

# Public consultation ‘Towards a better network of visitor facilities’

Submission analysis and decisions report; submission focus, general themes and decision implications

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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. A national summary is presented here, and more detail is available in each conservancy submission and analysis report.

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# Message from the Regional General Manager Southern

This process of public consultation has been a challenge for the department, in particular getting agreement from the recreation community on the right course of action to take when supplying a public good such as outdoor recreation facilities in conservation areas.

Many of the facilities that have been the focus of this review are seen as integral to the unique character of the New Zealand backcountry, I am pleased that a lively round of dialogue has occurred which has now put a community perspective to the decisions that have been made. Providing for a range of recreation opportunities obviously means different things to different people, and meeting the needs of recreationists in our protected areas is a balancing act that requires co-operation. I am pleased to see the degree of interest that various community groups and individuals have shown in volunteering to manage some of the huts and tracks on conservation land. By undertaking these tasks the resources being committed will provide for a larger network of visitor facilities than if the department was left to do this alone. This report represents the conclusion of a large exercise to confirm the ongoing management of the current range of opportunities into the foreseeable future.

From those of us who have been involved in the process it has been a positive learning experience and I wish to thank those key recreationalists who gave up their time to provide input and were able to articulate their strong sense of connection to our outdoors. It is my desire for these connections between recreationalists and department staff to be built on and I encourage all those involved to continue the level of dialogue that has been initiated through this process.

Graeme Ayres

Acting Regional General Manager Southern

# Executive summary

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

- The department ran a process of public consultation on recreation opportunities entitled 'Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities', undertaken by each conservancy, commencing on 26 September 2003 and submissions closed on 31 January 2004.
- Indications are that those people who could be expected to be interested in the issues of DOC's visitor facilities provision took interest and many of these people and groups made submissions.
- UMR polling suggests that 30% of the population were aware of the consultation process, but the level of submissions represents 0.05% of the population, although the involvement of outdoor recreation and conservation organisations should add some robustness to the results.

## SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

- 1468 submitters made submissions to conservancies, with many making submissions on a number of proposals, making a cumulative total of comments on proposals 8594.
- 368 of the submitters were groups, with a number recorded more than once by submitting on proposals in more than one conservancy.
- Few submissions directly challenged the Principle to Guide a Core Facility Network.
- 268 submissions discussed general or national issues, which have been analysed and are reported on later.
- There were few submissions from iwi, which probably reflects more significant political issues attracting their attention (foreshore and seabed ownership debate).
- The most submissions were received by Nelson conservancy (over 1800) followed by West Coast (nearly 1200) and Wanganui (nearly 1000).
- The 15 proposals for each conservancy that received the most submissions (195 in total) totalled 3289 submissions between them, of which 34% were supporting proposals and 66% were opposing. Thus 16% of the 1223 proposals put out for public comment received 34% of all submissions.
- The average number of submissions per proposals would be 7 if evenly spread. Many proposals received very few submissions or none at all.
- Generally the majority of submissions for particular proposals were either supportive or in opposition, with support going for enhancements of the existing network and opposition to reductions to the network. The exception to this is marked opposition in some instances to raising the service standards of some tracks or huts.

Three conservancies with the most submissions were:

- Wanganui (Waitotara Valley proposed reduced effort)
- Nelson (Pine Valley road and track upgrade opposition)
- Bay of Plenty (Track closure and phasing out huts opposition)

Medium level of submissions were for:

- Auckland (Support for proposed huts and other enhancements)
- Wellington (mixed support for track upgrades and opposition to hut removals)
- Canterbury (Orari Gorge track closure opposition).

Lesser interest was received for:

- Northland (generally supportive of improvements)
- Waikato (generally supportive of proposals for new tracks and accommodation, but rejected proposed track closures).
- East Coast / Hawkes Bay (mixed opinion on the proposed reduced effort across huts)
- West Coast (consistently opposed to huts being phased out, and mixed views on hut upgrades).

Least submissions were received for:

- Tongariro / Taupo (supportive of new proposals for tracks, a hut replacement and community management of two huts)
- Otago (generally supportive for proposed tracks and hut upgrades, but opposition to hut removals from the Rock and Pillar range)
- Southland (general opposition to proposed phasing out of huts and closing of some tracks).

It would appear that certain communities were more galvanised to make submissions than others, notable particularly in Nelson Marlborough, Wanganui, West Coast and Bay of Plenty.

## SUBMISSION CONTENT

- The arguments presented in submissions ranged from very detailed to very brief, with very brief arguments being the norm, most expressing a clear opinion.
- The consultation process was criticised for; the potential for DOC not taking any notice of submissions, the timeframe was too short and the wrong time of year, insufficient information was provided to fully understand proposals, no way of knowing there is national consistency.
- Terminology used to describe people in conservation areas is a sticking point for many people, but there do not seem to be any easy answers.
- Concern was expressed that the conservation of natural and historic values was not a criteria used when looking at the visitor facility network. A response is that these values are to be considered when facilities are planned for development, when considering upgrades or when considering removal.

- The Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network were not specifically challenged, but the thrust of many submissions would lead to the conclusion that ‘a range of recreation opportunities’ to many people means the current range of facilities.
  - Huts that are easily accessed by families and the less able trumper are promoted, as well as accommodation easy to reach on a Friday night
  - Huts and tracks are seen as important for safety in emergency situations, beyond any ‘strategic’ value they may or may not have within the network.
- DOC service standards have been challenged, for the need to comply with legislation, for leading to unnecessarily high standards, for increasing construction costs for huts, and for threatening the existence of what are seen as quintessential backcountry facilities.
  - There is a strong argument for the retention of a small two person bivvy as part of the character of the backcountry setting.
  - People would like to see the hut upgrade work funded by the Government to deal with deferred maintenance completed for all huts including those on minimal maintenance.
  - People would prefer that track markers be left in place on tracks that DOC is no longer intending to manage.
- The concept of visitor groups and service standards for those groups was included in many submissions with requests that more basic facilities suitable for Backcountry Adventurers was more desirable than providing some higher standard facilities for Backcountry Comfort Seekers or Day Visitors.
  - This argument in many cases was based on the premise it is international tourists who are the predominant users of BCC and DV sites, who should either not be encouraged into these areas, or should pay for their own facilities.
  - Counter to this were submissions seeking greater access for people less able to tackle basic facilities.
- Submitters would like to see better and more up-to-date information on recreation opportunities, improved safety and security at roadends.
- For community involvement in managing visitor facilities, concern was expressed at the likely bureaucratic processes that might complicate volunteer effort, as well as an acknowledgement that clubs may not be as able to complete work parties as often as has been the case in the past.
- The issue of tourism in New Zealand, the resource commitment to manage the infrastructure in conservation areas, the social conflicts that arise when these people start to dominate favourite conservation areas, and the added biophysical impacts these extra people add all feature, and there a strong anti-tourism sentiment to many submissions.
- Four wheel drivers would like more opportunities, arguing this is a legitimate activity, it helps less able people enjoy conservation areas, and supports search and rescue operations.
- Motor Caravan owners would like to have approval to stay overnight at Day Visit locations, arguing they are self contained, and could improve roadend security.



- Vandalism at roadends is an issue some submitters would like DOC to tackle, as this prevents people from undertaking certain trips.
- The issue of fees was raised, with suggestions that better mechanisms could be used to generate more revenue in an equitable way.

## DECISIONS

The financial implications of the decisions that have been made are that the department can manage the facilities to be retained into the future, within the budget that the Government has said will be committed into the foreseeable future.

The caveats on this conclusion are:

- No funds budgeted to manage the upgrades of any facilities not currently to standard
- No adjustments for inflationary costs.
- The model management costs are predictions based on the best current information, but will only be proven through actually doing the work.

The proposals for most amenity areas and campgrounds was status quo, so although these are significant in terms of public visitation, they have featured very little in the consultation and decisions discussions.

## Tracks

1. The total length of track to be managed into the future is 12,910km, which is 98km more than is being managed at the start of the consultation process (12,812km).
2. Of this total, 258km of track are being considered for community group management, and, on a case by case basis, if no agreement is established, may be phased out of the system. An additional 132km of track already has agreements in place that community groups manage these facilities.
3. Of 817km of track proposed to be phased out of the system, 290 will now be retained, resulting in 527km of track to be removed from the visitor track system. 435km of track will be phased out completely and 92km will be for management purposes only.
4. There is 625km of new track proposed.
5. Some new tracks now to be developed were the result of strong community interest expressed through the consultation process.
6. At least 200km of new track is coming to the department as a result of High Country Tenure Review outcomes.
7. 158km of new route will be marked in West Coast Southern Alps locations to better connect the remote tramping network there.
8. Bringing existing tracks up to their required standard will commence prior to beginning the construction of new tracks.

9. Tramping tracks total more than 61% of all track length, with an additional 12% managed as routes.
10. The decisions following consultation see this percent contribution dropping to 56% for tramping tracks and rising to 14% for routes.
11. The ratio of people using tramping tracks and routes to people using easy tramping tracks (including Great Walks) is approximately 5:3 while the provision of tracks is 8:1, or nearly 10:1 when routes are included as part of the more basic tramping opportunity provided.
12. Decisions see a small shift in this ratio, with six times the length of tramping track to easy tramping track, and eight times when routes are included as part of the basic service standard tramping opportunity.
13. In response to submissions there was a small shift to include more tramping tracks and routes, and slightly less easy tramping track.

### **Huts**

1. The current network of huts is 987. [The exact number of huts has been complicated by a number of huts used for management purposes being removed from the total during the consultation process, new huts added because of High Country Tenure Review outcomes, and the ongoing construction and removal of huts that occurs as a matter of course.]
2. Decisions will see 811 huts retained into the long term, and 104 additionally retained on minimal maintenance until the end of their functional life.
3. Proposals were for 781 huts to be retained into the future, with an additional 135 huts retained on 'minimal maintenance'.
4. 79 huts will be removed, which will occur within two years.
5. Following consultation the decisions will In terms of the number of huts, the proposals had most significant impact on the Standard and Basic huts (with Service Standards to suit the Backcountry Adventurers), reducing eventually from 847 huts currently to 663 huts once 'minimal maintenance' huts have reached the end of their functional lives.
6. There are huts currently located on near to road ends, many of which were proposed for phasing out, because they do not meet the Principle relating to travel times to hut near road ends. The retention of these more accessible huts have been defended through submissions arguing they are preferred by parties that include children and others who are less able to tramp longer distances. These huts also get used in some instances when trampers start weekend trips on a Friday night. Many of these huts have decisions to retain in the network because they are now confirmed as 'popular destinations'.
7. There is no significant increase from the current level of provision of huts with higher Service Standards.
8. There are 21 decisions to upgrade Standard Huts to increase their capacity, and one to manage the hut to the Serviced standard. There are 10 decisions to upgrade Basic huts to increase their capacity, and two decisions to manage the huts as Standard huts.

### *Huts specialist group meeting*

A group of five backcountry enthusiasts, chosen because of their high level of knowledge about the current hut network, met at the end of June 2004 to consider the decisions made on huts.

Issues the group thought required more thinking by the department were:

- The cost of holding huts on minimal maintenance compared with removing immediately if they get virtually no use.
- The accuracy of engineers recommended 'retirement dates' for huts.
- Looking at the optimum hut sizes for cost effectiveness.
- It may be possible to manage for two different visitor groups on one tramping circuit, with both smaller more basis huts and larger serviced huts interspersed.

Changes recommended by the group result in a number of changes to interim decisions, a mix of adding some huts back into the core network, and targeting other huts on minimal maintenance for removal in the next two years, as even minimal maintenance was considered an unnecessary use of funds.

## STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- What actions to take should the management costs for the confirmed core network increase beyond the Government funding
- How to manage increasing demand for facilities with higher Service Standards, which provide different visitor experiences and appear to attract a different type of trumper.
- How to continue to include recreation users in the decision making processes for visitor facilities
- What terms to use for people in conservation areas

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the messages coming through public submissions and discussion with stakeholder groups as part of the DOC public consultation process 'Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities' and to report on the conclusions reached by the department. These conclusions include the decisions now reached for the future of visitor facilities, and the department's responses to key issues in recreation facility provision raised through the consultation process. Each conservancy has produced a submissions and decisions report, where much greater detail can be found on the decisions and the reasons for these.

## 1.1 REPORT CONTENTS

This report is composed of two main sections:

- Conservancy submission analysis and decisions.
  - A figure is provided showing the number and general intent (support, oppose, neutral) of submissions for each conservancy.
  - A short discussion then summarises the main points raised through all submissions.
  - A short discussion then explains the general nature of the interim decisions and the implications for the conservancy core facility network.
  - Figures are included to show the difference, if any, between the scale of proposals or facility types and the results of decisions.
- National overview and analysis of submissions
  - Total submissions received across the country
  - Comparison of proposals that received the most submissions
  - Comments on submission issues
- National overview and analysis of decisions
  - Total huts and track - currently managed, proposed to be retained and decisions to retain
  - Discussion on decisions
  - Comparison of track and hut decisions across conservancies

A national synthesis of this information is provided, looking at common themes, major differences, and consistency.

It is recognised that some of the data presented in graphical form does not necessarily reflect the strength of individual submissions. The strength of submission is included in the general discussion on submissions, and will be reflected in the decisions. The material is provided in various forms foremost for the purpose of giving people access to the results of the consultation process, and not necessarily as a means of defending any particular position that the department has taken, although there is some information of this nature provided.

## 1.2 GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

- Consultation was launched on 30 September 2003 by the Minister's office.
- This was followed by a series of approximately 50 meetings staged around the country for recreation groups and the public, announcing consultation and inviting people to learn about the proposals and to make a submission.
- 36 groups requested additional meetings with DOC managers.
- Submissions could be made on standard forms or on-line from the DOC website. Submissions closed on 31 January 2004.
- Conservancies made some additional effort to distribute further information over the summer holiday period at typical day visit and overnight locations, to encourage New Zealanders who may not normally get involved in consultation to have their say.
- Site Assessment Reports were available for each visitor site, containing a lot of background information that was useful when Conservancies developed their proposals. Fewer than 200 of these reports were requested by the public, of which half were provided as part of one request in East Coast Hawkes Bay Conservancy.

### **Media**

There was been good media coverage of the consultation process, with approximately 40 separate articles appearing in papers across the country up until the end of February 2004. There has been some focus on the proposed closure of huts and tracks, but generally there has been balance and many articles included an invitation to take part in the process.

### *Monitoring public interest*

1. A random telephone survey conducted by UMR Research in December 2003 with responses from 750 New Zealanders aged over 18 years throughout the country. The results showed 34% (+/- 3.6%) were aware of DOC's public review of recreation opportunities 'Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities'
2. The DOC Website containing the Recreation Opportunity Review information was visited by 3,803 different people.
3. 619 submissions were made through the direct submission feature available on the website.
4. A questionnaire sent to all 90 clubs that are affiliated to the Federated Mountain Clubs was responded to by 44 (49%).
  - 37 clubs said they had read the Resource Document (84%)
  - 30 clubs said they made submissions (68% respondents)
  - For those clubs not making a submission
    - 6 did not have enough time
    - 4 thought there was insufficient information
    - 4 have members making individual submissions
    - 2 thought DOC would take no account of their submission
    - 1 was OK with the proposals

- Of the comments received relating to how the consultation might have been improved:
  - 4 thought more information was needed
  - 3 wanted more time
  - 2 thought it was a bad time of year to consult
  - 2 thought there was too much information
- 17 responses thought that DOC has done a good job so far.

## 2. Conservancy submission themes and decisions

### EXPLANATION ABOUT THE DATA PRESENTATION IN THIS SECTION

#### Submissions received

- Each graph has been created by adding up the total number of submissions received for any particular proposal.
- The graphs represent the 15 proposals for each conservancy that received the most submissions.
- Submissions are either 'support', oppose' or in a few cases 'neutral' because no position was taken in the submission.
- The facility names are the names used in the Proposal Summary document presented at the start of the consultation process, although a few names have been shortened to fit the space constraints of the graphics.

The Proposals for facilities ranged across 12 options, but the purposes of simplicity the following proposal types have been used in the figures using the short code listed:

Proposed (new)	(p)
Replace larger size	(ls)
Upgrade (significant) to higher standard	(u)
Upgrade to standard	(us)
Replace	(rp)
Move to another location	(mo)
Maintain	(m)
Maintain to lower standard (or downsize)	(ds)
Maintain by community	(co)
Minimal maintenance	(mm)
Cease maintenance	(cm)
Close	(cl)
Remove	(re)

The option “Upgrade to standard” has been combined into the “Maintain” category for decisions information, because the option was actually reflecting the management of the facility as it had originally been intended, but had fallen into disrepair as a result of deferred maintenance.

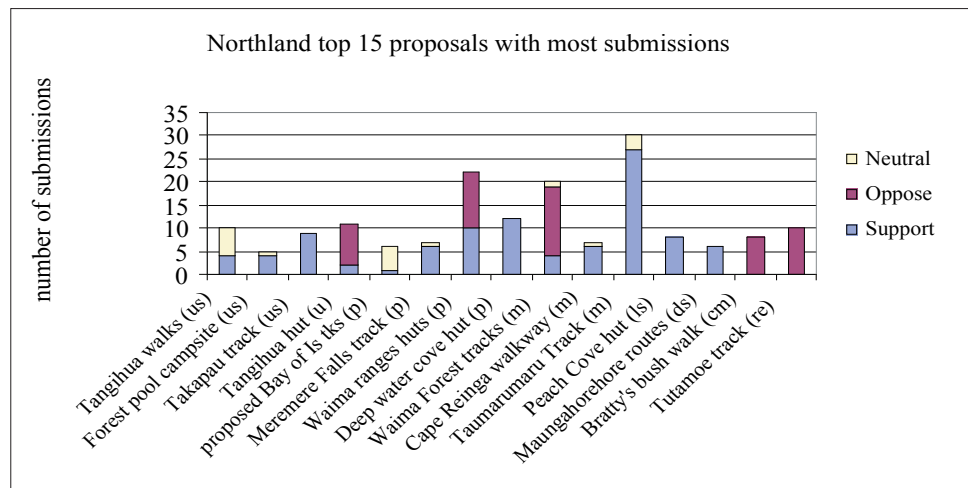
Full explanations of what these proposals mean are included at the end of this document.

The proposals shown in each figure are ordered so that an increase in resource commitment resulting from the proposal (e.g. a new hut, an upgrade of a track) will appear to the left of the proposals with a decreased resource commitment (e.g. a track closure, a hut removal).

The y axis scale differs across conservancies because of the differing level of submissions received. This enables the detail of levels of support or opposition to be better seen in situations where there are fewer submissions. A direct comparison on the level of submissions received across conservancies is shown later in this report.

## 2.1 NORTHLAND

### 2.1.1 Submission analysis



Themes that came through the submissions are outlined in the following general points;

- Holding on to Northlands remote experience in the Waima Ranges and the Warawara forest (referred to as Wilderness). Manage and maintain these areas with simple facilities like the track networks that already exist, but only ‘to standard’.
- Near tourist hot spots like Bay of Islands, the Kauri Coast, Cape Reinga, bring walking and tramping experiences to ‘standard’ to enable the visitor group being catered for to achieve satisfying experiences.
- There is strong support for retaining existing Tramping Tracks and Routes. They should be managed and maintained to their designated standard, not ‘Flashed up’.

- The submissions raised awareness of issues that had previously received little attention such as:
  - 10 submissions promoting tracks for botanising such as looking for native orchids.
  - There is a small but focused contingent of people seeking remote experiences in Northland.
- Many submissions also related to the management of DOC managed areas generally.
- A concern of Iwi groups that engaged in the process is that they are not public and should have been consulted separately and before the public process was undertaken.

Although Northland Conservancy does not have ‘wilderness’ areas the public process has shown that some areas are seen by Northlanders as a ‘wilderness’ experience and these areas should be respected as such, for example not putting huts on the Waima Range and the retention of access to the Tutamoe Plateau. Hukatere Track, Kahuwera Pa and the Mangahorehore Route lookout extension (500m) tracks that have a replicated experience elsewhere in the conservancy will cease maintenance.

Some concern was expressed that upgrade to standard implied tracks would be upgraded to higher service standards will be dealt with through better explanation of proposals, and many decisions to ‘maintain’ have been retained as initially intended through proposals.

### **2.1.2 Decisions**

There will be a wider range of recreation opportunities in Northland including old and new facilities for disabled access (Tane Mahuta, Ahipara Gumfields and Taumarumaru track), a new opportunity for sea kayaking / tramping accommodation at Deep Water Cove, a wetland track experience at Waitangi and tracks investigating local points of interest at Waitata Point and Soda Springs. Also a potential community development of Kaheka Point as a camping opportunity in the Whangaroa Harbour.

The decisions tend to favour proposed campground facility provision. There has also been a shift to retain some day visit sites that were proposed to be removed (Tutamoe Track near Dargaville, Bratty’s Bush track), and continuing with proposals to enhance these opportunities (Taumarumaru Coastal track, Waitangi wetland walk). The maintenance of existing backcountry facilities will continue. Three camp sites have been proposed, two out of three proposed huts are not going to proceed and three tracks are now not going to be removed.

In the Bay of Islands Area the key decisions that have been revisited are:

- Mangahorehore Route will not be shortened as this would compromise visitor experience.
- The proposed Deep Water Cove Hut was well supported by sea kayakers and trampers alike.
- The proposed Kahika Point campsite and existing Kahika Point Track is undergoing further discussion with community and iwi, so these proposals remain unchanged.



- For the Merumeru Falls Track, it was decided that environmental damage of putting in new track would outweigh the benefits of the new work, and the falls can be seen from the existing track network.

*Kaitaia Area there were no changes to track proposals.*

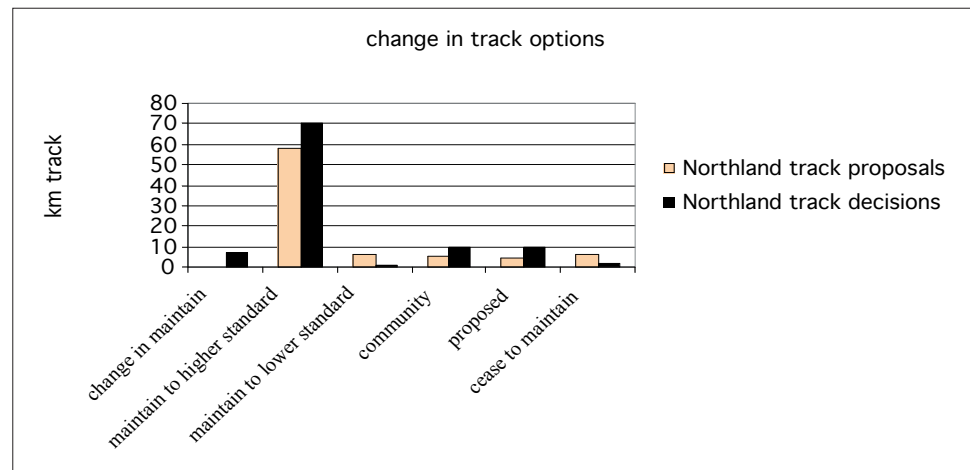
- The proposed Taumarumaru Track had overwhelming support from local communities.
- The Ahipara Gumfields Walk proposal will be barrier free and accessible for the disabled.

*Kauri Coast Area*

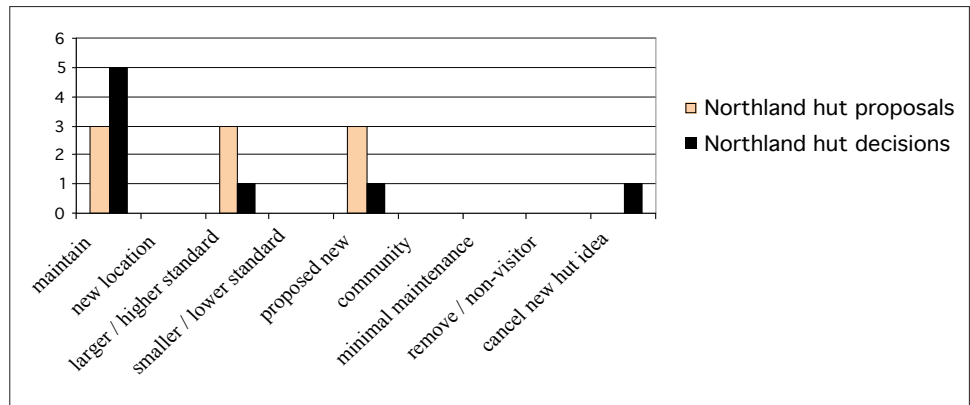
- The two proposed facilities in the Waima Forest were strongly opposed by local communities and people seeking a ‘wilderness’ experience in Northland. However, there was support for the restoration of Framptons Hut and for overnight opportunities further in the Waima Ranges in the form of informal camping areas with composting toilets.
- Mt Tutamoe Track will continue to be maintained as the only access to the Tutamoe Plateau, for hunting and other remote experiences.

*Whangarei Area*

- The public proposed a vehicle accessible campground at Mimiwhangata.
- The community halls on Recreation Reserve in the Whangarei Area will be handed over to other community groups or administrated by respective District Councils.
- Bratty’s Bush Track will be retained and maintained to a lower standard as it is an important access track for botanists viewing native orchids.

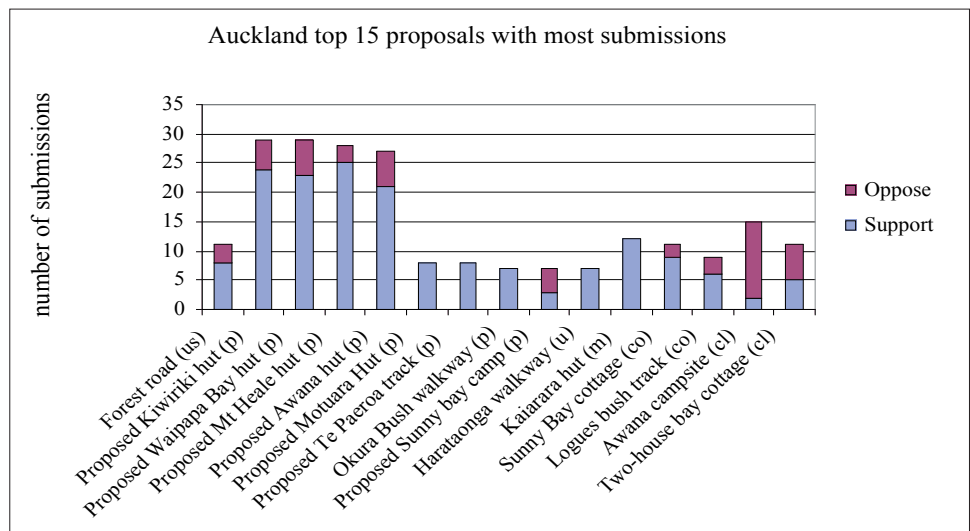


Northland Conservancy will be managing 570km of track in the future, 21km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be ‘maintained’ as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.2 AUCKLAND

### 2.2.1 Submission analysis



Submissions supported the Conservancy’s proposals to upgrade tracks and walkways on the mainland to walking track standard. Submissions have confirmed that there is a high level of support for the strategic direction of improving backcountry opportunities on Great Barrier Island. In general, submitters tended to favour a network of three huts and the decisions support this preference. Once Mt Heale Hut has been built and depending on future visitor patterns, Kaiarara Hut could be moved to a more central location on Forest Road near Maungapiko. The upgrade of some tracks to easy tramping track standard also received support as did the creation of two new tracks to provide a more complete circuit.

A number of submissions were received seeking further recreation facilities in Te Paparahi Stewardship Area which is zoned a remote experience area. The Conservancy wishes to take a cautious approach to opening up this area as it the only sizable part of the Conservancy with these remote values. It is proposed that existing remote campsites at Miners Cove and Rangiwahakaea Bay be formalised. A route into Rangiwahakaea Bay has been proposed for the future which would provide an enhanced remote experience compared to that provided by Burrills Track.

Submitters generally supported the expansion of overnight opportunities on Hauraki Gulf islands and Great Barrier Island to facilitate sea kayaking.

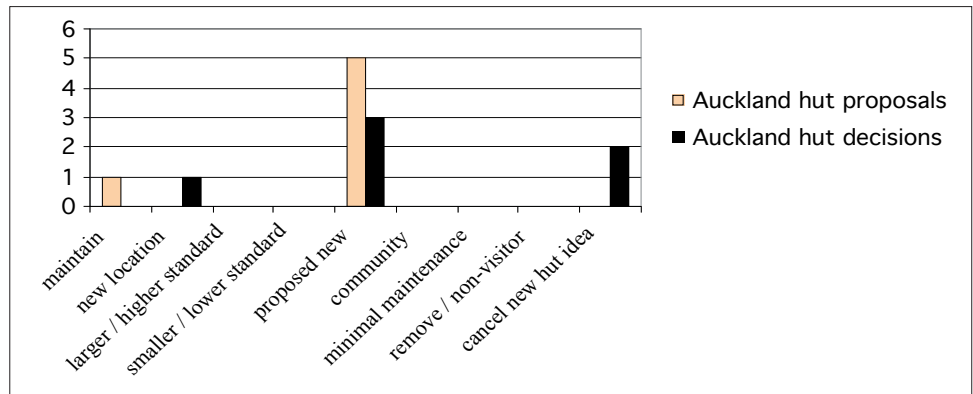
Submitters generally opposed the closing of walkways or devolving their management to the community.

Submitters expressed a high level of support for upgrading day walking opportunities to standard including associated carparks, and in general providing further opportunities throughout the Conservancy. Similarly the upgrading of tramping tracks to the easy tramping track standard was supported.

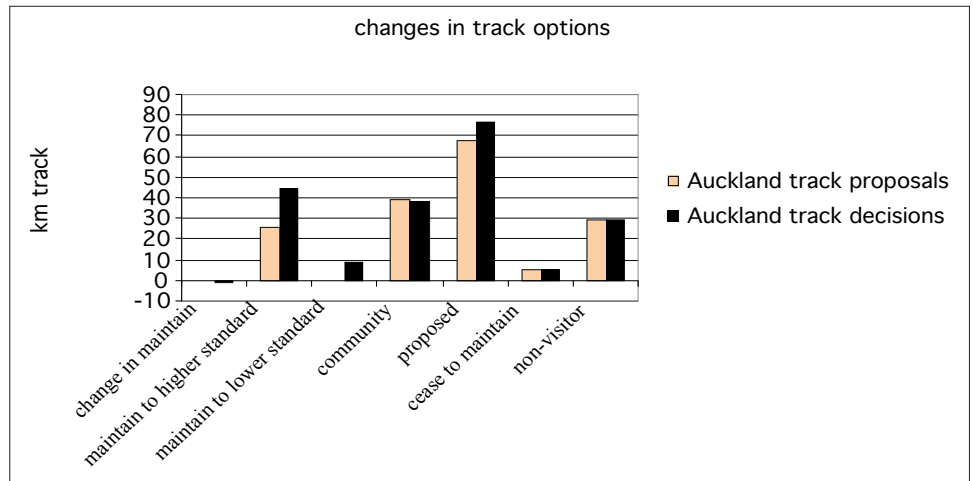
### 2.2.2 Decisions

The results of interim decisions will have the following impact on the range of recreation opportunities:

- Opportunities for disabled visitors will increase through the upgrading of short walks and walking tracks, and associated amenity areas and toilets. Further work is required to determine the amount and staging of this work.
- Logies Bush track will be retained as a day-walking opportunity, which is also proposed to be upgraded to disabled access standard. Mt William walkway (Mt William trig to Puketutu Road) will be retained as a tramping track and it is likely that Vinings walkway will be retained with management shared between DOC and tramping clubs.
- Overnight camping opportunities will be enhanced on Great Barrier Island rather than being reduced, due to the retention of Awana campsite and the proposed backcountry campsites at Kiwiriki Bay, Miners Cove and Rangihakaea Bay. This will involve the provision of a new toilet at each new campsites and ongoing inspection and maintenance.
- Overnight camping opportunities on other Gulf Islands will be enhanced with a backcountry-standard campsite being proposed for Wreck Bay (Rangitoto Island). A campsite on Waiheke Island or elsewhere in the inner Hauraki Gulf is being investigated. A proposed standard campsite at Sunny Bay will now not proceed.
- The scale of enhancement of higher service standard backcountry opportunities has been reduced from the original proposals. Two instead of four huts will be added, while Kaiaraara Hut will be moved to a different location subject to further investigation. The proposed track upgrades and new proposals for easy tramping tracks will proceed.
- Remoteness seeker opportunities in northern Great Barrier will be enhanced by a proposed new route to Rangihakaea Bay from Burrills route.
- Opportunities for mountain biking and cycle touring will be enhanced by:
  - allowing the roads on Rangitoto and Motutapu Island to be used by cyclists
  - a proposed dual use walking track, Duck Creek Walkway, in Warkworth Area
  - upgrading Harataonga Coastal Walkway to dual purpose mountain biking and easy tramping track (with seasonal restrictions)

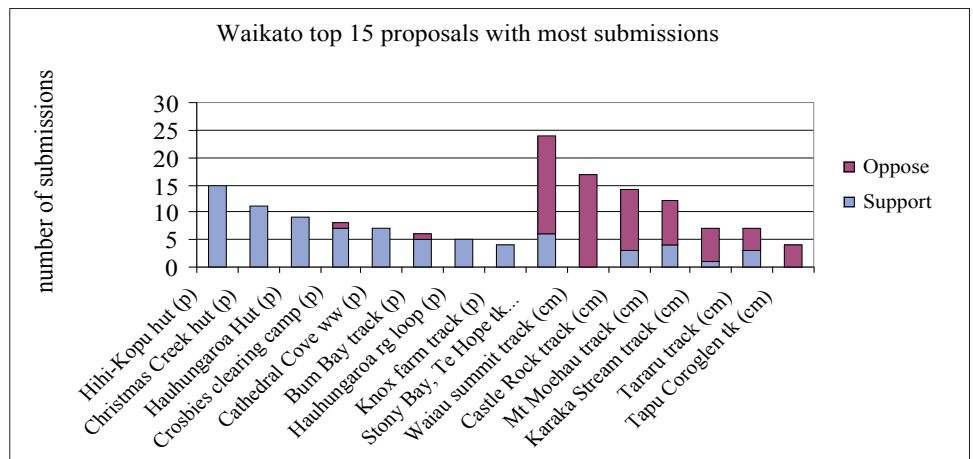


Auckland Conservancy will be managing 365km of track in the future, 67km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be ‘maintained’ as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.3 WAIKATO

### 2.3.1 Submission analysis



- Support was expressed for access to and through Whangamarino wetlands from National Wetlands Trust and Miranda Naturalist Trust as the major planning partners.
- The network of tracks is viewed as an important attraction for tourism as well as important for local resident use.
- Submissions supported multi day tramping options on a track networks with loop options
- Additional tracks were considered appropriate where there is a deficiency of a particular opportunity, and for enhancing Te Araroa national trail and links across conservancy boundaries.
- Submissions support front country Short Walks close to residential area for ease of access by locals
- Some submissions expressed criticism at the current lack of track and hut maintenance
- There are limited opportunities or offers for ‘maintain by community’ tracks, although interest was expressed by community groups to be involved in contracts for track maintenance
- Interest has been expressed in tracks for mountain bikes as well as roads and or tracks for off highway vehicles / four wheel drive vehicles / quads and motorcycles
- Collectively, various supporters and groups want to see access to almost all of the Coromandel east coast by way of coastal walkway and track.
- There is an expressed need for information / interpretation including signage of tracks to be improved
- Sea kayaking is well established on the northern Coromandel coast and the users are appreciative of the existing camping sites. There is an expressed need for more designated sites (similar to freedom camping) to expand their recreation into multi day trips and or overnight trips for locally based kayakers.
- Some people raised concerns that search and rescue operations would take longer with resultant risks of loss of life and greater difficulties for the rescue teams if there were to be a reduction in the total number of huts and tracks.
- Extensive use is made by members of the NZ Motor Home Association of campgrounds on conservation lands throughout New Zealand. Currently visitor safety at road ends and remote amenity areas is an issue with visitor’s vehicles and personal belongings at risk of theft and damage.

### **2.3.2 Decisions**

The range of recreation opportunities in the Waikato is broadened by the decisions made as an outcome of this consultation process.

#### *Hauraki Area*

Due to strong local interest and support, three tramping tracks and one walking track proposed for closure will now be retained to the required standard. Two new huts, two basic camp sites /shelters, three new coastal walking tracks and an upgrade of Hoffman’s pool car park will all contribute to the core facility network.

Improvements will occur at key amenity areas; Waitaia picnic site, Kauaeranga road end, Tararu car parks and Maratoto road end car park. Proposals to phase out three tramping tracks will proceed.

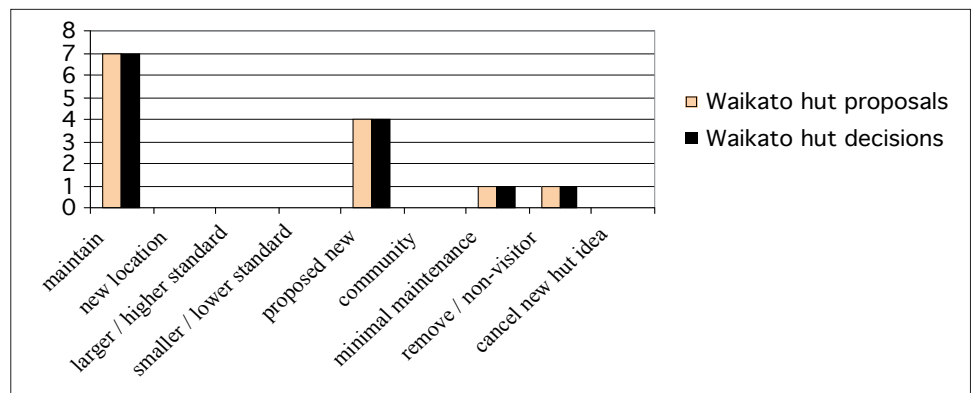
Maintain by community options for some tracks need to be further explored.

### Maniapoto Area

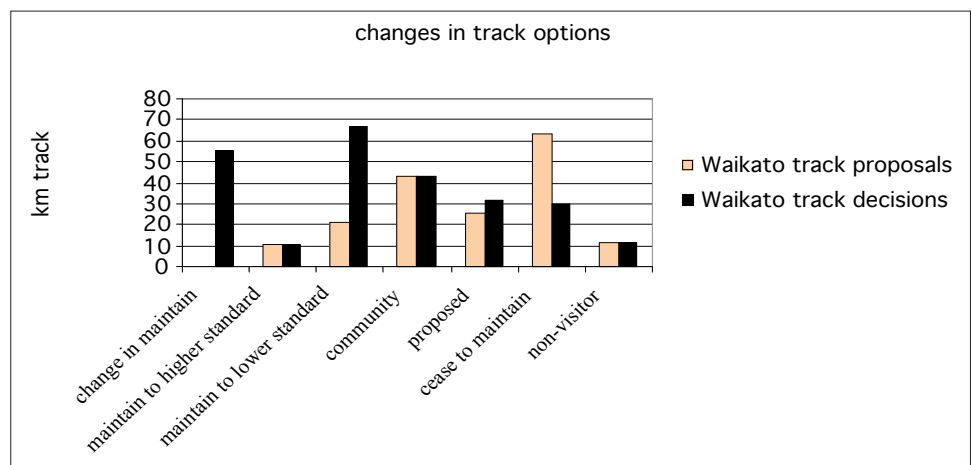
The proposals for two new huts, two new walking tracks and one new tramping track will proceed. Two dilapidated huts will be removed. All proposals for roads to for mountain bike or off-road vehicles will proceed.

### Waikato Area

Three proposed new car parks linked to new short walks in the Whangamarino wetlands and three new short walks in the Whangamarino Wetland will be developed, as will the proposed car park on the Firth of Thames. One tramping track and one road will be phased out.

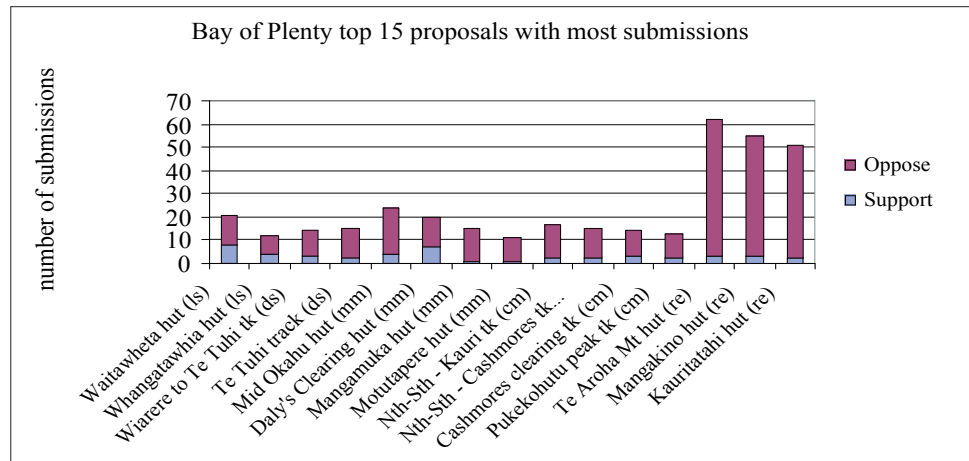


Waikato Conservancy will be managing 726km of track in the future, 57km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.4 BAY OF PLENTY

### 2.4.1 Submission analysis



#### *Submissions: General Themes*

- Submitters recognise the actual and potential growth in both population and international visitors to the region.
- The Bay of Plenty is considered to be a valuable and under-utilised resource for residents of urban areas of the northern half of the North Island, providing the larger protected areas that Auckland and Waikato Conservancies lack.
- Submitters would like to see all backcountry huts retained.
- There was support for a network of tracks around the Rotorua Lakes.
- Submitters would like to see a network of huts in the Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park that would enable a multi-day tramp with loop options.
- Conservancy resource commitment was discussed in relation to back country huts and track provision, with the Whirinaki Forest Park perceived as benefiting at the expense of other Areas of the Conservancy.

#### *Submissions: Proposals*

Proposals that received most submissions were on removals of huts and closure of tracks in the Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park, particularly Te Aroha, Managkino and Kauritatahi huts and tracks around Cashmores Clearing. The majority of submissions were in opposition. The predominant argument in favour of retaining these huts, which are small ex-Forest Service deer culler huts, is that they are needed for search and rescue; that they are heritage items and for their contribution to the network of backcountry huts.

A number of submitters questioned the necessity of upgrading tracks within the Whiriani Forest Park which they perceive as being at the expense of other tracks that are proposed for downgrading in the Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park.

## 2.4.2 Decisions

Decisions for the conservancy reflect an intention to provide visitors with a wider range of outdoor recreation opportunities in the Bay of Plenty

Decisions for the conservancy reflect an intention to provide visitors with a wider range of outdoor recreation opportunities in the Bay of Plenty

The following are key decisions for the conservancy.

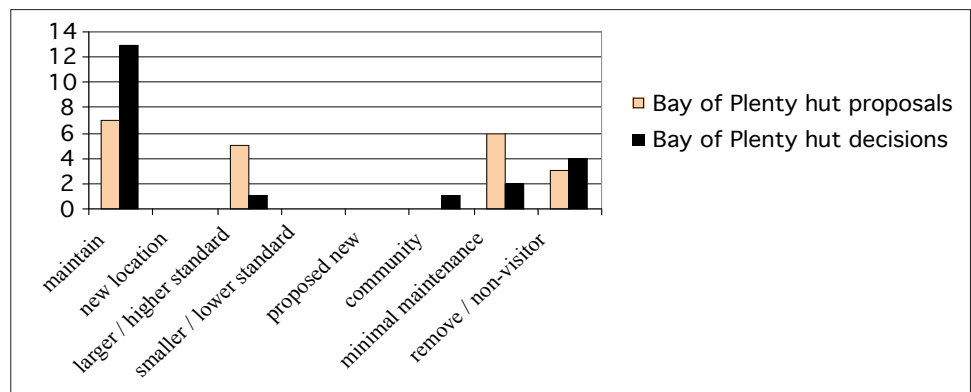
- Development of loop tracks in the Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park.
- Completion of 4-5 day easy tramping track circuit track in Whirinaki Forest Park.
- Explore the potential for new tracks around the Rotorua Lakes.
- Huts with little strategic value to be replaced with shelters at sites that will support the backcountry recreation opportunities.

By taking into account submissions more huts will be maintained, fewer huts will receive minimal maintenance and although there will be huts removed, alternative basic accommodation will be provided at locations that will support overnight tramping.

There are currently no opportunities for easier multi-day tramping trips in the Bay of Plenty Area. The neighbouring Tongariro National Park options are coming under increasing pressure. The conservancy has decided to proceed with the 'Whirinaki circuit' proposal, which continues existing strategic direction for the park.

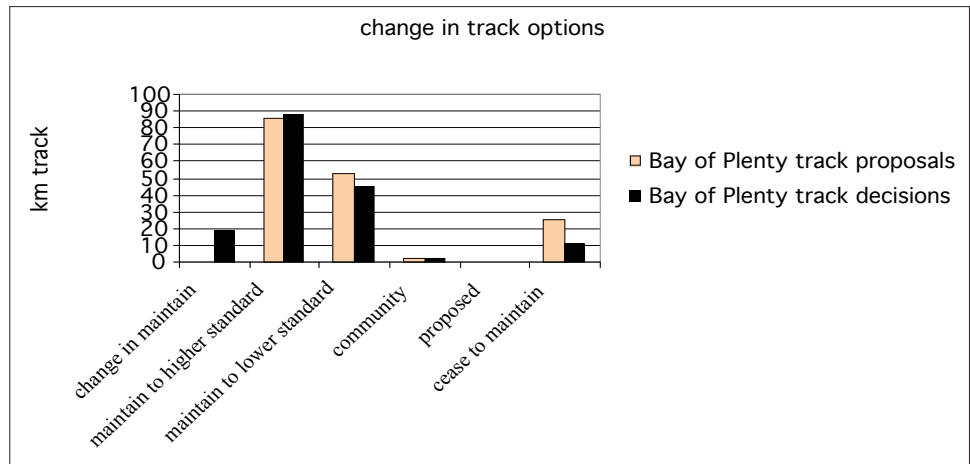
Current standards set for Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park tracks were originally set too high to realistically reflect the preferred conditions current users would expect.

Maintenance to date has actually been insufficient to even meet a lower service standard. Thus 'maintain to a lower standard' should still see a better but not significantly different track condition. This point was explained and accepted by the people who attended a user-group meeting during the consultation process.



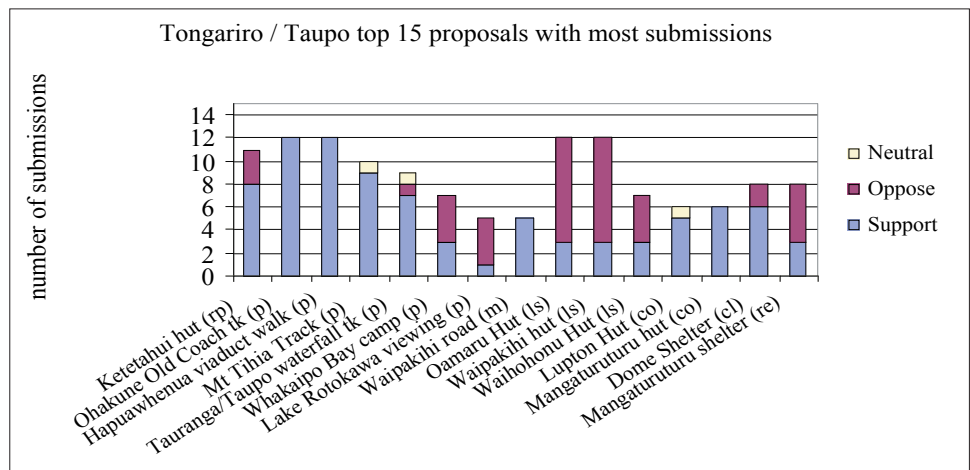
Bay of Plenty Conservancy will be managing 544km of track in the future, 12km less than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.





## 2.5 TONGARIRO / TAUPO

### 2.5.1 Submission analysis



Ten hut proposals raised 74 submissions of which 35 were in agreement.

Five of the proposals received general agreement from the public, with three of these proposals receiving unanimous support (for the “maintain by community” proposals).

The 10 track proposals raised 63 submissions, of which 49 were in support. Four of the proposals received unanimous support, three being new proposals and one to cease maintenance. One track proposal received no support.

#### *Tongariro National Park*

Submitters did not want to see a reduction of provision to facilities, but voiced concern at the cost of hut replacement, as well as the cost to stay in a Serviced hut while using a Tramping track (on which one would expect Standard huts).

#### *Kaimanawa Forest Park*

General comments were that access to the park, and between sections of the park, and to private land adjoining the park, are essential. Many submitters want to see basic service standards applied to most sites and facilities.

The two Kaimanawa Forest Park hut proposals to raise their service standards received 12 submissions each, by submitters who did not want to pay more for the use of the huts.

Other controversial hut proposals were for the removal of one shelter, and the removal of the visitor facilities from another shelter in the Tongariro National Park. These proposals received strong submitter resistance, with visitor safety being the main argument.

### 2.5.2 Decisions

#### *Tracks*

Calls for more day walk opportunities in the Conservancy have been met with several proposals; the Ohakune Old Coach Rd, the Hapuawhenua Viaduct Historic Walk and Mt Tihia track in Tongariro National Park and the Tauranga/Taupo Waterfall Walk in the Kaimanawa Forest Park. These new additions will be balanced with the ceasing of maintenance to several low use opportunities in the Rangataua Forest.

A new proposed day walk opportunity North of Taupo (Lake Rotokawa) was not supported and has been dropped. It is anticipated that a community led initiative for the Lake Taupo Walkway, mostly crossing private land, will provide adequately for day walks within the vicinity of Taupo township.

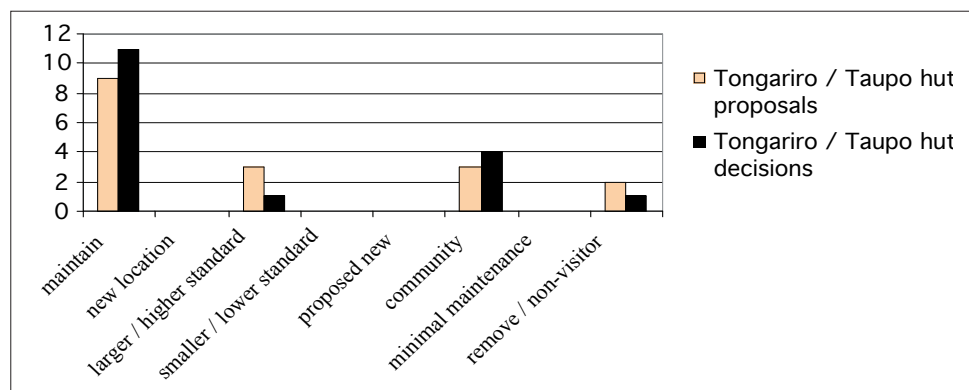
A major factor from submissions was the desire to resolve the public - private land issue within the Kaimanawa Forest Park. These issue cannot be resolved through this consultation process but will be pursued as opportunities arise.

#### *Huts*

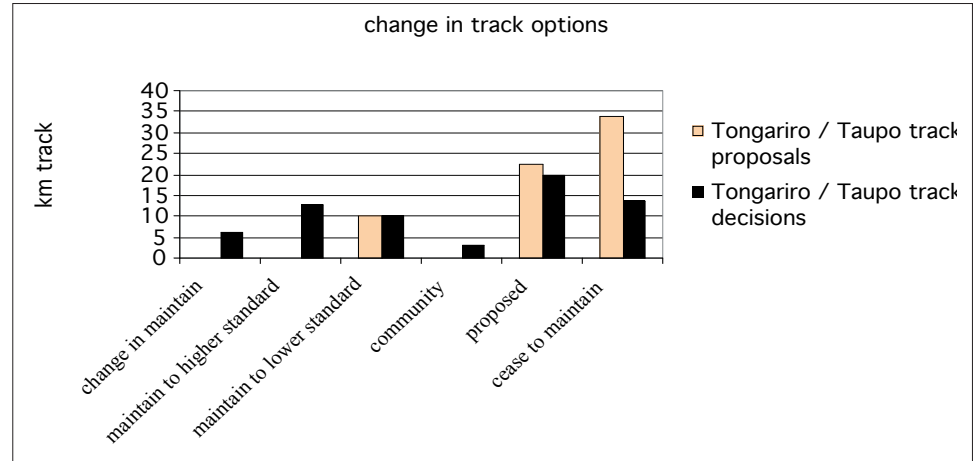
The Conservancy will manage a full complement of Great Walk Huts (Serviced hut standard) on the Tongariro Northern Circuit, in the Tongariro National Park. This will be enhanced by the managed replacement of two of the huts on this circuit.

The department looks to develop management agreements with hut users and community groups for four of its huts (three within the National Park, and one in the Tongariro Forest).

Two huts are to be removed from the Tongariro National Park visitor network - Dome Shelter to be retained for use by scientists and Mangaturuturu emergency shelter removed. The two Kaimanawa Forest Park huts proposed for increased service standard (Waipakihi hut and Oamaru hut) will now be maintained as standard huts. The strength of submission from users of the Kaimanawa Forest Park indicated that they valued the park in its present state, with a minimum of facilities.

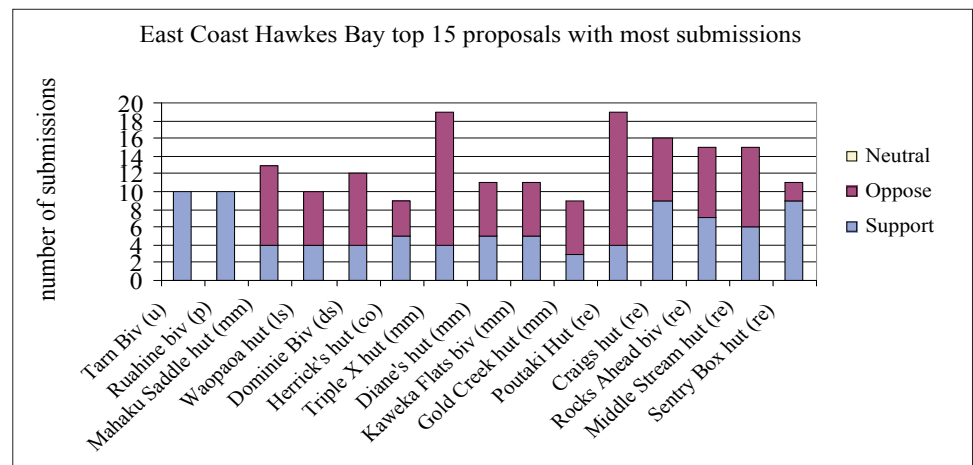


Tongariro Taupo Conservancy will be managing 493km of track in the future, 10km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.6 EAST COAST HAWKES BAY

### 2.6.1 Submission analysis



Two thirds of all submissions on specific proposals focussed on huts and bivies with particular emphasis on the Ruahine and Kaweka Forest Parks.

Seventy-two DoC proposals received no comment. These were mainly for tracks and other non-accommodation facilities within Te Urewera National Park. This was surprising as the majority of proposed changes to tracks within the conservancy affected this National Park.

On the whole the quality of information submitted was very good. Aside from comments on specific proposals, submitters raised background concerns to try and inform the review process on key issues such as:

- Limited road access in the Ruahine

- Disabled access (Aniwaniwa Visitor Centre glaring)
- The perception that DOC is chasing tourism dollars at the expense the traditional New Zealander's backcountry experience
- The preference for small intimate huts in the backcountry
- The safety role of huts and bivies
- Road end huts for families and the less able
- A need for updated visitor information to improve visitor safety
- Working closely with other providers e.g. Territorial Local Authorities, Iwi

Backcountry assets and in particular huts provided the main focus of debate within submissions.

### 2.6.2 Decisions

As a result of considering submissions, 51 proposals have been changed. Decisions tend to favour day visitor and backcountry adventurer facility provision. There are fewer options considered likely to result in community management of facilities, fewer reductions in service standard and fewer removals of facilities to proceed.

#### *Huts*

Three huts were changed from "minimal maintenance" and "maintain at a lower standard" to "maintain" (Triplex hut, Dominie hut, Manganuku hut), one less hut removal (Poutaki hut) and one more hut upgrade (Parks Peak hut) will proceed.

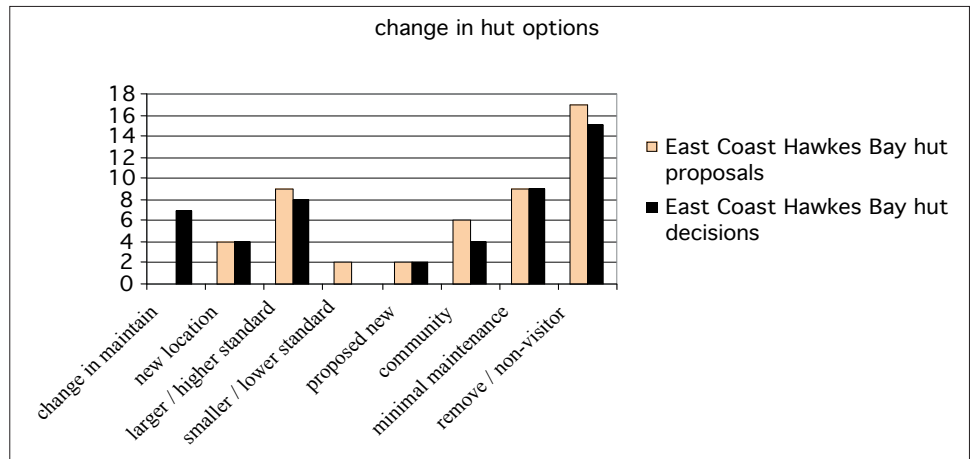
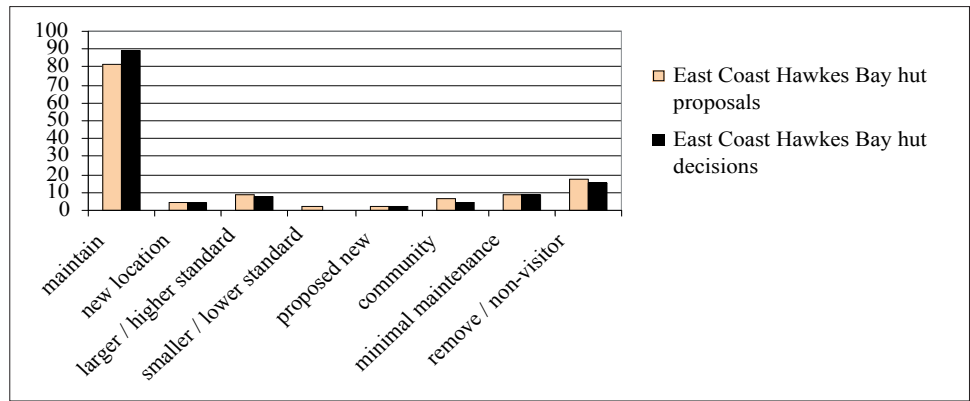
Tracks no longer to be phased out are; Kotepato track (seeking community maintenance), Longview / Makaretu hut - northern track (maintain northern section) and Mangakawa track (upgrade to a higher standard). One cableway on the Ngaruroro at Rocks Ahead Bivy will be upgraded to a swing-bridge.

13 new proposals resulting from submissions were received for new tracks of which 7 have been accepted. Those agreed to include:

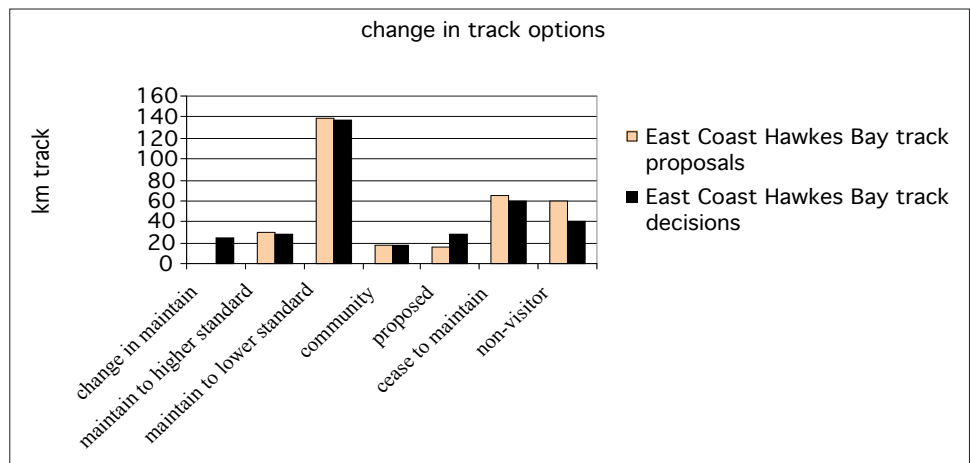
- Disabled access for Balls Clearing Scenic Reserve
- Re opening tracks in the Ruahine from Colenso Spur to Barlow's Hut and Parks Peak to Barlow's Hut
- Yeomans Track Extension to Mangleton Road
- Improving Ngawaaparua / Ngarororo fishing access in the Kaweka
- Linkage from Waikaremoana to Whirinaki in Te Urewera
- Remark Stag Flat-Pakihi Route in Urutawa Conservation Area

The Aniwaniwa Visitor Centre should be upgraded and made fully wheelchair accessible, which needs to be managed through a separate funding process.

For campgrounds, car parks, roads, structures and amenities only four DoC proposals were changed. An example is Boulders Campsite in the Te Waiti Valley, which will now be retained.

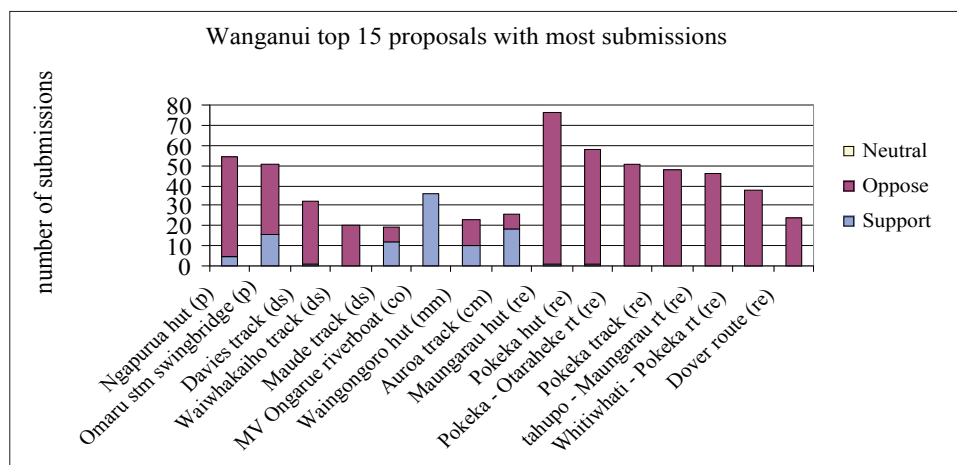


East Coast Hawkes Bay Conservancy will be managing 1537km of track in the future, 72km less than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.7 WANGANUI

### 2.7.1 Submission analysis



The number of submissions received in opposition to asset proposals in the Waitotara Conservation Area resulted in a meeting with key stakeholders and submitter groups, along with Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board members, to discuss possible management options for this area.

Some of the main themes from submissions on Wanganui Conservancy proposals were as follows:

- The closure of any tracks is considered a backward step – regular visitors and 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.
- Tracks with no or few structures are assumed to have low maintenance costs and should be retained. Rather than removing tracks outright, retain signs and markers so that tracks can still be used by experienced trampers/hunters
- Tracks that provide an escape route (whether classified as “safe exit from popular track” or not) should be retained, e.g. Auroa Track.
- 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 tramping track standard, rather than upgrading only a few tracks to walking track or short walk standard.
- DOC’s minimum service standard requirements for huts are too high
- 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.
- Backcountry huts should be retained, even if in poor condition, especially those in remote areas, as they provide shelter in severe weather/emergencies.

- 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.

### 2.7.2 Decisions

In response to submissions, decisions have been made, that will in general mean little change in the range of recreation opportunities provided within Wanganui Conservancy. There will, however, be some upgrades, some new facilities and some reduced effort.

In response to the strong opposition registered through submissions to the closure of routes and removal of huts in the eastern Waitotara area, the following solution has been brokered through public meetings:

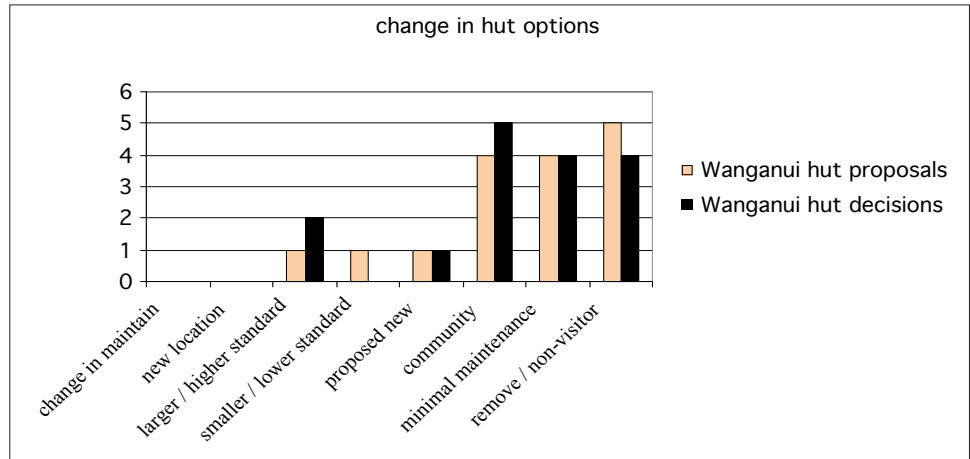
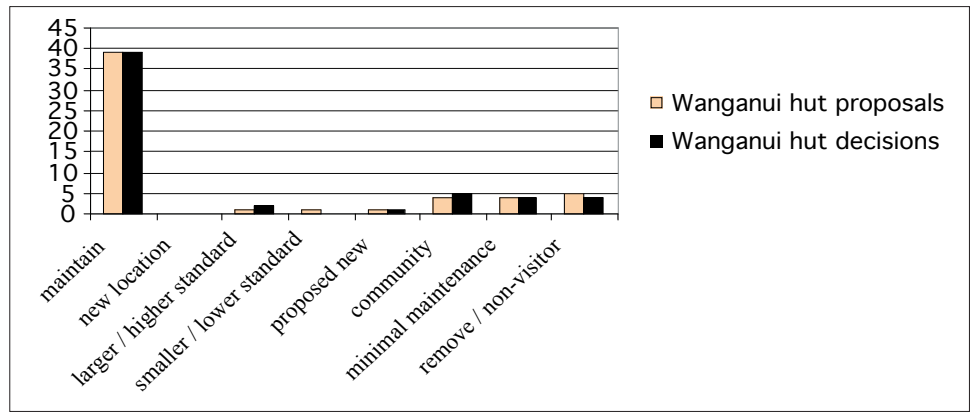
- A maintenance agreement to be negotiated with a local tramping club to maintain Pokeka Track and the eastern routes (if an agreement is not established the tracks will not be maintained).
- Following the removal of Pokeka and Maungarau Huts, two enclosed shelters will be built at strategic locations on the Eastern Waitotara Route.
- A new suspension bridge across the Waitotara River, near Kapara, will provide access for hunters into the extensive eastern Waitotara area.

In Taranaki, the majority of tracks will be retained although some to a lower service standard (e.g. the Dover Track to route standard).

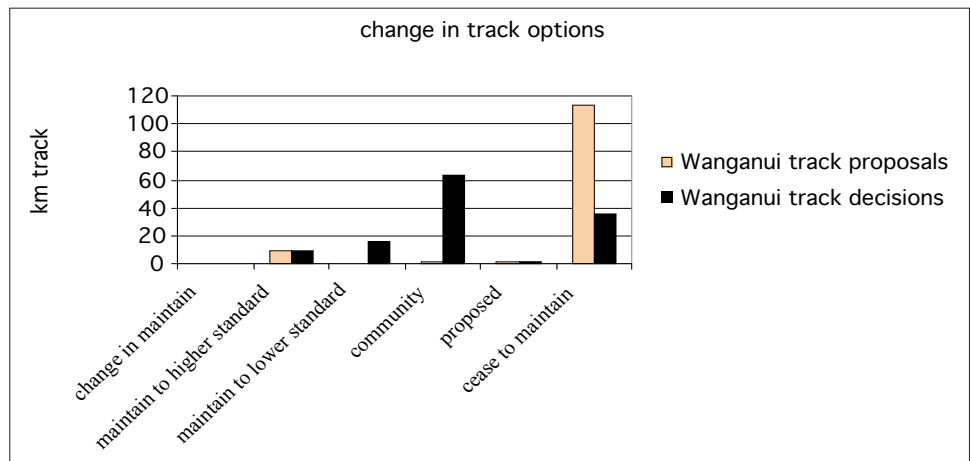
The upgrading of a number of popular walking tracks at roadends in Egmont National Park (and at Atene and Gordon Park near Wanganui) will enhance day visitor opportunities. Some of these tracks, including a new track proposed for Lucy's Gully, will be developed to barrier free standard, providing new 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 and at Whakahoro will enhance the two major backcountry tramping opportunities in Whanganui National Park and provide improved facilities on the Whanganui Journey.

In the western Ruahine Ranges, four huts will be managed on minimal maintenance and two huts will be removed. The Department will explore entering into a management agreement with a local branch of the NZ Deerstalkers Association to upgrade and maintain Te Ekaou Hut. 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.



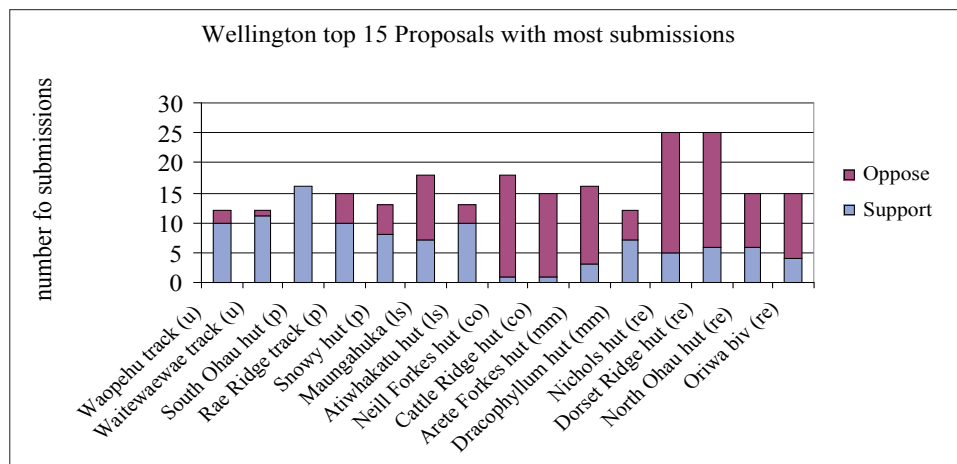
Wanganui Conservancy will be managing 775km of track in the future, 34km less than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.





## 2.8 WELLINGTON

### 2.8.1 Submission analysis



By the nature of the comments received it appeared that many submitters were experienced back country users.

Submitters were generally supportive of providing a variety of experiences for users with differing level of experience

Submissions generally encouraged good access to and use of the parks. A number of submitters raised concern about decreasing access to the more remote areas of the park due to the closure of tracks in the past and non-replacement of huts in more remote areas. A number of submitters called for a focus on retaining and enhancing the existing network, with some suggestion that it should be restored to the NZFS network status, which should have priority over the development of new facilities.

Some concern was expressed that, if access to the more remote areas of forest park is limited due to reduction in facilities, increasing number of people will be channelled into smaller areas and larger huts, causing crowding and environmental impacts (especially in the sub-alpine zones). There was also concern that the upgrade of tracks could produce the same crowding effect and present a safety risk where high quality tracks lead into more challenging areas of the ranges.

Submitters are concerned about the lack of parity between investment in the front country and 'fringes' against the investment in facilities in the more remote areas of the parks. The feeling is that there is disproportionate expenditure on road-end facilities and large huts and bridges. If huts and structures could be built more cheaply then more could be retained overall. There was also the feeling that the priorities in the Tararua Aorangi Hut Committee (TAHC) strategy reflected a lower level of funding than is now available and that proposals should therefore be more generous than those presented in the TAHC strategy.

In order to foster a safe tramping environment, there is felt to be a need for adequately short spacing between huts (in particular to allow for the affect of adverse on travel times in 'the tops'). Submissions also requested the placement of signs on key junctions on open tops, to assist route finding.

There is a general concern that tracks do not become over-engineered leading to loss of their essential basic character. A number of submissions assumed that

'upgrade to standard' meant increasing the service standard for particular tracks, rather than doing the remedial work needed to re-establish the track to its original standard.

### 2.8.2 Decisions

The strength and depth of submissions centred on the requirement to retain a backcountry and remote network of huts and tracks, principally focussing on the Tararua Forest Park. As a result decisions now reflect an overall increase in the level of infrastructure to be maintained to support the backcountry experience.

- Three backcountry/remote huts (Nichols, Arete Forks and Neill Forks) have been added into the core network.
- A new hut is proposed for South Ohau, responding to the level of interest shown in replacing the hut removed due to slips a couple of years ago.
- A number of tramping tracks proposed for downgrade or cease maintenance will now be retained, and the Nichols and Dorset Ridge linking track re-established.
- Two huts, Dorset Ridge and North Ohau, have offers from groups of hunters to take on their management.

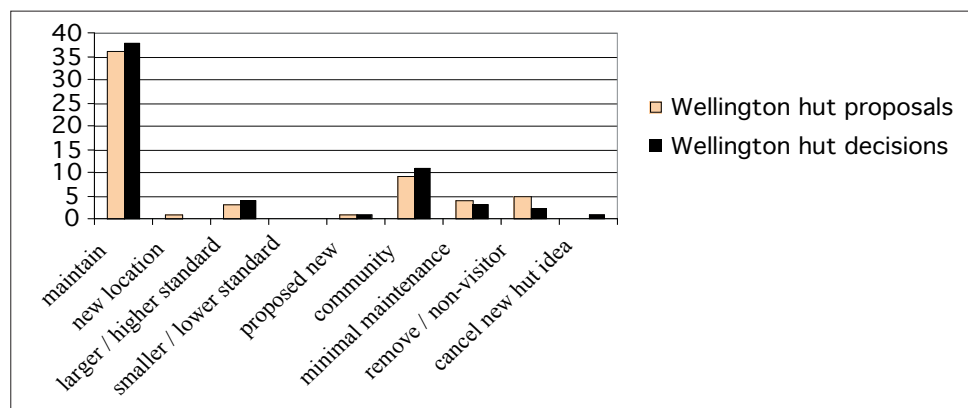
Progress towards improving the limited opportunities for the less able or less experienced trampers will be made by proceeding with the Rae Ridge proposals and through ensuring dry weather routes to Totara Flats and Waitotara.

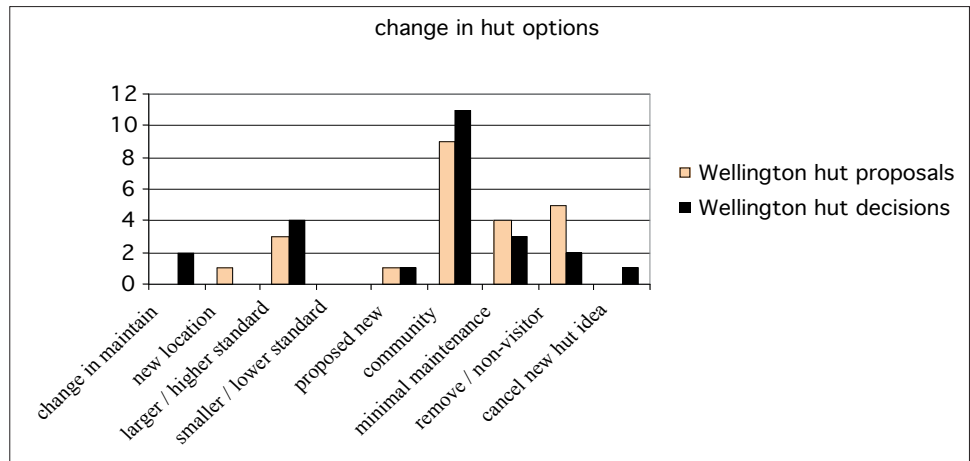
New day visitor facility proposals will be pursued:

- Additional tracks and facilities for Kapiti Island
- Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve tracks

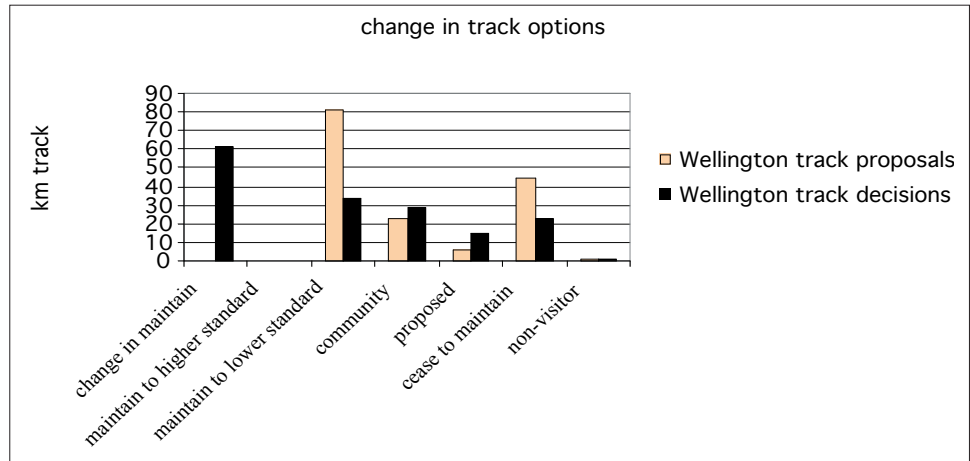
The bridge on the Donnelly Loop will be upgraded to allow wheelchair access to the Donnelly Flat and further up the Atiwhakatu Valley.

Some decisions are contrary to the management approaches set out in the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy and will be worked through with the Conservation Board who will consider their status in light of the upcoming review of the CMS.



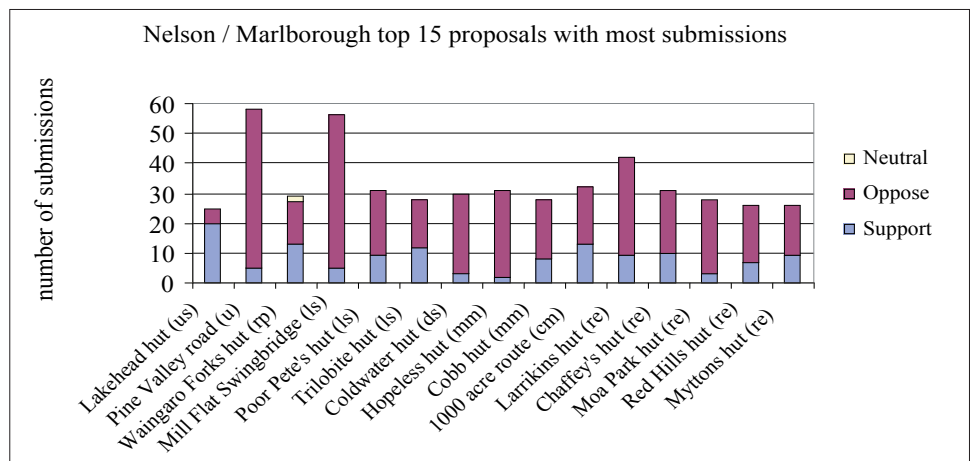


Wellington Conservancy will be managing 763km of track in the future, 12km less than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.9 NELSON / MARLBOROUGH

### 2.9.1 Submission analysis



Submitters raised the following points:

- Proposal to “Cease Maintenance” have been challenged on the grounds that department user numbers are not correct, the fact that in many cases the cost of maintenance was minimal, safety issues and in some cases simply the intense public opposition to closures (Saddle Hill Route, Loveridges Route, Mt Stevens Route, Richmond Flat Track, 1000 Acres Route, Beebys Knob Route, Hopeless Track and Gibbs Walk).
- A preference that DOC leave markers on tracks that are being closed. (Cease maintenance proposal allows for this).
- The issue of distances between huts was common, especially in relation to anglers and hunters whose activity is not compatible with large popular huts. A number of submissions expressed concern that DOC is moving towards providing large huts as huts are replaced.
- The concept of retaining huts easily accessible to family groups and less able visitors nearer to roadends has been well supported by submitters.
- The mountainbike clubs seem happy with the facilities provided in this conservancy, apart from continuing to push for access to National Parks.
- Proposals to “Upgrade to Standard” have been opposed, although this appears to be people assuming this proposal is for a major upgrade or change of category, when it was intended to reflect work to bring a neglected facility up to the originally intended standard.
- Specific groups that made submissions promoting more access were the disabled and four-wheel drive clubs. The Motor Caravan Association has called for DOC to allow self contained vehicles to overnight at designated road ends and carparks.
- Te Araroa Trust submitted that Red Hills hut be retained or its location be reconsidered in view of the proposed route of the intended walkway.

### 2.9.2 Decisions

The majority of the facilities proposals were to maintain to current standards. For the proposals which change facilities current facility management, there have now been 60 changes reflected in the decisions in response to public submissions. Some of the conservancy’s facility proposals were presented as ‘discussion points’ rather than having a position already defined, so the decisions in some cases do not represent a shift in DOC’s position (because no option had been chosen).

Decisions have not significantly changed the network and range of recreation opportunities provided in Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy.

The track proposal to “Close Site/Remove All Assets” has been changed to “Cease Maintenance” and markers are to be left on site.

Seven tracks with the proposal to “Cease Maintenance” now have decisions to “Maintain” (Saddle Hill Route, Loveridges Route, Mt Stevens Route, Richmond Flat Track, 1000 Acres Route, Beebys Knob Route, Hopeless Track and Gibbs Walk).

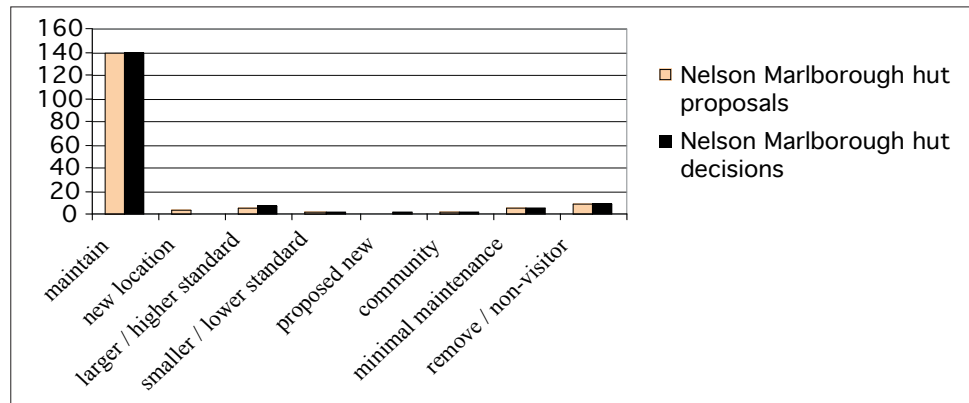
The decision for Cobb Hut has been changed from “Minimal Maintenance” to “Maintain” due to evidence that it had been well looked after by user groups since the 1994 Hut &Track rationalisation.

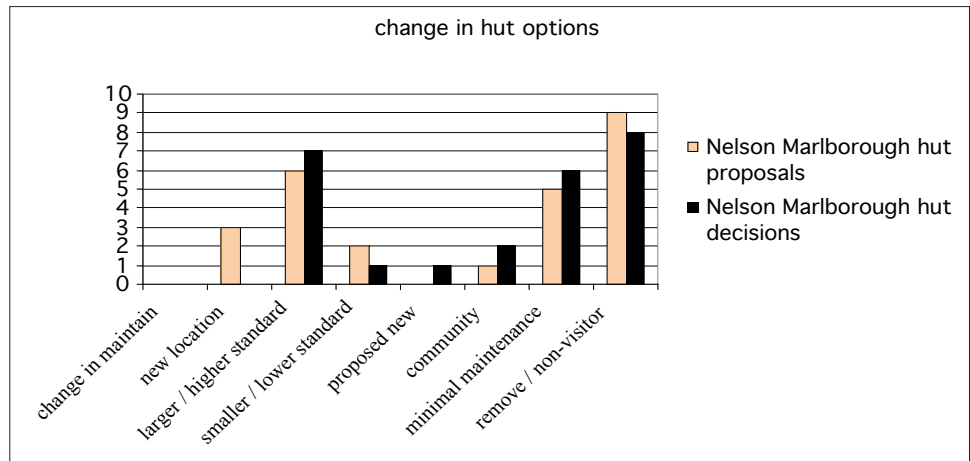
Larrikins Hut has been changed from remove to 'maintain, and Red Hills Hut will be replaced in the near future at a site yet to be determined.

Moa Park Hut and Flora Hut will both be replaced with day shelters due to submissions from tramping clubs. Shelters are not included as huts in the totals presented here.

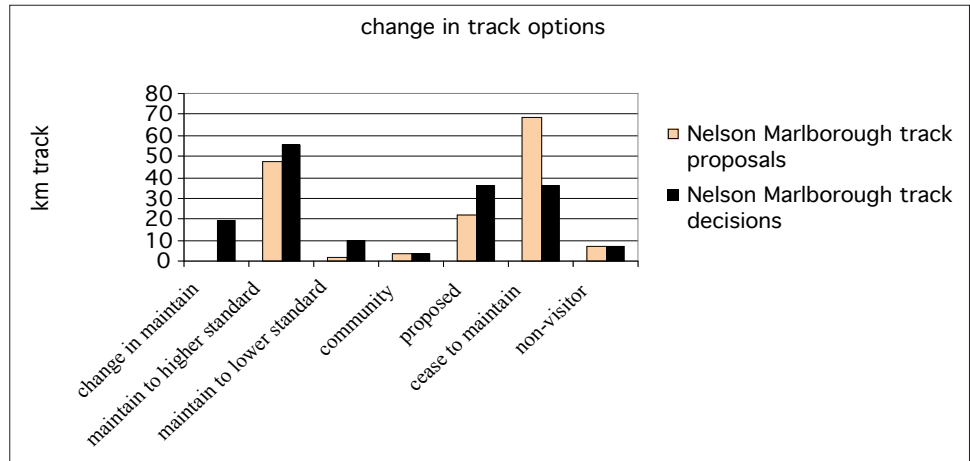
A number of new proposals have been put forward by the public, of which 11 are being supported

- Aorere Goldfields improve access road to the Doctors Creek carpark.
- Reintroduce camping at Perry and Saxon and provide camp platforms and cooking shelters at these sites. Desperately require a booking system!
- Paynes Ford Scenic Reserve - additional toilet.
- Manage Rawhiti Cave track to Route standard, construct viewing platform and install toilet.
- Canaan: investigate option to provide camping opportunities.
- Kiwi Saddle Track - The wire across the Kiwi Stream will be replaced with a 3 wire bridge.
- New toilet needed at beach near Split Apple Rock.
- New bridge on Pelorus track
- Leatham wet weather route will be retained (approximately 6km)
- Wairau Lagoons walkway: Build new viewing platform and interpretation
- Turn the Skyline Walk track into a loop track by extending it along the ridge at the top and bringing it down through the bush to meet the road at the old Matakitaki bridge site.



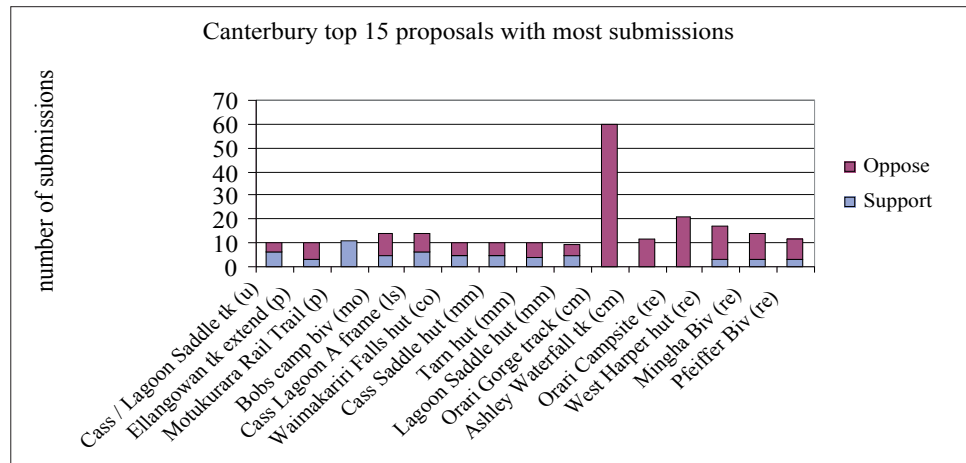


Nelson Marlborough Conservancy will be managing 1973km of track in the future, 5km less than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be ‘maintained’ as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.10 CANTERBURY

### 2.10.1 Submission analysis



- Orari Gorge track and campground / amenity areas attracted significant submissions opposing closure (60 and 21 respectively). The local public support for the area has been well demonstrated.
- The Cass Lagoon Saddle circuit facility proposals received mixed support, with preference to retain West Harper hut as historic, rationalising huts at Lagoon Saddle, and a preference to keep the track to basic tramping track standard.
- Ashley Waterfall track proposal to cease maintenance was opposed by all 12 submissions, but standard and access issues remain.
- Motukurara to Little River Rail Trail was supported by all 11 submissions.
- Seven other track and route and two new hut proposals were put forward via submissions.
- General issues identified through submissions were; DOC's new funding should allow all facilities to be maintained, DOC's new facilities cost too much, and facilities should be retained for safety reasons.

### 2.10.2 Decisions

Decisions tend to favour more day visitor and basic backcountry facility provision than was presented in the proposals, and also reflects the nature of the recreation opportunities managed in Canterbury Conservancy. Where proposals to remove or cease maintenance have been changed, the resulting decisions tend to be either Maintain or Replace - Smaller Size. Some minor balance has been achieved by one track and one hut being removed instead of Minimal and Cease maintenance.

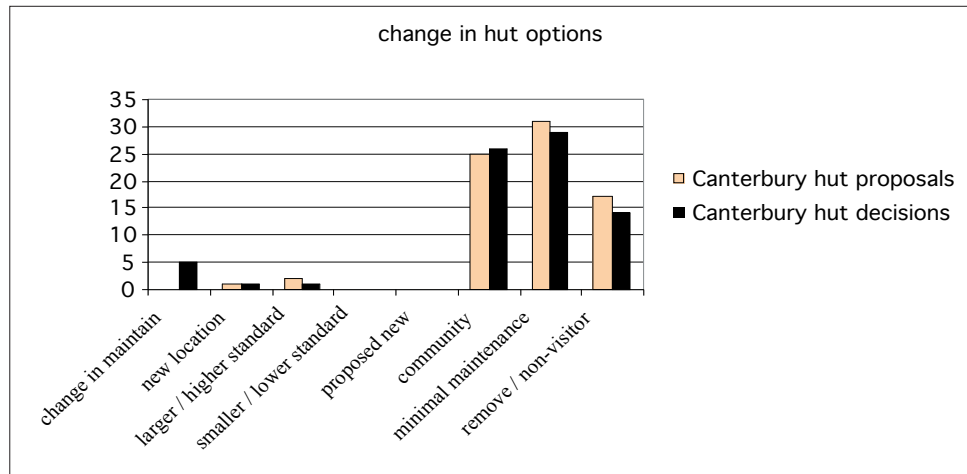
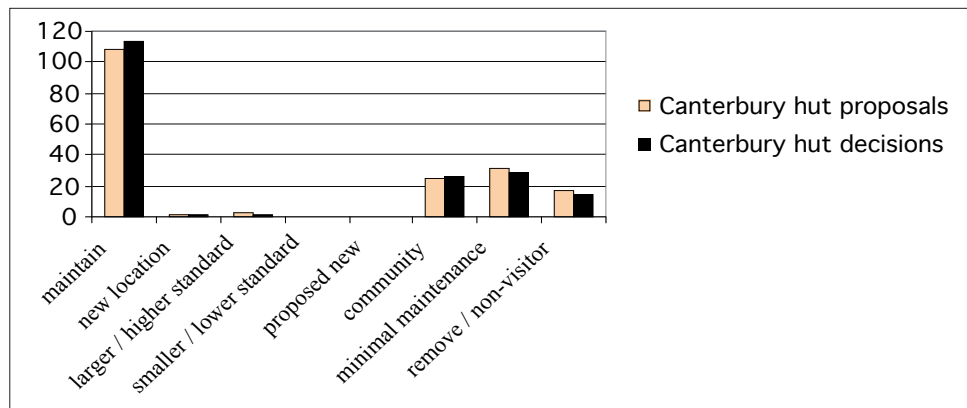
A key issue for the conservancy was the proposed closing of Orari Gorge facilities, which has now been changed to maintaining the track, campsite and access road.

Huts with changes from original proposal of minimal maintenance are:

- Snowy Gorge hut, Bobs Camp biv and Basins hut will now be maintained.
- Cass Saddle hut and Lagoon Saddle A frame will be retained on minimal maintenance and replaced with shelters at the end of their functional lives.

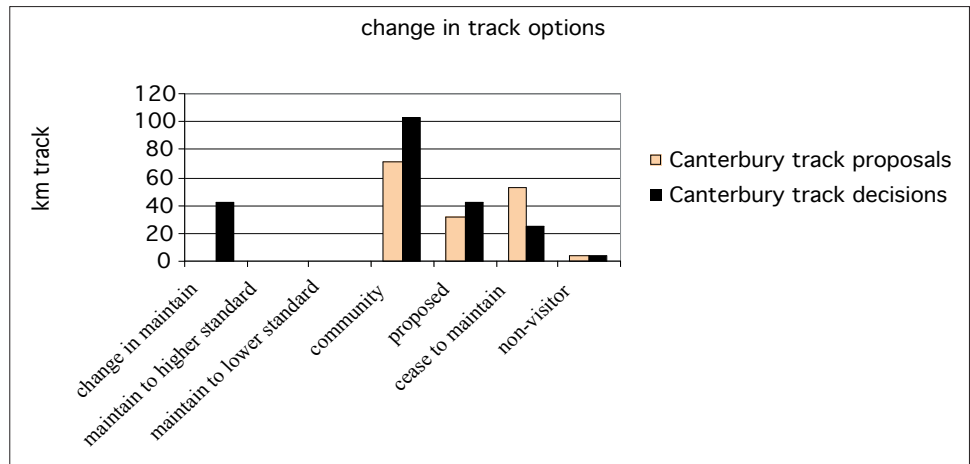
- South Opuha hut will be promoted for maintaining by a community group.
- Top Cox hut decision is for it to be removed.
- Track decisions see the Orari Gorge and Homebush tracks retained.
- Routes now to be retained in the system are Three Mile Steam route, Sylvia Tops Access route, Jollies Pass/ Isobel route, Wharfdale - Oxford route and Upper Salmon Creek.
- The Otehake swing bridge will be retained.
- A new track proposal for a Mount Thomas to Pinchgut route rationalising the existing tracks has been accepted.

This represents an increase in facility provision compared with the position presented in the conservancy proposals document.



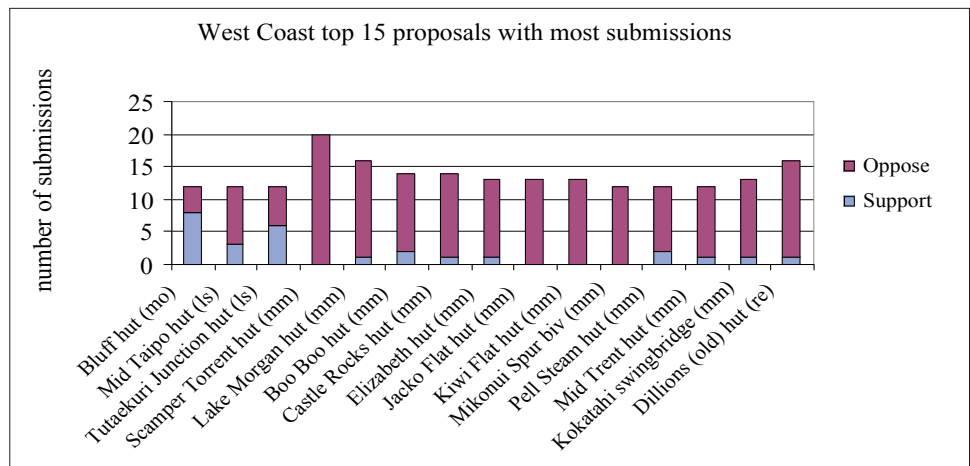
Canterbury Conservancy will be managing 1347km of track in the future, 60km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.





## 2.11 WEST COAST *TAI POUTINI*

### 2.11.1 Submission analysis



- A particular focus of submissions in West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy is on huts, with the most submissions relating to the desire to retain huts proposed for minimal maintenance or removal.
- Linked to the attention on huts is the preference to retain and improve the access between valley systems that can be provided by sections of marked and periodically cleared route through more difficult sections of scrub. Retaining key bridges to enable access across catchments has also been promoted.
- Most submissions related to Greymouth and Hokitika Area proposals.
- In Buller Area most submitters were seeking to retain Scotts Beach campsite as a backcountry camping experience.
  - Further development around Punakaiki was also promoted by submitters.
- Greymouth Area submitters focused on some short walk opportunities, and the desire to manage sections of track in the mountains to ensure access between valleys and across the alps. Huts associated with these more remote trips were requested to be retained.

- Hokitika Area submissions focussed on the backcountry.
  - The argument was presented that the proposals did not represent a full range of opportunities, with open tops and weekend trip opportunities not well provided for.
  - Additional argument is that huts and tracks in less popular locations should be retained now as opportunities for backcountry enthusiasts when other places become too busy due to tourism. Such an approach would also preserve the historic character of the backcountry.
- Franz Josef *Waiau* Area received very few submissions focussed on the existing tourism infrastructure.
  - Most submissions related to Castle Rocks hut due to its location and links to climbing in that area.
  - Support was received for enhanced access between valley systems, but also concern at encroaching on the Adams Wilderness zone.
- South Westland *Webeka* Area received few submissions.
  - Day visitor proposals were considered to be the responsibility of the tourism industry, and gained some opposition. Contradicting this view were the strong local submissions received regarding more facility provision between Haast and Jacksons Bay.

### 2.11.2 Decisions

#### *Buller Kawatiri Area*

Scotts Beach camping area will be retained. The Inland Pack track between Bullock Creek and the Pororari river will be maintained as a walking track as part of a suite of day visitor opportunities at Punakaiki.

#### *Greymouth Mawheranui Area*

The continuation and enhancement of traditional tramping opportunities and linkages between Canterbury and the West Coast are being supported through several proposed routes, including:

- The addition of short sections of marked route in the upper valleys of the Waiheke and Tutaekuri , associated with an Amuri - Hope Pass circuit.
- The provision for access through the Haupiri and Trent valleys, including the maintenance of the Elizabeth and Mid Trent Hut.

Improved access is being pursued for hunting in the Waikiti catchment, access to the open tops of Lake Morgan and for climbing Mt Alexander.

The Croesus track will be managed as an easy tramping track.

#### *Hokitika Area*

Decisions see the reversal of proposals to remove some swing bridges and maintain four huts in the backcountry.

Remote trips into the Hokitika backcountry will be supported with additional routes for the Mikonui Spur - Mt Bowen trip and the Steadman brow - Mt Beaumont system.

Weekend access to the open tops via the Toaroha Range and the Scamper Torrent circuit will be improved through maintained routes.

A four-wheel drive standard road will be provided near Ross and a walk to interpret the Giant Kokapu habitat will be improved.

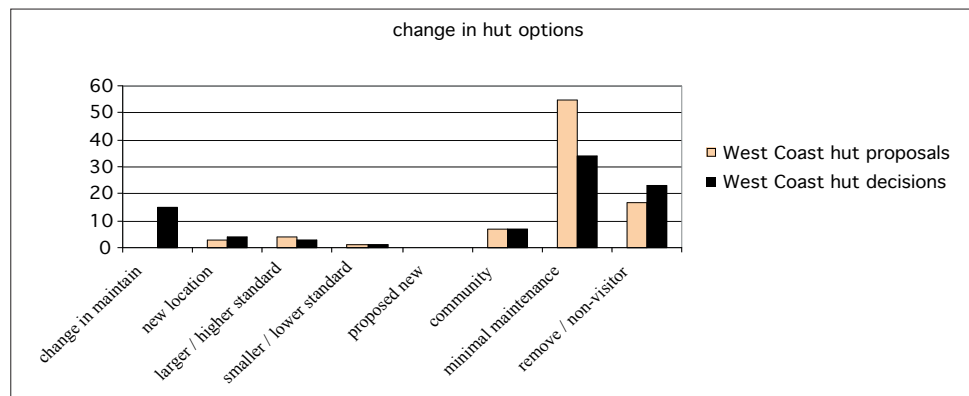
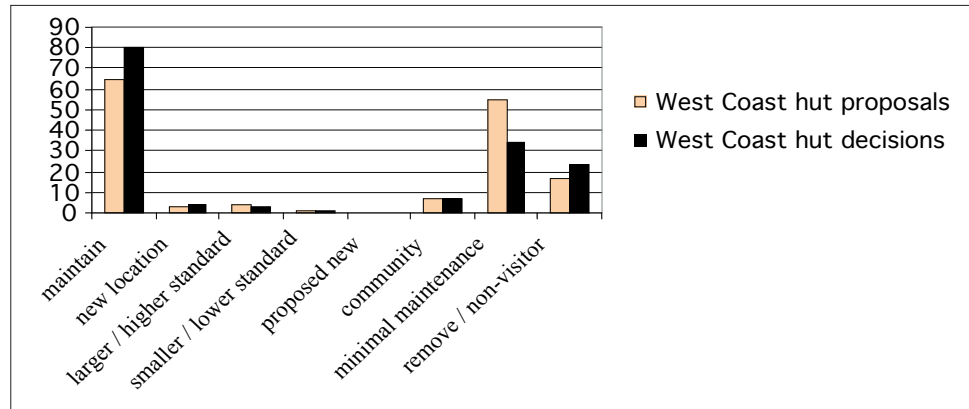
*Franz Josef Waiau Area*

Interim decisions include the maintenance of the Castle Rocks hut and the addition of a route to the Blue Lookout in the Wanganui River backcountry to enable hunting and alpine tramping/climbing. A tramping track will be maintained in the Saltwater forest, and the tracks between Franz Josef township and the Glacier valley will be maintained as walking tracks.

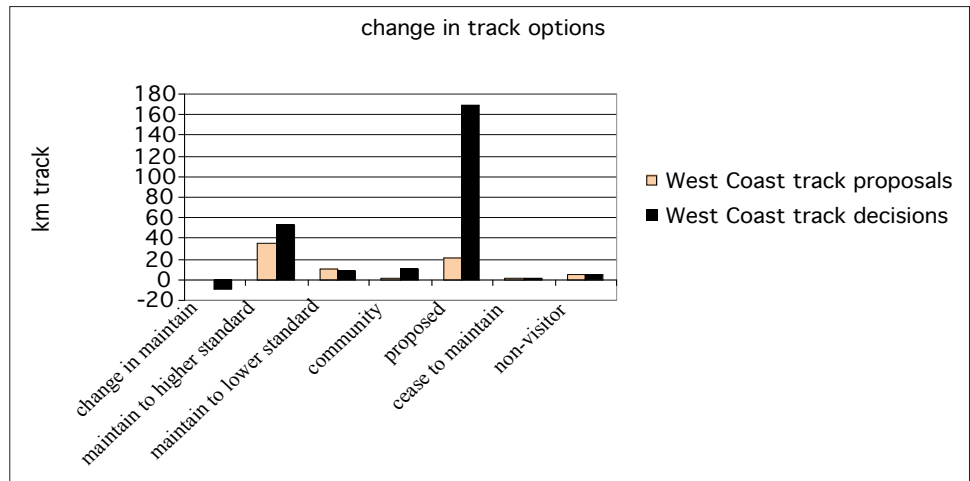
In order to climb Mt Adams, a marked route will be maintained to the open tops.

*South Westland Weheka Area*

Access will be provided as marked routes in both the Moeraki and Paringa River valleys in order for parties to cross into the Clarke Valley and access Marks Flat in the Hooker/Landsborough wilderness area.

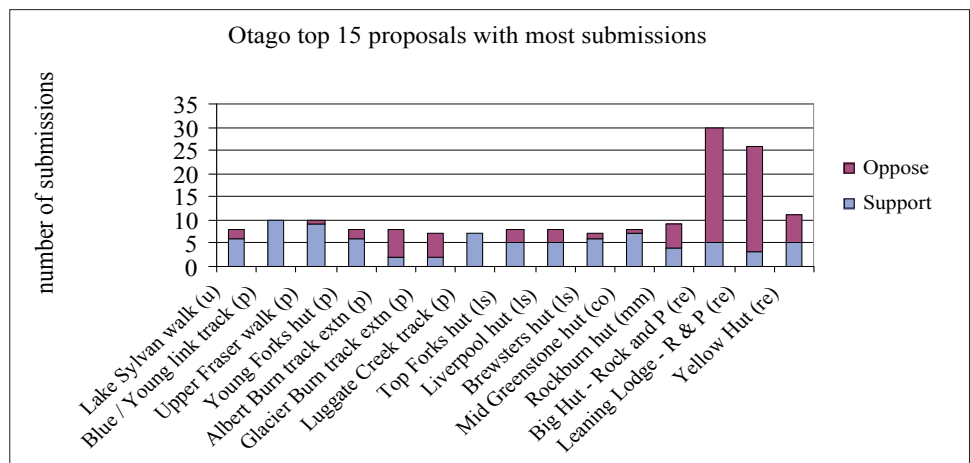


West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy will be managing 1186km of track in the future, 177km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.12 OTAGO

### 2.12.1 Submission analysis



- Many people and community based groups took the review as an opportunity to lobby for new visitor facilities. These proposals have been assessed for their strategic contribution.
- Submissions from national organisation representatives tended to discuss general issues without being specific to Otago Conservancy proposals.
- There were some views that remote and/or very low use huts should be retained irrespective of their condition.
- There are differing views on the role of DOC and of territorial local authorities over which agencies have the responsibility for facilities that are predominantly used by tourists rather than local residents.
- Several community interest groups did not believe that their local area was being supported equitably by DOC's new facility proposals.
- Support was gained for undertaking the heritage assessment of the number of huts listed as 'minimal maintenance' (some of which are dilapidated), before any

final decisions are made.

- There was criticism that it was because of lack of attention to track or hut maintenance in the past that DOC is now proposing either removal or reducing the standard of facilities.
- DOC has been asked to take account of the potential outcomes of future High Country Tenure Review negotiations when making decisions on facilities.
- Some information provided in the Proposal Summary Report caused confusion for submitters.

### 2.12.2 Decisions

The Conservancy has a full range of recreation opportunities, with strengths in more basic backcountry tramping opportunities in Wakatipu Area and easier tramping opportunities in Wanaka Area such as the Great Walks. Proposals represented some rationalisation that had already been planned with the aim of meeting current demand and trends in use. In light of this, new proposals requested by local communities have, unfortunately, not been supported at this stage.

#### *Central Otago Area*

Two longer distance tramping track proposals totalling approximately 15km have been withdrawn.

Two ex-tenure review tramping tracks totalling 10km have been accepted as strategically important.

This Area has a relatively large number of new proposals for carparks, toilet facilities and short walks mainly associated with providing adequate infrastructure to support visitor use of already popular locations, with a focus on access to historic sites.

#### *Coastal Otago Area*

Coastal Otago proposals were aimed at some rationalisation of short and day walk opportunities taking account of other providers of public recreation opportunities in the region. A number of proposals to cease maintenance on low-use walks have received no comment. Most of the 'maintain by community' proposals have been accepted on the basis that community groups were already involved in managing those sites. Two small picnic areas proposed to be transferred to local authorities will now be retained by DOC. Discussions continue on the future of the Papatowai Camp Ground.

Discussions with user groups are underway to jointly upgrade one of the Silverpeaks huts allowing removal of another that is in a poor state. Of three huts on the Rock and Pillar range that came to DOC from the High Country Tenure Review process, one is used for research purposes and will be licensed, a second has recently been acquired by a private trust which is upgrading the hut to DOC standards and will make the facility available for public use. The third hut is privately owned, in poor condition and may ultimately be removed dependent on the outcome of discussions with Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club.

#### *Wakatipu Area*

This Area provides most opportunities for backcountry adventurer tramping opportunities for the conservancy. Shared management between DOC and

Queenstown Lakes District Council of some urban and urban fringe tracks near Queenstown continues while the Department defines where its interests start and stop. A number of little used side-valley tramping tracks and routes have been identified for the 'cease maintenance' option as effort is focussed on key arterial tracks for hunters and backcountry adventurers. One walking track is proposed for upgrading to wheelchair accessible standard. The Routeburn roadend, gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park, is long overdue for an upgrade.

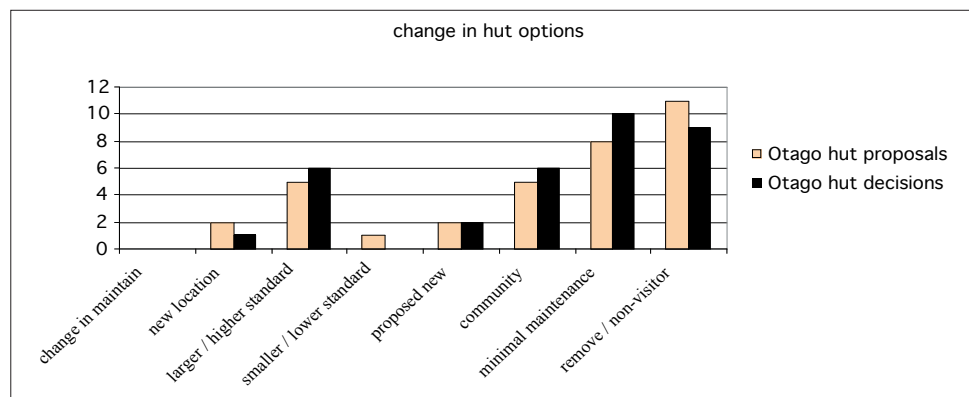
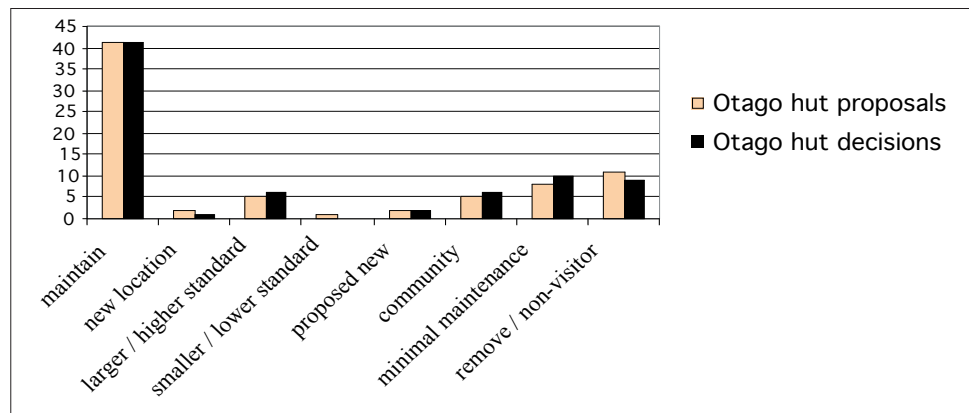
New walking track and amenity areas will be added to the core network arising from tenure review outcomes.

The old Esquilant biv will be removed as agreed with NZ Alpine Club. The old mid-Greenstone hut will be retained under a concession licence for use by hunters. A number of potentially historic huts are identified for minimal maintenance as a temporary measure until assessments of their heritage values can be completed.

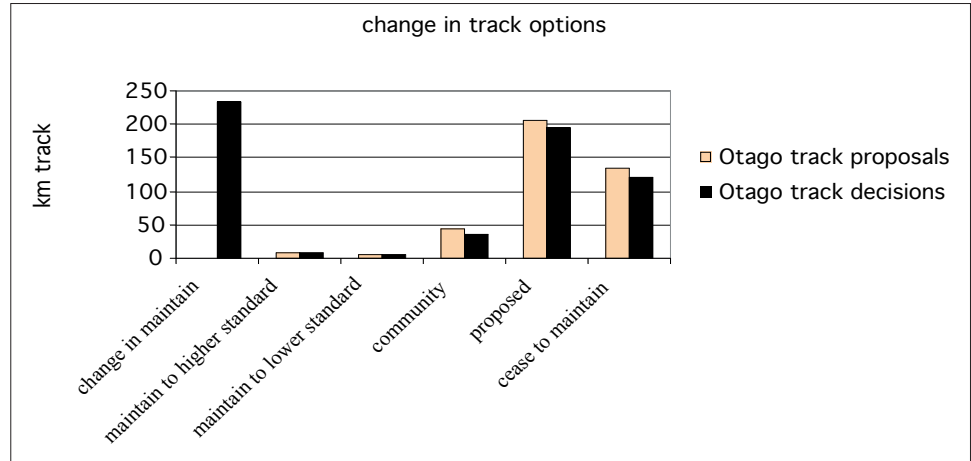
### Wanaka Area

This Area provides most opportunities for traditional backcountry recreation opportunities within the conservancy. New walking track and amenity areas will also be added to the core network arising from tenure review outcomes. Decisions have been made to phase out some huts and tracks; Big Hopwood Burn hut and route, Mid Flat hut, Bull Flat hut, Dunks hut, Ferguson Creek track, Hunter East Branch track, and Upper Timaru Creek track.

Six huts are identified for increases in size to meet current use levels only. A new link track from Blue Pools to the Young river mouth, including a new hut at Young Forks, will provide an all-weather access in the Gillespie pass circuit.

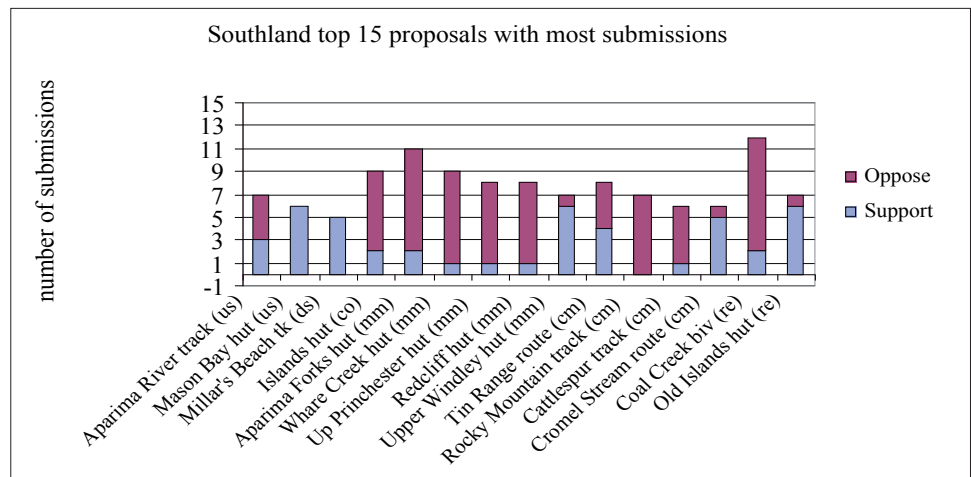


Otago Conservancy will be managing 1451km of track in the future, 289km more than the current track network. The changes in proposals for tracks, resulting from consultation, are shown in the following figure. The first bar represents the *change* in track length to be 'maintained' as *decisions* compared with *proposals*, and the other bars compare actual length of track first with *proposals* and then *decisions* to change from the current situation.



## 2.13 SOUTHLAND

### 2.13.1 Submissions analysis



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.13.2 Decisions**

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

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

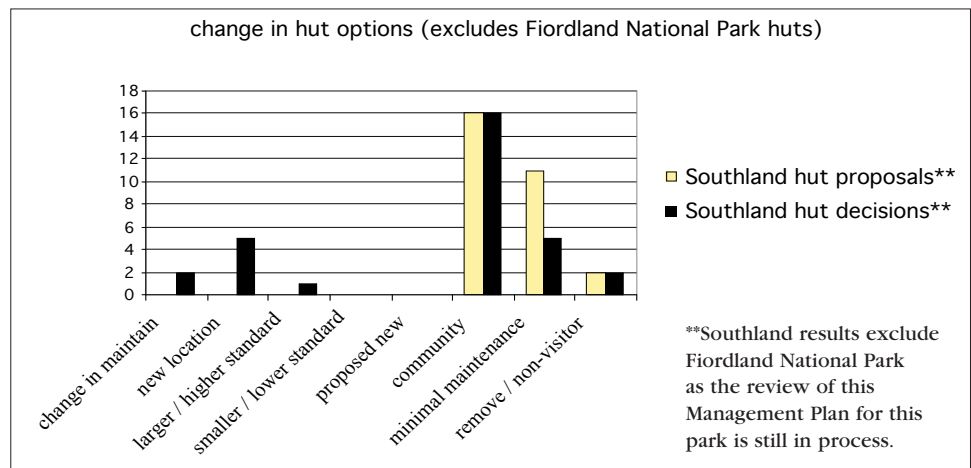
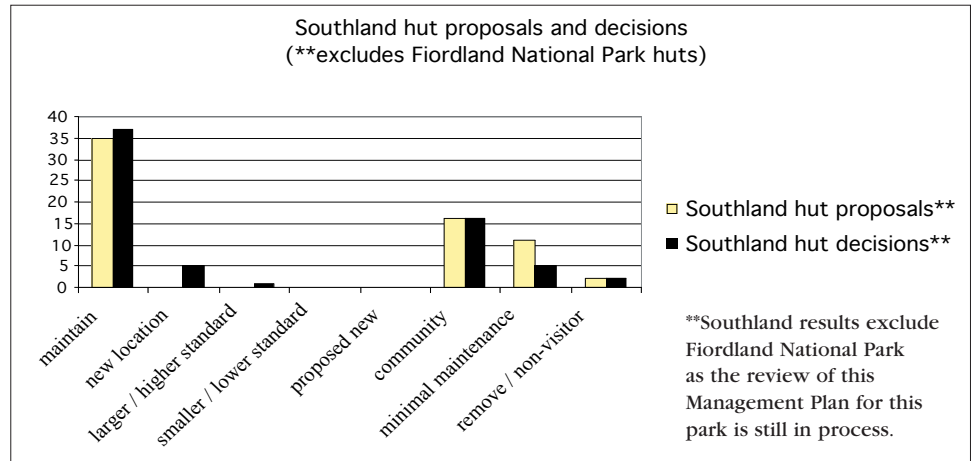
Discussions about access through the Longwoods as part of Te Araroa trial route has not been concluded. Several other community groups proposed track and facility development aspirations. The department has assessed these as not ranking as highly as existing facilities and believes these should be planned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

The benefit of the decisions will be an improved mix of opportunities for backcountry

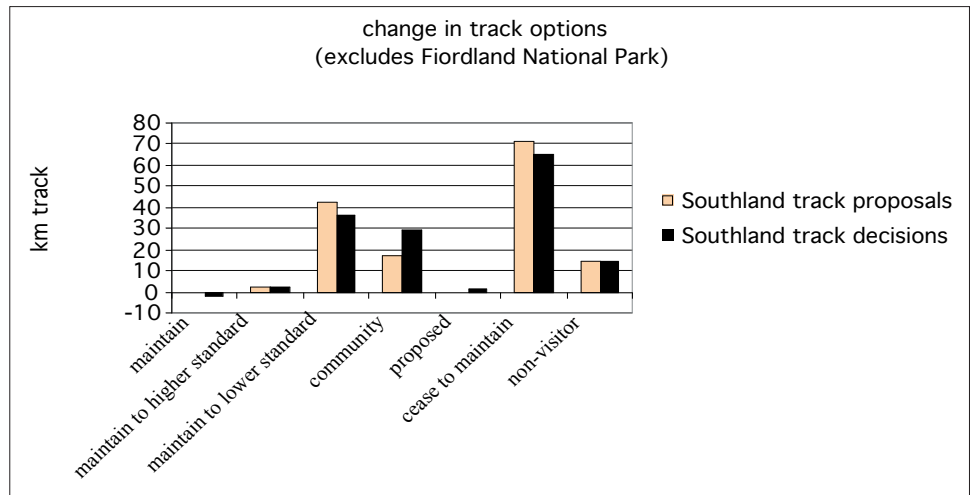


users in particular, but also a growth in accessible interpreted high standard day use facilities (e.g., at Waituna Wetland, Red Tussock Reserve, Wilderness Scientific Reserve).

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



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



# 3. Submissions received

## 3.1 NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS

- 1468 submitters made submissions to conservancies, with many making submissions on a number of proposals, making a total of 8594 proposals commented on.
- 368 of the submitters were groups, with a number recorded more than once by submitting on proposals in more than one conservancy.

Submissions have been received from the following national organisations:

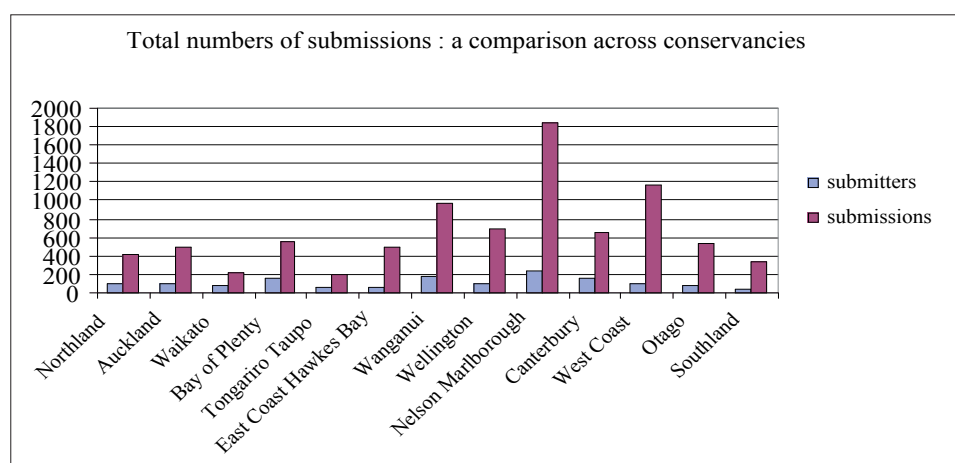
- Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand
- New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association
- Tourism Industry Association New Zealand
- Youth Hostels Association of New Zealand
- New Zealand Alpine Club
- CCS
- New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (Canterbury)
- New Zealand Historic Places Trust
- New Zealand Motor Caravan Association
- Outdoors New Zealand
- Few submissions directly challenged the Principle to Guide a Core Facility Network.
- 268 submissions discussed general or national issues, which have been analysed and are reported on later.

	SUBMITTERS	SUBMISSIONS	GROUP SUBMITTERS	INDIVIDUAL SUBMITTERS	SUBMISSIONS MENTIONING AND CHALLENGING PRINCIPLES	SUBMISSIONS WITH NATIONAL THEMES
Northland	96	406	45	51	0	18
Auckland	97	498	27	70	0	53
Waikato	81	215	22	59	0	29
Bay of Plenty	149	557	28	121	2	17
Tongariro Taupo	59	201	29	30	0	17
East Coast Hawkes Bay	68	496	21	47	17	51
Wanganui	186	976	25	161	106	19

Wellington	103	693	22	81	4	37
Nelson Marlborough	237	1848	38	199	1	
Canterbury	162	656	30	132	5	3
West Coast	102	1171	18	84	3	4
Otago	85	535	40	45	0	7
Southland	43	342	23	20	0	9
TOTAL	1468	8594	368	1100	138	264

### 3.2 COMPARISON ACROSS CONSERVANCIES OF TOTAL SUBMISSION

The figure below shows the total number of submissions received and the number of submitters making those submissions, for each conservancy.

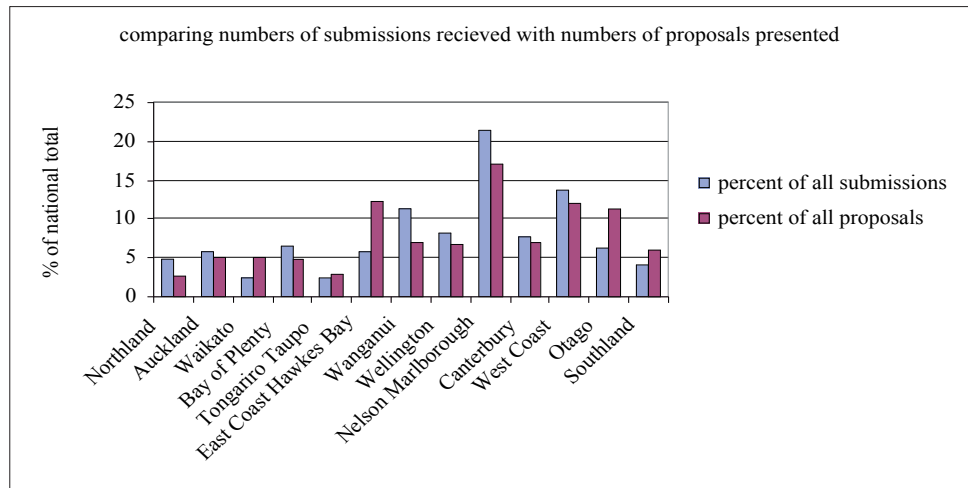


Most submissions were made by recreation groups or residents within the conservancy or from neighbouring conservancies.

There were very few submissions from iwi. This has been assumed to be because of other political issues occurring at the time, and because this topic of outdoor recreation facility provision on conservation areas is not significant to most iwi groups.

The difference in the level of submissions appears to reflect the degree that local residents have galvanised against particular proposals, and not a reflection of the population base of the region.

In terms of uptake of community interest in the submission process, one could conclude that the general population had either little knowledge or little interest in the consultation and proposals. A general population survey undertaken by UMR Research in December 2003 indicated that 34% (+/- 3.6%) of New Zealanders knew about the process. The assumption can then be made that, of the people who knew about the consultation, many people either did not engage in the process or were not concerned about the proposals enough to make a submission. This was not an unexpected outcome, and those people who made submissions did so in a purposeful manner, and made clear the core values that they were promoting.

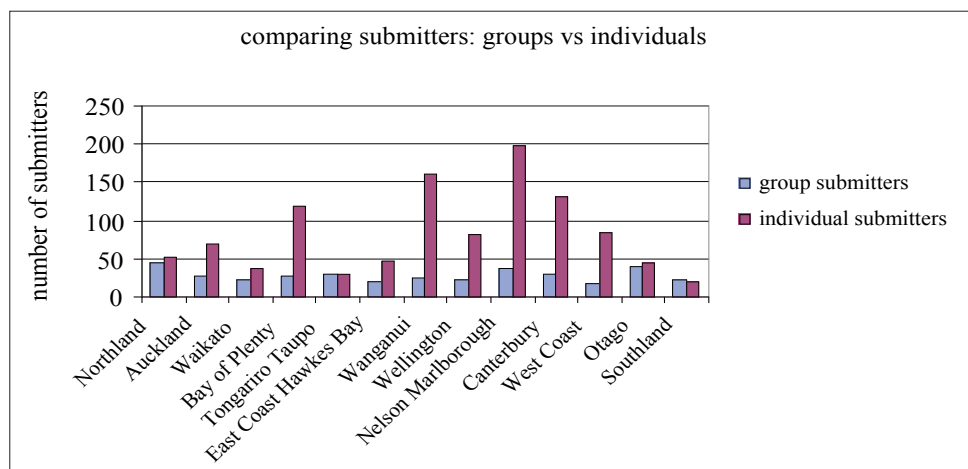


The relationship between the number of proposals presented by each conservancy and the number of submissions received is illustrated above. The higher level of interest in proposals is shown by Northland, Wanganui and Nelson Marlborough. Least interest (given the number of proposals) was shown in Waikato, East Coast Hawkes Bay and Otago.

The 15 proposals for each conservancy that received the most submissions (195 in total) totalled 3289 submissions between them, of which 34% were supporting proposals and 66% were opposing. Thus 16% of the 1223 proposals put out for public comment received 34% of all submissions. The 60 proposals (5% of all proposals) that received the most submissions accounted for 22% of all submissions. The average number of submissions per proposals would be 7 if evenly spread. Many submissions received very few submissions or none at all.

### 3.1 COMPARISON OF SUBMITTER TYPE

The following figure compares submitters for each conservancy based on whether they were individuals or groups making the submission. Group submissions were significant in all conservancies, though a minority compared with individual submissions.



### 3.3 COMPARING THE PROPOSALS RECEIVING THE MOST SUBMISSIONS

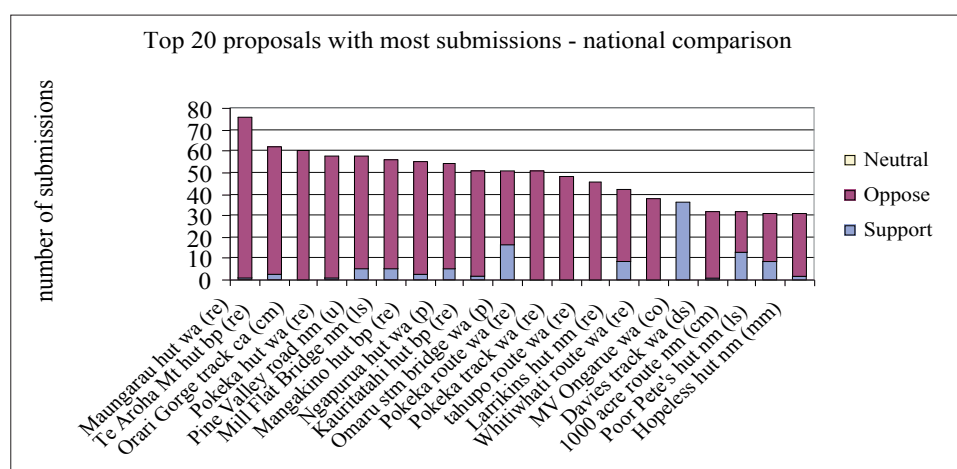
The following discussion does not take account of the merit of each submission, and conservancies took account of submission merit as well as numbers when making decisions. This information does, however, indicate the level of interest that particular proposals raised.

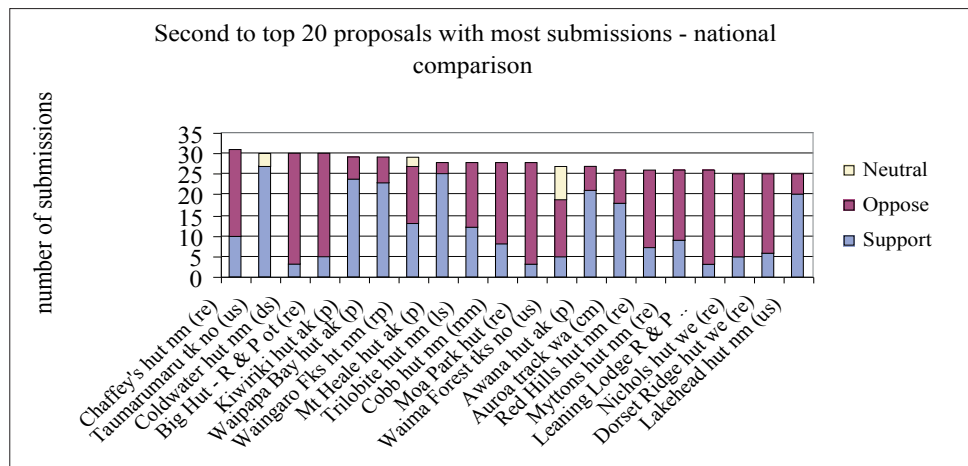
Across conservancies there is a relatively significant range in the number of submissions received for the fifteen most commented on proposals. The higher levels of interest have been generated from local communities rather than from further afield. The differences in levels of support or opposition are influenced by whether proposals are for improvements in the facility network or for reduced effort, and generally proposals have been supported and reduced effort opposed.

There is however, an apparent consistency in the overall level of interest within any one conservancy, with the result that some conservancies have received many more submissions both across the 15 most commented on proposals and in total.

The following figures show the 40 proposals with the most submissions received. The conservancy with the proposal is identified after the facility name by the following code:

Northland	no
Auckland	ak
Waikato	wk
Bay of Plenty	bp
Tongariro / Taupo	tt
East Coast / Hawkes Bay	eh
Wanganui	wa
Wellington	we
Nelson / Marlborough	nm
Canterbury	ca
West Coast	wc
Otago	ot
Southland	sl





Generally the majority of submissions for particular proposals were either supportive or in opposition, there was seldom a completely split in opinion. Support was for enhancements of the existing network and opposition to reductions to the network. The exception to this is marked opposition in some instances for raising the service standards of some tracks or huts.

The three conservancies with the most submissions across the top 15 proposals were Wanganui, then Nelson and Bay of Plenty.

- These submissions are characterised by significant opposition to track closures in Wanganui, in particular the Waitotara Valley proposals.
- There is majority opposition with a small level of support for removing huts or phasing huts over time in Nelson, Mill Flat swing bridge and Pine Valley track upgrades being notable.
- There is general opposition to hut closures or phasing out of huts and tracks in Bay of Plenty.

Conservancies with the medium level of feedback on facility proposals through submissions are Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury.

- Auckland proposals appeared to receive the highest level of support, to be expected given the number of proposed improvements featuring in the 15 proposals.
- Wellington submitters were supportive of improvements to the facility network, but generally not supportive of planned hut removals or phasing out huts.
- Canterbury registered more opposing submissions, with the Orari Gorge Track closure receiving a singularly high number of submissions in opposition.

Northland, Waikato and East Coast / Hawkes Bay and West Coast conservancies received smaller number of submissions.

- Northland proposals enjoyed a reasonable level of support.
- Waikato submitters generally supported proposals for new tracks and accommodation, but rejected proposed track closures.
- East Coast / Hawkes Bay submitters were of mixed opinion on the proposed reduced effort across huts, but supportive of a proposed hut and an upgrade of a Biv.

- West Coast submitters were consistently opposed to huts being phased out, and mixed views on hut upgrades.

Conservancies with the least level of public feedback by way of submissions are Tongariro / Taupo, Otago and Southland.

- Tongariro / Taupo submitters were supportive of new proposals for tracks, a hut replacement and community management of two huts, and limited opposition where this was expressed..
- Otago submissions were generally supportive for proposed tracks and hut upgrades, but opposition to hut removals from the Rock and Pillar range.
- Southland submitters expressed general opposition to proposed phasing out of huts and closing of some tracks.



## 4. Comments on submission detail

### 4.1 THE NATURE OF SUBMISSIONS

The department was pleased with the level of submissions, recognising the great number of facility proposals that were presented for comment, and the potential that people might not engage in this sort of process. The arguments presented in submissions ranged from very detailed to very brief, with very brief arguments being the norm, most expressing a clear opinion. Some submissions were substantial and thorough, and have provided the department with sound argument to consider.

### 4.2 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Some concern was expressed that the process of consultation would not result in the department taking account of public submissions, including new proposals the community are promoting. The timeframe for the consultation process was criticised for being too tight and running over the summer holiday period. Information provided through the Proposal Summary documents did not provide sufficient detail for some people. Some submitters wanted assurance that there was some way of ensuring consistency in approach across the country.

#### **Response**

- The department asked the public of New Zealand to contribute to the process of public consultation accepting the Principles of Consultation found in the DOC Consultation Policy, which requires the department to take account of what submitters have to say.
- The department decided on a four month period for accepting submissions and publicised the process at the end of September 2003 and throughout October.
- New proposals that have been submitted by local community groups have been considered using the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network.
- Guidance has been provided to encourage national consistency, with all submissions considered on their own merit, and the overall strength of submissions on common issues.
- Regional Office provided a national overview of the process, including submission analysis and decision making, and direction to conservancies on issues of consistency. Representatives of key national recreation associate groups are on a reference group that was briefed on the national overview and provided feedback for the department to consider.

### 4.3 TERMINOLOGY

Terminology used in the Proposals is a little confusing, talking about a Recreation Opportunity Review, but with proposals for 'facilities'. Other terms that drew comment were the use of the word 'visitor' and the implications of 'tourists' using DOC managed recreation opportunities.

#### **Response**

- The department draws on commonly used recreation planning concepts which include the idea facilities are key to providing recreation opportunities. While the review focused on proposals for facilities, the facilities were assessed in terms of the recreation opportunities they supported. Submissions received on other management activity such as information, hut fees and controlling access will be made available to managers who deal with these issues.
- There are many terms used to describe people who use conservation areas, but few are as inclusive as the word 'visitor'. The term 'user' has gained both support and opposition, and 'people', like 'visitor', is a very nebulous term. When a better term gains general support, this will be adopted.
- The department recognises a visitor group that prefers tracks and huts that have higher service standards, and people who prefer facilities that have lower service standards. These different preferences are born out by independent research. The name of these visitor groups has proven a problem for some people, but no alternatives have as yet been agreed.

### 4.4 INTEGRATION WITH HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

New Zealand visitor facilities are an essential ingredient of the cultural landscape of the forest parks and national parks of New Zealand. In particular some submitters want assurance that the historical values of visitor facilities are recognised when DOC is making decisions about which of these facilities will be managed into the future.

#### **Response**

- 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 appropriate recreation opportunities should be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests* (draft General Policy Conservation Act). This does not mean retaining all of the existing huts and track network, but most will be retained for their collective contribution to the desired recreation opportunities.
- The need to integrate the management of visitor facilities with management of historic heritage is promoted through various means. Scrutiny of historic values will be applied in particular where facilities have been assessed for phasing out of the facility network.

## 4.5 PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Submitters expressed concern that DOC's decisions on the future of visitor facilities should not lead to increased adverse effects on rare or endangered species or the ecosystems that sustain them. This concern includes issues such as crowding and litter. There is a desire to know what management options DOC is choosing to manage these issues, and suggestions include concentrating people to well managed locations as well as encouraging a greater spread of people to less used places.

### Response

- There is an inherent conflict in managing for the conservation of natural and historic values and the provision of visitor access, and experience to date is that this can be achieved with sound management practices and the cooperation of the visiting public.
- *“Recreation opportunities and associated visitor activities, accommodation, facilities and services, information and interpretation should be compatible with the purposes for which the area is held; be compatible with and managed to protect, and to minimise adverse effects on, natural, cultural and historic values and their intrinsic worth; be managed to protect, and to minimise adverse effects on, the qualities of solitude, remoteness, wilderness, peace and natural quiet, where these qualities are present”* (Draft General Policy Conservation Act).
- The department will promote best practice in the development of new facilities or upgrading existing facilities, through the use of an assessment of environmental effects.
- The challenges mentioned are shared by protected area agencies across the globe, and there are no easy answers. There are possible impacts associated with visitor access to conservation areas that need to be managed. The decisions currently being made for visitor facility provision are only one of the factors influencing changing use patterns and impact creation.

## 4.6 PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE A CORE FACILITY NETWORK

Very few submissions made reference to the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network, which were referred to in Proposal Summaries, and formed the basis of the reasoning behind the proposals themselves.

Many submitters believe that DOC should maintain the existing track and hut network, as they were developed for good reasons in the first place, and will be more costly to replace later, if removed now. In particular there is strong support for retaining the more basic huts and associated track networks, for their useful function (including visitor safety) and for what they represent in terms of the character of the New Zealand backcountry. Arguments were provided for retaining huts that are closer than three hours from road ends as well as the desire to see low use and more remote huts retained because each provides a unique opportunity.

## Response

- *A range of recreational opportunities should be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests* (Draft General Policy Conservation Act). The department recognises the significance of the backcountry hut and track network as part of the character of the national network of parks. An appropriate mix of recreation opportunities is being sought, which includes areas with higher levels of facility provisions, others with basic facilities and still others with no facilities.
- The existing track and hut network formed the basis for the proposals that have been consulted on. Additional factors influencing the proposals are ‘that most but not all of the existing network can be retained’ based on the department's costing models and experience, and that some new facilities are considered to be needed to meet current demands.
- The department developed the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network, which include the Hut Principles and Track Categories, to provide a common framework for use by all conservancies when assessing current facilities and new proposals.
- In deciding on a core facility network the department is considering the contribution that any particular facility makes to the enjoyment and safety of the predominant visitor group within the context of typical visitor use. 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.
- Over 12,000km of track provide access to a significant portion of New Zealand's backcountry.

## 4.7 HUTS

Huts in particular represent the character of the New Zealand backcountry, and many submissions commented on a variety of issues relating to huts. The small two person bivvs should be retained and the standard NZFS six bunker hut should also be retained for their iconic status in the backcountry. All huts are seen as being a potential life saver in emergency situations when conditions turn extreme as they occasionally do in the backcountry.

DOC should not use the level of visitation as a major factor when deciding priorities of huts, but should consider what the location offers as more important criteria.

There is concern that DOC is now building and maintaining huts to standards that are far higher than was the case in the past. At the same time, if some huts are to be phased out at the end of their lives, DOC is asked to do the work required to ensure that each of these huts can last well into the future, and in some cases to replace those that meet an untimely end (e.g. fire, avalanche).

## Response

- The department will seek to ensure that the value of historic facilities is taken into account when the future options for those facilities are being decided. A Heritage Inventory Report should be used to gather information about such facilities. A National Context Study has been completed for 600 huts that were originally Wild Animal Control Huts. Current decisions will see at least half of the 160 1-2 person bivvs retained.
- The Hut Principles consider the level of use alongside several other key factors when looking at which huts constitute a core network. The department agrees that low use huts in remote areas will form part of the recreation experience to be provided.
- There has been a trend towards more people seeking backcountry experiences that include facilities of a higher service standard. It is possible to accommodate these people's needs through the provision of some larger huts and better developed tracks.
- The service standard for huts have been developed over the past 4-5 years in consultation with representatives of the major NZ user groups. The minimum service standard requirements for all huts 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.
- 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.
- The proposal option 'minimal maintenance' was developed to seek to ensure that any existing hut was retained the whole of its useful life, even those that are deemed to have limited strategic importance, and will not be replaced at the end of its life. The best use of funds will be considered on a case-by-case basis as decisions are made to either schedule upgrade work or remove huts. Should such a hut be destroyed, the limited strategic value remains the deciding factor and it will not be replaced, unless new strategic importance has been determined through a formal planning process.

## 4.8 TRACKS

A number of submitters believe that DOC should continue to mark all tracks even those that are no longer going to be maintained. User groups could be approached to assist with this work. Tracks could then still be used by experienced hunters and trampers. In addition it has been argued that certain facilities such as swing bridges over rivers prone to flooding must be retained to encourage people to use less accessible locations.

A general theme was that tracks of a high standard are not needed, although there were submissions supporting tracks that made conservation areas more accessible to the general population and not just the fit and able.

Actual submissions opposing proposals for upgrade of tracks to easy tramping track standard did not feature significantly, other than opposition to the upgrade of two Whirinaki Forest Park tracks (24/29 submissions opposing when both track proposals are combined).

A common concern of submitters in response to 'upgrade to bring to standard' proposals was that this would mean increasing the service standard to an unacceptably high level.

Interestingly some Southland submitters interpreted proposals to maintain existing tracks and routes to those standards to mean that DOC was intending a lower service standards than currently exists.

## **Response**

- Track markers could be replaced in this fashion and the Department would welcome assistance from user groups with this work. If the track is to remain open and available for use by the visiting public, the service standard requirements need to be met. In many cases this will mean more than just ensuring track markers are present.
- The department will *'provide a range of facilities and services, information, and monitoring satisfaction with the range of recreational opportunities provided'* (DOC Statement of Intent). In deciding on a core facility network the department is considering the contribution that any particular facility makes to the safety of the predominant visitor group within the context of typical visitor use. 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.
- The department recognises its responsibility to manage visitor facilities for day visitors and those people making only short visits to conservation areas.
- 'Upgrade to higher standard' is the proposal type where the service standard is intended to be increased.
- In view of the history of deferred maintenance on tracks, and the existing number of poorly maintained tracks as well as the small number of Walking Track upgrades, it is likely that the public have limited examples of intended track standards to judge their preferences on.

## **4.9 FACILITY MANAGEMENT COSTS**

Another key theme from submissions is concern that DOC may not be seeking to provide the most cost effective solution for facilities. Past management with a more limited budget has retained the current facility network, so why should more funding mean less facilities in the future. At the same time there were other submissions that were seeking assurance that DOC would complete any work done to the best practice that was known. DOC is also challenged to consider the importance of all visitor facilities and to take the necessary action to ensure that all the current network can be retained.

## Response

- The best use of funds will be considered on a case-by-case basis as decisions are made on construction methods and costs, with advice from engineers and other relevant specialists. Currently costs are determined using model costs based on previous experience and typical design standards.
- The costs associated with providing huts vary according the service standard of the hut, and local conditions that will influence design and transport costs.
- Codes of practice must be followed that have been developed to promote safe practices and surety for the customer on the quality of the product.
- Low cost options used in the past were not strategically successful because deferring maintenance simply leads to higher management costs at a later date. While cost efficiency is desirable, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that only low cost facilities should be provided.

## 4.10 EQUITABLE ALLOCATION OF NEW FUNDING

Submitters were asked to identify facilities that might be dropped from the core network if they were requesting additional facilities to be added. Only a limited number of submissions did this.

The suggestions made to balance resource commitment were to the effect that DOC should pull back on the development of opportunities for easy tramping (e.g. Back Country Comfortseeker huts and tracks) or for Day Visitors (and explained as therefore supporting tourism) in order to enable a greater level of basic Backcountry Adventurer opportunities to be provided.

Many submissions suggested that the backcountry adventurers' opportunities are being eroded at the expense of facilities of higher service standards, and that this situation is unacceptable. These arguments range from simply noting that a reduction in facility provision is not fair, through to suggestions that it is not appropriate for DOC to fund the higher cost facilities.

To a number of submitters, especially those commenting on South Island conservancy proposals, 'a range of opportunities' appears to mean a suite of different tracks and huts to support basic and remote tramping and hunting, rather than a suite of opportunities to support all the visitor groups.

The interests of disabled people have been supported by a number of submissions, which promote the provision of higher service standards.

## Response

- More funding will become available and as a result more funding will be allocated to basic backcountry facilities, as well as to the provision of higher service standard front country facilities. The department will aim to meet its objective *"a range of recreational opportunities should be provided in different settings for visitors with different capabilities, skills and interests"* (Draft General Policy Conservation Act).



- The department recognises a visitor group that prefers 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 provided as part of the range of recreation opportunities that DOC manages.
- The department is not going to accept the argument that one visitor group's opportunities should be offered up by another visitor group in order to balance the overall resource commitment, without a clear justification on the grounds of demand for either opportunity and supply.
- 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 will be serviced and Great Walk huts.

#### 4.11 VISITOR INFORMATION

Visitor information is a topic raised through a number of submissions, with suggestions for improved and up-to-date on-site information to deal with issues of orientation, safety and security of possessions. Also requested was more accessible information for people planning trips, such as websites and publications.

##### **Response**

- *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 currently underway, and these suggestions have been passed to the relevant project manager. DOC has a responsibility for being as up to date as is practicable with information about its own facilities. 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
- Information about access over private property is obviously one of the types of information that should be managed and made available in a suitable way. Private property owners may have specific requirements regarding the use of information on public access, which would need to be accommodated.

#### 4.12 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN MANAGING FACILITIES

Community involvement in managing visitor facilities featured both as proposals by the department and as solutions provided by submitters for seeing a greater number of facilities retained into the future. Concern was expressed at the likely bureaucratic processes that might complicate volunteer effort, as well as an acknowledgement that clubs may not be as able to complete work parties as often as has been the case in the past.



## **Response**

- The department is promoting community group involvement in conservation, which includes the management of tracks and huts. Conservancies will endeavour to develop and maintain good working relationships with local outdoor recreation groups and encourages these groups to assist in the task of developing good communications and partnerships.

### 4.13 TOURISM

A major theme coming through many submissions is concern at the effect of increasing numbers of international tourists now seeking backcountry experiences, requiring higher standard tracks and huts and contributing to crowding at more popular locations and creating unacceptable impacts on the environment that would not have occurred with the more stable numbers of domestic users. The department is being challenged on its actions given its legislative mandate which requires DOC to 'foster' recreation and 'allow' for tourism, whereas people do not believe that such a distinction has been made. Suggestions have been made to seek to charge tourists specifically to fund the provision of facilities that are used predominantly by tourists.

## **Response**

- "The Department is not convinced that there is a hierarchy between the recreation and tourism aspects of s.6(e) of the Conservation Act." The management of a range of recreation opportunities, as promoted by the 1996 DOC Visitor Strategy and incorporated into the draft General Policy for the Conservation Act and related Acts, enables the Department to manage for the different types of visitor needs associated with New Zealand's conservation areas. As for tourism, the commercial aspects of this are dealt with under Part IIIB of the Conservation Act. This requires commercial operators to obtain concessions (which may have specific conditions imposed) when conducting activities on land administered by the Department.
- Tourism contributes to New Zealand's economic wellbeing and this is recognised through Government funding for visitor facilities and conservation work as a whole.
- Work is programmed to improve the ability of the department to understand and respond to issues of crowding and impacts, problems which are not created exclusively by one group alone. Many New Zealanders enjoy the higher standard facilities and opportunities that support nature-based tourism and are provided as part of the range of recreation opportunities that DOC manages.

### 4.14 FOUR WHEEL DRIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Submitters supporting four-wheel-driving wish to see more opportunities for this activity, noting that they also allow less able people to access areas of parks they would otherwise not get to see, and because of the contribution they can make to search and rescue operations.

## Response

- 4X4 vehicle 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.
- Such opportunities are limited in conservation areas, nor is this situation likely to change except for the opportunities that may arise through High Country Tenure Review in the South Island.
- Roads accessible to 4X4 vehicles may provide important access in situations of search and rescue, but roads are not maintained by the department for these purposes alone.

### 4.15 HUNTING

Hunters would like to see facility proposals that suit their needs, because of the contribution that hunters make to controlling deer numbers.

## Response

- Hunting is managed primarily as a recreational activity rather than as a reliable means of controlling animal pest numbers, although this contribution is recognised and appreciated. *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)*.
- The provision of a network of tracks and huts is considered by the department to support hunting access.

### 4.16 CAMPING

Submissions relating to camping were predominantly about access for motor-caravans. Requests included more powered sites, and the provision of more wastewater disposal systems. There was also a request for approval to park overnight at day visitor locations which would have a benefit to other visitors by improving security at road ends.

## Response

- The department prefers that all overnight visitors at vehicle accessible locations to use designated camping areas. There is a good network of camping grounds throughout New Zealand that provide powered sites, and serviced campgrounds on land managed by the department also provide this opportunity.
- It is not considered a priority for the department to provide more serviced campgrounds, in view of the commercial opportunity that such facilities provide for private businesses.

- The preferred option for motor-home wastewater disposal is to coordinate with local authorities in providing the required service at locations where the waste can be best managed. Good information about where to find wastewater disposal facilities will also be key to encouraging the right behaviour, a project DOC and the Ministry for the Environment are jointly working on.

#### 4.17 VANDALISM AT ROAD ENDS

The topic of vandalism at road ends is an important one, with a number of requests for DOC to assist improving security for visitors' cars and other valuables.

##### **Response**

*Information and interpretation should be of high quality, accurate, effectively communicated and accessible (Draft General Policy Conservation Act).* The issue of vandalism at road ends is recognised, and signs are being provided at key locations.

The department has a project underway to further explore this issue of security at road-ends, and options for particular associate groups to assist will be explored.

#### 4.18 FEES

A small number of submissions dealt with DOC's facility fees, which apply for campgrounds and the majority of huts. There were suggestions for changing the fee structure, but no group offered to accept higher charges.

##### **Response**

*Charges may be made for the use of visitor accommodation, facilities and services (Draft General Policy Conservation Act).* The cost to a visitor of using DOC facilities is generally only a small proportion of the total cost of a trip. Small increases in fees are introduced periodically. The decision on the strategic importance of an individual hut *does not* include the ability for that hut to generate revenue.

#### 4.19 DOC GETTING BETTER INFORMED

Some submissions supported the need for good information to inform managers' decision making. This was accompanied by concern at the accuracy of existing information, particularly hut use figures.

##### **Response**

Monitoring use of visitor facilities is an important part of understanding the recreation experience and planning to maximise the visitor opportunities but

minimise the associated impacts. Specialist inspection programmes have been developed to ensure that critical information is gathered within pre-determined timeframes. The department is developing a standard visitor satisfaction monitoring procedure, adaptable to different locations, and improving the monitoring of visitor use levels.

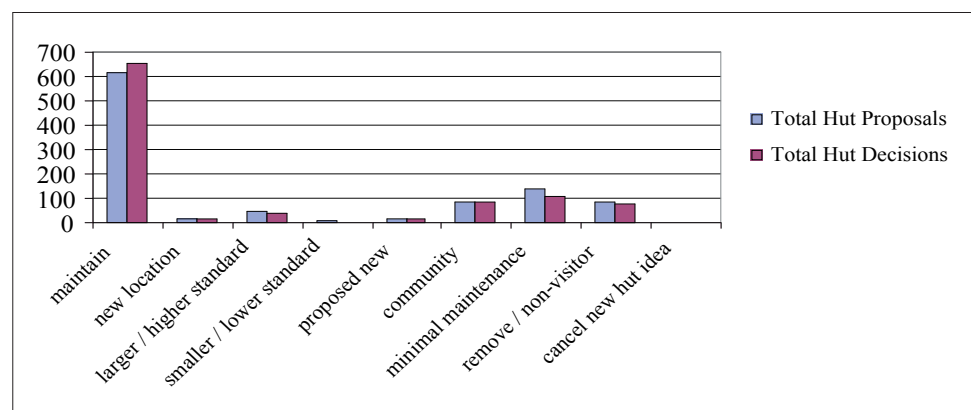
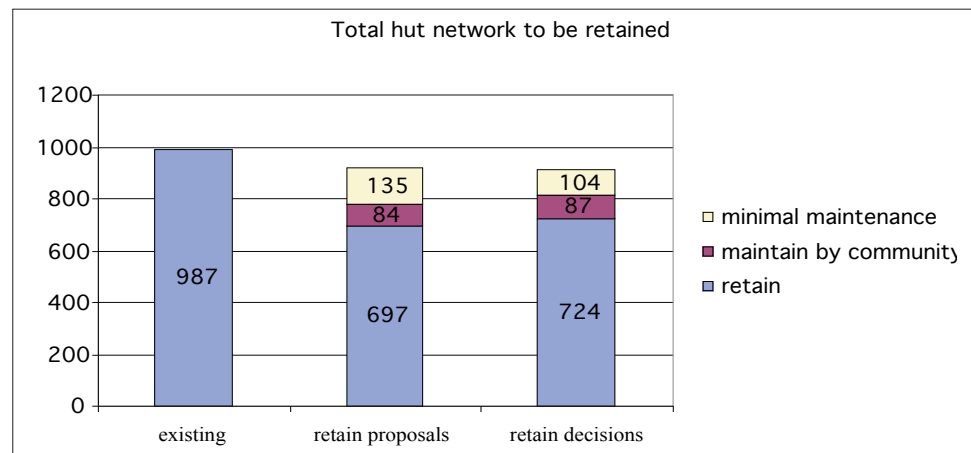
# 5. National decisions analysis

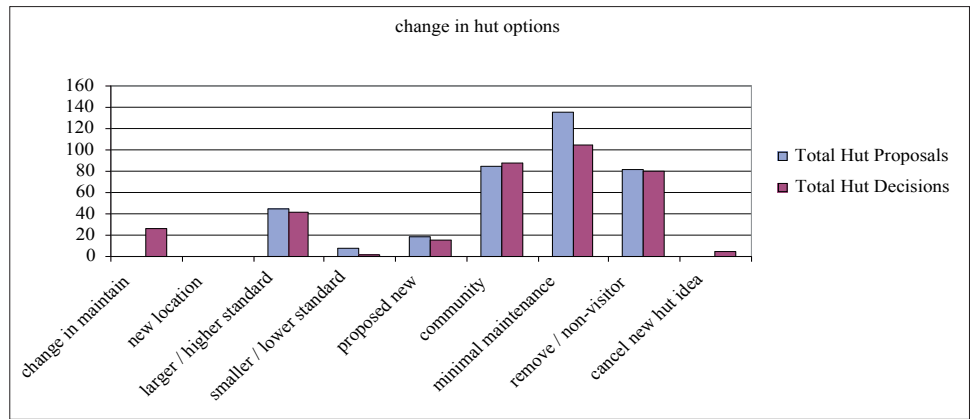
The financial implications of the decisions that have been made are that the department can manage the facilities to be retained into the future, within the budget that the Government has said will be committed into the foreseeable future.

The caveats on this conclusion are:

- No funds budgeted to manage the upgrades of any facilities not currently to standard (this will result in a longer time period before all facilities are at or close to the required service standard)
- No adjustments for inflationary costs, which include increasing cost of contractors, materials and transport (this is being looked at)
- The model management costs are predictions based on the best current information, but will only be proven through actually doing the work.

## 5.1 NATIONAL PICTURE FOR HUTS





The preceding figures show that decisions on huts will eventually see the total hut network reduced from the existing 987 to a total of 811 (83%), (which includes 87 huts on maintain by community) with an additional 104 managed on a minimal maintenance programme.

The result of considering submissions led to an increase in the total huts to be retained. This was a result of some huts being changed from ‘minimal maintenance’ to ‘maintain’. There are also a few more huts that will be promoted as community maintenance projects, where groups have indicated a desire to undertake the work required to keep a non-core hut open for public use. Agreements will be pursued with groups or individuals to formalise these arrangements. Some huts will be replaced with shelters, to satisfy the need for emergency shelter and to support day visitor activity. These shelters are not included as huts in these totals.



The huts that were proposed to be phased out of the current network due to limited strategic importance were for the most part ‘basic’ huts (maintained to the basic service standard - no fee applies). In response to submissions 27 of these huts have been included in the core network. Nine more ‘standard’ huts were added to the network. In contrast, in response to concern that huts of higher service standard were not needed, two proposed ‘serviced’ huts were changed to proposals for ‘standard’ huts and six proposals dropped altogether.

- One popular solution in the face of opposition to phasing out huts is to agree to retaining a shelter at the same site (Bay of Plenty, Wanganui, Nelson). The usefulness of this option will have to be tested through application.

It has been argued through the public submissions that the character of the backcountry recreation opportunities is to a large degree epitomised by the huts that provide shelter there. Of concern is that the small huts are being phased out at the expense of larger huts. The huts deemed to be of little strategic importance and hence for eventual phasing out tend to be smaller huts and this is understandable given that the larger huts tended to be built at places where there was an obvious demand.

The eventual loss of half of the 1-2 person bivvies and 3-4 person huts was a point of submissions, although these tended to describe the outcome in more dramatic terms. In response to submissions, 44 more huts of sizes 1-10 bunks will be maintained as part of the core network than were proposed, and half of these are four bunks or less.

What remains to be resolved is whether the minimum size of huts should be less than the standard four bunk hut already designed for use in all hut replacements in the future. In light of the submissions on this point, it would appear an option to explore.

### **5.1.1 Huts specialist group review of hut decisions**

A group of five backcountry enthusiasts, chosen because of their high level of knowledge about the current hut network, met at the end of June 2004 to consider the decisions made on huts.

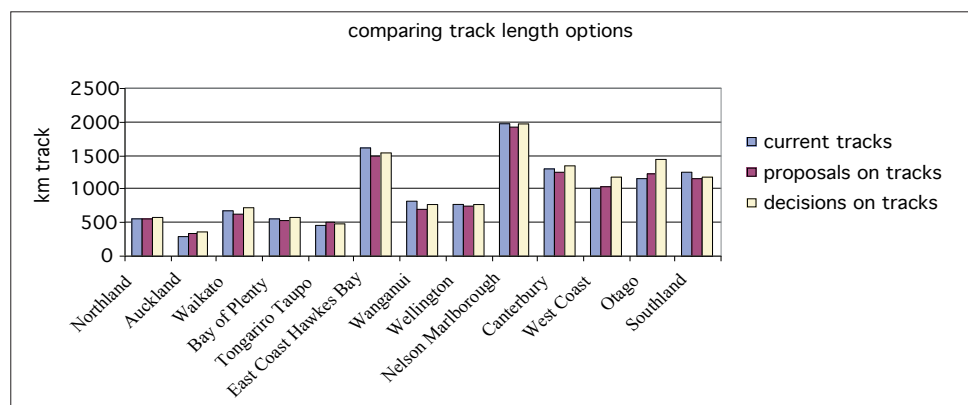
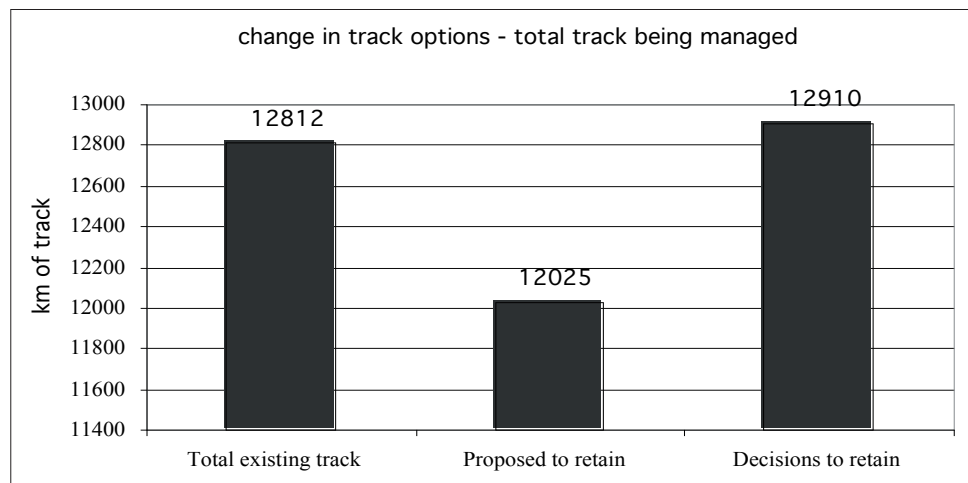
The following are the general observations of the group:

1. The cost effectiveness of the various options is important.
2. If the cost of 'minimal maintenance' for the life of a hut that has little strategic value is more than removal, then it would be better to remove a few more huts and look at using any savings to support more 'maintain' decisions.
3. The retirement date was questioned on a number of occasions. It seems likely that an engineer's view of the structural integrity of a hut is different to a trampers view, something that may need further work (e.g. how to share technical information). A similar issue has been raised, whereby a risk assessment by a technical expert that an avalanche or other natural catastrophic event poses too great a risk for people using a hut, is not seen as realistic by some hut users.
4. There is an opportunity provided by a 'two person - no bunk' bivvy that can accommodate parties of up to four if needed. Existing huts and bivvies should be able to be replaced with one of these in appropriate places.
5. A flyable bivvy could be designed for use in locations where there is limited use, the public express a desire to retain a hut and the department is unsure whether a hut should be provided or not. A bivvy could be provided until such time as it was established that it was getting so little use it should be removed and relocated.
6. The relative scale of costs for huts of various sizes could be assessed to see whether there is an optimum size for huts.
7. Some 'maintain by community' huts are clearly 'core' to the hut network, but have a community group interested in having full management and ownership responsibility. DOC should articulate the strategic importance of the hut more-so than the term 'maintain by community' implies.

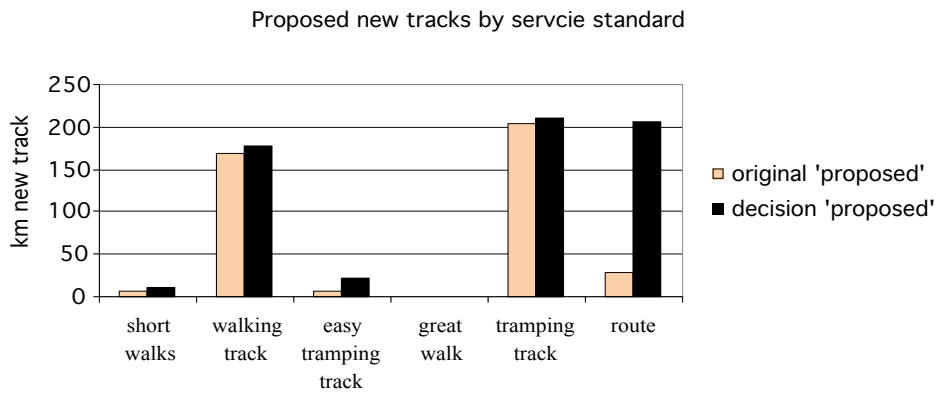
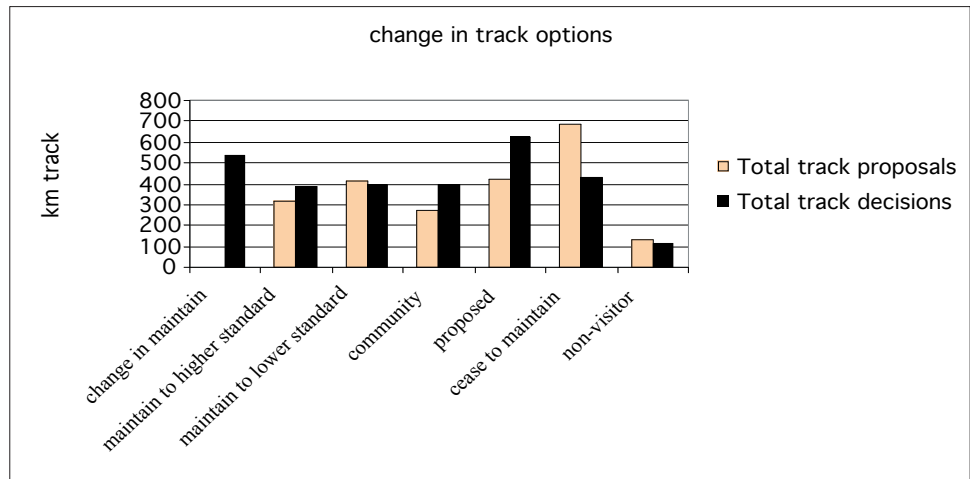
8. Explanations of decisions will need clear definitions to avoid confusion with the public (e.g. the difference between remove and minimal maintenance).
9. The group also recommended not increasing the size of six huts to be replaced.
10. There were also a number of questions asked about the reasoning behind decisions but with no specific recommendation on the future of the hut.
11. DOC promotes the concept that sites are managed for a predominant visitor group with the result that all huts in a multi-day circuit are managed to the same size and service standard. There will be situations where backcountry adventurer trampers will prefer to use smaller basic huts located along a popular track where there are also larger huts with higher service standards (e.g Cass - Lagoon Saddle track). Such an approach may help deal with concern at larger huts being built on classic backcountry tramping tracks.

Changes recommended by the group have led to changes reflected in the decisions now made.

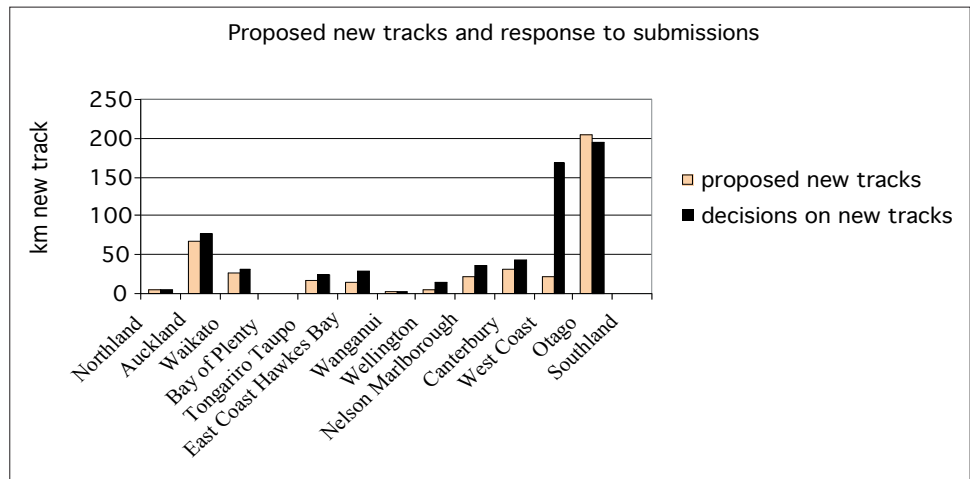
## 5.2 NATIONAL PICTURE FOR TRACKS







These figures detail the scale and changes in track length comparing current track managed, proposals to retain as part of a core track network, and decisions on that core network.

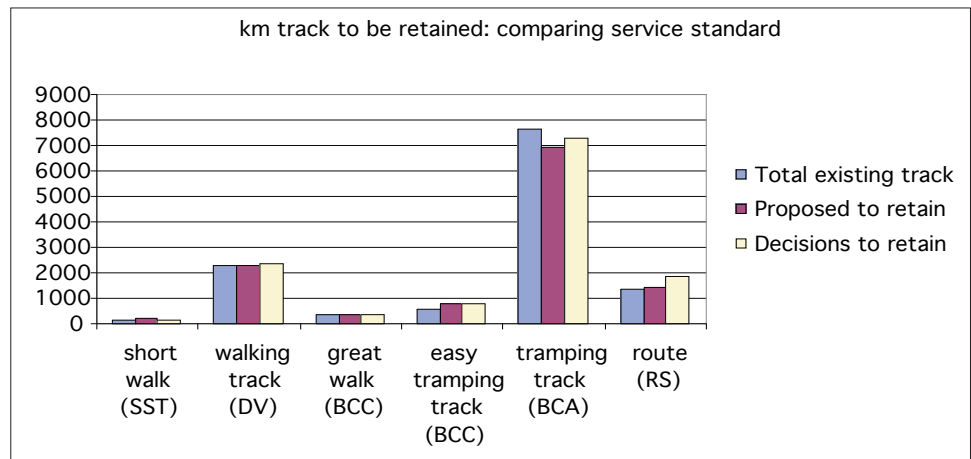


The final track length to be maintained is 12,910km, which is 98 km more than the current 12,812km current track. This is the result of decisions that 527km of track proposed to be phased out of the system now being retained, and 625km new track proposed for the system. Some of these new tracks were the result of strong community interest expressed through the consultation process, but there is also at least 200km of new track coming to the department as a result of High Country Tenure Review outcomes, and 158km of route to be marked in West Coast southern

alps locations to better connect the remote tramping network there. Overall the decision for the track network have been influenced by submissions to change options for approximately 9% of the network by length, and with the result that 4% more of the track will be retained.

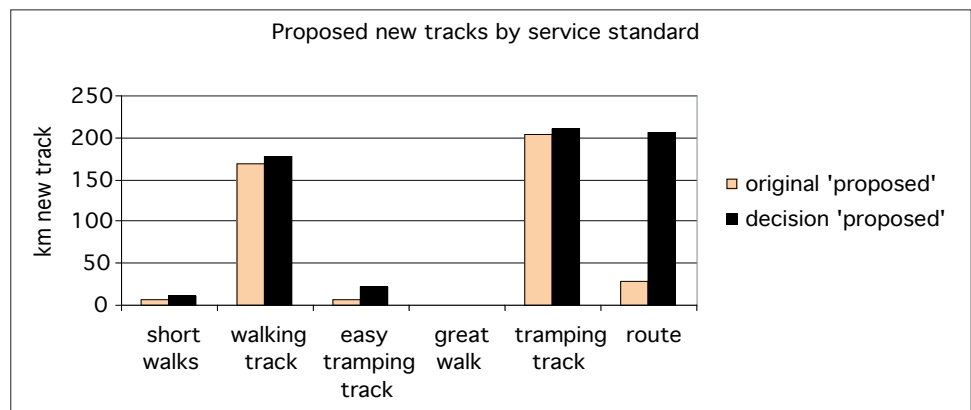
At the time that consultation began, the total reported was 12,551km, but some new land acquisitions and track inspections have improved the data with the result of 276km more track length now in the current total.

The ability to manage a greater length of track into the future and still keep within the projected budget is the result of a reduction in either the intended service standard for a number of tracks or a revision of the likely management costs against the model life cycle costs.



This figure shows the intended changes in the track lengths based on their service standard. Because service standards are intended to reflect the preferred track condition for the different visitor groups, these results show that all visitor groups except the Short Stop Traveller will benefit from having more tracking available for their use as a result of the decisions.

There are a variety of reasons why the 'short walk' category of track will be reduced, in part because some tracks will be maintained to a lower standard, because to date they have never been managed at this highest standard, and it is now not considered necessary to do so.



- There are 11km of new short walks now intended, which represent 20 tracks on average 450m each.

- There are 207km of new Walking track now intended, which represents 54 tracks on average 3.8km each.

The key message from these results is that the majority of the track network is tramping track suitable for backcountry adventurers, and this situation will remain the case, although there is an overall reduction in tramping track of 487km or 6% of the total track managed to this service standard. Some increase in 'easy tramping track' through upgrading existing popular tramping tracks is to proceed in recognition of the demand for this visitor opportunity (76km or 8% more than currently available), with a more significant increase being provided for 'remoteness seekers' by way of 340km extra route.

### 5.3 LOOKING AT THE EQUITY OF FACILITY PROVISION

Table 1 shows the lengths of track (in kilometres) currently managed by DOC across the country, divided into the service standard types, catering for the visitor groups listed.

TABLE 1. DOC MANAGED TRACKS IN KILOMETRES

CONSULTATION OPTIONS	SHORT WALK (SST)	WALKING TRACK (DV)	EASY TRAMPING TRACK / GREAT WALK (BCC)	TRAMPING TRACK (BCA)	ROUTE (RS)	TOTAL
<b>Current total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>2381</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>7755</b>	<b>1552</b>	<b>12812</b>
Maintain proposal	132	1958	900	6459	1114	10563
Maintain decision	137	2050	887	6822	1211	11107
Upgrade to a higher standard proposals	13	38	20	256	20	347
Upgrade to a higher standard decisions	18	56	57	235	22	389
Maintain to a lower standard proposals	2	58	4	323	40	426
Maintain to a lower standard decisions	3	76	4	276	40	398
cease maintenance / close / remove proposals	8	87		349	242	686
cease maintenance / close / remove decisions	6	64		220	146	435
Maintain by community proposals	11	130		108	26	275
Maintain by community decisions	12	131		151	96	390
not a visitor track proposals		4		91	36	131

CONSULTATION OPTIONS	SHORT WALK (SST)	WALKING TRACK (DV)	EASY TRAMP-ING TRACK / GREAT WALK (BCC)	TRAMP-ING TRACK (BCA)	ROUTE (RS)	TOTAL
not a visitor track decisions		4		51	36	92
Proposed new track for consultation	7	168	6	204	28	414
Proposed track to proceed	10	178	21	210	205	625
<b>Total proposed to retain</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>2257</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>6853</b>	<b>1531</b>	<b>12025</b>
<b>Total decision to retain</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>2361</b>	<b>1201</b>	<b>7286</b>	<b>1828</b>	<b>12910</b>

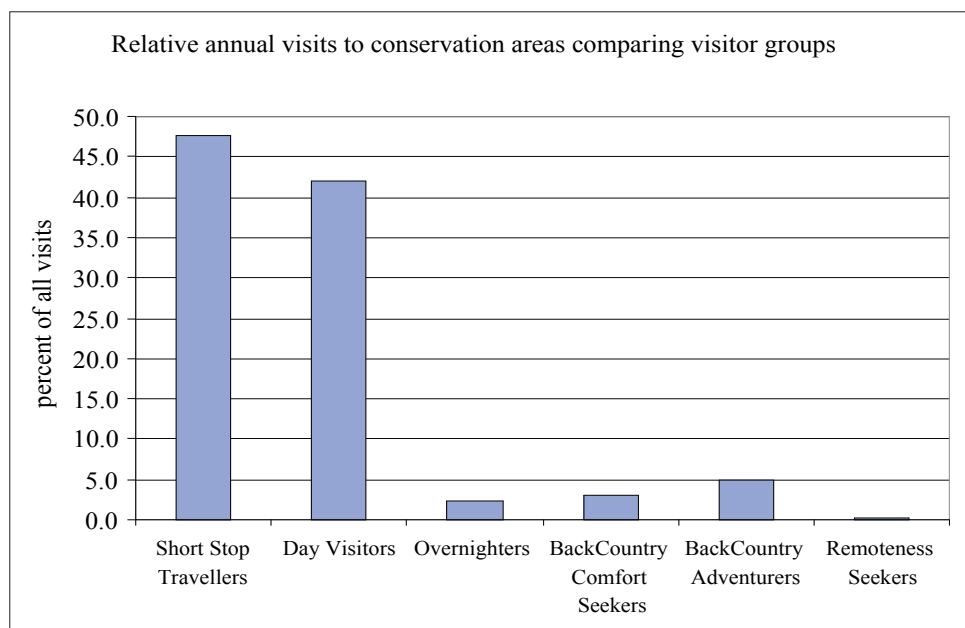
Table 2 lists the number of huts managed by DOC across the country, grouped by the service standard listed, catering mostly to the visitor groups listed.

TABLE 2. HUTS ON DOC MANAGED LANDS

	GREAT WALK HUT (BCC)	ALPINE HUT (BCA)	SERVICED HUT (BCC)	STANDARD HUT (BCA)	BASIC HUT (BCA/ RS)	TOTAL
<b>Current total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>987</b>
Consultation options						
Maintain, bring to standard proposal	34	10	79	332	157	612
Maintain, bring to standard decision	32	11	79	346	178	647
Upgrade to a higher standard, larger hut proposals	2		6	24	12	44
upgrade to a higher standard, larger hut decisions	2		8	22	12	44
Move proposals		1		9	5	15
Move decisions			1	7	9	17
maintain to a lower standard proposals				2	3	5
maintain to a lower standard decisions				1		1
Maintain by community proposals		6	2	24	52	84
Maintain by community decisions		6	2	22	57	87
Minimal maintenance proposals				20	115	135

	GREAT WALK HUT (BCC)	ALPINE HUT (BCA)	SERVICED HUT (BCC)	STANDARD HUT (BCA)	BASIC HUT (BCA/ RS)	TOTAL
Minimal maintenance decisions				3	101	104
Remove proposals				10	72	82
Remove decisions				10	69	79
not a visitor hut proposals				1	9	10
not a visitor hut decisions				1	3	4
Proposed new huts for consultation			12	4	5	21
Proposed new huts to proceed			6	6	3	15
<b>Total proposed to retain</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>781</b>
<b>Total decision to retain</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>811</b>

- In both of these tables the *proposed total* includes the ‘maintain by community’ options. If there is not the necessary commitment amongst recreation groups and the public to manage any of these huts or tracks, then they are likely to be phased out over time, which would reduce the total network accordingly.
- The option of ‘minimal maintenance’ for huts shows that 104 huts will be available into the short to medium term, but as the proposal is to not replace these at the end of their functional life, they do not contribute to the proposed total and hence the future ‘core network’ of visitor facilities. However, a hut can be managed to last a long time, even with very basic maintenance. Such huts will only be removed when an engineer’s inspection deems them to be no longer weatherproof, safe or sanitary. Many of these huts should continue to provide recreation opportunities for some time to come.



The following observations derived from these tables and figures are considered important when trying to understand DOC's current position on the provision of huts and tracks for visitors, as reflected in the public consultation decisions.

### **Tracks**

1. The vast majority of visits are made by people are to locations with short walks and walking tracks, to approximately 20% of the total track length.
2. Tramping tracks total more than 61% of all track length, with an additional 12% managed as routes.
3. The decisions following consultation see this percent contribution dropping to 56% for tramping tracks and rising to 14% for routes.
4. The ratio of people using tramping tracks and routes to people using easy tramping tracks (including Great Walks) is approximately 5:3 while the provision of tracks is 8:1, or nearly 10:1 when routes are included as part of the more basic tramping opportunity provided.
5. Decisions see a small shift in this ratio, with six times the length of tramping track to easy tramping track, and eight times when routes are included as part of the basic service standard tramping opportunity.
6. In response to submissions there was a small shift to include more tramping tracks and routes, and slightly less easy tramping track.
7. The total track provision to be managed into the future will be 280km more than is being managed at the start of the consultation process.

### **Huts**

1. In terms of the number of huts, the proposals had most significant impact on the Standard and Basic huts (with more basic Service Standards), reducing eventually from 847 huts currently to 663 huts once 'minimal maintenance' huts have reached the end of their functional lives.
2. The percent of all huts managed to Standard and Basic Service Standard sees a shift from 85% of current huts to 80% of the proposed total, and 81% once decisions have been enacted, and minimal maintenance huts have reached the end of their functional lives.
3. There are huts currently located near to road ends, many of which were proposed for phasing out, because they do not meet the Principle relating to travel times to hut near road ends. The retention of these more accessible huts have been defended through submissions arguing they are preferred by parties that include children and others who are less able to tramp longer distances. These huts also get used in some instances when trampers start weekend trips on a Friday night. Many of these huts now have decisions to retain them in the network because they are now confirmed as 'popular destinations'.
4. There is no significant increase from the current level of provision of huts with higher Service Standards.
5. There are 21 decisions to upgrade Standard Huts to increase their capacity, and one to manage the hut to the Serviced standard. There are 10 decisions to upgrade Basic huts to increase their capacity, and two decisions to manage the huts as Standard huts.

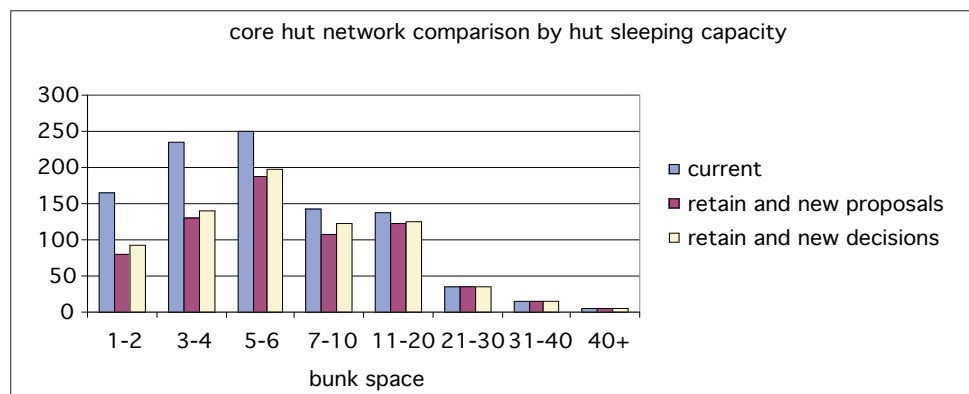
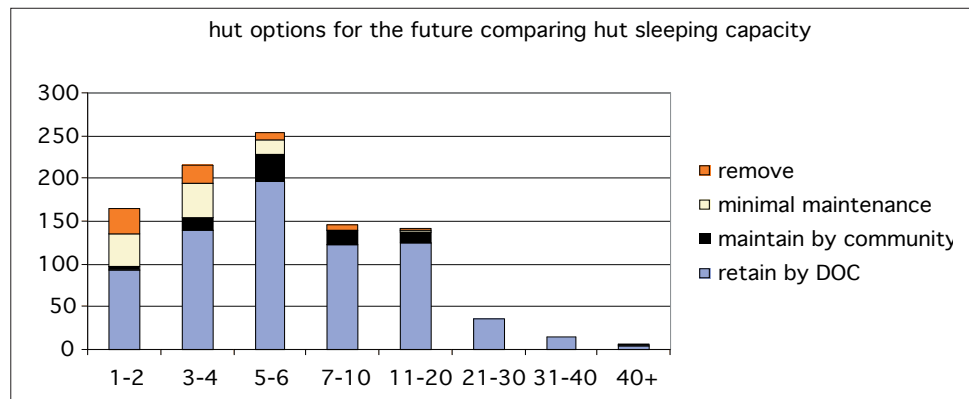
## 5.4 BASIC HUTS OR LARGER HUTS

Another issue of concern raised through the consultation process is that of the size of huts. Do the decisions that the department is making favour larger huts being retained and are small huts going to disappear?

In the past backcountry huts were not necessarily designed to standard sizes. There were over 500 NZ Forest Service standard six bunk huts (SF70) built in the 1960s though to the 1980s, some of which have now been modified. The other 500 or so huts reflect many variations in design, construction materials and maintenance. Sleeping capacity ranges from one to 80 bunks with six huts having 40 bunk capacity or larger.

There were 21 proposed new huts, 9 standard or basic huts for backcountry adventurers, and 12 serviced huts for backcountry comfort-seekers. Following consultation there remain 9 proposed standard or basic huts, but decisions are for only six new serviced hut. Apart from one 'serviced' hut of 32 bunks proposed as booked accommodation for Motuora Island in the Hauraki Gulf, these proposals range in size from 4 bunks to 20 bunks with an average of 9 bunks.

Two figure follow, the first showing the decisions for huts of different sleeping capacity and the second shows the total huts compared with those proposed to be retained into the future as well as the number of huts with decisions that they will be retained (excluding minimal maintenance and community maintained huts).



This information illustrates the range of huts sizes with the majority best described as small to medium rather than large. Combined with the information provided in Table 5 and the preceding figure, the nature of proposals for huts in the consultation process is not one of a significant shift towards huts that are very large,

but continues to reflect the range of huts currently available. However, clearly the smallest huts up to 6 bunks, and particularly 0-4 bunks are the ones most likely to not be considered strategically important for a core hut and track network, and a number of these now have decisions for removal or minimal maintenance.

## 5.5 DISCUSSION ON EQUITY OF FACILITY PROVISION

There is no denying that there has been an incremental shift in the nature of facility provision for people using protected areas in New Zealand. The current network has evolved through the efforts of the adventurous trampers and hunters who have both forged their way into the backcountry and provided many facilities to assist others to do the same and the influences of tourism, wild animal control, local community interest in recreation around scenic spots such as rivers and lakes.

The impression that DOC is embarking on a programme of providing larger huts and higher quality tracks is obviously supported whenever a larger hut is built in the place of a smaller one, and where significant track-work is undertaken. There is demand for these types of facilities, although there is also a clear message coming through submissions to limit the degree to which the character of the New Zealand backcountry is changed through providing higher service standard facilities which tend to attract more visitors.

Analysis is that the amount of facility provided in conservation areas suitable for the different visitor groups shows more opportunities for those people who are seeking the more basic service standard. The proposals presented through the consultation process offered a slight reduction overall for basic tramping tracks and routes. Decisions have seen a small shift back towards more basic facilities. Total track length to be retained now exceeds the current length of track in existence, the most significant increases coming through the formal management of routes joining the West Coast alpine valleys, and new tracks coming through the completion of High Country Tenure Reviews.

The provision of huts continues to favour the visitors looking for backcountry and remote experiences, although proposals included a reduction in effort that is significant to Backcountry Adventurers and particularly Remoteness Seekers. This is because the huts that were assessed as contributing little strategically to the hut network were often in more remote locations. Following submission analysis, decisions have seen some shift to include more of these more basic service standard huts in the core network, but 79 huts will be removed within two years and 104 will be retained till the end of their functional life but not replaced.

The principles used to determine a core network of visitor facilities were not driven by levels of use. If they were then the day visit and short stop locations would have seen a significant focus for improving facility provision. The consultation process was a good opportunity for people to make clear if they consider there are insufficient Day Visitor opportunities, and there was support provided for existing facilities as well as a number of new proposals suggested. Local communities in particular promoted more opportunities for access in their locality, including interest in coastal walking.

Within the context of the new Government funding, that “New Zealanders and visitors will have continued access to the full range of recreational opportunities



they presently enjoy”, this process of exchange of views between the department and the public has led to the decisions on the future of visitor facilities that achieves optimising the network, makes better use of the resources and demonstrates some subtle rather than dramatic shifts in commitment that will better serve the recreating public. The department recognises that every hut will be special to some individuals, and the decisions made that will led to the loss of any of these facilities that are so characteristic of the New Zealand backcountry have not been made lightly. They have been made with the view that there remains an acceptable level of equity in the total facility provision available to the different types of visitors who use conservation areas.

## 6. Conservancy comparison of key submission issues and decisions

The following table provides summary information on proposals that received the most submissions, as well as some detail on proposed new facilities, and the decisions on those facilities. This information is obviously very selective and cannot be used to reflect the full outcome of the process. It is intended to provide a snapshot view of the proposals that were of most interest to the public who engaged in this consultation process.

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION OUTCOMES; PROPOSALS MOST OPPOSED, MOST SUPPORTED, AND NEW FACILITY PROPOSALS, AND DECISIONS FOR THOSE PROPOSALS.

	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Northland submissions on key issues	Waima Forest Track - upgrade track to standard - concern that the track will be upgraded too much 13/27 opposed	Tutamoe Track, all 10 submissions opposing closure of only track of any length near Dargaville. Bratty's bush track closure objected to by all 8 submitters, local community interest,	Proposal for Peach Cove hut to be booked accommodation opposed by 4/6 submissions. Tangihua hut upgrade opposed by 3/12 submissions - as too much improvement	Taumarumaru Coastal Track, short walk and disabled access well supported with 26 submissions in support, none opposed.	Proposed 2 huts for Waima Ranges, 13/19 submissions supporting - appears to be a desire to keep facilities basic and not to see increased use, but support facility provision.		
Northland decisions on key issues	Maintain track - upgrade as required to tramping track standard	Decision Maintain Tutamoe track and Bratty's bush track (VAMS doesn't say what standard instead of Short Walk)	DOC control over the facility and people require Peach Cove hut to be booked rather than all arrivals having access. Upgrade of Tangihua hut is necessary in view of its use.	Continue with this concept.	Continue with concept to supply huts.		
Auckland submissions on key issues	Awana Campsite, 13/15 submissions opposed closing this campsite down, due to problems with informal camping. Proposed Islington Bay campsite 6 opposed,	Rationalization at Sunny Bay Sunny Bay wharf maintain by community, Two House bay wharf remove, proposed Sunny bay campsite - generally opposed.	Some opposition to reducing effort on some lesser used walkways, Vining WW maintain by community opposed 4/7, Closure of a section of Mt William Walkway 4/4 opposed.	4 new huts on Great Barrier Island 20+ submissions in favour of each.	Proposed Motuora hut, 8 in favour, 0 against		
Auckland decisions on key issues	Decision is reduce Awana campsite from 150 to 100 and create more of a buffer to the estuary. Compromise solution for Islington Bay is to have a campground developed at Boulder Bay, Rangitoto Island	Wharves not considered core to visitor access at Kawai, and maintain by community decisions will be pursued, proposed campground will not be pursued.	Continue with maintain by community for Vining WW, but maintain Mt William WW.	Conservancy has rationalised the proposals to a more realistic 2 additional huts and shifting Kaiaraara hut.	Not recorded in the decisions table?		A new proposal for a basic campsite on Waiheke Island will be further investigated. Proposals for more mountain biking and access for the disabled are being pursued.

	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Waikato submissions on key issues	Stony Bay & Te Hope tracks, 12/18 opposed to cease maintenance, due to profile of the track.	Waiau summit track, 17 submissions all opposed to the cease maintenance proposal due to significant local interest and history of track.	Castle Rock track, 11/14 submissions opposed to cease maintenance, good destination for scenic views near Coromandel.	Hihi-Kopu hut, all 15 submission supporting the new hut proposal.	Proposed Christmas Creek hut - 11 supporting submissions; Proposed Hauhungaroa Hut, 9 supporting submissions.	Proposed tracks for the Whangamarino wetland have been confirmed as strategically desirable. Four new huts (2 Coromandel, 2 Pureora), two campsites (Grosbites clearing, Mahurangi Island) and several new tracks agreed - Cathedral Cove, Knox farm, Bum Bay, Hauhungaroa Range
Waikato decisions on key issues	The decision is to keep the cease maintenance status because of the iwi cultural values, sensitive environment and duplicate opportunities.	Confirmed as Maori Reservation (Gazette 1989 P4141) and so will close at the request of the land owners	Proceed given the support	Proceed given the support	proceed given the support	All these new proposals are intended now to proceed
Bay of Plenty submissions on key issues	Proposed removal of huts, Te Aroha, Mangakino, Kauritatahi opposed by 50+ submissions each, safety, challenge visitor use stats, retaining basic hut network	Mid Okahu hut and Daly's Clearing hut seen as easy overnight tramping experiences - opposed removal by 20 and 13 submitters each, but proposal also supported by 4 and 7 respectively.	Nth-Sth Track cease maintenance proposals (4 sites) opposed 15,13,11,11 submission each - seen as a significant local recreation opportunity	Waitawheta hut proposal replace larger size supported by 8 submitters but opposed by 13 - extra resource should be committed to retaining other basic huts.	Hurunui Hut proposal fireplace bigger size supported by 8 submissions, 2 against. Increasing demand in Kaimais.	New tracks proposed for Lake Okitaina, Lake Tarawera, Lake Okareka, Rainbow Mountain and Mt Ngongotaha following public submissions and discussions. It is also now proposed to enhance the South Kaimai tramping opportunities with two new shelters.
Bay of Plenty decisions on key issues	All three huts will be removed, but Kauritahi Hut will be replaced with a shelter to support overnight travel in the Kaimai - Mamaku range	Mid Okahu hut will be 'maintained' due to its apparent popularity. Daly's clearing hut will be replaced with a shelter at the end of its life.	Propose to upgrade to BCA Tramping Track standard as part of loop track via Waitawheta and Te Rereatukahia Huts - pending assessment of ecological issues.	Replace the hut at the larger size (26 bunk) at the Old Mill site, which is superior location.	Replace with larger size hut and the end of its life.	Wider discussion is needed with land owners, but the concept for each of the lakes is to proceed.

	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Tongariro Taupo submissions on key issues	Oamaru hut and Waipakihi hut in Kaimanawa FP had 9 submissions opposing formalizing them as Serviced hut at \$10 a night, and prefer there be no fuel supplied. 3 in favour of higher service standard and fec.	Mangaturuturu and Dome shelter proposals to remove them from the visitor system opposed by 5 and 6 submissions respectively, and supported by 3 and 2.	Proposed Lake Rotokawa viewing area opposed by 4 submissions (not seen as important), supported by 1	Proposed Ohakune and Hapuawhenua viaduct historic walks both supported by 12/12 submissions	Mt Tihia track offering views of Lake Taupo proposed and supported by 9 submissions, 1 neutral.	Proposed Tauranga / Taupo Waterfall walk is accepted. Also note support for Ohakune and Hapuawhenua viaduct walks, and Mt Tihia track. Community interest expressed in Walkway around Lake Taupo.
Tongariro Taupo decisions on key issues	Both huts will be managed as Standard Huts which means no fuel to be supplied. The Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan review provides another opportunity to consider this issue.	Neither shelters will be available for normal visitor use, Mangaturuturu will be removed. People should not be relying on either of these shelters.	This concept of a new viewing area for Lake Rotokawa will not be pursued now.	These two easily accessible walking opportunities with historic themes will be pursued.	Mt Tihia track proposal will proceed.	The Waterfall walk proposal will proceed. The Taupo Walkway proposal made by the community will be supported but not led by the department.
East Coast Hawkes Bay submissions on key issues	Triple X hut (minimal maintenance) and Poutaki hut (remove) received 15/19 submission each opposing the proposal.	All of the top 15 submissions were about huts, with more opposition to reducing effort then support except Sentry Box hut which was supported for being too close to a roadend.	Of note is the lack of submissions on Te Urewera facility proposals	New track proposals were supported; Howletts to Daphne route, Heipiipi track, Marawaiwai disabled access track, Mohaka river vehicle access, Daphne road access.	A new hut (Ruahine biv) and an upgrade (Tam biv) were supported with 8 submission each in favour.	13 new proposals were received for tracks.

	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
East Coast Hawkes Bay decisions on key issues	Triple X hut will now be maintained, and Poutaki hut put onto Minimal Maintenance, recognizing public interest.	Craigs, Kumeti, Middle Stream, Sentry Box hut will be removed, Dianes, Gold Creek and Kaweka Flats hut will remain on Minimal Maintenance. Herricks hut will be maintained by the community. Domimie hut will now be maintained to basic standard, Mahuka saddle hut will be managed as an historic hut not for overnight use.	Ngaheramai and Tawhiwhi huts will be rationalised to eventually retain just one hut. Waopaoa hut will be replaced to a larger size at the end of its life.	All these proposals will proceed.	Ruahine biv will be built (and named Apias hut, and Tarn biv will be upgraded to ??? Service Standard	The conservancy has agreed with 7 new proposals including; disabled access for Balls Clearing, reopening Ruahine tracks (Colenso spur, Parks Peak) Ngawaaparua /Ngarororo fishing access, linking Waikaremoana to Whirinaki.
Wanganui submissions on key issues	Proposals for removing huts and closing tracks in the Waitotara Conservation Area received considerable opposing submissions (75/76 opposed Maungarau Hut, 57/58 Pokeka hut, 46 Tahupo Route, 38 Whatiwahati route).	Closure of the Dover route in Egmont NP was opposed by all 24 submissions, and seen as a low cost and useful access option and visitor experience.	Strong opposition (49/54 submissions) to a new Ngapuru Hut in Waitotara - preference to retain the existing huts.	DOC to facilitate Maintain by Community of MV Ongarue Riverboat supported by all 36 submissions. The resting place of the vessel remains an issue.	Cease maintenance of the Auroa track to Lake Dive ENP was supported by 18 and opposed by 8 submissions. Arguments for retaining the track have validity.	Approved Oamaru suspension bridge and Ngapuru hut. New proposals accepted for Waitotara Swingbridge, Pokeka camping shelter, Maungarau camping shelter (to replace hut).
Wanganui decisions on key issues	Decisions as concluded with user group; Pokeka hut and Maungarau hut each replaced with a shelter, cease maintenance or maintain by community for Tahupo - Maungarau route, Whatiwahati to Pokeka/ Maungarau route and Pokeka track.	Maintain to a lower standard, meeting submitters desire to retain track marking, and basic access.	The decision is to build a hut either at this site or another site that may better suit the needs of family trampers.	This old vessel will be maintained by the community once issues have been resolved with the various interested parties.	The proposal to cease maintenance for this track will be pursued.	The Oamaru bridge and Ngapuru hut will be built. The other new proposals for the Waitotaras will be pursued.

	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Wellington submissions on key issues	Submissions opposed Dorset Ridge hut (19/25) North Ohau hut (9/15) and Oriwa Biv (11/15), maintain by community Neill Forks hut (17/18) Cattle Ridge hut (14/15) and minimal maintenance Arete Forks hut (13/16), because they provide important recreation opportunities or support particular user group needs.	Moving Nichols hut to another location was opposed by 20 of 25 submissions on the grounds that the current location of the hut is strategically important .Proposal to move Maungahuka hut strongly opposed 11/18, arguing that it should be retained at its current site, but not increased in size.	Proposal to maintain the track from Roaring Stag Lodge to cattle Ridge hut to a lower standard (route) was opposed (7/10) - the area is considered an important tramping area.	Waiopahu and Waitewaewae track upgrade proposals supported (10/12 and 11/12) but with concern that the tracks not be upgraded too much.	Formalising a track on Rae ridge gained 10/15 submissions in support. Concern at environmental impacts and encouraging more people onto the tops were expressed.	Replacement of South Ohau hut (removed due to erosion/slipping) gained 16 submissions, arguing the journey to Te Matawai needed an intermediate hut.
Wellington decisions on key issues	Nichols, Neill Forks and Arete Biv will be added to the core network. Dorset Ridge, North Ohau will be maintained by the community. Cattle Ridge will remain maintain by community. Oriwa biv will be removed.	Nichols hut will be retained at its current site and considered part of the core network. Agree to retain Maungahuka in its current site, and replace with 10 bunk hut on retirement.	Agree to maintain the track to Tramping Track standard.	These tracks will be upgraded to the tramping Track standard.	The Rae Ridge track proposal will proceed.	A new hut will be built to break the trip from the roadend to Te Matawai.
Nelson Marlborough submissions on key issues	Pine Valley hut and track received overwhelming local opposition to an upgrade proposal (105 total submissions). The swingbridge at Mill Flat is also subject to local scrutiny in terms of not wanting to see upgrades (51/56 opposed).	Larrikins Hut received 33/42 submissions opposing its removal as part of rationalising huts in the area. Removal of huts proposals is a key source of opposing submissions. 1000 acre route associated with this opportunity had 19/32 opposing the proposal to cease maintenance.	Proposal to maintain Coldwater hut to a lower standard was opposed by 27/30 submissions - "obviously people have a high level of affection for the hut"	Lakehead hut had 20/27 submission in favour of upgrading to standard as part of moving to a safer location.	Kakapo Peak route and huts, Flora hut and Granity Pass hut were all facilities DOC was seeking feedback on, and got useful submissions on for deciding future action.	Turn Skyline Walk into a loop track, reintroduce camping to Perry and Saxon hut sites, Construct viewing platform and install toilet at Rawhiti Cave, new bridge on Pelorus track.



	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Nelson Marlborough submissions on key issues	No upgrade work will now proceed, other than to ensure service 4X4 vehicle can get to the toilet. Racks and bridge to be maintained to existing standards.	Larrikins Hut and 1000 acre route will both be retained, with the hut replaced in 10 years with a 10-12 bunk hut. Poor Pete's hut will be removed.	The Coldwater hut will be retained and upgraded to 10 bunks.	The upgrading of this hut will proceed.	Adelaide Tarn & Lonely Lake huts will be maintained as a Basic hut, Flora hut will be replaced with a large shelter, Granity pass hut replaced at a bigger size, but visitor activity in the area managed to mitigate impacts, all in accordance with general opinion through submissions.	These proposals will all be pursued.
Canterbury submissions on key issues	Orari Gorge track and campground / amenity areas attracted significant submissions opposing closure (60 and 21 respectively). The local public support for the area has been well demonstrated.	The Cass Lagoon Saddle circuit facility proposals received mixed support, with preference to retain West Harper hut as historic, rationalising huts at Lagoon Saddle, and preference to keep the track BCA standard.	Ashley waterfall track proposal to cease maintenance opposed by all 12 submissions, but standard and access issues remain.	Motukurara to Little River Rail Trail supported by all 11 submissions.	Maintain by community proposal for Waimakariri Falls hut received equal support and opposition (5 submissions each), reasons to retain hut argued, negotiations with club to proceed.	7 other track / route proposals (Tekapo WW, Mt Edwards summit route, Henery Saddle - Lewis Pass, Lewis Tops, Rolleston pack track, Casey- Bisner saddle) and 2 new hut proposals (Deer Valley, Pete's Stream-Poulter) were put forward via submissions.
Canterbury decisions on key issues	Decision to maintain the facilities at Orari Gorge	Facility decisions at Cass Lagoon Saddle and associated tracks will be managed in line with general public opinion - eventually replace the A Frame with a 10 bunk hut, minimal maintenance for Lagoon Saddle hut, Cass Saddle hut to be replaced with shelter. The track will be maintained to Tramping Track standard.	The Ashley waterfall track will be physically closed rather than 'cease maintenance' as it will be dangerous for the public to try to use this track - Glentui tracks are a good substitute and only 5kms away.	The Rail Trail proposal will be pursued.	Maintain by community proposal will be further pursued. There is support for retaining a hut at this location, and if a user group can take on a maintenance role, this will be a good solution.	A proposal to rationalise the tracks in the Mt Thomas - Pinchgut area has resulted in agreement to maintain one track linking these places. 7 new proposed tracks and 2 new huts were not seen as strategically important compared with existing facilities.



	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
West Coast submissions on key issues	Scamper Torrent Hut minimal maintenance proposal was opposed by all 20 submissions on the grounds of its importance for backcountry travel. Other huts with minimal maintenance proposals that were strongly opposed were; Lake Morgan hut (15/16) BooBoo hut (12/14) Castle Rocks hut (13/14), Elizabeth hut (12/13).	Dillons Hut proposed removal received opposition (15/16), on the grounds that the hut has history and character, and is easily accessible to family groups.	The proposal to maintain the Kokotahi Swingbridge to the end of its life, but not replace was opposed by 12/13 submissions. Reasons given are that it provides essential access for core tramping opportunities.	Submissions supported the Crooked River Route to be retained (not actually included in the proposals) because of the way this helps form a well used tramping circuit. A theme for the West Coast is the desire to retain sections of remote track to link adjacent catchments.	The moving of Bluff Hut to another location was supported by 8/12 submissions, although there is support for retaining the hut where it is.	New routes to ensure continuity of access across and around the Southern Alps: Bryan O'Lynn route, Camp Creek access route, Haupiri River valley route, Trent River valley route, Tutaeakuri River valley route, Crinkle Top Spur route, Dunns Creek Route, Mikonui Spur access route, Noisy Basin access route.
West Coast decisions on key issues	Decision to maintain Scamper Torrent hut, Castle Rocks hut, Elizabeth hut. Lake Morgan hut and BooBoo hut?	Maintain by community will be pursued, and if not successful, retain on minimal maintenance, pending further historic assessment.	Agree to maintain the Kokotahi Swingbridge and replace at the end of its life.	Agree to include a series of routes to ensure linkages between catchments.	Agree to include a series of routes to ensure linkages between catchments and continuity for remote tramping.	
Otago submissions on key issues	The removal of the Big Hut and Leaning Lodge from the Rock and Pillar Range was opposed by 25/30 and 23/26 submissions respectively.	Mixed response to the proposal to remove Yellow Hut in the Silverpeaks (6 oppose, 5 support), concern suggesting the hut is needed as shelter in bad weather.	The proposal to extend the Albert Burn track was opposed by 6/8 submissions, with concern expressed that the work was intended to offer opportunities for a nearby private lodge. The proposal was to be at route standard.	The proposed Blue / Young link track was supported by 10 submissions, and the associated Young Forks hut was supported by 8 submissions. This proposal is to enhance the existing Young / Siberia circuit.	The proposed Upper Fraser interpretation walk was supported by 9/10 submissions, although concern was also raised at the exposed nature of the trip.	All 7 submissions supported the proposed Luggate Creek track, but there was 5/7 opposing Glacier Burn track extension perceived to be an unnecessary upgrade to a higher standard (which was not the proposal).

	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUES - MOST SUBMISSIONS AGAINST	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	SPECIFIC ISSUE - MOST SUBMISSIONS FOR	DOC'S NEW PROPOSALS AND ANY DOC APPROVALS OF COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Otago decisions on key issues	One of the huts will be retained, and a community Trust should now be able to take on the management of Big Hut.	The hut is in poor repair and an improved Jubilee Hut will improve overnight accommodation in the Silverpeaks.	The Albert Burn track will be extended as a route, essentially maintaining the old route through the forest to the bush line.	The provisions of the Young Forks hut will proceed, as will the Blue/Young link track	This option will not proceed at this stage - it requires more investigation.	Upper Fraser interpretation walk will not now proceed, Blue Young link track will, as will the Luggate Creek track and Glacier Burn track.	
Southland submissions on key issues	Proposals for removal or minimal maintenance of huts in Takitimu CA opposed Coal Creek biv (10/12), Aparima Forks hut (9/11), Whare Creek hut (8/9) Upper Princhester hut (7/8) Redcliff hut (7/8).	Proposals to cease maintenance on Stewart Island Tin Range and Rocky Mountain tracks opposed 4/8 and 7/7 respectively. Tin Range track intrudes on wilderness area and has soil & vegetation impacts, but Rocky Mountains seen as surplus.	Eyre Forest CA huts proposals for removal or minimal maintenance opposed; Island hut (7/9), Upper Windley hut (6/7)	Old Islands hut removal proposal supported by 6/7 submissions. Agree on dilapidated state although interest in historic values.	Proposal to upgrade the Mason Bay hut living area was supported by all 6 submissions although also caution about increasing use of the area.	Proposed Bog Pine short walk Te Anau Area supported (2/2), and Red Tussock short walk (3/3).	
Southland decisions on key issues	Decisions are: Coal Creek biv - remove; Aparima Forks hut - move to another location, Whare Creek hut, Upper Princhester hut and Redcliff hut all stay on minimal maintenance, although access in the Takitimu CA may be reviewed at a later date.	The in Range track will remain 'cease maintenance' and seek to protect the local ecology. Rocky Mountains track will be maintained to the lower 'route' standard in view of public interest.	Upper Windley hut will remain on minimal maintenance, and Island hut will be promoted for 'maintain by community' option.	Historic values will be investigated, but the hut will not be retained for visitor accommodation.	The living area for the hut needs to be improved. Pending the outcome of current visitor research, a separate sleeping quarters may be developed, and the existing hut used only as living quarters.	Both Bog Pine and Red Tussock short walks will be pursued.	

TABLE 4: CONSERVANCY HUT PROPOSALS AND DECISIONS

	MAINTAIN	NEW LOCATION	LARGER / HIGHER STANDARD	SMALLER / LOWER STANDARD	PROPOSED NEW	COMMUNITY	MINIMAL MAINTENANCE	REMOVE / NON-VISITOR	CANCEL NEW HUT IDEA	TOTAL
Northland hut proposals	3		3		3					9
Northland hut decisions	5		1		1				1	7
Auckland hut proposals	1				5					6
Auckland hut decisions		1			3				2	4
Waikato hut proposals	7				4		1	1		13
Waikato hut decisions	7				4		1	1		13
Bay of Plenty hut proposals	7		5				6	3		21
Bay of Plenty hut decisions	13		1			1	2	4		21
Tongariro / Taupo hut proposals	9		3			3	2			17
Tongariro / Taupo hut decisions	11		1			4	1	1		17
East Coast Hawkes Bay hut proposals	82	4	9	2	2	6	9	17		131
East Coast Hawkes Bay hut decisions	89	4	8		2	4	9	15		131
Wanganui hut proposals	39		1	1	1	4	4	5		55
Wanganui hut decisions	39		2		1	5	4	4		55
Wellington hut proposals	36	1	3		1	9	4	5		59
Wellington hut decisions	38		4		1	11	3	2	1	59
Nelson Marlborough hut proposals	139	3	6	2		1	5	9		165
Nelson Marlborough hut decisions	139		7	1	1	2	6	8		164
Canterbury hut proposals	108	1	2			25	31	17		184
Canterbury hut decisions	113	1	1			26	29	14		184
West Coast hut proposals	65	3	4	1		7	55	17		152
West Coast hut decisions	80	4	3	1		7	34	23		152

	MAINTAIN	NEW LOCATION	LARGER / HIGHER STANDARD	SMALLER / LOWER STANDARD	PROPOSED NEW	COMMUNITY	MINIMAL MAINTENANCE	REMOVE / NON-VISITOR	CANCEL NEW HUT IDEA	TOTAL
Otago hut proposals	41	2	5	1	2	5	8	11		75
Otago hut decisions	41	1	6		2	6	10	9		75
Southland hut proposals**	35					16	11	2		64
Southland hut decisions**	37	5	1			16	5	2		66

\*\*Southland results exclude Fiordland National Park as the review of this Management Plan for this park is still in process.

TABLE 5: CONSERVANCY TRACK PROPOSALS AND DECISIONS

	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN TO HIGHER STANDARD	MAINTAIN TO LOWER STANDARD	COMMUNITY	PROPOSED	CEASE TO MAINTAIN	NON-VISITOR	PROPOSALS TO RETAIN	CURRENT
Northland track proposals	475	58	6	5	5	6		549	
Northland track decisions	482	70	1	10	10	2		574	565
Auckland track proposals	198	26		39	68	5	29	332	
Auckland track decisions	197	44	9	38	77	5	29	365	322
Waikato track proposals	519	10	21	43	26	63	12	619	
Waikato track decisions	574	10	67	43	31	30	12	726	736
Bay of Plenty track proposals	390	86	52	2		25		530	
Bay of Plenty track decisions	409	88	45	2	0	11		544	556
Tongariro / Taupo track proposals	442	0	10	0	16	34		467	
Tongariro / Taupo track decisions	444	13	10	3	19	13		490	484
East Coast Hawkes Bay track proposals	1294	29	140	17	15	66	59	1495	
East Coast Hawkes Bay track decisions	1309	35	138	21	30	65	41	1533	1609
Wanganui track proposals	685	9		2	2	114		697	
Wanganui track decisions	685	9	16	64	2	36		775	809

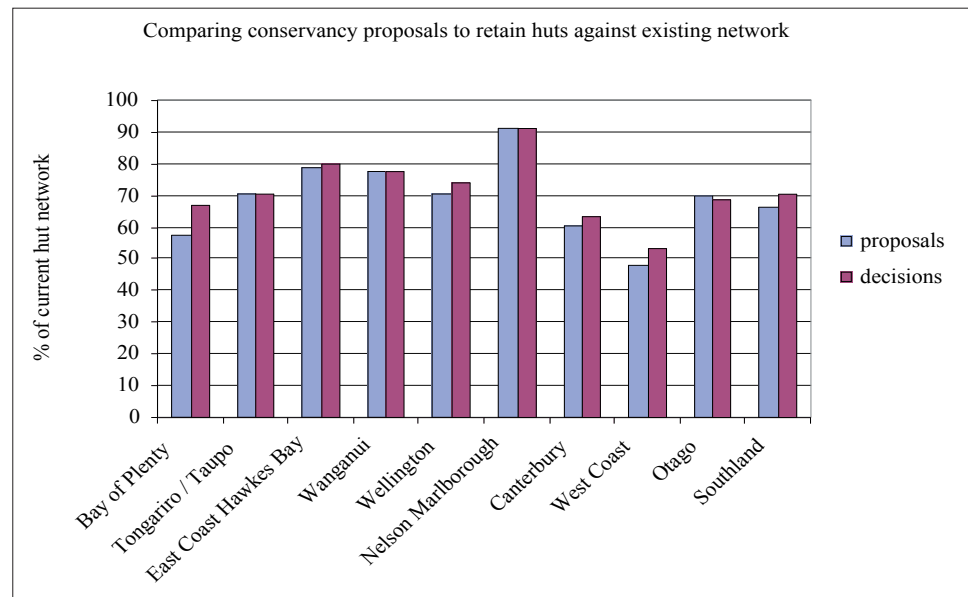
	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN TO HIGHER STANDARD	MAINTAIN TO LOWER STANDARD	COMMUNITY	PROPOSED	CEASE TO MAINTAIN	NON-VISITOR	PROPOSALS TO RETAIN	CURRENT
Wellington track proposals	625	0	81	23	6	44	1	736	
Wellington track decisions	686	0	34	28	15	23	1	763	771
Nelson Marlborough track proposals	1850	47	2	4	22	68	7	1925	
Nelson Marlborough track decisions	1869	55	9	3	36	36	7	1973	1980
Canterbury track proposals	1159	0		72	32	53	4	1262	
Canterbury track decisions	1201	0		104	43	24	4	1347	1333
West Coast track proposals	954	35	11	1	22	2	5	1023	
West Coast track decisions	945	53	9	10	169	2	5	1186	1025
Otago track proposals	971	9	5	43	205	134		1233	
Otago track decisions	1205	9	6	37	194	121		1451	1378
Southland track proposals	467	2	42	17		71	14	528	
Southland track decisions	465	2	36	29	1	65	14	533	612
Total track proposals	10605	312	417	275	418	686	131	12025	
Total track decisions	11096	389	398	395	627	436	113	12910	12812

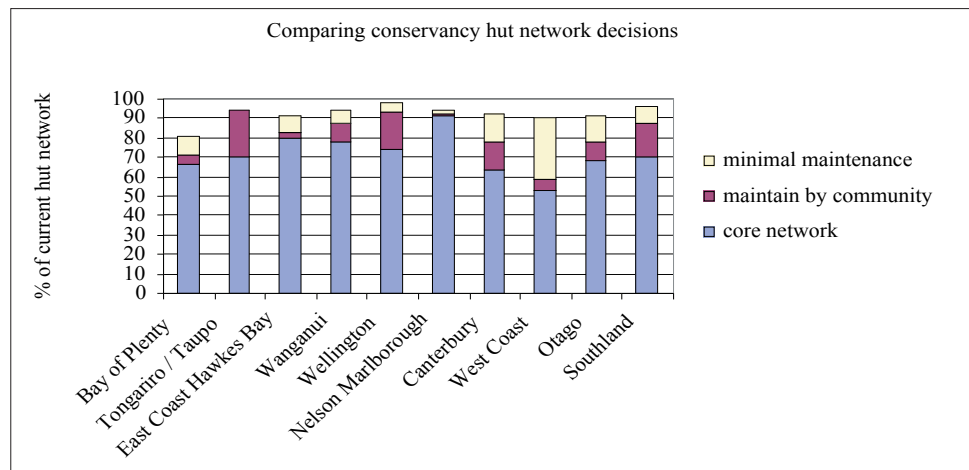
*\*\*Southland results exclude Fiordland National Park as the review of this Management Plan for this park is still in process.*

It is difficult to pick out any outcomes from the consultation process that highlight any one conservancy as being significantly different from the others. The major focus for changes from the existing facility network has been on tracks and huts, and consequently this is where the focus of submissions has been for all conservancies. All conservancies have made adjustments to their proposals as a result of considering submissions. The scale of changes proposed and consulted on has tended to reflect the scale of existing facility provision available within a conservancy, and there has consequently been a relatively proportional change as a result of submissions, generally to increase the core network back towards the existing levels and in some cases to more than is currently provided.

## 6.1 HUTS: A CONSERVANCY COMPARISON

Already covered are the proposals that gained the greatest number of submissions, and reflected in Table 3. The following figures represent the percentage change in the hut network resulting from decisions made by conservancies, compared with the existing hut network. Northland, Auckland and Waikato have not been included because the current numbers of huts are low (6,1 and 9 respectively) and the proposals all include changes that are proportionally very large compared to the other conservancies, and would distort this graphic presentation.



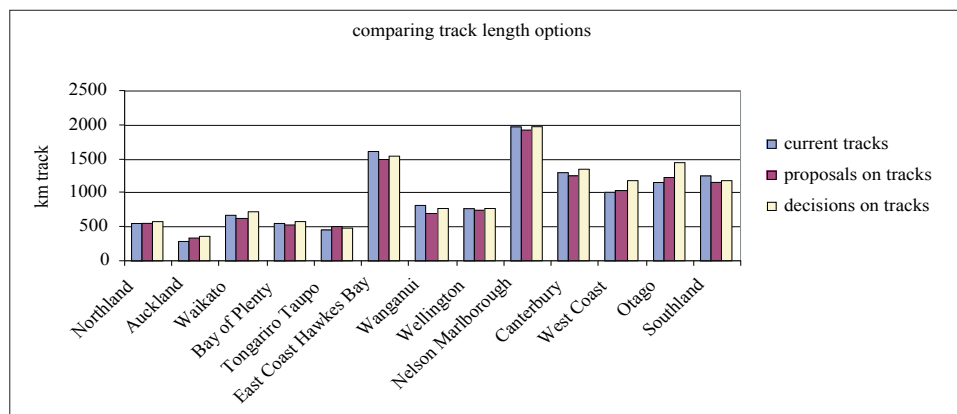


West Coast, Canterbury and Bay of Plenty were notable in terms of the percent of reduction in the total network of huts that was proposed for consultation. Justification for this proposed shift is that the existing hut network was the result of enthusiastic construction in the past, and not all of the huts being in locations that support logical 2-5 day trips. The degree of change resulted in relatively high numbers of submissions for Bay of Plenty and West Coast, but not to the same degree for Canterbury, possibly because the strategic issues have been discussed through open forum for several years now.

- Following analysis of submissions, Bay of Plenty have *pro-rata* reacted most to add huts back into the network, but in terms of numbers of huts amounts to two more huts retained.
- West Coast have also responded to submissions to a greater degree than most other conservancies with 15 huts added back into the system.
- Conservancies that show no change in the total core huts have seen individual hut options change, but with a net result of no change overall.
- While general submission comments suggested that DOC was significantly closing down backcountry opportunities with the proposed loss of many huts, the submissions focussed on certain huts, and decisions taken to accommodate these concerns have seen only a small change in the total number of huts (4% increase).

The department does not expect that each conservancy will have the same number of huts, or the same density of huts within parks. Climatic conditions differ, open camping options vary according to vegetation and topography, and there is now a greater focus on huts that contribute to a multi-day trip or a weekend away, rather than huts in most catchments.

## 6.2 TRACKS: A CONSERVANCY COMPARISON



For length of track to be retained in the core network (including sections to be maintained by community) there is a small and relatively insignificant difference across conservancies in terms of the changes that have been made in decisions compared with proposals that were consulted on and the existing length of track.

Otago and West Coast stand out in having increased lengths of track to be managed into the future, Otago because of concluded High Country Tenure Reviews bringing strategically important track into the public network, and West Coast proposing to formalise and manage tracks that link valley systems in the Southern Alps, thereby significantly enhancing the remote tramping opportunities in the region.

The difference in total track length between conservancies is historical, but was not challenged through submissions, nor considered by the department to be an undesirable inequity. It is considered an historical eventuality that track development reflected the interests of local communities to access nearby forests, streams, mountains and coastlines, the endeavours of adventurers and explorers, government agency initiatives to support domestic and international visitor demand for access, and private tourism ventures—all able to be traced back more than a century.

The proposals for change were made using the Track Categories approach. Efficiencies were identified where tracks appeared to duplicate the opportunities provided nearby, and tracks that did not appear to contribute strategically to visitor access and were little used. Submissions provided evidence in a number of cases that this assessment was not shared by people who used these tracks. The desire for new walking opportunities and to improve multi-day tramping options has led to the adding of further track to the network, and as already noted, the result of High Country Tenure Review has increased the total track lengths in a couple of the South Island conservancies. High Country Tenure Review outcomes will continue to see tracks formalised into the DOC core track network.

Because the submissions on tracks across conservancies tended to reflect the same sorts of arguments; to retain existing tracks, to avoid unnecessary upgrades, to accept new proposals and to suggest more new tracks, the responses to the submissions has also been relatively similar. Some proposed track closures have been reversed to retaining tracks - some with community support for maintenance, some new proposals have been added, some upgrades will proceed, and some tracks will be maintained to a lower standard than has been intended to date. The overall result is individual variation between conservancies but no significant change overall. The scale of changes in track lengths is obscured by the very long distances of track currently being managed.



## 7. Conclusion

The process of public consultation on the recreation opportunities provided by the Department of Conservation 'Towards a Better Network of Visitor Facilities' has successfully engaged the recreating public of New Zealand in discussion about their facility needs in conservation areas. More could be learnt about the views of the 'silent majority' of New Zealanders, many of whom do not use conservation areas, which is a new challenge for DOC's managers.

The proposals put forward for the future management for all the individual visitor facilities were based on the premise that the department can manage 'most but not all' of the current network. Change was also needed where new initiatives have been identified, as more facilities cannot be added to the network without the phasing out of others, if the whole core facility network is to be managed within the projected budget.

The key messages that came through public submissions and user-group meetings is the desire to retain the facilities currently available, plus a desire for some new options, but little support for any major shift in direction. In particular, the unique character of the New Zealand backcountry experience has been defended, with its basic huts and tramping tracks, representing the heritage given us by our forefathers, enjoyed by many people today, to be passed on to future generations.

The department has recognised and responded to the strength of feeling provided by submitters, in particular by many local communities and user group representatives, with decisions that will now retain more of the current network that was proposed at the start of consultation. Facility standards will be focussed more on basic huts and tracks. There is also the need to respond to the pressure already experienced for overnight and multi-day easy tramping tracks and larger huts, popular with New Zealanders less able or experienced enough to tackle the more challenging remote trips, and also supporting the growing tourism industry. Getting the right balance between these different types of experience will continue to challenge New Zealand's protected area managers, but the results of this consultation process should establish a 2004 benchmark against which pressure for further change can be matched.

The facilities in conservation areas most used by the public are the roadend picnic areas and short walks associated with regularly visited river valleys and coastal sites as well as the iconic tourist destinations becoming known by many people around the globe. These facilities will continue to be managed, as few significant changes were promoted through the consultation, nor requested through submissions.

The 12800km of tracks and 980 huts that support the quintessential kiwi backcountry experience will see some changes. These changes have been decided following the development of proposals based on the Principles to Guide a Core Facility Network, and taking account of the 8594 submissions provided by 1468 submitters (which includes many outdoor recreation and other representative organisations).

There will be fewer huts managed into the future, with 79, considered of little strategic value and in very poor condition, removed over the next two years. A further 104 huts, also considered to add little to a core backcountry network will be phased out by not being replaced at the end of their functional life (which for

some of these huts may be in many years from now). These decisions are not made lightly, and the department recognises that all huts provide unique and enjoyable experiences for individuals using them, and each is likely to be very special to certain individuals or groups.

There will be 100km more track managed as a result of the consultation process than is currently in existence. This will still involve the phasing out of 435km of tracks and routes that contribute little to the overall access to and through conservation areas, and 92km will be retained for staff use only. Another 625km of new track will be added to the network over the next ten years.

The conclusion that the final decisions can be afforded within the budget being made available has been reached following the negotiated changes in future facility provision and agreeing on the service standard of those facilities, and as local facility managers, using their experience, have adjusted projected model management costs to better reflect their particular situation. Also contributing to the total facility network is the provisional agreement that 390km of track and 87 huts will be managed by community groups or individuals who have indicated a willingness to support the department in managing facilities available for the public to use. Such commitments may change over time, and will require ongoing dialogue as agreements are formalised and supported.

All these decisions have been made in order to provide the public of New Zealand and associated user groups with some surety about the future core facility network of visitor facilities, to support their recreation into the foreseeable future. These decisions will guide resource commitment and work programmes.

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

Formal planning processes, such as the review of the Conservation Management Strategy, will continue to provide the mechanism for change of these decisions as needed. Conservation Boards will assist the Department to manage specific facility provision issues that will arise from time to time.

# What the decisions mean

Decisions for facilities in 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 insanitary, 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.