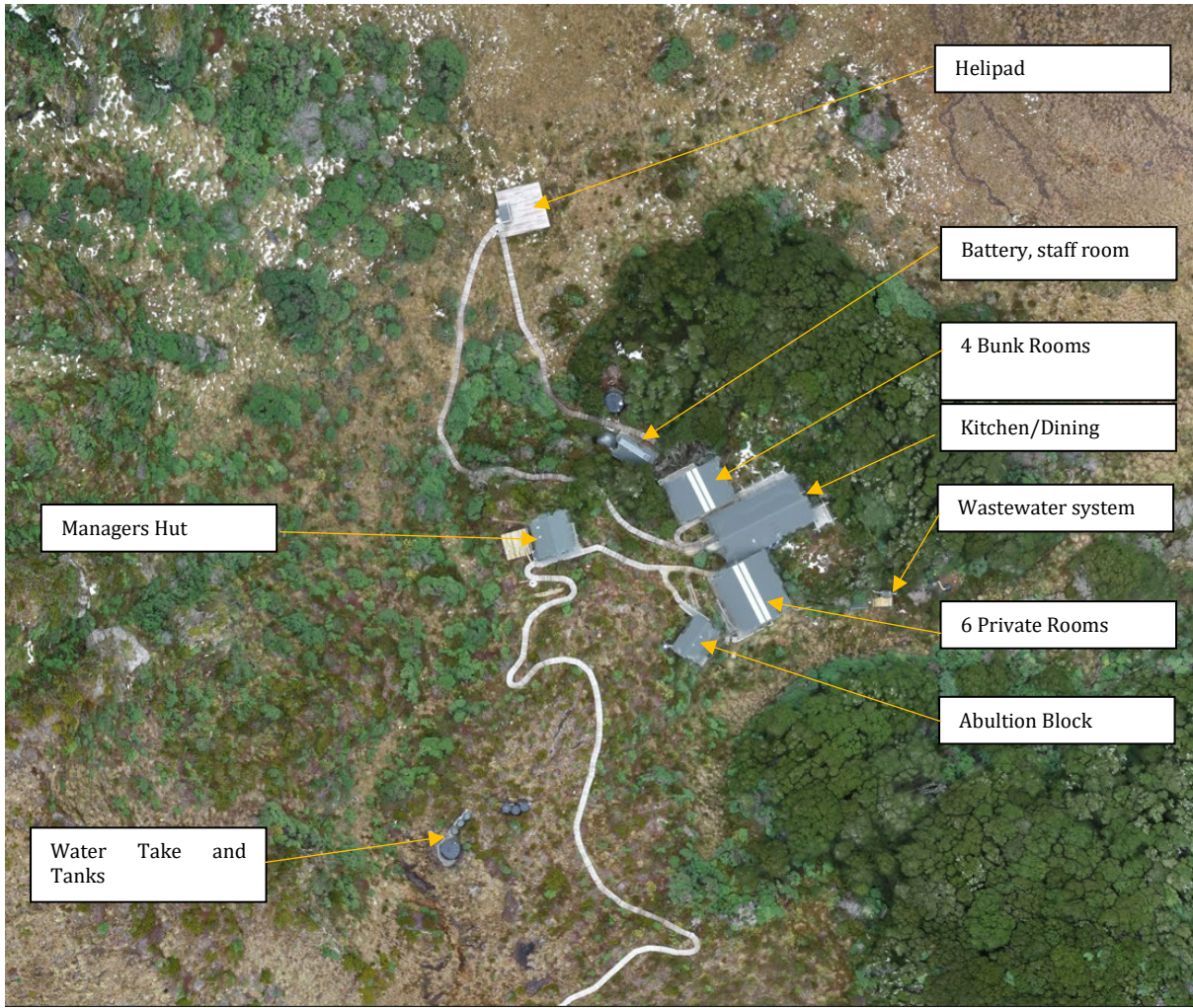


Figure 13 Okākā Lodge Site Overview

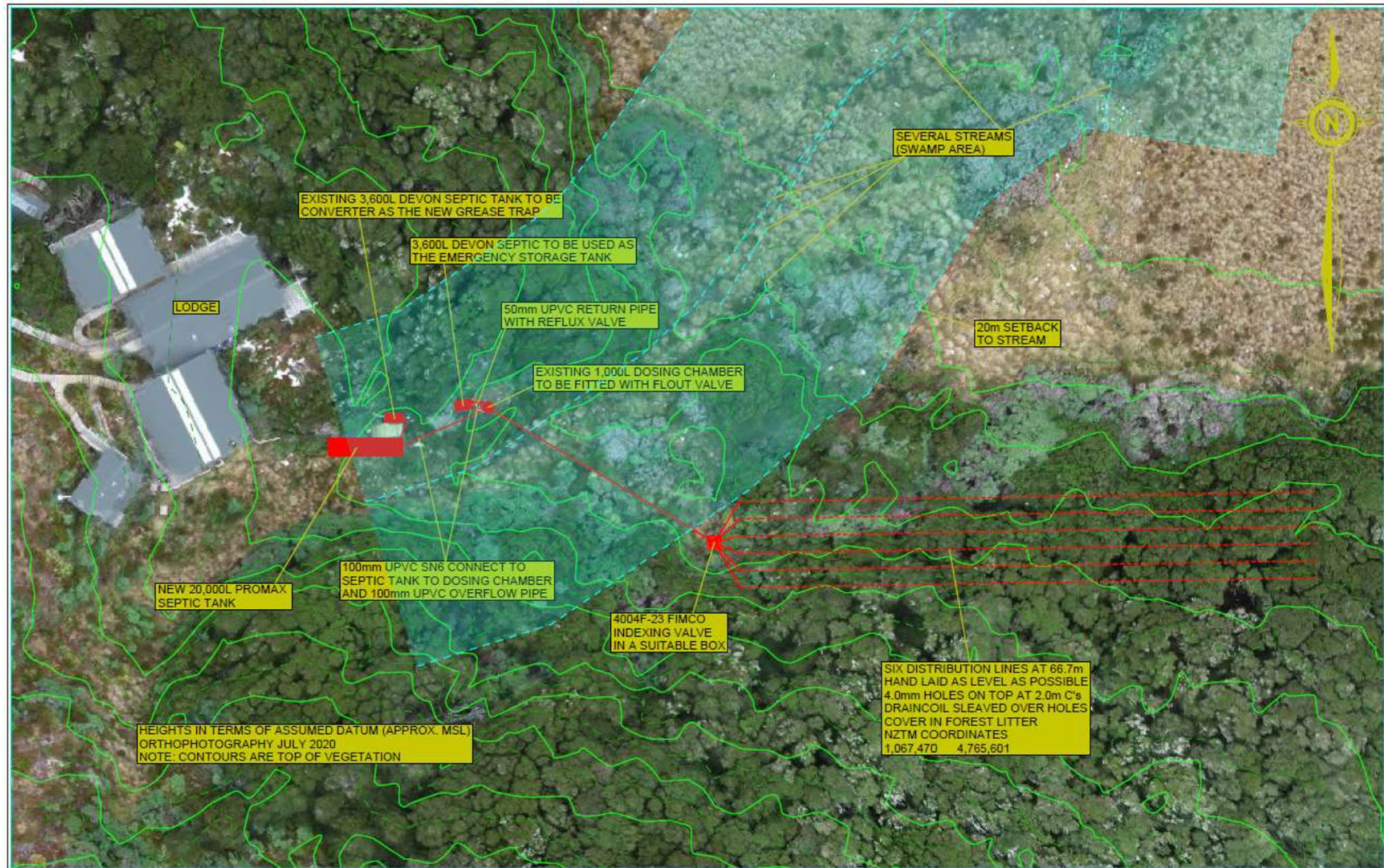


Figure 14 Overview of the Okākā Lodge wastewater system



Figure 15 Overview of the Okākā Lodge water system



Figure 16 Okākā Lodge. Note solar panels on the dining room roof are not shown in this picture.



Figure 17 Okākā Lodge Internal. Note there is now a ceiling.

3 Authorisations Required

3.1 Lease and licence to use land and facilities

The facilities and structures used by the Applicant have been presented in in the preceding sections.

The following authorisations are sought relating to the above facilities:

- The Applicant seeks a lease for the footprint of all Port Craig Lodge (refer to Figure 8) and Okākā Lodge (refer to Figure 13) buildings and associated infrastructure (including proposed additions). For the Port Craig site, a lease is sought for the courtyard area between the building (refer to Figure 18 below), this is due to the 'enclosed' nature of the courtyard and the connection of it with the surrounding buildings. As discussed above the lodges will be used to accommodate guided walkers and freedom walkers. A lease is also sought for those facilities described in Table 1 and Figure 4. Whilst a lease is sought for these facilities, these facilities will continue to be available for freedom walkers as well as guided walkers.
- The Applicant seeks a licence over the land within the Fiordland National Park which is occupied by the Hump Ridge Track; that part of the National Park over which the existing South Coast Track passes between the National Park Boundary near Bluecliffs Beach and the boundary with private land near Sandhill Point. A licence is also sought for all below ground infrastructure associated with the running of the Hump Ridge Track including underground water pipes etc. A licence is also sought for the land surrounding both lodges for within 100 metre of these lodges. This licence is sought to enable the applicant to continue to operate and maintain the facilities and its associated infrastructure.
- A concession to occupy and operate the Okākā Lodge and the Port Craig Lodge as discussed above in section 2.2.3.
- A concession to operate a tramping track from the South Coast Track at Flat Creek ascending to the Hump Ridge and traversing the ridge south to join the South Coast track again at the Edwin Burn (refer to Figure 1 and 2).
- A licence to use and maintain the facilities described in Table 1 and Figure 4.

Refer to Appendix H for a plan for both the lodges.



Figure 18 Proposed Lease Area for Port Craig Lodge. Note lease is proposed for outlying infrastructure such as septic tanks and water tanks.

3.2 Land Based Guiding Activities

The Applicant is seeking a land based guiding concession to continue their existing operation. As discussed above the Applicant has been undertaking guiding activities successfully since the inception of the track in 2001. Table 3 presents the land based guiding activities sought by the Applicant.

Table 3 Proposed land based guiding activities*

Track Name and Land Status	DOC facilities used	Dates of Operation	Max group Size	Trip numbers	Duration of visit
South Coast Track & Hump Ridge Track	Rarakau Car Park (Private Land) Flat Creek Shelter (Coastal Marine Area)	01 October to 30 April (inclusive) each year.	12 (inclusive of guides)	1 trip per day 1 trip per week	Overnight 1 night / 2 days

South Coast Track, Humpridge Track & Loop Track	Refer to Section 2.2.2	01 October to 30 April (inclusive) each year.	12 (inclusive of guides)	3 trips per day, 9 trips per week	Overnight 2 nights / 3 days
Hump Ridge Track	Refer to Section 2.2.2	One-off annual event	400	1	Up to 24 hours

*Proposed activities are within Fiordland National Park and on private land. Where tracks cross private land the Applicant holds easements to enable access.

Regular guiding activities

Regular guiding activities are those activities which occur from 1 October through to 30 April. Group sizes will be limited to maximum of 12 people per guide (party size of 13) for regular guiding activities. Each group will be accompanied by one guide. Guides will provide walkers with a briefing prior to commencing the walk, which includes health and safety as well as methods to minimise environmental effects, such as appropriate behaviour around wildlife, rubbish removal, and staying on the track to minimise vegetation disturbance and biosecurity.

One-off event

The Stump the Hump Event is a one-off annual event run by the Applicant to raise funds for the Hump Ridge Track. It has not been held for several years, for various reasons. However, the Applicant seeks the ability to run this event or a similar annual event over the course of the next ten years. The following conditions are volunteered:

- Will only be held once per year;
- Effects on the track will be monitored;
- The Applicant will be responsible for any damage to land or facilities attributed to the event and will remediate any damage within two months of the event;
- Public access to the track and park will be retained;
- Notification of the event will be via public notice in the paper and through signage placed at the entry to the track at least 1 week before the event;
- Neighbouring landowners will be consulted regarding the event being run;
- All participants will remain on the tracks/routes;
- All participants will be required to ensure footwear is free from weeds;
- All rubbish and waste will be removed by the Applicant; and
- No open fires will be permitted.

3.3 Easements

There is existing services and infrastructure located within Fiordland National Park which is integral to the efficient, effective and safe operation of the Hump Ridge Track. The Applicant therefore seeks the following easements to allow their continued use within Fiordland National Park:

- (a) A right to convey water, via above ground tanks and above and underground pipes, at:
 - i. Okākā Lodge (refer to Figure 15);
 - ii. Port Craig Lodge (refer to Figure 10);
 - iii. Water Bridge Shelter and Toilet (refer to section 2.2.2) – water is sourced from a nearby stream using a billy on a rope; and
 - iv. Luncheon Rock Shelter (refer to section 2.2.2) – water is sourced from the toilet roof structure and stored in a 1000L tank.
- (b) A right to drain sewage and discharge wastewater, via above and underground pipes and irrigation lines¹, at:
 - i. Okākā Lodge (refer to Figure 14);
 - ii. Port Craig Lodge (refer to Figure 9);
 - iii. Water Bridge Shelter and Toilet (refer to section 2.2.2) – solids are evacuated via helicopter as required; and
 - iv. Luncheon Rock Shelter and Toilet (refer to section 2.2.2) – solids are evacuated via helicopter as required.
- (c) A right to convey telecommunications – As discussed in section 2 above. The facilities are owned by the Applicant.

3.4 Aircraft

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan (FNPMP) does not include limits on the number of landings within the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor. It does however require the following:

- No landings within 500 metres of the track except at the Okākā and Port Craig Lodges;
- Landings are only permitted for the purpose of transporting packs;
- Passengers can only be transported if there is room on the flight carrying packs;
- Passenger ferrying (other than as described above) will not be permitted;
- Landings are to be managed to maintain existing recreation and user experience;
- Landings should occur between 10.00am and 3.00pm during the walking season.

The Okākā and Port Craig Lodges are serviced as required by helicopter (e.g., to move rubbish and waste out, bring in fresh linen, staff, gas and other supplies). The following is a typical resupply schedule:

¹ Irrigation lines will be covered with forest litter.

- Monday – Okaka and Port Craig (1hr);
- Tuesday – Guided (Flat Creek (in the CMA) and Okaka) (1 hr) if bookings confirmed;
- Thursday – Okaka and Port Craig (1hr); and
- Friday – Guided (Flat Creek (in the CMA) and Okaka) (1hr) if bookings confirmed.

However, servicing can change due to circumstance and weather. The Applicant keeps resupply to a minimum and is driven largely by cost (i.e., if there are no Guided bookings starting on a Tuesday or Friday for whatever reason, then the helicopter would quite possibly only fly on one day in the week).

Track walkers can also opt to have their bags flown up to the lodges via helicopter on service days. On average helicopter movements will be 4 per day (2 at each hut). However, at times more helicopter landings and take offs may be required (e.g., if servicing is required and sewage needs to be transported off-site). This use is provided for in the FNPMP. The Applicant uses their best endeavours to conduct helicopter activity between 10.00am and 3.00pm during the walking season. However, occasionally this cannot occur (e.g., due to the nature of resupply activities or the weather).

Passengers are sometimes transported to the lodges in exceptional circumstance (if there is space on a helicopter transporting bags), such as for disabled users. This use is provided for under the FNPMP.

On Day 1 guided walkers can choose to be transferred to Flat Creek, the landing occurs within the Coastal Marine Area, via helicopter where they will commence their Hump Ridge Track walk. This shortens the walk by 10km. This option is popular for elderly walkers.

Flight paths will be generally from the proposed new helipad located on the corner of Rowallan Road and the Papatotara Coast Road, directly to the lodges or Flat Creek, and back (refer to Figure 19). However, from time-to-time there will be deviation from this flight path as required by the aircraft operator (e.g., where they have another job to do in Fiordland).

Helicopter landings will also occur at other facilities along the track (refer to Table 1 and Figure 4) for rubbish removal, track maintenance or emergency purposes. These have been identified as safe locations for landing, as well as those with minimal impact on natural values and other visitors to the National Park (i.e., natural clearings). Further detail can be found in the Guided Manual (Appendix E).



Figure 19 Primary Helicopter Landing and Take-off locations for servicing huts, transporting packs, and transporting passengers. Notes passengers are only transported on flights with packs where there is space or to Flat Creek in the CMA.

4 Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposed activity takes place within the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor² as well as on public conservation land. The following section discusses the potential effects of the activity and the methods implemented by the Applicant to avoid, remedy or mitigate any effects on the National Park and Public Conservation lands and waters. This section addresses effects on landscape values, flora and fauna, biosecurity, other uses, cultural values, waste management, discharges to land, fires, historic values, private / leased land, noise effects, and positive effects, before providing an effects summary.

4.1 Effects on Landscape values

The proposed activities have the potential to adversely impact landscape values of the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor. However, the proposed activities have already been previously considered and authorised via existing concession and lease documents. The following changes are proposed:

- 1 the installation of an outdoor area within the courtyard at Port Craig;
- 2 upgrades to the septic systems of both Port Craig Lodge and Okākā Lodge; and
- 3 the installation of a radio antenna for telecommunications at Henderson’s Camp Hut;
- 4 extension of the staff manager facilities at Port Craig with an additional bedroom; and
- 5 a new staff pod (bedroom) at Okākā Lodge;
- 6 a new permanent timber helipad structure at Luncheon Rock; and
- 7 Permanent bivvy sites at Camp Creek and Flat Creek.

All other structures are existing and have been designed and maintained in a way that is compatible with the landscape. The proposed outdoor area (screened shelter with deck) will be sited within the existing footprint of the buildings (i.e., within the courtyard), hence it will not add additional bulk or scale to the Port Craig Lodge as experienced from outside of the lodge, at a human scale. The proposed upgrades to the septic systems will not result in significant adverse effects as they will be located within close proximity to the existing lodge infrastructure and will generally be underground. Where possible the Applicant proposes to reuse the existing infrastructure for the septic system upgrade. The proposed telecommunications aerial will be located at Henderson’s Camp which already contains man made elements. It is not anticipated to adversely affect the landscape or other significant values. The proposed extension of the staff facilities at Port Craig will be attached to the existing facilities so when viewed from the outside will not adversely impact landscape and natural character values. The site will be remediated upon completion of the work. The topography is flat and minimal earthworks are required. The new staff pod (bedroom) at Okākā Lodge will be visually connected to the existing lodge managers facilities. The topography on site, in respect of both Okākā Lodge, means it is challenging to

² The FNPMP identifies the Hump Ridge Track as a ‘high use corridor’.

add to the existing structures. Overall, the proposed additions are considered minor and not anticipated to adversely effect the significant values of the area.

Maintenance of the existing structures will be undertaken by the Applicant and will be undertaken in a manner sympathetic to the outstanding natural environment of Fiordland National Park and in accordance with building warrant of fitness standards. All staff undertaking maintenance work will be briefed on the importance of the location (including site-specific) and its important values including landscape, biodiversity and natural character.

No vegetation will be cleared as a result of this application, other than for track maintenance; that which already occurs under the existing concession and lease documents. There will be some vegetation disturbance to enable the upgrade of the septic tank systems for each of the huts and the proposed building additions, however this will be minor and temporary, and the sites will be remediated following the construction process. The proposed upgrades have been focused in areas where development has already occurred.

Any future modification of development (if any) will be undertaken only once approval and appropriate authorisations (if required) have been obtained is received from the Department of Conservation.

4.2 Flora and fauna

The Applicant has been running the Hump Ridge Track since 2001. They have robust systems in place to manage impacts on the significant flora and fauna of the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor. All staff are trained on the significant values of the area and of the low impact techniques to avoid adverse effects on the environment. Walkers are provided a briefing prior to walking the track and throughout their walk on the significant values of the area and techniques to minimise their impacts on the environment.

The Applicant has installed board walk on the most sensitive parts of the track to conserve the forest floor and reduce erosion on the delicate sub-alpine area. Steps have also been built on steep sections of the track to reduce erosion and protect the forest floor. Sections of the track have also been wood chipped to minimise trampers 'widening' the track. Walkers and guides are required to stay on the track and breaks are taken in one of two purpose-built shelters (built by the Applicant); these shelters concentrate walkers stopping in one area rather than spreading out off the track. The only vegetation modified in any way is when required to maintain the walking track or if required to maintain the facilities or infrastructure associated with the running of the track. This is only undertaken to the extent required to maintain walking access and the facilities or infrastructure. The proposed daily guided walk numbers are provided for in the FNPMP, as such it is considered that the impact of these

walkers through the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor has already been considered as, and is (i.e., remains), appropriate.

Walkers and guides are required to stay at least 20 metres away from wildlife and guides and walkers are educated on good management practices such as: not feeding wildlife, not using flash cameras, not harassing wildlife, not taking any animals (e.g., pets) on to the land and not playing recordings of bird song.

The applicant operates 225 stoat traps in collaboration with Wairaurahiri Jet, and walkers can sponsor for a 12-month period a trap. These traps are visible on 'NZ traps' during the summer; traps are checked fortnightly by the Applicant's biodiversity ranger who then updates the NZ traps website with photos and new sponsorships. Furthermore, the applicant has installed two automated possum traps at Port Craig on a trial basis and, if successful, the applicant will look to extend. Pig rooting and damage is currently managed through liaison with local hunters.

The only vehicle access to the track is via helicopter and the helicopter only lands at designated helipad sites or at clearings appropriate for landing a helicopter. Helicopter landing is intermittent and does not adversely affect native vegetation or fauna.

The proposed upgrades to the Port Craig septic system, as it is not gravitational, will require minimal excavation and vegetation impact. The Applicant will take all precautions to protect vegetation. The works will be temporary and upon completion the site will be remediated. The upgrades to the septic system will result in an improvement to water quality and less aircraft movements (associated with the removal of solid waste).

The Applicant takes the utmost care to protect the significant fauna and flora present along the Hump Ridge Track and implements mitigations to ensure its long term protection.

4.3 Biosecurity

The Applicant complies with all relevant government organisations' biosecurity requirements. The Applicant trains all staff and provides a briefing to all walkers prior to walking on the track, and this addresses biosecurity matters. The following methods are among those implemented by the Applicant: using Biosecurity NZ's Check Clean Dry Procedure when around waterways; ensure footwear is cleaned prior to entering the track, take all precautions to ensure weeds are not taken into the park.

The Applicant's management team do and will continue to advise guides and walkers of any potential biosecurity issues and how to manage these in accordance with best practice. Any possible pest incursions will be recorded and provided to the Department of Conservation.

All rubbish, including food waste, is removed from the National Park and Public Conservation land to avoid any potential introduction of species from seeds etc.

The Applicant's operation is reliant on the significant values of the National Park and Public Conservation Land; therefore, it is the Applicant's priority to protect this special public asset.

4.4 Other Users

The Applicant is committed to ensuring a high value experience is provided to guided walkers and freedom walks alike. Central to this is the management of effects of the operation of freedom walkers. The Applicant operates a booking system for both the guided walking operation and the freedom walking operation. This booking system is discussed in section 2.2.2.2 above. The booking system means that at least 50% of the hut space is available to freedom walkers at all times, with 100% available when guided walkers do not require overnight lodging (with one lodge used for guided walkers and the other used for freedom walkers when guided walkers do require overnight lodging). This approach manages conflict between the two different user groups, whilst still making the facilities available for all users. Guided walking group sizes are limited to 13 people (including guide), which complies with the FNPMP. The proposal does not impede public access to the track.

The Applicant completes annual activity returns to enable the Department of Conservation to monitor usage. Guides are trained and communicate the needs for guided walkers to be considerate of other track users.

The Applicant has a lodge manager present at their lodges throughout the season. The lodge manager ensures the lodges are left in a clean and tidy state upon guest departure. In the off season the Port Craig Lodge is closed for public use, as the public can use the DOC serviced school hut. Okākā Lodge is also closed for the season albeit one toilet, kitchen and the bunk rooms are left open for emergency use. Gas supplies (for hot water) are turned off.

There is one other guided concession for the Hump Ridge Track exist however, they need to book sleeping space through the Applicants booking system.

The proposed lease and license activity is to enable the continued operation of the Hump Ridge Track experience. The lease and licence are sought to provide security to the Applicant in the long-term operation of that experience. The buildings and infrastructure on the Hump Ridge Track are integral to the Applicant's operation. Whilst the buildings are open to the public security and management of them is essential. The lease and license will not impact on the public's access to the track itself or enjoyment of it. As discussed above the Applicant operates a booking system for their lodges, which ensures that (at least) 50% of the available bed space is available for freedom walkers at all times. In this instance this is achieved by having (at least) one lodge available for freedom walkers at all times. The shelters and toilets located along the track that have been constructed and are operated by the Applicant are available for use by the public.

4.5 Cultural Values

The Applicant acknowledges Ngāi Tahu hold Mana Whenua over Fiordland National Park and the cultural significance of Fiordland to Ngāi Tahu. The Applicant has had discussions with Ngāi Tahu representatives through the Great Walk discussions. The Applicant is proposing to continue the currently authorised activity to undertake multiday guiding within Fiordland National Park. The Applicant will consult with Ngāi Tahu over any future proposal for cultural interpretation and will continue to educate staff and clients on the importance of respecting Ngāi Tahu cultural values and traditions.

Taonga species are also present within Fiordland National Park and the Applicant will implement the measures discussed in section 4.2 above to protect them.

The Applicant will adhere to the Accidental Discovery Protocol if any find is made that invoked these, including natural state pounamu being accidentally discovered.

4.6 Waste Management

The Applicant operates a 'leave no trace' policy. This policy is communicated to all walkers. All rubbish is removed (via helicopter or packs) from the National Park and disposed of at an appropriate facility. The Applicant requires and effects a 'tail end Charlie' guide, who looks for and picks up any dropped rubbish from the track.

4.7 Discharges to land

The Applicant has installed two toilets (which correspond with, and are at, lunch stops on their guided walks). These toilets are elevated off the ground and each has a tank underneath to collect waste. Waste is removed via helicopter as required. There is also one of these types of toilet located at Okākā Lodge that is available for use by the public (i.e., by freedom walkers) during the off season. The Applicant has two existing wastewater systems installed (one at each lodge).

The two toilets at the walking stops were constructed to reduce the proliferation of toilet waste in the environment. They have therefore been positioned away from waterways and are available for use by both guided walkers and guides, and freedom walkers.

The Applicant proposes to replace the existing septic tank systems with two new wastewater systems both of which have been designed by an experienced wastewater system engineer. An environmentally friendly bacteria bug (Actizyme and Multizyme) is added to the systems to assist in breakdown of the sewage and toilet paper. Additionally, this reduces odours, protects the health of the dispersal fields and septic tank. Regular water testing is carried out (March each year), and results are sent to Environment Southland (ES) for monitoring as specified by ES; the design and operation of the systems and this monitoring ensures that there is no detrimental effect on the surrounding environment. The two new wastewater systems have recently been through the resource (discharge) consent process, via which ES considered the adverse effects associated with the proposed upgrades. Both have been approved. The Applicant is committed to complying with the requirements of their resource consents, including the maintenance of the systems to ensure their effective operation. A helicopter is used to extract solids from the septic systems as required. Sewage is flown out of the National Park and deposited at an approved site/s. Resource consents are attached in Appendix D.

4.8 Fires

As with any natural environment there is a potential risk of a wildfire occurring. The Applicant provides training to guides on the management of fire. Open fires are not permitted at any stage along the track. For walkers that smoke, clear instructions are given that this is only to occur in a designated areas and all embers must be extinguished. For the avoidance of doubt the Applicant operates a 'leave no trace' policy and this also applies to cigarettes. Fire extinguisher devices are in both lodges. Water storage is also available at both lodges.

4.9 Historic Values

The proposal will not impact on the historic values of the area. The Percy Burn viaduct is a category one New Zealand Historic Place and the Port Craig school is a category two New Zealand Historic Place. The Applicant has the utmost respect for the history of the area. The guides are educated in the historic values of the area, for example about the historic viaducts, and the history of the track. This is communicated to guided walkers. Walkers are expected to behave in a manner that respects the historic values of the area. The Applicant will adhere to the Accidental Discovery Protocol if any material is discovered during any aspect of the Hump Ridge Track operation.

4.10 Private / leased land

The Applicant has easement agreements in place to allow access to the private land that the Hump Ridge Track traverses. Guides are provided training on accessing private land and this is communicated to the guided walkers. Key messages are that walkers are to stay on the formed track through private land. As discussed above, the Applicant operates a 'leave no trace' policy.

4.11 Noise effects

The primary noise effect from the proposed activity is from the use of a helicopter to support the guided walking operation, servicing of lodges and track maintenance. The FNPMP places no limit on the number of helicopter landings within the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor. However, as discussed above (refer section 3.4), the only landings permitted within the Park are at the Okākā and Port Craig Lodges and are only for transporting packs³. Carrying of passengers is permitted if there is room on a flight carrying packs.

Literature shows a variety of responses to aircraft noise, with some users being annoyed by it and others not being worried about it. It is considered that guided and non-guided walkers alike will be more accepting of helicopter noise, given that helicopters are used to support the track and may be carrying their bags. The aircraft operator will operate in a manner consistent with the "Fly Neighbourly" guide published by the Helicopter Association International and recommended by the New Zealand Helicopter Association. In addition, the Applicant has a Noise Abatement Standard Operating Procedure which they operate in accordance with. The Applicant ensures helicopter movements are minimised where possible (i.e., aircraft movements are planned to ensure there are no unnecessary trips).

³ Servicing of the huts and track maintenance area considered separately under Policy 16 5.5.1 of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

The proposed activity is in accordance with the FNPMP, no change of scale is proposed to that which is already allowed. Overall, noise effects will not be significant.

4.12 Positive effects

The Applicant is a Charitable Trust which runs the Hump Ridge Track on behalf of the community. The Trust has constructed many of the facilities on the Hump Ridge Track. The Hump Ridge Track has a positive effect in terms of providing access to a significant natural area for a number of New Zealanders and visitors alike. The Hump Ridge Track contributes to the socio-economic uplift of the local community, by way of job creation, procurement, accommodation, general business activity and sponsorship. The Hump Ridge Track also results in a positive effect for community wellbeing.

4.13 Effects Summary

The preceding sub-sections have assessed the potential environmental impacts of the proposal. The proposal is for the continued operation of any and all existing authorised activity, with no increase in scale is proposed above what is currently authorised, except for some additional structural elements including in relation to wastewater system upgrades. Occupancy is expected to increase significantly through the Great Walk status. However, the Applicant is not seeking an increase over and above guiding already allowed. Overall, the proposal is not expected to result in adverse effects on the environment; in particular regarding the National Park and Public Conservation land or on other users of the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor.

5 Statutory Documents

5.1 National Parks General Policy

The purpose of the General Policy for National Parks 2005 (GPNP 2005) is to implement the National Parks Act 1980 and to provide consistent national direction for the administration of national parks through conservation management strategies and national park management plans.

Relevant provisions of the National Parks General Policy are:

- Policies in section 2 relating to the Treaty of Waitangi;
- Policy 4.1(b) relating to the management of indigenous species, habitats and ecosystems;
- Policy 4.3(d) relating to biosecurity management;
- Policy 4.5(b) relating to the management of geological, landform and soil features;
- Policy 8.1(c) relating to planning and management for recreation and other opportunities for benefit, use and enjoyment of national parks;
- Policy 8.6(c) relating to the management of aircraft;
- Policies in section 9 relating to accommodation and related facilities; and
- Policies in section 10 relating to other authorisations.

The Applicant recognises that Ngāi Tahu has Mana Whenua over the Fiordland National Park. The FNPMP 2007 sets out the provisions, including the protocols, and policies relevant to the obligations the Department of Conservation has with respect to management of the National Park and Ngāi Tahu's Mana Whenua. The process of developing the FNPMP should have also considered the Ngāi Tahu Treaty Settlement Claim and other relevant legislative instruments. The Applicant is committed to providing accurate and quality interpretation on the historical and cultural significance of the National Park and will meet any proposed conditions relating to this, especially with respect to consultation with tangata whenua. Furthermore, the Applicant is willing to engage with iwi to develop an effective relationship to benefit the recognition of Ngāi Tahu's Mana Whenua over the land. The Applicant considers that continuing the activity of providing guided multiday walks on the Hump Ridge Track, within the Fiordland National Park, is not contrary to the policies set out in the GPNP 2005.

The proposal will not result in the loss/decline of indigenous species. As discussed in the impact assessment section the Applicant implements a number of practices to minimise their impact on the National Park, including sticking to the track, biosecurity training and undertaking pest control. The proposal will maintain indigenous character and indigenous habitats and ecosystems. The proposed infrastructure is largely existing and that which is proposed has been designed in a manner which is compatible with the outstanding natural landscape and natural character.

The majority of the accommodation facilities are existing, some minor additions are proposed (as detailed in Appendix H). The proposal will maintain (at least) 50% of all the available accommodation on the track at Port Craig and Okākā being open for the public (i.e., freedom walkers) at any one time (with one hut being available for freedom walkers while the other is used for guided walkers). Over the course of a week more than 50% of the available bed space is available for freedom walkers. The accommodation cannot be established outside of the park given that the proposal is an existing one so shifting it (and associated infrastructure) now would result in significantly more adverse effects, and the Applicant operates a booking system allowing for public and private use of the facilities (pre-booking of all walkers is required). The proposed accommodation and its associated infrastructure have been situated, designed and maintained in a way which respects the surrounding landscape. Additional structures are required to ensure the efficient and effective management of the operation, and they are sited near existing buildings and in areas to minimise disturbance to the landscape and vegetation.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the Act. The proposal is for the continued operation of the Hump Ridge Track, which was constructed by the community in 2001. The Hump Ridge Track and its associated facilities enables guided and freedom walkers the opportunity to immerse themselves in the southern western end of Fiordland National Park. The proposal is for a renewal of an existing application, by a Charitable Trust. The Applicant implements practices to minimise effects on the

environment (as discussed in section 4). The FNPMP (discussed further below) identifies the Hump Ridge Track as a 'high use corridor'. The proposal complies with the party sizes and daily limits detailed within the Management Plan.

Overall, the proposal is consistent with the National Parks General Policy.

5.2 Fiordland National Park Management Plan

The FNPMP sets the management direction for Fiordland National Park. The majority of the Hump Ridge Track sits within the Fiordland National Park. The Management Plan contains a number of detailed provisions which are relevant to this application. These provisions can be found in the following sections:

- Part Two: Treaty of Waitangi Responsibilities;
- Section 4.3 – Preservation of Indigenous Species and Habitats;
- Section 4.12 – Historical and Cultural Heritage Management;
- Section 5.3.8.5 – Hump Ridge High Use Track Corridor;
- Section 5.4 – Concessions;
- Section 5.5.1 – Aircraft Access to Fiordland (general);
- Section 6.12 – Private huts; and
- Section 6.15 – Access and Utilities.

The Applicant acknowledges Ngāi Tahu hold Mana Whenua over Fiordland National Park and the cultural significance of Fiordland to Ngāi Tahu. The Applicant has had discussions with Ngāi Tahu representatives through the Great Walk discussions. The proposal is not considered to be inconsistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The proposal is not inconsistent with the provisions of Section 4.3 and 4.12. The Applicant acknowledges the importance of Fiordland National Park and its values. The proposal is for the continuation of an existing activity and the Applicant takes the utmost care in the running of the Hump Ridge Track operation.

The Hump Ridge Track sits within the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor. The Plan details High Use Tracks absorb the majority of visitors to Fiordland's backcountry and are invaluable for this purpose. These high use tracks are managed for a higher level of use than typical backcountry tracks. Hut capacity does not exceed 50, it sits at 44 (plus 3 for lodge staff). The lodges are existing, and the lease area is not being extended. The maximum party size does not exceed 13 inclusive of guides. The experience of a multiday guided walking activity on the Hump Ridge Track facilitates understanding and promotion of the importance of preserving the natural, cultural and historic values of the Fiordland National Park while recreating within it. The proposed activity promotes appreciation of

these values in all aspects of the product (i.e., website information, guest service information, interpretation provided by bus drivers and guides on the track, hut talks and hut/shelter interpretation panels etc). The Applicant's activity provides an opportunity for all visitors to experience the outstanding landscape, the historical importance of the area, and the special flora and fauna of the National Park. Through information and interpretation provided by the Applicant's staff and through information guided (and, to an extent, freedom walker) visitors have access to, knowledge and appreciation of this outstanding place and its special status is enhanced. Historical sites such as Port Craig Historical Village and the Viaducts are identified as actively managed historical sites of National and Local Importance respectively within the FNPMP. Clients and staff are educated on their importance and appropriate behaviour is encouraged at these sites. The Applicant considers that continuing the multiday guided walk activity is consistent with the provisions set out under Part Four of the FNPMP.

The proposal is overall, consistent with Section 5.3.8.5 relating to the Hump Ridge Track. The Applicant considers it appropriate to manage social effects by requiring all travel of the track to be in one direction from Rarakau to Okaka to Port Craig to Rarakau. It is noted Policy 2 requires the hut capacity to be limited to 40 people and that the proposal does exceed this, sitting at 44 walkers plus up to 3 lodge staff. However, it should be noted that the guided walking operation is only requesting 3 daily groups of 12 and therefore, under the guided operation not all bed space will be used. There is discretion in the 40 people limit detailed within the FNPMP. It is considered in this instance the additional 7 beds will not increase adverse effects on other users or the environment, as the bed space is largely existing. The Applicant manages access to the lodges and there is a manager present at each lodge to ensure adverse effects from lodge users are managed. As discussed elsewhere a booking system is operated for the Hump Ridge Track. Total daily walkers on the track do not exceed 90. The Applicant proposes an annual fundraiser to raise money for the operation of the track and the community. This fundraiser has previously been run, as mentioned above. All participants would be required to stay on the formed track and notification of the event to the public will occur. Impacts from the one-off event are not considered to be significant. The Applicant has volunteered a number of conditions to mitigate effects.

The Applicant's activity on the Hump Ridge Track provides an opportunity for a greater diversity of visitors to the Hump Ridge Track, some of whom may not have been able to undertake the track as an independent walker for various reasons, such as dietary or distance concerns, with the guided walk being 10km shorter overall. The facilities and services the Applicant currently provides and is proposing to continue operating, enable visitors to explore and experience the natural, cultural and historic values of the track and wider Fiordland National Park. The Applicant's guides provide information on the local flora and fauna, and the history of the track and area. It is through this

element that a visitor's appreciation of the Park's natural, historical and cultural values can be enhanced and positively escalated. The Applicant's guides and on-track staff have an ability to communicate between the lodges and with the Tuatapere base via radio and GPS phones, and vice versa. Safety of both staff and visitors is paramount. Further explanation about the methods of communication can be found within the attached supporting documents in the Guided Manual (Appendix E).

Monitoring of the proposed activities occur through both anecdotal accounts and in more formal, arranged settings (surveys). This enables the Applicant to gather and analyse visitor's perceptions of their experience. This information is always available to the Department of Conservation for management purposes if required. It is the Applicant's opinion that the existing multiday operation vis-à-vis separation of guided and independent walkers has worked well and has not caused conflict between different users of the Hump Ridge Track within the Fiordland National Park. It is the Applicant's intention to ensure no conflict occurs between the various types of users of the track and it is operational policy to alert DOC if any conflict is observed or becomes apparent.

Section 5.4 of the FNPMP sets out the policies on concessions within the National Park. Implementation 2 states that concessions should only be granted if they are consistent with the provisions of section 5.3 Visitor Settings (and other relevant sections of the Plan). The proposed activities are, overall, consistent with section 5.3 as discussed in the previous paragraphs. The remaining Implementation policies set out the assessment criteria when considering concession applications, proposed concession conditions, including monitoring, and compliance of concession activities. The Applicant considers continuing the activity of a multiday guided walk on the Hump Ridge Track as set out under this application does not detract from other visitors' use and enjoyment and National Park values. The lodges are existing and cannot be located outside of the National Park. The Applicant manages the track via a booking system, this management ensures that 50% of the available hut space are available at all times by having one lodge for guided walkers and one lodge for freedom walkers each night. The proposal is consistent with Implementation 10, noting that safety of the Applicant's clients is very important to the Applicant; all guided walkers are supported with at least one guide, a briefing is held on the day of the walk. The proposal is consistent with Implementation 14, noting that the Applicant holds resource (discharge) consent to upgrade both waste water discharge systems and has installed solar panels to minimise effects on the environment and increase energy efficiency.

The proposal is consistent with section 5.5.1 relating to aircraft. Aircraft access is critical to the Applicant's operation of the Hump Ridge Track multiday guided walk experience. Section 3.4 provides an overview of the Applicant's helicopter use. The only change proposed to the existing helicopter use

is that it will now be from the Applicant's new helipad located at the corner of the Papatotara Coast Road and Rowallan Road.

Obviously, all flying operation is weather dependent, and in this environment that can change quickly. Refuelling of the helicopter is undertaken at Fiordland Helicopters (Clifden Base), where there is a dedicated facility. Noise abatement and minimising impact to walkers and other visitors to the Fiordland National Park is a major consideration of landings and take offs, as well as overflying. Where possible, and this is often weather dependent, the flight path and height of flying is considered to ensure that the impact on walkers and other users of the Fiordland National Park is mitigated. Flight heights are recommended at no less than 1500ft, but higher if possible, when above the track. The resupply is for essential servicing of the lodges and shelters to maintain the existing recreation experience and use. The Applicant's intention for resupply is to carry out aircraft operations between the hours of 9am and 3pm on track in accordance with the provisions of the FNPMP. However, logistics (distance between lodges, location of resupply base, type of resupply materials) and other factors for flying (weather) means that landings may outside of these hours. At times aircraft operations occur between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm, and on rare occasion up until 5.00pm. The Applicant wishes to emphasise that it does everything reasonably practical to ensure that resupply day has the least impact on all users of the track, and other users of the surrounding Fiordland National Park and other Public Conservation Lands and Waters. In most cases it takes around 1hr or less to service both lodges. The high cost of helicopter operations ensures that maximum efficiencies are applied to helicopter hire. This efficiency minimises the potential impact on other visitors within the vicinity and the environment (carbon emissions). Additionally, the Applicant has adopted a Noise Abatement Standard Operating Procedure to avoid and mitigate potential adverse effects of the aircraft activity (Appendix G). The Applicant considers that the aircraft operations, as part of the existing multiday guided walk operation on the Hump Ridge Track, are consistent with the provisions of section 5.5.1 of the FNPMP. There is one existing telecommunication utility that services the communications for the Applicant at Okākā Lodge. This telecommunication facility has been in-situ since August 2000. It is powered by solar panels, has a small surface area, and maintenance and repair requires helicopter access. For purposes of clarity, the facility has been operated for communication services as part of the multiday guided walk and is also used by Jet boat operators on the Wairaurahiri River, Waitutu Lodge as well as maritime emergencies in the Foveaux Strait.

Two radio antenna are proposed as part of the Great Walk track upgrade. One of the proposed telecommunications utilities is located on Southland District Council Road Reserve at the Percy Burn Hut (on SDC land). The second proposed aerial will be located at Henderson's Camp within the National Park. The proposed repeater will be powered by solar panels. The safe and competent

operation of the multiday guided walk is dependent on having communications between guides, lodge staff and the Tuatapere base staff and management.

Alternative locations, outside of public conservation land and especially the Fiordland National Park, for these telecommunications facilities would be impracticable and severely reduce the capabilities of the Applicant's communication service. For safety reasons, this would be inappropriate. The Applicant has selected sites where there is already existing development, in an event to get development within already modified areas. While the facilities enable and provide a vital role, it is important to the Applicant that the occupation of the structures have minimal impact on the environment. This includes proper servicing of the utilities and proper operational use to maintain them in good working order for as long as possible. The Applicant considers that the occupation of the land within the Fiordland National Park for the telecommunication utility to service the multiday guided walk operation on the Hump Ridge Track is not inconsistent with the provisions of the FNPMP (Section 6.15).

5.3 Southland Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy 2016

The Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) is the statutory planning and management document for public conservation lands and waters covering the Southland Murihiku area. Fiordland is designated within this CMS, and has its own Place, under Part 2 of the CMS. The proposed activity falls within the Fiordland/ Te Rua-o-te-moko Place.

The following sections of the CMS are relevant to this application:

- Section 2.2 the Fiordland/ Te Rua-o-te-moko Place;
- Section 3.6 relating to aircraft;
- Section 3.11 relating to private accommodation; and
- Section 3.22 relating to sporting and other competitive events.

The proposed activity is for the existing operation of the Hump Ridge Track in south west Fiordland. The proposed activity is not changing in scale (refer above regarding) and significance. A comprehensive assessment of many of the above matters has been provided above. The most significant aspect of the CMS is the introduction of an outcome for place. In this case the outcome for the Fiordland/ Te Rua-o-te-moko Place is of relevance to this application. The proposal is considered to be consistent with the outcome. The proposal will not impact on the vast and spectacular landscapes or indigenous ecosystems of the Fiordland/ Te Rua-o-te-moko Place. The Applicant in conjunction with other concessionaires undertakes pest control on the Hump Ridge Track High Use Corridor. The outcome acknowledges this place offers an array of experiences and activities for visitors. The proposed aircraft use is provided for within the FNPMP. The Applicant educates all guides

on the historical and cultural values of the proposed site, and this is shared with guided walkers. The Applicant promotes and enhances conservation and recreational values of the site, by providing a high-quality experience for guided and freedom walkers. The proposal does not diminish the outstanding natural character and natural quiet values of the greater part of the Place. Noting there will be some intermittent noise effects from the operation of a helicopter, however this is provided for in the FNPMP. Overall, the proposed activity is not inconsistent with the sections of the CMS relevant to this application.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This application seeks authorisations from the Department of Conservation to enable the Applicant to continue to operate the Hump Ridge Track in Fiordland National Park and on Public Conservation Land. This application has assessed the effects of the proposal through an impact assessment and considered the proposal in light of the relevant statutory planning documents. Overall, it is considered the proposal is appropriate and consistent with the GPNP 2005, FNPMP, and CMS. The Applicant runs a high-quality experience which enables guided and freedom walkers to become immersed in southwest Fiordland. This experience would not be here without Applicant and the wider Tuatapere community. It is considered that the Authorisations sought for a guiding concession, lease and licence of land/buildings and easements associated with the Hump Ridge Track should be granted.