

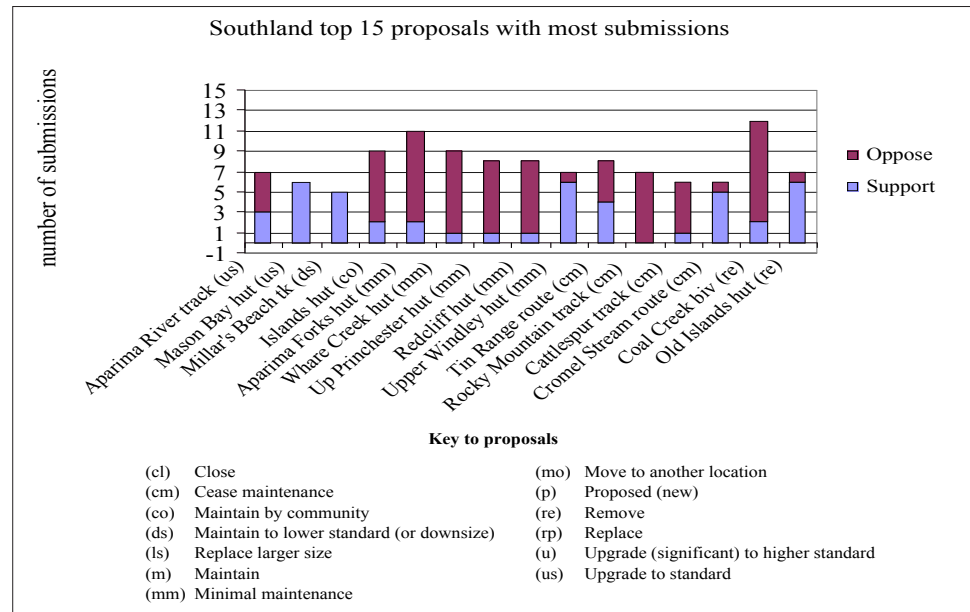


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Southland Conservancy recreation opportunities review

Summary of submissions and decisions

Submissions analysis



The Southland consultation on recreation opportunities has been conducted in part through the yet to be concluded Fiordland National Park Draft Management Plan. The information provided here relates to areas other than that national park.

All 73 proposals notified in the Southland discussion document received submissions. Huts received the greatest level of attention from submitters - especially in opposition to the Department's proposals.

Some submissions suggested that some huts would receive greater use if the access were easier and information more readily available.

The largest number of submissions received were for huts in the Takitimu Conservation Area (52 of which 43 were opposed), followed by Stewart Island, and Eyre Forest Conservation Area.

Submissions were generally supportive of the community maintenance proposals for Stewart Island Hunters huts.

The largest number of track submissions were for Stewart Island, Eyre Conservation Area and Snowdon Forest. The most frequently submitted on tracks were: Tin Range, Rocky Mountain Track and Aparima River Track.

Several submissions on tracks in Stewart Island were critical of proposals to maintain them at route or tramping track standards. Submitters were concerned that this would mean a further reduction in the actual level of maintenance on these tracks. It is intended that with improved levels of funding, these facilities will actually receive a higher level of maintenance to meet the required standard.



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There are several common themes from the submissions received. These were:

- Submitters were generally not in support of reduced maintenance commitments to non-core facilities. Submitters argue that the Department should maintain more huts and backcountry tracks in order to provide for recreational users (not tourists) and in recognition of their contribution to New Zealand’s heritage values.
- Submitters seek the creation of new facilities in the Longwoods, Curio Bay, and more walking opportunities in the Takitimu Mountains.
- Submitters seek greater publicity about visitor facilities and opportunities in the Eyre and Takitimu Conservation Areas in order to increase visitor use.

Decisions

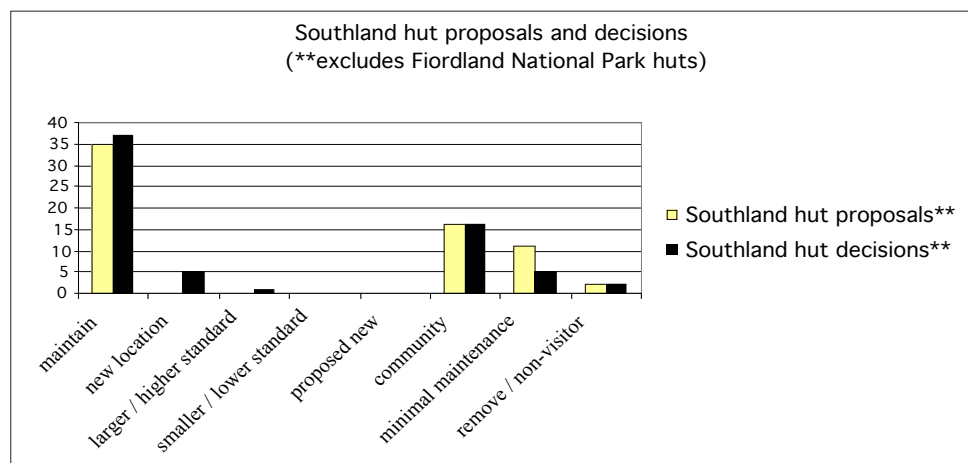
Southland decisions must be considered alongside the outcomes of the yet to be concluded Fiordland National Park Management Plan, which covers significant visitor facilities for this conservancy.

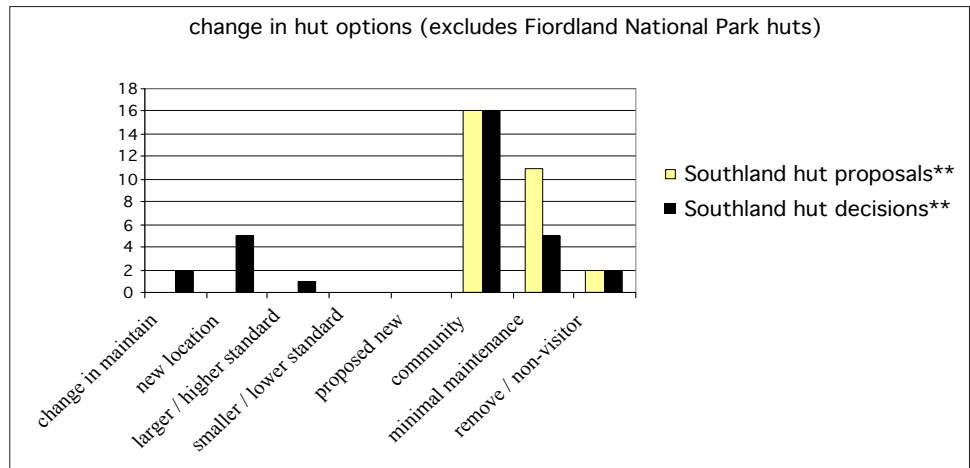
- Five Eyre and Takitimu huts proposed to be phased out will now be moved – and so put these facilities to better use in more strategic locations.
- Track upgrade proposals for Forks Flat and Dean Forest will be changed to ‘maintain’ decisions—because the track upgrades at these sites are complete. Titan Rocks Route (Waikaia) and Rocky Mountain Track (Stewart Island) will be maintained as routes.
- Further work will proceed looking at of improving legal and physical access for the Takitimu Range.
- Coal Creek Biv will be removed.

Discussions about access through the Longwoods as part of Te Araroa trial route has not been concluded. Several other community groups proposed track and facility development aspirations. The department has assessed these as not ranking as highly as existing facilities and believes these should be planned and managed by the community, in consultation with the department.

The benefit of the decisions will be an improved mix of opportunities for backcountry users in particular, but also a growth in accessible interpreted high standard day use facilities (e.g., at Waituna Wetland, Red Tussock Reserve, Wilderness Scientific Reserve).

Additional facilities and opportunities are expected to result from the High Country Tenure Review process, strengthening backcountry walk-in, drive-in, four-wheel drive and remote opportunities and provide real growth in opportunities for quality mountain biking, ski-touring, high-country tramping and historic appreciation.





Excluding the track managed within Fiordland National Park, Southland Conservancy will manage 533 km of track in the future, 65 km less than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.

