

Addendum to the Tongariro National Park Management Plan 2006–2016

As required by the Partial Review 2018

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Cover: Walkers and riders in Tongariro National Park.
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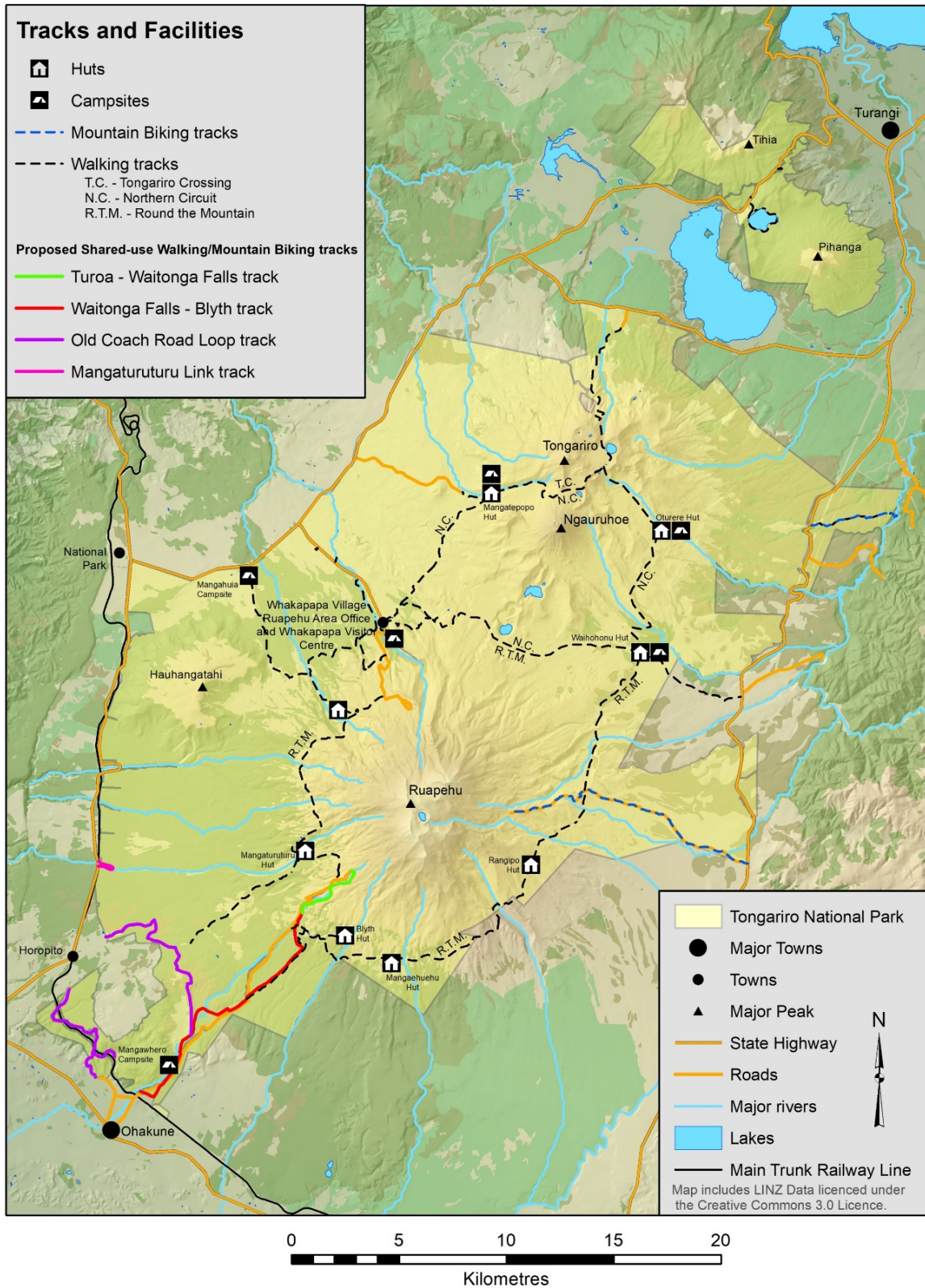
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5.1 Map 10 Access and facilities

Amend Map 10 (p. 139) to identify the following proposed shared-use tracks:

- Old Coach Road Loop Track;
- Turoa-Waitonga Falls Track (note this track requires further detailed consideration prior to being authorised for establishment);
- Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track; and
- Maungaturuturu Link Track.

Map 10 Access and Facilities



5.2 Section 4.3.2.4 – Tracks

Amend the preamble to section 4.3.2.4 (p. 143) as follows:

The extent to which tracks are developed depends on the type of experience being catered for, the level of use received, and the potential impact of visitor use on the environment. Greatest interest for tramping within the park is focused on the Tongariro Crossing as a one-day tramp, and the Tongariro Northern Circuit and Round the Mountain Track as multi-day tramps. Their locations are shown on *Map 10 Access and Facilities*.

Several extensions were adopted as part of the Department's national *Recreation Opportunities Review 2004*. These changes included new tracks to Mount Tihia, the Old Coach Road, and the Hapuawhenua Railway Viaduct. Other tracks may be upgraded, including possible realignment, as resources permit, including the Rotopounamu, Waihothonu, Taranaki Falls, and Tama Lakes tracks, and the Tongariro Crossing. Both the new tracks and the track upgrades were supported by the public during consultation carried out in 2004.

The development of new tracks, or the upgrading of routes to track status, will require clear evidence of departmental and public support and the availability of resources. The Department may from time to time enter into arrangements with groups to implement such proposals, where a business case demonstrates a sustainable track development programme. Importantly, mountain biking opportunities and the development of associated tracks will only be provided for within the national park where they are compatible with the protection of cultural and natural values and where they cannot be more appropriately located outside of the national park.

The main development work is in high use areas where the existing tracks and associated areas of the national park and facilities require constant maintenance. The volcanic ash and pumice soils are highly susceptible to erosion on some tracks, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the national park, where track erosion is very serious.

New shared-use tracks are proposed between Turoa and Ohakune; Mountain Road and Horopito; and Horopito and National Park (see *Map 10 Access and Facilities*). The tracks would in part follow the existing Blyth Track and routes of the historic Covern's and Bennett and Punch Tramways. It is anticipated that the tracks would be consistent with the New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide for Grade 2 trails and would provide family-friendly recreation opportunities. Grade 2 trails are described as easy and suitable for beginners, occasional cyclists and families who have limited cycling experience. The portion of the track from Turoa to Ohakune would provide an extension to the Mountains to Sea, part of Nga Haerenga – the New Zealand Cycle Trail.

It is most likely that the new shared-use tracks would be developed, managed, and maintained by a local community group under a concession or management agreement. Such an arrangement would not mean the group would own the underlying land, which would remain part of the national park. Independent (i.e. non-guided) mountain biking would be permitted on all mountain bike tracks, free of charge.

In the event the group could no longer manage or maintain the tracks, the Department should determine future options for the tracks, including: requiring the group to remove the tracks and restore the sites, finding another group to manage or maintain

the tracks, ceasing to maintain the tracks, or maintaining them using departmental resources.

During the life of this plan, the Department will prepare a recreation strategy that provides for a range of recreational opportunities within the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy. Recreational opportunities within the park will complement those available throughout the rest of the conservancy.

Add new objectives (p. 143) as follows:

- c To enable family-friendly mountain bike recreation opportunities where they cannot be more appropriately located outside of the national park and where they are compatible with the protection of the cultural and natural values of the park and the enjoyment of it by other recreation users.
- d To enhance the Round the Mountain walking opportunity.

Add new policies after Policy 3 (p. 144) as follows:

- 4 Allow for the development and operation of shared-use of the Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track, Old Coach Road Loop Track, and Maungaturuturu Link Track, where:
 - a) the protection of visitor safety and enjoyment is provided for;
 - b) departmental standards for Grade 2 (easy) cycle trails or equivalents are met; and
 - c) the Department has sought advice from the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board with respect to route selection, track development and environmental impact assessment.
- 5 Consider the development and operation of a walking track from the northern side of the Round the Mountain Track to the Turoa car park, and the development of a shared-use cycling and walking track from the Turoa car park to Waitonga Falls where:
 - a) use of the Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track, Old Coach Road Loop Track, and Mangaturuturu Link Track can demonstrate that:
 - i. impacts on landscape and ecological values are avoided
 - ii. the visitor experience is maximised to allow visitors to engage with and appreciate the values of Tongariro National Park
 - iii. the development is compatible with the recreation opportunity spectrum determined for Tongariro National Park at the time a decision is being made
 - iv. mixed use of the tracks is acceptable to the spectrum of users
 - v. separation of vehicle and mountain-bike and e-bike usage generates a positive safety outcome;
 - b) The Department has sought advice from the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board with respect to route selection, track development and environmental impact assessment.
- 6 Where a decision is made to develop the tracks identified at 5, the requirements identified at 4(a)–(b) should be complied with.

Amend and renumber Policy 4 (p. 144) as follows:

- 7 With the exception of 3, 4 and 5 above no new tracks will be provided in the park.

Add four new policies after Policy 9 (p. 144) as follows:

- 10 Will consider opportunities for parties, other than the Department, to develop the tracks identified in policies 4 and 5 above and for these to be constructed, maintained, and managed under a concession or management agreement.
- 11 Independent mountain biking and e-biking is allowed free of charge
- 12 Any party developing the tracks identified in policies 4 and 5 should adopt measures to:
 - a) ensure the protection of visitor safety and enjoyment;
 - b) promote awareness of park values including values of significance to tangata whenua and how to avoid adverse effects on these;
 - c) promote awareness of desired behaviours when using a shared-use track to protect the experiences of, and avoid creating hazards for, others;
 - d) meet departmental standards for Grade 2 (easy) cycle trails or equivalents; and
 - e) address the transfer of infrastructure assets, restoration of developed sites to original state, or reassignment of management functions upon expiry of the concession or management agreement.
- 13 Where an application for a concession is received, or the Department proposes to enter into a management agreement, as described in policy 10 above, the Department should:
 - a) require consideration of the policies in *Section 4.4.1 Concessions General*;
 - b) seek advice from the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board;
 - c) require a project plan that demonstrates the sustainable operation of the proposed mountain bike tracks over the long term; and
 - d) require a full environmental impact assessment undertaken by appropriately qualified specialists.
- 14 Development of tracks should be undertaken on a staged basis as follows: (1) Old Coach Road Loop Track, (2) Maungaturuturu Link Track, (3) Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track and (4) Turoa-Waitonga Falls Track.

5.3 Section 4.3.2.12 – Mountain biking

Amend the preamble to Section 4.3.2.12 (pp. 153–154) as follows:

All non-motorised cycles and mountain bikes are classed as ‘non-powered vehicles’ by the *General Policy for National Parks 2005*. For the purposes of this plan, ‘mountain biking’ has the same meaning as ‘non-powered vehicles’ under the *General Policy for National Parks 2005*.

The *General Policy for National Parks 2005* permits mountain bikes on formed and maintained roads, which in Tongariro National Park include the Tukino Mountain Road, Ohakune Mountain Road, State Highway 48, Bruce Road, Mangatepopo Road, Ketetahi Road and short feeder roads that access parking, picnic, tramping, and camping areas.

The *General Policy for National Parks 2005* also establishes the opportunity to allow mountain bike use in national parks where national park management plans identify the specific routes on which mountain bikes are permitted.

Opportunities for mountain biking off formed and maintained roads are limited by a range of factors including terrain, erosion-prone soils, environmental impacts, and possible impacts on other park visitors. For this reason, mountain biking is currently provided for on only two tracks: the Old Coach Road and the track that provides access to the western bank of the Tongariro River near the Pillars of Hercules (refer to *Map 10 Access and Facilities* for their location). The development of proposed shared-use walking and mountain biking tracks between Turoa and Ohakune, Ohakune and Horopito, and Horopito and National Park provides additional options for family-friendly mountain biking and enhanced walking opportunities (refer to *4.3.2.4 Tracks, Policy 4* and *Map 10 Access and Facilities*).

If the proposed shared-use walking and mountain biking tracks between Turoa and Ohakune, Ohakune and Horopito, and Horopito and National Park are established, the concession and works approval processes (see *4.1.16 Works Approvals and 4.4 Concessions*) need to be followed. The policies below set out the requirements for monitoring and management of the impacts of mountain biking once the tracks are established.

There is a clear requirement to ensure that environmental effects generated by the development of new tracks are avoided. A concessionaire operating within a community trust framework (or similar), allows the Department to efficiently set standards for track development and operation. The concessionaire will be building the tracks and the cost of doing so will be recovered via community and agency funding along with voluntary donations and user charges for guided groups. The conservation goals of avoiding effects on park values and maximising the visitor experience may be best met through a sole concession or management agreement.

The upper section from Turoa to Waitonga Falls includes part of the Round the Mountain Track and the Blyth Track which are currently used by both day visitors and trampers. The Blyth Track was the main bridle track up the mountain prior to the construction of the Ohakune Mountain Road (see *4.1.9 Historic Resources*). When the new tracks are formed, monitoring will establish baseline environmental and social conditions to enable an assessment of the effects of mountain biking, including users' benefits and use and enjoyment. As necessary, management actions to be taken will also be determined.

Most of the other sections of the proposed tracks are to be formed along the routes of historic tramways, which are not currently used by the public. As such the initial emphasis is on environmental monitoring. If significant adverse effects on the environment, these historic tracks or other users are identified, the management approach may be reconsidered.

A trial period has not been proposed on the shared-use walking and mountain biking tracks between Turoa and Ohakune, Ohakune and Horopito, and Horopito and National Park as this is impracticable given the significant upgrades required to existing tracks and the issue that the remainder is essentially a new track. Additional conditions, such as those related to one-way travel, group size, time of day, and season, could be implemented consistent with the *General Policy for National Parks 2005*, if monitoring indicates these as necessary.

The behaviour of track users can greatly influence the enjoyment derived by other users and the level and nature of effects on park values. The provision of information using signage, pamphlets and websites by the Department and partners can increase awareness of appropriate behaviours and what users can do to minimise their impacts.

Adherence to nationally developed codes such as Leave No Trace and the Mountain Bikers' Code can assist in achieving these outcomes.

The Tongariro National Park Bylaws 1981 prohibit mountain bikes (classed as non-powered vehicles by the *General Policy for National Parks 2005*, see paragraph one above) off formed and maintained roads. A change to the bylaws will be needed to allow mountain biking on the tracks listed above.

The Department has provided for mountain biking opportunities on land adjacent to the park, including Rangataua, Erua, and Tongariro forests. Resources include publications, extensive track networks, and support for a number of mountain biking initiatives.

Add new policies and amend the mountain biking policies (pp. 154–155) as follows:

- 1 Mountain bikes are permitted on formed and maintained roads, in accordance with the Tongariro National Park Bylaws 1981.
- 2 Independent mountain biking is permitted on the following formed tracks (*Map 10 Access and Facilities*):
 - a) the Old Coach Road
 - b) track from the Desert Road to the western bank of the Tongariro River at Pillars of Hercules.
- 3 Independent mountain biking will be permitted on the following tracks where they are constructed (*Map 10 Access and Facilities*):
 - a) the Old Coach Road Loop Track;
 - b) Turoa-Waitonga Falls Track (note this track requires further detailed consideration prior to being authorised for establishment)
 - c) Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track
 - d) Maungaturuturu Link Track.
- 4 With the exception of policies 1, 2 and 3 above, mountain bikes are not permitted in the park in accordance with the Tongariro National Park Bylaws 1981.
- 10 [*policy deleted through 2011 partial review*]
- 11 [*policy deleted through 2011 partial review*]
- 12 The Department may grant a sole concession for guided mountain biking on the following tracks (*Map 10 Access and Facilities*):
 - a) the Old Coach Road Loop Track;
 - b) Turoa-Waitonga Falls Track (note this track requires further detailed consideration prior to being authorised for establishment); and
 - c) Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track.
- 13 Existing concession holders for mountain biking on the Old Coach Road (part of the Old Coach Road Loop Track) will maintain their current rights through to the expiry of their permit.
- 14 In addition to the Department's standard considerations for determining concessions, the applicant will need to demonstrate the following:
 - a) it is representing community stakeholders;
 - b) community support for the proposal;
 - c) consistency with Treaty of Waitangi Deed of Settlements for the park;
 - d) a programme to connect track users with park values; and

- e) a project plan that demonstrates a sustainable track network over the long term.
- 15 The Department should establish and implement a monitoring programme for the tracks identified in policy 3 and report to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board annually on the following:
- a) numbers of visitors on the approved tracks and their experiences;
 - b) absence or presence of mountain bike activity off or beyond the approved tracks;
 - c) impacts on the track surface due to mountain bike activity;
 - d) any enforcement incidents and their outcomes;
 - e) nature and level of conflict between walkers and mountain bikers, including feedback from visitors; and
 - f) impacts on native fauna and flora due to user activity.
- 16 Where monitoring indicates that environmental or social effects, including cumulative effects, of mountain biking on the tracks identified in policy 3 are unacceptable, the Department should:
- a) cease consideration to develop any tracks yet to be developed;
 - b) use review conditions on mountain biking concessions or management agreements to change conditions of use; and/or
 - c) implement controls on independent mountain bike use, user flow or other methods to manage impacts.
- The Department will seek the advice of the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board prior to making a determination in respect of the above matters.
- 17 The Department will seek an amendment to the Tongariro National Park Bylaws 1981 to allow mountain biking on the tracks identified in policies 2 and 3 prior to these tracks being made available for mountain bike use.
- 18 The Department should provide information via signage, pamphlets and websites advising the public on how to:
- a) minimise potential conflicts with other track users;
 - b) avoid adverse effects on park values; and
 - c) comply with park bylaws.

5.4 New section – 4.3.2.12A – Electric power-assisted cycles (e-bikes)

Insert a new section 4.3.2.12A after section 4.3.2.12 Mountain biking as follows:

Electric power-assisted cycles (e-bikes) are classified as ‘powered vehicles’ by the *General Policy for National Parks 2005*.

The *General Policy for National Parks 2005* only allows vehicles on identified roads, tracks, and designated parking areas. It also establishes the opportunity to allow vehicles off-road where these specific routes are identified in national park management plans.

The use of e-bikes is an increasingly popular recreational activity in New Zealand and may enable people with lesser riding experience and fitness to explore and enjoy public conservation lands, including National Parks. The use of e-bikes within national parks is directed by the guidance for e-bikes adopted by the New Zealand Conservation Authority. It is appropriate that e-bikes be permitted on all tracks for which mountain

bikes are permitted (refer to *Map 10 Access and Facilities*), on the basis that effects on other users, park values and the environment are negligible.

E-bike use will be monitored and managed, and ongoing use considered at the next full review of this plan.

Objective

- a. To provide for e-bikes to be used in the park where mountain bikes are permitted, adverse effects on park values are avoided, and other visitors' benefit, use, and enjoyment of the park is protected.

Policies

- 1 Following a full national review of the use of e-bikes on public conservation lands, including a review of the Department's 2015 *Electric bikes on conservation land* guidelines, the Department may allow independent e-biking and may grant concessions for guided e-bike use on:
 - a) formed and maintained roads;
 - b) mountain biking tracks identified at 4.3.2.12 *Mountain biking* policies 2 and 3.
- 2 The Department should monitor the use of e-bikes on the tracks identified in 4.3.2.12 *Mountain Biking* policies 2 and 3 and report to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board annually consistent with 4.3.2.12 *Mountain Biking* policy 15.
- 3 Where monitoring indicates environmental or social effects, including cumulative effects, from e-bike use are unacceptable, the Department should:
 - a) use review conditions on concessions or management agreements to change conditions of use; and/or
 - b) implement controls on independent e-bike use, user flow or other methods to manage impacts;
 - c) consider the exclusion of e-bikes from any one, a combination of, or all of the tracks.

5.5 Section 4.4.2.1 – Guiding

Amend Policy 1 (p. 169) as follows:

- 1 Concessions may be granted in terms of Part IIIB of the Conservation Act 1987 and section 49 of the National Parks Act 1980 by the Minister for the carrying on of a guiding service where the public need for the additional guiding concession has been demonstrated. Guiding may be for any or all of the following purposes:
 - climbing, abseiling or climbing instruction;
 - ski mountaineering or ski-touring;
 - hunting other than helicopter hunting;
 - tramping, walking or nature study;
 - mountain biking, including the use of e-bikes;
 - instructing or examining guides so that they may obtain guiding qualifications;
 - supporting other activities requiring approval under other provisions of this plan, for example, commercial filming.

5.6 Appendix 7 – Bylaws sought during the life of this plan

Amend the descriptive text (p. 291) as follows:

- 4.3.2.12 *Mountain biking* policies 4 and 12 – amend *Bylaw 10 Vehicles* to allow the use of non-powered vehicles (specifically mountain bikes) on:
 - the Old Coach Road Loop Track;
 - tracks that provide access to the western bank of the Tongariro River near the Pillars of Hercules;
 - Turoa-Waitonga Falls Track (note this track requires further detailed consideration prior to being authorised for establishment);
 - Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track; and
 - Maungaturuturu Link Track.

- 4.3.2.12A *E-bikes* policy 1 – following a determination to allow e-bike use consistent with policy 1 (section 5.4), the Department will amend *Bylaw 10 Vehicles* to allow the use of powered vehicles (specifically electric power-assisted cycles) on:
 - the Old Coach Road Loop Track;
 - tracks that provide access to the western bank of the Tongariro River near the Pillars of Hercules;
 - Turoa-Waitonga Falls Track (note this track requires further detailed consideration prior to being authorised for establishment);
 - Waitonga Falls-Blyth Track; and
 - Maungaturuturu Link Track.

5.7 Glossary

Insert new definitions for ‘mountain bike’ and ‘electric power-assisted pedal cycle’ as follows:

Electric power-assisted pedal cycle (e-bike)	A pedal cycle to which is attached one or more auxiliary electric propulsion motors having a combined maximum power output not exceeding 300 watts.
Mountain bike	A non-powered bicycle that can be used off formed roads.

