



Wanganui Conservancy recreation opportunities review

Submissions analysis and decisions

OCTOBER 2004



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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This report is the conclusion of the department's public consultation process 'Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities', a Recreation Opportunity Review aimed at confirming with the public the mix of visitor facilities needed to provide the recreational opportunities most desired on public conservation land.

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1. A note from the Conservator

The following report details the content of submissions received by Wanganui Conservancy as part of the Recreation Opportunities Review public consultation period, and on other feedback received through public meetings and discussion with key submitters and stakeholders during this period.

Decisions have been made by this conservancy, taking account of the submissions and other information received and following a national assessment process including key national recreation associate organisations. These decisions align with the strategic direction as covered by the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network and the key policy and strategic directions referred to within these, or where there has been identified a preference through submissions to vary from this direction, these cases have been noted.

Implementation of these decisions will be staged over a number of years, as the level of funding provided by the Government gradually increases year by year, until the full level of funding required for ongoing maintenance and replacement of facilities is available. In the immediate period, priority will be given to carrying out remedial work to bring existing facilities to the required service standard.

W F Carlin

Conservator

2. Conservancy overview and Executive Summary

Wanganui Conservancy has a great diversity of landscapes, providing the settings for a range of recreation opportunities. These include the volcanic mountains of Egmont National Park, the extensive area of forested hill country stretching inland from Wanganui to Taumarunui and into North Taranaki and the forested slopes, river valleys and open tussock tops of the western Ruahine Ranges. An extensive coastline and major rivers such as the Whanganui and Rangitikei are also major features of the conservancy.

It is estimated that over 360,000 people visit public conservation land in the conservancy each year. The majority of these visitors use the short walks and day walks in Egmont National Park, visit scenic and historic reserves, use the conservancy's three walkways, stay at the huts and campsites along the Whanganui River, visit the historic Bridge to Nowhere or walk the Manawatu Gorge Track. A smaller number visit the more remote backcountry on tramping and hunting trips.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation for the Recreation Opportunities Review ('Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities') was carried out in Wanganui Conservancy in accordance with national guidelines. Information on the proposals was released to local news media and 12 public meetings were held across the conservancy to outline the proposals and to explain the process. A number of iwi were also consulted.

SUBMITTERS AND SUBMISSIONS

976 submissions were received from 186 individuals and groups; 369 submissions were in support of the department's proposals, 561 opposed, 17 were indeterminate and there were 29 other proposals. Most key recreation stakeholder groups made submissions.

Submissions were acknowledged individually, entered into a customised submissions database and analysed according to national guidelines.

Many submitters showed a high level of understanding of the process and contributed valuable information through their submissions. Some submitters also offered alternative management options which recognised the fact that proposed funding levels will allow DOC to maintain most, but not all facilities. Other submitters, however, wished to see the retention of all assets and the provision of additional ones.

SUBMISSION ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING

As a number of submissions were received in opposition to asset proposals in the Waitotara Conservation Area, a meeting was held with key stakeholders and submitter groups, along with Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board members, to discuss possible management options for this area. As other areas did not have the same degree of controversy, the only other follow-up meetings considered necessary were those concerning “maintain by community” proposals.

Responses were made to points raised in submissions, options considered and interim decisions, with supporting reasons, were developed. Area staff were involved in this process, along with a conservancy office based submission analysis team.

SUMMARY OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND DECISIONS

The Whanganui Conservancy is well placed to provide a spectrum of recreation opportunities, in a variety of settings, ranging from urban fringe (for example, the Ratapihipihi Loop Track near New Plymouth) to remote (the Waitotara Forest routes).

The conservancy provides a good number of opportunities for short stop travellers and day visitors. Most of these are located in Egmont National Park and in reserves close to highways and urban centres. As a result of the Recreation Opportunities Review, some facilities at these sites will be upgraded to bring them to the required service standard and some other suitable sites will be developed to provide access for disabled visitors.

Opportunities for backcountry comfort seekers will be met through ongoing improvements on the Whanganui Journey and the Pouakai Circuit.

For those who seek a more physical and remote experience, the conservancy provides a good number of opportunities for backcountry adventurers and remoteness seekers in Egmont and Whanganui National Parks, the western Ruahine Forest Park and in the larger conservation areas. This is supported by an extensive system of huts and tracks. Although the majority of backcountry facilities will be retained, some rationalisation will occur as a result of the review.

A small number of low use huts in Ruahine Forest Park and Waitotara Conservation Area will be removed or move to minimal maintenance and one hut may be maintained by a community group. Following consideration of submissions, fewer sections of track will now be closed, with some instead being maintained to a lower standard or maintained by community groups. On other tracks, maintenance will cease but existing markers will be retained.

The following is a more detailed description, by area, of the main recreational opportunities and decisions resulting from the review.

New Plymouth

New Plymouth Area is characterised by its rugged and scenic coastline, its many historic and scenic reserves and the bush-covered hill country of North Taranaki. The Stony and Whitecliffs Walkways provide important rural and coastal walking opportunities for day visitors, while scenic reserves such as Ratapihipihi and Meeting of the Waters provide short bush walks. Many important historic reserves, such as Te Koru and Pukerangiora, also provide opportunities for visitors to appreciate historic and cultural values. The Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area offers opportunities for diving, fishing and marine mammal watching. Inland, extensive forest areas such as Moki/Makino and Waitaanga provide tramping, hunting and mountain biking opportunities.

Few changes were proposed in New Plymouth Area. In response to submitters' points regarding the Mount Messenger to Kiwi Road Track, the proposal to remove (close) was altered to maintain to a lower standard (from tramping track to route). As community maintenance for Waitoetoe Beach carpark, picnic area and access road was not taken up as hoped, and no other offers were received, the decision was made to maintain this site. Other proposals remain unchanged.

Stratford Area

Stratford Area includes Egmont National Park and the largely undeveloped bush-covered hill country of East Taranaki. Egmont National Park is dominated by the Mount Taranaki/Egmont volcano and the adjoining volcanic remnants of the Pouakai and Kaitake Ranges. The park features a great range of vegetation types, volcanic rock formations, deep gorges, the extensive Ahukawakawa Swamp and the open tops and tarns of the Pouakai Range. The park provides many opportunities for walking, tramping, climbing and skiing. Short bush walks, summit climbs and tramping the Around the Mountain and Pouakai Circuits are popular activities.

The park has an extensive network of walking and tramping tracks. Under the review some reduction in backcountry adventurer tramping opportunity was proposed through the closure/removal of sections of track receiving low visitor use. Submitters sought the retention of some tracks for the day tramping opportunity they provided or suggested the closure of other, lower valued sections of track as an alternative to those sections proposed for closure. In response, decisions have been made to retain the majority of these tracks but to maintain some of them to a lower standard (for example, the Dover Track) and to close those sections of track recommended by submitters.

The upgrading of a number of popular walking tracks at road ends in the park will enhance recreation opportunities for short stop travellers and day visitors. Some of these tracks, including a new track at Lucy's Gully, will be developed to barrier free standard, providing additional opportunities for disabled people, families with young children and elderly people.

Some submissions sought the long term retention of the overnight opportunity provided by Waingongoro Hut. In response, consideration will be given to replacing it with a smaller hut/day shelter facility when the existing building reaches its retirement date, rather than removing it and not replacing it as originally proposed.

Whanganui Area

A significant feature of Whanganui Area is the large area of lowland native forest stretching across the inland hill country from Wanganui to Taumarunui. It is an extensive, rugged landscape of sharp ridged hills and valleys, with streams cutting deeply into the underlying papa. Much of it is protected within Whanganui National Park and adjoining conservation areas. Penetrated by only a few tracks and roads, it is one of the largest areas of lowland forest left in the North Island and provides opportunity for backcountry and remote experience tramping and hunting. Through the heart of this area flows the Whanganui River which provides a nationally important, multi-day backcountry canoeing opportunity.

As a result of the review, a new hut for the Matemateaonga Track and new bridges and camping facilities on the Mangapurua-Kaiwhakauka circuit will enhance use of these key backcountry adventurer tramping opportunities in Whanganui National Park. The development of new camping facilities at Whakahoro will improve accommodation provision at this key site on the Whanganui Journey, catering for canoeists, overnighers and trampers on the Mangapurua-Kaiwhakauka circuit.

Due to strong public feeling regarding the value of the recreation opportunity, proposals for the closure of four tracks and the removal (without replacement) of two huts in the eastern part of the Waitotara Conservation Area were reconsidered and alternatives discussed at a special meeting with key user groups and conservation board representatives. This led to an offer from a local tramping club to assist with track maintenance and, in conjunction with this offer, the department has decided to replace Pokeka Hut with a four sided (enclosed) shelter. The legal and financial viability of maintaining the existing building at Maungarau as an emergency shelter (i.e. without bunks) is being investigated. If it is not possible to retain the existing building, it also will be removed and replaced with a four sided (enclosed) shelter. These will provide the emergency shelter and reliable water sources identified by submitters as important for those experienced trampers and hunters wishing to visit this remote area. A new suspension bridge across the Waitotara River, near Kapara, will be provided to overcome access problems for recreational hunters.

New bridges to be built at Trains and across the Omaru Stream between Puteore and Humphries will provide reliable, all-weather access along the Western Waitotara Route, supporting the recent investment in two new huts and providing a new circular route tramping opportunity in the north western part of the Waitotara Conservation Area.

Palmerston North Area

The forested slopes, river valleys and open tussock tops of the Ruahine Ranges are a key feature of this area. Here, in the western part of Ruahine Forest Park, an extensive network of huts and tracks provides many opportunities for hunting, tramping, fishing and cross country skiing. Close to Palmerston North, the impressive Manawatu Gorge, an area of high geological, natural and scenic value, is the site of an increasingly popular walking track. Other reserves, conservation areas and the Beehive Creek Walkway also provide important recreation opportunities.

As a result of the review, some change will occur in the provision of huts in the Western Ruahines, with four huts moving to minimal maintenance and the removal of two others. The proposal to remove Te Ekaou Hut has been changed to “seeking

community maintenance”, as an offer to upgrade and maintain the hut was received from a local club. A suitable agreement has yet to be finalised. The remaining 23 huts in the western part of Ruahine Forest Park will continue to provide a good range of opportunities for hunting and tramping. Following support from submitters, the department will also proceed with the replacement of Purity Hut and Zekes Hut (the latter located in Hihitahi Forest Sanctuary, north of Taihape).

CONCLUSIONS

In general terms, implementation of the decisions will mean little change in the range of recreation opportunities provided within Wanganui Conservancy. There will be no significant loss of existing opportunity through asset rationalisation and there will be some enhancement of opportunity where existing facilities are upgraded or replaced or new facilities proposed, across a range of visitor groups and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes.

3. Introduction – the public consultation process

This section provides information on the public consultation that was undertaken as part of the department’s national Recreation Opportunities Review, “Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities”.

3.1 NEWS MEDIA AND MEETINGS

- Consultation began on 30 September 2003, with the national launch of the Recreation Opportunities Review public consultation process through a news media release from the Minister of Conservation, and a series of news releases from the conservancy. Letters were sent to local recreation groups and other key associates inviting them to attend public meetings in their vicinity (New Plymouth, Stratford, Wanganui, Raetihi, Palmerston North, Dannevirke and Taihape) to learn about the consultation process. Proposal documents and background resource material were provided to these groups and also made available on the DOC website to provide the basis for making submissions.
- Copies of the *Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities* factsheet, standard submission form and Wanganui Conservancy proposal document were placed at the Dawson Falls and North Egmont Visitor Centres, the four area offices, Wanganui Conservancy Office reception, the Wanganui Information Centre (*i-Site*), and the Wanganui District Library.

- Recreation Opportunities Review presentations were also given at the December meeting of the Wanganui Tramping Club, at a Destination Wanganui board meeting, and at a meeting in Ohakea with the Board of Destination River Region, the Manawatu/Wanganui Regional Tourism Organisation and others.

3.2 IWI INVOLVEMENT

The following iwi were contacted to inform them of the review process and make them aware of the proposed changes in their areas of interest:

- **Stratford Area** sent letters to all relevant iwi (inviting them to the public meetings), including the Taranaki Maori Trust Board (who met with area staff), Ngati Ruanui (Egmont NP), Nga Ruahine (Egmont NP), Taranaki Tuturu (Egmont NP), and Te Ati Awa (Egmont NP).
- In the **Whanganui Area**, iwi were informed of the review via letter and invited to meetings where relevant. In response, Nga Rauru (proposals for the Eastern Waitotara huts and tracks) indicated that the proposals did not create any issues for them, while Pipiriki Incorporation (MV *Ongarue*) were strongly opposed to removal of the riverboat from Pipiriki and stated that they would like DOC to employ them to restore it. Tamahaki and Hinengakau (Whakahoro Hut and other proposals for facilities along the Whanganui River) had no apparent concerns or comments.

3.3 PROCESS OF SUBMISSION CONSIDERATION

DATE	ACTION	WHO
31 January 2004	Closing date for submissions.	Recreation Opportunities Review (ROR) Submission Support Officer
December 2003 - February 2004	Each submission was acknowledged and entered into the Conservancy Submissions Analysis Database.	ROR Submission Support Officer
February	Consultation process team meeting held at the Wanganui Conservancy Office to discuss analysis process.	Conservancy ROR Submission Analysis Team: Technical Support Supervisor (TSS) - Visitor Services (Recreation Planner), Technical Support Manager, Area Manager, ROR Submission Support Officer
14 February - 19 March	Submissions analysed: See "3.4 - Submission Analysis Process" for more detail.	Recreation Planner, ROR Submission Support Officer
22 March	Database reports (e.g. number of submissions supporting/opposing each proposal) were circulated for area information and comment, along with a summary of submissions on those proposals that received the most responses.	Recreation Planner, ROR Submission Support Officer
March	Conservancy Recreation Opportunities Review (ROR) analysis team met to discuss comments on individual facilities, particularly those in the Eastern Waitotara area. Also attended by the Community Relations Supervisor - Public Awareness.	Conservancy ROR Submission Analysis Team

29 March - 23 April	Area staff were asked to provide responses to key submission points (via a report specific to each area) and to recommend interim decisions. Meetings were then held with area staff to discuss submission requests, finalise interim decisions and to discuss effects of decisions on recreational opportunities. This information was revised by the Conservancy ROR submission analysis team to ensure consistency.	Programme Managers (Visitor Services), Area Managers, Conservancy ROR Submission Analysis Team
April - May	The Conservancy Submission Analysis and Interim Decisions Report was drafted and circulated to relevant staff for comment.	Recreation Planner, ROR Submission Support Officer
30 April	Meeting with Recreation Planner from Wellington Conservancy and ROR national project leader from Southern Regional Office.	ROR national project leader, Wanganui and Wellington Recreation Planners, Wanganui ROR Submission Support Officer
10 - 12 May	Final draft of Submission Analysis and Interim Decisions Report given to Conservator for review and sign-off, and sent to the Regional General Manager Southern.	Conservator
April/May	Interim decisions entered into the department's Visitor Asset Management System (VAMS) database.	Recreation Planner
May - August	Each conservancy's interim decisions analysed by the department's Central and Southern Regional Office for national consistency and affordability.	Central and Southern Regional Offices (Wellington and Christchurch)
7 - 24 Sep	Conservancy Submission Analysis and Decisions Report prepared and circulated to relevant area and Conservancy staff for their information and comment.	Recreation Planner, ROR Submission Support Officer
30 September	Final draft of Conservancy Submission Analysis and Decisions Report given to Conservator for review and sign-off, and sent to Southern Regional Office for printing.	Wanganui Conservator
21 October	Public release of Recreation Opportunities Review results by Minister of Conservation; a copy of Conservancy Submission Analysis and Decisions Report sent to all submitters.	Minister of Conservation; Conservancy staff

3.4 SUBMISSION ANALYSIS PROCESS

- Each submission received was entered into the Conservancy Submissions Analysis Database (a customised MS Access database), copied to relevant area staff (Programme Managers – Visitor Services), and an acknowledging letter was sent to the submitter. The submissions database allowed submissions for each visitor facility to be categorised according to their support or opposition, the submitter's preferred management option (e.g. maintain, cease maintenance), and the reasons for their preference. Due to the length and complexity of many of the submissions received, some of the points made by submitters were entered in summarised format.
- The submissions database was used to create reports, listing all the preferences and reasons provided by submitters, providing the Conservancy Recreation Opportunities Review Submission Analysis Team (as listed in “3.3 – Process of Submission Consideration”) with a clear picture of the level of support/opposition and range of preferences for each proposal. Key submission points relating to proposals, and general points relating to local or national issues, were also collated. All these reports were sent to relevant area staff for their

information and consideration.

- All submissions were considered on their own merit and the strategic intent behind the proposal checked for consistency with submission points. Although many factors were taken into account, submissions were primarily considered according to:
 - Pertinence and strength of argument
 - Reference to the “Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network”, Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) and/or general policy
 - Strength of public feeling, i.e. the number of submissions, the level of support/opposition, and the level of change being asked for
- Proposals were ranked according to the number of submissions received. Submissions for proposals receiving the most opposition were analysed first. All submissions were considered on their individual merit and taking into account any strategic objectives for each location (e.g. from CMS, recreation strategy).
- Area staff were asked to provide responses to key submission points (via an “Interim Decisions Report,” specific to each area) and to recommend interim decisions (and reasons for these). Areas were also asked to arrange meetings, where appropriate, with key user/submitter groups to clarify points made in submissions, provide some initial feedback and to discuss possible options.
- New proposals put forward by submitters, such as new tracks, were discussed with area staff as to whether the creation of a new facility in the proposed location would enhance/improve recreation opportunities in the area, and whether such a proposal would be financially viable.
- All decisions that differ from proposals have been considered in terms of the overall effect they are likely to have on the provision of a range of recreation opportunities.

3.5 WHAT DECISIONS MEAN NOW

The Department of Conservation is making these decisions in order to provide the public of New Zealand and the associated user groups with some surety about the future core network of visitor facilities to support their recreation opportunities into the foreseeable future. These decisions will guide resource commitment and work programmes for the department.

There remain some factors that cannot be accurately forecast or guaranteed at this point in time, such as future construction costs, the durability of existing and new facilities, the effects of changing weather patterns (i.e. damage to facilities from storms and floods), and changing user group priorities. As a result these decisions are a negotiated outcome rather than conclusions set in stone.

Formal planning processes will continue to provide the mechanism for change to these decisions as needed and providing further opportunity for public input (e.g. CMS review, national park management plan review), and conservation boards will assist the department to manage specific facility provision issues that will arise from time to time.

Section One

4. Submitters and submissions

This section provides information on the number of submissions, the nature of submissions and a description of their content.

NB. Many submitters made multiple submissions, in that they provided comment on more than one proposal, i.e. a submitter's comments on one proposal were counted as one submission.

4.1 NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS

- 186 submitters provided submissions representing comment on 68 proposals - a total of 976 individual submissions.
- Submitters were made up of 25 groups (192 submissions) and 161 individual submitters (784 submissions).
- 106 submissions (95 of which were form letters) made direct reference to the Principles to Guide the Core Facility Network.
- 19 submissions contained comment that related to regional or national issues, as well as (or instead of) comment on specific proposals.
- 29 submissions presented (or supported another submitter's) additional proposals for new tracks (a total of 5 proposals).
- 37.1% of submitters (69) used form letters, making up 57.2% of the submissions (558) received.
- 31.2% of submitters were from the New Plymouth area, 30.6% from the Whanganui area, 14% from the Stratford area, and 8.6% from the Palmerston North area. The remaining 15.6% of submitters sent their submissions from outside the Wanganui Conservancy.
- No staff submissions were received.

4.2 MAIN PROPOSALS COMMENTED ON, BY ORDER OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS

ASSET NAME	SUBMISSIONS (AGAINST/FOR)	
Maungarau Hut	76	(75/1)
Pokeka Hut	58	(57/1)
“Ngapurua Hut” (proposed)	54	(49/5)
“Omaru Stream Swingbridge” (proposed)	51	(35/16)
Pokeka to Otaraheke Route	51	(51/0)
Pokeka Track	48	(48/0)
Tahupo to Maungarau Route	46	(46/0)
Whatiwhati to Pokeka/Maungarau Route	38	(38/0)
MV <i>Ongarue</i> Riverboat (historic asset)	36	(0/36)
Davies Track	32	(31/1)
Submitters’ Proposals (i.e. requests for new tracks)	29	
Auroa Track (to Lake Dive)	26	(8/18)
Dover Route	24	(24/0)
Waingongoro Hut	23	(13/10)
Waiwhakaiho Track	20	(20/0)
Maude Track	19	(7/12)
AMC Pyramid Route (both sections of track)	18	(3/15)
Mt Messenger to Kiwi Road Route	16	(16/0)
Waimoku/Sefton Ridge Track	11	(6/5)
Te Ekaou Hut	9	(7/2)

4.3 MAIN PROPOSALS – SUBMISSION SUMMARY

Of all the submissions received, 39% were supportive of Wanganui Conservancy’s proposals, while 58% were opposed, with 56% of those in opposition concerned with the proposed removal of Pokeka and Maungarau Huts and associated tracks in the eastern Waitotara forest area. Several groups and individuals also submitted their own proposals for new track developments, accounting for the remaining 3% of submissions received. Of the 85 visitor facilities with a proposal (as listed in the Wanganui Conservancy Proposal Summary), 69 received a submission.

Many submitters showed a high level of understanding of the process and contributed valuable information through their submissions. Some submitters also offered alternative management options which recognised the fact that proposed funding levels will allow DOC to maintain most, but not all facilities. Other submitters, however, wished to see all assets retained and additional ones provided.

The following tables provide an outline of key submission points received for the 20 proposals that received the most submissions or were the most contentious, along with the number of submitters and the original DOC proposal.

NEW PLYMOUTH AREA

FACILITY NUMBER	FACILITY NAME (& NO. OF SUBMISSIONS)	ORIGINAL DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF KEY SUBMISSION POINTS
96908 & 96910	Mt Messenger to Kiwi Road Route (16)	Remove/do not replace	<p>Number in favour: 0 Number against: 16</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This overall route is part of the dream of a west coast to east coast walkway; loss of this marked access through the forest will significantly reduce recreation opportunities. • This route requires little maintenance work as it has no structures - low cost to maintain. • Retention of signs and markers is important; private markers and/or blazing of trees will occur if markers are removed.

STRATFORD AREA

FACILITY NUMBER	FACILITY NAME (& NO. OF SUBMISSIONS)	ORIGINAL DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF KEY SUBMISSION POINTS
Egmont National Park			
3749	Waingongoro Hut (23)	Maintain (until retirement)	<p>Number in favour: 10 Number against: 13</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maketawa Hut is already over used by groups and will not cope with the expected increase in visitor numbers. • This is a popular destination for a range of visitors, including families, school groups and others who do not wish to venture far; it is an ideal first over-night experience for people of all ages and can provide an evening's start for weekend visitors. • The ability to park cars near the permanently populated Mountain House or Dawson Falls lodges reduces the risk of vandalism to these cars, making this a more desirable area to overnight. • It is an important hut on the lower Around the Mountain Circuit (AMC). • Submitters challenged the principle that a hut will be retained only if it is 3 or more hours from a roadend: Any hut on the eastern side of the mountain is going to be close to a road, but people doing the AMC are not necessarily using these roads.
96843	Dover Route (24)	Remove/do not replace	<p>Number in favour: 0 Number against: 24</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This route provides an easy, part-day climb without having to travel far into the backblocks, and can be used as a loop walk with other tracks in the area. • Maintenance is minor, as there are no structures - low cost to retain. • It should be retained as an escape route - there is no other route out from the western side of the Pouakai Range. • It provides a different type of experience to the other tracks in the area and the national park needs a good variety of tramps to cater for all levels of fitness and ability. • Retaining numerous marked access points and routes to the Pouakai and Kaitake Ranges will help to reduce the population pressure/ impacts on Mount Egmont/Taranaki.

FACILITY NUMBER	FACILITY NAME (& NO. OF SUBMISSIONS)	ORIGINAL DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF KEY SUBMISSION POINTS
96972 & 96973	AMC Pyramid Route (18)	Remove/do not replace	<p>Number in favour: 15 Number against: 3</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The track is passable at present and should remain open, with appropriate signage, until it becomes impassable. • This is a popular track and provides access to the Pyramids and western moss slopes – popular destinations.
96848	Auroa Track (to Lake Dive) (26)	Cease maintenance	<p>Number in favour: 18 Number against: 8</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an important escape route from the AMC. • It should be retained as it is part of the AMC – a well known/high profile tramping opportunity. • There are no other good low-level access tracks to Lake Dive. • This track is well used and provides a good tramping opportunity for children. • It requires little maintenance, just an annual vegetation trim – low cost to retain.
96901	Davies Track (32)	Maintain (section only)	<p>Number in favour: 1 Number against: 31</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proximity of this track to urban areas makes it very accessible and it is popular with locals. • It should be retained to cater for expected growth: The continued growth of the Oakura coastal area means there is likely to be increased usage of the Kaitake Range. • The closure of this track will reduce tramping opportunities in the Kaitake Range, including loop tramps; having the three access points allows people to combine various routes, depending on interest, fitness, time, etc. • The northern section is the easiest, safest track to the top ridge of the Kaitake Range for older people, families, school groups, and those with limited agility. • The Surrey Road carpark is particularly safe, the northern section is accessible all year round, is more scenic, provides shelter and is used more, while the Weld Road end gets more vandalism and is subject to prevailing weather. • Maintenance is minor, as there are no structures – low cost to retain.
96900	Waimoku/Sefton Ridge Tracks (11)	Maintain (section only)	<p>Number in favour: 5 Number against: 6</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waimoku Track seems to be more popular, and Sefton Ridge is steeper and more slippery • Both tracks are popular and a circuit is more appealing than a return trip. • Both tracks are used by a range of visitors, including family groups and school trips. • Maintenance is minor, as there are no structures – low cost to retain both tracks.

FACILITY NUMBER	FACILITY NAME (& NO. OF SUBMISSIONS)	ORIGINAL DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF KEY SUBMISSION POINTS
96899	Maude Track (19)	Maintain (section only)	Number in favour: 12 Number against: 7 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This track (when open) provides trampers with a great day or overnight trip and several possible round trips, without having to travel far into the backcountry. This track provides an escape route from the Pouakai Circuit. The national park needs a good variety of tramps to cater for all levels of fitness and ability. The upper level slip is not dangerous. Maintenance is minor, as there are no structures - low cost to retain. Retaining the track as access to the beautiful Mangakotukutuku Falls will enhance the appeal of the Pouakai Circuit - provides an interesting side trip.
96879	Waiwhakaiho Track (20)	Maintain (section only)	Number in favour: 0 Number against: 20 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a very good low level winter track for families and children, and provides the only opportunity to walk from the Egmont Road national park entrance to the North Egmont Visitor Centre (when combined with other tracks).
Submitter's Proposal	New Track Request: From Henry Peak to Holly Hut Track (1)	N/A	Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new track would provide a shorter alternative to the full Pouakai Circuit, several new loop opportunities, and could provide an escape route from Henry Peak. Virtually no structures would be required - low maintenance and development cost.

WHANGANUI AREA

FACILITY NUMBER	FACILITY NAME (& NO. OF SUBMISSIONS)	ORIGINAL DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF KEY SUBMISSION POINTS
Waitotara CA/ Whanganui NP			
4679	Pokeka Hut (58)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 1 Number against: 57 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large area of public conservation land, including unique forest/wetland, will become inaccessible to the public. Removal will discourage recreational hunting in the area - pest numbers could get out of hand. Safety - hut should be retained to provide emergency shelter in this remote area This hut has historic value, as the only remaining SF70 hut in the area. Submitters suggested that the Hut Principle regarding parallel systems/huts in adjacent catchments is inconsistently applied and was not intended for application at this scale. The cost of removal is high - money could be better spent maintaining existing facilities. Hut removal goes against general policy and the CMS, i.e. integrated management of huts, retaining a hut and track network for pest control purposes, and removing huts only if dangerous or unsanitary. Some submitters challenged the minimum service standard requirements (i.e. DOC standards are too high).

4645	Maungarau Hut (76)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 1 Number against: 75 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large area of public conservation land will become inaccessible to the public. • Multi-day tramping opportunities will be reduced significantly. • Removal will discourage recreational hunting in the area – pest numbers could get out of hand. • Safety – hut should be retained to provide emergency shelter in this remote area. • Submitters suggested that DOC is not supporting community involvement – the tramping and hunting community helped fund and construct this hut & do not wish to see it removed. • Submitters suggested that the Hut Principle regarding parallel systems/huts in adjacent catchments is inconsistently applied and was not intended for application at this scale. • Hut removal goes against general policy and the CMS, i.e. integrated management of huts, retaining a hut and track network for pest control purposes, and removing huts only if dangerous or unsanitary. • Some submitters challenged the minimum service standard requirements (i.e. DOC standards are too high).
96933	Tahupo to Maungarau Route (46)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 0 Number against: 46 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large area of public conservation land will become inaccessible to the public. • Multi-day tramping opportunities will be reduced significantly. • Removal will discourage recreational hunting in the area – pest numbers could get out of hand. • Submitters suggested that the Principles regarding parallel systems/huts in adjacent catchments are inconsistently applied and were not intended for application at this scale. • The Eastern Waitotara forest is different to (& better than) the Western Waitotara forest. • Track closure goes against the CMS, i.e. retaining a hut and track network for pest control purposes.
96930	Whatiwhati to Pokeka/ Maungarau Route (38)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 0 Number against: 38 Key points: As for the Tahupo to Maungarau Route, above.
96927	Pokeka Track (48)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 0 Number against: 48 Key points: As for the Tahupo to Maungarau Route.
96953	Pokeka to Otarakeke Route (51)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 0 Number against: 51 Key points: As for the Tahupo to Maungarau Route.
191217	“Omaru Stream Swingbridge” (51)	Proposed	Number in favour: 16 Number against: 35 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Omaru Stream crossing is often thwarted by high river levels, often at short notice • A new swingbridge may result in increased use of the area • The proposed swingbridge would enhance the recreational opportunities in this area, developing a western loop, providing all-weather access for a multi-day trip, and providing a unique experience outside Egmont National Park for locals • Money would be better spent maintaining backcountry huts and tracks, particularly those in the Eastern Waitotara area. • The proposed swingbridge is non-strategic and new structures are not a priority on marked routes, according to the CMS.

Submitters' Proposal	New Track Request: From Waitotara Valley Road end to Pokeka Track (with bridges) (16)	N/A	Number in favour: 16 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This track would provide access to a range of recreational opportunities, and would solve the access problem for hunters and increase the number of recreational hunters using the area.
Submitters' Proposal	New Track Request: From Mt Humphries to Aotuhia (near Bridge to Somewhere) (10)	N/A	Number in favour: 10 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This track proposal requires no structures and volunteer labour may be available. It would enhance recreational opportunities in the area.
191212	"Ngapurua Hut" (54)	Proposed	Number in favour: 5 Number against: 49 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A hut is needed to break the long (6-8 hr) day between Pouri and Puketotara Huts. This hut will help to reverse the decline in usage of the Matemateaonga Track. There is already adequate shelter and water at Ngapurua, and track traffic does not justify the cost of a new hut. Money would be better spent maintaining existing backcountry huts and tracks, particularly those in the Eastern Waitotara area. A new hut on the walkway would be better located at the old Otaraheke site, because it is an ideal site for DOC goat control operations and for hunters and trampers using the Eastern Waitotara Route It would be better to build the proposed hut on the Whanganui River, as the Whanganui Journey is more popular and accessible, overseas visitors on the river prefer to stay in huts, and John Coull Hut may become unusable as a result of flood damage

Pipiriki

800160	MV <i>Ongarue</i> Riverboat (historic asset) (36)	Maintain by community	Number in favour: 34 Number in partial favour: 2 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Ongarue</i> is in a serious state of deterioration at Pipiriki - if action is not taken soon it will be beyond restoration. The vessel has considerable historic significance, both nationally and regionally - it is a rare tunnel-hull riverboat and is one of the last remaining vessels from Hatrick's fleet. The Whanganui Riverboat Restoration and Navigation Trust have the experience, equipment, expertise, manpower, ability to raise the necessary funds, and the storage/display facilities needed to restore/conservate this vessel. The Whanganui Riverboat Trust wants to restore the <i>Ongarue</i>. The community at Pipiriki have neither the expertise, equipment, or access to funds necessary for the restoration, and lack of sustainable use and loss of purpose have occurred at Pipiriki. The vessel could be kept at Pipiriki or Wanganui after its restoration, but would be accessible to more people in Wanganui.
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PALMERSTON NORTH AREA

FACILITY NUMBER	FACILITY NAME (& NO. OF SUBMISSIONS)	ORIGINAL DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF KEY SUBMISSION POINTS
Ruahine Forest Park			
42604	Te Ekaou Hut (9)	Remove/do not replace	Number in favour: 2 Number against: 7 Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is used as a base by hunters, and for Young Hunters programmes when Diggers Hut is unreachable because of the weather - helps control deer in the area; provides good hunting away from Forks area (spreads hunters out for safety). It should be retained as an emergency/severe weather shelter for hunter/tramper safety and convenience. Submitters challenged the Principle that a hut will be retained only if it is 3 or more hours from a roadend: It doesn't get vandalised and it is a good hut for a range of people/groups who want to experience the outdoors without much tramping - easy/vehicle access and no river crossings. Some appealed to the Hut Principle that a hut may be retained if it is a popular destination: It is a well used hut (although the visitor book rarely gets signed by users). Maintenance by community: The NZDA (Manawatu) are willing to investigate the possibility of entering into an agreement with DOC to maintain the hut in its present condition and location.
Submitter's Proposal	New Track Request: From top of Ruahine Range (south of Longview Hut) to Top Gorge Hut (1)	N/A	Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a signposted, marked track down to Top Gorge Hut would increase usage of the area and the hut, and allow much safer access to the top of the Pohangina River - it is difficult country for even experienced people to travel in without a marked route.
Submitter's Proposal	New Track Request: From Heritage Lodge Track to the confluence of Umutoi Creek and Oroua River (Iron Gates Gorge) (1)	N/A	Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current access (over private farm) to Iron Gates Gorge used by school groups is not always safe. This track would provide direct, safe, all weather access to Iron Gates Gorge, which would be a very popular destination. Sixtus Lodge Trust Board members are prepared to help cut and form the track, and to help finance signs, etc.

4.4 OTHER SUBMISSIONS ON PROPOSALS

The proposals listed here are the remainder of those that received submissions, according to the proposed management type. Key points raised (or, in many cases, all points raised) by submitters are also included.

NEW PLYMOUTH AREA

ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
Maintain by community				
3314	Rerekapa Hut	9	(0/9)	The only submitter comment was that Moki Hut was originally built by a club that no longer exists, and has not been used by that group for 20 years.
3369	Moki (Spotswood) Hut	10	(0/10)	
96904	Morgan's Grave Walk	8	(0/8)	

STRATFORD AREA

ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
Remove/do not replace				
96856	Waiwhakaiho Carpark Viewpoint to Kaiuauai Track	8	(0/8)	Konini Dell Track provides a different experience to other tracks in the area and provides an alternative loop opportunity in conjunction with another track.
96871	Konini Dell Loop Track	10	(1/9)	
Maintain (section only)				
96864	Hasties Hill Loop Track	8	(0/8)	
Upgrade to standard				
96907	Mangaoraka Loop Track (SST)	11	(1/10)	Those in opposition suggest that DOC is too focused on achieving a very high standard for high-use tracks near road ends and is neglecting backcountry areas, even those close to road ends.
96857	Kaiuauai Track (BCA)	15	(0/15)	
96869	Kamaha Loop Track (SST)	10	(0/10)	
96850	Patea Loop Track (DV)	10	(0/10)	
96870	Wilkie Pools Loop Track (DV)	11	(0/11)	
90030	North Egmont Nature Walk (SST)	9	(0/9)	
99031	Connett Loop Track (SST)	9	(0/9)	
99034	Mangaoraka - Waiwhakaiho Link Track (BCA)	9	(0/9)	
Upgrade to higher standard (Visitor Groups listed are the preferred/proposed ones)				
96853	Veronica Loop Track (DV)	5	(1/4)	No points raised by submitters.
96852	Ram Track (BCC)	3	(0/3)	
96868	AMC: Enchanted Trk Jtn to Wilkie Pools Lp Trk (DV)	5	(1/4)	
96877	Ridge Loop Track (DV)	3	(0/3)	
96865	Kapuni Loop Track (DV)	3	(0/3)	
Proposed				
191484	“Waiongana Track”	2	(1/1)	Those in opposition would like to see funding go towards maintaining more kilometres of track to a standard suitable for backcountry adventurers, rather than upgrading only a few tracks to a high standard suitable for short stop travellers or day visitors.
191505	“Connett to Veronica to Ngatoro Link Track”	3	(2/1)	
Proposals for				
	Egmont National Park - General Submissions	7	(2/5)	Those in opposition want all tracks maintained, including the more challenging, less popular ones, so that a variety of opportunities is available for all users.

WHANGANUI AREA

ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
Cease maintenance				
96928	Kapara Route	2	(2/0)	Both submitters thought this track should be maintained, because of the tramping opportunities it provides, either on its own or in conjunction with other tracks in the area.
Remove/do not replace				
96968	Maraekowhai Track	3	(1/2)	Submitters suggested that better access from the Whanganui River to the Niu poles should be provided (for Whanganui River Journey users), and that "cease maintenance" for the original track would be a cheaper option than removal.
Upgrade				
96948	Atene Viewpoint Walk (DV)	3	(1/2)	Most submitters supported the proposed upgrades, although one person thought the money for upgrading Atene Viewpoint Walk would be better spent maintaining backcountry tracks, particularly those in the Eastern Waitotara area.
99157	Gordon Park Loop Track (SST)	2	(0/2)	
800135	Whakahoro Hut and Campsite (BCC)	13	(1/12)	
Maintain by community				
800132	Maraekowhai Historic Reserve (Niu Poles)	3	(0/3)	Submitters suggested that better access from the Whanganui River to the Niu poles should be provided.
800161	Pipiriki Toilet/Shelter (RDC building)	1	(0/1)	
Proposed				
19119	"New Mangapurua Track Swingbridge" I	6	(0/6)	One submitter thought that the Waitotara River (Trains) Swingbridge proposal was out of character with the opportunity, and another would prefer that the money be spent maintaining backcountry facilities, particularly those in the Eastern Waitotara area.
191217	"Waitotara River (Trains) Swingbridge" and			
4673	Trains 3-wire (replace with above)	15	(0/15)	
191220	"New Mangapurua Track Swingbridge" II	4	(0/4)	
191346	"Waione Stream Campsite Toilet"	2	(0/2)	
191346	"Waione Stream Campsite Water Catcher"	4	(0/4)	
191350	"Johnson's Campsite Water Catcher"	6	(1/5)	
191351	"Battleship Bluff Campsite Water Catcher"	5	(0/5)	

ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
Proposals for				
	Waitotara Conservation Area - General Submissions	4	(3/1)	Similar issues were raised in these general submissions (e.g. for Pokeka and Maungarau Huts) as compared with facility specific submissions, although one submitter (over whose land the Eastern Waitotara Route is accessed) pointed out that access will still be available to serious trampers, even if the huts and tracks are removed.
	Whanganui National Park - General Submissions	2	(2 neutral)	

PALMERSTON NORTH AREA

ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
Minimal maintenance				
42532	Piripiri Hut	3	(1/2)	Those supporting the proposal indicated that the huts are in a satisfactory condition that will see them lasting for several years to come. Those in opposition recommended that huts and bivies be retained, especially those in remote locations, as they provide severe weather/emergency shelter. Some submitters suggested that improved access to the more remote huts would increase visitor numbers.
42598	Top Gorge Hut	5	(2/3)	
42613	Traverse (A Frame) Hut	2	(1/1)	
42657	Toka Bivy	4	(1/3)	

Cease maintenance

96497	Piripiri Hut to Ngamoko Range Track	3	(1/2)	One submitter suggested that improved access and signage to Piripiri Hut from the road end (along legal paper road) would increase visitor numbers.
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Remove/do not replace

42540	Centre Creek Hut	5	(2/3)	The supporting points were that other forms of accommodation can be used, Centre Creek is derelict, and Opawe is too close to the road end. One submitter suggested retaining Centre Creek Hut as an historic hut (not for accommodation). Most commented that huts to be removed should be replaced with basic shelters and/or an intention book should be maintained at these sites, but many thought huts should be retained for safety and convenience. One opposing point was that DOC is proposing to spend too much money on more popular destinations and yet the lives of other, less popular huts could be extended with a minimal amount of maintenance (to a lower standard); the minimum service standard requirements were criticised (i.e. DOC standards are too high).
42621	Opawe Hut	5	(1/4)	

Upgrade to standard

98222	Takapari Road	1	(0/1)	No points raised by submitters.
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Replace

6153	Zeke's Hut (replace)	2	(0/2)	Submissions for Purity Hut supported the Hut Principle that "Huts must meet all... minimum service standard requirements" - most commented that it is in poor condition and unsanitary. One submitter thought replacing Purity with a water catcher/shelter would be better use of funds.
42571	Purity Hut (replace - bigger size)	8	(1/7)	

ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
Maintain by community				
42573	Heritage Lodge	2	(0/2)	
43393	Waikamaka Hut	1	(0/1)	
Proposals for				
	Palmerston North Area - General Submissions	2	(1 neutral/ 1 for)	DOC's rationalisation of huts in the Ruahines is necessary and reasonable, given funding limitations.
WANGANUI CONSERVANCY				
ASSET NUMBER	NAME	TOTAL SUBMISSIONS	FOR/ AGAINST	SUBMISSIONS ANALYSIS
	All Conservancy Proposals - General Submissions	4	(2/2)	Backcountry facilities should be retained to provide shelter (particularly in severe weather/emergencies), to provide access to NZ forest, rivers and lakes, to offer alternatives to the popular "tourist" sites, and as incentive for New Zealanders to get outdoors. DOC could involve the community in hut, track and structure maintenance if they are short-staffed or under-funded. Off highway vehicle (OHV) users would like to see more tracks/areas made available to them on DOC estate.

4.5 PROPOSALS THAT DID NOT RECEIVE SUBMISSIONS

New Plymouth Area

100879	Waitoetoe Beach Carpark
100880	Waitoetoe Beach Picnic Area
100881	Whitecliffs Picnic Area
100875	Ohura Peak Trig Road Picnic Area (Non-visitor)
98226	Waitoetoe Beach Picnic Area Access Road
3593	NPDC Swingbridge

Stratford Area

99310	Rotorangi Hydro Track
190928	"Lucy's Gully SST Track"
98231	Tahurangi Translator Access Road
98232	Manganui Gorge Access Road
4115	Translator Road Retaining Wall
3765	Translator Road Gabion Basket
4113	Translator Road Retaining Wall
4114	Translator Road Retaining Wall

Palmerston North Area

96489	No. 2 Line Track
96513	Ohutu Ridge Track

5. Additional information from meetings

Following the final date for submissions, key user groups in the Conservancy have participated in consultative meetings and further discussion with the department:

- Thursday 15 April 2004 - Wanganui (Attended by representatives from Wanganui, Waverley, Stratford and Heretaunga Tramping Clubs, Wanganui Hut Committee, Wanganui District Hunters' and Stalkers' Club, and other stakeholder groups; facilitated by Karen Schumacher, a member of the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board) This meeting explored options for facilities in the Waitotara Conservation Area, due to the substantial public response to proposals. The Wanganui Tramping Club offered to enter an agreement with the department to maintain the tracks in the Eastern Waitotara, but declined the option of maintaining either Maungarau or Pokeka Huts. With the exception of Maungarau Hut, the represented clubs accepted the alternative proposals presented by Whanganui Area staff (as outlined in 8.2, "New Proposals").
- New Plymouth Area staff are having ongoing discussion with the Stratford and New Plymouth District Councils regarding some of the proposals to "maintain by community."
- Stratford Area staff are still in the process of consulting with key submitter groups.
- Whanganui Area staff are still negotiating with the Wanganui Tramping Club regarding community maintenance options, as well as the best location for the proposed additional hut on the Matemateaonga Track, the newly proposed shelters (replacing huts) on the Pokeka to Otarakeke Route, and the newly proposed bridge (near Kapara).
- Palmerston North Area staff are currently discussing community maintenance options with Heretaunga Tramping Club, New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association (Manawatu Branch) and Sixtus Lodge Trust Board.

6. Summary of general points from submissions

The purpose of this section is to list some of the common themes and general comments that came through in submissions and to combine these with conservancy comment, thereby setting the scene for the development of decisions for individual facilities and for collation of issues to a national level. However, due to the large number of submissions received, only a few of the commonly recurring themes and general points could be listed here.

The conservancy responses make particular reference to the relevant legislation and Recreation Opportunities Review process guidelines, namely:

- Consistency with “Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network” (e.g. Hut and track principles)
- Visitor Strategy
- Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)/Conservation Management Plan (CMP) objectives
- Proposal document Conservancy Overview section

POINTS THAT CAME THROUGH AS THEMES

Huts

DOC's minimum service standard requirements are too high - backcountry huts should be retained, even if in poor condition.

The service standards for huts have been developed over the past 4-5 years in consultation with representatives of the major NZ user groups. The revised standards have just been released, following a period of feedback and further option development.

The minimum service standard requirements that all huts must meet are that they are to be weatherproof, in a reasonable state of repair, not dangerous and not insanitary. These “bottom line” requirements are derived from legal obligations placed on the department as building owner, employer or occupier under the Building, Health and Safety in Employment and Occupiers Liability Acts. Because of these minimum standards, huts cannot be left in a poor condition - they must either be brought to the required standard or removed.

Backcountry huts should be retained, especially those in remote areas, as they provide shelter in severe weather/emergencies.

The department accepts that any form of shelter has the potential to provide safe haven but does not accept that this is justification enough for all existing huts and shelters to be retained. When considering the strategic importance of each hut, the Hut Principles have been applied. These include: “In remote areas remoteness seekers are, by definition, capable of walking greater distances in a day (at a greater

speed) than backcountry adventurers, and are capable of planning trips that do not require huts, or where huts are spaced considerable travelling times apart.”

The department is endeavouring to ensure that sufficient information is available for trampers to assess their own level of competence and to choose their own level of risk.

Too much money is proposed to be spent on the more popular huts, yet less popular huts could have their lives extended with a minimal amount of maintenance/cost.

“A range of recreational opportunities should be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests” (Draft General Policy Conservation Act). Tracks and huts with a higher service standard tend to cost more to construct and manage, but also get higher levels of use, by New Zealanders as well as overseas tourists, thus bringing benefit to more people. Day visitor sites are the most popular destinations used by New Zealanders and international visitors alike. The department is making decisions with the aim of providing the best mix of opportunities for all New Zealanders.

Removal of backcountry huts will discourage recreational hunting and pest numbers may get out of hand; huts should also be retained for ongoing DOC pest control programmes, as recommended in the CMS.

Controlling animal pest numbers to a desirable level is important for ecosystem health and recreational hunting may be encouraged to help achieve this. Hunting, however, is managed primarily as a recreational activity rather than as a reliable means of controlling animal pest numbers. Where consistent with the protection or restoration of indigenous biodiversity and subject to controls to ensure public safety, recreational hunting for wild animals should be encouraged (Draft General Policy Conservation Act).

In making proposals for huts, consideration has been given to the strategic importance of huts, which includes access for deer hunters. DOC recognises that any hut provides the opportunity for shelter, but believes that there are a number of huts that receive little use and are not strategically important.

Access issues for huts should be resolved before removal is considered, as visitor numbers may increase with improved access.

Access and visitor use are not the only factors used when considering whether a hut should be retained. For example, a hut may also be poorly located or duplicate the recreation opportunity provided by another nearby hut.

Some access issues are difficult for the department to resolve, especially where the agreement of an adjoining private landowner is required to provide access and the use of guns and dogs are an issue. While desirable to resolve issues at once, this is not always practicable. Access issues are being examined by the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group.

The Principle that a hut will be retained only if it is three or more hours from a roadend is not always appropriate, e.g. in Egmont National Park, where many huts/tracks are close to a roadend, but people using these facilities are not necessarily using these roads.

Other factors also need to be considered, including how a hut is used in relation to other huts on a track network (e.g. the Around the Mountain Circuit). Other Hut Principles may also apply, such as whether a hut is a popular destination. Such factors were taken into account when developing hut proposals and when making decisions. Where submissions have made it clear that a particular hut is a popular destination, but the distance to the next hut or a road end is less than 3 hours, then the decision may have been to retain the hut into the future.

The Principles regarding parallel track systems/huts in adjacent catchments are not appropriate for some areas, e.g. the Matemateaonga/Waitotara area.

The Hut Principles required an assessment as to whether there was an unnecessary duplication of opportunity in the provision of the two track and hut systems in the same or adjacent catchments. This principle is a guide to be used when looking at the strategic importance of individual huts (and tracks) and the decision whether a hut should be retained or not is not made on this basis alone.

DOC should be honouring the legacy of huts and tracks left by the Forest Service, by maintaining the huts that exist. This is consistent with DOC's mission statement, "to conserve New Zealand's natural and historic heritage for all to enjoy, now and in the future".

DOC has interpreted the Conservation Act to mean that in order for all New Zealanders to enjoy New Zealand's natural and historic heritage, a range of recreation opportunities will be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests. This does not mean retaining all of the existing huts and track network, but most will be retained for the collective contribution to the desired recreation opportunities.

The Principles to Guide a Core facility Network were developed to capture the range of values associated with the provision of recreation facilities in conservation areas. It is difficult to assess a particular principle in isolation from the others, and in the same way, relevant principles must apply to ensure legislation and policy is enacted.

Hut use figures are biased because people tend not to fill in hut books in more remote locations.

Monitoring use of visitor facilities is an important part of understanding the recreation experience. It enables planning to maximise visitor opportunities while minimising impacts. Information from hut books alone will not provide accurate use levels, but is a good indicator of relative use levels.

Huts receiving limited use may be allowed to deteriorate, perhaps on the basis that they should 'pay their way'.

"Charges may be made for the use of visitor accommodation, facilities and services" (Draft General Policy Conservation Act). The decision regarding the strategic importance of an individual hut *does not* include the ability for that hut to generate revenue.

Tracks

The closure of any tracks is a backward step - regular visitors/locals want a variety of tramping opportunities (including less popular, challenging tracks) to cater for a range of abilities.

Removing any tracks will reduce recreational opportunities, as many tracks can be used either on their own or in conjunction with other tracks - trampers want loop opportunities retained.

The department is committed to providing a range of recreation opportunities, including a variety of walking and tramping options. The Wanganui Conservancy alone provides over 800 kilometres of track, covering all the various types and standards. The department is mindful that most tracks form part of a local network and together may provide a number of different walking and tramping options. This, along with other factors such as level of use and track condition, was considered when assessing the relative importance or value of each track in terms of the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network. Lower priority or lower use tracks may be closed (Wanganui CMS, section 38.1.2, page 357) but ceasing maintenance (markers will be retained but not replaced), maintaining a track to a lower standard (e.g. a tramping track reverting to route standard) or a community group taking over track maintenance are other options that can be considered.

Tracks with no/few structures will have low maintenance costs and should be retained.

All tracks, even marked routes, have long term inspection, maintenance and component replacement costs. These costs have now been modelled and allow the department to estimate the total facility network that can be afforded into the foreseeable future. All of these costs add up and the indication is that the anticipated funding will not be sufficient to allow all tracks to be maintained to the required standard. Other options can be considered as an alternative to track closure or removal (see above).

Rather than removing tracks outright, retain signs and markers so that tracks can still be used by experienced trampers/hunters.

Track markers could be replaced as a one-off effort if there are insufficient funds to maintain tracks and user groups could be approached to assist with this - tracks could then still be used by experienced hunters and trampers.

Track markers could be replaced as the minimum work required when managing tracks. The department would welcome assistance from user groups with the marking of tracks when this is required by the relevant service standard. Ongoing maintenance, however, is also an issue. The marking of a route needs to meet a set standard and vegetation and windfalls need to be removed in order that markers can be seen and followed in either direction (see Standards NZ Tracks and Outdoor Structures Handbook). If the track is to remain open and available for use by the visiting public, the service standard requirements need to be met.

Where tracks will no longer be maintained, existing marking will be left in place. However, the department has a responsibility for the safety of visitors where facilities are provided. Tracks to be closed eventually will not be marked on maps and no new markers will be placed along the tracks.

DOC is too focused on achieving a very high standard for high-use tracks near roadends and is neglecting backcountry areas, even those close to roadends - the funding could go towards maintaining more kilometres of track to a good BCA standard, rather than upgrading only a few tracks to SST or DV standard.

New Government funding is being provided to better manage the current range of recreation opportunities. More funding will be allocated to basic backcountry facilities, as will be the case for higher service standard front country facilities. While there are facilities that can be managed to lower service standards and thus are more cost effective by hut or km of track, this does not fulfil the department's objective that "a range of recreational opportunities should be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests" (*Draft General Policy Conservation Act*).

All tracks, even marked routes, have long term inspection, maintenance and component replacement costs. These costs have now been modelled and allow the department to estimate the total facility network that can be afforded into the foreseeable future. Routes and tramping tracks are more cost effective to manage in terms of length of track compared with tracks with higher service standards, and there is significantly more route and tramping track managed as a result. There is approximately seven times the length of basic tramping track and route being retained than there is track to the easy tramping standard, and five times as many standard and basic huts as there are serviced and Great Walk huts.

The department recognises visitor groups that prefer tracks and huts with higher service standards, a preference born out by independent research and the numbers of people using these facilities. Many New Zealanders enjoy the higher standard facilities and opportunities for these people will be provided as part of the range of recreation opportunities that DOC manages.

Tracks that provide an escape route (whether classified as "safe exit from popular track" or not) should be retained, e.g. Auroa Track.

One of the Track Categories that make up the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network is to provide a safe exit from popular tracks. Other tracks that duplicate access to a less popular location will be considered in terms of their strategic value within the surrounding track network.

It is important to retain/establish access (through private land if necessary) onto DOC tracks for all track users.

Some access issues are difficult for the department to resolve, especially where the agreement of an adjoining private landowner is required to provide access and the use of guns and dogs are an issue. Issues of access along unformed paper roads are the responsibility of the relevant territorial authority. Access issues are being examined by the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group.

Better promotion of many tracks/opportunities is needed (including brochures and signs on main roads).

Many signs need to be updated with appropriate information - often track times are underestimated - and there should be more information available on the state of the tracks. Interpretive signs about local flora/fauna, history, etc, would be a valuable addition in many areas, e.g. Egmont National Park, Whanganui River Journey.

Information and interpretation should be of high quality, accurate, effectively communicated and accessible (Draft General Policy Conservation Act). DOC is looking at improving the provision of information for visitors as part of project work underway, and these suggestions will be passed to the relevant people. DOC has a responsibility for being as up to date as is practicable with information about its own facilities. It is recommended that all DOC Conservancy offices are charged with the responsibility of having accurate, up to date information readily available.

OTHER POINTS, INCLUDING NATIONAL ISSUES

Bait stations, rather than aerial spreading, should be used for 1080 distribution.

Bait stations provide effective control in small reserves or other accessible areas. However, in extensive areas of rugged, remote backcountry, the cost of such an approach would be prohibitive. In such situations, aerial application of 1080 poisoned baits is the most cost effective method of achieving the required level of possum control.

Place intention books at more huts and roadends for Search and Rescue purposes, etc.

Visitor/intention books are placed in all huts - the main problem is that they are not always used. Therefore important information, for both management and Search and Rescue purposes, is sometimes not available. Placing more intention books at roadends could be considered but vandalism/abuse is likely to be a problem.

Locals' needs/requests should be given more consideration than those of tourists and other visitors, as locals use facilities in their area regularly, pay for them through their taxes and hut passes, and care about the conservation land these facilities are on.

“A range of recreational opportunities should be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests” (Draft General Policy Conservation Act). Tracks and huts with a higher service standard tend to cost more to construct and manage, but also get higher levels of use, by New Zealanders as well as overseas tourists, thus bringing benefit to more people. Day visitor sites are the most popular destinations used by New Zealanders and international visitors alike. The department is making decisions with the aim of providing the best mix of opportunities for all New Zealanders.

Off highway vehicle (OHV) users would like to see more opportunities for this activity, noting that OHV use allows less-able people to access areas of parks they would not otherwise get to see, and because of the contribution they can make to search and rescue operations.

Off highway vehicle/4X4 use is recognised as a popular recreation activity and many old access roads have been designated for this type of use. "Vehicle use and other forms of transport should be compatible with the outcomes sought in different places" (Draft General Policy Conservation Act), and as such are not always permitted access. There are limited opportunities in conservation areas, and this is not likely to change except for the quite extensive opportunities that may arise through High Country Tenure Review in the South Island.

The department supports the work being done by the NZ Police and the volunteers that work with them in situations of search and rescue. Roads accessible to 4X4 vehicles may provide important access in such circumstances, but roads are not maintained by the department for these purposes alone.

Te Araroa Trust were "a little surprised to see no mention whatsoever of the national trail in the Recreation Opportunities Review..."

The Memorandum of Understanding between the department and Te Araroa Trust provides a commitment that the department will allow for Te Araroa to achieve its shared objective. All Conservators have been advised that the department supports Te Araroa. While the department was aware of much of the alignment for Te Araroa through information supplied by the Trust, there had not been discussion with the department in many cases to specify proposed new track alignments, and as such were not included as formal proposals. The department expected the Trust, as a community group, to use the consultation process to clarify further the issues of route alignment. These discussions will be ongoing as the concept progresses towards reality.

Section Two

7. Making decisions

7.1 ORIGINAL PROPOSALS, SUBMISSION REQUESTS AND DECISIONS

NEW PLYMOUTH AREA

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Mt Messenger Conservation Area				
Mt Messenger to Kiwi Road Route	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cease maintenance (retain signs, markers and access) (15) Maintain (1) 	Maintain to lower standard (Route)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This route receives low use and is a low priority for an upgrade, which it would need if it were to be brought to Tramping Track standard (as it is currently rated in DOC's Visitor Asset Management System (VAMS) database). Maintaining it to Route standard will meet submitters' request to retain signs and markers (cease maintenance means eventual closure unless it is maintained by a community group).

STRATFORD AREA

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Egmont National Park				
Waingongoro Hut	Maintain (until retirement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain (long term) (13) Maintain (until retirement) (10) 	Maintain and eventually replace with smaller hut (with up to 8 bunks and more capacity to provide for day shelter requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use patterns suggest that the predominant users of this hut are day visitors, but the provision of some facilities for overnight staying is still proposed for the replacement hut. This decision allows for the point submitters made, that the hut provides an important opportunity in the park for families introducing their children to the outdoors. The situation will be reviewed by area staff 5 years before the hut's retirement date to ensure that its replacement is still warranted.

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Dover Route	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain (5) Cease maintenance (retain access and markers) (17) Upgrade (2) 	Maintain to lower standard (Route)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining this track to Route standard will meet submitters' requests to retain signs and markers (cease maintenance means eventual closure unless it is maintained by a community group). This route receives low use and is a low priority for an upgrade, which it would need if it were to be brought to Tramping Track standard (as it is currently rated in VAMS). Maintaining to a lower standard will incur minimal costs. Help has also been received recently from volunteers in the maintenance of this track.
AMC Pyramid Route	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove (15) Maintain until impassable (1) Cease maintenance (2) 	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The track is no longer passable due to heavy rains and mass erosion during Feb/March 2004. DOC has closed the track for safety reasons. The alternative route follows the Kapoiaia Track.
Auroa Track (to Lake Dive)	Cease maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain (7) Cease maintenance (19) 	Cease maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of submitters were satisfied with the proposal to cease maintenance. This track receives low use and is therefore a low priority for upgrade work (which would be required to bring it to standard). Markers and signs will be left in place, but not replaced.
Davies Track	Maintain (section only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain northern section, close section between Boar's Head Mine and Patuha Trig, leaving access to mine open (17) Maintain all (14) Maintain (section only, as proposed) (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain section from Surrey Hill Rd to Patuha Trig Remove section from Boars Head Mine to Patuha Trig Maintain section from Weld Rd to Boars Head Mine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision has taken into account submitters' indication that the northern section of track is the most popular, etc, and that it would be better to close the lower/middle section. In light of the fact that proposed funding levels will allow DOC to maintain most, but not all facilities, this suggestion provides a practical alternative to the original proposal.
Waimoku/ Sefton Ridge Tracks	Maintain (section only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Sefton Ridge Track (1) Maintain Waimoku Track (1) Maintain either track (3) Maintain both tracks (6) 	Maintain Waimoku Track (remove Sefton Ridge Track)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reasons provided by submitters indicated that if any track were to be retained, Waimoku Track would be the best (although some submitters said they use both as a loop walk). In light of the fact that proposed funding levels will allow DOC to maintain most, but not all facilities, this decision provides a practical, affordable option without removing the opportunity to walk to the summit of the Kaitake Range. Duplication of opportunity - both tracks are not needed to get to the summit.

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Maude Track	Maintain (section only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain all (7) Maintain (lower section only – as proposed) (11) Maintain lower section and short section at top of track (as lookout point) (1) 	Maintain section from Park Boundary to Mangakotukutuku Falls, and remove upper section (as proposed).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The upper section is prone to slips and poses a safety risk for users. The majority of submissions were in favour of the proposal, or wished to see access to the falls retained (provided from the Maude roadend).
Waiwhakaiho Track	Maintain (section only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain all (3) Cease maintenance (2) Maintain short walk from Rahiri to old bridge only (1) Cease maintenance from Mangaoraka Loop to park boundary and maintain from Rahiri to Waiwhakaiho Rvr (14) 	Maintain to standard (Tramping Track), from Rahiri Carpark to Waiwhakaiho River. Maintain to lower standard (Route), from Mangaoraka Link Track to Rahiri-Waiwhakaiho section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision takes submissions into account, which indicated that the Rahiri-Waiwhakaiho section is popular/valuable and worth retaining. Maintaining the upper section of the Waiwhakaiho Track to Route standard will require minimal resources while still providing some opportunity, as requested by submitters (i.e. markers/signs to be retained).
New Track Request: From Henry Peak to Holly Hut Track	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut new track from top of Henry Peak, to Ahukawakawa Swamp, to Holly Hut Track, halfway between the hut and the Kokowai Track Junction 	No new track to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed track would require a large number of structures and steps (i.e. high maintenance costs) due to the nature of the terrain (very steep areas and swampy sections), and this area is not a priority for new development, as existing tracks provide a similar opportunity (i.e. tramping/loop opportunities for fit, experienced people are already well catered for in the Egmont National Park and elsewhere in the Conservancy). Such a development is not supported in the CMS: 38.1.3 (ix) “Where outside organisations wish to establish tracks on land administered by the department and which are outside the department’s priorities, approval will only be given... if there is a proven visitor demand and ongoing maintenance can be assured.” The proposed track is not required as an escape route, as Mangorei and Kokowai Tracks already perform this function. The Ahukawakawa Swamp is an important and sensitive natural wetland area – further development of visitor facilities is undesirable.

WHANGANUI AREA

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Waitotara Conservation Area/Whanganui National Park				
Pokeka Hut	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain (52) • Upgrade (3) • Minimal Maintenance (1) • Maintain by community (1) • Remove (1) 	Remove and replace with an emergency shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Occupiers Liability Act, the department is responsible for public safety on the land it administers. The substandard structure at Pokeka compromises the department's position in terms of the Act, so that the hut must either be significantly upgraded, replaced, or removed. • This hut requires a significant amount of remedial work to bring it to standard, but is not a priority for replacement/maintenance as it is poorly situated (would be better situated on the true right bank of the Pokeka Stream, which, when in flood, can hold up parties on the other side), receives low visitor usage (<100 bednights/year), and did not meet national criteria to be maintained as an historic hut in a recent national review of SF70 huts. • The opportunity provided by this hut (and associated tracks) is duplicated in the western Waitotara area, i.e. the eastern and western huts/routes both provide hunting and tramping opportunities for fit, experienced people in a lowland native forest setting, in the same catchment area. • In response to submissions, however, it is now proposed to build a four sided (enclosed) emergency shelter with a water catcher facility, following the removal of the hut. Ongoing dialogue with key user groups/Wanganui Hut Committee may result in a change of location for this proposed asset.

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Maungarau Hut	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain (55) Maintain by community (4) Minimal Maintenance (15) Remove (1) 	Remove and replace with an emergency shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the Occupiers Liability Act, the department is responsible for public safety on the land it administers. The substandard structure at Maungarau compromises the department's position in terms of the Act, so that the hut must either be significantly upgraded, replaced, or removed. This hut is not a priority for replacement/maintenance, as it receives low visitor use (<100 bednights/year) and the opportunity it provides is duplicated in the western Waitotara area, i.e. the eastern and western huts/routes both provide hunting and tramping opportunities for fit, experienced people in a lowland native forest setting, in the same catchment area. The public feel strongly about this hut, as shown by the large number of submissions. At a meeting with the executive members of interested groups (April 2004), including the Wanganui Tramping Club, the option of entering into a management agreement regarding the maintenance of this hut was firmly rejected by all clubs present. However, the option of retaining the current building as an emergency shelter is being investigated. If this is not legally and financially viable, the hut will be removed and replaced by a new four sided (enclosed) emergency camping shelter that meets the building code (to Category IV). Ongoing dialogue with key user groups/ Wanganui Hut Committee may result in a change of location for this proposed asset.
"Ngapurua Hut"	Proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build proposed hut (5) Do not build proposed hut (2) Build hut at Otaraheke (46) Build for Whanganui River users (1) 	Build proposed hut (site still under consideration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hut Principles state that huts on backcountry adventurer (BCA) sites should not be more than 3-4 hours walking time apart. The walking time between Pouri and Puketotara Huts is 6-8 hours, depending on track conditions and fitness level. A hut at Ngapurua would best meet the needs of the primary users (less experienced BCA and family groups) of this track. However, in response to submissions, the department is considering Otaraheke as an alternative site for the proposed hut.

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Tahupo to Maungarau Route	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain (41) • Cease maintenance (5) 	Seeking community maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the low number of annual users (<50 visitors/route/year) and the recent investment in the western Waitotara huts and tracks, this route is not seen as a priority for upgrade/ maintenance. However, the strong public response to this proposal has led the department to consider alternative management options. • At a meeting with the executive members of interested groups (April 2004), a local club expressed an interest in entering a management agreement with the department to mark/maintain the Eastern tracks.
Whatiwhati to Pokeka/ Maungarau Route	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain (38) 	Seeking community maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasons provided for the decision for the Tahupo to Maungarau Route also apply to this track.
Pokeka Track	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain (46) • Cease maintenance (2) 	Seeking community maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasons provided for the decision for the Tahupo to Maungarau Route also apply to this track.
Pokeka to Otarakeke Route	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain (48) • Cease maintenance (3) 	Seeking community maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasons provided for the decision for the Tahupo to Maungarau Route also apply to this track.
“Omaru Stream Swingbridge”	Proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build proposed swingbridge (16) • Do not build swingbridge (35) 	Build proposed swingbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Standards New Zealand HB 8630 (New Zealand Handbook Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures), as it relates to routes, states that major water courses that are a significant hazard shall be bridged. The existing Omaru Stream crossing can be dangerous even at medium flows and it takes up to 4 hours to get back to a hut. This situation creates a significant hazard to the remoteness seeker users of this recreational opportunity, and so the means of an all-weather access is a strategic proposal to eliminate this hazard. • This bridge was proposed originally in response to ongoing consultation (over the past 5 years) with the Whanganui National Park Hut Users Group (and had been widely accepted as a high priority for the area).

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
New Track Request: From Waitotara Valley Road end to Pokeka Track	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new track from Waitotara Valley Road end to Pokeka Track. 	No new track to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locating a bridge/access close to the Waitotara Road end would be seen as provocative to the adjoining landowner who has concerns about hunters trespassing/poaching and stock disturbance (no clear boundary between farmland and public conservation land). A day visitor (or short stop traveller) site/facilities would be inappropriate/ low priority at this location, as it is not near a main highway/tourist route or urban centre. New Government funding is being provided to better manage the current range of recreation opportunities (i.e. for a range of people with differing capabilities, skills and interests, across a range of settings). The department is making decisions with the aim of providing the best mix of opportunities for all New Zealanders. This area is not a priority for new track development, as there are already sufficient hunting/tramping opportunities for remoteness seeker and backcountry adventurer visitor groups. The adjoining landowner has advised that existing access over his land remains available.
New Track Request: From Mt Humphries to Aotuhia	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Kurapete Track from Mt Humphries to Aotuhia, to BCA tramping track standard 	No new track to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area is not a priority for new track development as there are already sufficient hunting/tramping opportunities in the area for backcountry adventurers (and remoteness seekers) - it would duplicate existing recreation opportunities. New Government funding is being provided to better manage the current range of recreation opportunities (i.e. for a range of people with differing capabilities, skills and interests, across a range of settings). The department is making decisions with the aim of providing the best mix of opportunities for all New Zealanders.
Pipiriki				
MV Ongarue Riverboat	Maintain by community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain by Whanganui Riverboat Restoration & Navigation Trust (35) Maintain by community (not specified) (1) 	Seeking community maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion between Pipiriki Incorporation, Whanganui Riverboat Restoration and Navigation Trust, and the department continues.

PALMERSTON NORTH AREA

FACILITY NAME	DOC PROPOSAL	SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION REQUESTS	DOC DECISION	REASON FOR DECISION
Ruahine Forest Park				
Te Ekaou Hut	Remove/do not replace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove (2) Maintain by community (2) Maintain (5) 	Seeking community maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hut requires considerable remedial work to bring to standard, but is a low priority for upgrade/maintenance as it receives low use (<50-100 bednights/year) and Forks and Diggers Huts provide similar recreation opportunities in the catchment area. It is also close to both the road end and Forks Hut, and the Hut Principles state that such a hut generally will not be retained. However, while the hut's maintenance is not a priority for the department, a local club has expressed an interest in maintaining it. Discussion between the club and the department continues.
New Track Request: From top of Ruahine Range to Top Gorge	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new track to Top Gorge from top of Ruahine Ranges, south of Longview 	No new track to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the extensive network of existing tracks in the park available for backcountry adventurers, low visitor numbers in this area and the nature of the opportunity, a new track is not a priority for the department unless there is a proven need, minimal environmental impact and ongoing maintenance can be assured (i.e. maintenance by a community group).
New Track Request: 1km (approx) track to Iron Gates Gorge	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new track from Heritage Lodge Track to the confluence of Umutoi Creek and Oroua River (Iron Gates Gorge) 	Track development being investigated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of new tracks in the Ruahine Forest Park is a low priority for the department, due to the extensive network of existing tracks in the park that needs to be maintained. However, in response to the points raised by the submitter regarding visitor use (i.e. regular use by school groups), the limited length of track requested and the need for a recreation opportunity of this type in this setting, the department is investigating the viability of this proposal.

7.2 NEW PROPOSALS IN RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

Whanganui Area Reason for Proposal

“Waitotara River Suspension Bridge (Kapara)”

In response to the large number of submissions seeking improved access for recreational hunters into the Eastern Waitotara area, a new suspension bridge is proposed across the Waitotara River from Trains Track, at a point near Kapara Station (NZMS 260, R21, 596-862). The bridge will provide access for hunters/ trampers into an area seen by submitters as neglected, yet providing important opportunities.

“Pokeka Backcountry Camping Shelter”

In response to points raised by submitters, the construction of a four sided (enclosed) emergency shelter with water supply is proposed on the Pokeka to Otaraheke Route (approximately NZMS 260, R20, 698-919, although this is subject to ongoing discussion) to provide water and shelter in this remote area (to be built in replacement of Pokeka Hut). See reasons provided in Whanganui Decisions Table (page 33).

“Maungarau Backcountry Camping Shelter”

In response to points raised by submitters, the construction of a four sided (enclosed) emergency shelter with water supply is proposed on the Pokeka to Otaraheke Route (approximately NZMS 260, R20, 709-997, although this is subject to ongoing discussion) to provide water and shelter in this remote area (to be built in replacement of Maungarau Hut). See reasons provided in Whanganui Decisions Table (page 34).

8. Summary of decisions

This section outlines the influence that submissions have had on decisions and the nature of the changes from original proposals.

- Many of the main proposals (as listed in 4.2) had changes made to them in response to suggestions and reasons put forward by the public. Some of the reasons for changing proposals included:
 - Strong public reaction to proposals to remove a facility led the department to seek a compromise solution by changing to “cease maintenance”, “maintain by community”, “maintain to a lower standard” or “new proposal”, e.g. Mt Messenger to Kiwi Road Track, Pokeka Track, “Waitotara River Suspension Bridge (Kapara)”. This will enable the department to reduce costs, while still providing a range of opportunities for a range of recreational users.
 - Acceptance of points raised by submitters, e.g. Waingongoro Hut provides a valuable opportunity for introducing children to the outdoors and is a popular destination, so therefore should be retained.
 - Submitters offering alternative options that still met the objectives of the review, e.g. the northern part of the Davies Track is a better section to maintain than the southern section (providing the department with some direction in terms of preference or priority).
 - Offers of community maintenance, e.g. Te Ekaou Hut.
- Some proposals were deliberately vague, in the expectation that public response would guide the final decision, and some offered a choice, e.g. maintain either Waimoku or Sefton Ridge Tracks, not both. In such cases, submitters often provided good reasons for either option, although public preference for any one option was not always clear (even when many were in support of the proposal), e.g. Whakahoro Hut.

- The majority of the other proposals (as listed in 4.4 and 4.5) were not changed, as they were either largely supported by submitters or received no submissions. In this group of proposals, the only assets for which decisions differed from the original proposals were the Waitoetoe Beach carpark (100879), picnic area (100880), and access road (98226), in the New Plymouth Area. The original proposal for all of these was “maintain by community”, but the relevant organisation was not willing to maintain these. As a result, the Waitoetoe Beach site will continue to be maintained by the department.

The following table shows the amount of change between the original proposals and the decisions for huts and tracks.

PROPOSAL AND DECISION SUMMARY FOR HUTS AND TRACKS

HUTS AND BIVS

PROPOSAL	NUMBER OF PROPOSALS	NUMBER OF DECISIONS
Maintain/replace/upgrade/maintain to lower standard	41	41
Replace with emergency shelter	0	2
Maintain by community	4	5
Owned by DOC but maintained by community	0	0
Minimal maintenance	4	4
Remove	5	2
Proposed (new)	1	1
Total (including “remove”)	55	55

TRACKS

PROPOSAL	NUMBER OF PROPOSALS	NUMBER OF DECISIONS
Maintain/upgrade/maintain section/maintain to lower standard	186	189
Maintain by community	1	5
Owned by DOC but maintained by community	1	1
Cease maintenance	4	4
Remove	12	5
Proposed (new)	3	3
Total (including “remove”)	207	207

9. Overview of decisions in terms of a range of recreation opportunities

In general terms, implementation of the decisions will mean little change in the range of recreation opportunities provided within Wanganui Conservancy. There will be no significant loss of existing opportunity through asset rationalisation and there will be some enhancement of opportunity where existing facilities are upgraded or replaced or new facilities proposed, across a range of visitor groups and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum opportunity classes.

In Taranaki, some reduction in backcountry adventurer tramping opportunity was proposed originally through a number of track closure/removals. In response to submissions, decisions have been made to retain the majority of these tracks but to maintain them (or a section) to a lower (route) standard (for example, the Dover Track).

The upgrading of a number of popular walking tracks at roadends in Egmont National Park (and at Atene and Gordon Park near Wanganui) will enhance recreation opportunities for short stop travellers and day visitors. Some of these tracks, including a new track proposed for Lucy's Gully, will be developed to barrier free standard, providing new opportunities for disabled people, families with young children and elderly people.

The new hut proposed for the Matemateaonga Track and new bridges and camping facilities proposed in the Mangapurua area will enhance use of these key backcountry adventurer tramping opportunities in Whanganui National Park. The development of new camping facilities at Whakahoro will improve accommodation provision at this key site on the Whanganui Journey, catering for backcountry comfort seekers canoeing the river, backcountry adventurers tramping the Mangapurua-Kaiwhakauka circuit and overnigheters.

A substantial number of submissions was received objecting to the proposed closure of routes and removal of huts in the Eastern Waitotara. Submitters sought retention of the remote experience tramping and hunting opportunity provided by these facilities. Consideration of submissions and follow-up discussion with key stakeholders and user groups has led to a revised set of decisions. A maintenance agreement will be negotiated with a local tramping club to maintain Pokeka Track and the Eastern Waitotara routes (if an agreement is not established the tracks will not be maintained, i.e. 'cease maintenance' — vegetation and windfalls will not be cleared; existing signs and markers will be retained but not replaced). If it is not possible to retain the existing building at Maungarau, it will be removed, along with Pokeka Hut, and two enclosed emergency shelters will be built at strategic locations on the Eastern Waitotara Route (Pokeka to Otarakeke), to be chosen after consultation with user groups. A new suspension bridge across the Waitotara River, near Kapara, will provide reliable access for hunters into the extensive Eastern Waitotara area.

New bridges proposed at Trains and across the Omaru Stream will provide reliable, all-weather access along the Western Waitotara Route, supporting recent investment in two new huts and providing a new circular route tramping opportunity in the north western part of the Waitotara Conservation Area. Further development of the Western Waitotara Route, together with retention of some opportunity in the Eastern Waitotara (as described above) will provide ongoing opportunity for remote experience tramping and hunting in this area.

In the Western Ruahine, four huts will move to minimal maintenance and two huts will be removed. The department will investigate entering into a management agreement with a local branch of the NZ Deerstalkers Association to upgrade and maintain Te Ekaou Hut, which, it was submitted, provided a good base for novice and older hunters. The remaining 23 huts in the western part of Ruahine Forest Park will continue to provide a good range of opportunities for hunting and tramping.

Appendix 1

WHAT THE DECISIONS MEAN

Decisions for facilities in the Conservancy have been made by DOC as an outcome of this process of consultation. The options for future management are grouped under 13 broad headings.

Maintain

The facility will continue to be maintained, to the appropriate standard, providing recreation opportunities the same as, or similar to, those currently available. If it is a building or a structure it will be replaced with a similar facility at the end of its useful life. DOC will bring the asset up to the required standard if it is not currently to the required standard.

Proposed (new)

A new facility will be developed in a place where there has not previously been one.

Replace

A new facility will be built replacing an existing facility that will soon reach the end of its useful life.

Upgrade to higher standard

The facility requires upgrading to a higher standard or to a larger size to meet the needs of the main visitor and/or mitigate against visitor impacts.

Maintain to lower standard

The facility will be maintained to a lower standard than has previously been the case. Often this will mean continuing to manage to a lower standard because the original standard intended for the facility was too high and never achieved.

Remove

Remove the facility (if a structure, sign, hut or building). If a hut, remove by the end of 2006. If a track, remove markers, plant out track entrances and leave the track to revert to a natural state, or assist this process if necessary.

Minimal maintenance

Used for huts and other buildings. The building will be inspected by DOC on a regular cycle. Inspectors will travel with basic tools and equipment and some minor maintenance (that can be done during the regular inspections) will be undertaken. When the building is no longer weatherproof or becomes dangerous or unsanitary,

it will be removed, unless there is a community group willing and able to bring it up to standard and maintained to standard (see Seeking Community Maintenance)

Cease maintenance

For tracks, markers will be left until they naturally disappear, but the track will be left to revert to a natural state. Roads are closed to motor vehicles. Carparks, amenity areas and campsites are left to revert to a natural state and any associated buildings or signs will be removed. Signs will be placed at track entrances stating that the track is no longer maintained.

Close site/remove all assets

Remove all assets (structures, signs, huts, track markers etc), plant out track entrances and leave the site to revert to a natural state. Closed sites will be removed from all visitor information. Where necessary the site or part of it will be rehabilitated.

Own by DOC but maintain by community

The facility is one DOC believes should be retained. It is one that could realistically be maintained by a club, community group or local authority. The facility may already be maintained by the community. A management agreement should be established if one is not already in place. The funding assumption is that DOC will not cover maintenance costs, but will fund inspections and replacement.

Owned and maintained by the community

The Department currently has a formal agreement in place with a club, community group or local authority to maintain the asset. If, in the future, that agreement falls over, the future of that asset will be determined following consultation with the community.

Seeking community maintenance

The asset currently has no formal agreement in place and is not one that DOC believes it should maintain at all. The facility should only be retained long term if the community agrees to take it on. It is one that realistically could be maintained by a club, community group or local authority. DOC will discuss ongoing maintenance and replacement of the facility with such groups and should establish a management agreement for that maintenance

Non-visitor DOC management

For facilities receiving very little or no visitor use, the facility will be managed by the department for other purposes, such as to accommodate pest control staff or to access a biodiversity conservation area. The facilities will not normally be available for visitor use.