

Great Southern Regional Trails MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED



photo credit: Camp Quaranup

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This document has been published by the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE). It provides a summary of feedback received during the Public Comment period for the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP). It does not purport to be advice and is provided as a high-level planning document. Any representation, statement, opinion or advice expressed or implied in this publication is made in good faith and on the basis that GSCORE, its employees and agents are not liable for any damage or loss whatsoever which may occur because of action taken or not taken, as the case may be, in respect of any representation, statement, opinion or advice referred to herein. Professional advice should be obtained before applying the information contained in this document to particular circumstances. Some information may become superseded through changes in the community, evolving technology and industry practices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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This document has been prepared by GSCORE on behalf of the following regional stakeholders - City of Albany, the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling; the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA); the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC); and the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

GSCORE acknowledges all those who have contributed their time and expertise towards the development of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.

We recognise and value the heritage, culture and spiritual connection of Noongar people with the lands and waterways on which outdoor recreation takes place.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This document collates all the submissions received by the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) during the five-week public comment period on the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) conducted between 16 December 2019 to 19 January 2020. A response to the feedback is provided below. This response is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. All feedback has been provided to land managers and trail managers for review and consideration. It should be noted that some submissions include factually incorrect information. These have not been corrected and therefore caution should be exercised before citing the views or comments contained in the submissions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The public comment period represents the third round of community consultation undertaken in drafting the RTMP. During our first round of consultation we spoke with communities and trail users in order to identify their aspirations for trails and what the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan needs to achieve. In our second round of consultation we asked communities to help us better understand and balance different opportunities and challenges so that we could recommend trail proposals to land managers and funding agencies. In the third round of consultation we circulated the draft proposal for broad-scale community input. The feedback received during the public comment period has helped us to review the findings of the earlier consultation and refine the trail proposals.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS



FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

Overall, we heard that the objectives and principles we've developed for the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan are supported by the community. You told us that trails are valued and needed, and sound planning is required.



FEEDBACK ON THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

While many respondents appreciated being involved in the planning process, some were concerned that they did not participate in earlier rounds of consultation. Others expressed frustration with the slow progress of moving from planning to construction.



KEY FEEDBACK ON THE TRAIL PROPOSALS

While we received lots of positive feedback on the plan, we received a significant number of submissions raising concerns about trail proposals in national parks and nature reserves. You told us that you want assurance that land managers are taking an environmentally sensitive approach to planning.

THEME 1: TRAIL SUGGESTIONS

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
<p>We heard from a number of people who want to see improved maintenance of existing hiking trails</p>	<p>We agree. The region has an extensive hiking/walking trail network, including trails of national and regional significance. The RTMP identifies the maintenance of existing trails as a critical part of the implementation process.</p>
<p>We received a few suggestions for new trails or trail connections (including to areas outside of the Great Southern), as well as areas you thought we had missed.</p>	<p>The master plan was developed over nine months using a combination of face-to-face and online consultation. We received suggestions for over 220 different trail ideas from across the region. All of the trail ideas suggested during the public comment period were raised in earlier rounds of consultation. The short list of priority projects was developed by the Project Management Executive Group using a rigorous multi-criteria assessment (MCA) tool. All the trail suggestions raised during the public consultation period were considered as part of the MCA but were assessed as being of lower order priority. Some of these trail ideas may be included in local trail plans or integrated into regional trail networks in the future.</p>
<p>We received a few comments on the need to integrate existing trail networks and address gaps or problems with exiting paths and trails.</p>	<p>We agree. The RTMP seeks to make the most of the region’s existing trail supply by developing trail networks. We also recommend that land managers consider opportunities to develop trail networks in local trail plans.</p>
<p>We heard from a number of people who want to see strategies to address the creation of unsanctioned trails.</p>	<p>We agree. Unsanctioned trail construction and use is damaging to the environment, compromises the safety of trail users, and leads to poor trail user experiences. The RTMP calls for the creation of new sanctioned trails to cater to the needs of different groups, and the closure and rehabilitation of unsanctioned trail networks.</p>
<p>Several submissions suggested that the term ‘dual-use’ is inappropriate for trails that are unlikely to be used by hikers.</p>	<p>Dual-use trails can serve a number of purposes, including providing local residents with walking opportunities close to where they live. While these may not be favoured by bushwalkers, they are a valuable community asset for cycling, walking, and running. Multi-use trails may also be enjoyed by horse riders.</p>
<p>We heard from several people who suggested that firebreaks could be used by mountain bike riders, thus avoiding the need to build new trails.</p>	<p>Trail design principles vary for each project, depending on the aim of the trail/ trail network and the constraints. While some trail projects can utilise existing disturbances, others require new construction to best manage constraints and provide the type of experience sought by different cyclists. In the main, the surface, gradient, width and location of firebreaks are unsuitable for mountain biking and the RTMP therefore recommends the construction of new trails where appropriate. Regular clearing of firebreaks by machinery disturbs the track tread, making it unsuitable for riding.</p>

THEME 1: TRAIL SUGGESTIONS CONTINUED

<p>We heard from large number of people who felt that instead of building mountain biking trails in national parks and nature reserves, the RTMP should only recommend the construction of mountain bike trails on private land.</p>	<p>The Great Southern has very few sanctioned mountain bike trails, which is insufficient to meet demand. This includes a lack of downhill, cross-country, all mountain, and touring trails. Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing recreational, sport and tourism activities in Western Australia. Almost 120,000 mountain bikes are purchased every year in WA, with 19% of Western Australia’s owning a mountain bike.</p> <p>GSCORE supports mountain bike trails on private land, however, private recreation facilities are established to generate a commercial return and private investors will make decisions about where to invest based on profit forecasts. Small-scale trail networks such as those proposed in the RTMP, and certain styles of trail development (e.g. cross-country, touring) are generally not profitable.</p> <p>Private MTB parks can address supply for downhill or all mountain trails where they are built near large catchment areas (e.g. close to metropolitan centres), where there is existing supporting infrastructure (e.g. existing uplift services such as ski-resorts), or where there is sufficient length of trail to attract visitors (at least 80-150 km of purpose built single track).</p> <p>Private MTB parks do not provide the entire solution to meet local demand because user-pay systems create barriers to participation for disadvantaged communities, low income households, and young people. This is why all tiers of government support the creation of public spaces for sport and recreation. Most public land suitable for MTB trails occurs within national parks and reserves.</p>
<p>We received a number of submissions from horse riders who would like to see dedicated bridle trails included in the regional trails master plan.</p>	<p>In developing the RTMP, GSCORE commissioned a Feasibility Study on Bridle Trails by an expert trail consultant. This study revealed that there is currently insufficient demand for the creation of regionally significant bridle trails (i.e. trails that have the capacity to attract visitors to the region). However, there is strong demand for local bridle trails. We have therefore recommended that all local governments consider incorporating bridle trails into their local trail plans and actively work with equestrian groups to address the needs of local riders.</p>
<p>We received several submissions from horse riders who use the Stidwell Bridle Trail expressing concern about environmental damage and safety concerns associated with motor bike and four-wheel drive vehicles accessing trails in the Sand Patch area.</p>	<p>We note these concerns and have referred them to the City of Albany (the land manager). We acknowledge the need for safe bridle trails and the problems associated with multi-use trails in this area.</p>
<p>Several submissions queried the status of the Kinjarling Trail.</p>	<p>The Kinjarling Trail and Stories Strategic Plan (2010) outlines a proposed trail network along Albany’s waterways that incorporates Noongar stories and culture. We recommend that the new proposed dual-use trails between the City of Albany and Frenchman’s Bay/Torndirrup National Park integrate Noongar cultural interpretation in order to realise the Kinjarling vision.</p>



THEME 2: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
<p>Communities across the region wanted to know how we are addressing the potential environmental impact of trails. We heard that you are concerned about erosion, soil compaction, weeds, vegetation damage, littering, water contamination, and dieback.</p>	<p>Building sustainable and safe trails is a key planning principle for the RTMP. Our goal is to see the trail network built to a high standard and managed on a sustainable basis to enhance environmental and educational outcomes.</p> <p>To achieve this vision, we have adopted the eight-stage planning process outlined in the Trail Development Process (TDP), which provides best-practice guidelines for trail planning, construction and management.</p> <p>The TDP recommends the use of an assessment tool to monitor the environmental impact of any proposed trails (Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Checklist). This is based on the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCAs) assessment requirements for environmental impacts from trails. A wide range of issues are covered, including dieback, erosion/drainage, flora, fauna and unique environmental communities and habitats. Assessing environmental impacts and approvals is the responsibility of the relevant land owner/manager.</p>
<p>We received lots of comments about the need to protect the region's biodiversity, including threatened flora and fauna species, vegetation communities and ecosystems.</p>	<p>We agree. The region is internationally recognised as a world biodiversity 'hotspot' which is a major visitor drawcard. Threatened Species Recovery Plans, management plans and strategies will be used by land managers to ensure that biodiversity protection is maintained. Any new trail development will need to include an environmental impact assessment as outlined in the TDP.</p> <p>All existing and proposed trails should be managed to protect and enhance biodiversity values. Trails can be a management tool by providing managed access into conservation areas, where people otherwise may cause damage when walking/trampling across sensitive sites. They provide opportunity for nature appreciation and education, which may be difficult to communicate to target groups through different means.</p>
<p>We heard from several people who were concerned about the potential spread of dieback (<i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i>) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Machines used during the construction of trails b. Trail users (hikers and cyclists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Land managers and trail builders are very mindful of the need to adopt strict hygiene protocols in the construction and maintenance of trails. DBCA has developed management guidelines, protocols, and Green Card training to help prevent the spread of dieback. Dieback assessment is integral to all site assessments for trail planning and construction, and a variety of techniques have been used with success to address the spread of dieback in many locations in the Great Southern. b. Land managers are using a variety of techniques to address the potential spread of dieback along hiking and cycling trails. This includes avoiding trail construction in sensitive areas, boot and tyre cleaning stations, and bike washdown stations. We anticipate that these types of techniques will be used along trails outlined in this plan. These decisions will rest with the land owner/manager based on a dieback assessment at each proposed site.
<p>We heard from a few people who were concerned that large machines would be used to construct trails and that this would cause significant damage.</p>	<p>Large machines are rarely, if ever, used in trail construction. Trails are generally built to a maximum of 1.2 metre width, using a narrow footprint. This is either with hand tools or small machines may be used in areas where the topography is suitable, or the area has already been disturbed or cleared.</p>

THEME 2: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES CONTINUED

<p>We received numerous comments from people who stated that while they are supportive of mountain biking, they do not wish to see cycle trails established in national parks or nature reserves, including the Porongurup National Park, the Stirling Range National Park, and Mt Hallowell Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. National Parks/Reserves are established for conservation, not recreation or attractions b. National parks are for passive recreation not active recreation c. Mountain biking is environmentally damaging d. Mountain biking interferes with the quiet solitude of hiking e. Mountain biking leads to additional visitor load f. There is a current lack of resources to manage national parks and reserves 	<p>We acknowledge that not all members of the community are supportive of new trail development in national parks and nature reserves. Land managers will continue to work with the community to assess the opportunities and constraints associated with the development of any proposed new trails in these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The national parks and nature reserves selected as possible sites for MTB trails have been chosen because their management plans permit trail-based activities within designated recreation zones. Before any projects can proceed, these management plans will need to be reviewed to consider the inclusion of cycling-specific trails. Some types of reserve have higher conservation values and are generally not suitable for MTB. Downhill MTB is conditionally compatible in national parks, subject to the area’s conservation, heritage and social values. b. All of the national parks and nature reserves included in the plan currently permit active recreation, including hiking and rock-climbing. c. All trail development requires a detailed environmental impact assessment. Good trail planning, design, construction and management can mitigate potential environmental damage. Environmentally sustainable trails have been built all over the State, including hiking and MTB trails, and both have the same impact. d. Single track MTB trails designed and built separately from hiking trails – as is proposed in the RTMP - ensures user safety and enjoyment. There should be suitable trails for all users, hikers and mountain bikers e. All trail development requires a management plan that identifies how visitor load and dispersal is managed. This could include parking limitations, park fees, and restrictions on events. Visitation is managed the same for any new trail or attraction. f. All trail development requires a management plan that includes how the trails will be maintained. This is included in the Trail Development Series and WA Mountain Bike Guidelines
<p>A number of submissions noted that management plans for the Stirling Range and Porongurup National Parks, and Mt Hallowell Reserve do not permit mountain biking or other forms of cycling, and therefore the trail proposals should not proceed.</p>	<p>All of the management plans permit trail-based recreation and cycling on public roads. The Stirling Range and Porongurup National Park Management Plan recommends that the land manager consider a designated MTB path in the Porongurup NP, and a cycling trail in flatter areas of the Stirling Range NP. The Mt Hallowell Reserve Management Plan does not include reference to cycling and this would need to be considered by Council before proceeding with any future trail plans.</p>
<p>A number of submissions asserted creating MTB trails encourages irresponsible behaviour by MTB riders.</p>	<p>We disagree. Evidence from other locations demonstrates that unsanctioned trail construction or riding on undesignated trails (e.g. walk only trails) is reduced when purpose-built trails are constructed for mountain bikers.</p>



THEME 2: ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES CONTINUED

<p>We heard from a number of people who raised concerns about the impact of cycling trails on threatened species in the Albany Heritage Park.</p>	<p>The City of Albany is the land manager for the Albany Heritage Park. The City has conducted extensive surveys on threatened species in the park and is continuing to conduct these surveys in order to ensure that any proposed trail development minimises impacts on, or avoids areas known to contain threatened species.</p>
<p>We heard from a number of people who were concerned ongoing funding to maintain trails.</p>	<p>In accordance with the TDP, all trail development requires a management plan that includes how the trails will be maintained. The RTMP identifies a number of different management and maintenance structures, including the use of volunteer maintenance crews such as those that support the Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Trail.</p>
<p>We heard from a few people who were worried about the environmental impact of adventure bike riding.</p>	<p>Adventure bikes are licensed road bikes used for long-distance touring on sealed and unsealed roads. They use road systems, not trails. The RTMP does not focus on mechanised bike riding, but recommends that a network of adventure bike itineraries (similar to drive itineraries for 2WD vehicles) be considered.</p>

THEME 3: SOCIAL VALUES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
<p>We heard from property owners and residents who live close to the Porongurup National Park who were concerned about the possible impact on their lifestyles or livelihoods as a result of mountain bike trails. The issues raised include visual impact, noise impact, property security, compromised privacy, farm biosecurity, diversion of water resources, and emergency access.</p>	<p>Trail development has the potential to attract new visitors to the region. This may result in an increase in the number of visitors to different towns and localities.</p> <p>(a) In relation to the impact on lifestyles - local governments play a role in destination management through traffic control, zoning regulations, and planning approvals; and land managers play a role in managing the impact of trail visitation through land management plans which are developed in consultation with community.</p> <p>(b) In relation to the impact on adjacent landowners in the Porongurup National Park - if the trail proposal goes ahead, the land manager (DBCA) is required to consult with adjacent landowners to discuss their concerns.</p>
<p>We heard from a number of people who expressed the view that mountain bike trails would cause damage to Aboriginal cultural landscapes and/or Aboriginal heritage sites.</p>	<p>We undertook three rounds of community consultation to develop the draft RTMP. This included opportunities for members of the community, including Aboriginal people, to comment on the cultural significance of existing trails, landscapes and built features. The shared vision of the RTMP stakeholders is to showcase the region’s unique biodiversity, landscapes, Aboriginal culture and settler heritage. The RTMP is a high-level strategic document. Detailed planning, including community and Aboriginal consultation is the responsibility of each land manager.</p> <p>Aboriginal heritage assessments are an essential part of all site assessments for trail proposals in order to avoid potential damage to heritage sites. Traditional owners will continue to be consulted throughout the trail development process.</p>
<p>We heard from several people who argued that the stated goal of integrating Noongar culture and creative expression into trail design and interpretation is disrespectful or patronising.</p>	<p>We disagree. This planning principle was proposed by Noongar people and discussed with Aboriginal organisations and Elders, all of whom were supportive with the caveat that traditional owners would have the final say in what stories are shared.</p>
<p>We heard from several people who advocated for an Aboriginal naming convention for new trails.</p>	<p>We agree. One of the RTMP planning principles is the use of Noongar language or dual-naming of trails. We encourage land owners/managers to engage with traditional custodians throughout the trail planning process and to consider Noongar language for all new trails, and dual-naming for existing trails.</p>



THEME 3: SOCIAL VALUES CONTINUED

<p>Some of you commented on the potential for user conflict and/or compromised safety on dual or multi-use trails. However, others did not see conflict as an inherent problem with dual or multi-use trails.</p>	<p>The issue of dual or multi-use trails is a contentious one. Some trail communities in Australia and internationally report limited conflict when different trail users (e.g. walkers, cyclists, horse riders) share trails. In other locations, user conflict appears to be common. Evidence suggests that conflict can be minimised and safety enhanced through clear signage and public education campaigns. The RTMP recommends dual-use or multi-use on relatively flat trails with good lines of sight (e.g. rail trails) or on uphill sections (e.g. where cyclists must dismount or are forced to slow-down because of the gradient). In other cases we recommend the construction of single track. The type of trail use is by designation which is subject to it being suitable for the proposed use. Designated dual-use trails tend to not be controversial as people use it with the expectation of sharing. The problem is generally with single-use trails that are being used by unauthorised groups.</p>
<p>Many commented on the positive benefits of trails for engaging young people and providing things for kids to do close to where they live.</p>	<p>We agree.</p>
<p>Some of you emphasised the important health benefits of encouraging trail use and having trails close to where people live.</p>	<p>We agree.</p>
<p>A few people commented that sanctioned mountain bike trails are important for elite athlete progression.</p>	<p>We agree. Although the focus of the RTMP is on community and economic development, trails can also play a role in sports development.</p>
<p>We received some comments asserting that unlike hikers, MTB riders don't enjoy the environment, don't care for the environment, and/or are disrespectful.</p>	<p>Many individuals enjoy multiple outdoor recreation pursuits. For example, many hikers also enjoy mountain biking. It is a misperception to describe one trail user group as more respectful or environmentally aware than another. Bad behaviour can be exhibited by all types of trail users. One of the appeals of mountain biking is the appreciation of nature.</p>

THEME 4: ECONOMIC VALUES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
<p>We received many comments on the positive benefits of trails for attracting visitors and growing local and regional economies. However, a number of people were also concerned about the negative impact of tourism on resident lifestyles. In the case of the Porongurup trail proposals, we received several comments from people who argued that the business community has no desire to see the local economy grow.</p>	<p>Trail development has the potential to attract new visitors to the region. This may result in an increase in the number of visitors to different towns and localities. All of the trail proposals are located in areas with an established tourism economy in order to ensure that visitors can take advantage of existing accommodation and tourism services. Partnerships between destination marketing organisations and local governments will help to address problems associated with low occupancy and seasonality, support workforce development, create jobs, and support stronger local economies.</p>
<p>Some of you highlighted a desire to see local jobs and business opportunities emerge from trail projects.</p>	<p>We agree. We recommend that land managers ensure that local content policies are built into all tender contracts for trail construction and maintenance. GSCORE is working with our regional stakeholders to provide trail building training programs to upskill existing businesses and develop a trail-ready workforce.</p>
<p>Some of you were excited about the opportunity to link events, festivals and business opportunities to trails.</p>	<p>We agree. Trails are only one part of the visitor experience. To make the region an attractive destination, we need to build events and experiences that capitalise on our trail infrastructure.</p>

THEME 5: PLANNING PROCESS

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
<p>We received a few comments stating that the RTMP does not provide evidence of any demand for trails (i.e. a business case for trail development).</p>	<p>The RTMP provides a brief summary of target markets and user demand. A detailed analysis of these markets is contained in the Trails Background Report (www.gscore.com.au) and in each of the Priority Trail Plans prepared by the expert consultants.</p>
<p>We received a number of submissions that asserted that the process of identifying locations for trails did not take into account environmental, cultural or planning constraints or management plans.</p>	<p>This assertion is incorrect. While this is a high-level strategic planning document, some effort was made to rule out areas with high conservation values. Final decisions to proceed to trail specific planning will entail detailed environmental and heritage surveys and considerations. In the process of developing the plan, a review of environmental, cultural and other planning constraints was completed. As is the case in the development of other trail master plan (e.g. Peel Regional Trails Master Plan, South West Mountain Bike Plan), this information informed the multi-criteria assessment process that led to the identification of priority projects. Only projects that have the support of land managers to take the proposed trail to the next stage of planning have been progressed to inclusion in the RTMP. The progression from the RTMP to actual trail development will be subject to outcomes of future trail specific consultation and environmental and heritage surveys.</p>
<p>In relation to the Mountain Bike Proposals, we received a number of submissions that stated that the example of the “Seven Stanes” was not applicable because the Scottish landscape is different to the Great Southern.</p>	<p>These comments are based on a misunderstanding of the significance of the case study. MTB trails are often developed as single destination sites (e.g. Derby, Whistler) where visitors base themselves in one town and don’t travel to other locations. Single destination sites require long trail networks (approx. 100 km) to be successful.</p> <p>In contrast, the Seven Stanes is an example of an integrated trail network that consists of seven separate mountain trail hubs. Each of these trail hubs (each ‘stane’) is marketed under the one brand experience. Instead of basing themselves in one location, users travel to one or more of these trail hubs to experience different styles of mountain biking.</p> <p>The RTMP proposes a similar type of integrated trail network consisting of five trail hubs, each with a small length of MTB trail (5-20km each). These five trail hubs would offer different styles and grades of mountain biking but would be promoted as one visitor experience.</p>
<p>A few submissions asked us to clarify why detailed environmental assessment occurs after master planning, rather than before.</p>	<p>In accordance with the TDP, the first step in trail planning is to identify the opportunities and constraints that impact any new trail proposals. This occurs through an analysis of relevant management plans, feasibility studies, user demand studies, and land manager support. Environmental constraints are assessed based on a desktop survey and land manager input. The output of this assessment – Stage 1 (Master Plan) – represents an agreement by stakeholders to continue to the next stage of the TDP and undertake a detailed environmental assessment.</p>

THEME 5: PLANNING PROCESS CONTINUED

<p>A number of submissions asked why GSCORE is identified as the project lead for the implementation strategy.</p>	<p>The RTMP Stakeholder Reference Group recommended GSCORE’s role as project lead in implementing the RTMP based on our role as initiator and project manager of the RTMP, and our status as the regional peak body representing the outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism sectors. The Stakeholder Reference Group has indicated that some LGAs do not have the capacity or skills to lead the implementation strategy and consider GSCORE is best placed to do this. Individual trails may be developed with assistance of GSCORE and others will be managed by the land manager.</p>
<p>We received a number of submissions suggesting that more Noongar engagement is required before the RTMP can be finalised.</p>	<p>GSCORE has undertaken extensive consultation with Noongar communities across the Great Southern throughout the project. A representative of the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and from the Wirrpanda Foundation sit on the project Stakeholder Reference Group. Aboriginal people and representative organisations have participated in each of the three rounds of community consultation undertaken in the development of the RTMP. As with all communities, there are diversity of views amongst Aboriginal people about the trail proposals outlined in the RTMP. Consultation with the Noongar community is required at all stages of the TDP and is a requirement for projects on DBCA estate.</p>
<p>Some writers expressed frustration that the RTMP does not provide detailed designs for each trail.</p>	<p>The Trail Development Series provides the best practice approach to strategic planning for trails. Stage 1 (Master Planning) is a high-level strategic planning document. Detailed design can only occur after site assessments (Stage 3), concept planning (Stage 4), and corridor assessments (Stage 5).</p>



Photo credit: City of Albany

HOW WAS THE FEEDBACK MANAGED?

Following the period of public comment, all feedback was reviewed by the Project Management Executive Group and discussed with the relevant land manager. The master plan was amended according to the criteria outlined below.

The master plan was amended if a submission:

- provided additional information of direct relevance to the development of a trail or trail networks
- indicated omissions, inaccuracies or a lack of clarity.

The plan was not amended if a submission:

- clearly supported proposals in the plan
- made general or neutral statements or no change was sought
- referred to issues beyond the scope of the plan
- referred to issues that are already noted within the plan or already taken into consideration during its preparation
- has the support of the land manager/s at this stage of the plan
- was one among several widely divergent viewpoints received on the topic but the approach in the plan is still considered the best option
- contributed options that are not feasible (generally due to conflict with legislation or government policy)
- was based on unclear or factually incorrect information.

Next Steps

In accordance with the 8-Stage Planning Framework outlined in the Trail Development Series, community engagement will continue to play an important role in planning for the trail proposals outlined in the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.

Notes

Submissions are sorted according to date of receipt. Each submission has been provided with a unique identifying number (ID). Except for submissions received by organisations or public persons, all identifying information (names and addresses) has been redacted to maintain anonymity. In some cases, this has required additional redaction where the respondent could be identified by other comments they have made. Where an individual has made more than one submission, they have also been given a respondent ID. Several submissions were received after the public comment period closed. The Project Management Executive Group has chosen to include the late submissions.

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC COMMENT

RECEIVED FROM 16/12/2019 TO 28/1/2020



Photo credit: City of Albany



191216_2042

> From: [REDACTED]
 > Sent: Monday, 16 December 2019 8:42 PM
 > To: trails@gscore.com.au
 > Subject: GSCORE Feedback

> Good stuff here thanks.

> FEEDBACK

> I would like to see clear signage on the shared use trails on the Albany Mounts

> 1. Bikes give way to walkers at all entry points and a general code of courteous behaviour.(I have been around putting up stickers for the council but they are small and indistinct.)

> 2. Bike to use bell or some other method to warn people they are coming.(Same as the board walk)

> 3. Dogs on leashes or staying close on the trail to their owners(Unfortunately some people let their dogs run through the bush chasing animal one still warm bandicoot with it's leg ripped off)

> 4. Any development of of the Albany Mounts to be done at the same time as rehabilitation of degraded areas such as multiple criss crossing trails. I don't want to hear that all the money has been spent on a MTB trail and there's now none left for rehabilitation.

> Also I see some roads such as Dragon road and Talyuberlup Way that are marked on the map but are just bush these would make great connecting bike trails to the Chainsaw Sculptures with great trails through to Great Rex Road.

> I am dubious about the Albany City Councils commitment to addressing the cutting of illegal trails as Andrew Sharpe wrote to me and told me that he would follow up on a MTB rider encouraging others to cut trails on the Mounts like he had at Pokies(Pokerilup??). I spoke to this person and he had had no contact from the Albany City Council even though they had all his contact details.



191218_1613

From: [REDACTED]
 Sent: Wednesday, 18 December 2019 4:13 PM
 To: trails@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Trails on Mt Hallowell Denmark

Dear gscore

My name is [REDACTED] old and I would love mountain bike trails on Mt Hallowell Denmark. My favorite sport is Mountain biking but there are no trails with in 50km of we're I live (Denmark) this makes it very difficult for me to ride. If there were trails on Mt Hallowell I would be able to ride there from my home and shred with my friends whenever I want which would be awesome. It would also help me and many more kids/adults to be more productive instead of sitting at home.





191220_1314

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 20 December 2019 1:14 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan draft comment

Good afternoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan draft. I applaud the plan and forward thinking of the GSCORE and fully support the initiative as both a trail user and resident of the region. The potential development of the Stirling Ridge walk and proposed Grain Rail Train dual use trails is especially exciting. At this stage, I would wish for the Stirling Ridge walk to remain a Grade 6 trail, however a reclassification to Grade 5 with minimal signage would also be supported.

I have noted several omissions of trails that currently require improvement and/or extension that may provide extra showcase to the region.

- **Development of trail to Torbay Head and West Cape Howe** - There currently exists a poorly marked and overgrown trail branching off the Bibbulmun track that progresses to the headland and Dunskey Beach, but intersects with 4wd tracks at inconvenient intervals. The trail has been documented on the popular hiking blog [The Long Way Is Better](#) and listed on the DPAW brochure for [West Cape Howe NP](#). The Bibbulmun is accessible from Shelley Beach via the Bruce Tarbotten track (itself requiring some improvement/maintenance), and it is possible this trail may be developed within the short term time frame as a day hike from Shelley Beach.
- **Development of Nornalup to Denmark Heritage Trail (stage 2)** - The trail is not developed between Bow Bridge and Parker Road, and requires the Crossing of both Bow and Kent Rivers. I believe some mention of its development has been on the agenda [in Denmark since 2014](#), but this section may be compromised by landholders over the heritage line route. Could this trail be added to the list of long-term projects?

Also, as suggestions for current proposed trails:

- **Linking of Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit with proposed Grain Rail Train trail in trail towns/regions.** It is not stated within the draft plan if this is to happen. I would assume it would be, however it appears lacking.
- **Extension of proposed Whaleworld to Gap walk trail** - is it feasible to extend this proposed trail further West to connect with the Sandpatch leg of the Bibbulmun track, taking in more of the coastline? Or will the trail be separate be the proposed spur off the Albany to Whaleworld dual use trail?
- **Stirling Range lowland trail** - develop the trail to link current peak climbs within the range, or combine with proposed cycling trail for a loop of the ranges. Hiking trail to incorporate existing campsites within the ranges (Moingup Springs, Stirling Range Retreat, Mt Trio Bush Camp & Caravan Park)

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I wish every success for the proposed lan.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]





191221_0656

Sent: Saturday, 21 December 2019 6:56 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: MTB

Hi

I have a few comments in relation to the trails plan for Mountain Biking in the Albany area.

Background, 65 year old long term cyclist both road and MTB, member of Albany Over 50s Cycling group.

I agree with the general thrust of the document and its fine words, now is certainly time to 'walk the talk'

1. MTB tracks on Mt Clarence and Mt Adelaide. I and my friends use these tracks weekly and thoroughly enjoy the riding on the hills.

(a) We are however concerned about the danger when people put branches and rocks on any trail and in particular the bike only Pilot Trail.

(b) Riding the dual use, walking and MTB trails we have come across very few problems with walkers, slowing down and a cheery good morning seems to fix any issues. We do get the occasional glare and dog off lead, but generally there are very few problems. Walkers and MTB should be able to coexist taking into consideration the number of cyclists and walkers, the size of the area and number of trails. We are after all a diverse community and should be accepting of all users.

(c) If you don't provide and allow young people to use the hills for MTB you shouldn't be too surprised when they hang around shopping centres, York St, do drugs and finally leave town for more welcoming places. I would point to Geraldton and the Chapman River MTB facilities, pump track, jump track and 8k river loop, that have worked wonderfully to keep young people occupied in a positive way. Good trails away from the City Centre are good for those with transport but kids need something easily accessible without parent driving support. Kids need tracks with a range of difficulty, easily accessible after school and for short periods of time. Margaret River, Compartment 10, and the Pines are full of kids having the best, most positive and life affirming experiences.

(d) In these times of obesity why are we discouraging or stopping anybody doing vigorous exercise? Young people in particular need all the encouragement we can give them to be active and actively involved in their communities.

2. MTB trails on Mt Melville. Mt Melville appears ideal for a MTB development similar to Geraldton's Chapman River. I have been told there are too many groups who have an interest or rights to areas of Mt Melville. This was the case in Meelup and the Busselton Council took some time and negotiated with the various groups to produce a world class facility used by MTB young and old. Chapman river in Geraldton has become a magnet for indigenous youth and provides such a positive outcome for all. It really can't be beyond a group of adults to negotiate this and possibly take some of the strain from Mt Clarence. Mt Melville has several degraded areas ripe for positive development.

3. Munda Biddi A group of 8 riders and 6 support crew from the Albany Over 50s Cycling Group completed an end to end of the Munda Biddi in October this year. It was a fantastic experience and the Munda Biddi is on the whole a world class track. It is however let down by the section from Mt Lindsey to Albany, which is predominantly on roads, flat and monotonous. To say the trail head in Albany is underwhelming is an exaggeration and was an anticlimax after the effort, achievement and pleasures of the track further north.





CONTINUED

4. General Cycling around Albany. A cohesive approach to cycling infrastructure is needed to join all the aspects of road riding, commuting and MTB into a viable whole for all ages. I shouldn't need to worry about where to park to access all cycle facilities or about kids safely accessing facilities without have to connect missing sections by kerb hopping and dodging on to the road. Note, what happens on Grey St West, cycle path to no path, kerb hop and road dodge.

Thanks [REDACTED]



191222_1350

Sent: Sunday, 22 December 2019 1:50 PM

To: trails@gscore.com.au

Subject: Re: trails plan

Hi,

I think all the trails idea's look really good, I am looking forward to using them in the near future.

I also think that with naming any of the trails the aboriginal name could be used alone, there would then be no need for rebranding at a later date, culturally significant names, or native names for flora and fauna could be used. Dual naming I believe will just overshadow the other name.

Regards,
[REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

Respondent 0801

191223_0810

Sent: Monday, 23 December 2019 8:10 AM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

[Redacted]

Message Body:
 hello.

Nice article in the Extra! So that's what is going to happen, riders with chainsaws curving their own trails in the bush, spreading of dieback Rangers not being safe. And of course they don't seem to be concerned with the impact of their behaviour on the park. And who stops trail bike riders from going on MTB trails? A sign? Keeping an eye on this will cost a lot of time money, where's that coming from?

so angry about these shortsighted MTB plans in the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park



191223_1333

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, 23 December 2019 1:33 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trail plan consultation

Having read your document from back to front I am appalled at the dismissal of equestrian trail use as having no discernible benefit. 1. You appear to measure benefit by one measurement only - that of economic return to the local economy. 2. Do you actually know how many horse riders there are in the great Southern Region? I see no evidence of your stakeholder consultation with this group anywhere. 3. The equestrian cohort is typically among the type of stakeholder that you have eagerly identified as "" priority"" being middle aged, having disposable income and time to spend on leisure. They do travel and they do spend money on equestrian events.

Also, You have identified that there needs to be more work done to study the feasibility of equestrian trails. Correct, but if you wait until all the other trails are approved before planning the equestrian ones, then any potential sites may be already occupied with the more lucrative motorbike and mountain bike trails, and these classes of user do not mix with horses. I am afraid you are doing the Great Southern a huge disservice by writing off equestrian use so fast. I would be happy to help you with some real consultation among the equestrian users of existing trails in the Albany region to help you kick off your consultation if you wish.

[Redacted]





-- Original Message -

191224_0853

Respondent 0801

Sent: Tuesday, 24 December 2019 8 53 AM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Message Body:
hello.

So both the Stirling Range and the Porongurup Range are heritage listed National Parks. Who is protecting the over 700 plant species in the Parks when at the same time they have to serve as Luna Parks with people doing their own thing and not respecting on what they stand - poor plant, poor invertebra. DBCA doesn't, although they have Conservation in their name there is also Attractions, how contradictive here. PAW doesn't, they have 1 ranger for 5 or more parks just to empty the ticket station and volunteers to do the toilets and they call themselves Parks and Wildlife, MY god how got no words for that. So WE the people who care about these Parks, who live here and who are proud to live next to a healthy Heritage Listed National Park, WE have to stand up and fight for it's wellbeing because it's OUR wellbeing. SO WE WILL FIGHT.

so angry again



Photo credit: Francis Andrijich



191225_1806

Feedback to Great Southern Region Master Plan, 24 December 2019

Page 1 of 2

Feedback Wheatbelt Cycling Collective:

Item 1: Cycle Inc. (known as Wheatbelt Cycling Collective) support four agreed strategic objectives' 'GSRMP'

1. Support the visions stated, 'four agreed strategic objectives' 'GSRMP'
2. We acknowledge we are not within the Great Southern, however as a neighbouring region we individuals of the adjoining regional community, under our Collective umbrella, encourage and support the stated Great Southern Regional Master Plan (GSRMP), acknowledging we 'Wheatbelt Cycling Collective', are closely aligned to the vision, per the GS strategic objectives.

Refer GSRMP below,

Supporting this vision are the following four agreed strategic objectives which are central to the successful implementation of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan:

- 
Integrated Planning & Management
 Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.
- 
Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network
 Develop, upgrade and maintain a network of high-quality trails and facilities that deliver outstanding experiences to a wide range of trail users and activity types.
- 
Promote the Visitor Experience
 Encourage strong local community and visitor participation in recreational trail activities through effective promotion and marketing of the region's trails.
- 
Community and Economic Development Opportunities
 Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN



Wheatbelt Cycling Collective Email: wheatbeltcycling@gmail.com

Find us on FB, Wheatbelt Cycling Collective or enter 5 Trails <https://www.facebook.com/5Trails/>



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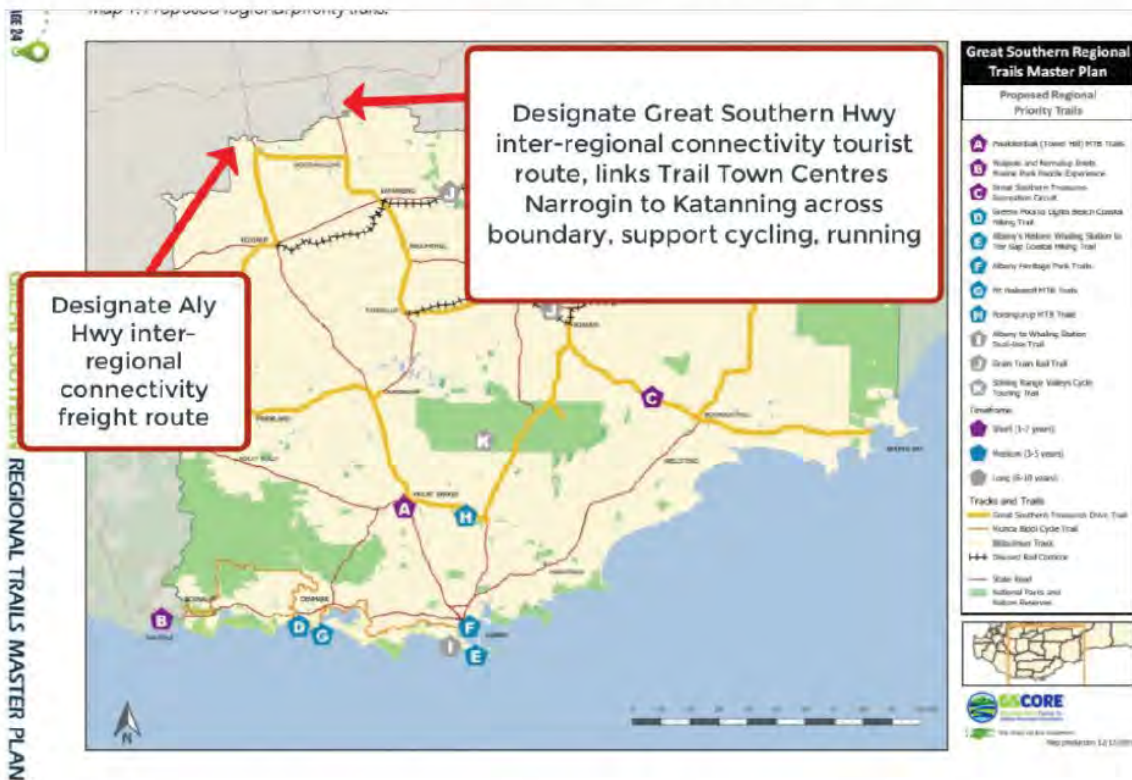
CONTINUED

Feedback to Great Southern Region Master Plan, 24 December 2019

Page 2 of 2

Item 2: Add inter-connectivity between Wheatbelt region communities be raised as objective under Strategic Plan

1. Recommend add item under the strategic plan high level strategy: We Wheatbelt Cycling Collective, request the Master Plan provide for inter-connectivity with Southern Wheatbelt Region.
 - The main two roads providing connectivity are Albany Highway and Great Southern Highway (Northam Cranbrook). Albany Highway is considered unsuitable for road tours, being a freight route. However, an opportunity is presented to advocate a route designation, to ensure efficient use of scarce funding.
 - Great Southern Highway be designated tourist a light vehicle route.
 - Able to be achieved with modest infrastructure expenditure mainly with connectivity in signage, rest areas – set aside appropriate areas for tourists including cyclists, runners.



2. Healthy Local Communities are a critical component to the long-term maintenance and support via the trail's local community network.
 - Recommend the Master Plan add new item,
 - To provide consistency in signage and route trails across inter regions (rather than adhoc) we ask the Master Plan to set an objective '...provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans', We would like to encourage a road bicycle tour linking Katanning - Wagin - Narrogin between our region for local youths as a personal challenge. Narrogin is our equivalent of a Trail Town.





191225_2009

-----Original Message-----

[Redacted]

Respondent 0801

Sent: Wednesday, 25 December 2019 8:09 PM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Message Body:
 hello.

So today I thought of this leaving feedback on your Reginal Trail master plan ideas on your website. How bizarre that you as a government sponsored body which for 100% supports these trails in the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park is also the body which receives the feedback. That should be an intermediate body which receives feedback from both sides: pro & contra. You just can delete all feedback you don't like and say you received only feedback in favour of the trails. SOOOOO DODGY and SOOOOO ANGRY



191226_1438

-----Original Message-----

[Redacted]

Respondent 0801

Sent: Thursday, 26 December 2019 2:38 PM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Message Body:
 Hello.

So if they are planning MTB tracks in the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park and in the Heritage listed Stirling Range national Park and if they are planning international MTB events, How on earth do you get hundreds of spectators stick to their tracks? TV channels which want the best spots for their camera's, hundreds of cars, event tents, food stalls etc. How will they be handled. A hassle if the weather is nice and dry but catastrophic for the Parks when it's raining. Dieback will finish off what MTB'ers started and another Heritage listed National will be gone due to the everything destroying work of mankind. Why can't we just leave the mountain alone? STAY OUT OF IT. MTB tracks are good but not in Heritage listed National Parks. MY GOD SO ANGRY AGAIN!





191227_0850

-----Original Message-----

[Redacted]

Respondent 0801

Sent: Friday, 27 December 2019 8:50 AM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Message Body:
hello

You guys get funding from some government departments and lotterywest. "Building our Future" it says under the Australian Government logo. Really? Do they know what you planning? Do they read reports like this? and lotterywest, do they know what they are in for? The like to fund MTB trails to get people off their lazy bums but in a Heritage listed National Park? Very controversial I would say and Lotterywest probably doesn't like that. Hope they read this report but the word Heritage listed is not in there so they just get half the information, not knowing what they are funding. SO WRONG ALMOST CORRUPT. STILL SO ANGRY



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Friday, 27 December 2019 2:19 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Masterplan

191227_1419

The more trails we have to encourage people back into the outdoors the better. Multi use trails and a variety of trails are great because they appeal to a larger audience and therefore should be used more.

The quicker we can get these trails constructed the better and the tourism promotion of them is imperative to getting tourism dollars that can be pumped into more infrastructure or maintenance.

Keep the trails coming,

Regards, [Redacted]





191228_1230

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 28 December 2019 12:30 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au

I agree completely with the proposed MTB trails at Pwackenbak (tower hill) and Mt Hallowell shown in page 22
 MTB trails are a great facilities for people of all ages to experience the out doors in a social and active way. Building
 MTB trails in Denmark is a cost effective and environmentally friendly way of bring people and business to Denmark



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
 Sent: Saturday, 28 December 2019 3:07 PM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

191228_1507

[REDACTED]

Message Body:
 hello.

You did not find it necessary to mention in your report that the Porongurup National Park is Heritage listed since 2009, I am sure you knew but just to refresh your memory here is a very short extract of the reason why it is Heritage listed.

"Porongurup National Park has one of the richest varieties of plants in Australia with more than 700 native species within the park's 2,621 hectares. With its diverse wildlife, tall karri and open jarrah forests, and massive granite domes, the park is a haven for birdwatchers, photographers and wildflower enthusiasts who are drawn by the sheer beauty of this place".

You should be ashamed of yourself to even thinking of trails in this Park but you even wrote them down and presented it as a masterplan. WHO PROTECTS OUR LAST REAL NATURE OF MILLIONS OF YEARS OLD? Well not our government, that's clear.

So angry





Photo credit: Travis Deane



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 2 January 2020 3:52 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Porongurup trail network feedback submission

200102_1552

Respondent 0803

Ref: Potato patch Downhill and XC MTB trails proposal
 Page 34 Great southern Regional trails master plan.

[REDACTED] Deeply **oppose** to the proposed Downhill mountain bike trail at the "Potato Patch".
 [REDACTED] carpark [REDACTED] metres.
 The proposed downhill track from the "potato patch" will directly affect [REDACTED]

Visual impact- The proposal was discussed in 2019 with Mr Stan-Bishop and his vision was to put a cable car/chair lift up to the top of the hill to support access to the top of the trails. The planned route was [REDACTED] direct vision of our residence. We do not wish to see cables, infrastructure and patrons 200 metres from our house.

Noise impact- We often hear hikers and visitors heading up to castle rock. These are seldom and of no concern to us or our neighbors. [REDACTED] the chair lift access, extra vehicle traffic into the carpark area and specialized competitions or events will inevitably increase the noise pollution for us and potentially [REDACTED] Granted, noise would be considered marginal for cycling but if we can hear hikers talking then there is little doubt that extra activities will generate considerable noise as well as the use of a cable car..

Property security- [REDACTED] ill illegal trespassing [REDACTED] from inadvertent and deliberate intrusions from hikers, general public and vehicles. Increasing public access to our boundaries will without question raise more security concerns unless adequately controlled with considerable exclusion methods. We would also expecting increased exposure from the western side from public trying to access the trails etc without using the dedicated lift or access route.
 Currently there are three ways to gain access to the potato Patch. The east track which is very steep and useable only when dry (maintained as a fire break by DPaW), [REDACTED] offers the safest route but still requires 4WD) or an old overgrown, disused track on the west side [REDACTED]
 Due to the steep terrain and thick vegetation, a lot of the inaccessible sections of our boundary has not yet been fenced, however, construction is in progress and the boundaries have been re-surveyed to ensure accuracy.

Privacy- We would expect aerial filming by drone activity with events and general trail use. This will incidentally [REDACTED] and machinery on an almost regular basis to anyone with internet and social media access. This will also give the general public a clear and detailed account of any of our undertaking which is impossible to regulate or control. Drones and this kind of footage has been linked to farm break ins and property theft. A Lift/cable car will also allow the public with an arial view of our property and live phone footage straight to social media is inevitable.

Farm biosecurity- [REDACTED] currently have plans in place which require strict farm biosecurity. Deliberate, unintentional or incidental access or soil contamination from [REDACTED] activities could have severe and detrimental effects and financial [REDACTED] proposed area is the top of a water course that leads into [REDACTED] any contamination up stream will be carried down hill. Litter and soil





contamination from an overhead chair lift/cable car over or near our property also has potential to spread [REDACTED] throughout the underlying vegetation.

Water catchment area- Trails made through the above slopes has a potential to divert valuable water away from below properties if not adequately maintained. Erosion from tracks created by riders and spectators could contribute to less water run off or over silting on downstream catchments and waterways. There is also potential of spreading non native seeds, pathogenic organisms, excess soil nutrients from other areas from dirty equipment and foot traffic. There is also a high potential for the contamination by improper disposal of human waste which could occur on the higher slopes in the catchment area if correct amenities are not supplied.

Emergency access- Due to the steep terrain bordering both our boundaries on the east and western sides, how is emergency access being considered? Downhill MTB is an extreme sport and injuries and accidents are inevitable. Do they then require access [REDACTED] mid trail or nearing the top? What about maintenance or vehicle access to the top of the lift/trails? [REDACTED] Is there a plan for the evacuation or fire control system?

Erosion and environmental disturbance- MTB riders are not restricted to a single path. Several tracks will need to be developed to maintain interest and accommodate for the various skills and abilities of riders. this increases the virtual footprint of the ground disturbance and the potential for riders to then create their own paths is a high risk for erosion and further ground disturbance as well as soil compaction. Access tracks for emergency and service vehicles will also need to be created. Major events also attract spectators, which by nature will seek the best vantage point to view the action. This will not only lead to further soil erosion but add to vegetation damage, water contamination, littering as well as the before mentioned issues.

We do understand that cycling and especially downhill activities attract valuable funding and revenue as well as the flow on effect to the surrounding regions and this we do not oppose, [REDACTED] Possible alternatives to the above issues:

- Ground level rail car in lieu of a ski lift style chair lift to gain access to the top. This could contour around the slopes, reduce the level of noise or visual impact whilst still maintaining the required service ability.
- Change proposed location to avoid private properties. Suggest West of Abbey Creek Winery/Wattle Hill and east of Millinup Estate.
- Start at the top of the potato patch but divert all tracks to the eastern slope away from the water catchment area and private property boundaries
- Or choose a location that is not national park and environmentally sensitive.

If the proposal does go ahead from the potato patch and the above for mentioned issues are not adequately controlled to an acceptable standard then the following will occur:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] the facilitation of trails or infrastructure.
- We will not be [REDACTED] compensate for the creation of trails or infrastructure
- [REDACTED] alternative emergency [REDACTED]
- We will not be supporting access to the potato patch for maintenance or staff if a lift is constructed.
- We will not be supporting and directly oppose any events held on the track
- [REDACTED] of the public, patron, operator or anyone associated with the proposal will be referred to the police and we will be seeking legal advice to determine the best course of action to take against any proprietor or involved organisation.
- [REDACTED] the form of contaminated soil or water, theft or invasion of privacy from patrons or members of the public that can be related to the use of the proposed downhill trail will result in legal action and a claim for compensation for loss of income, damages or loss of property.





From:

[Redacted]

To:

Subject:

[Redacted]

Friday, 3 January 2020 7:25 AM
trails@gscore.com.au
Horses

200103_0725

In the plan I have seen no mention of trails for horses? Please could horses be included in the plan.
Thank you

[Redacted]

Sent from my iPad



From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

[Redacted]

Saturday, 4 January 2020 9:44 AM
trails@gscore.com.au
Denmark MTB trail hub

200104_0944

Hi there,

Just want to say how much of a good thing a trail network will be for Denmark. If you look at other regional areas around australia (Vic & Tas in particular), you can see how greatly the local region and businesses benefit from the typical cashed-up and environmentally conscious mountain bike tourist. I would be more inclined to visit Denmark on a regular basis if such infrastructure were to be installed.

Best regards,

[Redacted]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 4 January 2020 9:57 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails in Denmark

200104_0957

It would be great to see some gravity or trail riding development in Denmark.

I have lived here my whole life and it would be great to have some more activities for local community and tourists to enjoy .it would definitely benefit tourism in our town and the youth in our community.

many thanks
 [REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 4 January 2020 10:44 AM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

200104_1044

[REDACTED]
 hello.

MTB trails are good but NOT IN A HERITAGE LISTED NATIONAL PARK ESPECIALLY THE HERITAGE LISTED PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK.



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 4 January 2020 5:52 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails feedback

200104_1752

Looks good - I assume preliminary discussions have been undertaken with local governments?

I am allowed to say this as I am a "walker" - don't let the whinging walkers have their way (which is to not share anything). We can all exist together and if the walkers don't like it, shut down all the trails until they stop acting like 5 year olds.

Ambitious plan, good to see. Good luck!





200106_1126

To whom it may concern

Reading *the Great Southern Trails Master Plan* excites me for a number of reasons as I wear a number of hats within the mountain bike community. [REDACTED] Denmark Mountain Bike Club (DMTBC), the plan outlines trails for mountain biking to be constructed in Mt Barker and on Mt Hallowell in Denmark. This is amazing for the sport within the Great Southern for so many reasons: from engaging young and older in a healthy, nature-based activity, through to fostering those up and coming riders within our community that are progressing to the world stage. This could provide Denmark at a local level a facility that gets our youth outside engaging, economic benefits and a flourishing mountain bike club that's able to work with the community to develop events at local, state and possibly even nation levels.

Secondly, as an advisor on *Westcycle's* mountain biking committee, the benefits that the region and state could receive from a project like this being completed will benefit all mountain bikers. Developing projects such as this draws more riders from within W.A as well as eastern state and international riders, drawing more money into the sport that allows for the development of new trails and maintenance of established trails. This much needed capital is also required to develop a healthy State body that can represent the sport and it's riders by working with the National body, helping with state rounds, supporting small and new clubs and generally nurturing mountain biking in W.A.

I am a small business owner in Denmark that is in the bicycle and tourism industry and see the trails network on Mt Hallowell as an amazing opportunity for our town to develop a tourism market and stabilize the business's that already exist. Tourism is a relatively untapped in Denmark, yes, the town has lots of accommodation and places to eat but what it does not have is something that can capture tourist's here with an experience and entice them to come back in both the summer and winter. Trails on Mt Hallowell will benefit so many more people in Denmark than just the mountain bike community.

I am also a father of 3 young children and have some dirt jumps at my house that my kid's along with just about every other child in the neighbourhood come and ride. For the all those kid's that come and ride I am sure there are many more in Denmark that would love to have somewhere to ride their bikes through the bush over some jumps having fun with their friends, trails on Mt Hallowell can provide that. We talk about kid's inside playing games all the time, well let's give them something to do outside that excites them and develops a culture around a healthy activity.

And lastly but most important I am a mountain biker that is busting out of his skin with excitement with the hope that these trails will get developed. I have ridden on Mt Hallowell for over 10 years and the diversity that this hill offers, is awesome, the giant granite boulders, Karri trees, elevation and perfect dirt make Hallowell and its proximity to world class beaches and accommodation is paradise for a mountain biker. As far as I am concerned, this is the best thing that has happened to Denmark in years.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Business owner, Advocate for mountain biking, Dad and rider.





200106_1616

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, 6 January 2020 4:16 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

[Redacted]

Message Body:
hello.

So angry that Gscore doesn't mention in the draft report that the Porongurup National Park is Heritage listed. Not sharing important information like this should be considered a crime. There is only ONE Porongurup National Park in Australia with it's completely own flora and fauna so STAY OUT OF IT! help "building the future" instead of destroying it.



200108_2015

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 January 2020 8:15 PM
To: Pam Hull <projects@shirebt.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Public Comment - draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

How fantastic does this look!
Awesome!!

[Redacted]



From: Andrea Salmond <andrea@katanninglandcare.org.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 January 2020 10:10 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Comment on Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200109_1010

Page 47 Enhance existing trails.

Lake Ewlyamartup in Katanning shows Gnowangerup as the Project Lead?
 I presume it should be Katanning, not Gnowangerup?

Other than that I think the plan looks great, well-thought out, and therefore have no additional comments.

Kind Regards,
 Andrea ☺



Katanning Landcare Executive / Finance Officer

P: 08 9821 4327; E: finance@katanninglandcare.org.au or andrea@katanninglandcare.org.au
 Katanning LCDC, PO Box 803, 10 Dore Street, Katanning WA 6317
 Like us on [Facebook](#) - Follow us on [Twitter](#) - Subscribe to our [email updates](#) - Visit our [website](#)



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Thursday 9 January 2020 8:57 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Submission - Mountain Bike Trails are best on privately owned land to avoid damage to our A class reserves such as Mt Hallowell

200109_2057

Submission
 Mountain Bike Trails are best on privately owned land to avoid damage to our A class reserves such as Mt Hallowell

Mt Hallowell is important phascogale habitat as well as being rich in Aboriginal heritage. The exposed granites are important Aboriginal cultural sites, containing significant features such as lizard traps and are unsuitable for use by mountain bikes due to the potential for damage.

Please keep Mt Hallowell as a Bibbulmun track walk trail only.

No mountain bike trail should be allowed on Mt Hallowell, as Mt Hallowell contains phascogale habitat as well as significant Aboriginal heritage, and mountain bike trails risk damage to flora, fauna habitat and Aboriginal cultural landscapes

Thanks
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 ALBANY
 WA 6331



**From:****Sent:****To:****Subject:**

Thursday, 9 January 2020 9:57 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Public submission regarding the proposed Regional Trails Master Plan

200109_2157

Dear Regional Trails Master Plan consultant team,

My name is [REDACTED] and own a house in the Porongurup township at [REDACTED] a short distance from your proposed mountain bike trail.

I have several concerns regarding this plan and I feel there are a multitude of reasons why mountain bikes are not appropriate at this cultural, ecological and environmentally significant national park.

Below I have listed a few of my concerns;

1)The Porongurup National Park has many good walking trails as it is and there is no need to add more. It is a beautiful spot that is visited by many hikers and they have great facilities at both sites but no rubbish collection at either park, so it is not uncommon to pick up rubbish when visiting the park. The introduction of more trails such as the one proposed for the mountain bikes will only increase the rubbish left by tourist and these mountain bike trails will not be safe for Rangers/volunteers to hike them to maintain and clean. Which in turn means you would need to employ many more rangers to maintain the park as volunteers can not be expected to track the bike trail to collect rubbish (In which was said on the night that the parks don't have enough money and resources to maintain the already going parks), so adding more will only increase the out put of cleaning and maintaining.

2) The Porongurup national park supports a diverse and unique range of wildlife, these populations are already under threat due to the recent fires that devastated the Stirling Range national park. The introduction of mountain bike trails would only add extra pressure onto the local wildlife as you are going to plow down there habitats to make this bike trail . In fact when you think of the vast amounts of bush land across Australia that has been lost due to arson and bush fire recently, it is very irresponsible to destroy even more bush land simply to entertain the thrill seeking tourists and locals that want to go off the beaten track and say they have had the pleasure to ride in the Porongurup.

3)The Porongurup National park is a sacred indigenous site that has been developed enough. The granite-skywalk is a fairly recent development into this sacred and special site. The Porongurup has been a special sacred site for millions of years but in recent times it has been eaten away with developments and upgrades. Although it is fun and enjoyable to visit this site I feel it is already been over developed and it losing what makes it special. I am not an indigenous Australian but I can respect that they are the traditional owners of this sacred site and it is highly insensitive and dis-respectable to be defiling this site with bike trails.

4) My biggest concern with this proposal in regards to the Porongurup national park mountain bike trail is that it has a great potential to impact the environment of this park. There are big problems with protecting parks from die back at the moment. Will there be more employing of rangers to man the entrances to ensure everyone washes their bike tires on there exit from the park as we have to clean our shoes at the cleaning stations already. How do you intend to ensure every bike is clean of potentially deadly die back disease that is contaminating our national parks as we speak. Porongurup is one of the few parks that is not decimated by die back. People may not realise the dangers and unless closely monitored it would be very difficult to ensure that the park is not contaminated. It is well known that many thrill seeking mountain bike tourist would be taking there bikes to many different locations while staying in the great southern and this plan could turn into a environmental disaster if it is spread quicker due to the influx of visitors in our parks.

I hope you will read through my concerns and realise that the proposed mountain bike trails are incredibly bad idea for a short term gain of a few thrill seeking tourists. I can understand the potential benefits with a short term money gain but the long term negative effects way out the short term benefits.

Thank you for reading my concerns and please respond with your response to my questions and concerns.

From a concerned local

[REDACTED]



200110_0823

10 January 2020

Dr Lenore Lyons
Executive Director
GSCORE
22 Collie Street
Albany WA 6330

Dear Dr Lyons,

Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan – Public Comment: Sand Patch.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Regional Trails Master Plan.

My husband purchased 11 acres on the corner of Roberts / Racecourse Roads Robinson 5 years ago. We made a substantial investment to buy the property and have since developed the property with a lovely new home/shed, stables including an extensive vegetable garden, gardens and tree laneways around the boundary.

All up we have made an investment of approximately \$700,000 which is our life savings and we chose this area because of its proximity to the Equestrian centre, the Stidwell Bridle Trail, Albany racing club, beaches, the harbour and last but not least its quiet roads and pure tranquillity.

Since then our daughter and family have moved into the area and made a similar investment. All being equestrians who love to use the Stidwell bridle trail and all of the above.

Over the last few years, as you would know the Robinson area has become very sort after with not many properties available for sale anymore which indicates its popularity, the majority of families in this area are equestrians and or have children.

I can honestly say that what was, a dream, has become a major disappointment not only because of the mixed use of the bridle trail but also walking and cycling along the road.

The speed at which some vehicles come around racecourse road is unbelievable especially during weekends furthermore the groups of unlicensed noisy motor cycles is extremely frightening if you happen to be on the road at the same time. Many of the neighbourhood children love to enjoy the freedom to ride their bicycles to each other homes and I fear it will only be a matter of time there is an accident.

All of that said the most frustrating issues are the motor bikes and four wheel drives using the Stidwell Bridle Trail, I fear also that it is only a matter of time where there will be a terrible accident.

Horses are animals that regardless of how much training, nothing can prepare them for being confronted by loud motor cycles, Four Wheel Drive Vehicles and Mountain Bikes jumping through the air towards the horse with no respect for riders or animals and no





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escape route. When those bikes and vehicles are accelerating to get up a sand track they don't stop!

This is of particular concern for our younger riders. I do know of many equestrians who have stopped riding the trail because of the traffic and this seems terribly unfair as the Stidwell Trail is a designated bridle trail.

I strongly object to the concept of Multi Use Trails in the Robinson Sand Patch Precinct and urge you and the appropriate authorities to restrict the Robinson/ Sand Patch area to equestrians and return the precinct to a safe recreational trails area for horses and ponies before there is a tragedy.

It seems an injustice that families who have worked hard to be able to afford a good lifestyle in an equestrian precinct and who pay rates are dictated to by a minority who come and go at their leisure regardless of anyone else's safety or right to be on the road or out trail riding with friends.

In October 2018 many of the concerned users of the Stidwell Bridle Trail began a Facebook group page so that we could share our memories and stories of great rides but also to act as a 'neighbourhood watch'.

In this group 'Friends of the Stidwell Trail' there are 160 members, this is not an exaggeration, this is riders who use the trails regularly or maybe once a year, This is one of the best trail riding trails in the Great Southern.

It is extremely disappointing to see the damage bikes and four wheel drives and vandals are doing to the trail.

If the City of Albany is targeting tourists to the Great Southern and Albany what better way to promote the area than to bring the Stidwell back to what it once was, a safe place to ride furthermore promoting the Robinson area with all of its attractions as a safe horse precinct for visitors and tourists alike.

Yours truly

[REDACTED]





200110_1205

Sent: Friday, 10 January 2020 12:05 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: submission re Great Southern Regional master plan - particularly the Porongurup Mountain Biking Trail - negative

Submission against the Mountain biking trail proposed in the Porongurup National Park

by [REDACTED]

I have attended the first workshop held in the Porongurup Shop regarding trails in the area and I have last night attended the Community meeting at the Porongurup Hall.

I am happy to have trails of any sort, bike, historic, nature, horse riding, **IF they do not impact in any negative way on the ecology of the National Park.**

Of these alternatives, the worst offenders would be the bike and horse trails.

On the page of the GSCORE draft that is entitled **What has been proposed for the Shire of Plantagenet,**

I must strenuously oppose the **New, regional, Mountain biking trail, Porongurup MTB Trail network, New downhill and cross country trails at Potato Patch and Tree in the Rock.**

- 1.** This goes against every aspect of conservation of the **ecology of this very small national park which has such exceptional flora, fauna and geology.** It goes against all of the cultural and environmental views of this critical area.
- 2.** There has been **no consideration of the views of the local aboriginal culture and the world heritage status of the area.** The concept should not even be entertained.
- 3** There was talk last night of the economic benefits to the community - there has been **no business plan,** and certainly the local businesses see little evidence of benefit from the Granite Skywalk from the mostly daytrippers.

If trails are to be built let them be built on private land where someone will benefit and there will not be the downgrade of our precious small national park.

In this drying climate we must cherish the bushland we have and do everything to conserve it, not take bulldozers in to make trails and expose the bush to dieback and erosion and rubbish and increased likelihood of fire.

Please acknowledge receipt of this submission.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
10 January 2020

Photo credit: Kelly Waterhouse





200110_1450

HikeWest Incorporated
www.hikewest.org.au
execofficer@hikewest.org.au

10 January 2020

Attn. GSCORE (trails@gscore.com.au)

HikeWest submission on draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Our interest

HikeWest is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit association committed to promoting hiking / bushwalking in the State, in keeping with our vision of Better Bushwalking for Western Australia. As the peak body for hiking / bushwalking in WA we represent the interests of our member clubs and the wider bushwalking community in pursuing greater opportunities to pursue healthy recreational pursuits through access to the natural environments of Western Australia.

HikeWest AGREES with the following specific proposals in the Plan:

1. **'Proposed priority regional trail' status** (p.6 and p.28) for:
 - i) **new Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Hiking Trail** (6km) This trail development could result in an excellent circuit walk in this delightful area.
 - ii) **new Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Hiking Trail** (10km) - This long hoped-for trail would be a great asset for the area.
2. **Enhancements of at least the following trails** (p.6 and p.28-29):
 - i) **Bald Head Walk** (Torndirrup NP) This popular trail provides a much-valued walk at the more adventurous end of the spectrum of walk opportunities. Such trails are much-needed, to attract walkers seeking hiking experiences of greater challenge, offering them a more worthwhile, memorable experience.

Upgrading and ongoing maintenance of this trail may be challenging and expensive, but is clearly warranted, given its popularity and potentially 'iconic' nature.
 - ii) **Porongurup National Park trails** (including Castle Rock Loop; Nancy's Peak, Devil's Slide, Bolganup Trail)
 - iii) **Bluff Knoll** (Stirling Range NP) - Much additional rehabilitation work will be needed on this trail in any event as a result of the extensive damage from the recent bushfire.
 - iv) **Ridge Walk** (Stirling Range NP) Improved route information would be useful to dissuade those with insufficient experience or who are otherwise ill-prepared from attempting the walk.

Additional improvements should include:
 - installation of occasional guidance posts/markers, not only to help walker navigation, but particularly to reduce the environmental impact of multiple worn alternative paths;
 - a maintained, replenished, reliable source of drinking water on the Ridge.





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- v) **Albany Heritage Park Trails** We confirm that dual-use trails in the park are an issue: The paths have not been well designed; Some of the tracks are too narrow for dual-use by walkers and riders and steps are being degraded through MTB use; mountain bikers are often riding too fast to be able to negotiate walkers safely and courteously.
3. **Trail linkages (p.28)**
- i) **Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link (Denmark)** The completion of a new trail loop makes good sense, though it would have greatest appeal to MTB users and the 'dual-use' nature will be a disincentive to walkers.
 - ii) **Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite to Nullaki Peninsula, Denmark)** A suitable trail alignment to link the two sites is clearly needed if a boat service across the inlet is not readily available. Negotiation between DBCA and Bibbulmun Track Foundation and private landholders in the area is likely required to achieve a potential realignment.

HikeWest DISAGREES with the following in the Plan:

1. **MTB trail developments in the 'Potato Patch' and Tree-in-the-Rock in the Porongurup NP area (p.34)** - These proposed trails are not compatible with enhancing and protecting the values of this small National Park and ensuring non-MTB users (especially walkers) can continue to enjoy the quiet, undisturbed experience in nature they should be able to expect when visiting a National Park. As this is a small and relatively fragile National park the focus should be on rehabilitating and buffering already environmentally vulnerable or compromised areas, rather than developing intrusive trail infrastructure and intensive MTB activity.
2. **The inappropriate use of the term 'dual-use' for some proposed tracks (p.36-37)** - e.g. The 25km **O'Neill Road to Wansbrough Walk "Dual-use" Trail** planned to link Mount Barker townsite with the Porongurup National Park (p. 37) would presumably attract MTB users but appears very unlikely to attract walkers in significant numbers and meet walker expectations of a worthwhile trail experience. Such trails should therefore be considered and recognised as dedicated MTB trails contributing to the potential MTB trail network and making no practical contribution to a trail network for walkers.

Other points of relevance to the Plan for trails development

1. **Kinjarling Trail?** The Plan makes no reference to the trail network previously proposed under the \$5.8 million [Kinjarling Trail and Stories Strategic Plan of 2011](#) that was prepared for the Albany Maritime Foundation, supported by funding through the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), City of Albany, Department of Indigenous Affairs, WA Museum and other bodies. It was also discussed during development of the [Trails Hub Strategy 2015](#). This was to be a 90km trail using stories to link significant sites along Albany's waterways that could generate new tourism income in the Great Southern. New trails linked to the existing dual-use paths and secondary tracks would form the proposed Kinjarling Trail to become the core of a tourism experience taking in Noongar stories and culture, the history of explorers and settlers, and natural features around Albany. The report identified 14 'story precincts' in the trail network with the potential to become the focus of interpretive content and tourism product development. Noongar enterprises and other tourism operators were to be encouraged to create cultural tours, storytelling and activities associated with sites on the trail.





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2. **The Great Southern can offer a range of hiking experiences of varying challenge ranging from the Grade 1 walks on the proposed Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit (p.74) to the challenging Grade 6 Stirling Range Ridge Walk (p. 29).** This presents an opportunity to differentiate itself in the hiking market place and target the discriminating visitors who are not seeking the 'vanilla' experience of the 'average' tourist but something a little different that can provide a memorable challenge that suits their experience and skill level. The Hiking section introduction on p.25 notes that "adventure trail users" rate the region as having "some of the best hiking in the State", yet the implications of that observation for strategies for attracting future increased participation is possibly overlooked given the subsequent statement that "Short half day walks are the most popular length of hiking trail, particularly within the leisure market,...".
3. **Planned walk trails, especially bushwalking trails, should wherever practicable be single-use and purpose-built for the following reasons:**
 - i) **The foremost consideration for new trails is that they must be planned to meet user expectations of a worthwhile, quality experience.** e.g. Most bushwalkers seek quiet, single-use, purpose-built trails, and tend to avoid wherever possible dual/multi-use and over-developed trails. Other possible trail planner preoccupations - such as achieving a trail network; the economies of shared trails; or a short-term economic benefit such as generating local employment for trail developers - should not override the key objective of delivering trails that will actually meet user expectations and so attract increased, sustained participation.
 - ii) **Busy trails (eg dual-use trails shared with MTB users) that don't meet bushwalkers expectations of a quiet, undisturbed walk in nature will not be used by bushwalkers.**
Peak national body, Bushwalking Australia (BAI) provides useful guidelines on the "[Sharing of tracks and trails...](#)" (link) and whether mixed use is possible or desirable for a planned or existing trail.
4. **Existing participation by intrastate visitors in Bushwalking versus Cycling** - Given the apparent greater focus in the Plan on new MTB trails (including "dual-use") versus dedicated walking trails, it should be noted that the numbers on Table 6 (p.66) of the Plan indicate that the ratio of intrastate visitors participating in bushwalking versus cycling in the region for 2016-2017 was 88%: 12%, strongly in favour of bushwalking.



200110_1510

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 January 2020 3:10 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Name: [REDACTED]
Number: 98511929

Message Body:
Both [REDACTED] were at the Porongurup Panel Discussion on the Regional Trail Master Plan 2020-2029.

We have a farm here in [REDACTED] and wanted to say how we both think the Trail is a fantastic idea and will not only bring many more visitors to the area. but will provide an excellent local outdoor activitie.

We believe many of the people there had not looked to the future and generations to come. They had it in their mind, we don't want the bike trail. But had not listened to the positve side and what it will bring to the community as a whole.

Well done, look forward to the opening day.

Regard
[REDACTED]





200110_1628

From: Elson, Michelle <Michelle.Elson@mp.wa.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 10 January 2020 4:28 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Cc: Holt, Colin
Subject: Feedback on THE REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN - Nationals WA Colin Holt
Attachments: Nationals Policy - Making-tracks-along-the-south-coast.cleaned.pdf

Congratulations on the Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.

The Nationals WA are focussed on participating and supporting plans such as this that help integrate nature-based recreation with tourism and small business development in the Great Southern and along the south coast of WA.

Through the Royalties for Regions program, The Nationals WA have a long history of supporting community driven trails projects and through your feedback process I would like to reinforce the opportunity presented by extending the Munda Biddi and Bibbulmun, both of which already enjoy stature as internationally renowned attractions. I have attached the Nationals Policy document 'Making Tracks Along the South Coast' for consideration for inclusion in the Great Southern Regional Trails master Plan.

The Nationals WA commit to the development of the extension of the Bibbulmun Track and the Munda Biddi Trail along the south coast from Albany to Esperance and look forward to continue working with you.

Kind Regards,

Michelle Elson on behalf of Colin Holt MLC

Research Officer to Hon Colin Holt MLC
Member for South West Region



Freecall: 1800 758 458 **Ph:** (08) 9724 1181
Email: Michelle.Elson@mp.wa.gov.au
 2/8 Cassowary Bend, Eaton WA 6232
<https://www.nationalswa.com/our-team/colin-holt/>





200111_0953

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 11 January 2020 9:53 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Porongurup mountain biking tracks

To whom it may concern

I am a [REDACTED] woman who lives in porongurup. I have a love and passion for the environment and plants so I moved here from the city a few years ago. I am against the creation of bike tracks in the National Park. I believe the risk for Phytophthora with the wheel contact and the upkeep of tracks with brought in soil is too high for this one of a kind National Park.

The Porongurups is the most special place I have ever been in my life and I have traveled a lot of the world. The magic, tranquility, plant, animal life and views is what I consider to be the biggest quality for tourism. I plan on living here for a long time and want to see the flora and fauna protected and studied as there are still bird species being discovered as of this year. As humans we tend to over do things until we go to far and then we cannot go back and correct them. We are talking about the oldest mountain range in Australia, being 1.2 Billion years old. Please do not make the mistake in over doing the humanisation of this one of a kind place, and making it into just another mountain range. We don't even understand the importance this range had to the true owners of this land, and it would be nothing but disrespectful to have people doing something as unnatural as biking down these sacred mountains.

We still have lots of tourists visiting our park and there are already problems that put the park at risk. Countless times I have seen tourists smoking on the tracks in the heat of the day in summer, I have told them to put it out as they could create a fire and burn the bush and threaten homes and lives and I have received responses like "I'm allowed too". Not to mention the rubbish I collect.

I believe there are other ways in increasing tourism safely and that does not threaten the health of the most sacred, biodiverse mountain range of Australia. The plant and animal life on this range is world class and to do anything that put that at risk would be a mistake.

Please do not threaten this sacred space with the diseases and scars that we humans bring, please leave something for future generations, as everything around us is crumbling already.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 11 January 2020 6:09 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Response to GS Trail Master Plan

200111_1809

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I would like the support the development of mountain bike trails with in the Denmark and Albany areas,

As a regularly mountain bike tourist within Australia and over sea it is disappointing the lack of single track MTB trail within the region.

I would encourage trails development at Mt Holloway Denmark and at Mt Adelaide in Albany.

Trails assessable from the town centres such Derby in Tasmania and Margaret River is the key to long term sustainability MTB trails and reaping the reward of the investment.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 12 January 2020 4:19 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

200112_1619

Message Body:
 hello

I hope that after last Thursday's community meeting it is clear to Gscore that the Porongurup community is not happy with MTB trails in the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park and that they will fight until these plans are totally gone.

I also hope that this 8 steps planning process about which Leonore spoke about too many times won't get started up because there will be a point where the whole plan will be cancelled. Save yourself time and money and think realistically.

I am very curious about the final Great Southern Regional Trails Masterplan report.
 I hope you got the message.

Starting to get angry again.



200112_1626

Respondent 0804

Mr Karl Hansom
Project Leader
Trails Masterplan
GSCORE

Dear Karl

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Master Plan. Firstly I would like to commend GSCORE for undertaking and coordinating this project, the Region has been in need of a long-term plan for trails for some time, and I look forward to seeing how the concepts progress as the individual communities comment on them and take them up.

The Master Plan is thorough, well researched and reaches well beyond Albany, which will be important for other towns in the Great Southern.

I have only three main comments, one specific and two general:

Albany Heritage Park Mountain Bike Trails

The planning and community involvement for this trail has been problematic. It is based on the flawed Albany Heritage Park Trail Concept plan which has been unsuccessfully presented to the EPBC - and there are deep community concerns over impacts to threatened species and the safety issues of mixing high-speed downhill cycling with recreational and tourist walkers.

I am on the record as being a critic of this project, and rather than repeat my concerns, I have attached a joint letter to the City lodged when the project was first proposed. I hope it provides you with some constructive comments on the areas in which the original plan missed significant trail opportunities.



CONTINUED

Rural and Regional Trails

A key element of the implementation of these should be capacity building of local communities and businesses – as you have identified. Unfortunately on many occasions I have watched ‘grand plans’ land in small communities, only to see the majority of the funding go to Perth-based consultants and large construction companies. The projects comes and goes, leaving no skill development, little extra cash from purchasing local services and materials and in some cases – no local ownership of the project.

If I can suggest that rolling out trails may be best done in a fine-grained way that allows local trades to take on manageable projects. Small communities work very hard to secure funding for new works, and it is very disappointing to see them fail to make the most of this money and energy when it finally comes to town.

Networking

As you have identified, networking the trails will be a key element of the trails success. Visitors like to have choice of options - and a ‘loop’ of trails along a wider journey can be marketed to encourage people to explore, and perhaps spend an extra night in a small community.

In addition, support experiences need to be linked to the trails – festivals, food and wine etc. Networking between the trails, and their support experiences if properly marketed and promoted has the potential to get the most value from trails development.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment and I look forward to the next steps in this project.

Regards

ATTACHMENT SUPPLIED - SEE PAGES 50-54



ATTACHMENT SUPPLIED WITH LETTER FROM PAGE 48

Mr Carl Beck
 TravelSmart Officer
 City of Albany
 PO Box 484, Albany 6331

Dear Carl,

We are writing to offer some detailed feedback on the Albany Heritage Park Trails Concept Plan which we felt was better provided in a letter format as we have taken some time to review the publicly-available documents.

We have both lodged comments via the web survey from the point of view of adjacent residents and users of the reserve. The following comments and points are offered from our professional perspective.

Between us we have decades of experience in trail strategy development and construction, and are also both keen walkers and cyclists who have been active advocates for new and improved trails throughout the State. We have an intimate knowledge of the Mounds reserve and offer the following constructive criticism with the aim of helping create enhanced trails which complement the assets of the Reserve in a way which will be sustainable for the City.

We have not had access to any supporting reports which the consultants may have provided, and so our apologies if some of the comments below are addressed in these.

We would firstly like to congratulate the City for its initiative in seeking to enhance the trails experience on the Mounds.

We believe that the reserve has unique natural, historical, heritage and recreation assets which are highly valued by the community, but which could be enjoyed and appreciated by an even wider cross-section of the population. The existing trails could clearly be improved –they could be better connected, offer a greater variety of experiences and be more clearly signposted - and we would wholeheartedly support this work. It is also accepted that there would be value in adding a limited number of new, high-quality trail experiences.

However, our concerns centre around the following issues:

1. Project emphasis;
2. Mounds use and character;
3. Existing asset utilization;
4. User group emphasis;
5. Duplication, and
6. Ongoing management and maintenance capacity.





CONTINUED

1 Project Emphasis

The project is marketed as a Trails Concept Plan in a Heritage Park. The emphasis is however clearly on the introduction of an extensive network of mountain bike trails.

As far as we can tell from the materials that have been publicly provided, of the new trails proposed, only 327m is exclusively for walkers, whereas over 11km of new trail is for the exclusive use of mountain bikes. Over 25km of trail would become mountain bike accessible and the text accompanying the trails descriptions identifies 4 levels of mountain bike cycling skill being catered for; each with their own dedicated trail/s. The same level of attention and resource provision is not afforded for walkers or other (more relaxed) groups of cyclists.

Indeed, there is historical evidence that walkers on nature based shared use paths may feel their experience of a quiet walk in the bush is negatively affected by fast riding cyclists and consequently they gradually abandon such trails, essentially creating 'bike only' trails over time. Even with thoughtful design, the potential for user conflict still exists (particularly on switchback routes) and walkers may not feel safe and may not be able to relax. Negative consequences rarely accrue for mountain bikers on such shared use paths, adding to the imbalance in proposals such as this. Indeed, over time, they benefit – as there is a reduced need to make allowances for walkers.

The advent of motorized / electric assist mountain bikes may make even hill climbing cyclists unacceptably fast for shared use trails.

Despite the name, Albany Heritage Park, 'Heritage' is discussed only in the phrase 'interpretive experiences' in trails 16 ~ 18, with no added detail that we can see. This appears to be a deliberate down playing of the long term and accepted values of the reserve, and could well attract significant negative reaction from the wider (non cycling) Albany community. It is as if a significant change of primary purpose is being proposed in what could be construed to be a rather surreptitious fashion.

To summarise this point, the project appears to be focused on mountain bike trail enhancement and construction, and it should be clearly identified as such. If this is not the intention, then the Plan needs considerable reworking to bring it into balance for all user groups – and to ensure cherished long term values of the reserve are not usurped without the support of the wider Albany community.

2 Mounts Use and Character

The Plan, if fully implemented, will change the character and use of the Mounts from predominantly informal natural bushland with walk trails and military heritage sites (with embedded and important natural and indigenous values), to a high profile mountain bike adventure cycle facility, skirting the historic military sites.

The City will need to consider if it is appropriate to alter a key central CBD bushland reserve with significant natural, indigenous and military assets from an essentially passive use, to one which is dominated by active recreation and has elements of extreme sport and which requires duplication of a number of paths to try and prevent conflict between user groups.

We are yet to be convinced that cycling activity beyond the 'easy' level for families (and suitable for dual use trails), is appropriate for the Mounts given their long term and established natural and cultural values. If it is, then this should be on a distinctly limited basis which does not put at risk natural or indigenous heritage and does not diminish existing passive recreation usage.





ATTACHMENT SUPPLIED WITH LETTER FROM PAGE 48

3 Existing Asset Utilisation

We were surprised to see the low priority given to the Ellen Cove boardwalk (18c). This trail provides wonderful vistas, a variety of topography and environments, access to historic sites, a surface which is accessible to a wide cross-section of the community, an existing culture of sharing between cyclist and pedestrians and iconic outlooks. In short, it is one of the most valuable cycle and walk assets on the Mounts, if not in Albany, and is much loved by a wide cross-section of the community.

It could be enhanced with better connecting points, a trail head at the Rotary lookout, improved maintenance, more accessible links to the water's edge and the Mounts, quality interpretation and weed management. In terms of value for money, this trail is enjoyed by such a wide variety of users that any improvements and new connections would be easily justified.

We feel that its lack of appeal to mountain bikers seeking challenging bush trail experiences has seen its potential – and the opportunity presented by its enhancement - ignored in this Plan. Of more concern is the parallel mountain bike / walk trail being proposed (9a) below 18c which will be difficult and expensive to construct, will be valued by a smaller sector of the community and will duplicate 18c – and this is not to mention the likely environmental impacts on such an exposed and fragile coastal site. Quite frankly, this proposal suggests a troubling lack of understanding of the values accorded the east end of Mt Adelaide by many in the community, and indicates a scant consideration of resource prioritisation at a time when funds for projects such as this are scarce.

4 User Group Emphasis

We feel that a number of potential trails users have been left out or inadequately catered for in this Plan. In our work with other Shires in the State and elsewhere in Australia, we have noted increasing numbers of the following trails users:

Electric bike users. Many grey nomads are travelling with electric bikes, both touring and off-road style. They are looking for scenic cycle trails with places to stop and enjoy / understand the place's history, rest hubs or café's, and circuits of a variety of lengths. They are not skilled enough for green, blue or black level bike trails and want to take their time and enjoy the setting. Many older local recreational riders fall into this category as well, whether they use electric bikes or not.

Young families on bikes. These riders are of a similar skill level to the above group. They have small children learning to ride who are at a developmental stage where their peripheral awareness is poor and they are unable to anticipate fast-approaching bikes or cars. They want safe trails with gentle gradients which are easy to access from car park tail heads and which provide young riders with an enjoyable natural trail experience.

Older adults, people with disabilities and parents with pushers. As the population demographic ages, we are noticing more older adults, some with mobility issues, wishing to access natural sites and interesting historic / heritage locations. While we accept that the topography of the Mounts makes full disability access difficult (and in fact the visual intrusion of endless ASI428 ramps can be an eyesore in natural locations) we think that much more could be done to provide for this group, and for people with small babies and young children. After all, it is widely known that Albany has an unusually high percentage of retirees.

The text for trail No 1 states that the link between the Mounts will be wheelchair accessible. This would require very gentle gradients, a hard surface and regular rest points, which would come at a considerable expense for over 2.5km in length. Is this the intent, and if so, have the implications been costed? Trails 12, 16, 17 & 18 are labelled with the wheelchair icon but we would question whether this can be accurate. They are likely to be an easy walking grade, but the wheelchair icon is misleading.





CONTINUED

Trail 16 may well be able to be made fully accessible but is not shown on the plan, so it is hard to comment. Accessibility in the Forts Precinct could be greatly improved. Presently the NAC, café and other buildings are accessible, but it would be difficult for a person in a wheelchair to reach the Wesfamer's lookout from the lower car park, and the guns adjacent to the water tanks are inaccessible to wheelchairs due to the gravel surface. A more accessible trail circuit (within the sensible bounds of the site's topography and historic fabric) would be an asset and would allow more people of all abilities to enjoy more of the Forts Precinct. A combination of 'bush' trails and more formalised paths here would provide a variety of experiences.

The Desert Corps memorial is easily accessed; Padre White a little less so but access here has been improved as much as is possible within the limitations of the natural features and granite outcrops.

International visitors. We are observing more international visitors in regional and remote sites. Some of these are young Europeans looking for extreme sport adventure, but many are from large cities in India and China and are not as adventurous. They are seeking to enjoy Australia's unique nature and the vistas and bushland experiences available on the Mounts are a real draw for them. They are, however, not confident bushwalkers and need clear unambiguous signage, good quality trails and reassurance that they are in a safe location. Once they are confident of their ability to find their way home, they will become more adventurous and walk longer distances.

We do not believe that these users have been adequately considered in the proposals contained in the Plan, and would like to see more thought given to catering for their needs on the Mounts. The Plan as it stands has a significant equity of access issue.

5 Duplication

We understand that in order to reduce the likelihood of trail user conflict, separate trails for different users have been proposed. Unfortunately, this has resulted in multiple parallel trails at access points. There are 4 trails at each of the east and west entry points, and 3–5 parallel east–west trails between the Mounts. The need for this duplication suggests a much wider problem, and may even point to the Mounts being unsuitable for most mountain bike trails; particularly blue and black level ones.

The sheer number of trails proposed as a consequence of this "duplication reduces user conflict issues" thinking would see major fragmentation of the bushland on the Mounts, with quite likely significant negative outcomes for both flora and fauna. Further, this kind of planning generates enormous construction and maintenance costs and the City has a distinctly limited history of funding trail construction or maintenance in this reserve (see 1999 and 2001 report recommendations).

6 Ongoing management and maintenance capacity

This duplication leads us to comment further on the maintenance load on the City of so many trails on and across steep slopes in a place known for its wet weather. We know that at least one of the new trails is on an old alignment that was closed as the gradient, soil type and water flows had resulted in trenching that was impossible to maintain. Further, we have observed rapidly expanding erosion issues on earthen sections of existing trails that have been heavily used by mountain bikes in recent years. Not surprisingly, flowing water follows the wear line created by tyres, and subsequent trenching is now notable in a number of locations.

In our (extensive) experience the only way to avoid substantial ongoing maintenance issues is to construct bike trails to a very high standard, an expensive exercise in itself and a process which can result in unsightly infrastructure in the natural environment. We question if this is appropriate in a reserve cherished by many (almost certainly, the majority) for providing easy access to a peaceful natural environment.





ATTACHMENT SUPPLIED WITH LETTER FROM PAGE 48

CONTINUED

As noted above, the sheer number of trails proposed creates significant environmental issues related to bushland integrity as well. Multiple corridors reduce contiguous habitat, increase weed and dieback incursion and exacerbate erosion. Of major concern is that at least 7 of the trails appear to be new routes in previously untouched bush, while some of the existing paths, tracks and trails have not been utilised in the new plan. If the City was to seriously consider the adopting the Plan as it is currently presented the scale of potential environmental impact may warrant some kind of formal EIS process.

The number and variety of trails being proposed also raises the issue of their management. We understand that there will be a period of adjustment while users learn to share the Mounts, but the complexity of who is allowed where and when will require ongoing management if (non mountain bike) users are to feel safe, and if trails are to be used for the purposes and by the user group for which they were designed. Our concern is that the City may not have the capacity or funds to maintain and manage these trails, and that liability risk/exposure will rise substantially as a result.

In conclusion, we would again like to stress our support for trails enhancement on the Mounts, but we are not convinced that this is the right location for a network of mountain bike trails aimed primarily at experienced and competitive cyclists.

The Mounts are an asset for the *whole community*, and embedding an adventure cycle zone (promoted State wide) runs the risk of alienating the wider users for the sake of a few. We are also concerned that this narrow focus may not represent good value for money, as there are other users of the Albany Heritage Park who would also benefit from improved infrastructure and who we think represent a broader cross section of the local and visiting population.

We would be more than happy to talk through the Plan with you and provide any professional assistance that we can. We have seen a number of these proposals developed over the years – only to gather dust in the City's storeroom. We would be very disappointed to see the opportunity for trail improvement lost yet again because it was not crafted to suit this historic and beautiful location, or the needs of the wider community.

We are aware of the amount of time, work and consultation that has been invested in this concept, and hope that our observations assist in bringing the project to a sustainable and appropriate final form.

Sincerely,



Friday, 21 October 2016

CC: Samantha Stevens, Manager Recreation Services





From [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 13 January 2020 7:31 AM
To: Pam Hull <projects@shirebt.wa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Public Comment - draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200113_0731

Hi Pam,
A very comprehensive report with some great ideas and of benefit to most small & large country areas. Well done to all concerned.

[REDACTED]





ALBANY NATURAL TRAILRIDERS (INC.)
76 Festing Street
ALBANY WA 6330
albany.natural.trailriders2001@gmail.com



GSCORE
22 Collie Street
ALBANY WA 6330

13 January 2020

200113_0935

SUBMISSION: GSCORE GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The Regional Trails Master Plan has been eagerly awaited by the equestrian community, in the hope that some of our existing trails would be recognised and integrated into a regional framework. It has been quite disappointing to find that the Draft RTMP has relegated horse riding activities into the 'not economically viable' basket.

There has been a definite buzz and excitement within the local equestrian community at the process of developing the RTMP. Strong and interactive attendance has been at the workshops, as well as at the Trails Forum. However, from the Draft, it is quite clear that trail users bring economic benefits to a region will be the overall winners. We understand that there is a smaller demand for the equestrian tourist. However, this doesn't detract from the benefits to the users, particularly mental wellbeing and appreciation of our natural wonders. Economically, we contribute locally by purchasing fuel, food, stock feeds, use local contractors such as vets and hoof trimmers, whilst having a small footprint on the environment. Horse riding makes up the whole trails package, along with hiking, mountain biking and other trail users. Your strategy should include more on equestrian trails as it is a long-term plan and should be visionary. Thinking ahead to including equestrian activities would make sure that adequate consideration is given to development of facilities (e.g. float parking).

Of great concern is that trails that we currently use may be developed for the favoured economic users in the Draft, to the exclusion of horse riders.

We would like to suggest that some of the dual-purpose trails have varying levels of access. For example, a trail suitable for cycling would be open to horse riders at specific times. This might be:

- Cyclists ride on Saturdays, Equestrians ride on Sundays; or
- Cyclists ride all year, but one weekend a month is designated for horse riding only

Clear signage and public education are very important.

Multiple use could also work for dual purpose trails suitable for other combinations (e.g. cyclists & motor cyclists), or for multiple purpose trails (e.g. hiking, equestrian & cycling). This arrangement already works well on the Denmark Heritage Rail Trail which supports cyclists, hikers and horses.

Other comments

Page 20: *This prioritisation process suggested that equestrian trails and trail bikes are not a priority for development in the Great Southern at this time. The feasibility of future development for these activities should continue to be investigated. A rationale for this recommendation is contained in Section 4.*

This statement is a bit of a cop out. Why not put some of the existing informal trails on the table and also consider the longer-term use of the historic stock routes? This is a strategic document after all. ANTs have a great deal of knowledge about many of the trail resources in the region.





CONTINUED

Mixing of motor bike users (and sometimes cyclists) and horse riders have been an issue for many years, with the latter being the most likely to be injured. Without development of trail bike trails, horse riders will continue to clash, sometimes literally. The motor bike group deserves more attention in the regional framework.

Page 52: Equestrian Trails Feasibility Study

Formal beach access is provided at Peaceful Bay, Boat Harbour, Parry Beach and a part of Middleton Beach. The Denmark Heritage Rail Trail was not mentioned as a significant multiple use trail (equestrian, cyclists and hikers). While not a trail, Quaranup Beach (Shoal Bay), Albany is a highly valued multiple use location.

There is strong demand for local bridle trails and these should be formalised and improved with land manager support. Yes, there is strong interest.

Land managers are unwilling to support long-distance trails (e.g. former stock routes) through protected areas. There are a number of historical stock routes, including Forest Hill, Camballup and Moriarty stock routes, in the region. Sections of these stock routes pass through the Walpole Wilderness Area. Although there is strong local interest in opening up these routes as bridle trails, there is currently no support from the land manager. This plan recommends, however, that these routes become designated as Heritage Trails in recognition of their historical value. Does this mean that they have the future potential to be opened up to equestrian use? Are we able to access the sections which aren't in the Walpole Wilderness region? DBCA has recently put much more of a focus on allowing activities in National Parks if sustainable practices can be established. ANTs have recently ridden in Gull Rock National Park and enjoys using the Shannon River National Park rides. There should be no reason for DBCA not to allow the stock routes and other trails to be established as regional rides, especially given the current use of these areas by four-wheel drives and motorbikes. ANTs adheres to the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association Code of Practice (attached) which includes environmental stewardship.

There is little information available regarding equestrian trail use levels or economic impact and it is difficult to determine whether regional equestrian trails will provide a return on investment. Anecdotally there is high equestrian activity in the Great Southern, particularly along coastal regions. Return on investment would be hard to gauge as horse riders are generally the horse owners, and not coming from outside the region to participate. Our club tries to support local wineries, stores or cafes as part of our rides, but not all trails lead to one of these venues. Small businesses have been keen for us to bring horses to their venues and have made parking and yarding space available. ANTs could provide you with a list of the trails that we have been riding for the last 20 years.

Equestrian trails have recently been developed in the adjacent South West region and monitoring of these trails will inform the feasibility of additional regional trails in the next few years. This will be interesting to follow. We would be curious as to how economic impact is measured.

Yours sincerely

Julie Robins

Chair





13 January 2020

200113_1028

Dr Lenore Lyons
Executive Director
GSCORE
22 Collie Street
Albany WA 6330

Dear Dr Lyons,

Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan – Public Comment: Sand Patch.

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to comment on the Regional Trails Master Plan.

[REDACTED] Racecourse Road in Robinson 18 months ago. We have made a substantial investment for our long term future to buy the property in the Robinson area specifically because of its location, the equestrian hub and riding trails it is well known for. We will be, in the next 12 months starting to build our dream home and develop our life long dream of owning an equestrian property in Robinson Albany.

Over the last few years, as you would know the Robinson area has become very sort after with not many properties available for sale anymore which indicates its popularity, the majority of families in this area are equestrians and or have children.

I don't want our dream to become a major disappointment not only because of the mixed use of the bridle trail and the increase of motor bikes and 4 wheel drives destroying the natural environment and endangering pedestrians/hikers, children and horse riders alike.

The speed at which some vehicles come around racecourse/Roberts and Robinson roads is unbelievable especially during weekends. Furthermore the groups of unlicensed noisy motor cycles is extremely frightening if you happen to be on the road at the same time. Many of the neighbourhood children love to enjoy the freedom to ride their bicycles to each other homes and I fear it will only be a matter of time there is an accident.

All of that said the most frustrating issues are the motor bikes and four wheel drives using the Stidwell Bridle Trail, I fear also that it is only a matter of time where there will be a terrible accident and people or horses are seriously injured or even killed.

I grew up riding on the horse only trails for years and it was one of my most favourite things to do weather on my own or with family and friends. I really look forward to being able to do so again but I don't want it to be in fear that me, my horse or children could one day be cleaned up by a motorised vehicle while out on the roads and bridle trails.



CONTINUED

Horses are animals that regardless of how much training, nothing can prepare them for being confronted by loud motor cycles, four wheel drive vehicles and mountain bikes jumping through the air towards the horse with no respect for riders or animals and no escape route. When those bikes and vehicles are accelerating to get up a sand track they don't stop!

I strongly object to the concept of Multi Use Trails in the Robinson Sand Patch Precinct and urge you and the appropriate authorities to restrict the Robinson/ Sand Patch area to equestrians and return the precinct to a safe recreational trails area for horses and ponies before there is a tragedy.

It seems an injustice that families who have worked hard to be able to afford a good lifestyle in an equestrian precinct and who pay rates are dictated to by a minority who come and go at their leisure regardless of anyone else's safety or right to be on the road or out trail riding with friends.

In October 2018 my self and many of the concerned uses of the Stidwell Bridle Trail began a Facebook group page so that we could share our memories and stories of great rides but also to act as a 'neighbourhood watch'.

In this group 'Friends of the Stidwell Trail' there are 160 members and always growing, these are riders who use the trails regularly or maybe once a year. This is one of the best trail riding trails in the Great Southern.

It is extremely disappointing to see the damage bikes and four wheel drives and vandals are doing to the trial and to also see them deliberately jump blockades to the entry of the trails that they are currently prohibited on using.

If the City of Albany is targeting tourists to the Great Southern and Albany what better way to promote the area than to bring the Stidwell back to what it once was, a safe place to ride furthermore promoting the Robinson area with all of its attractions as a safe horse precinct for visitors and tourists alike.

Thank you for taking the time to read our concerns. Could please keep us informed of any developments with this plan.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]





200113_1215

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 13 January 2020 12:15 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Feedback

Flag Status: Flagged

I completely agree with the trails master plan due to the significant lack of trail availability, support and progress as seen in most other areas of WA and AUS particularly trails that address filling the void in mountain bike trails. As mountain bike trails appeal to all ages and demographic.

I believe due to the remote location of Albany and costs associated with accommodation and travel expenses this limits accessibility to the existing trail networks in WA. A Great Southern approach presents a unique opportunity to develop multiple trail locations in the Great Southern area, welcoming world class tourism and providing a source of outdoor recreation for all ages.

Priority trails and timeframes:

Although I acknowledge that creating a variety of trail types is beneficial when looking a projects of this scope.

My main request for ANY link trails e.g. Whale Station, Greens Pool to Lights beach, Grain train trails, Stirling range valleys is that if a trail is planned that it be designed for dual use mountain bike and walk trail as is the Mundabiddi, where cyclists, horses and walkers all use and share the trails. Ideally this would not be just a boring footpath only type of trail but would include segments that create interest to riders. As it would have a limited interest level!

The existing Mundabiddi trail has not caused any concerns of a shared trail.

Sadly the Bibbulman being walk only is not accessible to mountain biking and hence has limited reach, accessibility and use.

Destination: Priorities

Developing centrally located trails e.g Mt Adelaide, Clarence and Melville will provide accessible outdoor recreation activists such a mountain bike riding to school children and youth. This age group does not have the ability to travel to more remote locations as they are entirely reliant on their parents who often work until 5pm. These users require trails that can be accessed with a short ride or walk.

Stirling Ranges and Porongorup areas have exceptional world class potential! Having explored trail hubs in TAS and NZ we have an abundance of opportunity that has not been tapped into. Other areas have beautifully designed their trail networks in a way that promotes environments conservations, provides recreational activities, connects a cultural history and promotes it to the rest of the world. Unlike the Stirlings and Porongurps where finding a map of the variety of hikes available is almost impossible.

If there is one thing I couldn't stress any more is that any adventure / link type of trails should be dual use right from the start (please don't limit usability like the Bibbulman) if you want to genuinely attract tourism and participation they have to cater to a mountain bike discipline. Mt Wellington in NZ is a fine example of successfully designed shared trails.

I admire your proactive approach! Well done and good luck.



PAGE 60

GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN - PUBLIC COMMENT

Prepared by Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence



200113_1221

From: Carolyn Fennelle <Carolyn.Fennelle@noongar.org.au>
Sent: Monday, 13 January 2020 12:21 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Noongar people - comment

Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern,

We refer to your website and the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029.

On behalf of the Traditional Owners, Noongar people of the South West we respectfully request that Noongar people are involved in early and ongoing engagement and consultation in relation to any proposed Great Southern Regional Trails planning, development and implementation. This may involve:

- Consultation on location of trail and type of trail
- Cultural significance of particular areas
- Story-telling and public education
- Tourism
- Protection of country and heritage
- Employment opportunities

Noongar people have created many traditional trails over thousands of years holding invaluable knowledge of country and environment.

Kind regards,



Carolyn Fennelle | Senior Legal Officer
 South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council
 p: (08) 9358 7400 | f: (08) 9358 7499
carolyn.fennelle@noongar.org.au | www.noongar.org.au
 1490 Albany Hwy CANNINGTON | PO Box 585 CANNINGTON WA 6987



-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
 Sent: Monday, 13 January 2020 7:20 PM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

200113_1920

Message Body:
 hello

The heritage listed Porongurup National Park is not in a good condition. [REDACTED]

- * weed seeds are flying in and make the Park into one big weed patch
- * fertilisers blow in through erosion and dry weather spells from surrounding farms: not good, native plants cannot handle fertilisers.
- * no baiting is done: cats, dogs, foxes kill native fauna
- * sprays from farms and wineries are drifting through the forest, a disaster

Depaw has no money so nothing happens to keep the Park alive for the future and this is what the Australian Government promises: Building the future that's why there is a heritage list for national parks

And then Gscore is planning mountain bike trails as if it's just a piece of neglected land. Neglected yes but not worth destroying it even further and faster. If you guys are serious and if Gscore is a trust worthy responsible and ethical business then these trails should never have been planned.

Keep your hands of nature this time, leave it alone and put your energy in helping to keep the Park alive.





Photo credit: South Coast NRM



Dr Lenore Lyons
 Executive Director
 GSCORE
 22 Collie Street
 Albany WA 6330

200113_2054

Respondent 0802

Dear Dr Lyons,

Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan – Public Comment: Sand Patch.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Regional Trails Master Plan.

I am an equestrian. A carriage driver. I compete at local, state and national events. My horse lives at Robinson adjacent to the Sand Patch Reserve. I chose the Robinson area to pursue my equestrian sports because;

- close proximity to the Albany Equestrian Centre,
- the Albany Racing Club,
- the Stidwell Bridle Trail,
- the extensive quiet rural roads and tracks,
- proximity to beaches.

The Robinson area is a mix of semi rural and rural properties. Many residents chose to live or agist their horses in the area because it was an equestrian precinct. Safe for children to ride to the Pony Club, for riders to enjoy the once quiet and safe roads and tracks.

The Stidwell Bridle Trail was officially opened in 1999 and incorporated 30 kilometres of trails for equestrians to enjoy the bush tracks, rolling hills, hidden valleys and magnificent views. It was a designated bridle trail. Trail Bikes and other vehicles were originally not permitted nor intended.

The Stidwell Trail incorporates three loops;

- Sand Patch Loop along the road verges, through Allmore Park, behind the Albany Regional Prison to the Werrilup Loop
- Robinson Loop winding through Robinson Estate to the Werrilup Loop
- Werrilup Loop track leading to the summit of Werrilup Hill with a purpose built shelter and horse hitching rail.

The Albany Equestrian Centre is an equestrian hub for many equestrian clubs including;

- Albany Pony Club
- Albany Adult Riders Group
- Albany Horsemen's Association
- Great Southern Dressage Club
- Natural Trail Riders
- Albany Carriage Driving Club





CONTINUED

During the last 2 years and particularly since the adoption of the Multi Use Trails concept in the area which allows Cyclists, Motor Cyclists and off road Vehicles to share the same trails as equestrians, I and my friends have encountered many conflicts with the other users.

The speed vehicles travel along the roads in Robinson is excessive and I have noticed more and more unlicensed 4WD's and motorcycles on the roads which are noisy and frightening for horses and ponies.

These conflicts have caused serious safety issues. Horses are animals and no manner of training can prepare them for being confronted by loud motorcycles, Four Wheel Drive Vehicles and Mountain Bikes jumping through the air towards the horse with no respect for riders or animals and no escape route.

Pony Club children, Adult Riders and Carriage Drivers no longer feel safe to pursue their sport and recreation in the area.

These motorcycles, mountain bikes and 4WD's also use the Stidwell Trail and have created new tracks through the bushland. At times the City of Albany have erected barriers however this has not deterred them as they simply re route around barriers and create new tracks. The damage to remnant bushland since the multiuse trails have been introduced in the area is quite extensive. I have observed large groups of these bikers and motorists gather near Allmore Road with trailers and fuel cans in preparation for long hours of hooning around the trails.

There are very small signs in the area indicating multi use trails and requesting motor cyclists, bikers and 4WDS give way to horses however quite the opposite occurs. In fact, on many occasions I have been verbally abused and sworn at by these other users who have threatened to chase me with my horse and deliberately revved their engines and spun sand towards me frightening my horse and I.

As an equestrian I have always felt privileged to use the trails in the area and admired the foresight of the City Council to establish an equestrian precinct which encouraged equestrians to establish these facilities, work together and share the amenities.

As far back as 1999 the City of Albany has referred to Robinson as an equestrian precinct and council staff recommended that speed limits should be restricted to a maximum of 40 kph in the area due to the horses and children on ponies.

I strongly object to the concept of Multi Use Trails in the Robinson Sand Patch Precinct and urge you and the appropriate authorities to restrict the Robinson/ Sand Patch area to equestrians and return the precinct to a safe recreational trails area for horses and ponies before there is a tragedy.

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 ████████████████████
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200114_0929

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 14 January 2020 9:29 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan. I am a resident of Albany, and my young family moved here from the metro area six years ago primarily because of the amazing lifestyle and climate offered by this region. In particular we purchased land and built a new house on a rural-residential property in Robinson so that I could access the wonderful Stidwell Bridle Trail, which goes right past my front door.

Albany is well recognised as a town full of equestrian enthusiasts and we have a high quality Equestrian Centre as well as multiple Pony Clubs and adult riding clubs. The Stidwell Trail is well loved by Albany horse-riders, and attracts visitors from other parts of the State, who can camp with their horses for low cost at the Equestrian Centre, which is also the trail head. Just like the equestrian trails in the South west (such as the Shannon National Park), the Stidwell trail allows for horse riders to make a base (with horse yards, water, toilets, etc) meet up with other riders, and access over 30kms of marked trails throughout Robinson and the Sandpatch Reserve. I personally know a number of people who have travelled to Albany with their horses specifically to utilise the Stidwell Trail, and there are also a number of accomodation facilities in our suburb (Robinson) which are set up specifically to cater for visiting equestrians.

I am an avid user of the Stidwell Trail and ride the trails at least once a week, all year round. There are many of us, and currently 159 members of the "Friends of the Stidwell Bridle Trail", all being active users of this one trail. Interestingly, a high proportion of the users are women and young girls who are attracted to the sport and find trail riding a great way to interact with the outdoors. I'm therefore surprised that so little data has been included regarding the current use of the trail by equestrians in the Master Plan (page 52). I'm also surprised that the Master Plan does not see any market potential for equestrians? Horse riding is an expensive sport and our horses are at least equivalent in value to some of the higher end mountain bikes (believe me, my husband is a highly competitive MTB enthusiast, as are my two children, and we own a lot of bikes!), plus all the tack, horse floats and equipment that goes along with our sport. Horse riders invest a lot in their sport (and everyday maintenance of their horses) and typically enjoy higher socio-economic financial positions. Just like MTB riders, they are looking for high quality trails and experiences and are prepared to pay for them.

I am personally about to go on an overseas horse trek in NZ next month which has cost in excess of \$2,500 (excluding airfares), run by Globetrotting.com.au, who specialise in equestrian destination tourism. I had to book my trek more than 12 months in advance as the demand was so high and places limited. This is for a guided trek where they provide the horses, gear, accomm etc, similar to some of the guided walking tours you can do in the Cape to Cape, for example. There are actually a number of places that are recognised worldwide as horse trail destinations, one being NZ, but in Australia we also have the Snowy Mountains, the Kimberley, and Margaret River to name the best known. Horse riders pay considerable \$ to go to these places to ride the trails and it is a lucrative business to offer high quality guided horse back trek experiences. We don't have any businesses like this in Albany, but the trails could be developed to make this a feasible opportunity for a local operator. Or, the Stidwell trail could be enhanced and extended for more self-guided riding. As it is, the trail can only be accessed from Robinson, and does not connect up with other trails, although this could be possible considering the Munda Biddi comes so close. If Robinson was properly designated as an equestrian zone, and speed zones reduced, this would allow even more local roads and road/drainage reserves to be incorporated into the trail network. These trails could then be more safely shared with pedestrians, dog walkers and cyclists, who already enjoy the scenic roadways of the area.





CONTINUED

The biggest issue with the Stidwell Trail is that we currently have to share it with motorised trail bikes and 4wd drivers. I was surprised to read on page 51 of the Master Plan that trail bike riders present “the least user group and community impacts” as my experience is very different. Trail bikes are noisy, fast and cause damage to trails that are sandy. Trail bike riders that use the Stidwell trail are predominately riding unlicensed bikes, and many are young, unlicensed riders. The noise their vehicles make, combined with the high speeds they travel make them a deadly user for horse trails. I have had multiple conflicts on horse back when suddenly approached by trail bike riders who were going too fast, or not looking out for other trail users. Motorbikes often frighten horses and this can be unsafe for all concerned. Trail bike riders, especially on off-road bikes, also tend to blaze their own trails through the bush, destroying vegetation and cutting up paths with their bikes. I have reported many incidents in the last 2 years (which the City of Albany has acted upon) where trail bike riders have illegally cleared bush, breached cavaletti gates and cut up trails. This is indeed a negative community impact and affects pedestrians, bike riders and horse riders using the trails.

Similarly, the trail bikes are noisy and disturb people living in proximity to the Stidwell trail (including my family and many of my neighbours), which all other users (pedestrians, dog walkers, MTB riders, horse riders) don’t do. I am all for sharing trails, but I strongly believe that trail bikes should be on designated trails, away from conservation or residential areas, as this sport is fast, noisy and can be dangerous to other trail users. Trails for trail bike riders should also be monitored to ensure only licensed vehicles and riders are using them, considering the risks of the sport.

I believe the Stidwell Trails in Albany could be a destination Trail for WA and I am disappointed that the feasibility of this opportunity has not been explored due to lack of research about horse-based tourism and market potential. Albany has the climate, the sandy trails, the shady bush and the spectacular scenery and topography perfect for horse trails to be used all year round, and most of the infrastructure is already in place. Managing user conflicts so that horse riders of all different abilities can safely ride the trails without fear or conflicting with a motorbike or 4wd is all that is needed to make the Stidwell a destination trail for locals and visitors alike.

Regards,



Robinson, WA

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, 14 January 2020 9:49 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Re: Trail Masterplan

200114_0949

Respondent 0804

Thanks for your reply Karl,

I appreciate your quick response.

Can I ask if the Kinjarling Trail Concept came up in your background research? I had a quick look at the Master Plan but couldn’t see it referenced. It was developed about 10 years ago by the Port, City and Museum with the Minang community.





200114_1350

From: Linda Daniels: Bibbulmun Track Foundation <linda@bibbulmuntrack.org.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 14 January 2020 1:50 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails master plan feedback

Hi Lenore and team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan. Comments include:

Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail

Creation of new trail within William Bay National Park that would link Greens Pool with Madfish Bay, Waterfall Beach and Lights Beach. Construction of this new trail would create the opportunity for a trail loop (with potential overnight at Tower Hill Hut) using the Bibbulmun Track from Lights Beach via Lake Williams and Tower Hill.

Assume that Tower Hill Hut is actually William Bay Campsite on the Bibbulmun Track. The Foundation is very supportive of the suggestion to create loop walks incorporating sections of the Bibbulmun Track. Should the trail from Green's Pool to the Bibb Track crossing on William Bay Rd be mentioned in this plan? Is so that walkers don't have to walk up William Bay Rd when the beach is washed away on the main route?

Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Trail

Creation of new trail within Torndirrup National Park, following the coastline from The Gap lighthouse, to the Blowholes, to Jimmy Newells Harbour, Torndirrup Beach, Stony Hill to the Bald Head trail head and the Albany's Historic Whaling Station. This trail alignment could allow for a series of short loops at each attraction site, a return loop inland to the Whaling Station, and a dual-use trail link to Frenchman's Bay Road.

Suspect it might be too far but a Bibbulmun Track link/spur through Tondirrup might be a long term addition to this. It may need an additional campsite which would make it a good overnight circuit/spur.

Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link

The Wilderness Ocean Walk (WOW) Trail is a dual use trail connecting the Denmark Windfarm to Lights Beach. It is used as part of the Munda Biddi Trail. Walkers and cyclists use a gravel service road to access the WOW Trail from the Ocean Beach end. Trailhead signage and a purpose built dual-use trail would improve the overall experience for all trail users. Construction of this link would enable a new hiking trail loop using the existing dual-use path from Ocean Beach to the Bibbulmun Track/Sheila Hill Trail over Mt Hallowell and back to Lights Beach (start of the WOW Trail). [This trail is also referenced in the Cycling Plan]





CONTINUED

Bibbulmun Track

(Denmark townsite to Nullaki Peninsula)

The Bibbulmun Track is cut off between Denmark and the Nullaki Peninsula, requiring walkers to use vehicle transport (approximately 40 minutes) to the trail head. As a nationally significant trail, consideration should be given to finding a suitable trail alignment to link the two sites.

This discussion may be informed by a comprehensive review conducted 10 years ago. DBCA has a copy of this report.

Mt Hallowell MTB Trails

MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Potential for use for competitive Enduro events. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.

We would be keen to know that the intention is not to use parts of the Bibbulmun Track here (and perhaps even avoid crossovers which encourage MTB to take an alternate route on the Bibb). It is a narrow winding trail unsuitable for bikes and dangerous for walkers if they were on it.

Kind regards

Linda

*Linda Daniels
Executive Director*

*Bibbulmun Track Foundation
Perth YHA Building
300 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000
T: (08) 9481 0551
E: linda@bibbulmuntrack.org.au
W: www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au*



-----Original Message-----

[Redacted]

Reponent 0801

200114_1608

Sent: Tuesday, 14 January 2020 4:08 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

[Redacted]

Message Body:
hello.

The heritage listed Porongurup National Park is a very small Park and to me this Park with it's very special biodiversity is far too small to have MTB trails, MTB events (spectators, participants, supporters, tv crews etc) bituminised roads and carparks happening. I think it's ridiculous to think that you can just add all these things to a struggling National Park it's just purely selfish thinking. Nature again gets the shortest straw.

I wonder if there will be an ad in the paper or any other media to call for expressions of interest to create a MTB park on private land. With a MTB park on private land everything is solved. So why wait? regards.





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
 Tuesday, 14 January 2020 5:15 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 GS trails master plan

200114_1715

Hi,

I have recently reviewed the trails master plan. I am a local to Albany, having lived here for 8 years.

Over the past 2 or 3 years I have become a keen mountain bike rider and I enjoy riding distance trails such as the Munda Biddi but also the shorter cross country type trails. I have also recently become a parent and enjoy seeing my daughter riding her bike and in the future look forward to riding with her.

I am encouraged by the plans for a variety of trails in the great southern and hope that the implementation of these is within the time frame suggested. I have also recently read the trails plan for Albany City Council and note that this was dated 2015-2025 and I am not sure that there has been much progress with these.

I regularly ride in the Albany 'Mounts' and enjoy the trails there but this is limited significantly by the knowledge that there may be walkers or cyclists coming the other way and there is a risk of collision which moderates my riding. By comparison I have recently thoroughly enjoyed riding the many purpose built trails around Dunsborough and Margaret River and on returning to Albany I can see so much potential for the same trails.

I also feel the dual use path to Whale world will be a fantastic addition to the trails in Albany, particularly if it can be linked up with the Mounts and the town centre which would give the region a feel of a forward thinking and modern city.

Currently the link from Little Grove is broken across (a very busy and potentially dangerous intersection) Hanrahan road/Princess Royal drive and then the trail turns into a stop/start footpath along Grey Street, both areas which limit the commuting on trails in/out of town, particularly with young family.

Thanks for the opportunity to give feedback, I hope that the planned trails progress as planned.

[REDACTED]



From [REDACTED]
 Sent: Wednesday, 15 January 2020 12:12 PM
 To: trails@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Comments: draft regional trails master plan

200115_1212

Hello

Please find following my comments, as a private citizen, on the draft regional trails master plan:

OVERARCHING COMMENTS:

1. The draft plan looks like a good foundation for future trails-based projects across the region.
2. An important matter that I think should be specifically addressed in the plan is the underwhelming nature of the Albany (southern) terminus of the Bibbulmun Track, compared to its northern terminus in Kalamunda. I imagine that the terminus where most people end the track (Albany), not the start, is the highlight, and this is not reflected in the current state of the Albany terminus. I believe the regional trails masterplan plan should be used to prioritise an upgrade to the Albany terminus (which also doubles as the terminus of the Munda Biddi trail that starts in Mundaring - another reason the terminus should be at least as good as the two northern termini of the trails that are located in separate shires in the Perth Hills). Such an upgrade should be aimed recognising the achievement of walkers/riders that have completed the track, and for walkers/riders aiming to follow the track from south to north promoting what's in store in the Great Southern segment of the tracks. Any upgrade could also promote shorter walks/rides that exist around the Great Southern (particularly Albany) now that riders/walkers have made it to the region.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

1. Executive summary, page 5, par 2, says the draft plan has been developed in partnership with the 11 local governments of the region. As the next page (6) mentions a project partly located in Walpole (Shire of Manjimup, outside the Great Southern), and this project is mentioned elsewhere in the document, recommend that mention also be made of any consultation that has occurred with relevant shires that adjoin the Great Southern region;
2. Page 6, bottom, 'Trail type' legend. 'Snorkelling' is included, but there is no mention of snorkelling in the 'Proposed priority trails' table immediately above to which the legend refers. Recommend deletion of 'Snorkelling' here;
3. Page 12, first column, 'The Cape to Cape walk track in Margaret River'. As the track runs across two shires, Augusta-Margaret River and Busselton, the statement is not entirely accurate;
4. Page 26, Row 2 'Destination significance'. 'Stirling Range', not 'Ranges';
5. Page 26, Row 1 'Trail significance'. There is an opportunity here to specifically foreshadow an upgrade to the southern terminus of the Bibbulmun Track. In Row 1, I would suggest: Current status: 'The Bibbulmun Track is a nationally significant trail with its passage through the region being a major magnet for hikers from across the world. However, the standard of facilities at its southern terminus does not match the standard of its northern terminus in the Perth Hills.'; and 'Proposed strategy': 'Market and promote the region's existing trail network, including examination of the feasibility of upgrading the Bibbulmun Track terminus to a standard that at least matches the northern (Kalamunda) terminus of the track. OR this matter could alternatively be addressed in Row 10 'Useability' by specific mention to the terminus under the 'Proposed strategy' heading there where improvements to trailhead facilities are mentioned in general;





CONTINUED

6. Page 28, 'Develop trail linkages'. My point about the southern terminus could alternatively be addressed as a separate line item here, beneath the line item concerning the proposed Denmark-Nullaki improvements;
7. Page 29, 'Bald Head Walk' and 'Bluff Knoll' headings. Neither attraction is in the 'South West' as stated. Suggest use of 'Great Southern' or 'south west corner of Australia';
8. Page 31, dot point commencing 'Creating high end ...'. 'Stirling Range', not 'Ranges';
9. Page 32, consistent with my comments above, in first row, under 'Trail significance', suggest something like: 'The Munda Biddi Trail is a nationally significant trail with its southern terminus in the region being at the same spot as the Bibbulmun Track southern terminus'. And under 'Proposed strategy': 'Improve and maintain the Munda Biddi Trail, including its southern terminus, to attract interstate and international visitors';
10. Page 34, consistent with the point immediately above, suggest a new line item under 'Enhance existing trails', viz: HEADING: Munda Biddi Trail southern terminus, Albany. Recognising that this major trail terminates at the same spot as the Bibbulmun Track, examine means to upgrade the terminus to the same or higher standard of the Bibbulmun Track's northern terminus in the Perth Hills;
11. Page 37, Albany to Whaling station dual use trail item: 'Frenchman Bay' not 'Frenchman's Bay'. Further, mention of the Frenchman Bay Heritage Trail comes out of the blue here. Ideally, the Frenchman Bay Heritage Trail should be foreshadowed and foregrounded earlier in the plan;
12. Page 37, Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail item, first line: 'range', not 'ranges';
13. Page 37, last line item re Munda Biddi Trail. My suggestion for Page 34, above, could alternatively and just as effectively be implemented here;
14. Page 45, The idea of having a 'Great Southern Treasures' loop that does not include Albany and Denmark suggests that nothing in Albany or in Denmark is a treasure. Seeing as the plan is a regional document, I would therefore recommend that the previous term 'Great Southern *Hidden* Treasures' be reinstated for this proposed recreation circuit;
15. Page 56, par starting 'A Great Southern Trails Reference Group ...'. Suggest that 'overseeing' be added to the second last sentence between the words 'for' and 'strategic';
16. Page 56, par starting 'The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence ...'. Suggest addition to the end of the sentence of '..., subject to performance indicators agreed by the GSTRG and yearly endorsement by the GSTRG of annual reports drafted by GSCORE on its performance against the agreed indicators'.
17. Page 56, last par, third line. Recommend that the word 'vested' be deleted.

If you have any queries about my submission, above, please feel free to call me on 0467 710 180.

regards





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
 Wednesday, 15 January 2020 2:13 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 Submission: Great Southern RTMP

2001115_1413

Dear GSCORE,

I have a close association with the Porongurup and Albany communities. I have hiked extensively around Walpole, Denmark, Albany and the Stirling and Porongurup ranges, worked for a small business in the Porongurup region and take my holidays in the Great Southern region.

With regard to the Regional Trail Master Plan, I submit the following:

1. The vision and strategy of the RTMP is, in a general sense, a positive and impressive plan for the Great Southern.
2. I do not support the selection of the Porongurup National Park as a site for a MTB trail (page 33) on cultural and ecological significance grounds. I make this submission on the basis of two experts presenting at the Community Information Evening held at Porongurup Hall on 9th January:
 - a. Larry Blight, Menang Nyoongar representative, expressed dismay at the proposal to develop a MTB in the national park, specifically at the higher levels of the range as they hold cultural significance to the traditional land owners. This was echoed by other Aboriginal people in attendance.
 - b. Dr Stephen Hopper, Professor at the UWA School of Agriculture and Environment, expressed deep concern at the high risk for environmental degradation in constructing and operating a MTB trail with the Porongurup National Park. Given this expert opinion, no new development should take place within the Porongurup National Park (excluding enhancement and upgrades to reduce the impact of existing trails).
 - c. Despite mitigation strategies, there is inherently higher risk of degradation from MTB riders using the park due to the speed and distance covered, with higher risk of deviating from trails (accidentally or otherwise) and spread of disease such as dieback.
3. An alternative site for the Porongurup MTB trail should be found on private land, within the Porongurup region but not within the national park.

Yours sincerely,





200115_1509

From: [Redacted]
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Feedback on Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

15 January 2020 3:09 PM

To whom it may concern

Firstly, thank you for all the work you have done on providing this master plan. We as a local Albany family do quite a bit of holidaying, in other regions. We feel that the great southern is falling behind in trails. So it is fantastic to see some forward planning happening.

The master plan looks like a great start. One thing I noted is the total lack of MTB trails in the area. This is a rapidly growing sport, Albany and the great southern have fallen quickly behind in this aspect. We have to travel frequently to other areas, to go MTB as a family, on purpose built trails. If this could be put as a priority, to get implemented. The returns on investment would be great for the region and local community

It all looks like some exciting developments for the great southern, myself and family look forward to it progressing further.



Respondent 0805

200115_1610

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 15 January 2020 4:10 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Public comment for the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

I am glad to see consideration of accessibility across all trails.

With regard to considering all abilities, specifically with cycling and mountain biking, it is notable that despite the presence of cycling enthusiasts locally, there remain few trails that are truly family-friendly and suitable for children and beginners. I hope to see more of these trails and paths created for these leisure groups, especially taking into regard separated paths from motorised traffic.

For example, the bicycle path along the CBD section of Albany Hwy causes the bicycle user to encounter a driveway every few metres; children and teenagers with immature peripheral vision are at risk of misadventure at these points. Separated bike paths would increase usability.

Additionally, aside from recreation, more and better (i.e. safe) paths for vulnerable users (cyclists and walkers) will encourage more active transport, which has flow on public health benefits in our community.

The proposed trails generally look amazing and I am sure a lot of work has gone into this. Thank you.





-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
 Sent: Wednesday, 15 January 2020 8:14 PM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

200115_2014

Message Body:
 hello.

No events planned in the park you said in your last email. But you want the area to be a regional mountain biking and cycling destination for national and international visitors. Plus DBCA has a yearly MTB event in Gull Rock NP. Together this will end up in many events in the Park organised by different groups. That will happen and the Park is just too small and eco systems in the Park are too fragile and too precious for the people who care about it, it will end up being a Luna Park and a Luna Park and a Heritage listed National Park don't go together! NEVER!
 You also said that trails on private land are worth considering in the future. Which future? After the Porongurup National Park is destroyed? Why not NOW? Again, MTB trails on private land are THE solution, it's just a private operated business, people pay and get a good trail. So easy. Parks stay untouched and the big maintenance problem for the trails is solved.
 When are you planning an ad for expression of interest?

Regards



From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Thursday, 16 January 2020 8:04 AM
trails@gscore.com.au
Trails plan

200116_0804

Morning

As a family that enjoys being in the great outdoors together and appreciates the beauty of nature we would definitely support mountain bike trails in all locations listed in the trail master plan, especially the mounts within ALBANY, Denmark, poiklerup and porongorups. We have such a beautiful part of the country and to provide opportunities for more families to enjoy the great outdoors as well as bringing tourist dollars to Albany would be amazing. We, as a family travel all over wa to ride mountain bike trails and to race state rounds and the respect and care we and all others show to the environment while using the trails is extremely high. Mountain bikers want to use the trails so they know they have to look after the environment to continue to enjoy them. There is no straying from the trail to check out anything and potentially damaging flora as especially in downhill trails it's about sticking to the trail and enjoying the rush of getting to the bottom.

We think it's important that all user groups get to experience the beauty of nature without impacting each other. On a side note Albany has produced many state champion mountain bike riders imagine how well they could represent ALBANY if they had more trails to train on.

Kind regards
[REDACTED]



PAGE 77





200116_1042

I am not opposed to the development of trails around the south coast, but I do not think that GSCORE is able to produce and manage a program which will respect the environment, communities and groups that are not cyclists. This is due to their emphasis on commerce and the voice of the mountain bike group which is organised and vocal, despite representing a small group of users. There is overwhelming evidence that people visit the region to go hiking and walking, so this should be the focus of the document. The document is very thin on the time line and no mention of maintain what we already have. Let's improve what we have before we go about mismanaging more of our natural assets.

I attended the recent meeting in the Porongurup's Hall in January 2020. The GSCORE representative kept talking about world class trails and best practice. To date the evidence of GSCORE's ability to perform at a level that involves "world class" is sadly lacking. Evidence of its ability to manage trails comes from the trails on the mounts in Albany. These are of poor quality, rapidly declining condition, well below world's best practice and dangerous due to the unsanctioned use of hiking trails by cyclists. As a result, I have no faith in GSCORE's ability to manage anything close to a regional strategy and as a result the document being reviewed is below the standard needed. There is also continuing evidence that GSCORE is operating for the benefit of the mountain bikers and not the community as a whole. If GSCORE wants to be trusted by the wider community, they need to demonstrate this by putting some effort in to making the hiking trails in Albany world class and make them safe to walk on (that means stopping the bikes). Only then will anything put forward by GSCORE resemble anything the wider community can trust. My source of evidence is my use of the trails over the last ten years.

It is a pity that plans for the hiking trails in Albany is being based on the 2016 Trails strategy plan. This plan has many issues. Firstly, the community engagement sessions were attended overwhelmingly by mountain bikers. The rest of the community did not know of the meetings until they were complete. This ensured that only mountain bikers had input to the plan. The plan includes 25km of bike trails on a mount that is only 3 km long. This is far too much and damaging for the environment. There is nothing in the 2016 plan for anyone else, including a large number of established users. There are questions about the appropriateness of the dieback survey, and no dieback hygiene introduced to the region. There are figures in the plan that are misleading. And non-bikers have been treated poorly by GSCORE and the City of Albany. The 2016 document needs to be replaced with one that represents the whole community and gives more importance to the maintenance of the natural environment.

There also needs to be a formal way of prosecuting those who build illegal trails. There has also been no penalty for the promotion of building illegal trails on the Mountain Bike Clubs Facebook page. None of the people who have constructed illegal trails have been prosecuted despite knowing who the people are and what they have done. Bringing the activities of these offenders to the notice of the police should have been done. This needs to be formalised in the plan.

In research done by academics and the City of Albany, there is overwhelming evidence that people come to this area to walk and hike. It is the leading reason for people to visit. They come for the nature. The plan does not appreciate this enough. If GSCORE is interested in driving economically robust recreation, then more time and effort needs to go into fixing the existing hiking trails and bringing them up to world class standards before any more trails are built.

I am affected by changes to the hiking trails on the mounts in Albany and as a result I will be reading any documentation that comes from this activity. I will be ensuring that my comments have been included and have been represented in the way they are intended. This has been a problem in the



past when comments have been misinterpreted, usually for the benefit of cyclists. I am not against cycle trails on the mounts, but they need to be appropriate for the size of the mounts. There is only room for one cycle trail and if its not good enough for a "gravity trail" then they need to go elsewhere.

Get it right in Albany before you impose more trails in other places, especially where community do not want them. And don't forget the reason this region is so nice is because we don't have many people destroying what we all love – money is not everything.





200116_1410

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 16 January 2020 2:10 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Public Comment on Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Flag Status: Flagged

I attended the community information evening on Thursday 9th January at Porongurup community hall. Unfortunately due to the short space of time between Thursday's meeting and to the deadline of submission, my comments will be predominantly referring to the trail proposals in the Porongurup Ranges.

I applaud the thought and effort that has gone into creating the Great Southern Regional Trails master plan and in theory it is a wonderful idea. However, I'm afraid I am in opposition to any new trails being built in the Porongurup Range National Park. This highly unique national park contains extremely precious biodiversity and would be far too vulnerable to host such a proposal. Also, it would concern me as to how the proposed trails would be monitored for riders staying on designated tracks, as well as there being enough funding for ongoing maintenance when funds already fall short for providing a full-time ranger to the area.

Comments were made at the meeting that here in Western Australia, we are behind other parts of the world when it comes to creating mountain bike trail networks. For instance, places like Scotland – as mentioned in detail in the master plan on **page 33**.

However, Scotland has vast areas of highly degraded landscapes. Many Scottish mountains are covered practically by grass alone, having been denuded over the millennia by human habitation. Unlike here, where we have some of the richest and most diverse flora in the world.

Europe sustained geological upheavals as recently as twenty thousand years ago in the last ice-age, whereby in contrast, this part of Australia remained untouched by glacial covering and our flora was able to evolve undisturbed for up to *two hundred and fifty million years*. We have many, many thousands more species because of this lack of disturbance. Unfortunately, much of our rich biodiversity has been destroyed through clearing since European settlement; a lot of this clearing was done by people in the past who didn't have a clue as to the biological richness of the area. But now we know better. We know how unique and special this part of the world is, and we should be doing everything in our power to protect what remains.

At the meeting, much was made of the low impact and sustainability of well designed trails, and this is commendable, but the bottom line is that initially there would have to be a high disturbance of the landscape to get machinery in and native bush would need to be cleared. There is SO much degraded land in our state and so little that remains untouched, it seems terribly short-sighted and insensitive to choose a relatively untouched place to put in more infrastructure. Our planet is in environmental crisis. This proposal advocates that we eat into our last remaining areas rather than looking at options in areas that have already been highly disturbed and damaged.

So much effort already goes into trying to protect these last remaining places from further clearing and from weed infestation and fires, it is utterly exhausting for small numbers of people to have to keep fighting afresh against yet more ways to eat into our untouched native bush. We need people in public office to take a stand on what is right and not bow to what the next financially influential group wants. There is no violation of human rights if people can't ride mountain bikes in the Porongurup Range. Everyone is able to walk through and enjoy what it has to offer.

On **page 10**, there is the statement "Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land" But mere acknowledgement is not enough. At the meeting. A local Noongar man stated quite emphatically that the Porongurup range has huge cultural and spiritual significance to four different Noongar groups and they don't want mountain bike trails in the park. This should be respected and is alone reason enough not to go





CONTINUED

ahead with the trails. On **page 33** it is mentioned “There is an opportunity to integrate Noongar culture and creative expression at each site to highlight the region’s unique history and landscape.” Yes, it acknowledges them, but doesn’t show respect to their wishes.

In conclusion, I would like to make it clear that I think it’s a great idea to develop some new mountain bike trails, particularly with the rising interest in the sport, but please look more carefully at the options in areas that have already been cleared or semi-degraded and the impact will be far less. There is an opportunity here to be more visionary in going forward with this masterplan and future generations will thank you for it.

The planet is losing its natural habitat at unprecedented and frightening rates so what little remains of our untouched bush should be preserved at all costs. There are already beautiful walking trails through the park which I feel should be left as natural as possible, there is talk of economic gain with the building of trails but as time progresses far more economic gain will be made possible by having untouched biodiversity for people to marvel at.





trails@gscore.com.au

200116_1454

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 16 January 2020 2:54 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: NEVER EVER Mountain Bike trail in the Porongurup National Park
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern, The Porongurup NP is for conservation and appreciation of nature and for all the delicate fauna and flora that still exists in such a small pocket of land surrounded by near complete destruction of the natural world. We are the custodians of this National Park how dare you consider more destruction?. The exploitation of the Porongurup National Park from the 11 councils involved is offensive and is ill conceived as expressed by all who attended the local meeting at the Porongurup Hall.

If we the people are ignored please expect their wrath because this will be a war you the 11 councils will soon learn to regret and loose in great shame!

Our National Park is for our children and your children to enjoy along with all the fauna and flora and not to the benefit of extreme racing sports.

Shame on all the local councils who only see \$\$\$\$\$ instead of the beauty that was given to us from previous generations who preserve it for us today. Please make no mistake your Jobs are at risk if you continue down this path, as you work for us are paid by us and are hired to work hard for us, the people!.

Please come to your collective senses and understand this is a National Park and such an idea makes a mockery of you and our National Park system as a whole. I pray this is something our councilors will soon come to reconsider. Mountain bike racing has no place in such a naturally and culturally sensitive area.

Question? do we need to completely start again and elect new councilors who are in touch with its people and today's environmental issues?.





CONTINUED

Continue this blatant rearguard to our nature and we the people will rise to fight you and fight we will! disregard us at your peril, please listen you have been warned.

Save your time and our money and just ask yourselves which side of this fight do you really want to be on?

Make no mistake your going to loose and loose badly and shame on you all if you continue.

I am just one of the many ready and highly financed to fight you, there is still time to wake up and take a good look at this exploitative plan you are suggesting or do you have no soul or care other than the all might dollar?

No! we do not want Mountain Bike trails in the Porongurup National Park now go find a suitable area to exploit other than our N.P.

From:**Sent:****To:****Subject:**

[REDACTED] Thursday, 16 January 2020 3:03 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

RE: Regional Trails Master Plan Comment

Respondent 0802

200116_1503

Good afternoon Karl,

Of course you may circulate my comments to the City of Albany. I hope to meet Paul Camins at the City of Albany in the near future to discuss the issues further.

I am disappointed to hear that the Regional Trails Master Plan is not considering user conflict issues in the Sand Opatch area. I would have keenly participated in the public consultation during March and April however I was away overseas judging as I am also an International Equestrian Judge.

However, I would urge the consultant group GSCORE, GSDC and the GS Local Governments to take heed of the issues when considering any bridle trails and particularly those in the City of Albany where the city have supported the development of dedicated equestrian facilities in the Robinson and Sand Patch area. This issue will not go away without intervention.

Regards



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 16 January 2020 6:14 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

200116_1814

[REDACTED]
Message Body:
hello.

The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) defines a national park as: a relatively large area with one or several ecosystems where plant and animal species, geomorphological sites and habitats are of special scientific, educational and recreational interest. Visitors are allowed to enter under special conditions, for inspirational, educative, cultural and recreational purposes. Further on they mention: Prohibition of such activities as sport, hunting and fishing.

A definition of a Heritage listed National Park I could not find but you can imagine that rules and conditions are even much more explicit.

So why on earth are you proposing MTB and other tracks in such a fragile, relatively pristine, significant area as the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park, that is under so many threats already.

KEEP OUT

Own up, say sorry that we proposed this and put an add out for expression of interest in creating a MTB theme park and everybody is happy as Larry.

regards.



From:

To:

Subject:

Thursday, 16 January 2020 8:22 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Submission regarding the Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200116_2022

Submission regarding the Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029

Date: January 16, 2020

I object to the Master Trails Plan.

I object to anything but walking trails in the Porongurup National Park (page 6-Proposed Priority Trails).

National Parks were set aside for the public to be able to appreciate their special ecosystems and to preserve habitat that has otherwise been destroyed by agricultural or development activities. In National Parks, leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but pictures.

Evidence of mismanagement of existing trails on sanctioned and unsanctioned trails in the City of Albany indicates the inability of the largest of the eleven local government partners to control bicyclists.

One solution to trail creation for biking enthusiasts is to put trails on private property. This benefit is twofold: 1) Economic benefit will flow to the landowner and those he employs and 2) the landowner will have to take responsibility for trail construction and maintenance in the future.



From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

Thursday, 16 January 2020 8:49 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Submission for RTMP

200116_2049

I strongly object to any trails (other than walking trails or existing roads) being created in National Parks as part of the RTMP. These Parks were set aside to protect the fauna and flora from commercial development such as farming and logging. The Parks should remain the attraction and not the attractions we build in them.

The RMTMP concept is good but the locations of some of the proposed trails should be moved out of the Parks and located on private land or government land that is already assigned for exploitation.

Porongurup





16 January 2020

200116_2052

Dr Lenore Lyons
Executive Director
GSCORE
22 Collie Street
Albany WA 6330

Dear Dr Lyons,

Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan – Public Comment: Sand Patch.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Regional Trails Master Plan.

We are an equestrian association, spanning many years. Our main affiliation is with Equestrian Federation International. We promote all disciplines, recreational and competition. Our members mainly use the Albany Equestrian Centre. Although our home ground, our members do utilise the Stidwell Trail extensively, either to access our main hub, the Albany Equestrian Centre, or to ride recreationally. The Stidwell Trail allows riders to travel safely to the Albany Equestrian Centre and use the extensive facilities, e.g. The Ray Dowsett Indoor Arena, cross country facilities. The Sand Patch Reserve is also accessible for many of our members because of these unique trails.

Our members choose the Robinson area to pursue equestrian sports because;

- close proximity to the Albany Equestrian Centre,
- the Albany Racing Club,
- the Stidwell Bridle Trail,
- the extensive quiet rural roads and tracks,
- proximity to beaches.

The Robinson area is a mix of semi-rural and rural properties. Many residents chose to live in the area because it was an equestrian precinct. Safe for children to ride to the Pony Club, for riders to enjoy the once quiet and safe roads and tracks.

The Stidwell Bridle Trail was officially opened in 1999 and incorporated 30 kilometres of trails for equestrians to enjoy the bush tracks, rolling hills, hidden valleys and magnificent views. It was a designated bridle trail. Trail Bikes and other vehicles were originally not permitted nor intended.

The Stidwell Trail incorporates three loops;

- Sand Patch Loop – along the road verges, through Allmore Park, behind the Albany Regional Prison to the Werrilup Loop
- Robinson Loop – winding through Robinson Estate to the Werrilup Loop
- Werrilup Loop – track leading to the summit of Werrilup Hill with a purpose built shelter and horse hitching rail.





CONTINUED

This area was identified many years ago as an area with the need for equestrian trails, hence the development of the Stidwell Bridle Trail.

The Albany Equestrian Centre is an equestrian hub for many equestrian clubs including;

- Albany Pony Club
- Albany Adult Riders Group
- Albany Horsemen's Association
- Great Southern Dressage Club
- Natural Trail Riders
- Albany Carriage Driving Club

During the last 2 years and particularly since the adoption of the Multi Use Trails concept in the area which allows Cyclists, Motor Cyclists and Off-Road Vehicles to share the same trails as equestrians our members have encountered many conflicts with the other users.

These conflicts have caused serious safety issues. Horses are animals and no manner of training can prepare them for being confronted by loud motorcycles, Four Wheel Drive Vehicles and Mountain Bikes jumping through the air towards the horse with no respect for riders or animals and no escape route. When these vehicles travel at speed a rider and their mount do not have the opportunity to prepare for their sudden appearance. These vehicle users don't have speed restrictions when using these trails.

Pony Club children, Adult Riders and Carriage Drivers no longer feel safe to pursue their sport and recreation in the area.

We strongly oppose the concept of Multi Use Trails in the Robinson Sand Patch Precinct and urge you and the appropriate authorities to restrict the Robinson/ Sand Patch area to equestrians and return the precinct to a safe recreational trails area for horses and ponies before there is a tragedy.

Yours sincerely

The Committee
Albany Horsemen's Association





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 16 January 2020 10:52 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Stidwell Bridle Path

200116_2252

Hello,

I wish to briefly share my experiences on the Stilwell Bridle Path. But before I do, I wish to say that I bought this house 2 years ago because of it's location being very close to a bridle path. Having two horses, this was important to me when looking to find a house when moving from Perth.

My rides have been very limited on the paths as I just do not feel safe on it. I live on Princess Avenue and usually only utilise the surrounding paths and designated limestone roads.

I have witnessed off road vehicles riding at speed which I find very un-nerving with the blind crests and corners. One neighbour has children riding unsupervised. I personally witnessed them riding quads and two wheel bikes in the horses only section near the Albany Racecourse.

Another neighbour rides his ATV around. My sons have seen him riding over the crests at speed between the model aircraft clubhouse and Princess Avenue. They stated that he appeared to be try to use them as jumps. Imagine if a horse / pony was also on the track at the same time.

Another time a friend and I led the horses while her young children where in the saddle. Two off road trail bikes came roaring up to us. They slowed down as they passed but 20 metres after they gave it throttle and fish tailed away. It was obvious that a child was sitting on a 16hand high horse but the riders gave absolutely so regard to the dangers and appeared to see us as a nuisance.

Even cars going to the RC model aircraft club room appear to have little knowledge on driving safely near horses. A few times I've had to gesture to them to slow down as they approach far too quickly. On one occasion I was forced to go bush as the driver gave me no time to find a clear spot. Those that did slow down were acknowledged with a friendlywwave and a thank you to show that we appreciate it and to try to encourage a positive image for riders.

The damage being done to the tracks also need to be considered. Many (even blind) corners have sand banked up to one side when off road vehicles have been ridden at speed around. Fish tailing and donut tyre marks are often seen. Something that I do not personally call riding in at a sensible and safe speed.

Thank you for taking the time to review the usage of the Stidwell Bridle Path. I fear that someone or a horse will be injured badly if this "free for all" "multi use " path continues. Horses are a dangerous animal and should not be placed in the same category as cars, off-road bikes, bicycles and cars. It would be very pleasing to myself and many others if there were changes made with regards to its usage.

[REDACTED]





200117_0849

From: [Redacted]
To: [Redacted] 17 January 2020 8:49 AM
Subject: trails@gscore.com.au
Great Southern regional trails master plan

Hi,

I am totally for having this proceed within the Great Southern we are really lagging behind the other tourist hot spots in this regard, some have been well under way for years now.

I am a bit disappointed to see the Albany heritage park trails are in the 3-5 year plan as these have already been proposed for around 5 years already, Albany has a great hill to provide hiking & mtb trails pretty much in the city centre & would be ideal to bring tourist to town? I though these were on the verge of happening & just waiting on (another) environmental study which was due to be completed late last year?

Any way a definite yes from me lets get it all started!

[Redacted]





200117_1141

Comments on Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

I have a background in both regional development and natural resource management.

The master plan is extensive and proposes a number of new trails. The plan mentions biodiversity as a major attraction yet provides no indication of how it will be protected from proposed new trails.

In the four objectives there was a motherhood statement of 'sustainable' but no indication of what this means.

Some local governments have so far shown little capacity to maintain current trails even in areas with large numbers of visitors. The plan states that trail enhancements are of lower priority than new trails (p23).

Rather than clearance of bush to make new trails, it would be valuable to see more emphasis in the plan on improving current walking and hiking trails and on interpretive signage for visitors on hiking routes. If walking trails and their marketing were improved they would be used more. For example more information on Noongar culture, settler history as well as flora, fauna and geology would be interesting to tourists.

Current trail maintenance and enhancement should be of high priority.

City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy

The plan supports the City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy in several places (Table 9 page 34, Appendix 2, and page 69). It doesn't mention the Albany Heritage Park Trails Network Concept Plan, which was passed by the City of Albany in December 2016. The Concept Plan was for a large network of trails on Mt Clarence and Adelaide and the requirement to clear twenty-five kilometres of bush on those mounts.

A survey from 2002-10 recorded 160 species of native fauna in the Park, with 11 mammal species and 125 bird species. There are at least 350 species of plants. The bushland is an area of important breeding habitat for the critically endangered western ringtail possum and the EPBC has already informed the City that it will not get approval for such trails. The City has since put in another proposal to the EPBC for fewer trails on the Mounts. The EPBC has found the new proposal also requires assessment.

Regular walkers have already witnessed illegal clearance on Mounts Adelaide, Clarence and Melville. Night mountain biking is also a threat to the nocturnal activities of the possums.

The Master Plan needs to consider the impact on biodiversity.

Porongurup and Stirling Ranges

New mountain bike trails in the Porongurup and Stirling Ranges are a threat to biodiversity and should never be considered in such sacred Noongar locations.

This statement on page 31 is completely at odds with the State and Commonwealth Governments' mandate to protect this iconic area.



CONTINUED

- *Creating high end, high quality, overnight mountain biking experience through iconic locations like the Stirling Ranges*

The proposal for mountain biking in the ranges is astonishing. The damage to vegetation on Mounts Clarence and Adelaide from mountain bikers indicates that their activities cannot be controlled. Well-planned trails and detailed site assessment are useless when the mountain bikes continually go off-trail, widen trails, cause erosion and spread dieback. The argument that constructing well-planned trails solves the problem of illegal trails or trail modification has proved to be erroneous. The Margaret River area has already experienced illegal clearance. In Tasmania many unauthorised trails and structures such as jumps and berms are constructed in areas with mountain bike trails. These irresponsible mountain bikers are not necessarily mountain bike club members but once mountain biking is encouraged in an area damage follows. For this reason, mountain biking and conservation are generally not compatible even with best practice trail design.

Mountain biking in the Porongurup Range (and particularly Stirling Range -p31) is incompatible with conservation principles.

Cyclocross Track

Mountain bike trails are being constructed all over Australia so it is going to be difficult to attract mountain bike tourists to the Great Southern.

I submitted a proposal to Anthony McEwan at the City of Albany for a cyclocross track in the area of Centennial Park. Cyclocross is a rapidly growing sport and popular with all age groups. It could be incorporated into the Youth Challenge Park which has the mountain bike home base and runs pump track and slalom races.

Cyclocross races could be held weekly if there was funding for support staff and appropriate safety measures.

The advantage would be that initially it would be only permanent cyclocross track in Western Australia and could attract major races. (see attached document).

Proposal for cyclocross track in Albany

Monitoring

There should be more emphasis on monitoring the impact of trails both on economics and environment. There is little research on the impact of mountain biking on South West biodiversity which is highly vulnerable to plant pathogens and weeds.

There needs to more research on the impact of trails in areas of high biodiversity or where there are threatened species or plant communities.



From: Oliver Laing <oliver@mundabiddi.org.au>
Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 12:18 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Masterplan feedback from the MBTF

200117_1218

Dear Karl,

Hope all is well with you. Below is some Munda Biddi related feedback on the masterplan.

p. 28 - Develop Trail Linkage - Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link - building a trail so that walkers can traverse a loop rather than walking one way only on the WOW trail sounds good in principal. The MBTF suggests that there would be the potential for increased cyclist / walker conflict on the WOW trail if walker numbers were to increase significantly - parts of the WOW trail are tight and have limited visibility. Cyclists travelling in the direction of the windfarm to Lights Beach travel quite fast, being a predominantly downhill section. Further consideration would need to be given to reducing the potential for walker / cyclist conflict.

p. 37

- 1) Munda Biddi - William Bay Road realignment
- 2) Munda Biddi - Denmark Heritage Rail Trail connector
- 3) Munda Biddi - Sandpatch

The MBTF is supportive of these proposals as they stand.

best wishes,

Oliver Laing

Executive Officer, Munda Biddi Trail Foundation

(08) 6336 9699 - 105 Cambridge Street, West Leederville WA 6007 - ABN 62 903 910 807





200117_1240

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 12:40 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: submission for Great Southern Regional Master Trails Plan
Attachments: Submission for Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.rtf

Respondent 0806

Regards to the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
 Section 4 Trail Development Proposal
 Proposed Mountain Biking and Cycle Touring Trial (page 31 and page 34 Table 9)
 Porongurup MTB Trails
 Porongurup National Park

I disagree to the proposed Trail network in the **Porongurup National Park**.

Extreme Mountain biking and cycling is an inappropriate use of the land.
 The Porongurup National Park is one of the few remaining areas of conservation, a haven for both very unique flora and fauna. Protect the biodiversity, many people visit the Park for this reason. The Porongurup National Park offers a unique natural experience for the more conservation minded people. The Porongurup National Park does not need further degradation by more trails. It does not need the potential of increased die back and further weed infestation. The Porongurup National Park is Heritage listed therefore this needs to be adhered to, to protect and maintain it as the beautiful natural wonder that it is.

I am also concerned about the affect of a cycling trail in the Stirlings, for similar reasons

The idea of the plan to connect cycle trails to other towns is a good plan, as long as there is care for any remnant bush, and the surrounding properties.

My concern in this area is to do with the **degradation of the Munda Mindi trail**. Myself and my grandson toured the top half (Perth down) and we had to push our bikes through deep ruts in the path more than being able to cycle. The Munda Mindi Trail has a huge potential to be a "must do" for overseas visitors but not in the state that it is now. I feel the design of the trail did not suit the landscape and needs more attention and money for maintenance to be the icon it should be.

I feel you need to concentrate on upgrading the Munda Mindi Trail, and show how successful it can be, before commencing any other cycle paths.

[REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 1:32 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Bicycle Trails within Porongurup National Park

200117_1332

To Whom It may concern,

The upgrading of the Porongurup Skywalk was installed with utmost care and with exceptional method so as not to interfere with the environment or damage to the Park. How can bicycle trails be created within the same code of practice?

The Park attracts tourists because of its unspoilt beauty, stillness on walk trails and the abundance of flora and fauna. These attributes have been found to be beneficial for mental health and many of the visitors who pass through our Caravan Park, Karribank Country Retreat, Bolganup Homestead, Porongurup Tea Rooms and B&B/chalets are seniors looking for such quiet bush walks without interference.

The Park protects the Porongurup Range, an extremely ancient and largely levelled mountain range formed in the Precambrian over 1200 million years ago. The Park evokes feelings similar to Uluru which I can attest to. (no bike trails up there!).

The locals here have a strong bond possibly due to the small population and that's why I am still here. I believe our local businesses and wineries are happy with the status Quo and would not want and would be unable to handle a sudden influx of visitors.

An American study on bike trails found - "Adding a motor (E-Bike) only enables the idiots who ride inappropriately to ride faster and farther"

How many people who throw rubbish from cars are likely to ride bicycles? With so many agencies involved, who will be coordinating trail riding activities and who will be monitoring on the ground? Will there be someone there to supervise daily activities? Taxpayers can't even provide funds to maintain a permanent Park Ranger.

At the end of the day, the greatest threat to our National Parks is die back. Along with machines to create trails, please show how all trail.mountain bike riders can and will disinfect footwear and bicycle tyres to prevent what we know as the biggest threat to biodiversity within our Great Southern Region that contains some of the rarest flora on the planet. Is it worth the risk?
 I think not.

[REDACTED]



trails@gscore.com.au

200117_1341

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 1:41 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Re: trails masterplan public comment

Hi
 Thanks for the opportunity to comment on MTB Trail development around Denmark.
 I don't participate in MTB activities. I am an enthusiastic walker and admirer of local bushland.
 I would encourage designers of the trails in the Mt Hallowell area to consider multiple users, namely the MTB community, walkers, runners and those who take their dogs along for those activities. It would be great for everyone to share a new, healthy activity facility.
 I would also ask that consideration be given to avoiding siting new MTB paths through bushland. There is a path and set of jumps built (without Denmark Shire approval I suspect) in bushland adjacent to my home and the damage to the bush flora is considerable. It would be disappointing to see more bushland degraded for MTB paths.
 I'm happy to answer any queries you may have.

[Redacted]



200117_1426

From: [Redacted]
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails master plan

Great work guys. Keep up the good fight.

It would be nice to see the Albany Heritage Park MTB trails get a higher priority than the 3-5 years mentioned in the plan. Surely as these are already underway they should be getting a high priority to allow completion. VERY happy to see it still listed as 25km of trails. As there is no mention of further trails on Mt Melville it is essential that we get every metre of the 25km mentioned.

Good luck with the next step in the process I shall be continuing my research in Canada this year.

[Redacted]





From: [REDACTED]
Date: 17 January 2020 at 2:59:22 pm AWST
To: "trails@gscore.com" <trails@gscore.com>
Subject: Hill trail

200117_1459

Dear Regional trails coordinator
 I would love to see the top of Willyung Hill available for the public to use. The cavernous granite torres which you can see from Menang rd look amazing. I would imagine that the view towards the Porongurup Ranges and Stirlings would be breathtaking. I am no Indigenous people's expert but I believe that the Menang people may have used this high location to view back to the Porongurup and back towards Mt Melville and Mt Clarence. These three Albany peaks being significant reference points. The hill would be a fabulous mountain bike track and hiking track only 10 min out of Albany town.
 Regards [REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 3:30 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

Respondent 0801

200117_1530



Message Body:
 hello.

Your report mentions that The Heritage listed Porongurup National Park could be a starting point for hang gliders. Have you ever done that? Do you know how they are getting their equipment up on one of the tops? By car?, quad bike?, mule? on the pilot's neck? Probably not. So that would involve roads? bitumen? carparks? Have you really thought this through?
 Over and over again: this park is too small and what lives and grows there is far too precious and unique to be just put aside for thrill seeker's pleasure. It cannot be a LUNA park and a Heritage listed National Park at the same time. Impossible.
 Mountainbiken and hang gliding are fun and need their space but not here.

regards





Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 3:35 PM

To: info@gscore.com.au

Subject: Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan - Update

200117_1535

Hi Lenore

well done to you and Karl for doing such a great job on the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.

Julia Scriven did send this onto key people for comments.

I had a good read of most of the doc and want to let you guys know that it is extremely well written and flows really well. The doc layout, photos and graphics are exceptional.

I do have a few general comments.

1. I do believe that snorkel trails have the potential to become regionally significant in the long term, with snorkel trails stretching from Peaceful Bay across to Bremer Bay.
2. There is a potential to highlight in the document the cross use of trails, especially by destination visitors. Eg. Hikers in the Greens Pool to Lights walk trail also using the snorkel trail at Greens Pool, paddle trails, and the possibility of utilising MTB trails. In other words, Trail Towns can promote its multiple trails to attract visitors for longer stays.
3. It would be useful to expand on the concept of a Trail Centre, such as at the Stirling Ranges - I could only find scant references in the doc. Is it the responsibility of this plan to build such a development into the doc? In other words the doc talks about Trail Centres but there is no development plan for one or more.
4. Is there the potential in this doc to have linkages to more specific biodiversity attractions such as orchid and wildflower walks (a seasonal variation to the trails), marine life for snorkel trails, bird and frog walks perhaps. There is a possibility of linking this to "citizen science" opportunities. The MTB plan does mention the possibility of attracting leisure visitors for food & wine experience.
5. I love the idea of the Treasures Drive trail as a great way to encourage visitation of the hinterland.

Thanks for the opportunity for comments

regards

[Redacted signature]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 17 January 2020 3:42 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Draft Regional Trails Masterplan comments

200117_1542

Hi Lenore & Karl

Congrats on getting to this point of the development of the Masterplan.

Please see below for my personal comments in relation to the Draft Regional Trails Masterplan.

Firstly I'd like to congratulate GSCORE, and specifically Lenore Lyons and Karl Hansom, on delivering the Draft Regional Trails Masterplan and all of the community consultative work done during 2019.

As a regional document it will hopefully stimulate long needed commitment to funding trail development in the region by the State and Federal Government's and we can catchup somewhat with the South West and Peel regions to become the dreamed of World Class Trail Destination.

In relation to the City of Albany, although the document does reference the City's Trails Hub Strategy, the draft Masterplan has only picked up a few of the Priority Projects within each of the areas identified within the Trails Hub Strategy.

For example in relation to the Vancouver Peninsula the only project of high importance picked up in the Stakeholder Action Plans on page 81 is to "Identify a management group to maintain underwater plinths and signage". There are 15 recommended projects in the Trails Hub Strategy, none of which have been planned for or undertaken by the City since the Strategy was adopted in 2015.

Another example is the Kalgan River projects where only waymarking and interpretation has been included. 7 priority projects are included in the Trails Hub Strategy including an upgrade to the Luke Pen walk to a green dual use trail, something I highly support, likewise a Paddle Trail including buoy signage and interpretation.

Whilst I can understand the need to keep the document focused on Regional needs the City has done considerable work on our Trails Hub Strategy and I would argue more of that work should be referenced in the Draft Regional Trails Masterplan.



CONTINUED

On a positive note I love the idea of the Whaling Station to Gap Coastal walk, upgrade of Bald Head walk, Albany to Whaling Station Dual Use Path and of course focus on Albany Heritage Park MTB trails and Poikeclerup MTB Trails.

In relation to other priority trails identified within the region, I fully support all 4 of the Mountain Bike Trails listed on page 69. We must take advantage of the elevation found in some parts of the region, particularly in the Porongurups. Whilst I acknowledge there are environmental issues, and some indigenous issues, to manage in the Porongurups I am confident that they can be managed. By using the elevation in the Porongurups, and to a lesser extent at Pwakkenbak and Mt Hallowell, the region will be able to offer a variety of MTB trails and experiences to attract people to visit and live here.

I'm also highly supportive of the Cycle Touring and Dual Use Trails identified at page 70, especially the Albany to Whaling Station Dual Use Trail and the Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail. Realignment of the Munda Bididi trail in the different sections identified on the same page are highly supported as well.

In relation to other Hiking Trails within the region I'm very supportive of them, especially Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail, Stirling Range Lowlands Trail and enhancement of existing trails, especially at Bluff Knoll, Ridge Walk, Castle Rock, Nancy's Peak Circuit and Devil's Slide.

I must admit I'm a bit surprised of the lack of proposed Hiking and MTB trails in the Bremer Bay region. It's a very popular holiday spot and the addition of some good quality hiking and MTB trails to showcase the Point Henry Peninsular would be a fantastic addition to the attraction of Bremer Bay, both as a tourist destination and active recreation for residents.

I look forward to seeing the final Regional Trails Masterplan and sincerely hope it will be a catalyst to attract serious funding from State and Federal Governments in due course.





Hon. Diane Evers MLC
Member for the South West Region

200117_1641

Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence
22 Collie Street
Albany WA 6330

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the **Great Southern Regional Trails Draft Master Plan**. I recognise the potential for well-planned and well-managed trails to enhance southwest communities, providing recreational, health and economic benefits for locals and tourists alike. However, several constituents have raised a number of concerns with me in relation to trails, particularly where walkers and cyclists share trails. Safety is seen as a key issue.

Environmental issues are important, as the fourth strategic objective notes: 'The trail network will be built to a high standard and managed on a sustainable basis to enhance environmental and educational outcomes'. At this stage the draft is high level of course, with little detail on the specific approaches to environmental issues. However, it is vital that if the plan is endorsed and implemented, environmental and aesthetic issues are thoroughly considered based on relevant scientific research. For instance, indicative principles that were suggested to me in relation for the mountain bike trails in Whicher National Park included the need to:

- Avoid or minimise the creation of new trails
- Utilise existing trails, tracks and roads where possible
- Avoid natural features such as outcrops, steep slopes and riparian habitats
- Identify and manage potential dieback infestation, including appropriate signage that can cater for international visitors who may not speak English
- Consider drainage issues
- Retain existing trails at their current width to avoid unnecessary clearing and retain the natural feel of trails
- Avoid using or developing trails that increase the risk of dieback spread or erosion, or inappropriate risk to natural features
- Prevent the development of offshoot tracks and manage access to non-trail areas.

A key issue constituents have raised with me is a lack of confidence in the consultation processes that have been undertaken to date, with concerns that the mountain bike lobby has had undue influence. Given that the plan stipulates that the 'timeframe for the delivery of these projects is based on a combination of factors, including the need to secure funding for construction, the need to undertake detailed environmental and heritage assessments as well as additional community consultation, and



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CONTINUED

the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers¹, it is important that any consultation processes are fair, appropriately designed, and are seen to be so. This means that consultation methodologies should be publically available, supported by independent third-party evaluation of the quality of public processes. It is important that all trail users are confident that their perspectives have been effectively integrated into planning processes.

According to the draft plan, International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)² principles outlined in the Trails Development Series Community Consultation Guide have been during its development and will continue to be applied as it is rolled out, which is encouraging³. However, it is difficult to fully evaluate the efficacy and fairness of the consultative processes undertaken to date, since they are not described in detail and no third party evaluation has occurred, as far as I can tell. Furthermore, there seem to be some misunderstandings about IAP2 tools. For instance, the consultation guide lists “deliberate polls” as an example of consultation tools that “involve” the community, however, the correct term is “deliberative poll” which is a significantly different concept⁴. This may of course be a typographical error, however it suggests that the consultation guide needs to be revised and updated at the very least if it is to be used to further develop and implement the plan. It may suggest that key concepts underlying the IAP2 spectrum have not been fully understood. If this is the case, the consultation guide should be revised.

The statement in the Guide⁵ that ‘It is unlikely any trail proposal would use the (IAP2’s) EMPOWER approach as decision making for trails normally involves multiple authorities and stakeholders’ is contestable, since deliberative democracy and collaborative governance processes frequently do just that⁶. It is simply a matter of appropriate process design. Nonetheless, the consultation guide continues to say that ‘a local government authority or other primary decision maker may decide to adopt this approach⁷, which is also encouraging. Given the need for integration of diverse perspectives in changing circumstances and the need for trusted evaluation of progress as the plan is implemented, “empower” approaches should be used on an ongoing basis as a key tool to involve community and stakeholders. While the consultation guide lists a number of possible stakeholders, it does not recognise any scope for the involvement of citizens generally. However, this may be necessary at certain stages, such as the concept planning stage. Constituents who do not fit into any of the identified categories which include local conservation groups, traditional owners, local community groups, adjoining land owners, relevant local businesses, and heritage groups⁸, have contacted this office with concerns about trail plans. Given that the Plan aims to encourage the public to utilise the trails, plan architects should be open to the inclusion of views from the public through deliberative processes.

One technique that could be used to achieve this is an Enquiry by Design (EbD) or a Charrette. These techniques are often used in urban planning, but could be adapted for use in relation to trails strategy:

An Enquiry-by-Design is an intensive, interactive forum, over 2 to 4 days, that aims to produce non-binding urban design and planning visions for complex projects. Workshops involve a Technical Team

¹ Regional Trails Master Plan Draft Exec Summary

² <https://www.iap2.org.au/>

³ <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/conservation-management/trails/Traill%20Development%20Series%20Part%20B%20A%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Consultation.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/conservation-management/trails/Traill%20Development%20Series%20Part%20B%20A%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Consultation.pdf> (page B9)

⁵ <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/conservation-management/trails/Traill%20Development%20Series%20Part%20B%20A%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Consultation.pdf> (page B8)

⁶ See for example Gastil & Levine. 2005. The deliberative democracy handbook: strategies for effective civic engagement in the twenty-first century. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.

⁷ <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/conservation-management/trails/Traill%20Development%20Series%20Part%20B%20A%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Consultation.pdf> (page B8)

⁸ <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/conservation-management/trails/Traill%20Development%20Series%20Part%20B%20A%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Consultation.pdf> (page B14)





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and a Consultation Group, working in tandem. Participants work together using a consensus building approach to create both principles of development, designs and implementation strategies. A Charrette is a similar process (see our Charrette resource here), however where the Enquiry by Design usually involves the urban design of a limited number of sites, the Charrette involves more comprehensive visioning and urban design of an area's employment, transport, facilities and growth.

The Charrette is longer, and involves a greater degree of public participation in terms of representation, opportunities for input, and shared decision making. The Charrette often builds towards binding outcomes⁹.

Multicriteria Analysis tools, which the consultation guide mentions, are useful although not necessarily highly collaborative in themselves, and can also be useful in a deliberative process such as an EbD. A multicriteria analysis does offer a way to identify pathways through complex issues, but unless participants in the process are representative of the broader community and stakeholders, and unless the process is truly deliberative, its value can be limited¹⁰.

The consultation guide does not mention the need for independent third party evaluation of the public involvement process and its techniques such as MCAs. This is a major oversight that should be rectified if the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan is to lead to successful and trusted outcomes. There are a number of assessment tools that could be used¹¹.

Furthermore, the implementation of the plan should include regular public involvement in evaluating its success and identifying areas for improvement.

Without this transparency and rigour, claims in the draft plan such as 'The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local governments for trail development¹²' have limited value. The public does not appear to have been consulted adequately. Stakeholder or lobby groups do not necessarily provide insight into the broad range of community concerns. They have their own barrow to push.

Attention to these points can only strengthen the draft trails plan.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Diane Evers MLC
Member for South West Region
17 January 2020



From:

To:

Subject:

17 January 2020 4:49 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

DRAFT Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan | Public comment

200117_1649

To Whom It May Concern

I would like my strong objections being noted regarding Mountain Bike Trails within the Porongurup National Park as outlined in the Draft Master Plan.

P33: the document states: " The proposed trail network in the Porongurup National Park presents the most appealing opportunity in the region due to the terrain, elevation and soil. The existing supply of accommodation, food and hospitality services will make this location the region's premier MTB experience."

P33 - Table 9 Porongurup MTB Trails

"Potatoe Patch and Tree-in-the-Rock7

Featuring cross country trails within native vegetation and gravity-focused bike park, including downhill trails"

My comments : The Porongurup National Park is a small National Park, even the current recreational use by hikers is putting pressure onto its unique fauna and flora. The range is one of the oldest mountain ranges on the planet, set aside for conservation and named as one of the global hotspots in the world. This location should be taken out of any future planning, the money saved can be used to assess more suited sites on private/shire owned land. In the current political climate with increased interest in environmental issues by the public, the stakeholders of this document should consider if the proposal of a (Heritage Listed) National Park as an Recreational Park is the best choice available.

Emphasis should be: Investigating private land or shire grounds and if suited sites are found, to develop these to cater for the active recreational use (allowing economic benefits for the region as well as catering for the growing MTB sport) PLUS preserving the environment within the Porongurup National Park for future generations.

[Redacted]



From:

To:

Subject:

Friday, 17 January 2020 8:04 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Trails in Albany

200117_2004

Dear Sirs,

I am in full support of any progress of trails and particularly cycling and mountain bike trails due to the significant lack of trail progress in Albany and the Great Southern region.

There is a growing interest in the sport with a variety of economic, physical and health benefits.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

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1/20
2



200117_lett

THE GREAT SOUTHERN REGION TRAIL MASTER PLAN

Having been a participant in various stakeholder group meetings focused on identifying the need for the further development of trails within the region, the Master Plan forms a most comprehensive and thorough document. It outlines the current position and provides a strategic framework to move forward with to achieve a planned developmental approach.

In brief, Albany's Historic Whaling Station (AHWS) supports the Master Plan and is particularly keen to be involved in the development of the new hiking trail proposed between the whaling station and The Gap. This would provide the opportunity for both locals and visitors to explore areas currently inaccessible, and to do so in a sustainable manner. The Torndirrup Peninsula is a significant and historic area, one of the last touchstones with Antarctica along its cliffs facing south and then linking back in to King George Sound. This trail will provide hikers with the link and access to not only connect with the environment including the geologic, geographic and ecologically significant aspects but also the opportunity to learn and discover more about the history of the whaling industry – which was the first industry in the state. The whaling station forms part of maritime history and is significant at a local, state, national and international level as it was the last operating whaling station in Australia. It now shares its stories of its place in the whaling industry and embraces its full circle relationship with whale watching in current times. The trail will link the hiker with the waters in which whales are now viewed from land and water, and can also take the hiker to the whaling station site for a comprehensive educational and tourism experience with full facilities available.

Albany's Historic Whaling Station is also in support of the proposed enhancement of existing trails – particularly those in the immediate Torndirrup area – for example the Bald Head Wall and the Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk. These areas need to be maintained and kept sustainable as well as being sensitively developed to further encourage and attract more people to use and explore what they offer. The whaling station's proximity to these trails is also of benefit as a further attraction for all visitors and participants in providing a further range of experiences and facilities.

The additional proposal for the new Albany to the Whaling Station dual-use Trail is very welcome. Currently cyclists ride either on Frenchman's Bay Road as far as Little Grove or on the dual-use path to Little Grove. Beyond Little Grove there is no path/trail either single or dual-use to the Whaling Station. The Whaling Station is a popular destination on a regular basis for many in the local community however it is also a hazardous experience for cyclists having to use Frenchman's Bay Road, sharing it with motorists and without any dedicated cycle lane. Speed limits are 80kms and motorists are often observed to be impatient and taking risks in overtaking, putting all road users at risk of injury and/or accident.

A dual-use trail all the way to the Whaling Station would benefit both the local community as well as significantly contributing to the development of the visitor experience and cycle tourism within Albany and the region, in turn positively impacting economic growth.

Elise van Gorp

General Manager

Discovery Bay Tourism Precinct Ltd
81 Whaling Station Road TORNDIRUP Western Australia 6330





200117_2157

SUBMISSION ON THE GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN 2020



This is a short submission in respect of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP or The Plan) as discussed at the Porongurup Community Meeting on 9 January 2020.

Specifically, comments are directed to those areas in the RTMP that pertain to the Porongurup Region and the Porongurup national Park viz:

1. Porongurup MTB trail and proposed Bike Park New initiative
2. Castle Rock Loop enhancement of existing walking trail
3. Nancy's Peak trail alignment to Wansborough Walk



CONTINUED

4. Devils' Slide surface upgrade, infrastructure and promotion to help disperse visitors from Castle Rock
5. Bolganup Trail signage enhancement
6. Mt Barker to Porongurup dual use trail using O'Neil Road track New initiative

OPENING COMMENTS

The work and effort that has gone into developing the RTMP is acknowledged and the concept applauded. The Plan should be a valuable resource to local governments especially with low population bases and limited capital.

The opportunity to comment on the Plan is appreciated.

The comment on Page 9 of the RTMP is noted:

"development of sustainable trails that are VALUED and SUPPORTED by local government and LOCAL COMMUNITIES is imperative to the long-term success of the RTMP."

Additionally, the text on P31 of the document is also noted:

"to achieve *sustainable benefits and acceptable outcomes* that benefit the whole community, trail development in environmentally sensitive areas will require *sensitive planning, community engagement AND SUPPORT*."

Both these quotations from the RTMP call for **LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT** as a precursor to success. Therefore, it is presumed that should the local Porongurup Community **NOT** support some or all of the proposals of the RTMP then the Plan will be amended accordingly.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

General Comments - Bike Trails

This submission opposes the proposal to develop a Mountain Bike Trail / network of trails and the proposal to develop a Bike Park in the Heritage Porongurup National Park. The





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submission also opposes the notion of the Porongurup range being part of a draw card for a series of Mountain Bike Trails in the Lower Great Southern Region.

Specifically, objections are raised to looped networks, cross country trails within native vegetation, gravity focused bike park including downhill trails with a variety of classifications (P34 of The Plan).

Whilst it is understood that the bike trails themselves can be relatively narrow and unobtrusive, it is the attendant paraphernalia and supporting gear that accompanies such an adventure based recreational pursuit that is quite disproportionate to the activity itself.

Here reference is made to the four-wheel drive vehicles to carry bikes to the head of the downhill tracks. The parking requirements both at the top and bottom of the tracks. Vehicles gaining access to tracks that are supposed to be off limits. A constant need to drive up and down the tracks as each rider completes a run and starts again. Then there are of course the basic amenities required such as toilets, rubbish collection ancillary car parking for both riders and spectators etc. It is also noted that much of the Mountain bike activity takes place in Winter (requiring moisture in the soil) thus compounding an already churned up muddy environment.

In addition, the sport caters for numerous competitions and competitive racing which also brings with it big spectator numbers which further impinge on a small fragile environment.

Objection – Bike Trails

The opposition and rejection for the proposal is based on the following points;

1. The Porongurup Range as a Spiritual Ground of Aboriginal Culture

Evidence abounds that the Porongurups was and still is a spiritual place for Aboriginals. Boronggorup was the Aboriginal name for the hills. That Aboriginal people identified every valley, hill and watering place with some incident, or natural function, is a well-known fact. Modern research indicates there is more than a grain of truth in some of the legends that have come down from "Demma goomger" ("big grandfather) and" Nyitting" (cold) times.





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There are strong tribal traditions and customs still in play today in respect of Januc (evil man) and Devils Slip. We should respect this cultural and spiritual connection with the Porongurup Range and not seek to further despoil and violate this spiritual ground. It is akin to the desecration of a church or cathedral or sacred/spiritual place of modern religions.

2. Fragile Ancient Landscape

The Porongurup Range has a fragile ecology. It has shallow soils on granite outcrops. It is small in comparison to the Stirling Range National Park and the Fitzgerald River National Park. However, it contains a diverse range of flora and fauna some of which is still being "discovered".

It is a unique landscape which has not been the subject of glacial action for millions of years and it is vulnerable. Managing its biodiversity in a warming climate is enough to contend with let alone managing it if these proposed bike trails (both downhill and cross country) proceed. Issues arise such as hygiene regarding die back; potential destruction of fragile habitats; noise pollution and rubbish pollution.

Land stewardship in this fragile area should be prioritized over tourism and commercial outcomes especially given the overall size of the Range.

3 The ideal of beauty as a goal for the Porongurup National Park

The time is upon us where natural environments and unspoiled vistas are rare and endangered and rapidly disappearing from this world. The natural environment of the Porongurups contains in itself gratifications and rewards that will never be found in artificial landscapes. We should do everything possible to retain what remains of this unique, rare and beautiful environment.

We should be stewards of the land beneath our feet and not continue the trend of desecration for economic gain or hedonistic pursuits



CONTINUED

4. Be careful what you wish for – Explosion in Tourist Numbers

All through the RTMP there are references to:

- a. Driving economic growth
- b. Driving tourism dollars into local businesses
- c. Creating a nationally significant trail destination
- d. Capturing Mountain bikers as they are a more lucrative tourism market
- e. Entice visitors, repeat visits and increase length of stay
- f. becoming the premiere destination for trails
- g. providing nature-based tourism and authentic exciting outdoor experiences

So which Australian State has done this in the past to which there are several references in the Plan?

Tasmania is now reeling from high visitor numbers. An explosion of visitors is seeing a capping of tourist numbers to the hot spots such as Freycinet and Cradle Mountain. The Overland Track use is by booking only. Parking, toilet issues., shuttle buses to avoid peak crushes are all creating problems. This is diminishing the natural experience that attracts 1.3 million visitors to Tasmania each year (and growing). Now there is a call to change the tourism strategy and promote the less visited areas of the island.

Ballooning over visitation, congested walks and no space to enjoy a natural environment is an outcome of marketing, infra structure upgrades and a push for the tourist dollar. This is not what we want for this region.

5. Loss of Other Interest Groups

Over catering for a particular group of individuals such as the stated lucrative tourism market of the Mountain Biker has the potential to destroy existing tourism markets that are attracted to the Porongurups to enjoy the natural beauty, serenity and tranquility of the National Park. These markets are predominantly hikers and passive recreational folk who come to this destination to enjoy it for what it is; a natural rare and beautiful environment. A major change to the way in which the National Park is used will destroy





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its private and secluded character which makes it so appealing to local and tourists alike. There is no compatibility between the adventure outdoor experiences such as mountain bike riding and the more passive recreational pursuits such as walking and hiking in a such a small and fragile area.

6. Residents of the Porongurups

There is obvious concern over the proposals as evidenced by the turn out to the Community Consultation on 9 January 2020. The concerns go to all the reasons cited above. The community is small, and we live here because we enjoy and respect this environment and we want to protect it for future generations.

We do not live here because we want to make a dollar out of tourism which has the potential to jeopardize the natural environment.

It should be noted some local business owners in the area were in attendance at the meeting (general store, caravan park, self-contained accommodation etc.) and they did not show support for a proposal for a Bike Trail in the show of hands at the end of the meeting.

The Porongurup Range cannot be replicated. It is unique. Its flora and fauna are rare. Its diversity is second to none. A downhill bike track for this growing sport with all the required facilities and parking can be created in State forests, in Blue Gum Plantations and in Sand Dunes. In fact, any number of places that have some elevation. The Porongurup Range should be exempted and should not be proposed as the jewel in the crown for bike riding destinations.

Walking and Dual Use Trails

All the trails slated for enhancement and upgrade are well known to the writers and are walked several times a year. Castle Rock is avoided in the busy season as it is like the Hay Street Mall. Nancy's Peak and The Devils' Slide are less walked by visitors, and it is understood there is a desire to divert visitors to these lesser known tracks. (This illustrates the point made above on over visitation and the diminishing of the natural experience).



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The upgrade and enhancement of the tracks is generally supported.

Having said this, it is unclear what "infrastructure" refers to on P29 of The Plan where referring to the upgrade of Devils' Slide. Nor is the statement clear about combining Nancy's Peak and Devils Slide for a full day's walk as these two walks can already be combined and there is signage to both tracks already in place.

The reopening of O'Neil Road to make it a dual use track is also supported although the options for walkers is unclear once they reach the intersection with Woodlands Road.

CLOSING REMARKS

At the end of the day the desire to build sound and attractive bike trails in the Lower Great Southern Region to cater for the various classifications of bike trails is understood and generally supported.

The RTMP makes it clear it is a growing sport and we can expect visitor numbers to grow. Page 61 of the report gives the various classifications for trails and the fact there are timed competitions, spectators and bike parks integral to the trails for judging competitions such as pump and jump, ariel displays and the like.

Proposing the Porongurup National Park as a destination for this type of activity is completely at odds with the reason for making the area a National Park in the first place.

The proposal to use Tower Hill in Mt Barker as a bike trail is an excellent suggestion and the projected should be expedited.

References:

1. Tasmanian tourism boom forces new plan for crowded Freycinet National Park 28 April 2017 The Australian Newspaper
2. Tourist hordes in danger of loving Tasmania's top draws to death 13 Oct 2018 The Australian Newspaper
3. Plantagenet Rich and Beautiful Rhonda Glover



**From:**

[REDACTED]

To:**Subject:**

[REDACTED]
Friday, 17 January 2020 12:35 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
trails masterplan public comment

200117_1235

Hello

Just wanted to add some input into the Mt Hallowell plan for mountain bike trails. I would like to give my full support as a property owner who lives adjacent to the mountain bike trails. I regularly walk my dog and run/ ride in this area myself. I am currently a bit worried about the random building of trails by I suspect, kids wanting to have a bit of fun in the holidays. The building of the trails has become more intense I would say in the last six months which shows endeavour but sadly I am not sure that the trees feel the same way. I am more than happy to support trails being built in a sustainable and enduring fashion and for the area to be available to all facets of combined outdoor pursuits - dog walking/biking/walking/running etc. I think these areas are becoming increasingly important for outdoor use and we should encourage the use of the outdoors for the coming generations. I don't want to see a mountain bike only use of the trails but am happy to share the trails with everyone. I would prefer that the random digging of trails stopped until the plan was put into action but understand that this is hard to police.

Regards

[REDACTED]





17 January 2020

200117_1649

Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence
22 Collie Street
Albany WA 6330

By email - trails@gscore.com.au

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Draft GSCORE Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (Master Plan): Public Comment

We are members of the [REDACTED] family which has lived on and owned [REDACTED] in Porongurup for [REDACTED]. During that time the family has used, cherished and protected the Porongurup ranges, including the area now covered by the Porongurup National Park (PNP).

From the mid 1920's to 1944 the family ran [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has operated as farm stay accommodation. These activities have given the family an insight into the needs, demands and wishes of tourists and visitors to the region.

We write with some concern at the suggestion in the above Master Plan that it is proposed to develop the Porongurups, including parts of the PNP for mountain biking.

In our view the Master Plan is fatally flawed in this regard for two reasons.

First, there is no attempt to make out a 'business case' for the proposal which would, had it been attempted, have failed for obvious reasons.

Secondly, it also makes no attempt to subject the site selection to any exclusionary 'filters', such as environmental sensitivity. Such filters are a basic tool in master planning which, if used, would have excluded the PNP for mountain biking.

Other Matters

Before addressing that aspect of the above report in more detail we make the following comments.

1. Two documents are relied upon as a basis for the Master Plan, the Great Southern Outdoor Recreation Strategy and the Great Southern Regional Sport And Recreation Plan.
 - a. While the former recommends the creation of a regional trails master plan, there is nothing in that recommendation or the report more broadly that requires or even suggests that it involve mountain biking.
 - b. The latter document says that the Great Southern is a recognised hotspot for MTB and there is an 'immediate need' for master planning to guide future MTB development. There is no basis given for the statement the falsity of which is emphasised by the Master Plan itself which says on p31 that the Great Southern has 'limited existing recognition as a mountain biking or cycle trail destination'.
2. We acknowledge that master planning is a 'good thing'. In areas such as the Great Southern, regional master planning is also a 'good thing'.



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3. We note that most of the priorities identified in the Master Plan are for new trails/ networks and emphasise the need for proper maintenance and repair of existing trails that are often neglected.
4. We cautiously welcome the proposed upgrade of existing hiking trails in the PNP. We have noted the increase in the number of visitors to Castle Rock by the construction of the Granite Skywalk and encourage steps to be taken to 'spread the load'.

Porongurup MTB Trail

We now turn to the question of the proposed Porongurup MTB Trail. As noted above, there are two major reasons why this aspect of the Master Plan ought not to proceed – lack of a business case and ecological sensitivity.

Lack of Business Case

1. As noted above, the Master Plan acknowledges that there is no established need for mountain bike trails in the Great Southern. Indeed, there is no attempt to suggest that such a demand exists or is likely to emerge in the near future.
2. Rather, the Master Plan appears to proceed on two unstated assumptions: (1) 'if you build it they will come'; and (2) the region would benefit from an influx of interstate and international visitors keen to mountain bike in the region.
3. There is no basis for the first unstated assumption. The Master Plan gives as an example the 'Stanes' in Scotland. With respect, that example is cited without any attempt to compare the two situations or evaluate whether that outcome can or will be replicated.
4. A more relevant example is the Castle Rock Granite Skywalk. That has certainly increased visitor numbers to the Castle Rock climb.
 - a. But from our experience, most of those climbing are not staying in Porongurup or Mt Barker.
 - b. Rather, they are on day trips from elsewhere and have often clearly undertaken no preparation at all other than seeing it on a map.
 - c. Certainly they are nothing like the visitors the subject of this aspect of the Master Plan who would need to transport specialised equipment over very considerable distances.
5. The second unstated assumption is fatally flawed. As noted above, Bolganup Homestead has provided farmstay accommodation to visitors to the region for decades. We make the following comments:
 - a. Tourist infrastructure in the region is limited and unsophisticated and has been for as long as anyone can remember. Table 8 of the Master Plan goes some way to acknowledge this.
 - b. The lack of sophistication has its own charm for the majority of visitors – that is why they come.
 - c. Various suggestions (and some attempts) have been made over time with a view to increasing visitor numbers by improving the tourist 'offer', mostly without 'success'.
 - d. In our view, visitors come to the region precisely for its unspoiled nature; its lack of sophistication and absence of 'attractions'. They come for a few days to walk in the hills and enjoy the quietude.
6. The proposal to put MTB trails in the Porongurups will discourage existing visitors attracted by the quietude and absence of such 'attractions'.
7. Perhaps more significantly for the purpose of the Master Plan, such a proposal will also almost certainly fail to create a sustained market for interstate and international visitors





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because the region is a long way from major centres and lacks the sophisticated tourist infrastructure necessary to support such visitors.

8. To give but one example, visitors coming to use MTB trails in the Porogurups will need specialised equipment. They will either need to bring their own (which would require transport over considerable distances from Perth) or they must hire it from a suitable commercial enterprise. It is to state the obvious to note that no such commercial enterprise exists and that none is likely to exist; the commercial realities make it a laughable suggestion.

Sensitive Environment

9. The above analysis demonstrates that the proposal for MTB trails in the PNP amounts to a highly speculative venture involving the creation of tax-payer funded infrastructure (trails cut, carparks constructed etc) without even a suggestion of a business case to justify it.
10. In addition, the Master Plan acknowledges the highly sensitive environment of the Porogurups. It should go without saying that the PNP is recognised as having an extraordinarily high level of biodiversity coupled with the unique importance of the granite ecosystems which need to be protected.
11. There are very obvious environmental impacts of introducing a MTB trail into the PNP, including:
 - a. Increased likelihood of the spread of weeds and diseases such as die-back;
 - b. Increased litter and its implications for flora and fauna;
 - c. The likelihood of cyclists going beyond prescribed trails;
 - d. Increased risk of fires (inadvertent or otherwise) in an increasingly drying and warming climate;
12. One of the roles of a Master Planning document is to apply exclusionary filters to the site selection process such that further work is not done on proposals that ought not proceed.
13. Sensitive environmental areas ought to be one such exclusionary filter but that task has not been carried out as part of the process for the Master Plan.
14. Rather, the Master Plan 'kicks the can down the road' by suggesting that the environmental sensitivity should be dealt with at a later stage through community consultation.
15. With respect, such an approach is disingenuous.
16. In our view the Master Plan ought not be endorsed until a suitable site selection process has been carried out by applying suitable and relevant exclusionary filters.

Aboriginal Spiritual Significance

17. The same points as those made above as to environmental significance may be made in relation to the spiritual significance accorded to the Porogurups by the local Noongar community.
18. The Porogurup Range is regarded as a place of real spiritual significance by that community, a point made strongly by members of the local Noongar community who spoke strongly against the proposal at the recent community meeting at the Porogurup Hall.

Consultation

Finally we note that p9 of the Master Plan states that "In developing the RTMP, GSCORE and associated consultants undertook an extensive community consultation process"... and that "The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local governments for trail development."



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We are advised by family members that there was very strong opposition voiced at the recent meeting at the Porongurup Hall to the suggestion of a MTB trail in the Porongurups.

Accordingly, the second statement noted above is plainly wrong and should be corrected to reflect that very deep level of opposition.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 7:24 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Proposed Trials - Mountain Bike Specific

200118_0724

To who it may concern,

Firstly I would like to say. I read the document fully prior to Christmas period. Though have only just been reminded comments were due before tomorrow.

I am in full support of all proposed new trails and upgrades to existing. The area in general is well behind the rest of the Australia and in course Australia is well behind the rest of the world in this.

This has been evident from numerous members of my extended family visiting over the years, where they were all shocked at how little there is to do in general in Australia. It is advertised as an outdoors nation but reality is very different. With so many rules and regulations and people who all believe they must have their say to essentially block any development possible. How is a community and nation expected to advance in something they have that nowhere else has with this things common across the board? Australia is a beautiful and vast country and we should be playing to the strengths. A few trails that have little to no impact whatsoever to flora and fauna will only benefit the country and local areas. If you travel to other countries there as so many trails for all to enjoy and are used all the time. I find it very hard still to believe this is totally lacking in Australia.

I will relate this to specifically the Mountain Bike developments. This is an area that is clearly key to success of the area. Denmark and the other great southern areas are the best suited in the state to mountain bike development. This is the fastest growing sport and tourism area globally. Nowhere else in WA does it have the elevation, soils, views, features and local infrastructure to handle the potential numbers of people wanting to ride. All you see over the holiday periods is people with bikes, (Denmark specific), asking where to ride. There is nowhere really other than a few existing tracks that are essentially none challenging to the modern mountain bike rider.

- Page 34 – Mt Hallowell Trials – Full support. The more the better. The area is large and should support numerous trails for all abilities including long Cross Country, (XC), loops. I would like to see >30km of single track in this area.
- Page 34 – Porongurup Trials – Again as above. Excellent.
- Page 37 – Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link – The WOW is great but needs to be enhanced as only 6km long. I am in full support anything to add to this. The trail is used regularly by bikers >350 according to Strava (fitness tracking website). This number is likely to be significantly higher as Strava is used by serious athletes to track performance. So the general cyclist will not be recorded on this. The semi tarmac surface of the WOW trail should also be noted as not ideal. If mountain bike specific should be more natural, (not sand), some hard pack gravel / soils. As it would get high usage, so am a bit unsure on this as maintenance is required.
- Page 37 – Enhanced Existing Trails – Both Denmark proposals – Both are great proposals. Currently some of the best section of the trail around Denmark is the single track off the South Coast highway between McLeod Rd and William Bay road. To say this is pretty poor, as its about 1km long! However after this it is riding on the road to Greens pool then the road to Waterfall Beach where you re-join the off road Munda Biddi. Where >400 strava have logged times. I would like to see the linking trails go through the diverse hilly terrain you see on the left side of the road heading to Greens Pool. Then can link down to Waterfall beach where existing trail is. This would be very good riding for all abilities. Pushing up hills is not a bad thing for riders, it is a challenge to get up some hills. Mountain biking is about going up and down. Again surface should be natural and not tarmac. Area looks sandy so gravel like the existing surface between Waterfall and Lights Beach is fine. The section of trial mentioned is probably the best riding in the area with the McLeod short section. It is the only single track mountain biking in Denmark!





CONTINUED

I would like to see all the proposed trails go ahead. I have shared the document and talked about the plans with visitors from far a field and they are from all walks of life. Mainly walkers and they think these are all great ideas. The rest of the world also don't have issues with walkers and bikers on same trails either. It's quite normal. If the government are serious about creating business and generating jobs and revenue to the area these trails will go a long way to help. This I believe will put the area on the map, specifically for Mountain Biking, its such a big sport now. Look at the Cape to Cape in Margret River 1500 riders a year over 4 days.... The terrain there is much poorer than Denmark area. This is where Denmark and the other areas should be looking. More people go Margret River to ride than surf now.

Thank you,

[Redacted]



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 7:48 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Master Trails Plan

200118_0748

as Secretary of the Porongurup Community Association, we do not want any mountain bike trails within the national park. We respect the park for its environmental and spiritual value.

thank you

[Redacted]





From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 8:29 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: feedback

200118_0829

Hello

I am writing as an individual, and on behalf of my family, we are residents of Denmark, and members of Denmark Mountain Bike Club.

Mt Hallowell is at our doorstep.

I have read the proposed plan and wholeheartedly agree with it.

We would like to see the creating of new trails, particularly hiking and MTB, see the development of trail linkages and see the enhancement of existing trails.

We are a family of four who love the outdoors, have a teenage son who would benefit greatly from MTB trails being closer to home.

Presently we spend time and money in other areas such as Pemberton, to go riding the trails there.

We would like to see limited environmental impact, and increased opportunities for both locals and visitors to experience our unique natural landscape.

From a business point of view I see my two local businesses [Redacted] benefiting from increased visitation to the area and expanding the existing market base to include the ever increasing health-conscious population.

[Redacted]





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
 Saturday, 18 January 2020 9:19 AM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 Great Southern Regional TrailsDRAFTMASTER PLAN2020-2029

200118_0919

Hi

Can you please let me know if you get this email thank you

Re; submission Great Southern Regional Trails DRAFTMASTER PLAN2020-2029

I strongly disagree with any development of new trails (page 25), especially mountain bike trails (page 31) in the Porongurup National Park

The mountain bike association would have a lot of support if they would do their project on private land like in the USA for example

National park are there to be protected, Porongurup National Park is one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world and is already under pressure from outside the park's boundary and from a rapid changing climate

If anything it should get more protection, not more damage due to any development

Porongurup is a culturally sensitive place a place of totems, this needs the highest respect. Four aboriginal groups are represented in the Porongurup for thousands of years,

[REDACTED] not one person has been in support of this development, all are shocked that something as damaging as this is even contemplated The Skywalk has already brought more trade and people that this small National park can support, we already worry about its future because of this

Sincerely

[REDACTED]



18/01/2020

Respondent 0801

200118_0937

Hi.

Thanks for your reply.

In your email you say: There are no plans to provide for events in the Park. On page 12 of the Trails Master plan it says: Creating attractive experiences requires consideration of capacity to host events. ?????

On page 10 of your Masterplan is written under Planning Principles: Put the user experience first. I think it is more logical to look at the location first and then think about trails. You could have saved yourself soooooo much time by thinking: Porongurup?, Heritage listed National Park?, Biodiversity hotspot? 700 plant species in such a small area? hhhmmmm, maybe not.

So in the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park are planned:

Mountain bike trails with different classifications

Downhill trails with different classifications,

Starting from Potato patch

Starting from Tree in a Rock

Most likely all linked (Nic said he wanted 60km of trails in the Porogurups)

starting point for hang gliders

Infra structure to all trail heads: roads, parking areas, toilets, covered bbq areas etc.

Events: including participants, supporters, spectators, camera crews, first Aid crews, food stalls, areas for gazebo's, toilets etc. (and with rain, everybody has to clean their shoes, tyres, equipment etc. not only once but several times at different station against dieback)

The sad part of this story is if there is some one who does not know what to do with his money and has a kid that likes mountainbiking the money will be there and the locals have to fight a very very tough and hard fight against the big buck to keep the National Park alive.

Porongurup Range, formed 1200million years ago, destroyed in a decade through the all mighty dollar.

A paralysing idea which makes my heart cry, but at least I can say I was against it, I fought for the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 10:56 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trail plans feed back

200118_1056

Hi,

I think this is an excellent idea. I have been waiting so long for someone to organise trails in the porongurups and Mt barker. I live in Mt barker and I believe this is going to make more people aware of the sport of mountain biking.

I look forward to the trails on Mt barker hill and hopefully more then just one trail. Hopefully a range of trails for instance a Downhill trail, Flowy jump trail and an xc trail. Then Albany MTB club can host club rounds of all sorts.

I'm sure you guys have thought of all this but hopefully this can be done. I would be keen to help build the trails as I live on the mountain. Love giving a hand for my local community.

Thanks guys,

[REDACTED]





200118_1057

Public Comment - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP)

“The RTMP recommends trail development projects that address the following activity types: hiking, mountain biking, cycle touring, paddling and snorkelling. Trail proposals for each activity are outlined in Section 4.

This prioritisation process suggested that equestrian trails and trail bikes are not a priority for development in the Great Southern at this time. The feasibility of future development for these activities should continue to be investigated. A rationale for this recommendation is contained in Section 4.” (RTMP, pg. 20.)

Our comments to be read with reference to Area H as per Section 4, Map1 of the RTMP, p. 24.

Public Comment - RTMP - Area H

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on the RTMP as it applies to Area H as outlined in the RTMP.

Summary

With regard to the RTMP proposals for Area H, we fully support:

- the enhancement and upgrade to all existing **hiking trails**;
- the enhancement, upgrade and establishment of a **linkage access** from Mt Barker via O’Neill Road to Area H to include both a hiking and “international best practice” mountain bike trail.

However we do not support the the establishment of a new “international world best practice” mountain bike Trail Network within or indeed traversing the Porongurup National Park (PNP) ie:

- the creation of a new **mountain bike (MB)** network at the Potato Patch;
- and, a **MB network** linkage, centred on the Tree-in-the-Rock site.

As an alternative, we suggest that the RTMP should be revised to prioritise for consideration a MB track that dual purposes as a strategic fire-break on appropriate sections of the perimeter of the PNP that could facilitate the inclusion of private landowner participation. Such would be a strategic investment for the protection of the PNP and surrounding properties.



CONTINUED

No further comment will be made regarding the areas of the RTMP we agree with as detailed in the Summary above. The following outlines our reasons for not supporting a new MB Network within the PNP and for the alternative option listed. We hope that they do not fall within the dot points:

- refers to issues that are already noted within the plan or already taken into consideration during its preparation;
- is one among several widely divergent viewpoints received on the topic but the approach in the plan is still considered the best option;

as per GSCORE's guidelines for public submission.

We are against the establishment of a MB Network within the PNP for the following reasons:

- **Cultural Values of the PNP**
 - at the Community Information Evening held Thursday, January 9 it was evident from discussions with GSCORE that the selection process for the prioritisation of potential MB Networks was skewed towards the economic benefits of the trail projects identified. The cultural and heritage factors and the importance of the PNP landscape to the identity and spiritual well-being of all Australians should have taken precedence. With the historical closure of Uluru aimed to preserve the cultural and natural experiences as the primary experience of attending Uluru (in this case read PNP) we believe this offers an opportunity to rethink the selection, investment and funding profiles of Local and State authorities. This move would finally give strong practical support to the National Heritage listing of the PNP in lieu of billboards and sign posts.
- **Conservation of the PNP**
 - the Stirling Range is unique and after the fires will take many years to re-establish the biodiversity and ecology of the region. The PNP is small and it too is unique in its known biodiversity and ecology. Again, we believe that the decision processes for Local and State authorities should incorporate the uniqueness of the PNP landscape and focus on conserving the natural bushland of the PNP and locking it out from further consideration in the RTMP. International and world best conservation practice of the PNP should be the focus of any future investment in the Range which in our opinion would simply be to leave the PNP and in fact all National Parks to do what they do best - that is, to self heal and evolve for future generations to enjoy.

Leaving the "international and world best practice" MB Network to be centred in a location or region with the suitable landscape that can sustain frequent remodelling and supervised maintenance.



CONTINUED

Arguments for the inclusion of an alternative project that limits the MB Network in area H to a dual-purpose “international and world standard” MB track and strategic fire-break on appropriate sections of the perimeter of the PNP that could facilitate the inclusion of private landowner participation:

- to achieve a balance between bushfire risk management measures, environmental protection, biodiversity and landscape management;
- recent fires have shown the need for a proactive improvement in the provision and management of fire-breaks in high fire risk areas. The fire-break would assist in the control of fires entering or exiting from the PNP. The benefits of which would be the opportunity to dual purpose an “international and world standard” MB track within the fire-break;
- the dual track would be a natural fit with the O’Neill Road Project, existing roads, and offer private landowners the opportunity to consider providing their land and equity for a MB Track private investment.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.





From [REDACTED]
Date: Sat, Jan 18, 2020 at 11:32 AM
Subject:
To: <trails@gscore.com>

200118_1132

Dear Sirs,

I am in full support of any progress of trails and particularly cycling and mountain bike trails due to the significant lack of trail progress in Albany and the Great Southern region.
There is a growing interest in the sport with a variety of economic, physical and health benefits.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 1:25 PM

Subject: Proposed Down hill MTB trail for the Porongurups- feedback submission

200118_1325

Respondent 0803

Ref: Potato patch Downhill and XC MTB trails proposal
Page 34 *Great southern Regional trails master plan.*

Hello to all,

I am writing the submission to highlight myself, my partner and the majority of the nearby Porongurup residence thoughts, feedback and concerns regarding the proposed downhill MTB trail for the Porongurup National park as highlighted in the attached *Great southern Regional trails master plan.* Page 34.

This is a further correspondence to my earlier submission to the GSCORE feedback provided on Thursday 2nd of January, 2020 and to reiterate that this proposal should not take place and we are **OPPOSE** to the plan. Please take the time to read my submission and allow me to explain and further justify some of our concerns.

Background Information:

Myself and partner own the property [REDACTED] which is bordered by the Porongurup National park on three sides. The property has recently been resurveyed and submitted to *Landgate* so all boundary marks are accounted for and accurate. Our residence is located approximately 600 metres from the castle rock carpark and our east boundary approx. 400 metres. Our property is directly adjacent to the Downhill proposal area on two sides and borders the "potato patch" so any activity in the proposed area directly and without question will affect our lifestyle, livelihood and the safety of my property, livestock and family. Not without say, the damage and potential damage to the park is also a major and foremost concern for us and other residents.

I, myself, am a casual mountain biker, rock climber and outdoor enthusiast and clearly understand the needs and requirements of these kind of activities and the restrains placed on these groups. We all have the right to ask the question "can we do this here?" but we also have the obligation to accept the fact that not all community groups share the same passion and not all areas are suitable for our activities.

Our Concerns for our property:

[REDACTED] we have had numerous occasions of trespassing and illegal entry across our boundaries. Due to the steep terrain and thick vegetation on all three sides, the majority of the east/West and South boundaries have not yet been fenced. This was not an issue as access to the potato Patch was limited to a very steep fire break or through our property. Most trespassing has occurred via the fence line nearing the castle rock carpark. If the proposal does go ahead, there is likely to be events held in situ and increase public interactions will be inevitable. We will be forced to bulldoze the fence lines through the vegetation and erect a suitable boundary fence to delineate our boundary instead of gently clearing and placing a simple low impact fence. This is not only costly but will scar the vegetation significantly and risk erosion. Worst case scenario would be riders themselves crossing our boundaries seeking unsanctioned tracks and trails either deliberately or unintentional. I am unsure of the proposed plan and how close it will be operating against my boundary but being in close proximity will certainly raise the risk of vandalism, fence damage, litter, incidences of human waste, stock interaction/disturbances, risk to farm bio security, noise, illegal camping and intrusion. This will be exacerbated immensely if events are held. What controls would you put in place to reduce this risk? Has this been even considered in the proposal? [REDACTED]



CONTINUED

It was also mentioned in my previous submission, and worth re-noting, the use of Drone filming activities would increase. We are wary that drones have been used in the past to scout farms and properties and publicly released film footage inadvertently can identify exact location and activities to be targeted by thieves. Imagine your property was filmed and then posted on social media on a regular basis! Yes, Drone usage is becoming more popular for the general public and filming is evitable, however, being adjacent to a thrill-seeking sports area will mean our property, machinery, vehicles and building will most likely be featured in most of that footage taken. How can you prevent that? What means do you have to reduce that risk to my family's privacy?

Furthermore, if the downhill trails are developed, we also face the possibility of trail users and general public seeking out alternative access to the facilities/ features which would mean once again, crossing our boundary, possibly on the western side where there is direct road access [REDACTED]. Our property has the most convenient access track to the top, easily researched on google maps/Earth. This would allow them unlimited unsanctioned and unregulated trail possibilities and possible fee avoidance.

Our Concerns for the Park:

Building a Downhill track in the Porongurup NP goes against the ethos highlighted in the document *Trail Development Series Part A.A Guide to the Trail Development Process* and furthermore in the *Western-Australian-Mountain-Bike-Management-Guidelines*

The opening statement claims:

"Ensure you develop the right trails, in the right places, in the right way and for the right reasons".

We totally agree to this statement, but the Porongurup NP is not a suitable location for such activities.

According to the published guideline, by their own admission and the criteria for downhill given, the "potato patch" and Porongurup is not a suitable location. These are a few examples: [ref: *Western-Australian-Mountain-Bike-Management-Guidelines*]

- "Conservation parks are managed to conserve wildlife and the landscape, for scientific study, to preserve features of archaeological, historical or scientific interest and to allow forms of recreation that do not adversely affect their ecosystems or landscapes".
- It is already recognised that the park is an area of cultural, geological and biodiversity sensitivity therefore major disturbance is undesirable. The creation of multiple downhill tracks (and future development) and associated facilities and amenities can be considered substantial park disturbance.
- The gradient exceeds the recommendation for downhill and substantial banking and track shaping will need to take place to achieved the desired gradient even for downhill. The recommend technique is to use the natural topography and features which will no doubt include the numerous granite outcrops unique to the area further damaging the unique ecosystems surrounding these outcrops.
- The soil type **is not** suitable despite claims. The black peat/loam on the upper slopes does not compress or repel water and any moisture makes the surface extremely slippery. The clay Karri loam further down the slope is similar with very little gravel aggregate. Unless this is removed/replaced with a suitable substrate, the track or parts of will be unsafe to use when wet. This effectively will reduce the feature usability to possible only an estimated 6 months of the year. (I know because I live here)
- Riders/public will need access to the top. This will mean substantial infrastructure and disturbance through the already mentioned sensitive areas of Karri forest. A unique sub species found nowhere else in the world.



CONTINUED

- Erosion has already been highlighted as "Inevitable". Who will be monitoring this? Who will be rectifying any non-compliance? Who will be liable if this non-compliance and what penalties are going to be for environmental disturbance?
- The proposed area is a water catchment area for the local creek system. Track development is likely to divert water and potentially alter the existing water courses or prevent adequate run off reaching down-stream. This system flows through my adjoining property and neighbouring properties.
- Down hill is classified as a small minority group. A lot of infrastructure and development will be required for a small (relatively speaking) and very specific demographic. Does the desires and monetary gain from this group outweigh the environmental risk?
- It is within 20km of another regionally scaled facility (Tower hill-Mt barker) and 40km from Albany (Mt Clarence)
- Event trails/race lines may require additional line or further alteration to existing lines- This will increase the ground disturbance further. Common occurrence is that these lines will inevitably continue being used despite rehabilitation efforts or track closures by track operators.

With all these above guidelines and other propose site non conformities, isn't it worth considering an alternate location?

One of the communities biggest concerns is not only planned and authorised trail development in the park but also the unsanctioned trails that inevitably will occur. It has been mentioned that this is impossible to control (by their own admission) and general observation through numerous social media posts that this is an accepted practice within the MTB community. The old saying "give them an inch and they will take a mile" is quite relevant here and it is just human nature throughout any organisation.

As mention downhill MTB riding is an extreme sport, as is surfing, rock climbing, base jumping etc. the list is almost endless. The need to push the boundaries and limits further and further is the attraction and is not unique to MTB. Once mastered and repeated, the thrill is diminished-gets boring and the person is then seeking new challenges and change To a rock climber is a new line- harder, bigger, taller To surfer it is bigger waves and new locations. To a MTB rider it is new trails, new jumps new obstacles What happens when the developed trails get boring? Are they going to get redeveloped? Are new, more exiting trails going to be made? Are users going to make their own tracks? Where is the limit? WA is a relatively flat state do we really need MTB trails down every single hill or slope of decent size.The amount of disturbance through future trail development must be considered during the proposal.

There has been talks about the economic benefits to the region. This is potentially true for specific area of the region but not for the Porongurup area. There is limited facilities or attractions here and we are very close to two major regional centres. Albany has shops, accommodation, other trails, bike maintenance and repair centres, fuel and desired tourist attractions. The Porongurup community demographic is mainly wineries, farmers and retirees which the flow on benefits would be marginal of any. Yet we will bear the burden of having the proposed facility in our back yard. All the negatives without any of the positives.

Most residence are here for the natural beauty of the area, agricultural potentials and the peaceful atmosphere. The majority are not thrill seekers. Riders associated with downhill are there for the thrill and excitement and have little regard for the natural surroundings or their activities impact- it is not why they are there and their agenda is different to other visitors. A prime example of this is when I was approached by a member/associate of the local MTB community who was floating the idea of putting a ski lift /cable car facility from the car park to the top of the hill. He had researched



CONTINUED

cost, proposed location etc and was not concerned with the impact that this facility would have on other users of the area. Two 10m+ towers with several cables running between. The visual impact alone would have been horrendous (this also would be overlooking my property for almost ¾ of the entire length.). The Porongurup community has been referred to as a “noisy minority” which is a further example of the disrespect this user group has in their midst.

Please understand the Porongurup community is not against mountain bikes, their associations or activities. They are against the development of the proposed down hill track’s location within the park and on their doorstep. If the proposal is granted, there is very little support you will get from this community.

Myself and my Partner, being the adjacent land owner and the one who will be most effected by this proposal are greatly concerned with this proposal will be consulting with local authorities and legal support regarding our legal rights and possible actions to be taken of our livelihood and property is affected.

I applaud you to consider our feedback and concerns for this matter and please do not hesitate to contact myself if you have any feedback or clarification.

Regards

██████████



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 2:20 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: MTB Trails Proposal

200118_1420

I, [REDACTED] **OPPOSE** the proposed MTB trails mentioned on pg 34 of the Great Southern Regional trails master plan referring to the "Potato Patch" Downhill trail.

The Porongurup NP, nor any National Park, is a suitable location for MTB trails. It is a place of conservation for wildlife and landscape. These MTB activities should only be performed on private property or State forests or as proposed, the Tower Hill site. The park is recognised as a bio-diverse and sensitive area and any disturbance through clearing or cutting tracks into a hillside is undesirable as well as unsightly.

Once again I would like to be clear that I,

OPPOSE the proposal !!!!!

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 2:36 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Submission feedback

200118_1436

Hi,
 The trails strategy is great. As someone with depression, I have found that mountain bike riding and hiking both have helped me to manage my illness to the point where I am no longer considered a suicide risk.

The emotionally calming effects of trees and other natural elements has been proven, so the more of our community we can get out and engaged with our beautiful environment the better. The old saying "a pinch of prevention is worth a pound of cure" surely applies here when we think of the healthy minds and bodies of people who won't need as much health care!

We have now made two family holidays to the south west (1-Margaret River 2-Collie) specifically to experience the mtb trails, and it was a fantastic holiday.

Please please build and maintain more trails.
 Cheers,

[REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 2:46 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Masterplan

200118_1446

Hi There,

I think the Masterplan appears to be an excellent document. I am an avid mountain bike rider and regularly travel from Perth as far as Pemberton, but there is no real incentive to go to the Great Southern. I'm excited to see the proposed developments and I think the Porongurup's trails in particular are an opportunity to create something fantastic that will attract riders from around the state, country and potentially internationally when combined with the other trails being proposed and built.

Improving the Munda Biddi will enhance it's reputation and be an incentive for more riders.

I know the Albany MTB scene is strong and crying out for more trails, anything that can be done there will enhance the locals experience and provide tourism opportunities.

Although not fundamental to me I'm likely to enjoy paddle and hiking opportunities with my family, especially if the paddle opportunities are supported by local operators as we don't have a kayak/ski.

Congratulations to all involved I look forward to seeing the plan come to fruition and the opportunity to showcase some of the most underrated areas of Australia!

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]





From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:04 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: MTB trails

200118_1504

Hi,

I am writing to say that I am incredibly supportive of the master plan particularly building more mountain bike trails.

We are currently on holiday in Esperance and there are some local trails (small loop out of town) which are great fun, connected trails make great sense too and I believe there is an increasing appetite for off road cycling. I have seen plenty of vehicles carrying push bikes and well maintained trails will only further increase the popularity of this magnificent part of WA.

Living in the Perth hills, Kalamunda, I can personally attest to how mountain biking is continuing to grow in popularity, this has done wonders for our town support him a second and third bike shop to be established and the cafes are always busy. Mountain biking has been described as the new golf and I would also suggest that for good quality venues and trails people will travel long distances for events, one only has to look at the Cape to Cape for evidence of this.

Mountain biking is a sport, in my experience, where participants are respectful of shared tracks, I have never witnessed and animosity or issues in the sections of the Kalamunda trails that intersect the walking trails, including the Bibblumun track.

I wholeheartedly support this proposal, it would be madness if not wholly irresponsible to not develop these mountain bike trails in a nation that is battling obesity and raising a generation that is increasingly glued to technology. Making the parks and wildlife more accessible to the public travelling on zero emission transport is a good thing.

[Redacted]



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:05 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au

200118_1505

Yes please to mtb trails in the great southern..





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:06 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: MTB Trails

200118_1506

Hi Albany is a fantastic location in terms of Natural attractions. We need to enhance this by providing access to the beauty. Purpose built trails are a no brainer. I'm a mountain biker and don't want to leave town on my weekends to ride in other areas. Also I own a small business and employ people. I need people in town to spend money in my shop. It's a win for all and as for the NO brigade what do they want for Albany's future!! Bit much as they are thinking of themselves. Build the trails please and make ALBANYs future a success story.

An example of what it can bring, myself and 8 friends are going to Derby in Tasmania for a week of riding. Not sure on total spend but accommodation and food for week around \$4000. Great for Derby and Albany missing out!

Cheers
 [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:16 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: We love Albany trails

200118_1516

I can't express enough how much my family and I love Albany's MTB trails. We are very keen to see more in Albany as we would certainly use them.

Regards
 [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:17 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Trails Master Plan

200118_1517

Good afternoon,

I would like to express my support for the Great Southern Trails Master Plan.

The Great Southern has been left behind while areas such as Collie, Kalamunda, Pemberton and Margaret River make the most of the opportunities associated with trail development. This is an excellent opportunity to increase tourism and physical activity among our residents (where our rates of obesity , inactivity and mental health problems are higher than the state average) and support environmental sustainability through the development of purpose-built trails.

I would also be interested to see more flexibility to negotiate use of tracts of land locked up by the rail network. I believe there is opportunity to explore co-location of carefully designed and placed trails alongside areas of rail corridor.

I look forward to seeing the Great Southern move forward to provide trails for our communities and economies.

Kind regards,
 [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:28 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails plan comments

200118_1528

Hi
 Thanks for the opportunity to provide comments on the trail hub plan.
 I'm writing as an albany resident and a business owner of short stay holiday accommodation in robinson.
 I have travelled widely for mountain biking to Tasmania, mt Buller, Lake District and south west uk and seen the fantastic community and economics benefit that mtb trails can bring to regional areas. I fully support the proposed development of trails in all the areas noted in the plan. And think this could offer fantastic tourism opportunities to albany and the wider great southern region. Also we really need something to engage younger people in the regions and stop the loss of the 18-30's to PERTH.
 One area of the plan that I typing has missed the mark is the great opportunity for equestrian trails, we have guests coming to our accommodation that bring their horses to ride the Stilwell trails and these could benefit from further development and resolution of the conflicting uses with motorbikes and 4wd Thanks for your work putting the plan together and I look forward to riding the trails Regards [REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:36 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Trails plan response

200118_1536

To Whom It May Concern

I have looked over the Great Southern Trails Master Plan and am very excited by the plans for our region. I cycle regularly so have a particular interest in the MTB trail plans. I would use trails in Albany regularly with cycling friends and with immediate family. I have relatives from Eastern States that would be very interested in holidays in the region both in the regional centres and if linked trails were developed further. While I'm impatient to see the Albany plans unfold, I am impressed with the idea of developing Mt Barker and The Porongurups as a high priority. Other areas already see larger numbers of tourists that come to visit existing sights and stay longer. I love the thought that has gone into considering linking multiple types of trails and purposes with various users in mind.

My email's purpose is really just to give positive feedback and support. I have heard much talk in the community about the plans and wanted to put my support in writing. The plans look terrific. Lets get it happening!

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Albany trails

200118_1615

Hi.
 I would like to voice my support for the trails. Being a convert to cycling 5 years ago I was encouraged with the plans back then. It is unfortunate that to date little has been constructed. In the meantime tracks have been made in other southern regional towns with positive results and a big windfall for local business. But locally here in Albany this development is a requirement to protect and sustain all users of the area including native wildlife.
 Please do the region, cyclists and this includes new cyclists to this activity with proper facilities and tracks, a favour by constructing these trails.
 Good for young and old in a town hanging out for quality activities.

Regards
 [REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 4:17 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails feedback

200118_1617

I support more mountain bike trails in the area. I and my family are avid cyclists, and dedicated trails for bikes are seriously lacking in our region, compared to many other similar ones (e.g. Margaret River, Pemberton, Manjimup). Not only would these trails benefit locals, but they would add another reason for mountain bike enthusiasts to travel to the area.

Regards,
 [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 4:32 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails feedback

200118_1632

Hello,

I love the concept of you doing a masterplan and developing business cases for more trails. I have walked the Bibby when it was first built and more recently the northern half of the Munda Biddi. I can't wait to do the southern half. I was surprised at the number of overseas and interstate riders on it, and speaking to them they came specifically to ride the trail so it is bringing \$\$ to WA. I was disappointed to see some erosion in spots but looking at it I think it's motor bikes using the trail that does the bulk of the damage. I have also heard dissatisfaction with how it ends in Albany but I can't comment on that personally.

Long distance gravel riding is growing quickly in popularity across the world and we have some wonderful experiences to offer so keep up the good work.

[REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 4:35 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails in WA

200118_1635

Hi Gscore,

I am emailing in regards to the trail plans for the Great Southern Region as I am a novice recreational mountain biker and enjoy the current trails.

I absolutely love the trail network we have going in WA at the moment, with Pemberton, Dwellingup and Margaret River being particularly fun and easily accessible. I would love to see more trails being built or considered, especially in areas such as Nannup, Walpole, Northcliffe or Augusta. Anywhere really! Some new trails would bring more and more tourists from around Australia and the world!

Thanks for everything you guys do for the riders in WA!

Take care,
 [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 5:17 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Mtb trails

200118_1717

Hi there

I saw the draft Great Southern RTMP Facebook Post. I am a novice mtb rider and so are my children. I wanted to let you know we would love more trails and definitely support this. Thank you so much.

[REDACTED]





From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 5:42 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Comment

200118_1742

This so-called 'plan' is fatally flawed because it has no serious consideration of the damage that trails can do to the environment. No part of our community has the right to assume that they can seriously damage our environment at no cost.

If there are to be trails then due recognition MUST be made of the damage by way of soil erosion that they cause. We only have the right to use our natural environment for recreational or other purposes if we devise a plan to repair ALL damage that is caused.

The history of European settlement of this country is the assumption that we have the right to exploit it as we feel inclined. Surely after 200+ years we have learned something!!?? This has got to stop while we still have some of it left! A heritage of erosion channels and polluted streams is not a suitable gift to the following generations.

I feel that ALL use of our environment such as the trails plan implies MUST also outline how any damage caused will be rectified at the expense of the trail users.

[Redacted]



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 6:20 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Re trails

200118_1820

Hi, I love MTB and other outdoor activities.

Please build these trails ASAP.

Regards,
 [Redacted]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 6:32 PM
To: Trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Porongurup trail development

200118_1832

To who it may concern

[REDACTED] I am writing this email in regards to the proposed trail development plans in the Porongurup National Park. The trails that are already in place in the park are already enough and from what I understand there is not enough funding to maintain the ones that are already in place. The fact that there is a proposal for down hill mountain bike tracks within the park is offensive. The park is considered a sacred place to our native people and it should stay that way. It is not the right place for people on bicycles. It is also risky as there would be even more of a possibility of the spreading of phytophthora die back. Porongurup National Park is tiny compared to other national parks and it's native fauna and flora is too precious for us to affect any more than we already have. It's obvious that us humans tend to take things too far and we seem to think we own nature. There is already enough tourism in porongurup and we dont need people riding bikes on this sacred mountain. Please don't try to exploit this beautiful place any more just for some more money in the tourism industry.

Regards
 [REDACTED]



Subject	Mtb trails
From	[REDACTED]
To	trails@gscore.com.au
Sent	Saturday, 18 January 2020 7:05 PM

200118_1905

Hi there. My name is [REDACTED] and am a member of the albany mountain bike club. I would like to say that we desperately need more trails here in albany and more cycleways to keep leisurely cyclist off the road in a safer manner. With environmental planning putting the Clarence masterplan on hold there is limited places but with the resources there can be heaps of great dual use trails in tornduruup, porongurups and gull rock. We're all tired of going 3-4 hours away for great trails. To have trials here that suit from begginers to the advanced would be a god send and with world class trails comes visitors far and wide.
 Thank you for your time. [REDACTED]





16th January 2020

200118_1923

Dr. Lenore Lyons
Executive Director
GSCORE
22 Collie Street
ALBANY W.A. 6330.

Dear Dr Lyons,

RE: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Public comment: Sand patch.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Regional Trails Master Plan.

I relocated from Perth to Albany in October 2016, purchasing a property in Robinson. I settled on this area due to its horse precinct and the area to pursue my equestrian sport, being close to the following:

- Albany Equestrian Center
- Stidwell bridle Trial
- The quiet roads and tracks
- The Albany Race Club
- Beaches.

The Robinson area interested me as it is a mix of rural and semi rural properties many of these properties have horses, either pleasure riding horses or competition horses. There are several race horse trainers residing in this area. On any given weekend there are pony club children riding to pony club, pleasure riders riding around the quiet road and carriage horses being driven around the suburb.

During the last 18 months since the adoption of the Multi Use Trails concept in the area, which allows for Off Road Vehicles (cars and motor bikes), to share the same trails as equestrians is a recipe for disaster. I have personally been on the receiving end of abuse from drivers of 'Off Road Vehicles' while actually riding on the stidwell trail. The



Stidwell Bridle Trail was officially opened in 1999, and intended for the use of horse riders only as a place of safe trail riding areas.

There are serious safety issues here. Horses are a flight animal and no amount of training will help prepare it for suddenly being confronted by off road vehicles hurtling towards them, or hurtling past the horse and rider showing no respect.

The general riding and carriage drivers no longer feel safe to pursue their sport in the area.

More and more unauthorised tracks are being created by these off road vehicles causing environmental damage some of which will never recover. There is also a fire risk with hot exhaust pipes coming in touch with tinder dry vegetation. Some of the stidwell tracks are now so damaged by these off road vehicles that they are also now dangerous for horses to use.

I strongly object to the concept of Multi Use Trails in the Robinson/sand patch precinct and would urge you and the appropriate authorities to revert this area back to a safe precinct for horse and pony riders before a tragedy happens.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]



200118_1923

Submission to Draft of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029

1. Response to specific sections of Draft Master Plan

Page 6

The GSCORE list of proposed priority trails features three trails that are of particular concern to me - the Mt Hallowell MTB Trails, Porongurup MTB Trails and the Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail.

I believe there is a fundamental incompatibility between MTB trails and land reserved for conservation purposes.

I also believe that given the current funding shortfall for the DBCA, we cannot trust that the funds will be available to adequately manage the very significant impacts of MTB trails on protected lands, and therefore MTB trails should not be allowed to go ahead on the conservation estate.

Other land tenures should be investigated for siting such trails. They should not be constructed on the minimal amount of properly reserved land in the conservation estate in Western Australia that is already facing so many other pressures (drying and warming climate, increased fire risk, dieback, weeds, and other human impacts).

Page 9

A consultation process is detailed, with the conclusion 'The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local governments for trail development.'

However, it is my understanding that on most occasions where there was discussion of MTB Trails on Mt Hallowell, Porongurup National Park or Stirling Ranges NP, there was quite a significant community response that was emphatically not in favour, on ecological grounds.

This community concern and opposition to these proposals has not been detailed anywhere in this document.

At one GSCORE event I attended the guest speaker from Victoria detailed the extensive building of MTB trails, and was extremely dismissive of community concerns, almost boasting about how they nullified those concerns. It would be very disappointing if GSCORE responded to genuine community concern about the impact of MTB trails on our valuable ecological areas in this way.



CONTINUED

Page 10

One of the principles described on this page is: “Showcase and protect our unique landscapes and biodiversity”.

In order to genuinely address this principle, this trails development process must include the possibility that some areas are too ecologically valuable to risk further human impact. There must be a decision-making process that incorporates the potential for a proposed trail NOT to proceed.

Page 12

The Draft Master Plan notes that: “Elevation is a key component of many popular mountain biking destinations, and the numerous mountains and hills of the Great Southern region provide an exceptional advantage when compared to other areas across Western Australia.”

Research into the impact of mountain biking on protected areas has highlighted that “Downhill riding generally has greater potential for trail impacts than cross country riding, due to more aggressive riding styles, steep slopes, heavy bikes and where competitions take place.”¹

The Draft Master Plan notes that: “visitors are drawn to the ‘amazing natural landscapes or national parks’” in this region.

As a region we need to ensure that the ecological values of these landscapes are protected and maintained, not further degraded. With increasing pressures from climate change (warming and drying climate and increased fire risk), dieback, and weeds, as land managers we need to minimise the impact on our special protected areas, like Mt Hallowell, Porongurup Ranges, and Stirling Ranges. Building substantial MTB trails through these areas is not compatible with the ecological value of these areas.

I am not opposed to the development of MTB trails per se, but they pose too great a risk to the ecological values of sensitive areas, and so should be built on sites outside of the conservation estate.

Page 31

The Draft Master Plan states: “To achieve sustainable benefits and acceptable outcomes that benefit the whole community, trail development in environmentally sensitive areas will require extensive planning, community engagement and support.”

This is not enough. There must be a mechanism for NOT going ahead with trails proposed in this document if the areas identified are found to be too environmentally sensitive.

¹ David Newsome & Claire Davies (2009) A case study in estimating the area of informal trail development and associated impacts caused by mountain bike activity in John Forrest National Park, Western Australia, *Journal of Ecotourism*, 8:3, 237-253





CONTINUED

Page 32

The Draft Master Plan states: “New trail development should prioritise elevated and mountain landscapes.”

However, research into the impacts of mountain biking on protected areas shows that the much more aggressive version of downhill mountain biking has a much greater ecological impact than other kinds of mountain biking.

Therefore, prioritising downhill MTB trails in protected areas is not a compatible use.

Page 33

The Draft Master Plan states: “There is an opportunity to integrate Noongar culture and creative expression at each site to highlight the region’s unique history and landscape.”

This is an almost patronising acknowledgement of Noongar heritage. Mt Hallowell and Porongurup Ranges are extremely valuable Aboriginal heritage sites that have the potential to be significantly disturbed by MTB trails.

The Porongurup Ranges in particular are known to have huge cultural and spiritual significance for Noongar people. At a recent community event, Larry Blight spoke about the Porongurups being an ancient site, one of the oldest on planet, and a culturally sensitive place – a place of totems. Larry said that Noongar people have “always left the uplands alone.”

Page 34

On the proposed Porongurups MTB Trails, the Draft Master Plan states: “There is potential for MTB trails at the Potato Patch and Tree-in-the-Rock. Looped networks featuring cross country trails within the native vegetation and a gravity-focused bike park including downhill trails, with a variety of classifications. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.”

On the proposed Mt Hallowell MTB Trail, the Draft Master Plan states: “MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Potential for use for competitive Enduro events. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.”

The remainder of this submission addresses the fundamental incompatibility of these proposed MTB Trails in the ecologically valuable and sensitive areas of Mt Hallowell and the Porongurups. However, it is just the particular values of Mt Hallowell that have been outlined in this submission, as I trust that other people will be advocating for the values of the Porongurup Ranges.





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2. Values of Mt Hallowell

2.1 A-Class Reserve

The Mt Hallowell Reserve is designated an A Class Reserve, vested in the Shire of Denmark.

As the South West Mountain Bike Master Plan notes, Conservation Reserves are areas of Crown land set aside for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and/or natural or cultural heritage values.

2.2 Heritage Listing

The Mt Hallowell Reserve is listed on the Municipal Inventory as a Place of Considerable Significance. It is significant for the maintenance of faunal processes as it contains undisturbed remnant forest communities – mainly virgin (unlogged) forest with little disturbance. The Reserve includes habitat for a number of endemic fauna species. It is in good condition, and integrity, with the majority containing very old fire age (>70 years) vegetation.

2.3 Mt Hallowell Reserve Management Plan – Ecological Values

Mt Hallowell Reserve Management Plan 2008 [Excerpts]

Management goals

Conservation: The Reserve is a conservation priority area for the maintenance of the flora, fungi and fauna and all ecological processes pertaining to the natural environment. It is recognised that the Reserve is a significant scientific reference site. Management should maintain the integrity and conservation value of the vegetation, and the habitat values for fungi and fauna as well as ensure that the edges of the reserve are not compromised.

Recreation: Recreational amenities are to be provided for the public on existing walk trails in the reserve, whilst maintaining the conservation values of the Reserve. [Note this does not include provision of mountain biking trails].

The Reserve's extremely diverse landscape contains a significant diversity of vegetation, providing a wide variety of habitats and associations for fungi.

Management should maintain the integrity and conservation value of the vegetation, and the habitat values for fungi and fauna as well as ensure that the edges of the reserve are not compromised.

2.4 Mt Hallowell – Benchmark for Scientific Research

The Mount Hallowell Reserve serves as a key benchmark for scientific research because it is one of the few remaining long-unburnt areas in the South West. The Reserve was designated a 'no planned burn area' in 1987 as an important scientific 'control' (Christensen and Abbott 1989). This designation was given to provide researchers with an important comparison between areas





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that receive frequent fuel reduction burning and areas that do not receive burning on a regular basis. With extremely limited areas in the South West not systematically burnt on a rotating basis, the Mount Hallowell Reserve holds a wealth of untapped scientific data. Research could include:

- The study of bacteria, fungi, algae and bryophytes in the soil
- The study of the regeneration and lifecycles of native flora
- The study of soil-stored seed
- The study of weed spread and reproduction
- The study of folivorous and xylophagous insects
- The study of impacts of fire regimes on reptiles and amphibians
- The study of accumulation and decomposition of biomass

2.5 Mt Hallowell Management Plan – Current Pressures and Impacts

The island of vegetation comprising the Mount Hallowell Reserve together with its undisturbed surrounds is diminishing. The integrity and conservation value of the vegetation is therefore under pressure and may be reduced.

With the continued growth and development in the region, the conservation and integrity of the Mount Hallowell Reserve are of increasing importance.

The Mt Hallowell Reserve Survey & Research Project 2004 indicated that the following factors are impacting on the integrity of the vegetation:

- Adjoining sub-divisions
- Numerous multi-use access paths in some areas
- Tourist and local walker numbers increasing
- Disturbance/Clearing/Fire breaks on the perimeter
- Increased walkers/dogs on the northern track/access
- Increased disturbance and access in Dieback (*Phytophthora* sp) susceptible areas
- Increased perceived need for fire security by adjoining landowners
- A reduction in undisturbed corridors joining the Reserve and the coastal vegetation

Holding the ecological integrity of the Mount Hallowell Reserve at present levels will require careful consideration when planning surrounding land use, fire breaks, access tracks and tourist facilities.

The Reserve generally has very few weeds where the indigenous vegetation is intact.

Dieback is an important issue in the management of the Reserve and access tracks.

2.6 Mt Hallowell Management Plan – Recreation

It is necessary to manage recreational access to ensure it does not degrade conservation values of the Reserve. The Mount Hallowell Reserve is a significant recreational destination, in part



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due to the development of the Bibbulmun Track which traverses the Reserve. This increased activity brings with it greater environmental disturbance, which has a significant impact on the biodiversity in the Reserve. The introduction of Dieback, feral animals and weeds, and accidental fire ignitions all become more likely as pedestrian access increases.

Monitoring of, and controlling access to, fragile areas such as granite outcrops which harbour specific and restricted vegetation habitats such as moss beds is particularly important.

2.7 Mt Hallowell Management Plan – Conclusions

The Management Plan recognises that even the small footprint of the Bibbulmun Track that traverses the Mt Hallowell Reserve can have a significant environmental disturbance, let alone the introduction of a larger network of tracks that involve much more disturbance in their construction and usage.

What makes Mt Hallowell particularly special is that there is a large intact core of bushland, meaning it is far more resilient to disease such as dieback, marri canker, as well as weed invasion and erosion to name a few. Expanding trails is not conducive to maintaining this ecosystem resilience.

In addition, the granite rocks that are of special interest to mountain bikers are also particularly fragile ecosystems that need special protection. Granite outcrops that aren't already subject to pedestrian traffic on existing trails often have more restricted (short-range endemics) and/or threatened flora and fauna species present, including mosses, fungi and lichen and most certainly invertebrates and reptiles.



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3. Impacts of Mountain Bike Trails on protected areas

3.1 Summary

A number of studies have detailed the significant environmental impacts of mountain bike trails on surrounding areas, with the impacts including soil erosion, compaction, incision and widening from the trail itself, with additional water run-off, vegetation and species loss, and spread of invasive species.^{2 3}

In South West Australia there is also the particular risk of spreading *phytophthora cinnamoni* or dieback, through both the extensive construction process, and in the spreading of dieback through soil on tyres.

In Mt Hallowell Reserve, dieback is present along the northern boundary and a small section of the eastern boundary. However, the central core, western and southern section is currently free of dieback. Creating new trails and therefore increasing the ground disturbance is without question one of the greatest risks to spreading dieback.

While proponents would argue that modern trail making has improved and can be done sustainably, the sheer physical footprint evident in existing MTB trails in the South West (as detailed further below) suggests that it is fundamentally incompatible with ecologically valuable and sensitive areas.

As Burgin and Hardiman note, while “effectively all outdoor recreational pursuits in natural areas can have adverse effects on the local environment, it is the markedly different motivation driving participation [in mountain biking], especially in the more extreme versions and the construction of trails and/or infrastructure to gain such outcomes, together with their extent and the very large number of participants involved that potentially sets this sport apart.”

The

y also highlight research on the implications for internal fragmentation of parks and reserves due to roads and recreational tracks. They concluded that there were major impacts from habitat alteration; constriction of the paths of animal movement; barriers to the movement of fauna; potentially isolating populations and communities; and collision. In contrast to most other forms of recreation that use access roads and paths in national parks, mountain biking trails are likely to be much more extensive and, at least over steeper sections, situated in much more vulnerable areas for the integrity of the local soils (i.e., steep, downhill slopes).⁴

² Goeft & Alder 2001 Sustainable Mountain Biking: A Case Study from the Southwest of Western Australia. Article in Journal of Sustainable Tourism.

³ Burgin, S., & Hardiman, N. (2012). Extreme Sports in Natural Areas: Looming Disaster or a Catalyst for a Paradigm Shift in Land Use Planning? Journal of Environmental Planning & Management, 55, 921-940.

⁴ Burgin, S. and Hardiman, N. (2012) “Is the evolving sport of mountain biking compatible with fauna conservation in national parks?” Australian Zoologist. Vol 36 (2)



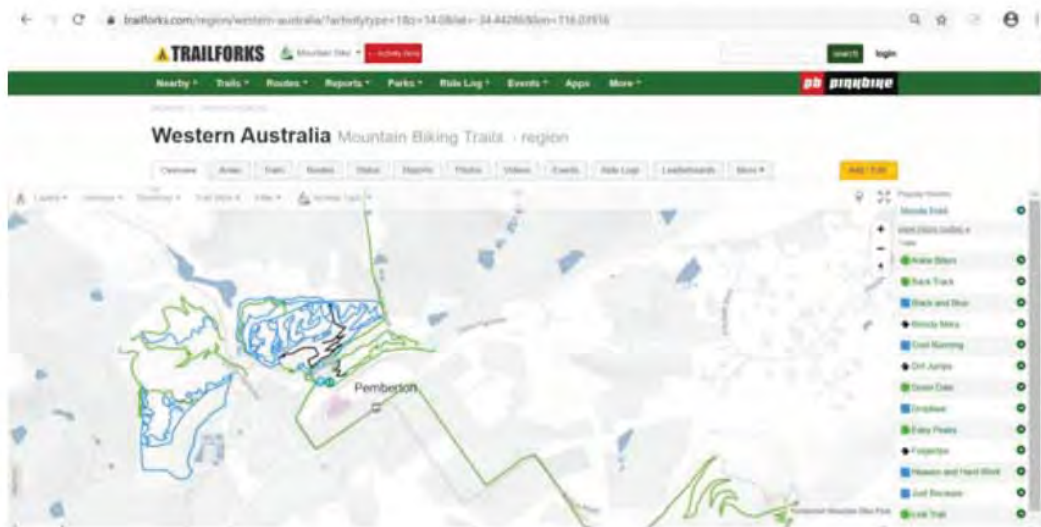
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3.2 Large footprint of existing MTB Trails on conservation reserves

Some investigation of the MTB trails in the Margaret River and Pemberton regions, demonstrate two things.

1. Demand from the mountain biking community seems to be for a very intensive set of trails through those areas. This contrasts dramatically with hiking trails which generally involve a single through-trail throughout a reserve.

See attached maps of the trails in the Pemberton and Margaret River regions:



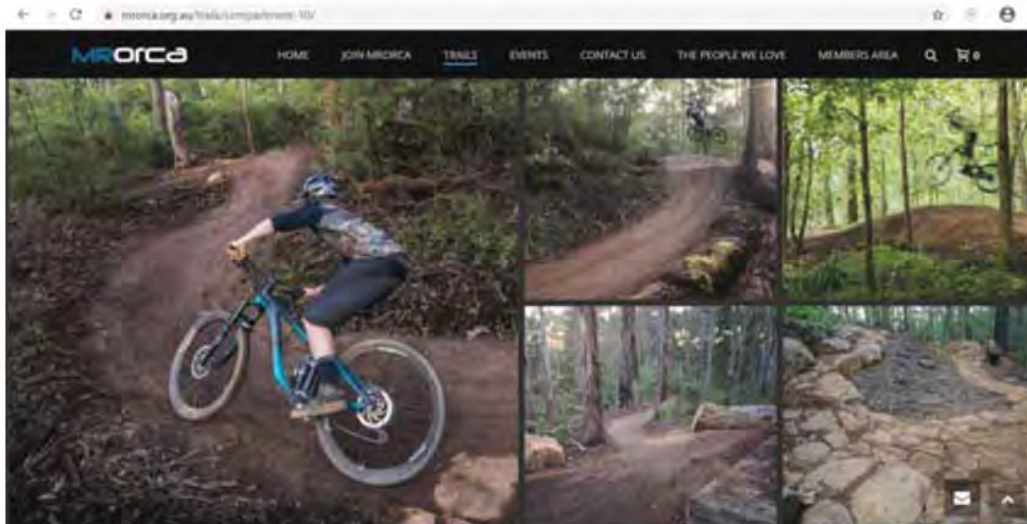
This scale of trail building in a small reserve would undoubtedly have negative impacts on flora but especially on fragmentation of habitat for fauna as outlined above.

2. The physical impact of MTB trails is significant and incompatible with areas of high conservation value



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Photos of the Compartment 10 trails in Margaret River show a high level of impact from the construction of MTB trails.



Photos of Compartment 10 trails in Margaret River (www.mrorca.org.au/trails/compartment10)

The prospect of having such an intensive network of trails, that involve a significant movement of earth and construction materials in the relatively small A-Class reserve (Mt Hallowell) and relatively small National Park (Porongurups) is alarming, and I believe, is a fundamentally incompatible recreation use with the ecological and cultural values of these areas.

3.3 Downhill MTB trails have a much higher impact

Newsome and Davies (2009) founds that “Downhill riding generally has greater potential for trail impacts than cross country riding, due to more aggressive riding styles, steep slopes, heavy bikes and where competitions take place.”

The Lane Poole Reserve Management Plan of 2011 specifically identified that “Due to its aggressive nature, downhill riding in particular needs to be located in areas where environmental impacts are manageable.”

Given it is the elevation of Mt Hallowell and the Porongurups that is desired by mountain bikers, it is likely that downhill MTB trails in these reserves would have a much greater impact than standard mountain biking.

MTB trails are incompatible with these important cultural and conservation reserves.



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3.4 MTB Trails pose significant management issues for land managers

David Newsome, from Murdoch University, has done a great deal of research into the impact of mountain biking on protected areas. It is worth quoting a large excerpt from a conference paper he delivered⁵:

The most significant environmental impact, however, brought about by mountain bikers is the creation of their own (illegally developed) trails to foster their own riding interests. Mountain bikers who occupy the 'adrenaline junkie' end of the activity spectrum create their own cycle pathways in order to locate and develop more challenging rides, as a short cut, to reach specific destinations or to connect existing tracks (IMBA 2007; Newsome and Davies, 2009). Significant damage to natural areas can occur when mountain bikers go deliberately off track. User created trail development increases the area of land, fauna and flora subject to disturbance through the adding of linear cleared track ways or widening existing trails (Cessford, 2003; Davies and Newsome, 2009).

Informal trails can be created very quickly with a substantial amount of vegetation loss and soil damage occurring in the first year of their development (IMBA 2007). For example, it was found that in one small area of John Forrest National Park in Western Australia mountain bikers had created an informal trail 2.34 km in length with 199 m of bypass trail creating an informal trail network of 2.54 km. Using an approximate trail width of 1m it was shown that 2540 m² of forest area has been cleared to create this informal trail network (Newsome and Davies, 2009). Given that John Forrest National Park is regularly used by mountain bikers and that other areas in the park have been impacted (for example, at another site in the park 18 mountain biker created trails have been counted on an 800m segment of walk trail) the total area impacted for this peri-urban protected area is likely to be unacceptably large.

In addition to this there is the problem of the creation of technical trail features (TTFs) either on existing trail networks or illegally constructed access routes. [The impact can be significant...] Recent work by Pickering et al. (2010 b) found 116 TTFs creating an area of 1601 m² of bare soil in a 29ha patch of remnant eucalypt forest in Queensland, Australia.

As Newsome and Davies (2009) identified: "passive mountain biking activities such as cross-country riding and touring are more likely to be contained and managed. The aggressive and thrill-seeking approaches to mountain biking, however, are likely to remain a constant problem for protected area managers."

With shrinking budgets for land management at Local Government, and especially at State Government level, it would be difficult to trust that there would be adequate ongoing management of the impacts of mountain biking in these important protected areas. It is

⁵ Newsome, David (2010) The Problem of Mountain Biking as Leisure and Sporting Activity in Protected Areas. Paper delivered at Conference on "Visions and Strategies for World's National Parks" and "Issues Confronting the Management of the World's National Parks", Taiwan.



CONTINUED

difficult to see how current management resources would be enough to monitor and respond to the extra illegal building of tracks in these areas. I believe that once tracks are built in these important and precious conservation reserves we would be sending a message that these areas are open to mountain biking, and that it would result in a large amount of unsanctioned track building, as has been experienced in many other places.

As Newsome describes:

[There is a significant] cost of management response to mountain biking in protected areas. The complexity of the demographic makes it a difficult leisure activity to manage in terms of controlling damage, satisfying the different participants according to the spectrum and repairing damage that has already taken place.

3.5 Land Tenures of MTB Trails in other SW towns

Most of the MTB trails in comparable places to Denmark and Albany (Margaret River and Pemberton) have been developed on land that is NOT A-Class Nature Reserve or National Park.

Margaret River Region

Trail	Location	Land Tenure
The Pines	Carters Rd	Plantation vested in Forest Products Commission
Boranup	Boranup State Forest	State Forest
Dunsborough MTB Skills Development Park	Dunsborough Country Club	Private land
Creek Trails	Carters Road	Unsure of this land tenure
10 Mile Brook	10 Mile Brook Dam	National Park (but a NP located very close to town centre, and therefore already highly impacted). It is also my understanding that unsanctioned trails were already built and therefore forced the hand of DBCA.

Pemberton Region

Trail	Location	Land Tenure
Pemberton Mountain Bike Park	Pemberton Forest Park	Vested in the Pemberton Visitor Centre Inc for the designated purpose of "Recreation and Tourist Facilities".

GSCORE, by proposing three major MTB trail developments to be in ecologically sensitive and valuable protected areas, is fundamentally at odds with the experiences of other mountain





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biking trail developments, which have mostly recognised the incompatibility of this kind of development with important cultural and conservation reserves.

4. Conclusion

There are ever increasing ecological pressures on our bush – such as climate change (warming and drying), increased bushfire risk, dieback, and invasive species – and the prospect of applying additional pressure through the construction of mountain bike trails will threaten, to an unsatisfactory degree, the resilience of these ecological valuable areas such as Mt Hallowell, Porongurup Ranges and Stirling Ranges.





Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 7:36 PM

To: trails@gscore.com.au

Subject: Public Comment on GSCORE draft masterplan 2020-2029

200118_1936

Public Comment on GSCORE draft masterplan 2020-2029

Generally speaking getting people moving in an outdoor environment is commendable.

I am a resident of Porongurup. Years ago I moved here to enjoy the peace, quiet and general respect that the community has for the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park. I am writing to oppose the proposed mountain bike trails in the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park as described in GSCORE's regional trail draft plan.

I have a few comments in relation to this draft plan. I am seriously alarmed by the section of the draft plan that includes a mountain bike trail in the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park. And hang gliding on top of that.

* Too large a percentage of the partners in the development of this draft plan (page 9) are skewed towards entertainment and revenue raising. Local Noongar groups have not been involved in this planning. There is only a vague reference to consultation with local Noongar people.

During the Community information evening on 9 January it became abundantly clear that DBCA as well as DPaW are out of their depth in management of this potential onslaught on the National Park. Funding restrictions will not allow for adequate care for the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park when mountain bike trails will need monitoring and upkeep. After reading GSCORE's draft plan it my observation that GSCORE and their partners do not have the health of the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park in their top priorities where it should be.

* I have grave concerns that the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park does not have its natural and cultural aspects considered and respected.

A mountain bike trail does not belong in a Heritage Listed National Park. Its environment as a biodiversity hotspot is too fragile for this type of activity.

How will dieback be controlled/kept out of the National Park?

Being an avid cyclist myself I understand the attraction but it is selfish and shortsighted to even consider putting a mountain bike trail in a Heritage Listed National Park.

* I was present with the Community Information Evening on 9 January and am seriously wondering where the 'widespread support from the public' (page 9) was gauged. Definitely not in Porongurup.

* Page 10 'collaborate not compete'. A collaboration by respecting local (Porongurup) opinion of looking after Porongurup National Park not cutting it up and imposing more human impact on this fragile Heritage Listed National Park would be a good start.

Page 10 'put the user experience first'. This is the wrong way around: put the natural environment first otherwise there will not be any 'user experience' to be had.

* Page 12: 'Creating attractive experiences requires consideration of' and then your 7 points none of which include sustainability/ protection of local environment. This indicates an attitude of thrill seeking and money making none of which will be useful once the Heritage Listed National Park is degraded and spent.

Suggestion: go into partnership with a local farmer to create a designated mountainbike trail. This will have no impact on the natural environment, especially if this is done on already degraded land. It would be a great business opportunity for somebody who is interested.

* Page 12: the draft plan mentions 'tourism growth'.

During the Community Information evening 9 January local businesses made it clear that they are just fine without the flooding of our Heritage Listed National Park with mountain bike riders. Money is not the end all and be all of living in Porongurup.





CONTINUED

As locals we chose to live here **because** there is none of the high impact, destructive tourism that a lot of other popular tourist spots experience.

Porongurup National Park is only 26 km². The habitat destruction and irreversible impact of a mountain bike trail would eventually lead to a degraded National Park.

A number of scientific studies have shown the significant environmental impacts of mountain bike trails on surrounding areas: soil erosion, vegetation and species loss and spread of invasive species, soil compaction and incision (Burgin & Hardiman - 2012, Goeft & Alder 2001). We are talking about a Heritage Listed National Park not a playground for thrill seekers. Once the thrill is gone the thrill seekers will go elsewhere for their next fix we will be left with a severely degraded and damaged National Park.

* Page 12 mentions of the draft plan mentions 'to host events'. This means even more impact on the National Park with extra spectators, camera and media crews whose first (and only?) priority would be getting footage, not respecting the natural environment that they are moving in.

* Granite skywalk is very popular. Already measures need to be taken to relieve the pressures on that area.

Bringing even more tourism into other areas of Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park would bring more degradation and more parts of Porongurup Heritage Listed National Park that would lose their natural beauty and equilibrium.

* Page 31: 'To achieve sustainable benefits and acceptable outcomes that benefit the whole community.....'!

The local community in Porongurup made it abundantly clear on 9 January 2020 that what would benefit the community is NOT have a mountain bike trail through Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park.

* Page 32: 'New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of all MTB trail user groups and accommodate riders of various abilities'. I strongly disagree. New trail development priorities should focus on sustainability, guarantying protection of local flora and fauna. That is why Porongurup National Park became a Heritage Listed National Park in the first place.

* Page 33: 'There is an opportunity to integrate Noongar culture...'

This again is the wrong way around. Local Noongar people have made it clear that Porongurup is their Mecca.

We have had 200 years of disrespect towards Aboriginal people. Will you be continuing this by not listening to them with regards to mountain bike trails on Porongurup?

* Page 33: 'Each site will also support the growing demand from residents (proof???) for accessible trails and address the increasing occurrence of unsanctioned trail construction'. There is no growing demand from Porongurup residents for more trails in the Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park.

To date there has not been a problem with unsanctioned trail construction in Porongurup National Park.

Bringing mountain bike trails into Porongurup Heritage Listed National Park will only introduce this destructive trend into the National Park.

* Pages 54 and 77: 'Sustainable and Accessible Trail Network'. Under this header GSCORE promises ...delivery of 'outstanding experiences to a wide range of trail users and activity types'. The 'sustainable' part of this header does not get any explanation. How can GSCORE guarantee sustainability?

There are many other hills and bush areas in the Shire of Plantagenet which do not have the high conservation value that Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park has. Please focus on these for the creation of thrills for mountain bike riders.

Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park is not a suitable or compatible venue for mountain bike trails.

Explore options for the development of mountain bike trails on private land but not within Heritage Listed Porongurup National Park.





-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 7:51 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

200118_1951

[REDACTED]
Message Body:
"Yes I want Mtb trails"





Photo credit: Tourism WA



200118_2003

RESPONSE TO GREAT SOUTHERN TRAILS MASTER PLAN (RTMP)



Whilst I applaud in general the initiative of the group in encouraging outdoor activity through the development of trails, I have serious concerns about the suitability of activities proposed for some locations.

In particular I find mountain biking in natural areas to be particularly destructive to those habitats. I draw attention to Mt Hallowell Reserve, Denmark where I believe NO mountain bike trails should be constructed

In a 2012 article Burgin and Hardiman presciently wrote:

“Without a strong strategic approach to mountain biking that includes community engagement, underpinned by quality ecological and social science, the outcome will be further degradation of natural areas and, at the least, loss of many animals if not major threats to populations. We also predict that there will be on-going conflict between mountain bikers and other recreationists and residents.”

Shelly Burgin and Nigel Hardiman (2012) Is the evolving sport of mountain biking compatible with fauna conservation in national parks? Australian Zoologist 36(2):201-208 · January 2012

The DPAW document Western Australian Mountain Bike Trail Management Guidelines makes it clear that the proposed Mt Hallowell development could not meet the clear criteria outlined. The entirety of section 8.5 Sustainability is relevant however this excerpt is particularly pertinent

“Trail development must be planned, designed and constructed with the highest environmental standards. Trails should be appropriate to the landscape, sense of place and add value to the area. Trails should not destabilise soils or slopes. Vegetation should not be cleared or damaged beyond the bounds of that required for the trail footprint. Trails should be used to manage potential recreational impacts on wildlife and habitats in a positive way. Trails should be designed and constructed in way that minimises the potential spread of soil-borne pathogens and weeds”

p40 <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/conservation-management/trails/Western%20Australian%20Mountain%20Bike%20Management%20Guidelines.pdf>

On Mt Hallowell the iconic, world renowned Bibbulman Track which is rated one of world's best hikes by National geographic magazine (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/lists/hiking-backpacking/worlds-best-grail-trails/>) wends it's way through karri forest unburnt for decades, around ancient rounded granite and pads through soft carpeted she-oak forest. Users travel from far and wide to walk experiencing the silence and solitude of the Track
This experience is clearly at odds with the cacophony of riders careering on a downhill MTB trail.





CONTINUED

From the second paragraph of the Vision Statement breakout balloon in the RTMP p5
 “The trail network will be ... managed on a sustainable basis to enhance environmental ... outcomes.”

However, off road cyclists have already demonstrated damaging irresponsibility by continual construction of an illegal pump track at the base of Mt Hallowell Reserve paralleling Heather Rd. Likewise the construction and use of downhill tracks in Mt Hallowell Reserve parallel to Ocean Beach Rd and higher up in the forest has seen the destruction of native vegetation. And mountain bike riders continue to illegally use the Bibbulman Track on Mt Hallowell

Mt Hallowell Reserve is listed in the Register of National Estate and in the Shires of Denmark 's Municipal inventory. In the WA State Heritage listing the Shire has stated:
 “It has extremely high landscape values and visual amenity and has important values for tourism.”, and further on in the document

“The Reserve contains known populations of endemic flora species, including: Eucalyptus cornuta and Dryandra serra. The area is also important for maintaining forest and woodland processes. The topographic diversity of this area contributes to high aesthetic values and scenic grandeur. The area contains uncommon geomorphic features of rock outcrops and monadnocks which are significant reasons for abundance and diversity of flora and fauna taxa and habitats. Despite its small size, the Reserve provides wilderness values for many visitors.”

(<http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/1a28e0ac-a806-4e7b-8152-5a1c612216fb>)

In the RTMP in relation to Mt Hallowell Table 9 p34 suggests “a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Potential for use for competitive Enduro events.”
 Descending events are the fastest and most aggressive with potential for significant unacceptable erosion both in use and by subsequent rainfall. Competitive enduro events attract spectators which



enduro event Derby, NE Tasmania image: The Examiner





CONTINUED

additionally unavoidably negatively impact on the surroundings of trail sites (see above photo).

In summary, Mt Hallowell in Denmark is a beautiful, rare and special Reserve valued for its largely intact natural vegetation and landforms. The maintenance of these values is completely incompatible with any form of mountain bike riding other than the formal roads which already exist, and for these reasons I strongly feel that no other tracks should be constructed. There are currently applications to establish downhill trails on private land in Denmark which I feel is an appropriate venue for these activities.



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 8:26 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au

200118_2026

Hi I am fully supportive of the plan for mountain bike trails in Denmark and surrounding areas. I have seen how trails I have been of benefit to other communities both locals and visitors. Examples include Margaret River Collie Pemberton and others.

[Redacted]



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:14 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Submission from [Redacted] on the Draft Trails Plan

200118_2314

Flag Status: Flagged

To: trails@gscore.com.au

[Redacted]

Date: January 18, 2020

Re: Submission in response to GSCORE & the RTMP

I oppose your Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan because it is essentially a mountain bike trail plan set within a review of existing trails in the Great Southern.





CONTINUED

I oppose your Draft Plan because there is an extensive listing of walking tracks assessed that require maintenance, reconstruction, extension and improvement but the bulk of *priority* activity the plan identifies (pg 6) is that of creating mountain bike trails with any work on walking trails of secondary and tertiary importance, yet your own statistics indicate (pg 26 & 32) that more visitors want to hike than bike.

I oppose your Draft Plan because much of what you propose is within National Parks over which you have no jurisdiction or control which therefore is erroneous information as part of YOUR plan for which you seek financial support. **And I oppose your Draft Plan support of the DBCA proposals to allow biking in National Parks.**

I oppose your Draft Plan because it is politically structured to appeal to economic development at suggested locations. And with regard to the bike trails, these locations are to be developed at the expense of the very destinations you target as being significant for their 'distinctive biodiversity, heritage, culture and landscape.'

I oppose your Draft Plan because it is essentially a bike trail plan based on the assessment that it is 'filling a gap' in a small percentage of the tourist market. With real and current evidence at hand, once biking is introduced to a location, sanctioned or un sanctioned, the participants in that activity accept no limits and the environment in which they practice their recreational pursuit becomes low priority. Thus, what has been set aside as the National Estate, becomes degraded. The biking fraternity are not poster people for sustainable recreation in nature and conservation reserves.

I oppose your Draft Plan because of your short and calculated timing of public release for submissions over the holiday period of the year as it indicates the organisation is implementing subterfuge as their operational style at the outset and I therefore do not trust you would complete a fair, open and honest Plan.

I oppose your Draft Plan in the method in which it has been constructed, its proposed implementation strategy and its branding to be the controlling body for all trail concepts. (section 5 & appendix 5)

And I oppose your Draft Plan because *if* GSCORE continues to exist you will be beyond public scrutiny in your operations, and without responsibility when your funding ceases to exist for any long term maintenance or legal liability.



From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
 Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:24 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 Public comment

200118_2324

Respondent 0807

Flag Status: Flagged

Hi, my comments are as follows:

1. The process in which you identified trails is flawed you should have an extra step in which you discount locations of high cultural and conservation significance. This would have enabled you to identify that locations such as the Porongurup range heritage listed national park, are not acceptable locations. Please immediately add this step and edit the Master plan accordingly. You know this step is important as evident though having proposed no trails in the highlands of the Stirling Ranges. It's necessary to keep your approach consistent as it makes it seem you've slated areas such as the Porongurup range heritage listed national park as a sacrifice point which isn't necessary. We a big region with lots of reserves, remnant bush, tree farms and private landholdings that could be used for all sorts of trail types.
2. There is no process, policy or recommendations in which to deal with unsanctioned trails. How to decide to either make them sustainable and sanction or to close and restore them. Please add this, especially as during the consultation period you discovered where most of these are as evident because they are in the same locations as most of your trail proposals.
3. You have not allowed for, encouraged or even addressed facilitating opportunity for private ownership. Please add.
4. I find the amount of times you mention your organisations name in the document is excessive and self-serving please remove as much as possible. This is supposed to be an impartial planning tool not your own personal business plan.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]
 *This is my personal opinion and does not [REDACTED] and will not affect our working relationship





Photo credit: David Bomba



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:48 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: public comment

200118_2348

Flag Status: Flagged

1. I do not support the proposal to include Porongurup National Park as a site for the development of mountain bike trails MTB trails.
2. Mountain bike trails and the sport of mountain biking are not compatible with the ecological values of the Porongurup National Park.
3. Provision of sporting facilities, such as rock jumps for mountain bikes that damage or destroy part of the heritage value of the Porongurup National Park are not compatible with the objectives of the Biodiversity Conservation act 2016 [Schedule 1 as at 01 Jan 2019 Version 00-d0-00 page 197 Published on www.legislation.wa.gov.au]

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_41658.pdf/\\$FILE/Biodiversity%20Conservation%20Act%202016%20%20%5B00_d0_00%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_41658.pdf/$FILE/Biodiversity%20Conservation%20Act%202016%20%20%5B00_d0_00%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

4. National Heritage listed in 2008 , the Porongurup National Park was recognized for its outstanding heritage value; " important for its endemism and richness in a wide array of plant species" "It is also among the oldest mountain ranges in the world" "unique flora and fauna."

"...the place [PNP] has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history

https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/0abaa17d_9dfe_44af_abae_72948e52e2bc/files/10606003.pdf

5. Page 33 of the GSCORE Regional Trails Master Plan (draft) 2020 – 2029:

"In the Great Southern, the five proposed sites all offer a different riding experience, landscape and point of difference. Like the 7 Stanes, (ref: Scotland) these five sites should be marketed as one regional offering."

The Stanes of Scotland are comprised of young fertile landscapes; the Porongurup Range, particularly the uplands, are comprised of ancient fragile infertile landscapes with fragile endemic flora and unique fauna.

6. *There is an opportunity to integrate Noongar culture and creative expression at each site to highlight the region's unique history and landscape.*

At least a dozen local Noongar elders from the Albany and Mount Barker communities have been in touch with me to express surprise and alarm that they have not been contacted or consulted to discuss the regional trails plan specifically the proposal to include mountain bike trails in the draft plan for the Porongurup National Park.

7. Alternative range of locations in hills and forest areas, appropriate local government lands and reserves within the Shire of Plantagenet; land without high conservation value and not set aside for the protection of nature.

A convincing case for dedicated single trails/tracks in national parks has not been made and cannot be justified.



CONTINUED

I oppose the construction of mountain bike trails as a diversion of limited resources to an inappropriate sport that damages park values.

8. The Porongurup National Park provides all, especially the local community who chose to live within the vicinity of the Park, the ability to connect with the country, observe nature and its seasonal changes, walk through nature with only the sounds of birds, trees and wind. In provides opportunities to learn of the many generations of Noongar cultural knowledge and practice, and, since 1859, learn the history of the first colonial settlers and the evolution from exploiters to protectors of the iconic range.
9. This country is subtle, quiet and peaceful. Please leave us be.

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:54 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Submission - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200118_2354

Submission
 Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

I support the of the development of appropriate trails which will benefit the Porongurup and Plantagenet communities.

I support appropriate maintenance of the existing walk trails in Porongurup National Park, the Castle Rock, Nancy's Peak, Devil's Slide and Bolganup Trails.

I support the development of the Pwakkenbac Mountain Bike Trails, and the O'Neil Road dual use trail, as both developments will bring new opportunities for local residents and visitors to the area.

Due to the significant cultural and environmental values, I do not support any new development in the Porongurup National Park, so under no circumstances should this Park be considered appropriate for Mountain Bike Trails.

To the four local aboriginal groups, the Porongurup Range is a culturally sensitive place, a place of totems. They consider that the uplands of this ancient Range must be left undisturbed, and MTB trails have no place here.

The Porongurup National Park is Heritage listed, it has national significance as an ancient mountain range and there are many endemic, endangered plant and invertebrate species present.

Thousands of years of careful, sustainable management has preserved this small fragile ancient mountain environment.

New development will initially bring with it much spread of weeds, dieback, erosion, soil compaction, irreparable waterways and granite rock damage, loss of species and more. Further disturbance and overuse coming with the MTB riders' desire for continued trail development will result in this park becoming degraded in less than a lifetime.

Preserving the cultural and environmental values of the Porongurup National Park for ever is far more important than providing entertainment for the relatively small group of MTB riders.

[REDACTED]



From: friends@porongurup.org.au
Sent: Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:58 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Public Comment - Great Southern Regional Trails Draft Master Plan [2020-2029].

Flag Status: Flagged

200118_2358

Due to the significant cultural and environmental values of the Porongurup National Park, The Friends of the Porongurup Range do not support any new development in the Porongurup National Park.

Under no circumstances is the Park considered appropriate for the development of mountain bike trails as proposed in the Great Southern Regional Trails Draft Master Plan [2020-2029].

The Porongurup Range is culturally sensitive and spiritual: a place of totems to the four local Noongar aboriginal groups.

Thousands of years of careful, sustainable management by the first nations people has preserved this fragile, ancient mountain environment.

We believe that for a park of the importance and cultural significance to the Noongar people, that consultation with them has been negligible and for some local Noongar, non-existent, particularly since they are recognised as co-managers with DBCA.

GSCORE and DBCA, by their own admission, do not recognize the significance of the Park's National Heritage status.

The Porongurup National Park was National Heritage listed in 2008 in recognition of its national significance as an ancient mountain range, one of the oldest in the world, with unique flora and fauna.

The iconic Karri trees and understory form a distinct eastern outlier from the main Karri block; the granite outcrops provide refuge for Gondwanan relict species.

Granite outcrops and boulders are particularly fragile ecosystems that support short-range fragile endemic flora and fauna.

Unfortunately, mountain bike enthusiasts seek out trails located over granite in high country for challenges and thrills.



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Culturally and environmentally, the Noongar prefer that the uplands of this ancient Range be left undisturbed.

Following from the public meeting held in Porongurup on 9th January 2020, the Porongurup community made it clear that preserving the cultural and environmental values of the Porongurup National Park is far more important than catering for the relatively small group of mountain trail bike riders.

The Friends of the Porongurup range oppose bike trail development in the Porongurup National Park.

Parks are for Nature – *that **is** the attraction*

Submitted on behalf of
The Friends of the Porongurup Range, Inc
by Chairperson
Judy MacKinnon



200118_2359

Submission - Gscore Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
Submission dated 18th January 2020 and emailed same day.

1.

This Submission focuses on proposed mountain bike trails in Porongurup Range and National Park
I will refer to pages 2, 32, 33, 34, 35, 55 and 58 of the above mentioned Gscore Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan and will refer to it throughout as the 'Gscore plan'.

The community meeting at Porongurup Hall on the evening of 9th January 2020 was a very good indicator of the concerns and sentiment on the issue of mountain bike trails in Porongurup Range and National park. Well over 100 people in attendance with the vast majority saying -

Mountain bike trails on private land - "Yes"

Mountain bike trails in Porongurup Range and National Park "NO" !!!!

Personally I feel that mountain bike trails and mountain bike riders, definitely should not be allowed in or close to Porongurup Range and National Park.

My reasons for this are numerous, but for the sake of this submission I will focus on three categories.

1. Environmental issues

This area is internationally recognised as a 'global bio-diversity hot spot' for the numbers of indigenous plant and animal species.

'Biodiversity Hotspots' are defined as regions "where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing exceptional loss of habitat".

This region was the first 'Global Hotspot' identified in Australia and is currently one of only 36 biodiversity hotspots world- wide.

The region has thousands of species of native plants and a plethora of native mammals, birds, frogs, reptiles, insects and fungi, with possibly more to be identified. Many of these are found nowhere else on earth and many are already endangered.

Conservation should be the obvious focus and issue in such a sensitive and fragile environment as Porongurup National Park.

One need only speak with and listen to, an expert like Professor Stephen Hopper of the University of Western Australia, who attended and spoke at the abovementioned meeting, to understand how imperative conservation of areas like Porongurup National Park are.

Professor Hopper is an internationally renowned plant conservation biologist and expert on granite outcrops.

He is very familiar and knowledgeable regarding the Porongurup Range and what a fragile and unique environment it is, having conducted research there in the past.

If anybody should be listened to, it is Professor Hopper and he is totally opposed to the idea of mountain bike trails in Porongurup Range and National Park as he is very aware of the long term damage it will bring.

Porongurup Range is one of the oldest and most iconic in the world and when the Park was heritage listed it was quoted by the Government as having "outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course or pattern of Australia's natural or cultural history".

It is a small, sensitive environment and one of the last bastions of 'bio-diversity' in this region.
It is an outstanding natural environment, the protection of which is totally essential.





2.

Conservation should be the main focus for funding, not bringing in 'extreme sports' or any other sport, which will only serve to degrade, cause erosion due to speed and downhill slopes, disrupt wildlife, introduce weeds and pollute to mention but a few of the negatives of the proposed Gscore plan.

Porongurup National Park is a unique, diverse and very fragile environment. It is a 'last refuge' for so many species of flora and fauna, the ecology of which has evolved over millions of years.

Huge amounts of wonderful work has already been done on the Gondwana Link, which encompasses Porongurup National Park. The objectives are conservation, regeneration and protection of our natural habitats and is very well documented.

* See the excellent film recently screened at Albany Entertainment Centre -
"Breathing Live Into Boodja – Social and ecological restoration in an ancient land"
 or go to Gondwana Link website www.gondwanalink.org

Well maintained walking trails in Porongurup National Park are far less invasive & a much better idea. Visitors to this National Park come to walk the trails, see the wonderful scenery, enjoy bird watching, photography, walk amongst the karri forests and granite outcrops, or just admire and appreciate the tranquillity and the many beautiful sites and landscapes. The Granite Skywalk is a good example of this, harmonising with nature.

Visitors come here for the peace and splendour of the environment.

The Porongurup Range should be considered the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the Plantagenet Shire and treated with the respect it so definitely deserves.

The proposed Mountain Bike Trails as mentioned on Page 33, 34 and 35 (Map 3) of the Gscore plan, are not at all compatible with the Porongurup National Park's iconic and extremely fragile environment.

2. Aboriginal heritage and significance.

On the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions very own internet site it states

Acknowledgement of Country

"The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present."

On page 2 of the Gscore plan it states

"We recognise the value and heritage, culture and spiritual connection of Noongar people with The lands and waterways on which outdoor recreation takes place."

It is well known and was also very clear at the meeting at Porongurup Hall on 9th January 2020, that **Porongurup Range is sacred to Aboriginal peoples of the region.**

The Menang people, The Wirlomin people, The Goreng people and The Piblemin all consider Borongurup (now known as Porongurup Range) sacred. A Home of the Ancestors, a Sacred Totem place and also a meeting place of the tribes.



3.

Where in this instance, is the 'respect' that the Government of Western Australia speaks of?

Is it in Page 55 of the Gscore plan under the heading 'Community and Economic Development Opportunities' No. 4.4 where it is suggested that

"Culture Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects."

Whilst being a nice little idea, I seriously doubt that some signs with Aboriginal place names and a little cultural information will make very much difference when Aboriginal people see mountain bike trails cutting through their sacred land of the Porongurup Range. It sounds hollow at best.

I see no true respect here.

It would also be interesting to know if Gscore has called any meetings of all the Elders of this region to truly consult with them and to truly find their views on the idea of mountain bike trails through a place they hold sacred.

I believe they have not.

The sacredness of this Range to the Indigenous Peoples of this region, their connection to this land for thousands and thousands of years, is something that should not in any way be disregarded.

It should be considered sacrosanct.

This in itself should be enough for Gscore or any person or organisation of true conscience and integrity, who is genuinely listening to Aboriginal people, to STOP this proposed plan for trail bikes going ahead in Porongurup Range and National Park.

3. Maintenance and monitoring

Who will be responsible for the maintenance, upkeep and monitoring of the proposed mountain bike trails in Porongurup National Park?

Peter Hartley of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, who was also present at the meeting at Porongurup Hall on 9th January 2020, stated that there is currently not enough money available to maintain the existing tracks throughout the region.

If there isn't enough money already, where will the extra money for mountain bike trails in the Porongurup National Park come from? Monitoring of these proposed trails will also be essential.

The construction of mountain bike trails will in itself cause destruction and clearing of habitat in the Range and National Park.

The use of these proposed trails will also add to the destruction by causing erosion, especially on downhill slopes due to speed etc., introduction of weeds, rubbish, possible 'over-use' etc.

Importantly too, who will monitor these trails or carry out maintenance and **who will monitor the bike riders to make sure they are all doing the right thing, not diverting from trails and causing even more destruction in an already delicate, fragile environment?**

Page 58 of the Gscore plan, under the heading of Maintenance and Management, suggests that

"agreement is developed following discussion between a land manager and trail user group/club about options for volunteer maintenance of trails."





CONTINUED

4.

Surely it won't be left to mountain bike riders themselves to do this "maintenance of trails."

Nick Walls, President of the Albany Mountain Bike Club, who was also present at the meeting at Porongurup Hall on 9th January 2020, stated himself that he and his club members already use 'sanctioned' and 'unsanctioned' trails. The example of Mt. Melville in Albany was given.

It was pointed out that Mt. Melville is used by many mountain bike riders and there are large deep, wide erosion trenches there already, particularly on the downhill slopes, as a result of their activities. Nick Walls replied that the tracks at Mt. Melville are 'unsanctioned' tracks and that was why they were in such a terrible state.

Yet he himself went on to say that his club members ride those very same unsanctioned tracks at Mt. Melville, therefore adding to the destruction.

Where is the care for the environment? They know they're causing environmental destruction, yet they do it anyway - And that is members of a mountain bike rider's club. What about all the individual riders who will use the trails as well?

To suggest that these are people to carry out possible "maintenance of trails" is fanciful at best.

Constant monitoring of the proposed mountain bike trails AND the mountain bike riders using them in Porongurup National Park, would be essential and in my opinion, impossible to do adequately.

Summary

There is also the added question of 'where is the line drawn?'

If this proposed plan is taken up now and mountain bike trails and riders are allowed in Porongurup National Park, what will be expected next in the future? Motor cross tracks, horse riding trails?

The line needs to be drawn now!

The Gscore plan is full of phrases like 'market potential' and 'destination deliverability (both page 61), 'taking advantage of tourism' (page 32), 'to ensure that the regions potential as a mountain bike destination is realized'.

No mention of the fragility of the land or cultural heritage. There is so much more to all this than money. It should be about preservation and conservation.

1. Porongurup National Park is a small, unique, diverse and extremely fragile environment, home to an incredibly range of flora and fauna. This is well known and documented.

The introduction of mountain bike trails and riders has a huge potential for causing damage to this fragile range's ecosystem which has evolved over millions of years in one of the world's oldest ranges.

2. Porongurup Range is a place of significant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Mountain bike trails cutting through that Range will be a total affront to that Culture and weill make the rhetoric of 'respect' that the Government espouses, look very shallow indeed.

3. Monitoring of the proposed mountain bike trails and the mountain bike riders using them will be difficult and in my view impossible.

This will lead to further deterioration of an already fragile environment.





CONTINUED

5.

Taking into account the issues raised in this submission, I feel **mountain bike trails should definitely NOT be allowed in Porongurup Range and National Park.**

Please send me a reply notification that this submission has been received.

Thank you.

* Note: One must also wonder whether Gscore is acting in a neutral way given that they have allowed such a limited time frame to receive submissions AND that the submission time is during the Christmas/Summer Holiday period when many people are away or pre-occupied with the holiday season.

The time frame for submissions should be extended by at least several months to allow the public time to investigate and make truly informed decisions on issues raised in the Gscore plan.

Many people would only just be hearing of this for the first time now.

For example, yesterday's The Extra newspaper (dated January 17th) which has an article about the Gscore plan, would quite likely be the first time many people would be made aware of that plan.

Yet the closing time for submissions is midnight on the 19th January. This allows at best a day and a half to fully understand the plan, which is 88 pages long, AND write a submission.

This does not seem right and only serves to give an impression of bias on Gscore's part - and surely that is not what's wanted.



Photo credit: Tourism WA



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 12:29 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200119_0029

Dear sir or madam,

As a 20-year resident in Porongurup, I was keen to learn more about this plan which I did by reading the document (thank you) and attending a local meeting here last week. It was very well attended.

I would say that prima facie - I oppose the plan for a mountain bike trail in the Porongurups. I fear these ancient hills (the oldest on the planet) will suffer erosion even with the best planned and managed trail(s). I'm also concerned at the potential for further environmental degradation, such as litter. The Porongurups are home to many plant species that grow nowhere else. I appreciate that the majority of bikers will be respectful, but like any other grouping of people there will be those who are less thoughtful.

However, I was wholly moved in my views by a resident first Australian - Larry, who provided an emotional 'Welcome to Country' and an even more impassioned speech to the assembly. I think many present were. A friend of mine asked the panel if Larry and his Noongar brothers and sisters would have the power of veto over any proposed plan. The obfuscatory reply sounded good but could be summarised as 'no'. I firmly believe that the Noongar folks should have such a power. The Porongurups are a very special place to them. New Australians have shown respect in the closing of Uluru to climbers, and although not as well known a special place is a special place. We should show Larry and his folks the same respect.

For what it's worth, I am convinced that if a vote were taken on the night, then the proposal would have been rejected there and then, by a significant majority. I'm also convinced that the option for a trail exists in this area, perhaps on private land? Anyway, I have no objection to mountain bikers or tourism per se, but I'm wholly opposed to any development in the steeper, holier areas. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards

[REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 12:32 AM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

200119_0032

Message Body:

Hi,
just a short message to let you know that I support professionally built mountain bike trails, especially around the mounds in Albany. I believe there are people against them, but I believe these people either think they own the reserves and don't want to share their 'backyards', or they haven't seen proper built trails and don't understand how eco friendly they can be.

[REDACTED]



200119_0530

GSCORE Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan: Public comment.

Email address: trails@gscore.com.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this Master Plan.

I recognise that it has received encouragement and in principle support from the Town of Albany and Shires within the Great Southern Region and considerable work has gone into the plan.

This region has many wonderful natural attributes. Increasing tourism to the region, and health promoting physical activity in it, are worthwhile objectives provided they do not override cultural concerns and the natural features, including its rich flora and fauna. They are the region's greatest attractions.

Business plan.

The Masterplan is aspirational. It has a fundamental weakness in not having an associated Business plan but I will leave others to make comment about that deficit.

Porongurup National Park (PNP)

My two main criticisms of the Master Plan relate mainly to the proposals for trails in the Porongurup National Park (Pages 9,29,33 and 87)

1.Noongar cultural considerations.

Although mention has been made to recognise the importance of Noongar culture via naming, or co-naming, important places and features (page 77) and to install appropriate signage, Noongar opinion was not carefully and comprehensively sought as a starting point, well before the initial drafting of the plan.

Discussions about culturally and spiritually important places do not appear to have been held prior to the publication of the Masterplan. If some discussions have been held with appropriate leaders/elders, then the culturally sensitive nature of some of the proposals certainly do not seem to have taken their concerns into account.

The Stirling Range is of major importance in their culture but It is quite apparent that the Porongurup Range is quite unique. It has had, and continues to have, enormous cultural significance for four Noongar tribes who have lived around the range for many millennia. They have respected its totem importance and protected its flora and fauna. They draw an analogy with other major sites and structures of importance to various other cultures and faiths and the measures taken to respect and preserve them.

2. Unique biodiversity and ecological fragility.

My second major criticism is the degree to which some of the proposed trails, and significant extension and 'enhancement' of existing trails with their associated increased activities, will impact upon the ecological fragility of this small and very vulnerable region. By comparison, the Stirling Range National Park is a great deal larger and more resilient.



CONTINUED

The SW of WA is recognised as the of the relatively few highly significant bio-diversity hot spots of the world. It an ecological treasure trove and the Porongurup Range is arguably the greatest gem in that crown. Its ancient geological history of granite hills is millions of years older than the post glacial Scanes of Scotland for example or the Stirling Range of WA. This, along with its elevation above the surrounding landscape, has created its own microclimate with mists often hugging the hills bringing cooling moisture with them. These conditions have enabled karri trees to persist there and many smaller relict species to survive as well. The Porongurup National Park has international heritage listing, recognising its global importance.

Professor Stephen Hopper AC, UWA Professor of Biodiversity, is centred in Albany. He is a nationally and internationally recognised botanist and regarded as the most authoritative expert on the plant life around granite outcrops. His voice should be heard loud and clear when human activities threaten the ability of fragile ecosystems to survive.

Walking trails in the PNP

Extending and possibly enlarging and `enhancing` walking trails will have some impact on soil erosion, ecological disturbance, litter levels, fire risk and the spread of weeds and diseases such as die-back. (pages 9,29,87). I am very familiar with all of the trails mentioned in the document and have climbed all of the named peaks multiple times since boyhood. If some extensions and `enhancements` do proceed, they may well damage the very natural beauty of the place over time. It will depend upon the sensitivity and scale of such `enhancements`.

I am well aware that the Sky Walk on Castle Rock has resulted in increased numbers of people visiting the attraction and putting some pressure on the walking trail to it.

Mountain bike trails

The impacts by walkers, however, will be multiplied to a very damaging degree by any introduction and utilisation of mountain bike trails (MTBs) in the PNP. (Pages1,33) Sensitive ecosystems may not recover from the damage caused. Sub-species may be lost. The PNP is absolutely the wrong place for them.

Mountain biking is obviously a very popular sport in many countries and has been a boon to the local economy in several centres in Tasmania. There is pressure to extend MBTs in WA including the Great Southern Region. Innovative ways should be explored to meet that demand without causing major damage. Alternative trails should be sought. In my view, there are several potential sites north of the Porongurup Road that have sufficient inclines and great views of the Porongurup and Stirling Ranges. They would be on private properties and the landowners may not be interested. It would be worth considering the matter.

Climate change

The Management Plan has not taken into account the actual and predicted increasingly damaging impacts of climate change on the Great Southern region. Australia has just experienced a decade of the highest average atmospheric temperatures since recordings began. The prolonged drought affecting much of Queensland, NSW and Victoria predisposed to this summer`s horrendous bushfires mainly across much of NSW and Victoria but all Australian states have been affected.





CONTINUED

Rainfall levels in the SW and Great Southern regions of WA have fallen 17-20% over recent decades. Run off into creeks and rivers has fallen even more. The landscape is drying out and that includes the Porongurup and Stirling Range National Parks. The recent devastating fires in the Stirling Range National Park, and that which occurred in the PNP in February 2007, are clear warnings of further bush fire dangers and management challenges ahead.

The Management Plan should be factoring these risks into the plan, or at least mentioning that they exist. These are not only risks to the environment and its biodiversity but they will also pose risks for comfortable living, health, physical activity, agriculture, tourism, and the broader economy.

Historical footnote.

In the early 1920s Mr Hayward of the WA Tourism Bureau suggested that the Porongurup Range would be a great tourism destination and encouraged my forebears at Karri Bank and Bolganup Homestead, having settled there in 1908, to set up guest houses to meet the need and supplement the income from their pioneering farms.

In that less demanding era, when cars were fewer, facilities were poorer, and visitors stayed for a week or two, often year after year, those guest houses ran successfully from around 1923 to 1943/44 when Bolganup Homestead closed its doors because of WW II.

Karri Bank Lodge (as it is now called) never closed down and has become quite active again. In 1991, Bolganup Homestead began running a very modest farm stay accommodation venture. Both ventures would, presumably, benefit from increased tourism but my own family's overriding concern is to protect the wonderful natural beauty, serenity, cultural importance and fragile ecological richness of the Porongurup National Park. Those are the features that make it attractive and precious and they could be easily damaged beyond repair.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]



From:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Sunday 19 January 2020 5:33 AM
trails@gscore.com.au

200119_0533

To:

Subject:

Addendum to my previous submission

Respondent 0805

I would like to see consultation with the Menang community and prioritising their input. Where there are culturally sensitive sites, I would hope that their wishes would be heeded above all else – and I say this as one who greatly enjoys walking and cycling trails.

I couldn't see discussions with First Nations People in the plan. Was this a consideration? If not, it is a striking omission. If so, their interests should inform trail development, or lack thereof.

Thank you again.

[Redacted signature]





From: [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 6:47 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_0647

I'm in favour of Mtb trails in the great southern region



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 6:48 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Mt bike trails project feedback
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_0648

Hi,

A big YES to more Mt bike trails in the great southern. There is so much potential for great trails and capitalisation on Mt bike tourism, especially in and around Denmark and porongorups. Would be amazing to see a trail hub akin to Derby, or even Scotland's seven stanes develop in WA. Bring on the trails :)

[Redacted]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 8:06 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Bike and walking trail Mt Clarence

200119_0806

I am very much in favour of sharing our environment with the whole community. However unless tracks are monitored and repaired regularly our natural flora and fauna will be destroyed. There are examples of where a minority of bike riders on Mount Clarence are damaging the vegetation and causing erosion on a daily basis. Do the people making decision actually walk on the track and see the real problem?
 From one who has walking the hill on a daily basis for many decades



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:12 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Mt. trails

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_0912

Hi

As a mtber I'm all for trails being built in the region, the sport is building rapidly and provides an outlet for young and old people alike to be close to nature, take risks and have fun. No matter what a persons background I have seen nothing but appreciation of our environment come from mtbing. After using both legal and illegal trails and trails built the wrong way, the impact is minimum.

It is important that there a high skill trails available as the sport is about challenging yourself.

Regards

[REDACTED]





200119_0932

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:32 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP)
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern.

I would like to make comment to the RTMP, in regard to the proposed Mountain Bike trails in the Porongurup National Park.

I object to opening up the park to non passive recreation on the following grounds.

+ As a heritage listed National Park its main function is for the protection of fauna & flora & passive recreation. It is a very unique environment, having developed over many millions of years. Opening the park up to non passive recreation would endanger the fragile ecosystem.

+ As the Park has no current residential ranger, there are no facility to properly protect the Park, including ,destruction of flora & fauna, monitoring people movements, rubbish collection, and controlling the spread of pests & diseases.

+ The Park and surrounding areas is very culturally sensitive to the indigenous people, who have used this land over many thousands of years. It would be very insensitive to open up their land to aggressive recreation.

I object to having the beautiful Porongurup National Park opened up to non passive recreation.

Those who wish to pursue a bike trail, should look at the option of getting funding from all levels of government & the private sector, purchasing freehold land an constructing their own facilities.

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:03 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Comment for the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200119_1003

Flag Status: Flagged

Hi there,

I'm writing in regards to the Great Southern RTMP. I would like to express my views that mountain bike trails are needed in the region and I would like to have more of them, and sooner! I'm in full support of the plans to develop MTB trails in Pwakkenbak, Albany Heritage Trail, Mount Halliwell Hallowel and the Porongorup.

More specifically I think that MTB trails in the Denmark - Walpole region should be developed as quickly as possible as there are currently no trails available to service the growing MTB rider community. This would help highlight the fantastic characteristics of the area including the breathtaking landscapes and amazing bio diversity and help attract more visitors to the region.

I'm in support of the four strategic objectives outlined in the plan. Especially important are the objectives for accessibility and sustainability, with good visitor experience.

Regards,

[REDACTED]



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

200119_1008



**Denmark
Environment
Centre Inc** ABN 78 197 582 304

33-35 Strickland St (PO Box 142) Denmark WA 6333
Ph (08) 9848 1644 • Fax (08) 9848 1248
denviron@denviron.org.au
www.denmarkenvironmentcentre.org.au

Submission to Draft of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029

DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

The Denmark Environment Centre Inc. (DEC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029 (The Draft Plan). In summary, whilst encouraging outdoor physical recreational activity and tourism are generally positive, DEC has some concern that some areas, particularly conservation reserves, are inappropriate choices for certain activities i.e. mountain bike trails (MBTs), and particularly downhill racing.

DEC objects to the following MBTs proposed by GSCORE in The Draft Plan (Pg. 6): Mt Hallowell MTB Trails, Porongurup MTB Trails and the Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail. DEC would like its objections noted in any documents that list community consultation (e.g. Pg. 9 The Draft Plan).

One of the principles described in The Draft Plan (Pg. 10) is: "Showcase and protect our unique landscapes and biodiversity". It is consistent with this aim that that some areas be recognised too ecologically valuable to risk further human impact. There must be a decision-making process that incorporates the potential for some proposed trails NOT to proceed when this is the case.

DEC proposes that other land tenures, other than Conservation areas, be utilised as siting such trails. They should not be constructed on the minimal amount of properly reserved land in the conservation estate in Western Australia that is already facing so many other pressures (dieback, weeds, drying conditions and more extreme weather events as exaberated by climate change, and other human impacts).

It is questionable whether DBCA funding would be adequate to manage a new set of challenges to Conservation areas, on top of those already existing.

The Draft Master Plan notes that: "Elevation is a key component of many popular mountain biking destinations, and the numerous mountains and hills of the Great Southern region provide an exceptional advantage when compared to other areas across Western Australia." (Pg. 12) and "New trail development should prioritise elevated and mountain landscapes." (Pg. 32).

Research into the impact of mountain biking on protected areas has highlighted that "Downhill riding generally has greater potential for trail impacts than cross country riding, due to more





COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

aggressive riding styles, steep slopes, heavy bikes and where competitions take place”¹ and has a much greater ecological impact than other kinds of mountain biking.

The Draft Master Plan notes that: “visitors are drawn to the ‘amazing natural landscapes or national parks’” in this region. As a region we need to ensure that the ecological values of these landscapes are protected and maintained, not further degraded. With increasing pressures from dieback, climate change (warming and drying climate and increased fire risk), and weeds, as land managers we need to minimise the impact on our special protected areas, like Mt Hallowell, Porongurup Ranges, and Stirling Ranges. Building substantial MTB trails through these areas is not compatible with the ecological value of these areas. MBTs would be more suited to areas outside Conservation areas.

The Draft Master Plan states: “There is an opportunity to integrate Noongar culture and creative expression at each site to highlight the region’s unique history and landscape.” (Pg. 33). Mt Hallowell and Porongurup Ranges are extremely valuable Aboriginal heritage sites that have the potential to be significantly disturbed by MTB trails. The Porongurup Ranges in particular are known to have huge cultural and spiritual significance for Noongar people. At a recent community event, Larry Blight spoke about the Porongurups being an ancient site, one of the oldest on planet, and a culturally sensitive place – a place of totems. Larry said that Noongar people have “always left the uplands alone.”

On the proposed Porongurups MTB Trails (Pg. 34), the Draft Master Plan states: “There is potential for MTB trails at the Potato Patch and Tree-in-the-Rock. Looped networks featuring cross country trails within the native vegetation and a gravity-focused bike park including downhill trails, with a variety of classifications. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.”

On the proposed Mt Hallowell MTB Trail, the Draft Master Plan states: “MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails”, and with “potential for use for competitive Enduro events”. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.

The remainder of this submission addresses the fundamental incompatibility of these proposed MTB Trails in the ecologically valuable and sensitive areas of Mt Hallowell and the Porongurups. However, it is just the particular values of Mt Hallowell that have been outlined in this submission, as it is most local to Denmark, in which locality DEC is situated.

¹ David Newsome & Claire Davies (2009) A case study in estimating the area of informal trail development and associated impacts caused by mountain bike activity in John Forrest National Park, Western Australia, *Journal of Ecotourism*, 8:3, 237-253





COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

Mt Hallowell

The Mt Hallowell Reserve is designated an A Class Reserve, vested in the Shire of Denmark.

The Mt Hallowell Reserve is listed on the Municipal Inventory as a Place of Considerable Significance. It is significant for the maintenance of faunal processes as it contains undisturbed remnant forest communities – mainly virgin (unlogged) forest with little disturbance. The Reserve includes habitat for a number of endemic fauna species. It is in good condition, and integrity, with the majority containing very old fire age (>70 years) vegetation.

Excerpts from Mt Hallowell Reserve Management Plan 2008

Mt Hallowell Reserve Management Plan's management goals are as follows:

Conservation: The Reserve is a conservation priority area for the maintenance of the flora, fungi and fauna and all ecological processes pertaining to the natural environment. It is recognised that the Reserve is a significant scientific reference site. Management should maintain the integrity and conservation value of the vegetation, and the habitat values for fungi and fauna as well as ensure that the edges of the reserve are not compromised.

Recreation: Recreational amenities are to be provided for the public on existing walk trails in the reserve, whilst maintaining the conservation values of the Reserve. [Note this does not include provision of mountain biking trails].

The Reserve's extremely diverse landscape contains a significant diversity of vegetation, providing a wide variety of habitats and associations for fungi.

Management should maintain the integrity and conservation value of the vegetation, and the habitat values for fungi and fauna as well as ensure that the edges of the reserve are not compromised.

The Mount Hallowell Reserve serves as a key benchmark for scientific research because it is one of the few remaining long-unburnt areas in the South West. The Reserve was designated a 'no planned burn area' in 1987 as an important scientific 'control' (Christensen and Abbott 1989). This designation was given to provide researchers with an important comparison between areas that receive frequent fuel reduction burning and areas that do not receive burning on a regular basis. With extremely limited areas in the South West not systematically burnt on a rotating basis, the Mount Hallowell Reserve holds a wealth of untapped scientific data. Research could include:

- The study of bacteria, fungi, algae and bryophytes in the soil
- The study of the regeneration and lifecycles of native flora
- The study of soil-stored seed
- The study of weed spread and reproduction
- The study of folivorous and xylophagous insects
- The study of impacts of fire regimes on reptiles and amphibians
- The study of accumulation and decomposition of biomass



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

The island of vegetation comprising the Mount Hallowell Reserve together with its undisturbed surrounds is diminishing. The integrity and conservation value of the vegetation is therefore under pressure and may be reduced.

With the continued growth and development in the region, the conservation and integrity of the Mount Hallowell Reserve are of increasing importance.

The Mt Hallowell Reserve Survey & Research Project 2004 indicated that the following factors are impacting on the integrity of the vegetation:

- Adjoining sub-divisions
- Numerous multi-use access paths in some areas
- Tourist and local walker numbers increasing
- Disturbance/Clearing/Fire breaks on the perimeter
- Increased walkers/dogs on the northern track/access
- Increased disturbance and access in Dieback (*Phytophthora* sp) susceptible areas
- Increased perceived need for fire security by adjoining landowners
- A reduction in undisturbed corridors joining the Reserve and the coastal vegetation

Holding the ecological integrity of the Mount Hallowell Reserve at present levels will require careful consideration when planning surrounding land use, fire breaks, access tracks and tourist facilities.

The Reserve generally has very few weeds where the indigenous vegetation is intact.

Dieback is an important issue in the management of the Reserve and access tracks.

2.3 Recreation

It is necessary to manage recreational access to ensure it does not degrade conservation values of the Reserve. The Mount Hallowell Reserve is a significant recreational destination, in part due to the development of the Bibbulmun Track which traverses the Reserve. This increased activity brings with it greater environmental disturbance, which has a significant impact on the biodiversity in the Reserve. The introduction of Dieback, feral animals and weeds, and accidental fire ignitions all become more likely as pedestrian access increases.

Monitoring of, and controlling access to, fragile areas such as granite outcrops which harbour specific and restricted vegetation habitats such as moss beds is particularly important.

The Management Plan recognises that even the small footprint of the Bibbulmun Track that traverses the Mt Hallowell Reserve can have a significant environmental disturbance, let alone the introduction of a larger network of tracks that involve much more disturbance in their construction.

What makes Mt Hallowell particularly special is that there is a large intact core of bushland, meaning it is far more resilient to disease such as dieback, marri canker, as well as weed invasion and erosion to name a few. Expanding trails is not conducive to maintaining this ecosystem resilience.

In addition, the granite rocks that are of special interest to mountain bikers are also particularly fragile ecosystems that need special protection. Granite outcrops that aren't already subject to pedestrian traffic on existing trails often have more restricted (short-range endemics) and/or



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

threatened flora and fauna species present, including mosses, fungi and lichen and most certainly invertebrates and reptiles.

As the **South West Mountain Bike Master Plan** notes, Conservation Reserves are areas of Crown land set aside for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and/or natural or cultural heritage values.

There are three main types of conservation reserve in Western Australia including;

- **Nature reserves** are areas managed to maintain and restore the natural environment, and to protect, care for and promote the study and appreciation of indigenous flora and fauna. Recreation that is compatible with the reserve's purpose, such as bushwalking, may be allowed.

Typically mountain biking is permitted on public roads, vehicle tracks and designated trails. Typically conservation reserves hold the characteristics most desired by mountain bikers. Due to their conservation value permission may be onerous and where appropriate, trail development must follow a prescriptive development processes.



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

Impacts of Mountain Bike Trails on protected areas

A number of studies have detailed the significant environmental impacts of mountain bike trails on surrounding areas, with the impacts including soil erosion, compaction, incision and widening from the trail itself, with additional water run-off, vegetation and species loss, and spread of invasive species.^{2 3}

In South West Australia there is also the particular risk of spreading *phytophthora cinnamoni* or dieback, through both the extensive construction process, and in the spreading of dieback through soil on tyres.

In Mt Hallowell Reserve, dieback is present along the northern boundary and a small section of the eastern boundary. However, the central core, western and southern section is currently free of dieback. Creating new trails and therefore increasing the ground disturbance is without question one of the greatest risks to spreading dieback.

While proponents would argue that modern trail making has improved and can be done sustainably, the sheer physical evidence of existing MTB trails in SW regions (detailed below) suggests that it is fundamentally incompatible with ecologically valuable and sensitive areas.

As Burgin and Hardiman note, while “effectively all outdoor recreational pursuits in natural areas can have adverse effects on the local environment, it is the markedly different motivation driving participation [in mountain biking], especially in the more extreme versions and the construction of trails and/or infrastructure to gain such outcomes, together with their extent and the very large number of participants involved that potentially sets this sport apart.”

They also highlight research on the implications for internal fragmentation of parks and reserves due to roads and recreational tracks. They concluded that there were major impacts from habitat alteration; constriction of the paths of animal movement; barriers to the movement of fauna; potentially isolating populations and communities; and collision. In contrast to most other forms of recreation that use access roads and paths in national parks, mountain biking trails are likely to be much more extensive and, at least over steeper sections, situated in much more vulnerable areas for the integrity of the local soils (i.e., steep, downhill slopes).⁴

1.1 Large footprint of existing MTB Trails on conservation reserves

Some investigation of the MTB trails in the Margaret River and Pemberton regions, demonstrate two things.

1. Demand from the mountain biking community seems to be for a very intensive set of trails through those areas. This contrasts dramatically with hiking trails which generally involve a single through-trail throughout a reserve.

See attached maps of the trails in the Pemberton and Margaret River regions:

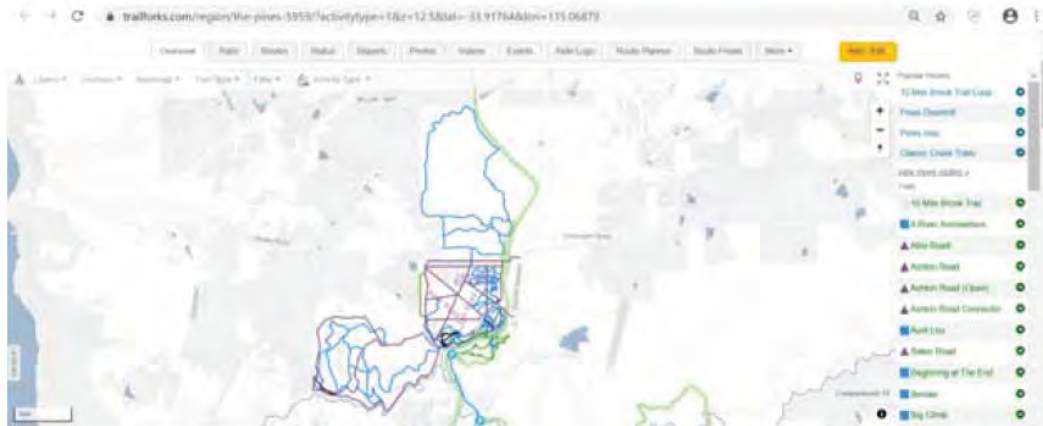
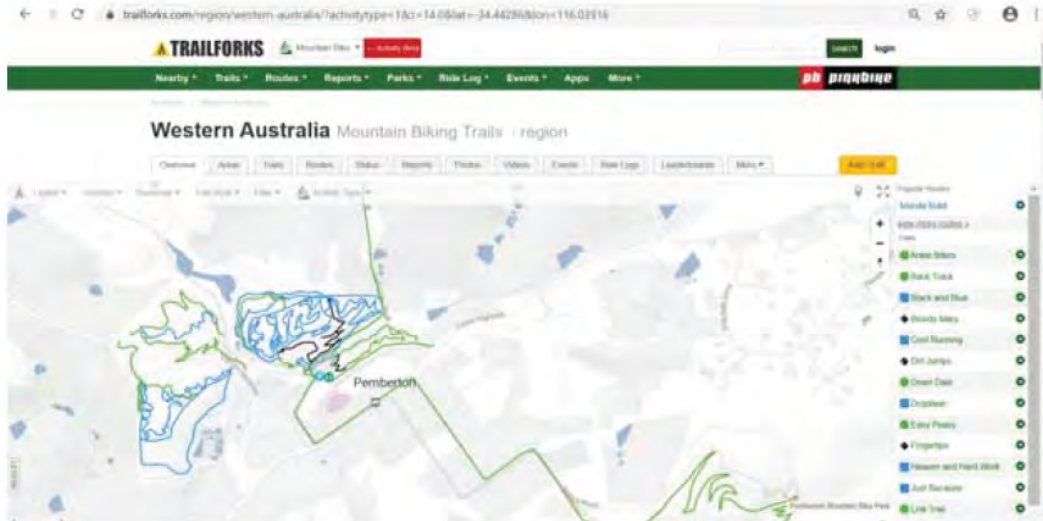
² Goeft & Alder 2001 Sustainable Mountain Biking: A Case Study from the Southwest of Western Australia. Article in Journal of Sustainable Tourism.

³ Burgin, S., & Hardiman, N. (2012). Extreme Sports in Natural Areas: Looming Disaster or a Catalyst for a Paradigm Shift in Land Use Planning? Journal of Environmental Planning & Management, 55, 921-940.

⁴ Burgin, S. and Hardiman, N. (2012) “Is the evolving sport of mountain biking compatible with fauna conservation in national parks?” Australian Zoologist. Vol 36 (2)



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED



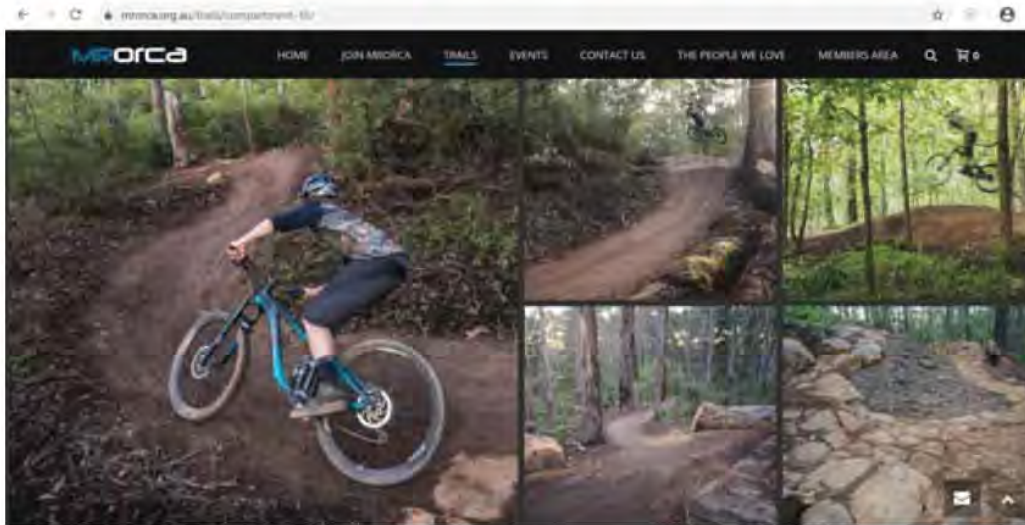
This scale of trail building in a small reserve would undoubtedly have negative impacts on flora but especially on fragmentation of habitat for fauna as outlined above.

2. The physical impact of MTB trails is significant and incompatible with areas of high conservation value

Photos of the Compartment 10 trails in Margaret River show a high level of impact from the construction of MTB trails.



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED



Photos of Compartment 10 trails in Margaret River (www.mrorca.org.au/trails/compartment10)

The prospect of having such an intensive network of trails, that involve a significant movement of earth and construction materials in the relatively small A-Class reserve (Mt Hallowell) and relatively small National Park (Porongurups) is alarming, and I believe, is a fundamentally incompatible recreation use with the ecological and cultural values of these areas.

1.2 Downhill MTB trails have a much higher impact

Newsome and Davies (2009) founds that “Downhill riding generally has greater potential for trail impacts than cross country riding, due to more aggressive riding styles, steep slopes, heavy bikes and where competitions take place.”

The Lane Poole Reserve Management Plan of 2011 specifically identified that “Due to its aggressive nature, downhill riding in particular needs to be located in areas where environmental impacts are manageable.”

Given it is the elevation of Mt Hallowell and the Porongurups that is desired by mountain bikers, it is likely that downhill MTB trails in these reserves would have a much greater impact than standard mountain biking.

MTB trails are incompatible with these important cultural and conservation reserves.

1.3 MTB Trails pose significant management issues for land managers

David Newsome, from Murdoch University, has done a great deal of research into the impact of mountain biking on protected areas. It is worth quoting a large excerpt from a conference paper he delivered⁵:

The most significant environmental impact, however, brought about by mountain bikers is the creation of their own (illegally developed) trails to foster their own riding interests. Mountain bikers who occupy the 'adrenaline junkie' end of the activity spectrum create their own cycle pathways in order to locate and develop more challenging rides, as a

⁵ Newsome, David (2010) The Problem of Mountain Biking as Leisure and Sporting Activity in Protected Areas. Paper delivered at Conference on "Visions and Strategies for World's National Parks" and "Issues Confronting the Management of the World's National Parks", Taiwan.



COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

short cut, to reach specific destinations or to connect existing tracks (IMBA 2007; Newsome and Davies, 2009). Significant damage to natural areas can occur when mountain bikers go deliberately off track. User created trail development increases the area of land, fauna and flora subject to disturbance through the adding of linear cleared track ways or widening existing trails (Cessford, 2003; Davies and Newsome, 2009).

Informal trails can be created very quickly with a substantial amount of vegetation loss and soil damage occurring in the first year of their development (IMBA 2007). For example, it was found that in one small area of John Forrest National Park in Western Australia mountain bikers had created an informal trail 2.34 km in length with 199 m of bypass trail creating an informal trail network of 2.54 km. Using an approximate trail width of 1m it was shown that 2540 m² of forest area has been cleared to create this informal trail network (Newsome and Davies, 2009). Given that John Forrest National Park is regularly used by mountain bikers and that other areas in the park have been impacted (for example, at another site in the park 18 mountain biker created trails have been counted on an 800m segment of walk trail) the total area impacted for this peri-urban protected area is likely to be unacceptably large.

In addition to this there is the problem of the creation of technical trail features (TTF's) either on existing trail networks or illegally constructed access routes. [The impact can be significant...] Recent work by Pickering et al. (2010 b) found 116 TTF's creating an area of 1601 m² of bare soil in a 29ha patch of remnant eucalypt forest in Queensland, Australia.

As Newsome and Davies (2009) identified: "passive mountain biking activities such as cross-country riding and touring are more likely to be contained and managed. The aggressive and thrill-seeking approaches to mountain biking, however, are likely to remain a constant problem for protected area managers."

With shrinking budgets for land management at Local Government, and especially at State Government level, it would be difficult to trust that there would be adequate ongoing management of the impacts of mountain biking in these important protected areas. It is difficult to see how current management resources would be enough to monitor and respond to the extra illegal building of tracks in these areas. I believe that once tracks are built in these important and precious conservation reserves we would be sending a message that these areas are open to mountain biking, and that it would result in a large amount of unsanctioned track building, as has been experienced in many other places.

As Newsome describes:

[There is a significant] cost of management response to mountain biking in protected areas. The complexity of the demographic makes it a difficult leisure activity to manage in terms of controlling damage, satisfying the different participants according to the spectrum and repairing damage that has already taken place.

1.4 Land Tenures of MTB Trails in other SW towns

Most of the MTB trails in comparable places to Denmark and Albany (Margaret River and Pemberton) have been developed on land that is NOT A-Class Nature Reserve or National Park.





COMMENT FROM DENMARK ENVIRONMENT CENTRE - CONTINUED

Margaret River Region

Trail	Location	Land Tenure
The Pines	Carters Rd	Plantation vested in Forest Products Commission
Boranup	Boranup State Forest	State Forest
Dunsborough MTB Skills Development Park	Dunsborough Country Club	Private land
Creek Trails	Carters Road	Unsure of this land tenure
10 Mile Brook	10 Mile Brook Dam	National Park (but a NP located very close to town centre, and therefore already highly impacted). It is also my understanding that unsanctioned trails were already built and therefore forced the hand of DBCA.

Pemberton Region

Trail	Location	Land Tenure
Pemberton Mountain Bike Park	Pemberton Forest Park	Vested in the Pemberton Visitor Centre Inc for the designated purpose of "Recreation and Tourist Facilities".

For GSCORE to propose two out of three of the major MTB trail developments to be in ecologically sensitive and valuable protected areas is fundamentally at odds with the experiences of other mountain biking trail developments, which have mostly recognised the incompatibility of this kind of development with important cultural and conservation reserves.

Conclusion

There are ever increasing ecological pressures on our bush – such as climate change (warming and drying, as well as increased bushfire risk), dieback, and invasive species – and the prospect of applying additional pressure through the construction of mountain bike trails will threaten the resilience of these ecological valuable areas such as Mt Hallowell, Porongurup Ranges and Stirling Ranges. While DEC supports the creation of MTBs as part of a suite of outdoor physical recreation activities DEC objects to MBTs within Conservation areas on Mt Hallowell the Porongurups the Stirling Range, instead proposing that trails in these vicinities utilise land outside Conservation areas.





200119_1009

From: CEO Denmark Chamber of Commerce <manager@denmarkchamber.com.au>
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:09 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Comment on Draft Regional Trails Master Plan

Flag Status: Flagged

Good Morning,

The Denmark Chamber of Commerce would like to show our support for the Draft Regional Trails Master Plan. We look forward to it both creating regional jobs in the development phase as well as adding to the social and economic value of our community.

Kindest Regards,
 Sumer Addy

CEO DCC

0499444542



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:48 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Very exciting

200119_1148

Flag Status: Flagged

Hi,

Just wanted to provide feedback that I am very excited by the proposed trails within the masterplan document. I can not wait for some of those trails, hike, bike and paddle!

I did not see any new snorkel trails mentioned, but I may have missed this.

Best Regards,

[Redacted]





-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
 Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:10 AM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au
 Message Body:
 hello.

200119_1110

Mountain biking is a great sport , should be promoted to get people off the couch. Trails however should never be planned into a Heritage listed National Park as the Porongurup Range. You just don't do that, not ethical, not sustainable and too damaging for a small park as the Porongurup Range. Around the park or on private land is THE solution.

I like to refer to this next Act:

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places defined in the Act as matters of national environmental significance.

Specifically, the EPBC Act aims to:

conserve Australia's biodiversity
 provide a streamlined environmental assessment and approvals process where matters of national environmental significance are involved protect our world and national heritage promote ecologically sustainable development.

Gscore, DBCA, Lotterywest should have this in mind and should protect this small park instead of being transformed into a LUNA park.

For nature's sake, no MTB trails in the Porongurup National Park

regards





200119_1248

Comments on Great Southern Regional Trails Master plan draft Dec 2019

GSCORE – emailed to trails@gscore.com.au 19th Jan 2020



OVERVIEW

1. The document should recognise at the outset that public lands are set aside for diverse community values and interests, including purposes such as conservation and Aboriginal heritage that can be incompatible with trail location and development.
2. New mountain bike trails and trail bike trails should be confined to lowlands and uplands only on cleared country, and placed predominantly on private property rather than public reserves set aside for conservation.
3. Conversely, there is a fundamental conflict and incompatibility between attraction of uplands for mountain biking, trail biking v/s their Aboriginal cultural religious importance, biodiversity significance (e.g. concentrations of threatened flora), threats such as dieback disease, and current lack of scientific knowledge and expertise to repair and restore damage caused by trail development and use (cf. Mt Clarence, Mt Melville).
4. Similarly, there is a fundamental safety conflict between mountain/trail biking and pedestrian trail use. Dual use trails should be abandoned as a priority.
5. The focus of future trail development should be on maintenance and relocation of existing underfunded trails to better show respect for Noongar culture, biodiversity conservation and allow time for research on restoration ecology to catch up with present rates of degradation of existing trails
6. Porongurup National Park contains the most sacred Noongar upland in the Great Southern, many threatened species, and knowledge of restoration of damaged native upland vegetation in PNP is in its infancy. Development of new trails should occur outside the National Park.
7. More generally, trail network additions should be on private property and road reserves only, preferably on lowlands and slopes, not on uplands set aside for public purposes such as conservation.
8. As an advocacy document for more trails as marketing tools for tourist development, the document is professionally done. However, a simple word search highlights the absence of adequate consideration of environmental/biodiversity values and conservation threats, cultural heritage considerations and public safety values.
9. Provided the above matters are given serious consideration as guiding principles, the approach to Paddling Trails, Snorkel Trails, The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit and Equestrian Trails Feasibility Study appear reasonable.
10. For proposals on public land with conservation purposes, adoption and Implementation should only occur after other uses of the public lands are given serious integrated consideration, and co-management of national parks becomes a reality involving equal status and representation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on management boards.



CONTINUED

DETAILED COMMENTS (in bold)

Page 9 **erroneous claim that GSCORE developed the plan with all regional stakeholders (eg GSCORE rejected my emailed offer for them to meet delegates at UWA's International Workshop on Granite Outcrop delegates in November 2019 to better understand how highly regarded Great Southern granite uplands were to the international scientific community)**

10 Planning Principles '**acknowledge traditional custodians' only includes dual naming and cultural interpretation See also pg 78. Dual naming is ethnographically naive. Place names of Noongars are multiple, depending upon context**

12 Situation analysis - **laudable first statement of Unique trail experiences matched to the region's landscapes**

12 Hills in the Great Southern clearly targeted for mountain biking: 'Elevation is a key component of many popular mountain biking destinations, and the numerous mountains and hills of the Great Southern region provide an exceptional advantage when compared to other areas across Western Australia. The unique opportunity to establish mountain bike trails where elevation reaches between 240-300 metres in various locations, has the potential to reap a significant return on investment for the region. **This proposition goes against the fundamentals of Noongar spiritual regard for elevated sites and their biodiversity importance as places of the greatest concentrations of threatened plants etc. From these dual perspectives targeting the hills in the Great Southern for mountain bike trails is the worst possible initiative that could be undertaken by State Government agencies and LGAs.**

12 Laudable recognition that 'The diversity and uniqueness of the flora is a major drawcard'

13 Current trail offering: There is a significant lack of sanctioned mountain bike trails and although there are a number of informal road cycling routes, there are very few recognised cycle trails. **Informal mountain bike trails are used everywhere, causing increasing damage to landscape and disrespect for Aboriginal cultural heritage.**

16 identification of priority trails: **pro-development criteria only are cited – no criteria include environmental nor cultural heritage assessment. This is a major failing of the report. Rather than a balanced assessment of trail development in the context of other land uses and priorities, the document is strongly biased towards marketing and tourism without regard for negative impacts by inappropriate placement of mountain bike, trail bike and walking trails.**

17 **Money to be made from mountain bikers:** '... due to longer average time staying at a location (3-5 days) and often higher than average daily spend on food and accommodation, mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market.' **To avoid significant environmental and cultural heritage degradation, as well as expanding maintenance budgets that State Government and LGAs can ill afford, the placement of mountain bike trails should be determined by many other considerations than a lucrative tourism market.**

19 'The RTMP focuses on nationally and regionally significant trails that have the potential to attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors to our region.' **This sole purpose conflicts with the need for government agencies to manage land for a range of public purposes and achieve an appropriate balance in the context of public interest and available capacity to manage lands.**





CONTINUED

19 **Reliance on distinctive biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape:** ‘Destination opportunity refers to a location’s relative importance and uniqueness, as well as potential land availability, landform character and topography, accessibility, and trail diversity. Trail projects that highlight a region’s distinctive biodiversity, heritage, culture and landscape score higher on this measure.’ **Agreed, but not at the expense of destroying or severely damaging these same biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape values. An intelligent approach to locating and designing trails is needed, including clearly recognising where the importance of other community values clearly override any consideration of new trail development**

20 Trail type recommendation for regional opportunities: The RTMP recommends trail development projects that address the following activity types: hiking, mountain biking, cycle touring, paddling and snorkelling. **Mountain biking needs to be handled with particular sensitivity to cultural and biodiversity values, as well as the safety of walkers where dual use is proposed.**

22 **Priorities for trails – several affecting granitic uplands on public lands. These uplands (kaat) are of fundamental importance for Noongar spirituality and for biodiversity conservation. New mountain bike trails and trail bike trails should be confined to lowlands and uplands only on cleared country, and placed predominantly on private property rather than public reserves set aside for conservation.**

23 **The majority of the proposed regional priority trails are new trails or trail networks. This is at odds with DBCA’s and LGA’s failing struggle to maintain existing trails, surely the first priority rather than bulldozing new trails on public lands which is the focus of this misguided draft.**

25 Hiking trails - some of the best day walks in the State including Bluff Knoll in Stirling Range National Park, Bald Head in Torndirrup National Park and the Castle Rock/Granite Skywalk in Porongurup National Park. **Each of these trails was put in before any serious attempt at understanding their Aboriginal significance was considered. Each traverses uplands highly significant to Noongar cosmology. Serious consideration to reducing their lengths or closing these trails is needed. These are the Great Southern’s Uluru in terms of Aboriginal cosmology, especially the uplands of Porongurup National Park.**

26 Current/potential status: Porongurup and the Stirling Ranges have sufficient supply of quality hiking trails and supporting facilities to become trail centres. **Great sensitivity needs to be exercised hereon now that the Aboriginal and biodiversity conservation significance of these uplands is documented and well understood.**

29 **Porongurup hiking trail network upgrades:**

Castle Rock Loop Porongurup National Park	DBCA			
Enhance and extend existing trail to Castle Rock to provide an alternate return route (taking pressure off current out and back track) and enable visitors not able to climb the Granite Skywalk to access, and appreciate, the views from the ridge.				
Nancy’s Peak Porongurup National Park	DBCA			
Upgrade Nancy’s Peak Circuit trail connection to Wansbrough Walk through improved trail alignment including switchbacks where possible.				
Devil’s Slide Porongurup National Park	DBCA			
Upgrade Devil’s Slide Trail surface, infrastructure and promotion to help disperse visitors away from Castle Rock. Potential to combine with Nancy’s Peak for a full day walk				
Bolganup Trail Porongurup National Park	DBCA			
Extension of Bolganup Heritage Trail to include interpretation of natural features and biodiversity.				

This is contra to Aboriginal religious beliefs. Arguably, visitors should be advised of Noongar concerns about climbing Porongurup and advised that Elders recommend a no climb policy).





CONTINUED

31 MOUNTAIN BIKING : Establishing Albany, Denmark and Mount Barker as trail towns with vibrant trail communities through creation of diverse riding opportunities for local enthusiasts which will also serve a growing visitor market. **Disagree. Focus on better management of existing walking trails. Future mountain bike trails should only be on private property where management of users will be much more intensive and money will be earned by rural landholders.**

31 'To achieve sustainable benefits and acceptable outcomes that benefit the whole community, trail development in environmentally sensitive areas will require extensive planning, community engagement and support. The proposed trails and trail networks outlined in this plan will all require detailed site assessments and concept planning before they can progress (see Table 8).'**Need to be very clear that decisions not to develop should be made where significant Noongar cultural heritage and biodiversity values would be placed at risk by new trail development.**

32 Munda Biddi to focus new trail development in uplands:

Uniqueness of experience	The Munda Biddi Trail and two rail trails showcase coastal and forest landscapes. However, there are few opportunities for cyclists to experience mountain environments.	New trail development should prioritise elevated and mountain landscapes.
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Upland development will threaten Noongar spiritual values and concentrations of threatened biodiversity.

33 PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS: opportunity to integrate Noongar **culture** and creative expression at each site to highlight the region's unique history and landscape. **As it stands, by assuming that all mountain trail bike developments are desirable, this is a naive and culturally repressive view. What if Noongar cosmology dictates that the trails contravene upland no-go areas? A sensitive lowland mountain trail development proposal on private property, on the other hand, could well celebrate Noongar heritage and show genuine respect for Noongar culture.**

33 **Porongurup first:** The proposed trail network in the Porongurup National Park presents the most appealing opportunity in the region due to the terrain, elevation and soil. The existing supply of accommodation, food and hospitality services will make this location the region's premier MTB experience. A sustainable, accessible and well-designed MTB trail network in this location will become the hook that attracts riders into the region. Once in the region the diversity of other smaller trail networks will entice riders to stay longer.

Each site will also support the growing demand from residents for accessible trails and address the increasing occurrence of unsanctioned trail construction. It is important to stress, that the proposed trail networks outlined below (see Table 9) will all require extensive site assessment to determine the length and location of potential trail corridors. Development will need to be staggered over time to ensure that extensive community consultation and robust planning occurs. To ensure that the region's potential as a mountain biking destination is realised, however, at least three of these projects will need to be completed within the first five years of this plan.

I DISAGREE STRONGLY. PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK CONTAINS THE MOST SACRED NOONGAR UPLAND, MANY THREATENED SPECIES, AND KNOWLEDGE OF RESTORATION OF DAMAGED NATIVE UPLAND VEGETATION IS IN ITS INFANCY. TRAIL NETWORK ADDITIONS SHOULD BE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND ROAD RESERVES ONLY.

34 Table 9 PROPOSED REGIONAL MTB TRAILS:





Table 9: Proposed Mountain Bike Trails

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
Pwakkenbak MTB Trails Mount Barker	PLAN	L	▲ ▲	S
Small scale MTB network to service the local Mount Barker community and to provide additional experiences for visitors to the region. The network is ideally located close to the township and offers magnificent views, excellent terrain and sufficient elevation to make it a fun and challenging local trail network. Trails should be descending cross country focused with multiple descent opportunities across the site featuring the exposed granite.				
Porongurup MTB Trails Porongurup National Park	DBCA	R	▲ ▲	M
There is potential for MTB trails at the Potato Patch and Tree-in-the-Rock. Looped networks featuring cross country trails within the native vegetation and a gravity-focused bike park including downhill trails, with a variety of classifications. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.				
Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Denmark	DEN	R	▲ ▲	M
MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Potential for use for competitive Enduro events. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.				
Albany Heritage Park MTB Trails Albany	ALB	R	▲ ▲	M
A network of MTB trails on Mt Clarence, with Middleton Link enabling access to Middleton Beach from the Albany CBD. A concept plan for the precinct was developed in 2018 and detailed design has begun on sections of the network. This project is contained within the Albany Trails Hub Strategy.				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
Poikeclerup MTB Trails Nanarup	ALB	L	▲ ▲	M
Existing unsanctioned gravity trails within and adjacent to a former gravel pit site, steep good terrain towards the top and good views, rock features, bushland in the lower reaches. High potential to provide more gravity trails and a few XC trails. Potential for more advanced Black and Double Black trails to allow for rider progression recognising that the Albany Heritage Park is not suitable for that level of trail. No current infrastructure other than an informal carpark.				

Each of these proposals targets uplands of significance spiritual significance to Noongars, as well as concentrations of threatened flora and of vegetation whose restoration and repair after damage is poorly understood. Give priority to trails to adjacent private property and road reserves rather than conservation uplands on public reserves.

51 Trail bike Trials Feasibility Study: The best initial opportunity for development of trail bike trails would be to extend the Adventure Bike map and routes, through identification of trail loops and segments that can be added to the overall network for use by licensed riders on road-registered vehicles. **Adventure biking causes the greatest environmental damage given its demand for steeply sloping rocky trails. It is naive to think that repair and restoration techniques developed on young mountainous landscapes recently under glaciers in the Northern Hemisphere can be directly transferred to the ancient uplands of southwestern Australia. Consider, for example, the 30-40 years intensive research taken to develop a bauxite mine site restoration tool kit for the Darling Range. For a consideration of the current science pertaining to old landscape upland restoration see:**

Hopper, S.D. (2009). OCBIL theory: towards an integrated understanding of the evolution, ecology and conservation of biodiversity on old, climatically-buffered,infertile landscapes. *Plant and Soil*, 322, 49- 86.



CONTINUED

Hopper, S.D., Silveira F.A.O. and Fiedler, P.L. (2016). Biodiversity hotspots and Ocbil theory. (Marschner Review). *Plant Soil* 403:167–216.

54,76 IMPLEMENTATION: **Within a year!**

1.1. All LGAs, DBCA, DLGSC, and GSDC endorse the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) as the overarching guide to the planning, development and management of regional trail priorities over the next 10 years

1.2. Stakeholder Reference Group endorse the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy

Why the rush? This needs to allow time to consider the broad range of competing public uses and interest. Public reserves have many uses and purposes, some incompatible with trail developments, that need careful evaluation before Government agencies decide on where trails should go.

56 Cultural weakness and nydiyang (white-fellah) bias: only one Aboriginal on the Great Southern Trails Reference Group (GSTRG! West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC). Respectful recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage involves meeting with Elders on Country to take major decisions where equal representation occurs, as proposed for co-management of National Parks. A single Aboriginal representative on the GSTRG places that individual in the invidious position of talking for all country for all Noongars – completely inappropriate in Noong culture. Thus, this governance perpetuates the inequality that has dominated Noongar lives for 200 years, forcing them to comply with the governance arrangements of the dominant non-Aboriginal society rather than moving towards a genuinely equal partnership.

56 GSCORE’s blatant lobbying for the implementation contract?? Inappropriate. Tenders needed.

56 Massive bureaucracy proposed, draining on NGOs and Aboriginal people with little sense of priority or balance. Let each Government agency deal with the matter within its present governance frameworks. Aboriginal people should be paid for consultation as cultural heritage experts, just as any consultants are.

77 ‘Collaborate’ should read ‘pay for best practice research’: Collaborate with land managers, scientific institutions and community organisations to monitor ongoing usage and impacts of individual trails to improve managementpractices over the long-term.





COMMENT SUBMITTED BY SOUTH COAST NRM

200119_1253



17 January 2020

Karl Hansom
Project Coordinator
GSCORE
22 Collie St
Albany WA 6330

Dear Mr Hansom,

Comment on DRAFT Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the DRAFT Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029. As the peak natural resource management group on the South Coast region we encourage collaborative planning to ensure sustainable management of our natural resources. Congratulations on your efforts and your partner groups in preparing the master plan to guide decisions for trail management and development across the Great Southern.

The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) aligns with our regional strategy, the Southern Prospects 2019-2024 and delivers on several Cultural Heritage and Regional Capacity five-year outcomes. The implementation of the RTMP will provide a wide cross section of our community to increase their awareness, recognition and respect of our natural assets and cultural heritage values. The planning framework provides a framework for biodiversity and cultural values to be considered in the design, construction and management of trails. South Coast NRM supports sustainable nature based recreational activities within our region and has a history of working with relevant land managers and organisations to minimise the potential environmental impact of recreational activities on our natural areas.

South Coast NRM views a well-planned, constructed and managed trail network as crucial to minimise the impact of existing nature based recreational activities within our region. This includes, walking, hiking, mountain biking, horse riding and canoeing. The impact from passive nature based recreational activities, such as hiking and mountain biking, has a cumulative degradational effect without adequate infrastructure and ongoing trail management. The Trails Master Plan provides an opportunity to increase nature-based recreation within the region, increase opportunities for cultural education and with good planning protect key environmental and cultural natural areas.

As a general comment on the Trails Master Plan there is a significant focus on the development of a trails network to attract a growing tourism market to our region. While South Coast NRM recognises the importance of this to our regional economy, it is also important to recognise the existing demand and use of trails within the region and the need to improve infrastructure and management to cater for this current and estimated increase in use locally.

Solutions for a productive and healthy environment

88 Stead Road, Albany Western Australia 6330
Telephone: 08 9845 8537 | Facsimile: 08 9845 8538
www.southcoastnrm.com.au | info@southcoastnrm.com.au
Registered for GST – ABN 43 781 945 884





COMMENT SUBMITTED BY SOUTH COAST NRM - CONTINUED



The table provides South Coast NRM’s comments on the specific sections of the plan.

Page	Section	Comment
5	Vision Statement	We support the vision statement but suggest including ‘cultural in the second paragraph, so it reads “...to enhance environmental, cultural and educational outcomes”. The second paragraph should be worded to include ‘sustainable management of existing needs of trail users to minimise the impact of nature based recreational activities’.
5	Agreed strategic objectives	Strategic objective 2 does not refer to sustainable, or environmental benefits. Could include ‘minimise environmental impacts of existing and potential trail users’.
5	Strategic Objectives	Include a fifth strategic objective to support the vision. “Protect sensitive biodiverse and culturally sensitive areas.”
5	Executive Summary	With Native Title about to be settled, it will be important to include WagyI Kaip in future planning and partnerships.
5	Executive Summary	Need an acknowledgement to country and note that the Trail master plan is in Menang, Goreng, Pibelman and possibly Koreng country.
6	Executive Summary	We would encourage that first priority in all locations be rationalisation and upgrading of existing trails before developing new trails.
6	Proposed priority trails	Albany Heritage Park trails we would assume would be in the short term given the high level of planning to date, City of Albany endorsement and current progress with the approvals process. Refer to comment under page 33 below.
10	Planning Principles	Need to include the consideration for sensitive biodiversity and cultural areas and this may mean that these areas are not developed for trails.
13	Table 1	Trails listed under MTB do not seem to include the Munda Bididi, is this because it is classed as a dual use trail?
14	Table 2	Need to include an additional approach titled ‘Rationalise’ that would aim to close or rationalise existing trails. This would include





COMMENT SUBMITTED BY SOUTH COAST NRM - CONTINUED



		the rehabilitation of closed or unused existing trails, firebreaks or management tracks.
23	Trail development proposals	During the next phase of planning it needs to be noted that some of the proposed trails may not be feasible due to outcomes of environmental and cultural assessments and further consultations. Presently it reads like these trails proposed new trails are a done deal. The Aboriginal community would not support the development of new trails in culturally sensitive areas, for example trails (walk and bike) that take people to the top of mountains.
29	Propose hiking trails	Be good to consider loop/circuit trails.
31	Mountain Biking and Cycle Touring Trails	In the final paragraph please include 'culturally sensitive' as well as environmentally sensitive.
32	Proposed Mountain Bike trails	The Porongurup Range is a very culturally sensitive area for Aboriginal people and will need considerable consultation with the Aboriginal community to proceed with any further planning. The Porongurup community will also need to be further consulted as there is a percentage of this community who are opposed to the development of additional trails in the park.
33	Priority Regional Trails	Priority to be given to the existing trails with demand for development to reduce environmental and cultural heritage impacts. Albany Heritage MTB trails need to be upgraded to 'short' timeframe. Presently there is a high demand for both walking and mountain biking on Mt Clarence, Mt Adelaide and Mt Melville with too many trails and many illegal trails. Without the immediate works to rationalise the trail network and upgrade the MTB and walking trails, the mounts environment will continue to be degraded. This rationalisation and upgrade will also make it safer and reduce conflict between existing user groups.
34	Proposed cycle and touring rail trails	Development of these types of trails is respectful of Noongar cultural heritage by keeping people off the mounts.
39	Paddling Trails	Rivers and waterways are culturally very significant for Noongar people and therefore it is very important to consult with the Noongar community in developing these paddling trails. The



COMMENT SUBMITTED BY SOUTH COAST NRM - CONTINUED



		location for entry and exit points have the potential to disturb the banks and will need consultation with Noongar Elders. Paddling trails also provide a good opportunity for sharing cultural heritage information through interpretive signs.
55	4.4	Support a Noongar dual naming strategy and interpretation plan for all trails including local trails.
76	Appendix 5	At no stage in the Strategy or in the referenced WA Trail Development Series does it include an investigation on the estimated level use of and suitability of the proposed trail to meet existing and proposed user group needs. This is a crucial first step in determining the return on investment of any trail development.

South Coast NRM is an incorporated, community focussed organisation formed in 1994. It is the peak natural resource management group in the South Coast NRM region, working with the community between Walpole and Esperance and inland to Tambellup, Ravensthorpe and Salmon Gums. Funding is acquired for activities to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing agricultural land and waterways sustainably and economically, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.

South Coast NRM is managed by a skills-based Board of Management. The Board is subsequently supported by committees and reference groups, which enables a more inclusive approach to community engagement, technical and skilled input and the efficient use of time and input.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and we look forward to the finalisation and launch of the Great Southern RTMP that has the support of the regional community.

Yours Faithfully

Joanne Headlam
Acting Chief Executive Officer





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 1:23 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails yes please

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1323

Just a broad comment on the proposed trails plan.
 From a mountain bikers perspective, It would be great to be able to access properly built mtb trails without having to drive for hours to Margaret River, Collie or Dunsbough.
 Mountain bike tourism is a very underrated sector, you may be surprised at the number of riders that are willing to travel to trail destinations and spend their money there.
 Myself and 3 other couples are travelling to Tasmania in a couple of weeks just to ride the trails they have there!
 Just my 2 cents worth, here's hoping we get some trails built.

[REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 1:48 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

200119_1348_1

Message Body:

Dear GSCORE,
 I would like to raise serious concerns about the proposal to create MTB trails through the Porongurup national park. The parks flora and fauna are extremely fragile and the size of the park adds to this vulnerability. Furthermore I have not met a single local Aboriginal person who thinks that MTB trails are culturally appropriate in the park. Finally, the process by which you are seeking feedback has been limited and I believe non transparent.
 I believe there are smoke opportunities to have MTB trails around the area, but am against trails in the NP.
 Thank you

[REDACTED]

Ps: the email address from the newspaper has kept bouncing back. That seems like a significant error



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 1:48 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Proposed trails

200119_1348_2

To everyone that was involved in this process, well done!!! After reading the proposal on your website, I was really impressed with it all and think that the aim behind it is fantastic. I believe we live in a very special place and I think we are underutilizing what we have to offer!! And the potential for tourist business is fabulous!!
 Great job everyone!!

[REDACTED]





200119_1351

GSCORE on RTMP Jan 2020 Page 1

Comment on the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP), open for comment between 16th December 2019 and 19th January 2020.

These comments relate both to the hiking and mountain bike trail components of and generally to the plan.

Comment 1.

Of the eight, prioritised short and medium-term trail proposal, 3 involve mountain bike trails, none of which it would appear at the moment are being proposed as dual use for walkers. This commits a significant proportion of investment funds (construction of sanctioned MTB trails) towards a single participating element.

The implementation of MTB trails on Mount Clarence in Albany has been poor, apparently due to funding restriction. Any "dual use" portions of the trails have been hazardous for walkers, due to lack of adherence by bikers to good practice, lack of monitoring and follow-up, and lack of maintenance. I have asked the Mayor in Council, for an explanation of this short fall and assurance as to an adequate budget for maintenance in future ventures in order to increase safety and participation for both user parties, and received written response indicating that it is dependent on sufficient funding being secured before this is possible.

Given that this RTMP is a PLAN, the schedule for MTB trails needs to declare the specific measures for maintenance and for monitoring the damage to the natural environment (flora AND fauna) for the trails. Planning for DUAL use also opens up the visibility of a respectful approach to the native vegetation and role-models that cultural approach. This new cultural approach is an essential part of re-adjusting the culture nationally, of our "use and abuse" of our natural environment.

I am aware of the standards of construction for MTB's and of the huge disturbance that is made by construction, and for that magnitude of disturbance (machinery encroachment etc), there should be more return that single-use user participation can deliver.

Comment 2.

I do not understand how, if the "Pwakkenbak (Tower Hill) MTB Trails" has been ranked as achievable short-term, why the "Hiking Trail Albany Heritage Park Trails" should be ranked as medium-term achievable. Does this include the mind-set input from the local partner, i.e. local government?



CONTINUED

Maley Comment to GSCORE on RTMP Jan 2020 Page 2

I do not believe that the Albany Heritage Park (AHP) unsanctioned MTB trails that are problematic would be abandoned for MTB use while hiking paths are constructed. If the medium-term label takes into account rectifying the MTB trails, then that surely should be declared and acknowledged in the planning document.

Comment 3.

Terminology in document:

- a) I consider that the use of the term "Dual Use" in the document is ambiguous at the moment and should at least be better defined as to which form of cycling (MTB or non-MTB, road cycles) is referred as partnering with whom.
- b) Is it really sensible to group Cycling and Mountain biking under the "C" icon as they are such different activities in terms of environmental impact and participant-type and share-potential?

Comment 4.

Pedagogy

I am pleased to see the link declared with the Scottish "7 Stanes project". There is much more we can adopt from the Scottish approach and their orientation of focus for people engagement with their natural world.

The "Forestry and Land Scotland" website (<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/>) displays this pedagogy well by speaking in the tone of the forests welcoming people in as long as they abide by an ethical practice which is respectful to nature. This latter commitment is absent from the terminology used in the draft trails masterplan.

Equivalently absent is any reference to other cultural, first people's aspects of the proposed trails, or any consultation relating to that. This point does rather infer an imperialist vision and another desperate dollar grab from a land we have already taken so much from and returned so little.

[REDACTED]





200119_1408

Response to GScore Great Southern regional trails masterplan

Summary

- The 2016 Albany MTB trail hub strategy is deeply flawed and should not be used for any future proposals within the City of Albany.
- There is significant bias within the GScore Regional strategy towards downhill mountain biking while lessening the significance of the proven tourism of people coming to the region for the flora, fauna and landscape.
- The deliberate or otherwise confusion of the term 'mountain biking' with the minority subset of 'downhill' or 'gravity' mountain biking throughout this document raises serious questions about the bona fides of this document.

The 2016 Albany MTB trail hub strategy is deeply flawed

A major flaw in the masterplan is the reliance on the flawed Albany Trails Hub Strategy (THS) which was adopted by the City of Albany councillors in December 2016.

The Albany THS is better described as the **Albany mountain bike strategy**. Its development was highly contentious and strongly disputed. The public consultation phase was highly flawed and an excellent example of how not to conduct community engagement activities. The strategy was driven by a couple of individuals with close links to the Albany Mountain bike club with goals and outcomes determined at the outset. Any opposition to that version of the plan was ignored.

It is essential that GScore conduct workshops to further discuss how the trails masterplan moves forward within the City of Albany.

The GScore process to date has been flawed as it claimed to have undertaken extensive community consultation.

- At the first meeting held, no questions were allowed and most invited presenters were irrelevant to Albany and its surrounds. The 2nd meeting had limited numbers of participants and was also biased towards mountain biking.

There is significant bias towards downhill mountain biking within this report.

- There is confusion of mountain biking terms with sometimes all cycling being lumped together and other times wholly focusing on **downhill** mountain bikes.
- The masterplan claims that the Great Southern has numerous mountains and hills with elevations 200 to 300 m. Mount Clarence is 177 m at the trig point. This gives an indication of the significant bias of this report towards **downhill** mountain biking. There is no mention of environmental and cultural values of the environment other than how you can market it.
- There is also **no evidence** given on how much money promotion of **downhill** mountain biking will bring to the local economy. All the information that you have relied on is either from Tasmania or a North American mountain bike website i.e. www.pinkbike.com.





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Using Maydena and Blue Derby as examples

The use of Maydena and Blue Derby as examples for the Great Southern to follow is highly misleading and largely irrelevant.

Both places are small villages and collapsed timber harvesting locations. Both sites are also close to major Tasmanian cities and **national** airports.

Maydena is 87 km from Hobart with a trail elevation of 820 m and Blue Derby 95 kilometres from Launceston and 760 m elevation. Compare this to Albany which is 400 km from Perth with low, fragile hills. The Tasmanian trails also go through a lot of previously logged areas not the fragile diverse ecosystems found in the great Southern.

It is also interesting to note that Maydena has a 30% occupancy rate with most houses in the village now temporary accommodation. As such both shops in the village have been for sale for over 18 months because the owners cannot make a living. The place is a ghost town Monday to Friday lunchtime.

More evidence of the bias of this report can be found in **Table 1** (P13). It claims there is one mountain bike trail which is 1.3 km in length. Why was the Munda Biddi excluded in this?

Market potential

There seems to be biased and wishful thinking to promote **downhill** mountain biking in this strategy and the amount of money that will pour into the region.

The report presents dodgy figures suggesting that cycling is undertaken by one in 6 international visitors and one in 10 day-trippers. This includes **all types of cycling**, yet the report is trying to make out that this is **downhill** mountain biking. Similar dodgy figures are used in the WA state report stating the majority of pushbike sales are mountain bikes. And? There are no figures on how many of these are used for **downhill** adventure mountain biking.

In **Table 5** (P20) the bias continues. The market potential for downhill Mountain bike biking is rated high with no evidence is presented. More wishful thinking.

The report also takes information from a North American website devoted to **downhill** mountain biking which has **no relevance** to mountain biking in Western Australia.

*“However, due to longer average time staying at a location (3-5 days) and often higher than average daily spend on food and accommodation, **mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market.**”* www.pinkbike.com

Maybe the author of this report should have said that “In North America mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market than X, Y and Z.”

Once again you cannot compare North America to WA! Many of these locations are ski fields which are tapping into **downhill** mountain biking in summer.





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Mountain biking and cycling

It is disturbing to note that you are planning to run trails through both the Stirling Range National Park and the Porongorup NP. I would suggest that this would be fought on many fronts.

This report is also out of date as it suggests the pump track in Albany **will be** commissioned. This occurred in 2019.

There is also the strange statement that “there are few opportunities for tourist to experience mountain environments”. Western Australia is not renowned for its mountain environments. I would suggest plate tectonics are beyond the scope of GSCore.

Once again confusion in terminology exists in **Table 8** (P32) where mountain biking and **downhilling** are mixed up.

Snorkel trials

While I support snorkel trials it should be pointed out that Whalers Cove and Little Boat Harbour are dive trials **not** snorkel trails. They are at a depth 10 m, which is unsuitable for all but the most proficient and experienced snorkelers.

Great Southern treasures

Good idea

Motorcycle trials

Adventure bike routes are a great idea however dirt bikes should not be considered.

Management and maintenance

The use of volunteering agreements is doomed to fail so minimal regard should be given to this concept.

Any memoranda of understanding with interest groups **SHOULD BE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE**.

Most people would be happy to encourage the private sector into the **downhill** mountain bike sphere as has happened in Tasmania, except on private, not public land.



Photo credit: Kelly Waterhouse



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 2:22 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1422

PAGE 14

GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN WHAT IS NEEDED TO ADDRESS THESE GAPS?

To create a nationally significant trail destination, development needs to focus on creating remarkable and accessible visitor experiences, improving trails, infrastructure and marketing. To address these gaps, this plan identifies three trail development opportunities: (i) create new trail experiences; (ii) develop trail linkages; and (iii) enhance or upgrade existing trail networks.

In regards to the above I would like to address both of these amendment options:

The master plan may be amended if a submission:

1. *provides additional information of direct relevance to the development of a trail or trail networks*
2. *indicates omissions, inaccuracies or a lack of clarity*

My main reason for asking for an amendment is according to this criticism of the master plan: Why has the itemisation of needs become an ordinal numbering system which relegates the remaining items in the plan to longer timeframes? Three areas of improvement are proposed here, but each element after the first has lessening significance. Why can't all three elements work in parallel with time and significance defined by initiatives? Each could have short and long term goals.





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TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK
SHORT 1-2 Years	Pwakkenbak (Tower Hill) MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit
MEDIUM 3-5 Years	Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Hiking Trail Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Hiking Trail Albany Heritage Park Trails Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Porongurup MTB Trails
LONG 6-10 Years	Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Grain Train Rail Trails Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail

In my opinion, the Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail options are of more immediate interest to International visitors using the Bibbulmun track. The final 5km of the Bibbulmun Track is a poor experience due to off-putting urbanisation. Each hiker coming through this section is subjected to a roadside hike beside the main road for busy satellite suburbs to the south and west.

Extending the last section of the Bibbulmun track to Misery Beach would be more convenient and ideal for several reasons.

Adding 20 kilometres to the hike allows for two additional huts to be constructed for the purpose. These huts could act as a hub for numerous other day hikes across the area. Example:

- Ending on a beach opens the opportunity to commit directly to sea hikes,
- Sea connection to any part of the region's coastline or more sailing connections,
- Bald Head and Stony Hill are great walks for hikers,
- Goode Beach is also a great walk,
- International tourists love Frenchman Bay
- A potential foreshore trail from Misery Beach to Point Possession would create a breathtaking experience.

Because of the synergy created with this proposed amendment, at this location, the relegated opportunities (in the proposed master plan) could run immediately and in parallel with other developments.

My proposal here is to allow the Bibbulmun Track organisation the opportunity to merely add immediate trail changes to destination of the track for hikers to travel through national parks and woodlands till completion. All government departments have a vested interest in the Discovery Bay area which makes it



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amenable to cooperation in a way that streamlines all stakeholder interests. Whereas the current master plan has large trails marked and proposed, but not necessarily that attractive to tourists after enduring poorly thought out and dangerous sections on existing tracks.

To make an award winning impact on tourists, through my proposal, people need only extend their visit or hike to Discovery Bay, which then acts as a hub for sea transfers to trails and hikes across the region. Discovery Bay has the potential to be an adequate road and sea terminal for tourism. Whereas Albany city presents more of a hub for car driving Australia.

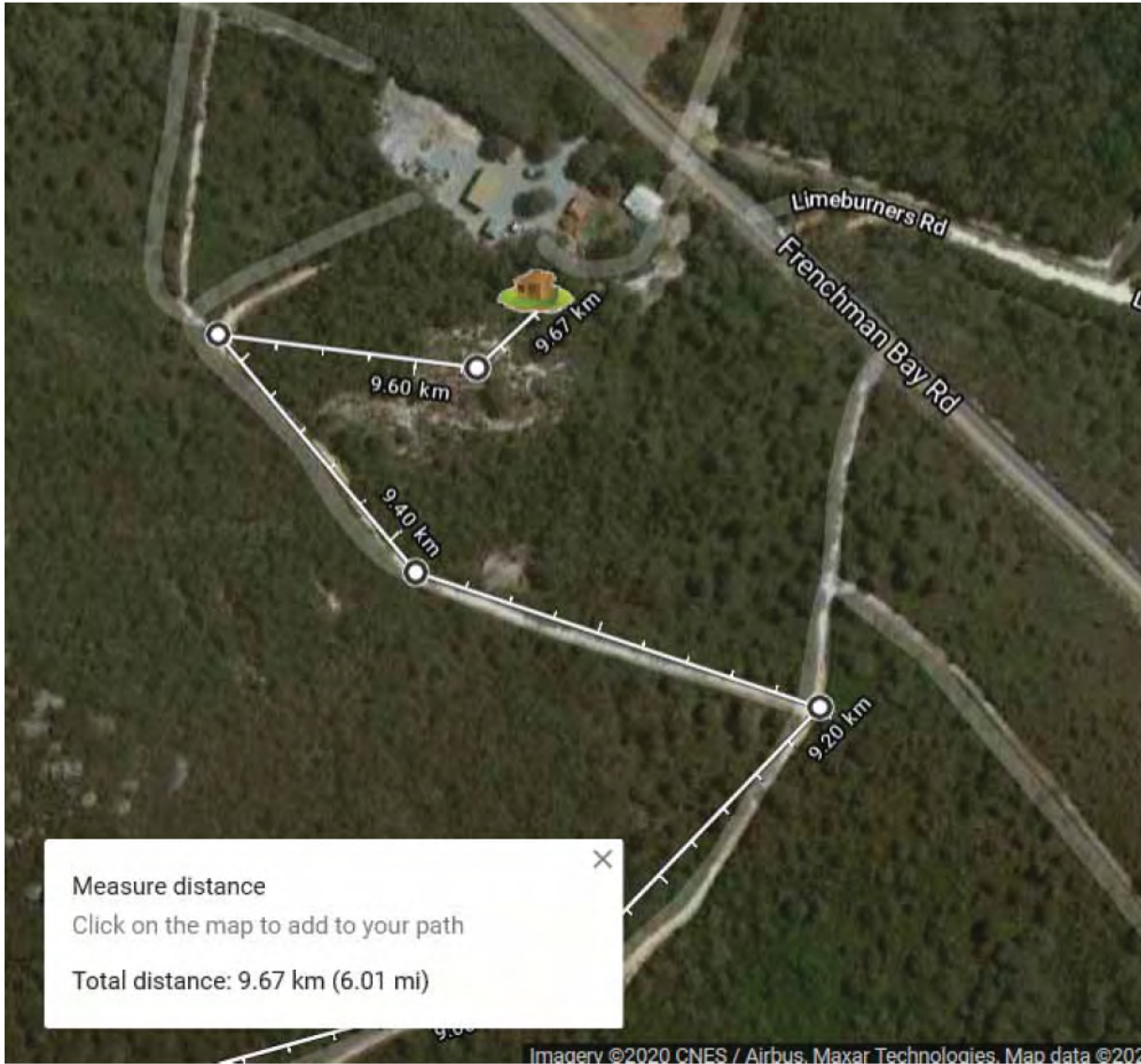
With a more professional tourism sea terminal in use, the number of tours that can use the Discovery Bay hub for departure then addresses who is coming to all other items.

Addressing mixed trail ideas: Through use of a tourism hub and properly defined centralised network, people can be conveyed to trail bikes tour sections through operators and guides. This replaces the plans to encourage ad-hoc trail breakers who destroy the natural settings without adequate supervision. New tourism operators with electric trail bikes could be considered superior to performance and racing trail users finding accessible sections. A tourism operator would allow for novice international trail riders to consider the destination, and thereby reduce lawlessness on motorbike trails. Motorbike trails around the Sandpatch windfarm (abutting Torndirrup) area show a high rate of environmental vandalism, and track rerouting to overrule government requirements and gates. The Great Southern is home to numerous environmental vandals that seek to destroy property and track bans and appropriate confinements. Overseas interest would be preferable because of the opportunity for tour operators to moderate and observe trail conditions and government requirements. Having the early preference for electric trail bikes allows tours to operate from local council parks and obtain special permissions to cross gated properties and parks. Which also gives rise to the potential of recharging stations and additional hiring points. (Multiplying international business potential beyond aggressive, destructive, quality reducing trail users and bad actors).

I believe what I have addressed here is significantly better at creating remarkable and accessible visitor experience. I have included some Google Maps here measuring off easy reroute trails for immediate development. These maps show that an extended Bibbulmun Track is a viable plan to resolve the poor experience issues currently found on the Albany section of the track. Usage of this amendment shows that itemisation of the whole network should be addressed in both short and long timeframes.



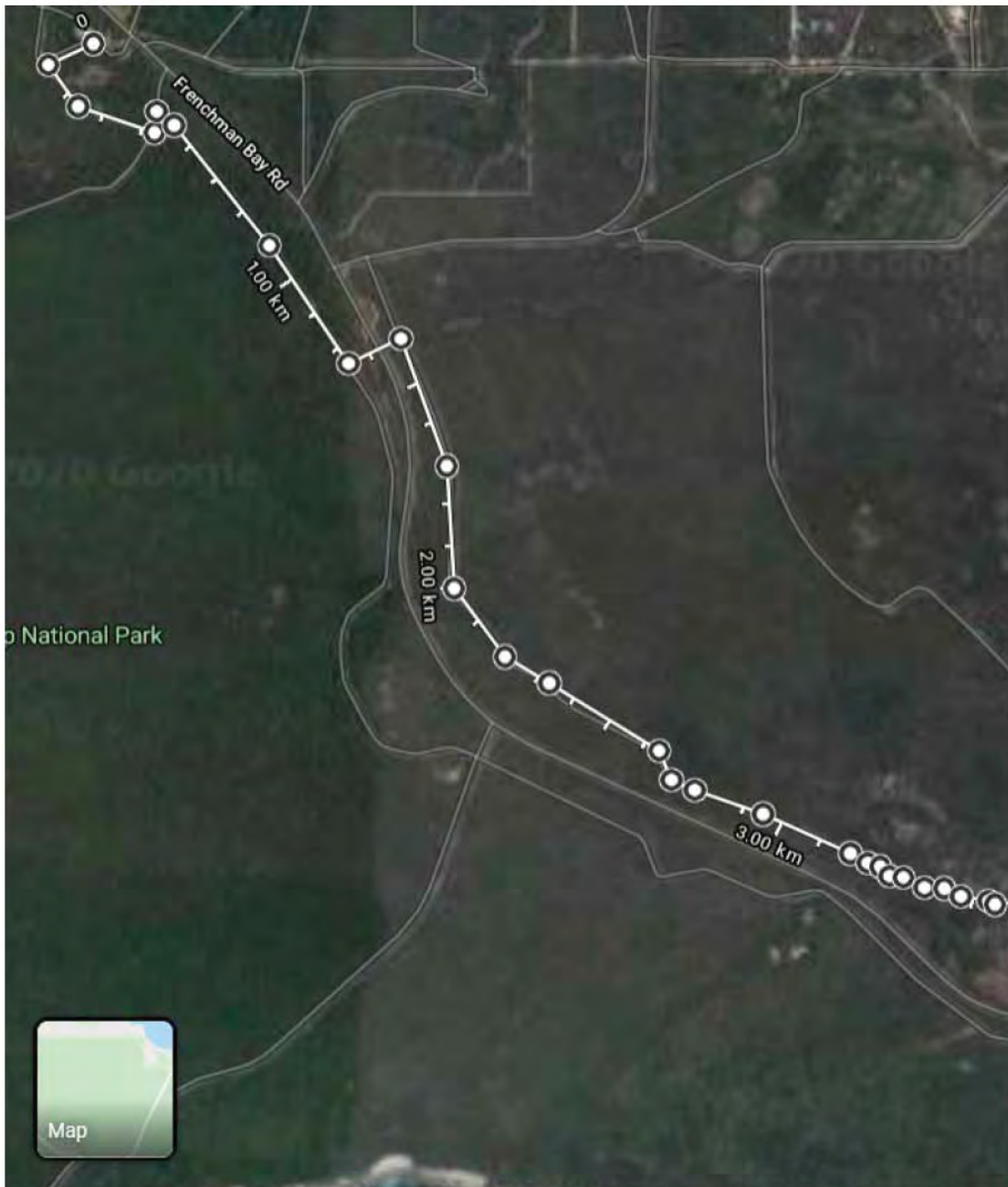
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Hut 1. Adding a hut here gives easy access to local camps and tours. A more bespoke trail experience could be crafted with ongoing consultation with stakeholders.



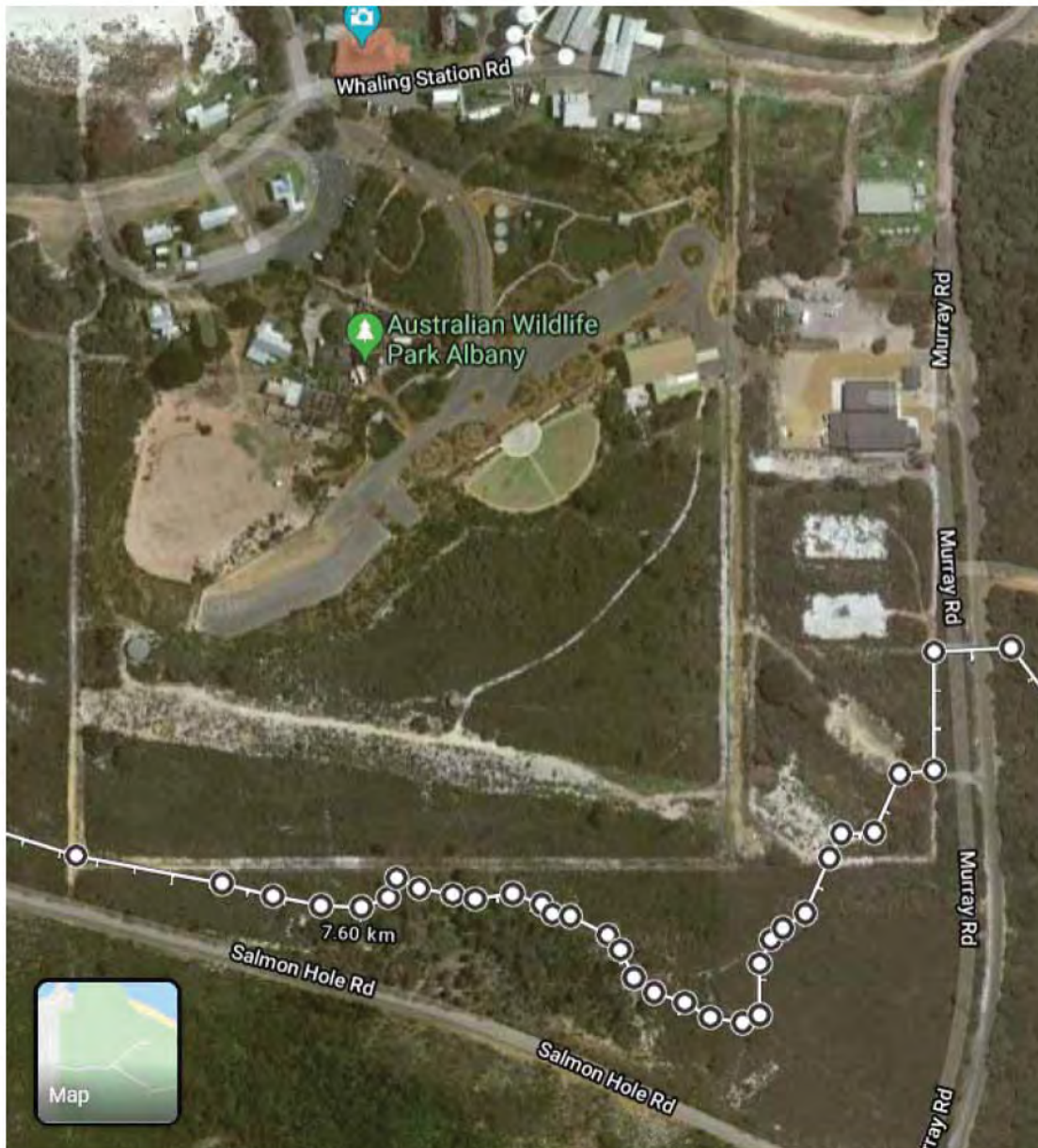
CONTINUED



This trail could simply add to the existing fire trails through the national park. At 10 kilometres it presents a decent hike for sightseeing optimization. Adding feature sections of trail is something the National Parks can discuss with the Bibbulmun track organisation.



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Hut 2. There are several sites, owned by governments in this area, that could present an ideal place to install a hiker's hut. There the area presents less danger than trying to camp on Mt Melville in comparison. If a hiker arrives earlier than expected they can explore the surrounding trails until their connection time arrives. Discovery Bay could host events to celebrate end to end hiker achievements. Perhaps even Bed & Breakfast in the early pioneer huts on their site for lucky end to end hikers.

Kayak, canoe, SUP, or rowboat hiring could occur in front of Discovery Bay, and snorkelling could be arranged to leave from Misery beach or Discovery Bay.





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This proposed reconfiguration of the master plan eliminates some of the degrading experiences associated with the Albany arrival and shifts the focus onto ongoing transfers throughout the region.



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A case of comparison: from the local Albany perspective, Albany City has been struggling to complete the cycling tracks initiative in crossing the railway tracks, and has little consideration of taking the cycleway passed Little Grove where it terminates poorly despite cyclist interest for extended usage. Most of the local cycling tracks have strange hiccups that put cyclists off continuing section to section. Few people commute from Little Grove by bicycle. The risk and poor experience makes cycling around Little Grove, in circles, more enjoyable than extending the journey outside of the suburb. Cyclists are put under duress in many areas along Albany's poorly designed cycleways.

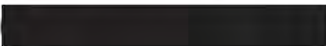
Why I mention this: *Expecting long term modifications and extensive trails to work efficiently as a world class experience is unmerited considering all of the other obligations for the organisations proposing these plans. Involving a wider field of groups, organisations, and governments is vital in framing the experience as extendable to the entire region.*

Another case comparison: the Munda Biddi section that travels through Dwellingup area has death-roll sections. Poorly graded tracks with loose rubble work as traps for cyclist to spill out on. Not worrying about the actual experience beyond the design on a map is foolhardy. Having large trails marked is not necessarily that attractive after enduring poorly thought out and dangerous sections.

The solution is to provide a live hub at a Discovery Bay terminus, with ongoing discussion of trail quality. Albany city should shelve plans on being the immediate terminus for hikers and trail users. It's the struggling tourists that define how the trail network will be perceived. Extending the trails to Discovery Bay gives many more organisations access to finalise the experience and to ensure quality and accommodating practices. Funnelling the outcome into a CBD ignores the significance of word-of-mouth marketing for additional experiences and recovery points. Hikers generally look terribly bedraggled and are not seen as great achievers by car driving locals. Inclement weather alone is enough reason to show some appreciation of their achievement. Rest and recuperation should be seen as a concern during the final stages, and crossing careless sections on busy roads is a depressing end.

Missing the potential to address existing problems with currently operating trails is something that I see as an oversight of the proposed master plan. The master plan seems short sighted, and more like an action plan for an individual organisation's leadership on doable new projects. This doesn't address cooperation with stakeholders across the region appropriately. A regional track-and-agency optimization plan would be a better outcome.

If you would like to discuss my views, these proposed amendments, or other possible alterations to the master plan please feel free to contact me. I am happy to receive updates of the ongoing process. I am also available for employment, and would be very interested in discussing any new business initiatives with the stakeholders.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 2:24 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: submission for the great southern regional master plan
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1424

Respondent 0806

To gscore

I have lived in the Porongurups for 30 years. During this time myself and many others have spent long hours, blood sweat and tears in fund raising, organising events, art in the park, weed eradication, and there are many other activities), all for conservation.

I feel that your part of the MTP, pages 31 to 34 table 9, involving the Porongurups derides and devalues all of the hard work that many locals have been involved in, in raising awareness of conservation.

In general the MTP has some prospective good ideas in some areas

But I am **Hugely opposed** to any cycling Trails within or around the Porongurup National Park.

The area encompassing the Stirlings and Porongurup National Park is an important landscape in the Gondwana Link pathway.

It is the largest inland remnant of native vegetation between the Stirling Ranges and the coast.

Help us protect it.

Regards

[REDACTED]



200119_1425_1

RE: PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL IN PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK

As a resident of the Porongurup area for many years I wish to submit reasons against the proposed mountain bike trail in the Porongurup National Park as advertised in the GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN (page 69)

There are 3 main reasons why I am against this proposal:

- Cultural
- Environmental
- Health of other members of the public.

In page 2 of your pre-amble you state that you "respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners". If this is true then it certainly does not fit with the proposed use of their sacred land. For many years I have realised some of the significance of the Park area to them and this was confirmed by Larry Blight and others at the recent meeting in the Porongurup Hall. For four aboriginal groups it is a culturally sensitive place and has been so for likely thousands of years. In the Executive Summary (P 5) of the Regional Trails master Plan it is stated that various groups have been consulted but there is no mention of the Traditional Owners, although they are allowed a representative on the G S T Reference Group (P 79:4.4). That the Range has been gazetted a National Park indicates to me that it is also meant as a heritage for the population as a whole.

The fact that indigenous hunters stopped at the boundary of the Porongurups provided the area as a sanctuary for the local fauna. Such a Trail would have an environmental impact on the local fauna as well as the flora some of which is quite unique and could become endangered. As mountain bike trails are built to take advantage of hilly terrain this would allow increased erosion and destroy the fragility of some areas/plants as pointed out by Steve Hopper. There is also the risk of spreading dieback. Attempts can be made to try and stop this as is done e.g. at Twin Creeks.

The fact that it would be maintained by the DBCA would be a problem as was pointed out by Peter Hartley. The DBCA currently have trouble just caring for the existing trails I would imagine that Mountain Bike Trails would be the hardest to maintain. Can the DBCA afford such a new trail? Monitoring is mentioned (P 77, 2.2) would that mean it could be closed like Uluru once the damage has been done?

I fully recognise the health benefits of exercise (P 79:4.3) in my alter ego I am a medical Practitioner. Nor am I am not against cycling as a sport I have no experience of mountain biking which does sound quite thrilling, My late husband and I cycled, in our youth, from the UK to Greece, complete with our tent and cooking utensils! But would the benefits for a few outweigh the disadvantages to others. The Tree-in-the-rock is cited as one area that could be developed. But would this be appreciated by the number of visitors that come to this easily accessible picnic and walking spot.

██████████





200119_1425_2

Comments on Great Southern Regional Trails Master plan draft Dec 2019

GSCORE – emailed to trails@gscore.com.au 19th Jan 2020

My concerns are mainly to do with mountain bike trails and trail bike trails, arguably the most destructive of the trail types proposed in terms of environmental degradation and lack of respect for Noongar culture.

1. Do not establish mountain bike trails nor trail bike trails in national parks and other reserves set aside for conservation. Use lands already cleared or degraded such as private property and road reserves for these purposes.
2. Abandon dual use paths. Mountain bike riding and pedestrian activities are incompatible. Combining them risks serious accidents given the speeds attained by bikes.
3. Focus initiatives in Torndirrup National Park on maintaining existing degraded trails rather than creating new trails.
4. If a new dual use trail from Discovery Bay to The Gap remains an objective, ensure it is contained within present road reserves. Traversing Torndirrup National Park will place users at unacceptable safety risks due to the steep topography

From: [REDACTED] **200119_1427**
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 2:27 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) - Mountain Bike Trail Comments

Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern,

I fully support the proposal for dedicated and shared mountain bike trails as recommend from page 31 onwards.

Interest in mountain biking across WA has increase significantly in recent years and is only growing in popularity. These types of trails are exactly what my family and friends look for when choosing a holiday destination. It is a huge opportunity for the region to put increase tourism in an area that is currently underserved across the state. The current World Champion for the EWS Enduro Race Series even resides in Perth.

I look forward to the proposal being accepted and put in places!

Thank you

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 3:23 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Pla

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1523

This email is to register my support for the above plan. Would really live to see development of mtb trails especially in the denmark area. So undeveloped at the moment and so much potential.

Thanks

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: MTB tracks in the Great Southern

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1547

To whom it may concern,
 My family and I are thrilled to see that more MTB trails will be built in the Great Southern Region. We are keen mountain bikers, hikers, and love experiencing the outdoors in general. We really look forward to seeing the development of more MTB hubs in the region. We are particularly keen on downhill riding / technical riding and jumping. As such we would love more single black and double black tracks considered.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]





200119_1617

Pathways to Trails

GSCORE are to be congratulated for trying to advance a publicly promoted, overarching vision that guides infrastructure development in our region going forward. The concept of governments at a State and Local level striving to coordinate, focus and efficiently deliver meaningful, targeted, strategic and productive infrastructure is highly commendable. In an era characterised more by a focus on the privatisation of services and exclusionist contractual arrangements rather than government efforts to promote social good, it is refreshing to see a bold, publicly funded initiative undertaken that is overtly focussed on wider social good.

Key organisational themes identified in the Draft Master Plan are worth reiterating:

- *'Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment'.*
- *'Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits'.*
- *'(meet) key objectives of the Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint to develop a state-wide network of sustainable trails, facilities and associated infrastructure; to raise the recreational and tourism profile of Western Australian trails; and to develop a diverse revenue stream to ensure economic sustainability'.*

I certainly support expenditure of public funds on large scale analysis and planning for initiatives that underpin the long term stability and economic security of regional communities. I accept that things do not remain as they are, I acknowledge that we live in a globalising world which increasingly has implications for where we all live and I endorse efforts to seriously dialogue with communities about what has been and what might in the future as our worlds and our economies and our communities transform.

In the current master plan for trails planning process I fear that the bold vision with which the process began is in danger of becoming 'opportunity lost' or more precisely 'opportunity missed' now that the public comment on draft milestone has been reached. Reading the draft plan, and in order to keep my submission to a modest length, I suggest that an analytical lightning rod can be found by focussing on two of the four images used to illustrate the Executive Summary on page. 5 of the Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 - 2029. Image One, assigned under the title 'Integrated Planning and Management' uses four stylised people arranged in relation to each other. The arrangement appears to be one above the other three below as in a corporate managerial hierarchy, or perhaps a lecture format where a speaker delivers an address or an outline to an audience which receives. The sense of the image is of one over three, or perhaps one over the many. The one has power over the three.

Image four, used to illustrate the section titled 'Community and Economic Opportunities', has a stylised representation of three people lined up on the same plane with the middle figure raising the



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hands of both those on either side as champions or victors. The sense of the image is of a judgement whereby the success and victory of both parties is acknowledged and celebrated by all three. It is an image of shared victory.

I suggest the entire Draft Management Plan can be read as the pathway for achieving realisation by moving sequentially between these two images, from the first to the forth, and the sequential components of the plans overall vision is thus represented therein. Read in this way, step two and three of the 'agreed strategic objectives' (Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network and Promote the Visitor Experience respectively) that will be delivered by the plan are steps on the overall movement from objective one to objective four.

The central theme and critical point of my submission is to be found in the fine detail encapsulated in this approach as read through the first strategic objective. The plan states that this first objective of Integrated Planning and Management will occur through 'key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment'. I know that GSCORE undertook a significant number of consultation meetings across the region and this is a good thing and should be acknowledged as such. GSCORE staff travelled far and wide and created lots of opportunities for community consultation and no doubt gathered significant evidence of community input and ideas. The on-ground staff are to be commended for this level of commitment to consultation with what is a withering amount of stakeholders. However, consultation doesn't equal collaboration. For me this is the central issue in both the Agreed Strategic Objectives and the overall Draft Master Plan. What is missing is a crucial step that facilitated the essential phase of turning community consultation into community collaboration. I would term this missing phase something like 'Joining the Circle: Establishing local partnerships for collaborative trail development', or perhaps 'Creating new Paths: Community guidance, collaboration and regional regeneration'. Either way this phase would inject a process for serious on-ground community engagement through which the entire community collaborated; analysing, defining and then pursuing development goals of the region.

I acknowledge that incorporating this 'missing step' would add a significant cost in time and resources to this project. More importantly I acknowledge that including such a phase would require a re-envisioning of that first Integrated Planning and Management image and aspiration such that the hierarchy is replaced with an image that suggests dialogue and a process through which two parties (a government body and a community) work out over time what a collaborative outcome looks like. This working together (collaborating) is not about one party being advised what has been determined. Rather, both parties are actively involved from commencement in defining what, where and when development (in this case trails) within the region would be.

Because this 'Joining of the Circle' phase is missing from the current Draft Master Plan the plan steps forward with an elaboration of 11 priority trails which were distilled from the extensive community consultations referred to above. Community reaction to this distillation is likely mixed but it includes those who are frustrated that lots of thinking and analysis and decision making has, it seems, been undertaken outside of the consultation process. Here is where the slip from consultation to collaboration implicit in the plan becomes rather more sharply defined. As a reader, as a resident of the region and as somebody who participated in some of the GSCORE consultations I am left to grapple with many questions about the how and why of these 11 priority trails which have been developed. For me, it's the feeling that the collaboration component has been missed that is



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frustrating, because in such a phase the crucial elements of detailed, specific and substantial community input (and ultimately ownership) has not been able to occur.

Here I will use only one example to make the broader points about the need for a collaboration phase to be introduced to this planning process. The Porongurup MTB Trails proposal is presented within the 'Identifying Regional Opportunities' of the Draft Master Plan (pp. 15-20) as a *high priority* and *medium term* proposal and it is presented as a *core component* of the wider focus to create a hub to attract tourists and riders into the region. Within the Porongurup area and indeed within the regional community there is significant hostility to the MTB proposal as presented. Porongurup is a vibrant and engaged community which generally speaking lives and seeks to live in innovative and sustainable ways. The community is nestled around one of the most profound geographical sites in the State and the community has a long history of initiatives and projects and volunteer works that have sought to protect and enhance the Range and surrounding area. I would suggest that such an engaged and active community would represent an excellent opportunity for community collaboration. Given this potential it must be asked why has the Draft Master Plan generated such hostility? I suggest the answer is to be found in a community sense that consultation hasn't led to collaboration and that in fact the community is feeling that the proposal to develop a MBT has been conceived, analysed and promoted with very little community input and thus no opportunity for actual collaboration.

Behind Porongurup community member frustrations there are two major themes which are prominent. Many local residents feel that a crucial element of the uniqueness found at Porongurup Range is its incredible (and yet vulnerable) biodiversity values and many residents also acknowledge and wish to respect the deep Noongar cultural values associated with Porongurup. It seems that the MBT proposal for the Porongurup Range as articulated in the Draft Master Plan does not adequately make account for either of these themes and more troubling for people, hasn't provided a chance for serious local input. To do so would have required a collaboration phase.

It should be said, and clearly said, that the Porongurup community is generally not against development and certainly would be open to seek opportunities that promote and develop the region for tourism and other life style enhancing chances if these opportunities were framed by respect of the two themes identified above. Such seeking would require significant on-ground engagement and collaboration. It is my sense that the community feels this didn't occur with the Trails Plan process because establishing a MBT on and in Porongurup Range seems to be directly incompatible with respecting and enhancing biodiversity and cultural values of the region. Yet this proposal is now one of the 11 trails presented/promoted. Here is a community wondering how did this happen? Here is a community now asking why our concerns would not have been taken seriously? Perhaps most worryingly of all here is a community now wondering if the plan will be rolled out regardless of their concerns and aspirations?

I am confident that this situation could have and still could be avoided if a collaborative phase was introduced into this trail process. Such an effort would be well received if it was pitched to put decision making into the community's hands. Whilst not denying the difficulties and challenges, I would predict a good outcome. I cannot speak on behalf of the community but it is my belief that the Porongurup community would for the most part wish to give the strongest endorsement of the



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need to protect and enhance the biodiversity and cultural values of the Range and surrounds. In terms of biodiversity Australia generally has recently been through an incredible and sobering experience which has highlighted the precarious nature of many Australian species and the utterly crucial role that significant areas of native bush will fulfill in recovery and long term survival of species. Porongurup Range is one such outcrop of natural habitat. Biodiversity value is not incompatible with economic value. A sophisticated development approach within the Porongurup region which seeks to protect, enhance and promote biodiversity could lead the way in showing how community collaborative partnerships can be developed which support economic expansion whilst promoting biodiversity protection.

In a similar vein, a less well known but none the less increasingly respected concept is the desire and acknowledgement that modern Australia recast and revisit and indeed reset its relationship with Indigenous Australians. That a difficult and at times painful debate has continued (and is gathering steam) about if and how the population should celebrate 'Australia Day' is indicative of the pertinence of that this theme holds in contemporary life. Regardless of where one sits on the specific issue of what January 26 means in this country the fact that its relevance and meaning is a recurring debate suggests the deep need for Australia to grapple and I would argue recast- its relationship with both the past and the future. Attending to this need and engaging in a respectful process that says 'we are ready' should be thought of as essential component for any development planned within the Porongurup Range. For Noongar People the area is of the deepest significance and Noongar understandings of and for the Porongurup should be made paramount. As it happens it seems Noongars are in full disagreement with this MBT proposal. Given the national debate, given the need to reset our relationship why promote something that Noongars will strongly object to? To go directly against Noongar wishes and concerns belongs in the old, historical way of doing things. It cannot be a principle of the future. We should be asking of Noongars 'what can we now do?' How do we better care for country? Can we play a role now in healing the land? Can we make a future characterised by respect and partnership?

In closing I would say that there is an opportunity here to work with the government's big vision for careful and strategic regional infrastructure development. This vision can be matched with a dynamic community's desire for collaboration that highlights the need for protection and enhancement of the two key themes of biodiversity and cultural values found at the beautiful Porongurup Range. For mine there is an incredible opportunity before the committee to activate these various components and build them into a very productive and inspirational collaboration focussed on regional development with a long term view to security and stability:

- make history by resetting the relationship with Noongar people;
- facilitate a vibrant community's desire to actively protect and enhance biodiversity and cultural values;
- provide the government with an dynamic model of how large vision public works and infrastructure developments can be undertaken in a way that garners deep community support whilst enhancing economic resilience within a region.

Here is a chance to change history. Nongars to th fore. Land first and then see what we have. People will come. For Country with Culture, for People with purpose.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 4:24 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Comments on the RTMMP

200119_1624

Ross Garnaut's climate change prophecy is coming true and experts warn it's going to cost the nation billions

Professor Garnaut says quantitative estimates on the latest bushfires "just scratch the surface". (AAP: Samuel Cardwell) Twelve years ago, economist Ross Garnaut made a prophecy that has devastatingly come true. Key points: The insurance damage bill from the bushfires that began in September has risen to \$700 million Conservative estimates put the final cost well into the billions of dollars Australia's tourism industry could suffer, health costs could spike and there are warnings about more

Read in ABC News: https://apple.news/ANtqT-NblSpi_6UOezKiZ3g

I am an Albany resident who has holidayed/lived in the Albany/Denmark region since 1972 when my parents bought a bush block near Denmark.

I spend much of my life outdoors bushwalking, hiking, thinking, and just being.

I volunteered for many years at Kanyana, a native animal and bird rehabilitation hospital and education centre and am now a member of the Albany Bushcarers.

I love, respect and try my best to do no harm to the natural world.

Consequently, I believe that the RTMP needs major modifications if it is going to address the present world wide dire situation affecting all living things due to human induced climate change.

If the RTMP continues to ignore the evidence of climate change, like the recent and ongoing catastrophic fires that have decimated vast swathes of both natural and human landscapes in Victoria and NSW, you will be further endangering the interconnected ecosystems that all living things depend on.

Our region is drying out too. As a result there have been 3 huge fires in the Stirling Range NP in the last 3 years and the construction of more terrestrial trails in the region will fragment these already dry and threatened areas, which we used to celebrate as biodiversity hotspots, destroy habitats, introduce more disease like dieback, spread invasive weed species, cause erosion, and trail creep. And there will be more fires. And tourists will die along with what's left of the fauna and flora.

I have read the whole document and have found no evidence that human induced climate change has been considered in any of the proposals. Instead the focus seems to be on providing 'outstanding experiences' for tourists, and financial rewards for those who cater to them as they tick off one more item on their bucket list. Respect and responsibility for the increasingly fragile environment are not highlighted in your vision to establish the Great Southern as a World-Class Trails Destination.

In order to address the seriousness of the issues of climate change and the vital importance of environmental respect and responsibility I would like to propose these changes to the 'four agreed strategic objectives which are central to the successful implementation of the Great Southern Regional Trails Masterplan.'

1. No new trails. Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to the rehabilitation of the thousands of kilometres of existing trails, and the management and maintenance of these trails through trained and volunteer locals, eco-tourists and key stakeholder collaboration and targeted investment.
2. Promote the eco-experience to locals and tourists through effective promotion and marketing of the opportunity to make a positive difference by participating in trail rehabilitation, maintenance and management activities.





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3. Promote the importance of knowledge, participation and working together to mitigate some aspects of climate change which will result in environmental, health,cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

There are millions of people who would rather help the environment than indulge in an ‘outstanding one off tourist experience’. In fact they would probably see this opportunity as a real and lasting outstanding experience! And come back again and again. There would be less need for expensive marketing campaigns but more need for the commercial providers of accommodation, food, transportation, health care etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

[REDACTED]



-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 4:55 PM
 To: info@gscore.com.au
 Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

200119_1655

[REDACTED]

Message Body:

I'm writing an expression of support for the development of mountain bike trails in the Great Southern. As part of the MTB community, I can ascertain that we are responsible members of our society and ride harmoniously within nature and endeavor to maintain the integrity of the environment. I am tremendously excited about the possibility of MTB trails development & it's benefits for the entire Great Southern region: stimulating healthy lifestyles & relationships, skills, environmental awareness, gaining national and international awareness by embracing and actively participating in the fastest growing sport in the world, tourism and great economic benefit for the entire region.





200119_1822

Proposed “Paddling Trail Experiences” – pp 40-41

Walpole River paddling trail – of regional interest, “Leisure” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

Deep River paddling trail – of regional interest, “Leisure” and/or “Active” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

Nornalup to Walpole paddling trail – of regional interest, “Active” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

Rest Point to Circus beach paddle and hiking trail – of regional interest, “Active” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

Nornalup Inlet circuit – of regional interest, “Active” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

Frankland River paddling trail and overnight bush camp – of regional interest, “Active” and/or “Adventure” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

Monastery Landing to Bibbulman Track – of regional significance, “Active” market, to be completed within 1 to 2 years

You expect these trails to have the following (see page 18 of your draft report):

“Leisure”

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Typically holiday makers who seek out accessible trails for use with family and friends. Time spent on trails is often short to half-day in duration.

VISITOR TYPE: Tourist, family, friends

EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: Well-marked trails to suit range of abilities. Easy access trails linked to town site and/or accommodation

SKILL REQUIRED: LOW-MEDIUM - Limited experience seeking accessible, achievable trails

VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH

“Active”

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Outdoor enthusiasts who will plan their visit to include use of trails. Time spent on trails is often half- to full day or overnight stay.

VISITOR TYPE: Competent outdoor enthusiasts seeking challenge, skill development

EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: Well designed and marked trails with associated facilities such as equipment hire/repair, safe parking, nearby access to accommodation, food and beverage facilities.

SKILL REQUIRED: MEDIUM-HIGH - Experienced seeking opportunity for skill development and socialisation

VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH-MEDIUM

“Adventure”

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Dedicated trail walkers, riders or paddlers who will seek out challenging trails or unique experiences. Time spent on trails is often overnight and multi-





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day.

VISITOR TYPE: Experienced and willing to travel for iconic experience.

EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES:

More remote experiences with limited facilities.

SKILL REQUIRED: HIGH - Very experienced seeking high-level challenge and adventure

Visitor Numbers: LOW

I have two points to make in response to the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan. They both relate to the proposed Paddling Trail Experiences to be set up in the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park (listed on pages 40 and 41 of the draft plan).

The first is this: I do not think you have done an accurate risk assessment when determining your trails market segmentation for these Paddling Trail Experiences (see page 18 of the draft plan for a table of trails market segmentation).

The second: I can find no impact statement in the draft plan for the infrastructure development, and the increase in traffic, on the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park and the Walpole Wilderness. There are no figures given either for the current numbers of visitors to the inlet, the current numbers of visitors who paddle on the inlet, or for the increase in numbers of visitors and paddling visitors to expect once these Paddling Trail Experiences are developed.

On my first point, the fact that you would countenance marketing the Deep River trail as a “Leisure” trail (to be paddled by tourists with limited experience!) suggests a real failure to grasp the nature of our environment down here. The Deep River is beautiful, it does provide the longest stretch of water available to be kayaked in the area, and it is regularly paddled by locals in their 60s and 70s. It does fit a “Grade 1” categorisation, in that there is “slow to medium flow, relatively few obstacles, easy path to follow”(p64 of the draft plan). It is also isolated, only accessible by vehicle at a few points, and even then the road is unsealed and can be difficult to traverse if it’s been very wet. Paddling to the Deep River from the Rest Point Caravan Park jetty involves crossing a section of the Nornalup Inlet and if the wind picks up (which it can do, quickly) the waves in the Nornalup Inlet are high and rough enough to overturn a tinny with an outboard – an inexperienced kayaker would be immensely vulnerable. As a volunteer Emergency Medical Assistant with Walpole’s St John Ambulance, I find the idea that you would send tourists with limited paddling experience off across the Nornalup Inlet and down the Deep River mind-boggling. It takes us half an hour just to get an ambulance to the Rest Point Caravan Park jetty, and a further 90 minutes to the nearest hospital. Finding someone who had injured themselves or got into trouble somewhere along the Deep River, or on the inlet, (not unlikely for someone with “limited experience seeking accessible, achievable trails” p18, Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan) would be very difficult, and the outcomes could be horrendous.

On the issue of environmental impact, according to your draft Master Plan, “Paddlers need easy access to launching points, parking, interpretive signage and information, and on-site infrastructure including picnic tables, seating, toilet facilities and water supply.” (p40) You expect the numbers of visitors to the Leisure and Active trails to be “HIGH”and “HIGH-MEDIUM” (p18) – but you don’t quantify the terms “HIGH” and “MEDIUM-HIGH,” and you don’t provide current visitor numbers. I suspect you’ve gone no way towards establishing what the current and predicted future numbers of people paddling on the Walpole and Nornalup inlets are. I cannot find any indication in the report of exactly what paddling trail development will mean in terms of how many more cars will





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be on the roads to the water's edge, how much bigger the car parks will need to be, how many more visitors will be on the waters of this fragile marine park, how much rubbish they can be expected to leave, what sort of earthworks will be needed to add water supplies and sewage services to places like Monastery Landing, nor any other impact of infrastructure development and increased visitor activity on the Marine Park and Walpole Wilderness.

These rivers are beautiful, and paddling them is a wonderful thing. Providing visitors to the area with information about routes they can kayak is a great idea, and having structured Paddling Trail Experiences would provide an opportunity to increase our visitors' knowledge and understanding of the natural environment of this unique and wonderful part of the world. On the other hand, any increase in the number of visitors, and the number of visitors on the water, will be an increase in the stress on that natural environment. It's not that the well-being of the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park, and the Walpole Wilderness cannot be maintained alongside activities like kayaking, but there are no details even hinted at in your draft plan as to what the environmental impacts could be, and how you will mitigate harm.



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 6:58 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1858

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback on the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029.

Please note that I work in the tourism industry but the views I am sharing are my own personal views and not that of my workplaces.

This is an exciting plan that I partly agree with. I can see many exciting opportunities for both businesses and those that use trails for sport and leisure.

My main issue is with using National Parks for extreme sports like downhill mountain biking as is proposed for The Potato Patch within the Porongurup National Park (Page 34). I can see merit in hiking and biking trails along existing, and perhaps improved, fire breaks. Access to the Potato Patch is difficult and I cannot see how access could be gained without creating new tracks. These tracks would be extremely steep and difficult to prevent erosion from occurring. I lived in the area for many years and am very familiar with the park so my knowledge is from personal experience. There would opportunity for private landholders to construct amazing downhill runs alongside the National park without jeopardising the integrity of the actual National Park.

Page 34 also lists Pwakkenbak bike trail near Mount Barker. I feel listing this as of local significance and not regional may be a missed opportunity. This is an amazing site that is not deemed a National Park but has a great incline, granite outcrops and is close to accommodation and infrastructure. There could be interesting trails, including extreme downhill, built within this area.

Page 10 - Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, Noongar language or dual naming of trails; and cultural interpretation.

In my opinion there needs to be much more than acknowledgement and/or dual naming. Thorough consultation with all the different cultural groups and families is required. Just using the SWALSC in the initial stages is probably not enough. All cultural groups and families must be included. There needs to be more consideration of these special places than just dual naming. This may seem like a huge task but could be managed if approached in the correct way.

Thanks again for the opportunity to respond. I look forward to what could be an exciting future if managed well. Natural and cultural places of significance need to be treated with the respect they deserve. In future years the pristine environment of the Great Southern and it's National Parks is what we will be marketing to visitors as there may be little left elsewhere in the world.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]





18 January 2020

Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence
 22 Collie Street
 Albany WA 6330
 By email trails@gscore.com.au

200119_1903

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Draft GSCORE Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (Master Plan): Public Comment

[REDACTED] which has a long history in the Porongurup region, I write regarding the proposal to provide mountain bike trails in the Porongurup National Park.

I have been a keen mountain biker in the past, mainly in the Perth hills, and so I can understand the potential tourism benefits that mountain bike trails could bring to the Porongurups.

However, there are significant risks associated with creating new trails in such a sensitive area, and it appears that those risks weren't adequately considered in the draft Master Plan. I would appreciate a more balanced analysis of the likely benefits and risks than the draft Master Plan currently provides. That analysis might draw on the experience of other regions in Australia and around the world where mountain bike trails have created either positive or negative results.

If such details were provided, I might be a supporter of the proposal. In its current form I would have to say I oppose it.

Thank you

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 7:35 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails plan

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1935

Good Afternoon

I have only had a quick look at the trails plan and had previously decided that I wouldn't respond because it seems that there has been consultation on this matter for years now via the City of Albany and nothing has happened apart from a very short Pilot Trail on Mt Clarence.

Having given it more thought I have the following points to make:

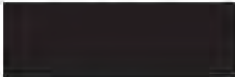
I am very disappointed that the first priority trails are in Mt Barker and Denmark- smaller populations and less demand than Albany.

I have used the trails on "The Mounts" in Albany for over forty years, first as a runner/hiker and more recently as a mountain biker. These trails need immediate attention to make them safe and accessible to all. There is a degree of conflict over the use of these trails and it seems an inability by some to share. Having hiked and cycled in Canada and the UK recently it is clear that hiking and biking can coexist successfully. I note that Poikeclerup is relatively high on the priority list- this is a great area that could become a mountain bike park with extensive nested trails as well as some downhill. It is also close to Mt Richard where there are fire trails that could provide for longer rides. This would require DBAC to change their current policy which appears to be "no one should enter national parks" and who bulldoze trailheads that have existed for years to prevent such access. It is interesting that the same department allows activity in places like Collie.

Clearly something is better than nothing and as a long distance cross country mountain biker I would appreciate trails and back roads linking the three areas: Mt Barker, Denmark, Albany (via Porongorups).

The section of Munda Bididi from Denmark to Albany is predominately on roads with some on the very narrow and busy Lower Denmark Rd. This needs to be changed to make the end of the journey safer.

My apologies for not sticking to the guidelines.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 7:44 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Attn. Karl Hansom - Porongurup MBT trail
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1944

Dear Karl,

I strongly oppose to the construction of a downhill mountain bike trail in Porongurup National Park.

I don't think I need to mention the potential environmental impact of the suggested trail on a National Heritage listed national park to a person of your professional background.

You are well aware of the risks associated with the construction of high impact infrastructure in a natural area, including (but not limited to) loss of habitat, introduction of weeds and litter and spread of dieback.

A downhill Mountain bike track starting from the potato patch would obviously require major clearing and earth work if vehicle access and a car park are to be constructed, thus threatening or even eradicating the unique biodiversity in the affected area.

Porongurup National Park is too small and too environmentally and culturally significant to be subjected to high impact "improvements".

From an economic view point, the target group, i.e. downhill mountain bikers ONLY, is too restrictive, considering both the capital and ongoing expense required.

Road maintenance within the park is sadly lacking already; the main scenic drive linking Bolganup Road and Woodlands Rd has been in a shocking condition for several years, and this road is for ALL park users. In consequence, I wonder how upkeep of facilities will be guaranteed for a small proportion of visitors, if the bulk of visitors are not catered for appropriately.

The Porongurup Range is a major asset for nature (and eco) tourism, and has a huge potential to create tourism dollars for the region. However, a downhill mountain bike track in the vicinity of Albany with its beaches, cycling facilities and conveniences is NOT the right way to attract visitors to stay in the Porongurups for longer than one night at the most.

Not a large proportion of locals would use a downhill mountain bike trail. The demand in the area is not for specific and difficult tracks but for a means to reach neighbours safely without using a car, and to become and/or stay fit by cycling without jeopardizing personal safety on Porongurup Rd.

Hence, it would make a lot more sense to construct a safe network of low impact trails suitable to all levels of fitness, including grey nomads and families with children. This could be achieved by improving and linking pre-existing tracks, such as fire tracks, and/or the old Millinup Pass, and by constructing a dual use trail linking tourism facilities such as accommodation providers, wineries, and other attractions, ideally combined with interpretation of natural assets.

Low impact multi-purpose trails of a diverse range of difficulty will be used by locals and visitors alike, and will entice a range of visitors to stay in the area for longer, if there is more to be explored the next day.





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In summary, I do not believe that high impact construction is beneficial to either national heritage listed Porongurup National Park, its flora and fauna, and the local population.

Thank you for for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Kind regards,





200119_2004

Response to Draft GS Regional Trails Master Plan

I recognise that [REDACTED] councillor I will have the opportunity to comment and perhaps influence the final draft of the plan to a greater extent than other community members, by virtue of seeing the next iteration of the document. The comments in this response reflect my own personal perspective.

Community and economic development opportunities

The development of the trail network should have as number one focus to be of benefit to the communities of the Great Southern region. The ambition is to build a world class network, but it must still be accessible to locals, we need to have pride and ownership in them and that we are sharing our treasures with others. We must also be able to build trails on private land or council controlled land without huge barriers to development.

If the locals do not use them, due to cost or because they do not feel welcome (barriers to use due to licences, must use a paid guide, must belong to a club etc) the trails will be a failure.

We have events in our region that are promoted as attracting tourists (Southern Art & Craft Trail, Bloom Festival, Taste Great Southern) but if they are not accessible or of interest to the residents of our region they will fail. We do need to ensure we do not forget that locals should have access to recreational facilities and attracting tourists is not perhaps the key motivation for many to support development.

The development and maintenance of trails (of all kinds) will require an element of volunteer labour and local ownership to be successful. Opportunities for groups to run events that utilise the trails and associated facilities must also be acknowledged.

Page 34 Create New Trail Experiences

Porongurup MTB trails not in the park

The potential of Potato Patch & Tree in the Rock has been written into previous plans, but the reality of developing a sustainable trail would seem to be contrary to the wishes of the local community. Friends of the Range do not speak for everyone, but their willingness to undertake activities that assist in the maintenance of the National Park and cultivate wider interest in the flora and fauna should be acknowledged.

It is a National Park and has been declared as such for many years. Effort would be better expended in looking for alternative locations that offer the same gravity opportunities across all land ownership types. A brown field site could be developed with less concerns about existing flora and fauna and re vegetation undertaken to create a more interesting environment. Fox Creek in the Adelaide Hills (Forestry SA land) might be an example to consider for comparison. The Adelaide Hills do have a distinct advantage in providing plenty of steep slopes. The Bike Melrose approach (private landholders and local government) should also be part of considerations in the development of trails (of all kinds not just for mountain bikes).



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Hiking has been portrayed by some as less damaging to the park or it is recognition that the battle was lost a long time ago in keeping everyone out. Trail running does not seem to have been highlighted in the plan at any specific location or as an opportunity, but it should be considered, and Bluff Knoll has in the past hosted similar. The experience of the UK in managing fell running and long distance events across a variety of locations could be called upon.

Page 20 Table 5

Adventure trail bike touring (motor bikes and mountain bikes) is no doubt happening with locals involved in exploring their region for pleasure and as a challenge. Encouraging this may be an opportunity to have more urban dwellers experience the natural beauty to understand it and recognise that there is more than koalas, kangaroos and tall trees that need protection, preservation and recognition.

Page 22 & 36 Grain Trail Rail Trails

This is identified as a long term objective, but the Master Plan must have these in it and I fully agree that local governments need to work together to ensure access. The history of how we as a state handed over this asset to the private sector is well known to Upper Great Southern and wheatbelt councils and councillors and is shameful. Access to the rail trails for recreation purposes may provide a face saving opportunity for all concerned and turn the current leaseholders into an example of model corporate citizens. Perhaps not grain growers, but other residents of the Great Southern would appreciate access without signage telling them they are trespassers or facing potential prosecution. Action on this is a high priority as the architects of the original lease plan will soon be gone and our communities will forget that the rail line is ours, not the property of an overseas corporate and we should demand to have some say on its use.

Develop trail linkages

Let us build on what we have and link them together. Cooperation across local government boundaries and state agencies with responsibility for various types of crown land need to be proactive and focus on how to make it happen, not block.

The private sector could also play a part, but planning or environmental rules (real or imagined) can easily derail proactive, generous landowners in providing access or considering opportunities. The attitude will need to be what can we do to make this happen. The community may be surprised at how generous landholders can be if they given the freedom and encouragement to participate in developing trails.

Final comments

Government (state and local) may hold the purse strings and planning authority to develop the majority of the physical trails outlined in the Master Plan, but the associated infrastructure to service visitors (accommodation, cafes, transport etc) will require the private sector to see and believe that they can invest with some level of confidence. We need both public and private investment for world class trails. Private investors will need to see a return on money and a benefit to their community that is better than what they currently have.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 8:17 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Review of Draft Great Southern Trails Master Plan
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2017

Lenore and Karl,

I have now read the subject draft report and have the following general comments/discussion:

REPORT

- The presentation, layout and figures of the report are very professional and polished.
- Therefore, the report presents very well.
- The report reads well and explains the project and project results in a clear and orderly manner.
- There are only minor typos, which I am sure you have covered.
- Tables and figures not listed (with page numbers?) in the TOC?
- It is important that respect and consideration for the environment before/during/after trail construction is emphasised in the report. And also the need for associated environmental studies in the early stages of a trail project and ongoing environmental management of trails. However, I do note that you mention these things a few times (see below).

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Environmental - dieback spread not mentioned. Feral plant spread?
- Environmental "...the need to undertake detailed environmental and heritage assessments as well as additional community consultation, and the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers"
 , This is an important statement from the report, which needs to be emphasised.
- I'm wondering whether a one paragraph 'importance' statement about environmental 'matters and management' would be useful in the front of the report?
- The economic value of trails will quickly decline if environmental values reduce.





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TERESTRIAL TRAIL NOMENCLATURE/CATEGORIES/NAMES

- The terrestrial trail nomenclature can be confusing. I have found the following trail categories in the report: hiking trails; MTB trails; cycle touring and dual-use trails; mountain biking and cycle touring trails; rail trails; walking trails; walking loops; walking track, heritage trail (usually in a specific name). There is no 'Dual-use' shown in the table of contents.
- Perhaps you need a summary table of your chosen trail category names up the front explaining the general 'characteristics' of each (sub)type, i.e. short definition/users? For example, who can use MTB trails, can pedestrians? Does the Hiking Trail include other trail sub-types? Are hiking trails and walking trails the same or is there an implied difference? Walking trail and walking track the same? Is this fully explained in the report?
- Make sure text agrees with selected types and is consistent?
- Or, if you feel you have adequately described each of these trail types in the report, please ignore my comments.

FRENCHMAN BAY HERITAGE TRAIL (FBHT)

- Thank you for including the FBHT in your proposed program and within one of your high priority long-term project trails (dual-use path extension from Little Grove to Whaling Station).
- We are hoping for a 3 to 5 year duration for the detailed design phase of the FBHT, depending on the success of grant applications.
- Although originally designed as a compacted limestone trail 1.5m wide, there has been discussion indicating that the FBHT should be a dual-use path. There is often conflict between slow-moving pedestrians and fast-moving bikes on such paths. You could argue that a heritage trail should not allow 'fast-moving' bikes. There will be people milling around signage at various observation points and this has the potential to cause 'traffic' congestion and frustrate cyclists, leading to on-site disputes.
- However, I see no reason why 'slow-moving' bikes shouldn't be allowed on a heritage trail, especially if it is a dual-use path where bikes are allowed.
- Do we need to define a heritage trail type in the text?
- I think locally opinion is divided about the type of trail construction for the FBHT.
- However, many people also think that the FBHT should be a dual-use path.
- I guess there will be further discussion about this.



CONTINUED

MTB TRAILS

- There seems to be an emphasis on developing MTB trails in the report. Understandable I suppose, because there aren't many in the GS (Table 1). *"Apart from one short trail in Albany, there*
- *are no purpose-built trails for mountain biking".*
- However, I feel in general that MTB trails have the greatest potential to have an environmental impact and need to be very carefully managed. Local experience around Albany has shown that MTB trails can 'multiply' into the bush and therefore that these trails are probably generally unregulated. Such non-sanctioned activities can lead to environmental impacts and the spread of dieback, for example.
- I have heard concerns about MTB trails and the frequent conflict with others using these trails. I understand that non-sanctioned MTB trails regularly appear as 'tributaries' to the main trail.
- Is there a difference in construction/allowed-users between MTB trails where competitions are held and standard weekend MTB trails? I have seen Appendix 1 about the numerous types of MTB trails.

I hope some of this is useful. I think it is a very good report, which hopefully will become a standard reference during trail construction in the GS.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 8:18 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Public comment - in Disagreement on development of Porongurup MB trails

200119_2018

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my disagreement/disapproval with the proposed mountain bike trails in the Porongurup National Park as outlined in the GSCORE regional trail draft plan - pages 31 to 37.

I am a resident of the incredible Porongurups and I border the national park. One of the many reasons why I love and live in this beautiful part of the world is for the tranquility, the untouched beauty, the respected and clean environment and the strong spirit that is evident here. I strongly feel that all of this will be impacted greatly if there is to be development here in the Porongurup National Park.

This land is simply too special, too culturally significant to be developed on.

I do believe that mountain biking is a fantastic sport and does need space for these developments to take place but the Porongurups are just not the right choice. I suggest private land owners be contacted first and foremost as most of this land had already been developed, cropped, used etc and it will not impact the environment as dramatically.

I do not support the proposal for the Regional Trail master plan to include the Porongurup National Park as a site for MTB trails (page 33). I submit on the grounds of cultural, heritage, environmental and ecological significance.

I hope this email is sufficient enough to count as opposing the proposed development in PNP. I honestly found the guidelines a touch confusing and I hope this has not deterred anyone from being able to voice their opinion.

If there is anything else I need to do to make my vote/ voice opposing this count, please let me know.

Kind regards,,

[REDACTED]





Submission in support of Porongurup MTB

200119_2041

Page The

I support the concept of mountain bike trails in the Porongurup National Park to diversity options and open up sections of the park to a wider range of activities.

Provided the changes are made with latest best practice environmental design, construction and operation parameters.

Business needs more support in the Porongurups.



Porongurup





200119_2042

Comment upon the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, however I register an objection to the time frame and the fact that this 'consultation' takes place at a time when people are on holiday and have many commitments – making a proper submission impossible in this time frame.

My comments (hurried) are as follows:

Section 1 – Introduction and Background – How was the Master Plan Developed? Page9

The planning process behind this Master Plan appears flawed in that:

There appears to be no Environmental voice in the entire report.

There is no understanding of Noongar spiritual approach to the Porongurup.

The reasoning and subsequent identification of users and maintainers of the reserves (Stakeholders) has been flawed from the first, as happened earlier in Albany with its Heritage Park. The main users of the parks, including Noongar people make up the widely disparate 'body' of individuals that walk daily or weekly on the mounts (Albany), carry out weeding and other 'Busy Bees' in Albany and in Porongurup etc, those that return year after year to visit both the Porongurup and Albany, were not identified and have not participated. Was the Bushcare group consulted? Were Friends of Porongurup consulted? What Noongar groups? A good many if not most of these people still remain unaware of the proposals.

Bike trails in the Great Southern have been canvassed to bike clubs, organised walking groups, local government and apparently in local papers which no one seems to have seen.

The plan mentions that the consultants have consulted the broader community, why is this mentioned as if its the least important? This is our place and we love it. How if we have been consulted do we remain unaware of the proposed Plan until invited to the meeting in Porongurup Hall and given ten days to put in a submission!

It is normal local government practice when a new or contentious use is proposed to advertise that proposal on the subject site and invite participation. Yet this has not been done. I have seen two newspaper mentions of this trail plan in this weeks 15th Jan papers but nothing before this.

Bringing a printed plan, as opposed to a sketch, to an initial(?) whole of Porongurup community meeting however much it might be 'marked' Draft, implies completion and insults the Community's knowledge of their areas and abilities to contribute. The impression created at the Porongurup Hall meeting (9th Jan 2020) was that GSCORE have it all 'done and dusted' while working to an arbitrary time line, completion by February 2020, that excludes the proper listening to the community, effectively the consultation appears to be preaching not listening. Why the hurry? Will Mountain Bike riding lose popularity before its been mined for profit?





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The community is made up of all of us and we all have something to contribute, the consultants would have been more 'professional' if they had approached all the 'broader' communities, including Noongar groups, of the local governments concerned, rather than the local government(LG) itself with blank paper, questions and ideas to be canvassed and listened at the very beginning, taking concepts (from the community) to the LG at a later stage – as it is we have a situation of an aggravated community in the Porongurup and consultants' in a position of 'defending' their plan and thus not listening to the people.

The website of the Department for Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has on its website: 'The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.'

The statement on page 33 of the Plan 'There is an opportunity to integrate Noongar culture and creative expression at each site to highlight the region's unique history and landscape' is incredibly patronising! Just disregard the sacred, create a theme park for mountain bikers to get their thrills and put labels around to pay lip service to a concept the consultants seem to think is apparently beyond the average Australian's comprehension.

Both local Porongurup people and the Noongar oppose mountain bike trails on the Porongurup? – where is the respect for 'holy' or sacred places? Mountain bikes are not an appropriate use for some places. Just because land presents slopes does not mean it automatically is suitable.

How were Conservation Values considered – where and when were the local fauna and flora experts consulted, where are their reports?

To acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land(page 10) via Noongar signs and cultural interpretation, while trashing the peace and tranquillity of holy places with downhill mountain bike runs is a travesty of respect!

We have mountain bikers yahoing thro' Mt Clarence at night speeding with lights on their heads and enjoying behaviour better fitted to a **disused quarry** than an A Class Reserve. How do we prevent this happening in Porongurup?

Page 34 Priority Regional Trails

I am deeply opposed to Mountain Bikes, speeding downhill, on A Class reserves and in the Porongurup. Given the loss of Wildlife creatures in the Eastern States Fires we should be all the more aware of our impact on the landscape and all the **more protective** of the wonders we have here.

Early morning reptiles enjoying a patch of sun cannot move quickly, sleepy bronze wings cannot get off the ground in a hurry, small marsupials paralysed by fright, all get run down by speeding bikes.

Does the Department of Sport override Conservation?



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The internet Trailtalk News – October 2016 **Launch of the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017-2021** – ‘At the Trails Industry forum on 19 May, Sport and Recreation Minister Mick Murray launched the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint, which will guide the next five years of trails development’ – I have yet to see any argument or justification for Mountain Bike Trails in Conservation areas, how do speeding bikes avoid killing wildlife? Bikes are a road vehicle and can cause considerable damage.

To my knowledge there has been no local formal environmental consultation, only informal advice on trail construction, and no whole of community participation and no public debate regarding speeding cyclists racing against time, and their possible intrusion into and impact on Conservation areas and Conservation and Noongar values.

What assessments are available of Mountain Bike impacts on the landscape in WA and why are they not included in the Plan? Why does this Plan show no consideration of Noongar beliefs and culture?

Have holiday makers returning to the area annually been consulted, has the process been advertised State wide? In some cases A Class reserves (Mt Clarence) have been given new uses, not commonly accepted as contributing to conservation, without Parliament being consulted – this is a blatant sidestepping of the statutory and democratic process and misuse of bureaucratic power. Complaints are met with obfuscation.

In addition trail bikes and motor bikes are using walk trails (Bibbulman track), where motorised vehicles are prohibited and endangering walkers and their dogs, they carry no licences and the police, rangers and local government are powerless or unwilling to control them. **Proposing trails that the community with few resources cannot police or manage is both short sighted and counterproductive and does and will lead to animosity between users and detrimental impacts on our landscape.**

The Development of the Master Plan is an example of the copy cat syndrome, others are doing it in Tasmania or Scotland etc so lets follow with little or no examination of what makes WA unique and different from Tasmania or overseas. “In the Great Southern, the five proposed sites all offer a different riding experience, landscape and point of difference. Like the 7 Stanes, (*ref: Scotland*) these five sites should be marketed as one regional offering.”Page 33.

In what ways can our trails be Excellent, how do we respond to our environment, our climate, our small populations and our vast distances and management problems?

SECTION 2 – SITUATION ANALYSIS

There is no mention of our Conservation Values on Public Land, no mention of climate and conditions that may be dangerous to physical over exertion and general management of the trails.

Possible Lobby Role for GSCORE?

The Eastern States Fires illustrate how fragile our country is. They also highlight the dangers of dehydration and heat stress in summer. More people die in Australia of heat stress than are killed by the fires.





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If GSCORE is really seeking excellence in outdoor recreation:-

perhaps examining holiday structures and lobbying the Department of Education and State Government to consider making longer holidays in climatic periods that better suit the use of the Outdoors! Shortening the summer holidays and lengthening others. Closing trails in summer could be of benefit to the tourist industry, to the community, to the environment and trail users.

Mt Bike Trails should not occur in Conservation areas and existing walk trails that intrude on Noongar Values should be reduced / altered etc;

Excellence should also be sought for trails on Private land where the land manager can monitor and manage the trail, provided no informal access to Public land occurs.

Page 12 How we compare to established trail destinations

Why not say what it is we have and discuss the tyranny of distances, not shared by Tasmania or Scotland? Most other trails are in more populated regions and are on a lesser horizontal scale. The Porongurup and Mt Clarence (1898) are important because they have been conserved for various natural and cultural reasons, they are not suited to Mt Bike racing.

Identifying Regional Opportunities

Section 4 Trail Development Proposals

I strongly object to the concept of Mountain Bike Trails in the Porongurup –

Our Western Culture and worship of money and the Economy, has destroyed much in this world that for centuries have been valued by peoples for peace, quiet, solitude, challenging environments both physically and mentally that can assist with transporting people into states of awareness and spiritual growth. Such places are increasingly rare and it is disappointing that GSCORE fail to understand the uniqueness of Porongurup landscapes, preferring to see them as potential themeparks for bikers, copy cat thinking again. Experiences have become 'potted' by consultants and travel agents to fit itineraries and budgets between coffees! We flatten the world to accommodate wheelchairs and overlarge houses, we turn contrast and difference into similarity and sameness all to make a buck.

Mt Everest has been turned into a garbage tip, by the extreme sports and tourist industry, with queues of people waiting to climb. Castle Rock has a stainless steel 'erection' and platforms, as does Mt Clarence, both unnecessary and superfluous to the experience of climbing up, in place, enjoying the marvellous rock structures etc. Stainless steel sameness belongs in railway stations not out in Nature. Today holiday queues of visitors to Castle Rock have completely destroyed the joy of climbing quietly and contemplation.

In making trails to standards we in fact remove the challenges and differences, like our highways they become standardised and eventually boring.

Just because Mountain Bikes are now fashionable is not a good enough reason to make all places, and particularly conservation areas, available to be raced over. Slow speeds, quiet and awareness of the landscape and its inhabitants are what contribute positively to conservation of Nature and Noongar Values.





CONTINUED

Page 33 of the Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 – 2029:

The following Statements are outrageous in their complete disregard for Conservation and Values that have guided the Porongurup Community to identify the Porongurup to the Commonwealth Government for Conservation:

“The proposed trail network in the Porongurup National Park presents the most appealing opportunity in the region due to the terrain, elevation and soil. The existing supply of accommodation, food and hospitality services will make this location the region’s premier MTB experience. **And** “A sustainable, accessible and well-designed MTB trail network in this location will become the hook that attracts riders into the region.”

“To ensure that the region’s potential as a mountain biking destination is realised, however, at least three of these projects will need to be completed within the first five years of this plan.” I have yet to understand Why(?) we need to be a premier MTB experience? If private land owners wish to have trails – fine, provided they can guarantee no ‘informal’ access to Public Land from their land.

If the behaviour of Mountain bikers + their audiences (at events) on Mt Clarence is anything to go by then Mountain Bike Trails will be destructive of the Porongurup as a Conservation Reserve. Large events and accompanying audiences are not supportive of Conservation.

Unjustly many believe that ‘white’ Australians are incapable of love of the land and its Values in landscape and wildlife, only Noongars or Aboriginal Australians are seen as having an attachment to the land – this is erroneous – the community of the Porongurup is international in origin and these people love their environment and the Park. Please listen to criticisms and don’t ride over them.

“Development will need to be staggered over time to ensure that extensive community consultation and robust planning occurs.” Why is this not done before the Master Plan?

We have been told that Mt Bikers will spend more money than walkers, what councils’ fail to see is that those who come to live in the region, buying homes, paying rates, shopping, dining out, consulting doctors, specialists, supporting schools etc give more to the Region than any bikers. We need to be listened to and given priority over visitors.

If a fire breaks out in the Porongurup, as happened in 2007, and there are bikers in the Park, how do we know they are there? who is responsible for getting them out and how? Communities are small and have responsibilities to themselves in such times. It is irresponsible to recommend trails for which the communities are ill equipped to manage.

Please remove Mountain Bike trails from the Porongurup and Mt Clarence.

On off member of Friends of Porongurup, on and off weeding and Art in the Park, and one time owner of old farmhouse, Stoney Creek Rd in Porongurup.





To: GScore

200119_2059

Section: What has been proposed for the Shire of Plantagenet.

CC: Chief Executive Officer -Shire of Plantagenet
 Mr Chris Pavlovich - Shire of Plantagenet President
 Mr Peter Hartley DBCA
 Mr Luke Coney DBCA
 Peter Grigg CEO Amazing South Coast
 Professor Stephen Hopper - University of WA
 Mr Terry Redmund - Blackwood-Stirling Electorate
 Hon Stephen Dawson Minister for Environment - Minister.Dawson@dpc.wa.gov.au
 And others as supporters.

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan



Our submission is in relation to the proposals put forward for the Shire of Plantagenet but more specifically the Porongurup Range.

Our background with the area:

We purchased our block in 1986 and used it as a weekender whilst establishing a vineyard. We eventually built and relocated to the site in 1990 and with a short stint from 2001 - 2005 away have been permanently living on this property.

Over the years we have been involved and partaken in various community groups and activities in the area. We have attended many workshops/meetings/discussion groups regarding changes to the area in which we have a vested interest not only financially but economically, environmentally and protection of the lifestyle, serenity and natural ecology the area offers not only to us, as residents but potential residents and visitors. These changes put forward, have proposed the implementation of the Porongurup Management Plan, the proposals for tree plantations, subdivisions, village proposals all of which have had an impact on the region. More recently bush fire strategy meetings and others.

The Park is continually undergoing administration change C.A.L.M., D.E.C., D.P.A.W. and now D.B.C.A. and the Ranger once resident and active in the Park, is now a "drive-in drive-out cleaner" removing rubbish and cleaning toilet facilities.

We therefore consider it reasonable, that our prolonged association with the area (34 years) gives us the right to voice our concerns for some aspects of this "Plan" and comment on others.



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Also, as well as in the PNP, we have walked many a trail in other parts of our country and overseas UK, Italy, USA and *we find that the Porongurup range compares very favourably with ranges/trails in the aforementioned countries*; and are hard placed at times, to find anywhere that compares to our own backyard and that of the Porongurup and Stirling Ranges.

For those who are making the decisions and suggestions of this PLAN, *we challenge you to come yourselves to these places*, and experience the ambiance you want to change before committing to the proposals.

Our comments/objections/support to the Proposals for the Shire of Plantagenet;

1. Porongurup National Park (PNP) Potato Patch and Tree in the Rock (Nancy Peak) downhill and cross-country trails. There should be **NO** mountain bike trails within the Heritage listed Porongurup National Park for these reasons:
 - a. The Park is the attraction because of its natural bush, views, animal and bird life, plant and fungi growths, granite formations and wonderful hiking trails.
 - b. The PNP is a small park with so much ecological biodiversity of flora and fungi with many endemic to the park. Any activity within the park has an adverse effect on the life of everything within it.
 - c. The PNP is a small park with old land granite sculptures and landscapes. It is one of the oldest areas in Australia and is very fragile and any development is a threat to it.
 - d. A cultural and spiritual place for the local Noongar peoples that should be respected and protected.
 - e. Threats from weeds, erosion, dieback would be greater than that of walk trails due to the impact of wheels as opposed to feet (*we do not consider or accept that the representations made by Dr Lenore Lyons on 9th January that "mountain biking has no greater environmental impact than hiking", are credible and soundly based. It is therefore asserted that when the two activities are compared and factors such as shoe/tyre surface area ratios, coupled with weight to surface ratios relative to surface soil penetration, plus relative speed of movement, are consideredit is obvious mountain biking is a far more effective vector than hiking for the spread of micro-organism infection, erosion etc.*)
 - f. Water runoff would be diverted from downhill properties which rely on the winter runoff for creeks and dams for their agricultural purposes.
 - g. Mountain bikers are not interested in soaking up the scenery, smelling the plants and wildflowers, appreciating the wildlife, birdlife, insects and reptiles.
 - h. Mountain bikers have one aim to get to the bottom as quickly as possible and compare the experience/times on social media with others.
 - i. Mountain bikers soon tire of a trail when it is no longer a challenge and are quick to change the existing one adhoc, or change the route to suit their adrenaline needs. Many proclaim that bikers stick to trails instead of going "bush", as opposed to hikers however research shows that this is not the case and as stated bikers will find a harder- steeper - rougher way to the bottom.



CONTINUED

- j. Mr Nick Walls of Albany Mountain Bike Club admitted at the meeting of 9th January that the club members will “go anywhere on unauthorised tracks, if it gives them a thrill and they feel they have an entitlement to do so”. This attitude is abhorrent and presumptuous and we submit not that of the majority of hikers who mostly respect the rules of hiking in National parks.
 - k. Mr Nick Walls also admitted that existing trails within the Great Southern were “flat and boring”.
 - l. **AS OF THIS LAST WEEK A FAMILY OF HOLIDAYING HIKERS TO NANCY’S PEAK HAD TO GET OFF THE WALK TRAIL IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING RUNOVER BY A MOUNTAIN BIKE THE MOUNTAIN BIKERS GO WHERE THEY WANT, WHEN THEY WANT, WITH NO RESPECT FOR PEOPLE , RULES OF THE PARK, OR THE ENVIRONMENT .**
 - m. Entry from Castle Rock carpark will involve extensive clearing of a track up to the “Potato Patch”. The carpark will need to be expanded to cope with the increased traffic. Even now on long weekends and holiday times and particularly during the wildflower season the carpark is full and vehicles park on road verges. CALM, DEC, DPAW and now DBCA have spent countless hours spraying the “Potato Patch” for invasive weeds and blackberry and have attempted to rehabilitate the area. All that expense and time will be to no avail should that site become a base “Camp” for mountain bikers.
 - n. When is enough changes and numbers of tourists enough? Yes, there will be a growth in the number of visitors to the area and this could increase the economy of the area, bring new businesses, increase jobs. It could be argued that there is already enough. Rangers have acted as a regulating entity policeman restricting the number of hikers on the track to the skywalk at a given time and at peak tourism times. Cafes, restaurants, accommodation businesses are already full in peak times, and the introduction of more activities like maintain bike riding would be when it is already at a peak. The tourism season is limited to a few months a year so more investment in accommodation or other small business would need to be researched thoroughly to avoid failure. Most of the present outlets are secondary to the main income activity of the property.
 - o. Mr Peter Hartley DBCA admitted at the meeting of 9th January that the” walk trails are not maintained as they should be”, as not enough resources or funds are forthcoming, so if more trails etc are built and opened up, the problem of environmental degradation is exacerbatedwhere will the funds come from to manage these . The Park fees are inadequate for the work load involved. However increasing the fees “Could” lessen the visitor numbers. A “CATCH 22” SITUATION!
2. Pwackenbak (Mt Barker Hill) Mountain bike trails this area would be suitable for such activities as there are a number of reserves in the area, hilly and not too steep. Who will manage and maintain this trail? We assume it will be the Shire of Plantagenet which does not have the resources to repair washed out roads let alone bike and hiking trails.
 3. O’Neill Road to Warnsbrough Walk this would be a great initiative although once again the maintenance and upkeep of the trail would be costly for whoever would be responsible Shire of Plantagenet??
 4. Castle rock trail Due to the increased numbers of hikers to the Castle Rock as a result of the Skywalk the present trail is very crowded and cluttered with two-way traffic. A trail



CONTINUED

added to give a circuit walk would be beneficial during peak times however how much clearing would be involved and again the cost of maintenance needs to be addressed.

For all these Trails for hiking:

Nancys Peak-

Devils Slide

Bolganup Trail

Mondurup Trail

Kendenup Nature Trail

Upgrading and enhancing the above would be a far better way of spending available funds in the area. The whole of the Shire could be renowned even a “Mecca” for its hiking, walking trails. The area could specialise in hiking walking trails whilst protecting the fragile environment of the area. This would be enough. This would preserve our fragile parks.

We are not against any outdoor activity within and around the area as long as these activities do not adversely affect the lifestyle of residents; the environment of the area; the biodiversity of plants and bird/wildlife; the structure of the natural features; the culture of the first peoples; and the amenity of this pristine region.

Moreover, planning and implementations of any proposals needs to be rigorous and thorough in order that any changes to this area are managed and maintained well into the future; and not have the attitude of “bums on seats” to tourism and visitor numbers in order to justify these changes and swell the bank balance or to “grease the palm” of tourism operators.

It is acknowledged that the Granite Skywalk construction up at Castle Rock has been a successful addition and the visitor increase has raised the economy within the Shire. That is enough of an impact.

Let the mountain bikers find another region that is not as small, unique, fragile, culturally unique and spectacular as the Porongurup and Shire of Plantagenet.

Please consider our comments as an objective addition to your proposals.





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
 Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:00 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 Submission - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200119_2100

Dear Gscore,

Re: Submission by [REDACTED] - Great southern Regional Trails Master Plan

I am writing to express my great concern at the section of the above mentioned trails master plan which refers to Porongurup Range and Porongurup National Park, pages 33,34 and 35 (map).

I strongly believe that any form of mountain bike trails or mountain bike riding in Porongurup National Park will have a very negative effect on the fragile environment of the Park, will be a total insult to Aboriginal peoples and custodians of the Region and will also be difficult to maintain and virtually impossible to monitor.

My reasons are a follows -

1. Porongurup Range is one of the oldest and most iconic Ranges in the world. The area is internationally recognised as a 'Global Bio-diversity Hot Spot.' These are defined as "regions where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing exception loss of habitat."

Porongurup National Park is part of this and a last refuge for so many species of flora and fauna, the ecology of which has evolved over millions of years.

At a community information meeting at Porongurup Hall on the evening of 9th January 2020, Professor Stephen Hopper of UWA School of Agriculture and Environment, who is an internationally renowned plant conservation biologist and expert on granite outcrops, spoke very clearly of the grave dangers of having mountains bike trails and the like, in the Porongurup National Park.

He spoke in detail of the long terms damage this will inevitably bring.

Professor Hopper needs to be listened to and heeded. These proposed mountrain bike trails will only serve to degrade and cause erosion due to speed, especially on downhill slopes, disrupt wildlife, introduce weeds and pollute, to mention a few of the negatives. The very construction of these trails will cause vast amount of damage, clearing etc.

2. Aboriginal Heritage Significance

At the same abovementioned meeting, Larry Blight, a Menang people's representative, spoke of the great cultural significance of the Porongurup Range to four different Peoples/Tribes of the region. For thousands of years it has been a meeting place of the tribes, a Sacred Totems place and a Home of the Ancestors.

If Gscore is truly acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal Heritage, they would never go ahead with this plan for mountain bike trails in the Porongurup National Park.

Mr. Blight also stated there has been no consultation process with any of the Elders of the four tribes who have a deep connection to Porongurup Range.





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3. Maintenance and Monitoring of mountain bike trails.

It was stated at the above mentioned meeting by Peter Hartley of the Dept of Biodiversity, conservation and attractions, that there is not enough funding to maintain the existing trails throughout the region.

Proposed mountain bike trails in Porongurup National park would need constant maintenance and also constant monitoring.

Page 58 of the Trails Plan, under the heading of Maintenance and Management, suggests that "agreement is developed following discussions between a land manager and trail user group/club about options for volunteer maintenance of trails."

This is totally a fanciful idea. Trail bike riders won't be "maintaining" the tracks whether they be groups or individuals.

Who will be doing this maintenance? More importantly who will be monitoring the mountain bike riders to make sure they don't divert from trails causing more damage to the National Park. .

It would require huge amounts of monitoring. Where will this come from and who will do it?

In my opinion, the required amount of monitoring would be impossible and it is ludicrous to think that the mountain bike riders themselves will be doing this, or any 'maintenance' of the proposed trails.

This proposal to have mountain bike trails in Porongurup National Park is full of 'negatives' for the environment - Listen to Professor Stephen Hopper.

This proposal is full of 'negatives' for Aboriginal peoples of this region - Listen to Larry Blight and all the Elders of the 4 tribes of the region who have cultural connection to Porongurup Range and hold it sacred.

Please send me an email by return mail to let me know this submission has been received.





200119_2106

19th January 2020

Karl Hansom
Project Coordinator
GSCORE
trails@gscore.com.au

Submission to Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029
Response to sections of the Draft Master Plan

I am pleased to submit for your consideration my response to the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029 (Draft Master Plan).

Recommendations

I recommend that the Trails for Walkers and Hikers are showcased as the principal way for our landscapes and biodiversity to be enjoyed.

I recommend that the proposed Mountain Bike Trails at Mt Hallowell and Porongurup National Park do not proceed, as this A Class Reserve and National Park are too ecologically fragile and valuable to risk.

I propose further community consultation to include more representation from individuals, bush walking groups, environmental groups and DBCA.

I recommend that walking trail upgrades concentrate on highlighting the Aboriginal Heritage of the culturally and ecologically valuable Stirling Range, Porongurup, Torndirrup and William Bay National Parks.

I recommend that the Wansborough Walk Trail should not be considered dual use in any circumstances.



CONTINUED

Mountain Bike Trails

I am in favour of activities that promote a healthy lifestyle, which should be encouraged and supported, but the proposed activities, Mountain Bike trail riding need to be amended and further community consultation is required. The Draft Master Plan (*Page 6 Proposed Priority Trail or Trail Network*) identified Mt Hallowell MTB Trails and Porongurup MTB trails in a 3 - 5 years' timeframe. I am very concerned about the process for selecting Mountain Bike Trails, which results in the selection of an A class reserve and a National Park for proposed priority trails.

Hiking trails generally involve a single through-trail throughout a reserve. The physical impact of Mountain Bike Trails is significant and incompatible with areas of high conservation value.

At the GSCORE forum, which I attended on 18th December 2019 at the Denmark Recreation Centre. The representatives attending the forum came from a broad cross section of the Denmark community, including the Shire of Denmark Councillors and Management and Staff. We all agreed that Denmark's Environment and Biodiversity should be ranked number one in importance. Take only memories, leave only footprints is a saying that most of us have heard and relates to the concept of treading lightly on the landscape.

Mt Hallowell

I have grave concerns about the impacts of mountain biking in Koorumdinup (Mt Hallowell), an A Class Reserve¹ and other conservation reserves in the Great Southern.

There are potential impacts from the construction of planned trails, but also the proliferation of illegal trails* through reserves. Appropriate planning and event management must be a prerequisite at all stages to ensure negligible impacts at MTB sites in the region.

'A' CLASS RESERVE: Koorumdinup (Mt Hallowell) is an A Class reserve, and is therefore a "conservation priority area for the maintenance of the flora, fungi and fauna and all ecological processes pertaining to the natural environment. It is recognised that the Reserve is a significant scientific reference site".

With increasing demands from ecotourism on ecologically important areas, applying additional pressure through the construction of mountain bike trails will only increase the level of disturbance. There have been scientific studies (e.g. Goeft & Alder 2001²; Burgin & Hardiman 2012³), which have demonstrated the significant environmental impacts of mountain bike trails on surrounding areas, with the impacts including soil erosion,

¹ Shire of Denmark Mount Hallowell Reserve Management Plan 2008

² Goeft & Alder 2001 Sustainable Mountain Biking: A Case Study from the Southwest of Western Australia. Article in Journal of Sustainable Tourism.

³ Burgin, S., & Hardiman, N. (2012). Extreme Sports in Natural Areas: Looming Disaster or a Catalyst for a Paradigm Shift in Land Use Planning? Journal of Environmental Planning & Management, 55, 921-940.





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compaction, incision and widening from the trail itself, with additional water run-off, vegetation and species loss, and spread of invasive species.

Goeft and Alder (2001, 208) concluded “mountain bike riding in natural settings will only be sustainable if trails are located, established and managed in a manner that integrates the environmental sensitivity of the area and rider preferences”.

In Koorumdinup (Mt Hallowell) reserve there is also the very real potential for spreading dieback through soil on tyres. Although dieback is present along the northern boundary, a small section of the eastern and more recently the north western boundary of Mt Hallowell Reserve, the central core, majority of the western and southern section is free of dieback. Creating new trails and therefore increasing the ground disturbance is without question one of the greatest risks to spreading dieback.

The 1995 Management Plan indicated that Dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) is present in the northern area of the Mount Hallowell Reserve. The Dieback susceptible areas of the Reserve extend into all the low-lying Jarrah, Jarrah/Marri, and moist shrubland areas. Indications of Dieback have been noted in an area that was not mapped as Dieback affected in the 1995 plan. This area is along the western boundary of the Reserve, 200m south of the northern boundary. Dieback is an important issue in the management of the Reserve and access tracks. *Banksia serra* (P41) is a rare species that is susceptible to Dieback. The occurrence of this species is diminishing and dead and dying individual plants are scattered throughout the area where they exist in the north-east and south-east corners of the Reserve.

There are significant Aboriginal heritage values associated with Mt Hallowell and a recent survey highlights the importance of protecting these areas. Karda Mia (lizard traps) are located on Mt Hallowell. A report has been prepared for the Denmark Environment Centre by Paul Greenfeld (Deep Woods Surveys (WA) Pty Ltd), Submission on the Aboriginal Heritage Values of Mt Hallowell, Denmark, Western Australia⁴. The report also details Aboriginal sites located in the Denmark region, and will be submitted to the Shire of Denmark when the management plan for Mt Hallowell is to be reviewed.

In addition, the granite rocks that are of special interest to mountain bikers are also particularly fragile ecosystems that need special protection and are often sites of Aboriginal significance. Granite outcrops that aren't already subject to pedestrian traffic on existing trails often have more restricted (short-range endemics) and/or threatened flora and fauna species present, including mosses, fungi and lichen and most certainly invertebrates and reptiles.

What makes Koorumdinup (Mt Hallowell) particularly special is that there is a large intact core of bushland, meaning it is far more resilient to disease such as dieback, marri canker, as well as weed invasion and erosion to name a few. Expanding trails is not conducive to maintaining this ecosystem resilience.

⁴ Paul Greenfeld (Deep Woods Surveys (WA) Pty Ltd), Submission on the Aboriginal Heritage Values of Mt Hallowell, Denmark, Western Australia



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There are many other hills and forest areas in the Shire of Denmark that are not designated A-Class Reserves noted for their ecological value. Mountain bike trails should be developed in these areas, not in Koorumdinup (Mt Hallowell) Reserve.

(In the Draft Master Plan refer to (Table 9, Page 34, proposed mountain bike trails) Mount Hallowell MTB Trails, Timeframe 3 – 5 years.

MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Potential for use for competitive Enduro events. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.)

Porongurup National Park

Recommendation:

I recommend that the Porongurup National Park should not be a Mountain Bike Trails network location.

The Porongurup National Park was identified in the draft master plan as a location for proposed priority MTB trails. This is one of the Great Southern iconic national parks and should only be managed by DBCA for hikers, conservation and biodiversity.

The beauty and richness of the Porongurup National Park, could be severely impacted if the proposed MTB trails network was realised.

Many of the concerns that I raised in the Mt Hallowell section, apply equally to the Porongurup National Park and these concerns will be addressed in submissions by the local Porongurup community. I do not agree that the proposed Mountain Bike Trails at Mt Hallowell and the Porongurup National Park will have minimal impact.

*(I refer to **Draft Master Plan (Page 6) Proposed Priority Trails Time frame medium 3 to 5 years Porongurup MTB Trails. (Page 33, Proposed Mountain Biking Trails)** stated: the proposed trail network in the **Porongurup National Park** presents the most appealing opportunity in the region due to the terrain, elevation and soil.)*

*(I also refer to draft Master Plan (**Table 9, Page 34**) - **Porongurup MTB TRAILS** and the proposal for DBCA Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan. Stated: There is potential for MTB trails at the Potato Patch and Tree-in-the-Rock. Looped networks featuring cross country trails within the native vegetation and a gravity-focused bike park including downhill trails, with a variety of classifications. I do not agree that Mountain Bike Trails would have minimum impact.)*



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Hiking Trails

Recommendations:

I propose further community consultation to include more representation from individuals, bush walking groups, environmental groups and DBCA, regarding any proposed dual use.

I recommend that walking trail upgrades concentrate on highlighting the Aboriginal Heritage of the culturally and ecologically valuable Stirling Range, Porongurup, Torndirrup and William Bay National Parks.

I recommend that the Wansborough Walk Trail should not be considered dual use in any circumstances.

Wansborough walk trail is a very steep trail and by making it dual use would certainly endanger hikers, because of the extreme speeds' mountain bikes can attain downhill. I must bring to the attention of GSCORE the number of close calls that resulted on Mt Clarence Albany when Mountain Bike riders would use the walking trails before the construction of a dedicated Mountain Bike trail at Mt Clarence.

Summary

I have shared some of the information about proposed changes to hiking trails with friends and colleagues who are walkers of all ages and they have been genuinely shocked to learn of the proposals to establish Mountain Bike Trails at Mt Hallowell and the Porongurup National Park. I look forward to being advised that the proposals to establish Mountain Bike trails at Mt Hallowell and the Porongurup National Park will not proceed.





200119_2114

Respondent 0807

Suggested Amendments

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan: 2020-2029

Overall comments

The main problem I have with this plan is the way trails were identified (pg16) of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] brought this up on numerous occasions with you during consultation events throughout the year. As part of the process of identifying trails **you should have immediately discounted locations that have significant environmental, cultural and planning constraints** i.e. If project site has any combination of; disease risk area, reservoir protection zones, public drinking water source area, high conservation value, endemic populations, high indigenous significance etc.. that could limit project efficiency, risk public backlash, reduce project sustainability then they should be removed from the further assessment/development. This process is included in other masters plan such as the Perth and Peel Mountain Bike Master Plan, why isn't it here? By not included this process the plan becomes harder to implement, significantly increases the risk to our environment, and biodiversity which is supposed to be the main "attraction point", and disrespects local Noongar and other community groups passionate about the area.

In my opinion this document also needs to reflect the strategies of the WA blueprint that initiated it, which it fails to do so especially for the following strategies:

- Strategy H3: Encourage and support private sector involvement in improving trail experiences of whom are completely ignored in this plan by not accounting for private ownership opportunities. **Needs to identify private ownership opportunities in the region in a section of plan**
- Strategy H4: Encourage and support Aboriginal involvement in improving trail experiences. Which has been done terrible in the last year with the organisation ignore local noongar families desires not to develop areas of spiritual significant such as the Porongurup Range, not asking for their suggestion or providing a frame work to encourage their involvement. **Need to drop plans in spiritually significant areas and re-engage with Noongar families in the right way and prioritise a percentage of interpretive trails.**
- Strategy G1: Improve trail facilities, interpretation and safety to increase the appeal of trails experiences. This has been partially covered in the plan but creation of new trails have been prioritised instead which doesn't reflect this strategy. **Need to reorder priority trails too enhance/realign current first and close down unsanctioned trails that are unsafe or unsustainable.**
- Strategy F1: Provide guidance and support to organisations, localities and regions to evaluate and seek investment in existing and future trails. This is nearly done but is compromised in page 56, 57 and appendix 5 by making GSCORE the lead implementor of the majority of trail proposal most of which are already maintained



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by the community in different capacities by numerous organisation and they just need the ability to obtain funding to enhance them to be more sustainable. The suggested governance framework also limits the community to plan and maintain trail through their current organisation. These trails are more likely to have are greater volunteer involvement and longevity if local community groups had sense of ownership instead of being told what to do by a separate body i.e. GSCORE. **Rewrite pages 6,7 and appendix 5 and keep the document as impartial as possible i.e limit mentioning GSCORE apart from the disclaimer and author acknowledgement.**

- Strategy E2: Encourage environmental stewardship through trail-related participation and programs. There is no mention of leave to no trace etc in this plan. **“Leave no trace” or similar program need to be mentioned, encouraged and reference in the plan**
- Strategy E1: Encourage community stewardship for trails by supporting and facilitating improvements in volunteer trail development, maintenance and management. Again this is compromised in page 56, 57 and appendix 5 **Rewrite pages 6,7 and appendix 5 and keep the document as impartial as possible i.e limit mentioning GSCORE apart from the disclaimer and author acknowledgement.**
- Strategy C1: Ensure that information and training on best practice sustainable trail design, construction and maintenance is available to current and potential trail developers, managers and organisations. These resources are not in the appendix or reference in the document. **Add and reference these documents**

Specific changes by section:

Suggestions Need to change

Section 1: Intro and background

Define the plans locations boundaries of the Great Southern region, including a list of the key partners

Where is the background/ history of trails. Why not talk about the history of trial including indigenous and European settler at the start of this section. You say you recognize and value the heritage, culture and spiritual connection of Noongar people with land and water but its not demonstrated in the document. Which family groups live in the great southern how are they all being represented individually in the trails and the process?

What are trail experiences?

Why is the master plan needed?

Referenced wrong the blueprint isn't just page 18. Also I think the page your referring to is 44

“Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017–2021 (the Blueprint) is an overarching guide for consistent and coordinated planning, development and management of quality





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trails and trail experiences across Western Australia. It provides a vision, guiding principles, strategic directions and actions for consideration across the State by government, trail managers and landholders, trail support groups and the community.” (pg12) Inserting the actual quote more accurately represents the documents aim than your interpretation.

Paragraph 2 is inaccurate and contradicted in the next paragraph. Needs rewording

How the master plan was developed?

Shouldn't this section focus more on the methodology of the actual plan creation: who, many were consulted, where etc.

I believe this section could be more precise ie. first paragraph can be replaced with “This plan was developed with local stakeholders following the trail development process (TDP) created by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in partnership with key stakeholder.” Though I believe the majority of this section is irrelevant as the RMTMP only covers stage one of the TDP process and that document is already referenced. Instead this section should just be paragraph 2.

Should have a separate sub title saying “What guidelines and resources should be used for sustainable trail development?” Then discuss the TDP and other important resources.

Section 2: Situation analysis

Need a section describing what our tourism is currently based of and what our unique offerings are before comparing to others.

Maybe a table would be more effective i.e.

Location	type	name	famous for	necessary factors	success
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By only further describing mountain trial only document show a bias towards Mountain biking

Current trail offering

A map would illustrate this

The whole section has lot of vague term such as many and most this section is about data/ location analysis so this should be illustrated via numbers and graphs. Prove these generalizations with more data than the little table.

Need subsection for informal trails: where are they, are they sustainable, what should be done about them? If you introduce the topic you have to explain it.

Current gaps identified should be its own section – This would include the last four paragraphs on pg 13

Reference is irrelevant would be better in the intro

What needed to address these gaps?



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The order the approach are listed should be reversed with the priority on making the current trails sustainable first before adding any more.

The enhancing approach need to include realigning trails to be more sustainable e.g. make sure all unsanctioned bike trails that are being kept/sanctioned are built to the current WA trail guidelines. There should also be another approach or increase in enhance criteria, to assess unsanctioned trails to either close and restore or enhance and sanction

Section 3: Identifying regional opportunities

How were the priority trails projects identified?

Need a 5th category/criteria for decided priority projects: Deliverability constraints

If project site has any combination of; disease risk area, reservoir protection zones, public drinking water source area, high conservation value, endemic populations, high indigenous significance etc.. that could limit project efficiency, risk public backlash, reduce project sustainability then they should be removed from the further assessment/ development. This does not need a site visit to determine as should already be mapped or known by landholder.

A map here illustrating the areas where these criteria can be met including private land i.e. general topographic map with colour coding to demonstrate the extent of suitable areas for increase trail development types.

There should be a subsection promoting private ownership enterprises and providing support via resources and stating that they are also eligible for funding.

Section 4: Trail Development Proposals

With the inclusion of category 5 when deciding priority trails this means the exclusion of National Park locations such as Porongurup Range and Mt Hallowell. These are **NOT** appropriate trail locations.

Section should include current unsanctioned and provide a plan to deal with them.

Mountain Bike trail

This section has been developed more and written differently from the other sections and shows bias. Need editing so each section is written/ covers the same topics as the other trails again shows bias.

Case studies are irrelevant: not comparably due to significant differences in offerings, environment, risks, culture values and public approach (such as leave no trace program).

As the Porongurup range should be discounted due to category 5 being implemented when identifying projects this paragraph referencing the park shouldn't be here either.

Extract Porongurup and Mt Hallowell from this table instead prioritize Poikeclerup and create it and Pwackenbak to be regionally significant trail hubs. Move Albany mounts to assess, close and/or enhance: upgrading the unsanctioned trail that are able to become





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sustainable, closing trails with issues and designing it to be more coherent. With 3 regionally significant trail hubs this will succeed the current demand for the next 10yrs with the ability to add more through private development.

Pg 36 different types of trails are explained in the appendix feels like a repeat

The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit

All but Pingrup grain silo walk and Bremer river paddle are approach should be classified as enhancing please move accordingly.

Trail bike and equestrian feasibility studies

Why haven't the feasibility studies been attached? one/ half a page isn't enough to be called a study. Is this a recommendation to do these studies separate from this document? These two pages need clarifying. What are the private owners opportunities? Where are the reference maps and resources?

I recommend removing these 2 types of trails from the document and stating in the disclaimer that this plan is for non-motorised and animal-based trail types. This makes the document more concise.

Section 5: Implementation

This section should be called recommendations as it isn't a fully developed strategy or process just specific actions that are endorsed as part of the plan.

Appendix 5 section 1.3 developing trails. Why is GSCORE the led the organisation that gets the funding for the trail development should be the lead. **Lead should be TBA depending on who secures the funding.** No2.1 Organisation that secured the funding should be responsible for developing the concept plans, and business cases for the funded project/s. Funding opportunity should be accessible to all community groups/members interested in leading a trail project and anyone/group leading the project should be preparing and implementing trail head and wayfinder strategy. **Therefore the lead should be TBA with GSCORE and land managers etc in support.** No3.1 initiative 1: branding should be led be the regional DOM with GSCORE in support initiative 2: should be more than dual naming and include interpretive trails. This should be led by a member of the locations corresponding family group or a designated representative of their choosing. Initiative 3 and 4: lead should be the organisation that secured the trail development funding with support from DOM so it fits in with the regional promotion they are leading. Initiative 5: digital asset production should already be included in initiative 3. 4.4 initiative 2 should be the responsibility of the lead body necessary that secured the development funding.

Pages 56 and 57 read as if straight from GSCOREs business plan and are inappropriate to put into a document that's aim is to be used as a planning tool for everyone in the region, makes it seem as the documents been made to secure funding for GSCORE and not the region. I suggest re-writing to be more impartial and allow for more flexibility.

I.e.



CONTINUED

i.e.



With quarterly reporting and agreement to conduct the planning and implementation in a way that satisfies the corresponding objectives noted as TBA in amended appendix 5

GSCORE should not be automatically contracted as project manager/coordinator for the proposed trails and should be award through the competitive tender/grants.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:25 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Feedback

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2125

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I want to provide feedback on the above proposal and want to submit the following.

- 1 - I have read the proposal and all documentation provided on the Master Plan.
- 2 - I currently have a property in the Porongurups (Stoney Creek road), 5 acre allotment. However I reside in Perth on a full time basis with the intention to reside at the Stoney Creek Property permanently next year. My husband and I have owned the property for 12 years and my adult children visit it and the area often.
- 3 - I have a vested interest in the area and its current and future plans.
- 4 - I agree with everything and all of the plans suggestions.
- 5 - I think the Great Southern is the best kept secret, but I want it to no longer be a secret. I want everyone to know about it and want them to be able to enjoy everything that it has to offer.
- 6 - I want the region to grow and prosper.
- 7 - The Stirling Ranges and the Porongurups are the most spectacular and diverse areas without a beautiful beach to captivate people. I believe that putting trails or developing areas within these ranges then people will be drawn away from the beaches to get out and explore.
- 8 - The great southern also has some of the best beaches I believe in the world and the best views.
- 9 - Putting Trails around areas will allow people to take in their environment rather than driving past it.

Final word - Please do this plan in full and bring vibrancy and the youth to the area. Get people to love it like we do.

Regards

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:26 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Cc: Elisabeth Braun
Subject: Public Comment Mountain Bike Tra

200119_2126

Flag Status: Flagged

I am writing to express our concerns to the proposal by the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence to the introduction of a mountain bike course within the Porongurup National Park(PNP). Since 2007 our pest management company has been actively involved in the control of declared weeds and weeds of national significance, funded by state and federal governments.

The PNP is a heritage listed park and is a world wide hotspot of exceptional biological and ecological significance. Within the PNP there are 700 plant species in an area of 2600 hectares. The plant species encompass a diverse range of plant groups including the rare flora Fine Leaf Apium and Ornduffia Calthifolia.

The park is also home to the Carnaby Cockatoo red tail foraging on a hakea found specifically in the PNP.

Our concerns include

1. The spread of dieback affecting native susceptible species 2. Spread of weeds eg forget me knots 3. High erosion risks (unstable soil types already eroded with minimum traffic) 4. Fire risk and poor access in the event of fire 5. Well known indigenous sensitive areas We are not against the introduction of mountain bike courses but would like to think they could be located elsewhere Sincerely [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:35 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Public comment for the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2135

Dear GSCORE,

I would like to offer two notes of caution regarding the proposals outlined in the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.

The first concerns the suggested overnight bush camping experience connected with the Nornalup Inlet circuit on page 41 of the Master Plan. The proposal that paddlers hike 3km to the Frankland River Hut seems unlikely to attract many people, given that it would require paddlers to leave their canoes unattended, along with associated equipment. The alternative proposal of building a new camp site would need to be approached with great caution, given the environmental sensitivity of the area. Unlike the Bibbulmun and Munda Biddi trails, on which the camp sites are quite remote, a site on the Frankland would be easily accessible not only by canoers but other users of water craft such as tinnies and the like. There is a clear risk of over-use and mis-use of such a camp site, for example the lighting of fires, littering and the like.

My second concern is of a more general nature and concerns the remoteness of the Walpole-Nornalup area. While Walpole has a Silver Chain nursing post, this is often unattended, and the nearest medical attention is in Denmark, some 65km away. Local ambulances are staffed by volunteers (of which I am one) and attendance at an emergency takes a minimum of half an hour, and obviously more if the location is remote. Anyone who participates in the activities suggested in the plan must be made aware of this situation and understand that they are responsible for their own safety.





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:42 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Submission - SAFETY

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2142

Good evening,

Please take the following into account and modify the Plan to achieve safety for “walkers” (and I suppose cyclists) when confronted by one or more downhill cyclists racing each other down narrow, dual use paths with blind corners providing zero reaction time in many locations;

Pg 28. Existing Trails Albany Heritage Park (comments also apply to the Middleton Beach dual use path).

Pg. 45 Over 55's walking.

Pg 60 Appendix 1: Trail Types & Grade Grade 1.

Pg. 61 Mountain Bikes Downhill.

Pg 62 Moderate **typically narrow trail**.

1. The use of trails currently designated as ‘dual use’, e.g. Middleton Beach path, e.g. Mount Adelaide and Clarence, are inherently dangerous, primarily to over 55's (who typically have a variety of serious medical conditions) and children, who are at greater risk of serious injury from collision by downhill racers permitted to access the ‘dual use path’. Near misses are a common occurrence on these dangerous paths.
2. These paths are actually ‘triple use’ paths given the fact that walkers take their dogs along these paths, using long flexible leads which are incapable of pulling a dog back from a downhill racer in time to avoid this additional type of collision.
3. The momentum and force of a downhill racer/s colliding with a pedestrian correlates to a severe risk assessment due to the highly probable, major injury outcomes of any such collisions.
4. Pg 57 Trail Monitoring Comment Boxes supplied with incident report forms and pencils for pedestrians to report accidents, incidents and hazards.
5. The City of Perth has “SEPARATE WALKING AND SEPARATE CYCLING TRAILS” due to the frequency and severity of collisions and injuries. Accidents have been reported along the Middleton Beach path and the City of Albany has done NOTHING to reduce the Hazards posed by a narrow, triple use (pedestrians, cyclists and dogs) with multiple blind corners. In fact they have refused, in writing, to prune the blind corners or widen the path.
6. PLEASE recommend new “SINGLE USE PATHS” only. For example, are trail/motorbikes permitted on equestrian tracks?
7. PLEASE plan the conversion of current dual use (actually triple use) trails and paths to SINGLE use, i.e. create separate trails for walkers/hikers and mountain bikes.





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I repeat, accidents have been reported to the City of Albany who have written back, effectively saying, we are not going to even prune the vegetation on blind corners to reduce the hazard in order to reduce the probability of serious collisions and injuries. Think broken wrist. Think broken collar bone. Think skin torn off and major bruising.

These events have all HAPPENED along the Middleton Beach path and the City of Albany is aware and has said they will do NOTHING.

Think over 55's on blood thinners at risk of bleeding to death before an ambulance could arrive. This is fact.

Please advise if you need professional risk assessment and advice from Worksafe or similar.

Please take these real world risks into consideration and include them in your planning.

Sincerely,





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:44 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master plan

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2144

Regards to the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
 Trail Development Proposal
 Porongurup MTB Trails
 Porongurup National Park

As an active volunteer, business owner and resident of the Porongurup area, I am against the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan proposal to develop mountain bike trails in the heritage listed national park. The Porongurup mountain range is of great importance to our local community for its cultural significance, water catchment, biotical history and unique, rare and diverse flora and fauna. The implementation of the trails would cause an unacceptable risk to these functions and cause a lot of our current community members to either move or experience high emotional distress. I believe this would ring true for many of the regions National parks and attached communities and wish for Gscore to remove all these locations from the plan.

As an alternative I think more focus should be directed towards finding a feasible location on crown or privately owned land. Giving private owners the opportunity would increase new businesses and increase the probability that this new revenue will be spent in the community propping up all local business not just those related to tourism. Encouraging private ownership will also ensure probability of proper maintain over a long period of time as a percentage of revenue would be used to protect the trails to ensure their own investment.

I do think having a tourism attraction like the trails would be great for the local areas by adding another point of interest to encourage people to travel into the southern regions but it should not be at the cost of our already existing attractions and the community. If the plan was to go through in an alternative location, sustainably to balance to the new industry, the community and environment.
 Kind regards

[REDACTED]





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[Redacted]
Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:45 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
Regional Trails Masterplan

200119_2145

Hi there,

I would like to provide feedback on the above proposal.

I have relatives who live in the Porongurups and Albany and feel like the plan will bring more people to the areas and I feel that this whole region is a hidden gem.

I feel the Stirling Ranges and the Porongurups will hugely benefit from trails and development which will allow the businesses in the area to grow.

[Redacted]





From: Sayah Drummond <communications@ohcg.org.au>
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:52 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Cc: Heather Adams
Subject: Submission regarding Draft Master Trails Plan

200119_2152

Flag Status: Flagged

The [Oyster Harbour Catchment Group](#), as a community landcare group that has been, for the last 28 years, fostering our local catchment communities to be prosperous and sustainable, we object to your method of identifying trail development opportunities. (pg 16)

We would have expected locations that have significant environmental, cultural and planning constraints to *also* be part of the process of identifying trail locations and on those criteria, some areas to should have been immediately discounted.

For instance, if a project site has any combination of: disease risk, reservoir protection zones, high conservation value, endemic populations or high indigenous significance, which would limit project efficiency or existence, risk public backlash and reduce project sustainability, then they should have been removed from further assessment/development.

By not including this step that is included in other master plans such as the Perth and Peel Mountain Bike Master Plan, this plan becomes harder to implement, significantly increases the risk to our environment and biodiversity and puts the plan at risk from public backlash. It also demonstrates disrespect to local Noongar people and other community groups.

We feel the plan has not adequately addressed:

- Private sector involvement in creating trail experiences and private ownership opportunities
- Encouraging and supporting Aboriginal involvement in identifying trail locations
- Improving existing trails, facilities, interpretation and *safety* first so as to increase the appeal of trail experiences; close down unsanctioned trails that are unsafe or unsustainable
- Providing guidance and support to organisations, localities and regions to evaluate and seek investment in existing and future trails rather than making GSCORE the lead implement or of the majority of trail proposals
- Encourage environmental stewardship through trail-related participation which is more likely to be done with greater volunteer involvement and local community groups having a sense of ownership





CONTINUED

- GSCORE should *not* be automatically contracted as project manager/coordinator for the proposed trails, the award should be made through a competitive process of achieving funding

In closing, again, we would have expected locations that have significant environmental, cultural and planning constraints to be eliminated from consideration on those very criteria. We feel bike trails have no place in national parks because of their impact upon the same criteria.

Sayah Drummond
Communications Officer
Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Inc.

P 08 9851 2703 M 0467 955 317
E communications@ohcg.org.au
P PO Box 118 MT BARKER WA 6324
W www.ohcg.org.au





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:55 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails Master Plan Feedback

200119_2155

Flag Status: Flagged

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to give my feedback regarding the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.

It's fantastic to see that a plan has been extensively developed and to see the range of trails planned for a variety of users. We are so lucky to have such an amazing natural landscape in the Great Southern and to make better use of it through planned trails is great for our active community, our visitors and to put the Great Southern on the active tourism map.

I am an active father of two young children and a local pharmacy owner. Myself and my kids love mountain biking and hiking on our mounts and I think this plan can only be a positive for Albany and the Great Southern. Leading the way on this shows our kids and community how an active lifestyle can be such a great contributor to our own physical health and the health of our community. Many of my older customers cycle and hike and it's fantastic to see how these activities contribute to their quality of life as they age and to their social lives. Enabling safer and better options to be active can only be a positive.

My only concern regarding the plan is the "Medium" timeframe of the Albany Heritage Park trails. I'm well aware of the development and consultation that has happened with these trails and I really feel this is a missed opportunity to not develop these trails sooner. I'm not sure that people are aware of the benefits separated trails will have on this area, as well as the huge potential as a tourist destination so close to town.

All in all though, well done on a great plan, I look forward to these trails being developed and hope to enjoy them with my family and community and I am they will draw people to Albany as a tourist destination.

Kind regards





Photo credit: Tourism WA



200119_2208

Comments on Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP)

Preliminary comment

Having consulted to the preparation of the RTMP I am aware of the comprehensive planning process that is behind this plan and I commend GSCORE and the steering committee on their work. I support the objectives and strategies in the RTMP with the occasional qualifying statement as noted below. Also having been involved with the drive trail, rail trail and equestrian trail planning I was pleased to see how the drive trails had evolved into The Great Southern Treasures Recreation circuit and that further investigation into the feasibility of the Grain Line Rail Trails is proposed. I am hoping that there can be more provision for equestrians and have made some suggestions within this document to that end for consideration.

Comment 1 Refer Executive Summary Page 5

The Vision statement refers to showcasing 'the region's unique landscapes, biodiversity, geology, Aboriginal culture and settler heritage'. It is assumed that this can include initiatives for the future such as sustainable energy, land care etc. is this assumption correct?

Comment 2 Refer Executive Summary Page 6

The Grain Train Rail Trails could include equestrian activities as well. This is acknowledged on page 36 and so could perhaps be included in some conditional way here? Inclusion of equestrian activities even in some small way in this Executive Summary acknowledges equestrians and their input to the planning process.

Snorkelling is noted in the legend below and not in the trail tables above which is a little confusing, it is suggested snorkelling is deleted from the graphic and equestrian is included in a conditional way (perhaps faintly, with a textured graphic or with an asterix and footnote?).

Comment 3 Refer Page 18

Leisure Trail Users Expected Activity Options and Facilities - it is suggested that the easy access trails will also likely include trails in natural areas and so the locations trails are linked to should note camping as an accommodation type and developed day use sites should also be noted (such as Valley of the Giants, Greens Pool, The Gap, Point Ann). The text could read as follows ...'Easy access trails linked to town site and/or accommodation (including camping areas) and major day use sites in natural areas.'

Comment 4 Refer Table 4 Page 18

Looking at the Active and Adventure classifications it is unclear which category 'supported experiences' such as the Three Capes Walk or the Overland Track would be in, as both of these experiences have a high level of infrastructure (the highly developed accommodation huts and trail hardening such as boardwalks) and there is a high level of management input from both the park management agencies (managing user numbers, visitor risk, evacuation plans, trail maintenance etc.) and from the tourism operators (guiding, providing food, accommodation, waste removal etc. etc.). It is important to note that if remote experiences, with minimal facilities are provided, visitor impact will still need managing by either hardening trails and campsites and providing infrastructure such as toilets, or managing visitor numbers (i.e. the visitor numbers will need to be kept low by management via a permit system or similar, no matter how popular they become). The economic returns from these permit experiences with low numbers could, however, be relatively high as visitors may pay higher fees for the uniqueness.

If 'supported experiences' are under the Adventure category I suggest





CONTINUED

Expected Activity Options and Facilities More remote experiences, which may be guided, with limited facilities such as lodges and huts. Management intervention (such as restricting numbers, installing boardwalks or hardening of fragile areas) required to ensure trail users do not impact the natural environment.

If 'supported experiences' are under the Active category that text will need adjusting to include guided experiences, lodges/huts and management intervention.

It is considered important to acknowledge that infrastructure and/or management resources are required even for Adventure experiences.

Comment 5 Refer Page 20 Table 5

The appropriateness of having Rail Trail under Activity Type is questioned as a rail trail is a facility / piece of infrastructure and not an activity. Rail trails as noted on page 36 are traditionally used for a variety of activities including walking, cycling, horse riding and sometimes trail bike riding and other specialised rail based activities. Rail trails are possibly a destination opportunity more than an activity type and so it is suggested they are left off this table.

Comment 6 Refer Page 20 Bottom Paragraph

It is suggested that 'regional' is placed in front of equestrian trails as page 52 notes the strong demand for local trails and that equestrians should liaise with local authorities to develop local trails.

Comment 7 Refer Page 22

Multi use trails have not yet been mentioned and this may be the place to introduce multiuse trails and discuss some of the pros and cons of multiuse trails as they are referred to in Figure 3. Alternatively reference can be made on page 22, to page 36 for more detail and perhaps page 36 can include some discussion on multiuse trails. Issues discussed could include - multiuse trails give better value for money by providing for a greater range of user groups and therefore more visitors but have the potential for conflict between user groups and may require greater management input. It should also be noted that if a trail is to be multiuse or not needs deciding at the outset, so appropriate infrastructure and or enforcement can be provided as part of the trail planning process.

Comment 8 Refer Page 22

The Grain Train Rail Trails have significant potential to also provide for equestrians (refer Collie Darkan Rail Trail and Margaret River Rail Trails) and this is noted on page 36 and could be included on Table 10. If this opportunity could also be acknowledged in Figure 3 it will confirm subsequent trail planning stages can consider that option. Including possible equestrian activity in this section, even in a qualified way (say with an asterix and footnote) will also acknowledge the significant input from equestrian groups to the trail planning process. Refer also Comment 2 above.

Comment 9 Refer Page 22

Introducing the Grain Train Rail Trails at this stage is supported.

Comment 10 Page 24 Refer Map 1

Why the Denmark to Nornalup Rail Trail is not included here is not clear. It is suggested the heading in the legend should be 'Existing Regional Tracks and Trails' (it is assumed the Denmark to Nornalup Rail Trail has not been included as it is not considered a regional trail?). The Disused Rail Corridor heading may need expanding to be Disused Grain Train Rail Corridor to differentiate it from the unused sections of the Albany to Denmark to Nornalup Rail Corridor.

Comment 11 Page 26 Table 6





CONTINUED

Iconic is mentioned again here but has not been defined? What differentiates/constitutes an iconic trail? This will need to be clear to assist with the maintenance prioritising process.

Comment 12 Page 26 Table 6, Page 32 Table 8, Page 40, Page 45 and Appendix 4

Facilities required to support trails are mentioned throughout the report such as

- In the proposed strategies for Useability in Tables 6 and 8 which include 'improvements to trailhead facilities';
- On page 40 which discusses launching points for paddlers and associated facilities;
- On page 45 which discusses the recreation nodes associated with activity trails and
- In Appendix 4 which separates carparks, toilets and trailheads.

The need for facilities at the start of a trail is therefore established within the report and some references refer to the recommended facilities such as parking (suggested it should be shaded if possible), trail information, toilets, seating and picnic facilities as well as activity specific facilities such as launch sites. However it may be appropriate to briefly describe the facilities needed at the start of a trail and confirm what a trailhead is on page 26, or maybe on page 24, so that it is has been established for the rest of the report the sorts of facilities that need to be considered in association with trail development.

Comment 13 Refer Table 7 Page 28

Table 6 notes the need for 'new trail development for the leisure market in coastal and mountain areas'. As someone who is often looking for day trips from Albany for an elderly parent with walker I would particularly support new Grade 1 mountain walks (we already visit Point Ann, the Gap etc. in coastal areas). These do not need to achieve elevation, just attractive views of the mountains, through areas with wildflowers and birds and plenty of rest spots. If these walks are associated with other more difficult walks and cycle trails and have good picnic facilities the facilities may also suit family groups with members of different capabilities. If these facilities do exist, apologies...I haven't tracked them down yet, I see there is a Bolganup Grade 2 Trail noted on page 68 which may be suitable. It is also noted on page 68 that a Grade 2 Stirling Ranges Lowlands Trail is proposed and this is strongly supported. Perhaps consideration could be given to a short Grade 1 section at the start of the Grade 2 trails? Grade 1 trails can be regionally and even nationally significant such as the Gap and the Tree Top Walk.

Comment 14 Page 34

Pwakkenbak trails is there an indicative location for the trailhead and associated parking facilities? The summit has limited capacity - are cyclists likely to want to drive to the top and cycle down, if so parking capacity will likely need increasing? Page 69 does acknowledge the need for trailhead facilities but perhaps it should be mentioned here as well. Also page 46 notes this area will also have hiking trails developed which could also be mentioned here.

Comment 15 Page 36

Refer comment 7 above. Perhaps page 22 can just refer to a dual use / multiuse trail definition on page 36? Will dual use in this master plan always mean walking and cycling...is that a generally accepted definition? Perhaps this could be clarified here?

Comment 16 Page 36

Great to see the potential for equestrian use of rail trails included. Could Table 10 also include a note that equestrian use of the Grain Train Rail Trails will also be considered?

Comment 17 Page 36

Great to see reference to the Albany to Nornalup Rail Line.





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Comment 18 Page 37

Munda Biddi Trail Sandpatch. An equestrian trail linking Elleker to the Stidwell Bridle Trail would also be well received. Could the proposed Munda Biddi Trail realignment be considered for equestrian use as well? This multi-use already occurs on the rail trail so continuation of trail sharing may be appropriate.

Comment 19 Page 40

Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Paddle Trails- there may be other opportunities to paddle such as on the Gordon River in Tambellup and maybe Martup Pool. These paddles would complement the lake paddles, though their suitability (in terms of water levels and under water debris) and availability needs confirming with the relevant land managers.

Comment 20 Refer The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Page 45

Overall concept strongly supported. It is suggested the following is added to the end of the second paragraph. 'Each node will become an attractive destination in its own right that is easy to find, with shady parking, information and toilets and picnic facilities as required to support the activity trails'. If the nodes are not attractive they will not become popular as word of mouth and electronic media ensure visitor experiences, good and bad, are quickly shared. Appendix 4 confirms that the need for this supporting infrastructure has been acknowledged, however there also needs to be a commitment to quality, for example although toilets and car park are noted as provided at the Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre there is no disabled access parking bay or path from the car park to the front door making it very difficult for some visitors to access the centre and its excellent facilities, particularly those with prams, wheelchairs or walkers.

Comment 21 Table 13 and Map 5

It appears most (if not all) 'outdoor recreation nodes' are managed by local government and this has possibly been a criteria for their selection. Dependant on discussions with relevant managers especially DBCA, it may be appropriate to note that additional short, easy, hiking opportunities could be developed in some nature reserves, (e.g. Moornaming Nature Reserve where it's a long way between the activities at Gnowangerup and Pingrup). Alternatively there could be a qualifying note at the bottom of Table 13 that additional or alternative recreation nodes may be identified during the development of the recreation circuit.

Comment 22 Refer Map 5 Page 49

Again dependant on the selection criteria for the above 'outdoor recreation nodes' it is suggested that a couple of nodes are developed on the major access routes to encourage visitors to stop and engage with the recreation circuit. Suggestions are

- Martup Pool on the Beaufort River and on Albany Highway a very attractive site with potential for a riverside walk which loops through the reserve to give a wildflower walk as well.
- Boxwood Hills on South Coast Highway the development of a wildflower walk in the town reserve should be feasible given the richness of the flora in the area. This walk would encourage visitors to stop and use the cafe (though a public toilet is also recommended that is always open, as visitors were observed using a nearby parking bay) and stop and take a break on the long drive. As well as being a 'hook' for the recreation circuit it could also be a gateway to the Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve.

Also it is suggested that information about the circuit is provided at existing outdoor recreation nodes in the Porongurups and Stirling Range National Parks. The suggestions in this comment could be allowed for by the inclusion of the qualifying sentence at the bottom of Comment 21.





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Comment 23 Refer Map 5 Page 49

Cycling should maybe be at Farrer Reserve and not Myrtle Benn Reserve...there are inconsistencies between Table 13 and Map 5.

Comment 24 Refer Page 52

Mention should also be made of the equestrian trails that are currently being formalised in Gull Rock National Park by DBCA.

Comment 25 Refer Page 52

After the note about local trails the following sentence is recommended for inclusion. 'It may be feasible to include equestrian use as part of the development of other trails of regional significance such as the Grain Line Rail Trails and this equestrian use will be investigated as part of the trail planning process for the individual trails'.

Comment 26 Refer Page 52

What does designation of the stock routes as Heritage Trails involve? At least one of the trails is already Heritage Listed with the Heritage Council (Shire of Plantagenet has the documentation which will give the exact terminology)...is designation as a Heritage Trail different to this Heritage Listing process? What does designation as a Heritage Trail mean in terms of the public's ability to access/use the trail?

Comment 27 Refer Page 52

As rail trails for equestrian use are also being developed in the South West Region it is suggested another dot point is included regarding monitoring the use of these rail trails to inform the suitability of including equestrian use on the Grain Line Rail Trails.

Comment 28 Refer Page 55

Under Community and Economic Development Opportunities include a point
4.6 Community Benefits foster community pride and self-worth by telling the community's stories through the interpretation planning process. Medium 2-3 years.
There will also be environmental education opportunities in the interpretation planning process.

Comment 29 Refer Page 70

Additional parking and toilet facilities and / or camping facilities will be required by hikers using the Grain Train Rail Trails as they do not travel so far in a day as cyclists do.
Again the possible inclusion of equestrian use of the Grain Train Rail Trails is recommended.

Comment 30 Page 73

See comment 20 above about the need for facilities to be high quality. The need for toilets should be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Comment 31 Page 74

As there are a number of existing and potential equestrian initiatives in the plan it is recommended that a Proposed Bridle Trails Section is included here. The format of the section may be different to the previous sections but by including the section here it acknowledges equestrians. The section can be qualified with a statement requiring equestrian groups to engage with their local land managers. This section could include

Create New Trail Experiences as part of Multiuse Trail Development

- Consider equestrian use of the Grain Line Rail Trails





CONTINUED

Develop Trail Linkages as part of Multiuse Trail Development

- Consider equestrian use of the proposed rerouted Munda Biddi Trail between Elleker and Albany. This could link the Torbay to Elleker Rail Trail to the Stidwell Bridle Trails.

Enhance Existing Trails

- Formalise local equestrian trails in Gull Rock National Park (underway)
- Formalise (where feasible) local equestrian trails particularly those close to centres of population through engagement with relevant land managers.

If the above section is included in the RTMP, equestrian components will need integrating into Appendix 6 Stakeholder Action Plan.

Comment 32 Page 78

It is suggested that Trails WA will have an important role to play in Promoting the Visitor Experience as this is a State wide data base that interstate and international trail users may use.

Comment 33 Page 78 Point 3.2

Community groups (e.g. historical societies etc.) will also have a lot of local knowledge and information to contribute to an interpretation strategy.

Comment 34 Page 79 Point 4.3

Ensure access for all is incorporated into facility provision.

Comment 35 Page 79

Refer Comment 28 for additional community benefits that could be identified here of community pride and self-worth and environmental education. It is envisaged these would be achieved by including community groups in the interpretation planning process.

Comment 36 Page 80

It is considered there needs to be a qualifying statement that acknowledges that more detailed assessment of the various trails and associated recreation sites may result in variations to the facilities proposed in Appendix 4 and Appendix 6 for example we looked for Frankland River Wildflower Walk in Frankland (looked at the information bay and the store was shut so we couldn't ask there) and couldn't find it so some more signage may be required.

Comment 37 Page 80 - 87

See Comment 31, include reference to equestrian use as appropriate.

Comment 38 Page 82

Pink Lake was noted in Appendix 4 as needing a car park that is not included here.





200119_2215

Karl Hansom,
Project Coordinator
GSCORE
22 Collie St
Albany WA 6330

Re: Comment on Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 2029

Dear Karl,

We would like to start with something written recently in a 'national' publication. Whilst this is not meant as an opinion piece, it is worth noting the fact that we have no sanctioned mountain bike trails in the region has not gone unnoticed by the broader riding community. This is an extract from the latest *Mountain Bike Australia* magazine, who wrote an article on the Southern Peaks event, run annually by the Albany Mountain Bike Club (AMBC) each September:



This article is somewhat embarrassing but sadly describes the riding experience in Albany perfectly and we believe this is a timely reminder that there is a significant need for trail development in this region, to cater for both the existing demand and predicted growth in the recreational activity

The AMBC have reviewed the Draft Masterplan and believe that the needs and potential of mountain biking in the region have been adequately met by this document. We consider the aim to "establish the Great Southern as a World Class Trails Destination" as bold and ambitious but as a club we fully believe this is achievable in this region with the right support, management and funding. We appreciate Mountain Biking is acknowledged as being significantly under catered for in the region at present (Page 13) and requires some serious investment in order to cater for the needs locally and to attract people to the region. We consider the document adequately identifies what was put forward by the club in the consulting stage in that trails need to be immediately accessible, create high quality overnight experiences and support other local infrastructure (pump track etc.).

Mountain biking is a diverse sport, comprising a number of distinct disciplines and utilised by a wide demographic. For some it's a nature based recreational activity, for others it's a sport and for some it's a competitive pursuit. AMBC believes the Draft Masterplan acknowledges this diversity, and as such the wide range of trails types required by specific mountain bike user groups.

Below is Albany Mountain Bike Club's comments on the specific sections of the plan.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (Page 5):

The AMBC sees these 4 objectives as significant. Very few of these objectives are being met in the current environment. We see objectives 1 and 2 as being significant from the club's perspective.





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Integrated Planning and Management:

- Having a sound understanding by key stakeholders around planning, management and maintenance responsibilities is crucial to this plan being implemented. In this respect the AMBC would like to see written delegated authority between stakeholders around maintenance and management of the trail networks. We would like to see more funding available for trail development and maintenance training that can be passed onto our members who could then take responsibility for their use of the trails. This creates more respect for the environment we ride in and a better understanding of how best to manage what we ride.

Sustainable and accessible Trail Network:

- We fully support the development and construction of worlds best practice trail networks. This will address issues currently seen in the region around trail deterioration, illegal trail construction and the dangers associated with sharing trails with other users. We also see the need to significantly upgrade and support existing trail networks to assure their longevity. We fully understand the development of mountain bike trails in this region is very divisive and we would like to state that the AMBC wants to see the most sustainable trail building practices adhered to during the construction process, we also believe there is a need to educate the community around what is involved in the construction of mountain bike trails in order to calm fears around bikes destroying the environment.

PRIORITY TRAILS (PAGE 6):

We generally support the experiences identified as 'priority trails' within the document. Having the Albany Heritage Park as a priority under the Trails Hub Strategy is seen by us as significant given the planning and development that has already gone into progressing the establishment of this network. We feel this solidifies this proposed network as being important to local riders and also in attracting people to ride in Albany. The Albany Heritage Park is located within riding distance of the largest population within the region, and most importantly is one of the few priority trails that can be easily accessed independently by youth under the age of 17. This should hopefully significantly boost funding opportunities available for sustainable construction and better management, in respect to both the environmental values and reducing conflict between user groups

Further to this we fully support the inclusion of trail networks at Mount Hallowell in Denmark, Pwackenbak in Mount Barker and the development of the Porongurup's. We see the potential of the Porongurup's to attract national significance as being very important to the region, although we acknowledge there will be certain difficulties in developing trails in this area due to a number of sensitivities. Regardless, given the elevation, soil composition and beautiful bushland surrounds in this area the potential is huge!

Further to this the AMBC also fully supports all of the proposed Cycle touring trails. This is a fast growing genre of the sport and having the ability to ride for multiple days through previous unrideable (or road rideable only) is a great advantage for the region and will open up huge opportunities for more remote communities. This trail network also provides a safer option for existing road riders away from vehicle traffic. We see these trail networks as being easy to identify, construct and maintain due to the near level topography and the areas these trails are proposed to run through. We consider it a very exciting prospect to see multi day trails in the Stirling ranges and also to have the ability to link smaller towns within the lower Great Southern region. These types of bike networks have proven very prosperous in other areas around the world.

While we were happy to see that Poikeclerup MTB trails was included as requiring enhancements to the existing trail network (page 34), we were disappointed that it wasn't included as a priority network. The AMBC and the broader mountain bike community see this area as the best potential for trail development to occur within a reasonable timeframe and cater to the significant demand of the region. AMBC has met with the City of Albany over the last 12 months, and significant progression has been made in negotiating a shared vision for this locality. This area has the potential to assist growth of junior riders and fast track rider progression in a way that other proposed networks could not achieve within the short term. We would strongly encourage GSCORE to reconsider this and include Poikeclerup as a priority trail network. We consider Poikeclerup ticks the boxes when it comes to the specific categories identified on Page 16. We consider the 'Active Trail user' and the "Adventure Trail User" (page 17) have not been given the credit they deserve, and this is a growing market. Albany has a disproportionately high number, given our small population and current lack of constructed trails, of competitive junior riders competing at both State and National level. We also consider Poikeclerup has the potential to be elevated from Local Trail to Regional Trail significance under the 'Destination Significance' heading on Page 19. Poikeclerup easily meets the criteria of "Destination Opportunity" as the destination and area is unique, the land is available, topography is very good for all forms of riding, accessibility is reasonable (although we acknowledge distance is a slight issue), and the trails offer some very good diversity. This trail network also ticks the box for 'Destination





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Deliverability'. From our experience in trying to get trails developed in this region Poikeclerup would be one of the easiest and fastest to deliver with low opposition from other stakeholders

We are happy to see the Munda Bididi Trail is considered on page 37 as requiring enhancing. The AMBC fully supports and agrees this that trail requires re alignment through the Sandpatch area. This will enhance the start/finish of the trail and make this end of the track of true national significance. While the Munda Bididi attracts cyclists to our region, the importance of this trail for local riders of all abilities is significant,

CONCLUSION:

We applaud GSCORE on the work they have done in completing this document. As the largest mountain bike club in the region we thank you for identifying the significant need for development and acknowledgment of our sport. We sincerely hope you can consider our above comments in the final documentation and report.

Kind regards,

Nick Walls
President Albany Mountain Bike Club
0457 968 395



Photo credit: FORM



200119_2234

**Feedback Submission on the Draft Great Southern Regional Trails
Master Plan 2020-2029**

Ref: Proposed Porongurup Trail Network (Porongurup National Park) Potato Patch Downhill and XC MTB Trails (New)
Pages 34-35 and 69 of the Draft *Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020-2029*.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

██████████ **OPPOSED** to the entire proposed MTB trail network in the Porongurup National Park, and in particular to the Potato Patch Downhill and XC MTB Trails of this network.

We do not believe that the Porongurup National Park is a suitable location for MTB trails.

Impacts on our property

██████████ situated on the northern slopes of the Porongurup Range in the Great Southern wine region of Western Australia. ██████████ below the Potato Patch, and ██████████ would be impacted by the proposed Potato Patch Downhill and XC MTB Trails. Our concerns for our property include the following related to our lifestyle, livelihood and safety:

- issues associated with the serious erosion caused by the trails and their usage;
- trespassing onto our land by MTB riders, including for the creation of unofficial new trails;
- noise disturbances for us and visitors to our cellar sales, possibly from dawn through to after dark;
- litter transfer;
- privacy issues, including drone usage on the trails; and
- interference with water flows from the national park to our property.

Impacts on the national park

██████████ also concerned about the impacts of the proposed MTB trail network on the Porongurup National Park. These concerns include the following related to damage associated with construction of the MTB trail network, and ongoing damage during operation:

- While the Master Plan refers to a “sustainable, accessible and well-designed MTB trail network in this location”, the Potato Patch is currently not accessible and thus part of the national park would need to be cleared for an access road. This would be in addition to the vegetation destruction required for the car park and toilets outlined on page 69 of the plan, plus for any shelters, picnic areas and the trails themselves;
- The design of the trails is likely to include multiple switchbacks, which means that the amount of national park clearance required would increase significantly;
- The presence of cars, bikes and riders would result in a heightened fire risk (e.g. from cigarette butts, car exhaust pipes and bike tyres), to an increasingly dry national park;



CONTINUED

- There would be an increased spread of dieback and weeds as a result of mud and soil in bike tyres (note that in addition to drinking water being unavailable within the national park, there will be no water available to clean bikes);
- There would be negative impacts on flora and fauna (note that the DBCA Visitor Guide to this national park states that the park is “a biodiversity hotspot of international significance”); and
- Erosion damage to the national park is likely to prevent the trail network from being sustainable.

Cultural impacts

We also consider that cultural constraints associated with the importance of the Porongurup Range to the local Indigenous people should preclude such a development in this area.

Comparison to the Goat Farm Mountain Bike Park

The only comparable MTB trail network within a Western Australian national park appears to be the Goat Farm Mountain Bike Park (Goat Farm), located in the Greenmount National Park. The Goat Farm does not have the dense vegetation (including the tall timber), and the diverse array of flora and fauna, found in the Porongurup National Park.

The April 2019 Goat Farm Redevelopment Concept Plan includes aims such as “Provide a shuttle road to access gravity focused trails” and “Provide additional parking for 100-120 vehicles to cater for events” (page 7):

- Would a shuttle road also be needed for the Potato Patch Downhill trails? If so, further vegetation clearance would be required for this road.
- The Goat Farm is “used by school groups, individuals and mountain bike clubs for various events, and has previously held both Cross Country and Downhill State Championships as well as National events” (page 4 of the Concept Plan). Would the Porongurup MTB trail network also be utilised by such a range of events? If so, this would increase the adverse impacts on the national park and the neighbouring private properties.

Please note that page 4 of the Concept Plan also states the following about the Goat Farm: “There is limited passive surveillance, as there are no other reasons for people to utilise the area, and it is prone to anti social behaviour.” This raises similar concerns about the proposed Porongurup MTB trail network.

Conflict of interest

A final point that we wish to make is that we consider that GSCORE as the Project Manager for the Great Southern Regional Trails projects has a significant conflict of interest as the public feedback on GSCORE's Master Plan will be reviewed by GSCORE's Project Management Executive Group. We suggest that an independent review is essential.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further details regarding our concerns.





200119_2241_1

GSCORE: Public Comment Submission. 19.01.2020

To whom it concerns.

RE: Section 4. Trail Development Proposals.

P34. We disagree with the Porongurup MTB trails.

- Reasons.**
1. This is a culturally sensitive site of significance for surrounding aboriginal groups.
 2. It is a fragile landscape with significant flora & fauna.
 3. This is a Nationally heritage listed site with the prime focus to preserve the unique flora and fauna.
 4. There is already concerning levels of public visitation, straining existing facilities, high noise levels threatening the bird life and reducing the pleasure & solace of leisurely bush-walking.
 5. DBCA struggle now for funding to maintain existing paths & amenities. Funding would be better directed to improving much needed closer- at-hand fire-fighting amenities.
 6. Track development and bikes subject to ongoing cleanliness have a huge potential to spread the devastating dieback (phytophthora) pathogen which has already decimated large tracks of our state's flora severely impacting our rare fauna species.

Suggestion. A perimeter trail outside the Park Boundary with feral proof fence demarcation of the park.

P34. We disagree with the Mount Hallowell MTB trails.

- Reasons.**
1. This site is culturally significant.
 2. The site has a unique diversity of flora, fungi and organisms that have evolved on the granite outcrops.
 3. The steepness and rainfall make the site very prone to erosion.

P 37. We disagree with Stirling Range Valley cycle & hiking trail. (subject to alignment).

Suggestion. If the track followed the existing roads enabling a wider clear fire mitigation strip it would be advantageous all round. Fires appear to readily jump the existing road widths.





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P37. We disagree with the O'neill to Wansborough Walk dual use trail. (subject to design).

Suggestion. That the new path be built on the farmers fence-lines retaining a bush strip between the existing road and the new path where possible to minimise loss of flora and in doing so provide a wider fire buffer combined with farmers firebreaks.

██████████ Friends of Mondurup Reserve, Mount Barker, W.A. 6324.

From: ██████████
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:41 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails Master Plan Submission

200119_2241_2

Flag Status: Flagged

In reference to the Draft trails master plan document I would like to express my opposition to the proposed Mountain bike track at the Potato Patch in the Porongurup NP. The extremely important Environmental and cultural significance of this site should exclude it as a potential site for a MTB track. The risk and consequences of degradation in this area are too great not only from the construction of the track itself but associated works required in the form of toilets, access roads, car parks etc. I also believe that with the huge number of people taking up mountain biking, the potential number of visitors would be excessive and lead to degradation of the Park. Due to the strong opposition to this track from both the Aboriginal and local community expressed at the recent public meeting, this proposed track should be removed from the master plan and further environmental risk assessment and planning/ investigation would be a waste of time. I support the construction of well designed MTB tracks to cater for increasing number of riders but these need to be created in areas where there is a lower risk of damaging significant natural assets. I think an area of private land which had been previously (or partly) cleared and used for agriculture would be more suitable. This would also enable camping and other activities without significant degradation risk. I think gscore need to go back to the drawing board with this one and use multi criteria analysis to select a suitable site for a world class Mountain Bike track. This analysis could include criteria required to make a good track eg steep slope, rocks as well as considering environmental risk (dieback risk, environmental significance) and other factors - distance from shops, accomodation etc. to come up with a more suitable location. As stated previously areas of private cleared land eg an old quarry could provide a good riding experience with little negative impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Regards
 ██████████



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:55 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2255_1

Dear Mr Hansom,

I write to note the reassurance you gave me that all trails and specific proposals arising from this master plan will be publicly advertised thereby enabling public comment or objection prior to adoption or any acquisition/construction. I am still waiting for your email in confirmation please.

I also wish object to the advertising period over the christmas new year holiday season and to the onerous conditions placed on those wishing to comment.

I ask that when planning the detail of trails in particular, that any existing public access be not infringed by new proposals. All to often existing access tracks etc are commandeered to then restrict or exclude use.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:55 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trail Master Plan Comment

200119_2255_2

To whom it may concern

I write to provide my comment in relation to the Great Southern Regional Trail Master Plan. I have a longstanding association with Porongurup and the community that calls the area home, visit the area frequently and have hiked the majority of public walking trails in the Great Southern (including the entire Bibbulmun Track).

I wish to comment only on the proposal insofar as it relates to the Porongurup National Park. I am broadly supportive of recreational trails, both hiking and biking - but do not support the creation of any further trails in the Porongurup National Park.

This area is heritage listed and rightly so - it is an incredible biodiversity hotspot. I would encourage you to take the time to go up on the existing hiking trails and explore its beauty and appreciate the fragile ecosystems that it supports. If you had, it would surprise me that you would want to disturb this beautiful place any further.

I oppose the development of any further trails within Porongurup National Park on two key grounds: environmental and cultural.

Dr Stephen Hopper from UWA has plainly explained the detrimental effect mountain bike trails would have on the fragile ecosystems that survive on this ancient range. It is high time that we listened to, and respected, the views of the experts. Dr Hopper's warnings were grave and I am incredibly concerned that if the proposal for an MTB trail in Porongurup National Park proceeds it would cause irreversible damage to the fauna and flora that has called the range home for millennia.

The range is also of significant cultural value to the Menang and Noongar people. I was concerned to learn recently from Mr Larry Blight that local elders have not even been consulted in relation to the draft plan. Plainly, the local indigenous community do not want the plan to proceed.

There are significant opportunities for MTB trails within Porongurup and indeed the Great Southern more generally. It is unclear why GSCORE has settled on the Porongurup National Park, particularly given its ecological and cultural significance. I was disturbed to hear from a representative of GSCORE at the Porongurup town hall meeting that the primary consideration was economic: that is, to drive tourism and create business opportunities in the area. She conceded that environmental and cultural concerns had not even been factored into the consideration, and may have resulted in a different decision if they had. This causes me significant concern.

I would like to hear from GSCORE in response to the following questions:

1. Why was the central consideration in developing the draft plan economic gain and what consideration, if any, was given to the environmental impact of the plan?
2. Why did GSCORE not consult the local aboriginal community in relation to the draft plan when it concerned a cultural site of significance?
3. Has the Federal Environment Minister been made aware of the plan given it involves a heritage listed place and will require approvals under the EPBC Act 1999 (Cth)?
4. Who within GSCORE authorised the release of the Draft Plan just before Christmas with a short window for public comment, and was that decision deliberately made in an attempt to stifle community engagement opposing the plan?



200119_2255_3

1. INTRODUCTION

Personal background relevant to regional planning, design and management of trails

These comments on the Draft Strategy are based on over **60 years of experience** as a **walker** in natural areas as well as a rock climber (Stirlings, Porongurup, West Cape Howe and Margaret River area) and caver (Nullarbor, Leeuwin-Naturaliste and Tasmania). I have been an extensive walk trail user of short and easy trails through to long distance (several hundred km) hikes, also undertaking highly challenging trails and trackless routes in Australia and in numerous other countries around the world, notably in the wilds of Scotland and the European Dolomites.

- I became the inaugural South Coast Regional Manager of National Parks in 1978 based in Albany, a position which I occupied for over 30 years. During transition to retirement from 2012-2014 I became the agency's Senior Trails Officer, Fitzgerald River National Park Improvement Programme – undertaking the final stages of alignment planning and overseeing construction of ~40km of new coastal walk trails from Point Ann to Point Charles and from Cave Point to Quoin Head (*Mamang* and *Hakea* Trails) – all to extremely stringent standards as required by the WA Environmental Protection Authority for this outstanding UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- I was the initiator and writer of CALM (now DBCA) *South Coast Regional Management Plan* 1987-91, first non-forest statutory regional management plan under CALM Act (1984). **This was the first CALM plan to specifically address 'adventure activities' at a regional level.**
- I then initiated a **South Coast Path (Trail) Management Plan 1991**. ~600 pages addressing all protected area trails from Denmark to the Stirling Range and through the Fitzgerald River and Esperance national parks to Israelite Bay. This was the **first regional trail plan in WA** and it itemised the condition, improvement and maintenance requirements and priority for implementation works section by section for each trail.
- I was responsible for the design in the field numerous of new trails and re-alignments of existing trails across the entire South Coast region including, more locally, the current alignment of Bluff Knoll Track, Bald Head Track, Nancy Peak and all other Porongurup trails, and the now popular Albany to Denmark section of the Bibbulmun Track including its huts. Together these comprise virtually all the DBCA trails mentioned in your Draft Strategy.
- Many of my ~70 career publications addressed trail design and management, signage and trail markers, dieback management - particularly in upland trails - a couple of guidebooks, **numerous park and trail brochures**, also visitor safety, mountain management/trails More recently, papers on walking and climbing as legitimate components of global 'geotourism' were also published.
- I have been a long term working member of the IUCN (World Conservation Union) specialising in the Australia/Pacific Region, Mountains, Ecological Restoration and Caves & Karst specialist theme groups.

It should be clear from the above that I have **extensive knowledge and experience with trails, their use, planning and management**. Whilst pleased to see another regional planning approach emerging, unfortunately this has a serious imbalance through its focus on development & marketing - primarily of mountain bike trails. It fails to consider the underlying **global biodiversity** hotspot significance of the regional natural landscapes, and their existing trails, *per se*. Nor does it acknowledge the significance of this country to the traditional Noongar owners, and take into account their legitimate concerns and aspirations regarding future trail developments.

Albany, 19 January 2020



CONTINUED

2. OMISSIONS

In addition to numerous errors, there are several important omissions from the draft document.

With regard to the **fundamental need** to acknowledge the outstanding global biodiversity and habitat significance of the natural vegetation in the region, the word '*biodiversity*' only has ~5 mentions (other than within DBCA). Furthermore, significant insidious threats to this biodiversity, notably *dieback*, *Phytophthora* or even '*disease*', are not mentioned at all. Nor are '*climate*' or '*climate change*' mentioned for what is supposed to be a forward looking 10 year time frame.

By contrast the words '*investment*', '*business*' and '*market/marketing*' collectively account for over 150 mentions, the vast majority being *market* or *marketing*. In essence the document would be more accurately described as the '**Great Southern Region Trails Marketing Plan 2019-2020**'.

A number of omissions are highlighted in yellow within the specific comments section below including

- P14 Table 2
- P6 Table 3
- P22 & p24 West Mt Barren
- P29 Aftermath from fire damage – contingency budgeting

The check lists in **Appendix 6** do not include all official trails under each agency. Even if they have been deliberately omitted from the draft, by definition all accessible trails, unless closed to public use, will at a minimum need on-going maintenance and sometimes significant repair. This will come at a management cost. Hence there should at least be a list of such trails for each agency, thereby giving a more accurate assessment of their required commitment to maintenance and any future capital works. **Such a list based on my own knowledge of ~ 20 missing trails is included towards the end of this submission.**

3. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

The comments below are focused on terrestrial activities such as hiking and off road cycling. Water based activities (other than coastal safety issues) and horse riding are not my areas of expertise. I have no issue with mountain biking *per se* and was a regular biker in my younger days. **The precautionary comments I make here regarding biking are on the basis of environmental/biodiversity impacts as well as social and safety impacts upon walkers, especially in small areas of native vegetation, areas with significant cultural/community heritage values or in protected areas including national parks.** The Great Southern Region is not akin to Tasmania or the Eastern States with their extensive multiple use forest areas... our parks and reserves are essentially isolated remnants in an incredibly ancient landscape which we should treasure and protect for their own intrinsic value and for future generations.

Please note that absence of comments below does not imply agreement – rather lack of sufficient knowledge or expertise to constructively comment at this stage... thank you.

Executive Summary p5

P5 2nd para 2 'the plan has the support of...' or 'the plan proposals have the support of...?'

P5 What exactly are the '**environmental benefits**' in yellow box 4?

P6 blue box 'Whaling Station... to... Gap' walk proposal has coastal safety/environmental issues





CONTINUED

P6 grey box 'Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail – inconsistent with CALM Act management plan.

P6 Great Southern **already** is an 'internationally recognised trail destination' (eg Munda Biddi Trail & Bibbulmun Track)

Section 1 Introduction & Background p7

P8 Top right para ignores recognition of previous DBCA strategic planning for trails across entire South Coast Region protected areas (national parks, nature reserves and other areas managed by DBCA from Eucla to Denmark) **since 1990** including regular up dating through statutory management plans under the CALM Act.

p9 Lower left column – there was no Albany workshop. **Albany is the major residential/home base concentration of trail usage within the Great Southern hinterland.** This is a **major flaw** in the 2019 regional trail strategy community consultation phase. The claim that the Albany Trails Hub Strategy already addressed the regional context is highly questionable based on the constant bias in that document towards mountain biking and failure to equitably address hiking trails. The other categories, eg water based & equine were either omitted or given only token mention.

P10 '**Protect our unique landscapes and biodiversity**' ('principle 7) should be moved significantly higher to 3rd or 4th principle on lists – these actions are a statutory responsibility under the CALM Act 1984 for all protected areas and Unallocated Crown Land and, under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, for **all land** in the State.

Section 2 Situation Analysis p11

P12 The claimed 'return on regional investment' due to elevations of 240-300m is likely to be minimal compared with the inherent existing returns from mainstream visitation based on landscape and biodiversity assets!

P13 '**Current Trail offering**' What is source of Table 1 data? It is **grossly misleading with regard to mountain bike trails.** For example there are two MTB Trails in the Albany Heritage Park – the Albany Downhill and the Pilot Trail. The footnote reference No4 uses the same table but also does not clarify the source of data.

P13 Upper left para – DBCA has State wide trail signage and has regional and State wide information on trails readily available!

P14 Table 2 **Major omission** INVESTMENT column (high cost applies to all three '*Approaches*')!

Re-word to 'High cost for planning, design, construction **and on-going maintenance.** Please note that the on-going maintenance includes **user safety** and '**protection of our unique landscapes and biodiversity**' (see comment above re p10).

Section 3 Identifying Regional Opportunities

P16 **Major omissions** Table 3 Trail prioritisation process

- Item 2 (Destination Significance) should include reference to '**...and biodiversity significance, as an asset and/or as a constraint**'
- Item 3 (Destination Opportunity) should be simplified to '**... trail diversity**'
- Item 4 (Destination Deliverability) should include '**... and guaranteed funding for responsible trail management and maintenance**'





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P17 Market potential End of first paragraph – ‘mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market’.... .. **than what??** ...and who says? – needs reference – if this means comparing with Tasmania or Eastern States forest areas then, as already commented in the introductory paragraph above, it is meaningless and like *‘comparing apples and oranges’*.

The listed market segments (three dot points) fail to recognise the attractiveness of a **range** of trail options within a locality or larger region. Such options include length, grade, weather conditions, personal health on the day, awareness of other group members and group size *etc.* We have a very good range of options in the Great Southern, a simple example of which is the availability of a range of coastal and inland choices for the day’s target trail(s). This is frequently based on the forecast or existing weather, *eg* if it is too exposed to wind and rain on the coast... then go inland a bit more sheltered, or if it will be very hot inland today *eg* Stirling Range or sometimes Porongurup Range ... then stay near or on coastal trails. **This will become an even more important factor due to trends in climate change.**

P18 I suggest the reference to ‘grey nomads’ be changed to ‘more elderly people and retirees’ or ‘seniors’.

Section 4 Trail development proposals

P22 Medium time frame proposals

- Proposed Whaling Station to Gap Coastal Hiking Trail – **not supported** due to visitor safety, sections of sensitive limestone and sand blowout landforms and greatly increased management capacity that would be required by DBCA. **Part of this concept – Salmon Holes to Peak Head and on to Blowholes and Gap was researched and dismissed several decades ago.** There is enough of an issue with rock fishing safety without greatly expanding foot access into equally, if not more, dangerous sections of coastline. The existing Bald Head (and Isthmus Hill spur) and Peak Head (Grade 4) walks as well as Sharp Point Walk Trail (Grade 2) already fulfil recognised visitor access to the same or similar landforms. The latter two are not listed in the draft regional trails plan however.
- **Former walk-only hiking trails are urgently required to be re-constituted within Albany Heritage Park and expanded to create an iconic walk-only route from Albany town over Mt Clarence and Adelaide and down to Middleton Beach. Furthermore, the previous walk-only circuits of both mounts should be re-constituted** (on Mt Clarence externally funded as ‘Heritage Walking Trails’ – the Granite Link Trail, and on Mt Adelaide known as the Nature Trail which dates from the 1970’s or earlier). The latter was endorsed and promoted by the former Town of Albany and interpreted by the Albany Branch of the WA Wildflower Society.
- Porongurup (National Park) MTB Trails – **not supported** due to the small size of the national park, its biodiversity and its obvious significance to regional aboriginal communities as well as to later settlers and life style residents surrounding the park. If privately owned hilly country becomes available outside the national park then that may provide an alternative for any downhill biking.
- **Omission** There are errors/confusion in the draft regarding trails in the Point Ann area (Ravensthorpe Shire and also DBCA vested) of the Fitzgerald River National Park – these errors are addressed in more detail below. However, West Mt Barren Walk Trail is within the Jerramungup Shire and is a highly popular short mountain walk which is in urgent need of upgrading and should be added to the Medium time frame proposals.





CONTINUED

P22 Long time frame proposals

- Albany to Whaling Station Dual –use Trail –**not supported** unless it is located **outside** the national park. There is a high dieback risk along the park’s northern boundary between Frenchman Bay Road and Goode Beach area.
- Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail – **not supported** as this is in conflict with the outstanding biodiversity values and known dieback disease risks within this iconic national park. It is also not consistent with the intent of the statutory Stirling Range and Porongurup National Parks Management Plan.

P24 Map 1 – add West Mt Barren Trail

P26 ‘Uniqueness of experience’. Disagree with the statement that leisure hikers have few opportunities to experience coastal or mountain environments. The Denmark – Albany section of the Bibbulmun Track is almost entirely coastal and has numerous access points for localised leisure grade walks. Likewise both the Stirling and Porongurup Ranges have a broad range of walks suited to the leisure walking market. However, both the coast and the mountains are potentially hazardous environments and hence any new alignments or promotion/upgrading needs to be very careful not to increase inexperienced visitor attention to additional higher visitor risk locations.

P26 ‘Trail type.’ The Bibbulmun Track is, and should remain, a long distance trail of global attraction. **High-end lodge accommodation and additional loops should be avoided** as they will detract from the trail’s primary function. Day shuttle services to and from existing accommodation (similar to the Cape to Cape Track and available for virtually all long distance trails in the UK) supports existing local businesses and reduces additional environmental impacts of new/upgraded huts or other construction.

P26 ‘Quality.’ **Strong qualified support.** ‘Widespread significant erosion’ is a major challenge. Trails do not look after themselves and require prompt and effective day to day management. However, **disagree with the strategy of focusing only on ‘iconic trails’.** **The focus should be based upon seriousness of erosion (and erosion potential) on all accessible trails and the mediation of impacts upon biodiversity.** For example, all trails should have freely drained surfaces without ponding or pooling of water after rain so as to minimise risk of further dieback disease spread.

P26 ‘Location’ . The ‘current status’ description is misleading as it does not take into account the large number of trails omitted from the draft trails strategy. Point Ann and the Mamang Trail are within the Ravensthorpe Shire.

P26 ‘Usability’. **Disagree** in the case of DBCA trails. These are all extremely well signed, interpreted and advertised both *in situ* at major trail heads and globally online. The department has high quality State wide criteria for signage including alerts to potential visitor risks.

P28 Please see various sets of comments above (page 22) regarding the following Priority Trails:

- Whaling Station to Gap Coastal Hiking Trail
- Albany Heritage Park Trails
- Porongurup (National Park) MTB Trails
- West Mt Barren Walk Trail (**omission** from draft plan)
- Albany to Whaling Station Dual –use Trail
- Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail





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P29 Enhancement of existing trails

Isthmus Hill Lookout. **Upgrade not supported.**

This is a matter for DBCA. The 'lookout' in question is virtually adjacent to the main Bald Head trail and is accessed by many sections of simple, but highly effective 'duck boarding' some of which are almost 40 years old. There is also some steep sloping granite which can be slippery in the wet and then a bit of a scramble up a rocky gully to the hill top. Furthermore, the existing car park is small and would require major expansion with associated landscape and biodiversity impacts. Neither Salmon Holes nor Misery Beach are alternative trail head locations for the Bald Head Trail and they also introduce additional visitor safety issues. Any 'upgrading' to access the summit of Isthmus Hill should remain low key in keeping with the rest of the trail and without promotion of a lookout for more general public use.

- Bluff Knoll. The recent fire has created a window of opportunity for the already signalled upgrade. **(Omission** Destructive fires and other natural events, in particular major coastal erosion events, are inevitable but essentially unpredictable. Classic examples are Bluff Knoll walk trail and Salmon Holes beach access in the 1980's. **You can't budget for dealing with the aftermath of such events unless contingency funds are quickly available. Hence setting work or project priorities under the regional trails strategy must be flexible enough in order for agencies to establish temporary alternative access and, in the case of fire, use the opportunity to re-adjust and reconstruct trail alignments while the lie of the land is visible and before thick regrowth vegetation begins to compromise reconstruction access.)**
- Ridge Walk. This is unique in WA and should not be meddled with unnecessarily. *In situ* route information is adequate and in keeping with the **gazetted wilderness zone** that it traverses. **Keep as is!**
- Castle Rock Loop. This is a matter for DBCA under the existing Stirling Range and Porongurup National Parks Management Plan. A completely separate return route would significantly increase the maintenance burden on the managing agency. Any 'loop' section should therefore be restricted to the forest plateau and should not include the steep approach slopes.
- Nancy's Peak. Tight switchbacks are a recipe for short cutting and escalating erosion. The current descent route to the Pass was considered the best option available at the time (~ 1980) and has largely been acceptable apart from a few metres of scramble up a rocky gully. DBCA issue anyway.
- Devil's Slide. This is already a popular half day (it is not a full day) walk when combined with Nancy's Peak circuit. Any upgrade of trail surface is an issue for DBCA. Note some visitors continue on the short distance to nearby Marmabup Rock summit.
- Bolganup Heritage Trail. Another matter for DBCA

P31/32 Mountain Biking & Cycle Touring trails

Uniqueness of experience – trail development should only be located **outside** national parks or other significant public reserves.

P33 Proposed Mountain Biking Trails

The quoted UK '7 Stanes' case study is based within Forestry and Land Scotland 'forest parks' - the equivalent of State Forest in WA. These are **not** national parks and are 'multiple use'. Most of the forest is plantation timber.

The proposed mountain bike trail in Porongurup National Park is strongly **opposed**.

P34 Table 9

Porongurup MTB Trails – **opposed as previously stated**





CONTINUED

Albany Heritage Park MTB Trails. Further development of biking only trails should be halted until the Mounts Master Planning process for this important local public reserve has identified and approved **re-establishment of (promised) walking only trails plus an iconic town to Middleton walking only route via Mt Clarence & Mt Adelaide, and retention of the existing historic Mt Adelaide Nature Trail.**

Poikeclerup MTB Trails - this existing site is unsanctioned but well known and effectively 'endorsed' by the City of Albany. It would need to be formally established through the City of Albany but only after a change of purpose for the reserve has been approved by the State. Any native vegetation within this reserve is subject to and will remain subject to the Environmental Protection (*Clearing of Native Vegetation*) Regulations 2004.

P36 and P37 Table 10

Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail **Note !** this is described as a 'mountain biking experience' on page 31 dot point 3 but in Table 10 is described as a 'touring trail'. This needs clarification. However, use of bicycles other than on public roads is not permitted in the Stirling Range National Park under the Stirling Range & Porongurup National Parks Management Plan. Furthermore there is a clear priority in the plan to protect the biodiversity values of the parks including restrictions on access to minimise risks of further spread of dieback disease. Hence, creation of new trails or use of existing management tracks would be counterproductive to the intent of the management plan.

P45 The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit

Suggest term 'grey nomads' be replaced as per comment regarding use of this term on page 45 above.

P51 & 52 Trail Bike Trails and Equestrian Trails

Both trail bikes and horses present problems for managers of protected areas. These include risks to other visitors (both can travel at speed and cause injuries to hikers), impacts upon biodiversity conservation (spread of dieback from mud on tyres or hooves) – also horse faeces which drop seeds leading to weed spread for example, and erosion or 'chopping up' of agency vehicle management tracks which then may become a risk to rapid firefighting access.

Section 5 Implementation Strategy

P54 Strategic Planning Recommendations

The strategies are meant to be 'aligned with each of the agreed objectives' (of Section 2). However, there is no mention of 'objectives' in Section 2 – so presumably this is referring to the 'Aims' within Table 2?

Item 1 (1.1) In reality this master plan can be no more than a guide to agencies which may operate under specific acts which they are statutorily bound to. Furthermore, agencies will be prone to funding constraints and life threatening emergency situations including wildfire suppression and visitor risk management.

Item 2. Agencies cannot meet this strategy without operator skills and understanding...and...most importantly, without adequate funding!

P56 Governance framework

Non-affiliated persons familiar with specific areas/trails should also be considered for inclusion in community advisory and other groups.





CONTINUED

P58 Volunteering agreements.

Physical volunteer maintenance of trails is fraught with risk. There is usually a tendency for volunteers to over-clear or over-prune vegetation and contribute to progressive widening through what is known as 'trail creep'. There are also *Occupational Health and Safety Act* obligations - hence agency supervision and clear written instructions and records/photos of work done are essential. **Special note or attention to water ponding on trails is critical in the context of reducing dieback disease risks.** Measures to combat ponding are not occurring even on the so-called model Demonstration Mountain Biking Trail.

P58 Marketing and promotion

It is also essential that marketing and promotion are subject to trail conditions being able to withstand increased usage. It is suggested that a third category lead this overall activity ***Information, marketing and promotion***. A publicly accessible **information status** based on current trail condition, safety risks, fires *etc* should be updated daily or as appropriate. This is standard practice for most trail managing agencies and should continue for the Great Southern Trails.

Appendices

P60 Appendix 1

Hiking. The walking track classifications should be regarded as **indicative** and some allowance made for special situations. For example, the appropriateness of information or interpretation signage beyond Grade 3 should be a guideline and not 'banned.' Conversely, classification based on a skill level and safety should always at least mention the highest skill level required or qualify classification according to unusual weather, high tides in beach situations, wet sloping rocks (typical for sloping lichen or mossy granite rocks in our region) *etc*

P67 Appendix 4

Key and headers – hiking trail lengths need to specify whether stated lengths are one way or return distances.

P76 Appendix 5

It is too difficult to predict such detail.

P80-87 Appendix 6

OMISSIONS from Appendix 6:

These check lists do not include all official trails under each agency. Even if they have been omitted on purpose, by definition all publicly accessible trails, unless closed to use, will at a minimum need on-going maintenance and sometimes significant repair. This will come at a management cost. Hence there should at least be a list of such trails for each agency, thereby giving a more accurate assessment of their required commitment to maintenance and any future capital works:

Additional official trails known by submittor in Great Southern Region, January 2020

**All except Point Possession Heritage Trail on Quaranup Peninsula, Lake Seppings Bird Walk and the imminent Frenchman Bay Heritage Trail are located in areas managed by DCBA*

City of Albany:

- Baie des Deux Peoples Nature Trail/Little Beach Trail (Grade 3), Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve
- Mount Martin Walk Trails (4), Gull Rock National Park





CONTINUED

- Stony Hill Heritage Trail (2), Torndirrup National Park
- Peak Head Trail (4), Torndirrup National Park
- Blowholes Trail (2), Torndirrup National Park
- Sharpe Point Walk Trail (2), Torndirrup National Park
- *Point Possession Heritage Trail (3), Quaranup Peninsula
- *Lake Seppings Bird Walk (1), Middleton Beach area
- *Frenchman Bay Heritage Trail – presume 1-2, (recently approved by City)
- Bruce Tarbotton Trail (3), West Cape Howe National Park

Stirling Range National Park:

Plantagenet

- Talyuberlup Trail (5)
- Central Lookout Trail (2 to first knoll & 3 or 4 to final knoll)

Cranbrook

- Mt Magog Trail (5)

Gnowangerup

- Mt Hassell (4)
- Toolbrunup Trail (5)
- Mt Trio Trail (4)

Fitzgerald River National Park:

Jerramungup

- Mt Maxwell Lookout (2)
- West Mt Barren Walk Trail (4)
- Twertup Horrie & Dorrie Trail (2)

Interestingly the two trails below are included in the draft trail strategy, but they are located within the **Ravensthorpe** Shire. However, their inclusion in the strategy along with the three additional trails which are located in the Jerramungup Shire is **very sensible** as all five trails are accessed from Jerramungup, Jacup or Boxwood Hill and are historically associated with those communities

- Point Ann Heritage Trail (2)
- Mamang Trail (4)

ERRORS in Appendix 6:

P83 Stirling Range Lowland s Trail DBCA should **consider** not ‘confirm’ action

P84 Mamang Trail is not in the Shire of Ravensthorpe and is not managed by Jerramungup Shire but by DBCA.

P86 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail – DBCA should **consider**, not confirm proposal

P87 Stirling Range Lowlands Trail- DBCA should **consider**, not confirm proposal

THANK YOU





From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:57 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Re trails

200119_2257

Flag Status:

Flagged

I support more activities in the regions as long as they do not impede on the national parks. The ecosystem is the most important thing to consider and any new developments need to give a wide berth to local flora and fauna that is endangered. Support will be happily received if there is a scientific and sustainable plan in place. Thanks!
Ellie





200119_2302

SUBMISSION on the GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The RTMP Executive Summary

The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) Executive Summary states that the RTMP “provides a coherent and clearly outlined program” over a 10 year period (2020-2029) and that it has been developed to “guide decisions about the management, and investment in, trails and provides a vision of what the trail network...will look like in the future.”

Flaws in the RTMP

I challenge the above statement as the RTMP provides no definition of the natural environments in which the trails are proposed to be “built” or upgraded and does not identify their biodiversity and conservation status. There is no mention of current management plans pertaining to them and insufficient attention has been given to any other constraints that may exist on the implementation of the proposed staged >10 year program that has been outlined for the majority of trails.

Although the region is one of the world’s Biodiversity Hot Spots there is no reference to this. The southwest has the highest concentration of rare and endangered species in the entire continent.

Nor has any reference been made to the climate of the region and how the changes in climatic conditions (hotter and dryer) that are currently being experienced and are forecast to worsen over the coming decade due to Climate Change, will be managed by the authorities involved. For example, the extreme water shortage being experienced by Denmark, one of the wetter areas in the region, is to be remedied by the unprecedented step of piping water from the Albany aquifers. Bushland and the landscape generally is dry, e.g one third of the Stirling Range National Park, a premier tourist attraction, was burnt in the current summer season.

Both the Stirling Range National Park and the Porongorup National Park have Management Plans that do not include mountain bike trails. Management of the Parks is focused on preserving biodiversity and mitigating adverse impacts. The Stirlings are a wildflower and plant reserve of international significance with over 1500 plant species, rare orchids, mountain bells and banksias as well as an abundance of fauna. Both National Parks have ancient and fragile flora and should not be subject to mountain bike activity. The RTMP makes no acknowledgement of Phytophthora dieback disease. Its presence in both parks is paramount. Mountain bikes are vectors for the spread of disease and weeds and in places of international botanical importance they have no place.

These arguments apply to other National Parks managed by DBCA with RTMP proposed single/dual use trails (single use mountain biking or dual use



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hiking/mountain biking trail) e.g. proposed Torndirrup National Park - Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Dual Use Coastal Trail.

Inappropriate case study: 7 Stanes

It was surprising to note that the RTMP mountain biking proposal for the region is likened to the 7 Stanes in Scotland. The 7 Stanes are predominantly forestry and land reserves, not national parks, with mainly degraded and low biodiverse environments. There can be no comparison with the ancient, biodiverse and fragile environments of the Stirlings and Porongorups. The ambition to replicate it in one of the world's Biodiversity Hot Spots is inappropriate and unacceptable.

It is also interesting to note that a number of the 7 Stanes are subject to a recent (since 2002) infestation of the disease *Phytophthora Ramorum* which is rapidly spreading. "Keep it Clean" is now a mantra in these degraded forest environments. Patrons are asked to clean footwear, wheels and animals before entering these areas. Mountain bike cleaning stations are in place. Is none of this relevant to the RTMP proposal? I argue that it is highly relevant and that to promote the introduction of another vector, mountain bikes, to transport disease around our unique and internationally significant southern National Parks is, to say the least, irresponsible and should be rejected.

Albany Heritage Park: Its special status

The lack of transparency in the RTMP document is very clear in the proposal for mountain bike trails in the Albany Heritage Park. No public forum was held to discuss the Albany Heritage Park RTMP proposal. Instead GScore have put forward the flawed 2016 City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy. This proposal has twice been referred to the Commonwealth's Department of Environment and Energy to be assessed under the EPBC Act. It is currently before that body waiting for assessment.

In the RTMP document no reference is made to the biodiversity and complexity of the Albany Heritage Park's natural environment and the threatened species that rely on it as habitat, in particular the critically endangered Western Ringtail Possum. It is also important foraging habitat for three threatened cockatoo species listed under the EPBC Act. Not listed as endangered but like the Western Ringtail Possum vulnerable to bike strike is the Quenda seen on many of the trails.

The City has a history of lack of maintenance of the current trails. The issues include poor or non-existent trail infrastructure, erosion, problems with drainage and unmanaged *Phytophthora dieback* risk. The spread of *Phytophthora* is the most serious threat to the park's vegetation and the four listed fauna species.

There are no longer any dedicated walking trails in the Albany Heritage Park. The recent opening up of all trails to mountain bikes has not only led to the issue of walkers' safety, but also trail widening, rutting, illegal clearing, loss of vegetation, increased *Phytophthora dieback* risk, erosion and a general

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degradation of the park. The current City of Albany approach and the 2016 Albany Trails Hub Strategy on which the RTMP document relies demonstrate a bias toward mountain bike trails which is to the detriment of walkers who form a significant cohort of the park users.

The Albany Heritage Park is a place of cultural and environmental importance. It is a stand alone tourist attraction with its Mounts Adelaide and Clarence landmarks bearing the dignified presence of the iconic and historic ANZAC memorial.

The current situation of the Albany Heritage Park is lamentable and the precedent it creates calls into question just how well equipped a local authority is to responsibly manage important cultural, environmental and heritage areas under its jurisdiction.

Alternative strategies should be considered

The use of private land that is perhaps environmentally compromised or not displaying important natural attributes should be considered as a feasible and workable option to be pursued for mountain bike trails instead of publicly owned national parks or reserves. This approach would of course need the consent and cooperation of the relevant landholders.

The status of any land considered, its ownership, managing body and management plans, if any, should be thoroughly researched. Any impediments to proposals should be known to the proponent(s) and stated clearly in any documentation that goes out for public comment.

RTMP not supported

The RTMP is not supported. Many of the trail proposals are unsustainable as outlined above and not in the public interest.



Mt Clarence. 6330

18 January 2020



200119_2306

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:06 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan [2020-209]

Flag Status: Flagged

Public Comment

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan [2020 - 2029]

I am in favour of the development of minimal, carefully considered appropriate local trails which will benefit the Porongurup and Plantagenet communities. However, due to its significant cultural and environmental values, I do not support any such new damage within the Porongurup National Park. Under no circumstances should this Park be considered appropriate for the development of Mountain Bike Trails.

The Porongurup Range is a culturally sensitive place, a place of totems. The four local aboriginal groups consider that the uplands of this ancient Range must be left undisturbed, so the proposed MTB trails have no place here.

The Porongurup National Park has national significance as an ancient mountain range with unique flora and fauna, and above almost every other south-western site, fully deserves its heritage listing. The Karri and its understory form a distinct Eastern outlier from the main Karri block, so being isolated from similar more coastal habits, has many endemic, endangered plant and invertebrate species.

Any further development will initially cause erosion, soil compaction, irreparable damage to waterways and the ancient surfaces of its exposed granite. Aided by widespread spread of weeds, dieback, resulting in loss of species and reduction of populations of birds and all other forms natural flora and fauna

A deep understanding of the natural environment has enabled thousands of years of sustainable management by the Aboriginal peoples of this region, and preserved this fragile, ancient mountain environment.

This will be degraded within a comparatively brief time of such concentrated use, and expanding damage with the MTB riders' desire for continued trail development. Due to the significant cultural and environmental values, I do not support any such inappropriate development within the Porongurup National Park. I do approve the proposed maintenance of the existing walk trails, and only these, within Porongurup National Park, to Nancy's, Peak, Castle Rock, Devil's Slide and Bolganup Trails.

There are abundant other sites, both public and private lands, mostly already of damaged habit, which could be used rather than the Porongurup range. Almost alone in the inland south-west of Australia, this range is still in near-natural condition. It is the very last habitat for many species, both flora and fauna.

I also encourage the development, with approval of local Aboriginal groups, of the Pwackenbac Mountain Bike Trails, and the O'Neil Road dual use trail, as both developments will bring new opportunities for visitors to the area.

[REDACTED]





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:15 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Regional Trails Master Plan Comments due 19/1/20
Attachments: attachment 1.docx

200119_2315_1

Dr Lenore Lyons
 Executive Director
 GSCORE
 22 Collie Street
 Albany WA 6330

Dear Dr Lyons,

Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan - Public Comment : Sand Patch.

I wish to forward my comments regarding the proposed plan, and specifically in relation to the Robinson Sand Patch area. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

The Robinson area has been my home for over 20 years now.

I have a horse property and I like many equestrian friends, have enjoyed using the variety of aspects and facilities this equestrian precinct has provided.

It hosts the Albany Racing Club, and Albany Equestrian Centre. The latter is home to 6 local clubs and used extensively by them, plus consistently by visiting coaches & trainers, all year round. This provides for a very active equestrian area/community, with participants of all ages and levels of ability. With the other most significant and related aspect/facility being the accompanying Stidwell Bridle Trail.

I was privy to the setting up and commencement of the Trail as a designated Bridle Trail, and as such, motor bikes and motor vehicles were not permitted. This is a most significant safety requirement. And there were environmental concerns for the erosion of bush by motorised vehicles and bikes.

Until more recently, the Trail had been safe and enjoyable for regular equestrian pursuits. Over the past couple of years there has been many more Motor Cyclist and Off Road vehicles in the area leading to conflict and a real safety issue for equestrian users. Plus erosion by motorised vehicles is apparent.

I believe that the concept of a Multi Use Trail in the Robinson Sand Patch Precinct has serious safety implications and the potential for dangerous accidents with equestrians should be considered.

I do object to a Multi Use Trail - particularly by motorised vehicles - in this area.

This area should remain as it was originally designated for the SAFE pursuit of Equestrian activity. And provide the appropriate recreational facility for the very large community of horses and riders that frequent the area.

Respectfully Yours
 [REDACTED]





Dr Lenore Lyons
 Executive Director
 GSCORE
 22 Collie Street
 Albany WA 6330

200119_2315_att

Dear Dr Lyons,

Re: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan – Public Comment: Sand Patch.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Regional Trails Master Plan.

I am an equestrian. I live/ my horse lives at Robinson adjacent to the Sand Patch Reserve. I chose the Robinson area to pursue my equestrian sports because;

- close proximity to the Albany Equestrian Centre,
- the Albany Racing Club,
- the Stidwell Bridle Trail,
- the extensive quiet rural roads and tracks,
- proximity to beaches.

The Robinson area is a mix of semi rural and rural properties. Many residents chose to live in the area because it was an equestrian precinct. Safe for children to ride to the Pony Club, for riders to enjoy the once quiet and safe roads and tracks.

The Stidwell Bridle Trail was officially opened in 1999 and incorporated 30 kilometres of trails for equestrians to enjoy the bush tracks, rolling hills, hidden valleys and magnificent views. It was a designated bridle trail. Trail Bikes and other vehicles were originally not permitted nor intended.

The Stidwell Trail incorporates three loops;

- Sand Patch Loop along the road verges, through Allmore Park, behind the Albany Regional Prison to the Werrilup Loop
- Robinson Loop winding through Robinson Estate to the Werrilup Loop
- Werrilup Loop track leading to the summit of Werrilup Hill with a purpose built shelter and horse hitching rail.

The Albany Equestrian Centre is an equestrian hub for many equestrian clubs including;

- Albany Pony Club
- Albany Adult Riders Group
- Albany Horsemen's Association
- Great Southern Dressage Club
- Natural Trail Riders
- Albany Carriage Driving Club



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During the last 2 years and particularly since the adoption of the Multi Use Trails concept in the area which allows Cyclists, Motor Cyclists and Off Road Vehicles to share the same trails as equestrians I and my friends have encountered many conflicts with the other users.

These conflicts have caused serious safety issues. Horses are animals and no manner of training can prepare them for being confronted by loud motor cycles, Four Wheel Drive Vehicles and Mountain Bikes jumping through the air towards the horse with no respect for riders or animals and no escape route.

Pony Club children, Adult Riders and Carriage Drivers no longer feel safe to pursue their sport and recreation in the area.

I strongly object to the concept of Multi Use Trails in the Robinson Sand Patch Precinct and urge you and the appropriate authorities to restrict the Robinson/ Sand Patch area to equestrians and return the precinct to a safe recreational trails area for horses and ponies before there is a tragedy.

Yours sincerely



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:15 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Denmark trail master plan

200119_2315_2

To whom it may concern,

Being a regular visitor to Denmark and an mountain bike enthusiast I believe that the area has the makings of an ideal Mountain bike destination in the future bringing great growth to the area.

Regards
 [Redacted]





200119_2322

GSCORE: Public Comment Submission. 19.01.2020

To whom it concerns.

RE: Section 4. Trail Development Proposals.

P34. I disagree with the Porongurup MTB trails.

- Reasons.**
1. This is a Nationally heritage listed site with the prime focus to preserve the unique flora and fauna. Adventure sporting activities are not appropriate in any National Park.
 2. It is a fragile landscape with significant flora & fauna.
 3. This is a culturally sensitive site for aboriginal groups. They are in fear of anyone entering the park, particularly at night. It is a sacred site similar to Uluru for the indigenous tribes of that area.
 4. Any further development, earthworks and bicycle tires pose a genuine risk of spreading or introducing dieback which is a well gazetted nasty pathogen which has led to huge loss of flora in many southern parts of our state.
 5. Existing tracks and infrastructure pose enough degradation with the increasing patronage. Some complain of the loss of serenity for walking trails already.

Suggestion. A perimeter trail outside the Park Boundary or on adjacent ridges of private property may be an alternative.

P34. I disagree with the Mount Hallowell MTB trails.

- Reasons.**
1. This site is culturally significant to aboriginal groups.
 2. This Mount is a fragile ecosystem with a unique diversity of flora, fungi and organisms that have evolved over centuries, undisturbed.
Upgrading of the Bibbleman track through here will enable better recreational use of the park for the majority of people. Surely the majority rule.
 3. The steepness and rugged terrain would make it financially unviable to proceed.
High levels of erosion would be inevitable.

Suggestions. 1. With the cost saving of building this proposed track/tracks a beautiful artificial track could be established in a state forest site or on private property.





200119_2334

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:34 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan feedback

Hi,

I am a keen MTB cyclist who regularly rides the Mount Adelaide and Mount Clarence trails in the Albany Heritage Park and also regularly walk the trails in this area and have walked most if not all of the walking/hiking trails in the Albany, Denmark and Walpole regions. I have ridden the whole Munda Biddi trail and have ridden the full Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail a number of times.

I have read the sections of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) that relate to my interest in off-road cycling as I feel that considerable work needs to be done to improve existing MTB trails in the region and to develop new trails as what is currently on offer for MTB riders in the region is extremely poor compared to other towns in WA that have a significantly greater number of dedicated MTB and dual use trails to offer than the Albany region, i.e. Margaret River, Dwellingup and Collie.

I give my full support for all of the proposed mountain bike, cycle touring and dual use trails mentioned in the RTMP (pages 33-37).

I also support the extension of the dual use path from Ocean Beach to the Denmark Windfarm (page 37) as the current gravel road link is inadequate and dangerous to cycle along.

I also support the enhancement of existing cycling trails (page 37):
 The realignment of the Munda Biddi Trail off William Bay Road
 The realignment of the Munda Biddi Trail – Denmark Heritage Rail Trail junction at South Coast Highway
 Realigning the Munda Biddi trail via Sandpatch

Regards,

[Redacted]



GSCORE: Public Comment Submission. 19.01.2020

To whom it concerns.

200119_2336

RE: Section 4. Trail Development Proposals.

P34. I disagree with the Porongurup MTB trails.

Reasons. Any bikes, motorized or not cause huge degradation to the terrain leading to erosion and loss of flora and fauna despite the best design efforts available.

I love the reserve as it is and National Parks should always only be considered for low impact activities like walking and guiding for cultural learning activities.

[Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]





200119_2338

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:38 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Trails Master Plan

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my frustration and disappointment that mountain bike trails in the Trails Master Plan have been given such low priority ;
 PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS on page 6, for Albany town are proposed to happen in 3 to 5 years but the trails at Towerhill are to happen within 1 to 2 years. Trail networks start in a major centre then have satellite networks progressing away from the centres, e.g Pemberton, Margaret River, Dunsborough this gives the local community [both young and old] easy access to trails and gives tourists easy access to some of the regions trails plus providing local businesses a boost in the number of customers over the entirety of the week.

In the section; ANALYSIS OF OUR CURRENT TRAIL OFFERING pg13, it states 1 MTB trail 1.3km in length. Table 8 pg 32 states, 1km of sanctioned trail and 20km of town trail dual use, but they are not sanctioned because there standard is rubbish and they are dual use. These need realigning to reduce erosion issues and trails do not meet trail standards so they can never be sanctioned, you can't have staircases that are not built to standards on a trail for MTB's or walkers etc [try walking or riding the Mt Clarence circuit trail].

Table 9 pg34 : Proposed Mountain Bike Trails Albany Heritage Park MTB Trails states that a concept plan was developed in 2016 but a plan supported by 84% approx of people was drawn up in approx. 2012.

PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS pg69 has only the Porongurup trails of a regional significance if you have ridden any of the existing Albany Heritage Park dual use paths you would know as I do they are far above a local only significance along with the countless visitors I have spoken to up on the mounts that are simply stunned with the surroundings so close to town. None are local in significance all are regional if not national, I travel a lot both riding and sightseeing with my family.

CITY OF ALBANY pg81 : Albany Heritage Park time frame M 3 to5 yrs why is it not a short term given that places like Margaret River and Collie have just been awarded millions of dollars to build more trails approximately 465 kms worth with already great trail systems in place. I travel regularly to the SouthWest of our state to ride these places and are astounded at even in the depths of winter these communities with trails in town are bustling but ours is not. I own a business in Albany and I wish our town could get a piece of this tourism within the next 3 to 5 years seeing as it has been planned and approved for such a long time. 150000 mountain bikes are sold in WA alone last year last year it increased 38%.

Thankyou
 [REDACTED]



2001199_2346



Great Southern Regional Trails DRAFT MASTER PLAN 2020-2029

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Draft Trails Master Plan. As an initial comment we suggest that having such a short comment period over the holiday period could lead to your intentions regarding public submission being viewed very cynically. This is hardly how an organisation such as yours builds a reputation for genuine engagement with the broader community. It has certainly proved difficult for us to review the document and comment in depth over the holiday period.

We applaud the concept of getting more visitors onto the ground appreciating the natural wonders of the Great Southern. As per discussions between our organisations, Gondwana Link is building a related program designed around the environmental benefits certain types of increased visitation can bring to the region's environment, in addition to the obvious economic benefits. We are concerned that, at best, your Draft Master Plan barely touches on how to mitigate the impacts of the numerous proposed trails, let alone consider the clear and urgent need to ensure projects provide positive benefits to the environment.

In our view the environment of the south-west has suffered enough careless exploitation. We are the biological epicentre of one of the world's top 25 biodiversity hotspots. We note that most environmental trends across the region are in decline. Additionally, the region is also being affected by global climate change, with reduced rainfall and higher temperatures apparent in recent decades.

In effect, as is well recognised internationally, we are in a climate and biodiversity emergency. As such, we consider it inappropriate for a supposed 'eco-tourism' plan to promote additional environmental pressures, and suggest the plan be re-drafted with the addition of detailed significant strategies that outline how the Trails Network can be an environmental positive for the region.

This can possibly be done while retaining many of the proposed trails. However, we strongly urge you to remove suggestions for adventure tourism, such as Mountain Bike Trails, from the Porongurups and Stirling Range National Parks. These are clearly inappropriate activities within national parks, particularly national parks that hold such high numbers of restricted species, are already under significant stress from visitation, fire, dieback and species loss, and are of great cultural significance to the Noongar community.

We note that your proposals go well beyond passive riding by individuals, but that you see the National Parks as suitable hubs for Enduros and presumably other competitive events. There are no real options to mitigate the use of these parks for Mountain Bike Trails and related events. Even a single issue like dieback spread alone is more than enough reason to not put extra wheels into those areas.

While the Draft Plan proposes the establishment of a number of new facilities, we are concerned that there is inadequate planning for their maintenance and upkeep. In recent decades National Park management across the region has already suffered considerably from reduced management budgets, and evidence of this can be seen in deterioration of numerous tracks and other facilities. It would seem unwise to add extra facilities unless additional ongoing funds can be guaranteed into future decades. A mechanism to achieve this is required before any on-ground changes are implemented. For conservation land management in the private sector a common mechanism is to establish an endowment fund sufficient to provide the required annual income from the interest it gains.



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Additionally, we are concerned at the poor level of cultural consultation that appears to have occurred. Individuals from within the region's Noongar community we have spoken to are deeply troubled by proposals to impact important areas, particularly the Porongurups and Stirling Ranges, incredibly important areas, and we are deeply troubled by the lack of good engagement process. You cannot develop plans like these and then ask for comment. Plans need, at the very least, to be discussed initially with the First Nations people of this region, and if they progress beyond that then they can be developed jointly.

In summary – while recognising that there are concepts worthy of consideration in your Draft Plan, we are very disappointed at the lack of positive environmental outcomes in a plan that relies on the environment. We are concerned that the local environment cannot, and should not, be subjected to further pressure. We are disappointed that clearly unsuitable sites within national parks have been highlighted for Mountain Bike Trails, and further concerned that there has been minimal engagement with the Noongar community before these Trails were proposed. This has caused upset.

We look forward to further discussions as you revise the Draft Plan.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bradby
CEO
Gondwana Link
19/1/2020



200119_2352

GSCORE: Public Comment Submission. 19.01.2020

To whom it concerns.

RE: Section 4. Trail Development Proposals.

P34. I disagree with the Porongurup MTB trails.

Reasons. 1. This is a culturally sensitive site of significance for surrounding aboriginal groups.

2. It is a geologically fragile landscape with significant flora & fauna.

3. This is a heritage listed site with the main aim of preserving the unique flora and fauna within the boundaries.

4. There are already concerning levels of public visitation straining existing facilities. High adrenaline adventure seekers would change the surface and impact on the serenity of the park.

5. DBCA struggle now for funding to maintain existing paths, amenities and provide staff. Funding would be better directed to improving much needed closer- at-hand fire-fighting amenities.

6. Track development and bikes tyres subject to ongoing cleanliness have a huge potential to spread the devastating dieback pathogen which has already decimated large tracks of our state's flora, severely impacting many of our rare fauna species.

Suggestion. A perimeter trail outside the park boundary with feral proof fence demarcation of the park.

Negotiation with local private landholders may benefit all parties with provision of funds for farmers and potential for down hill trail biking within farmers' properties.

Artificial ramps and drop-offs could be easily manufactured on site for added challenges.

P 37. I disagree with Stirling Range Valley cycle & hiking trail. (subject to alignment).

Suggestion. If the track followed the existing roads enabling a wider clear fire mitigation strip it would be advantageous all round. Fires appear to readily jump the existing road widths.

██████████ Mount Barker, W.A. 6324.





200119_2355

Submission to Draft of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029

████████████████████
 ████████████████████
 Emailed to trails@gscore.com.au
 19 January 2010

1. At present the document is a marketing and advocacy document for trail-related tourism, with very little acknowledgement of the major challenges facing the natural environments upon which the proposed trail developments rely. Eminent international, Australian and Western Australian scientists are alerting us all to the critical level of threat to and loss of biodiversity and ecological health. Within the Great Southern Region, loss of biodiversity is driven by a drying and warming climate, changed fire regimes, spread of dieback and other plant diseases, environmental weed encroachment, predation by feral animals, and the interminable loss of habitat associated with agriculture, grazing, altered hydrology, recreational developments, urban and peri-urban development, etc. As trail developments in natural areas are likely to exacerbate a number of these threats, it must be expressly recognised in the GSR Trails Master Plan that trail location and development can be incompatible with the protection of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.
2. The document fails to adequately address the cultural significance to Noongar people of sites potentially impacted by proposed trail developments, including the Porongurup Range and Stirling Range. This requires early and wide engagement, and should not be just added onto a pre-set wadjela process.
3. Page 12 states *“Elevation is a key component of many popular mountain biking destinations, and the numerous mountains and hills of the Great Southern region provide an exceptional advantage when compared to other areas across Western Australia. The unique opportunity to establish mountain bike trails where elevation reaches between 240-300 metres in various locations, has the potential to reap a significant return on investment for the region”*. There is an inherent conflict between the attractiveness of ranges and mounts for mountain biking (driven by thrill/adventure seeking and financial return) and the maintenance of conservation values of these uplands and management of threats and impacts. This conflict is deepened by the reduction in DBCA research and land management budgets, which means no guarantee can be given that impacts of proposed mountain bike trails in the Porongurup Range National Park will be adequately monitored and managed. This concern applies equally to the capacity of the Denmark Shire and the Albany City Council to adequately monitor and manage proposed MTB trails at Mount Hallowell and the Albany Heritage Park, respectively.
4. Conservation reserves are a vital bulwark against biodiversity loss and ecological decline. Consequently, MTB trails should be situated on privately owned, cleared land, which can be restored, in accordance with ecological restoration standards.
5. Specifically, it should be recognised that proposed mountain bike trails in the Porongurup Range National Park, Mount Hallowell Reserve, and Albany Heritage Park, and the proposed new Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trails within the Stirling Range National Park are incompatible with protecting conservation values.



CONTINUED

6. We are concerned about the risk of further dieback spread, feral animal access, and significance habitat disturbance associated with the myriad of new hiking trail experiences, trail linkages and trail enhancements proposed across Torndirrup National Park, William Bay National Park, Porongurup National Park and the Stirling Range National Park. What capacity will DBCA have to maintain all these new trails, linkages and enhancements in the long term? In order to protect nature conservation and Aboriginal cultural values, these proposals should all be carefully assessed for environmental and cultural impacts. There should be no net increase in the area of trails in these national parks. Will there be properly funded existing track closures and rehabilitation to offset new tracks?
7. The Porongurup Range and Stirling Range National Parks are situated within an epicentre of plant species richness in the Southwest Australian Floristic Region¹. Moreover, they are located within a global biodiversity hotspot 'Southwest Australia' - where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing exceptional loss of habitat². Extensive restoration efforts on adjacent and nearby private land are attempting to bolster the ecological wellbeing of these national parks as refugia and wellsprings for biodiversity, but the success of these efforts must be supported by protecting and restoring naturalness within the parks, and rejecting additional recreational developments.
8. Mt Hallowell is an important but relatively small (532 h) designated A Class reserve, vested in the Shire of Denmark. The Reserve's Management Plan³ (adopted by the Shire in 2008) notes the Reserve *"is a conservation priority area for the maintenance of the flora, fungi and fauna and all ecological processes pertaining to the natural environment. It is recognised that the Reserve is a significant scientific reference site. Management should maintain the integrity and conservation value of the vegetation, and the habitat values for fungi and fauna as well as ensure that the edges of the reserve are not compromised."* The Plan's Recreational Management Goal states *"amenities are to be provided for the public on existing walk trails in the reserve, whilst maintaining the conservation values of the Reserve."* It is clear from the Shire's Management Plan that conservation is the priority goal for the Mt Hallowell Reserve.
9. Furthermore, the Mount Hallowell Management Plan states:

"The island of vegetation comprising the Mount Hallowell Reserve together with its undisturbed surrounds is diminishing. The integrity and conservation value of the vegetation is therefore under pressure and may be reduced.

...

The Reserve faces many threats to its integrity as the network of corridors and linkages that connect the Mount Hallowell Reserve with coastal and inland areas continues to

¹ P. Gioia, S.D. Hopper A new phytogeographic map for the Southwest Australian Floristic Region after an exceptional decade of collection and discovery Bot. J. Linn. Soc., 184 (2017), pp. 1-15. In particular see inset in Figure 6, showing areas of highest richness (c. top 20% of values).

² N. Myers, R.A. Mittermeier, C.G. Mittermeier, G.A.B. Da Fonseca, J. Kent Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities Nature, 403 (2000), pp. 853-858.

³ Mount Hallowell Reserve Management Plan (2008), Shire of Denmark.



CONTINUED

*diminish with denser residential development along its borders. The Mt Hallowell Reserve Survey & Research Project 2004 indicated that the following factors are impacting on the integrity of the vegetation: ♣ Adjoining sub-divisions ♣ Numerous multi-use access paths in some areas ♣ Tourist and local walker numbers increasing ♣ Disturbance/Clearing/Fire breaks on the perimeter ♣ Increased walkers/dogs on the northern track/access ♣ Increased disturbance and access in Dieback (*Phytophthora sp*) susceptible areas ♣ Increased perceived need for fire security by adjoining landowners ♣ A reduction in undisturbed corridors joining the Reserve and the coastal vegetation.”*

10. The Draft GSR Trails Master Plan lacks acknowledgement of respect for the sense of place of local communities. For example, p. 33 states *“The proposed trail network in the Porongurup National Park presents the most appealing opportunity in the region due to the terrain, elevation and soil. The existing supply of accommodation, food and hospitality services will make this location the region’s premier MTB experience. A sustainable, accessible and well-designed MTB trail network in this location will become the hook that attracts riders into the region. Once in the region the diversity of other smaller trail networks will entice riders to stay longer.”* We are aware that many members in the local community are deeply concerned by the proposed MTB development in the Porongurup National Park. As members of the Friends of the Porongurup Range and the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, they have spent years caring for the national park and surrounds, including weed management, fire response, visitor interpretation, fencing of nearby remnants, and purchase of the Twin Creeks property to enhance conservation of the broader Porongurup environment. A major MTB trail development in their community would be detrimental to those values, and a major imposition on a very public-minded section of our community. Their work is what ‘showcasing and protecting our unique landscapes and biodiversity’ means, whereas its use in the draft GSR Trails Master Plan (e.g. p. 10) rings hollow.
11. At page 54, the Implementation Strategy states as high priority a one year timeframe for *“All LGAs, DBCA, DLGSC, and GSDC endorse the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) as the overarching guide to the planning, development and management of regional trail priorities over the next 10 years”*. This timetable would lead to a high degree of fait accompli being delivered to local communities, community-based conservation and landcare groups and the Noongar community. It is prejudicial to the development of community consensus and support, and unrealistic given the many ecological, Noongar cultural and local community factors raised by the document which require careful consideration. Furthermore, proposed trail developments within national parks need to be part of the existing national park management planning process, which has its own statutory processes, and will require considerable work by DBCA so that all the issues can be properly considered. We are particularly concerned that these proposals have got as far as a Draft Plan without genuine wide discussion with the broader Noongar community.
12. Unfortunately, the release of this document for public comment during the Christmas and school holiday period means that we have not had time to consider other proposals relating to the Paddling Trails, Snorkle Trails, and the Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit.



200119_2356

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:56 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Submission regarding the Draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Dear GSCORE

I am against Mountain bike trails in the National Heritage listed Porongurup National Park as well as in the National Heritage listed Stirling Ranges National Parks.

One of the reason to get Heritage status for the Parks was that these parks got very high plant diversity over 700 and some endemic species. These plants, like the listed as Vulnerable *Apium prostratum* subsp. *Porongurup Range* (*G.J.Keighery 8631*) is only found in the Porongurup National Park and on a couple of private properties adjoining the Porongurup National Park. The EPBC listed status for the *Ornduffia calthifolia* is the Endangered. This plant is only found in the higher altitude on Rocky Outcrops, of the Porongurup National Park

Between 2007 and 2016 around 3 million dollars of Australian taxpayers Grant money was spent to control invasive plants in and around the National Heritage listed Porongurup National Park to protect the native vegetation, its endangered plants and special plant communities from invasive species. I have been the Friends of the Porongurup volunteer weeding group coordinator for 12 years and the group has spent nearly one Sunday every month to control invasive weeds in the Park, Shire Reserves or road verges. Many other volunteers and landowners in the Porongurup and the great Southern have made a big commitment to eradicate weeds in Native vegetation and I have seen how easily seeds can be carried in the rough profile of bike tires.

My property is adjoining the Porongurup National Park. Over the years I have seen bike riders (mountain bikes and motorized bikes) going along private and National Park firebreaks in high speeds. Destroying the surface of the tracks and generating erosion problems on the steep tracks. At times the run off drains needed to be repaired nearly daily, which was quite labor intensive and frustrating. On top of this came that the riders rode their mountain bikes in wet conditions making the spread of *Phytophthora dieback* a high possibility.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Porongurup



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, 20 January 2020 12:02 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Trails master plan (Porongurup)

200120_0002

Respondent 0807

Flag Status: Flagged

Regards to the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
 Trail Development Proposal
 Porongurup MTB Trails
 Porongurup National Park

[Redacted] I am writing to voice my concern that bike trails could be put through the Porongurup National Park,..... this is a "global biodiversity hotspot" and needs protecting not exploiting.

Environmentally vulnerable to phytothora (dieback), land degradation environmental weeds plus the aboriginal peoples "januk spirits", how could you even think of burdening this park with your plan? Walkers are welcome because they are generally quiet and show care. They also generally "leave no trace" of their visit.

Our local community is supportive of trails being out of the Park, just not within.

Thankyou for your time

[Redacted]



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, 20 January 2020 6:01 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Late submission

200120_0601

Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Karl

I seem to have missed the deadline for submissions, but hope you will accept this comment.

I am an enthusiastic bushwalker. Over recent years, more and more "shared trails" have been constructed. This may work well for cyclists and horse riders who get to access what are effectively walking trails, but it doesn't work for walkers. We are the ones who must give way and get off the trail every time we meet a cyclist or horse. We must be constantly on the lookout as both other user groups can travel much faster than we can. This seriously detracts from the walking experience and thus I believe walking only trails should be the norm.

Thanks for your consideration of this comment.

Regards, [Redacted]





From: bremerprojects@fbg.org.au
Sent: Tuesday, 21 January 2020 2:11 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: belated feedback for Master Plan FBG

200121_1411

Hi Karl,

I have a couple of groups that I have been asking to give feedback on your report but haven't had opportunity due to the busyness of the holiday season. Its been very unfortunate that you used the Christmas break for this process since most are not picking up their emails and FBG office has been closed for January.

However if I was given a week's extension I definitely think there will be some points raised that will be important to Bremer Bay So far except for one email I only have verbal comments.

If by chance I am not able to have an extension then the following points are of concern

- On page 8 it has been commented that there is no master plan for trails in the Shire of Jerramungup and in particular Bremer Bay The Shire adopted a Master Cycle and Shared Use plan and the Native Snail Trail is a segment of this plan. This was done around Dec 2013 and completed by Nathan McQuoid. A copy of that can be sourced on their web site I think. There was also an earlier plan that Jessie Brampton did.
- With this large missing component in your calculations and the clear links that are created I can see why we have not been prioritised higher. What they do is show is a bigger picture, of which the Rock Cairn walk is also one segment and much funding is needed to complete.
- One of the most important components of your planning documents, as quoted by one of my Trail committee members is "so at a minimum Gscore needs to leave the door open and include a mention that the Bremer Bay Trails Group has active aspirations for new projects which will complement the Master Plan."
- At the moment we have much interest in walk trails for bird watchers and whale watchers

So its been a very quick skim read for me and like many in my area I am madly trying to catch up now back at work. Many of my volunteers choose to be away at this time of year (and dodge the tourists in Bremer) so we are very sorry we have not been timely with our feedback.

I plan to respond further if we are able

Cheers Therese Bell



Therese Bell | Strategic Planner FBG Subgroups | bremerprojects@fbg.org.au

10 Tobruk Road Jerramungup WA 6337 t: +61 8 9835 1127 f: +61 8 9835 1329 e: enquiries@fbg.org.au w: www.fbg.org.au



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 21 January 2020 2:53 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
Attachments: Mt Lindsay Walk.kmz

200121_1453

Hi

I was born in Mt Barker and lived in Albany as a student of ASHS in 1970 and 1971. I am also a regular visitor with my wife and on each visit we do some walks and climbs and rides. Our favourite walk is to Bald Head. I would argue that it is the best walk in Western Australia, but could be improved with regular track maintenance. We have climbed Bluff Knoll many times. It is a delight, but in December we climbed Toolbrunup and it is even better. We also bring our bikes. We stay in our caravan at Emu Point and love the cycle path from there to Middleton Beach. We have also cycled around to the town on the sea side of Mt Clarence. Sadly that track is a disgrace and much of it needs to be rebuilt. I would strongly recommend rebuilding the very steep up and down sections to make the ride a much friendlier grade. It would be also nice to have a safe and well-marked cycle path back to Middleton Beach from town – via Burt St and Hare St.

As a very experienced and elderly cyclist, often cycling with young grandchildren, I can't emphasise enough the importance of cycling paths having gentle grades and being safe.

I love the idea of a coastal walk from the Whaling Station to the Gap. It would however also be very desirable to have a dedicated and interesting track from there back to the Whaling Station. The best walks are loops. By the way we have done overseas walks such as the Milford Track, the Inca Trail and the Coast to Coast in England.

A walk I have suggested elsewhere is a coastal walk from Shelly Beach to West Cape Howe. **West Cape Howe is a bucket list visit** as it is the most southerly point in Western Australia. Yet it is virtually inaccessible to anyone other than intrepid four wheel drivers. And Shelly Beach is as beautiful as it gets.

Another idea is much better access to the Vancouver Peninsula with a walking path there. Driving along Quararup Rd leads to you signs which clearly indicate that visitors are not allowed and not welcome. I can now see online that there is a Point Possession Heritage Trail. That was not clear to me when we visited that area last year. In December we also climbed Mount Lindesay near Denmark. **Once you find the carpark** it is pleasant walk/climb on a cool day.

Whilst on the topic of finding places I very strongly recommend that .kmz files be produced for all of the trails and walks. I use an app called maps.me and I simply upload kmz files into it, and now never get lost. Maps.me does not need an internet connection when in use, unlike Google maps. I have attached the kmz file I made for the Mt Lindesay walk.

Regards

[REDACTED]





200121_1639



OYSTER HARBOUR CATCHMENT GROUP

admin@ohcg.org.au | 9851 2703 | www@ohcg.org.au
 PO Box 118 Mt Barker WA 6324 | ABN 40 741 930 451

To Great Southern Centre of Outdoor Recreation and Excellence

As a community landcare group for the past 28 years, the [Oyster Harbour Catchment Group](#) has been fostering our local catchment communities to be prosperous and sustainable. We therefore object to the method used to identify trail development opportunities as outlined in the *GSCORE* Great Southern Regional Trails Masterplan draft (p16).

We would have expected locations that have significant environmental, cultural and planning constraints to *also* be part of the process of identifying trail locations and on those criteria, some areas should have been discounted.

For instance, if a project site has any combination of: disease risk, reservoir protection zones, high conservation value, endemic populations or high indigenous significance which would limit project efficiency or existence and reduce project sustainability, then they should have been removed from further assessment/development.

As this process, included in other master plans such as the Perth and Peel Mountain Bike Master Plan, has not been used this plan becomes difficult to implement, significantly increases the risk to our environment and biodiversity and puts the plan at risk from public backlash. It also demonstrates disrespect to local Noongar people and other community groups.

We feel the plan has not adequately addressed:

- Private sector involvement in creating trail experiences and private ownership opportunities
- Encouraging and supporting Aboriginal involvement to identify suitable trail locations
- Improving existing trails, facilities, interpretation and provide *safety* first to increase the appeal of trail experiences
- Closing down unsanctioned trails that are unsafe or unsustainable



CONTINUED

- Providing guidance and support to organisations, localities and regions to evaluate and seek investment in existing and future trails rather than GSCORE nominating themselves as the lead implementer and sole funding recipient of the majority of trail proposals
- The trails project should be developed through a competitive process in order to be funded
- Encouraging environmental stewardship through trail-related participation is more likely to be achieved with greater volunteer involvement and giving local community groups a sense of ownership

In closing, bike trails have no place in national parks because of their incompatibility in these locations; we would expect locations with significant environmental, cultural and planning constraints eliminated from consideration on these very criteria.

Lucia Quearry

Vice Chair OHCG, on behalf of the Group



200122_0912



DENMARK WEED ACTION GROUP
 33 Strickland Street / PO Box 142
 Denmark WA 6333
dwag@westnet.com.au
 ABN 56 307 5959 260

The Denmark Weed Action Group Inc. (DWAG) is writing to inform you that as an organization and stakeholder that has been actively caring for Denmark's bushland for over 20 years, we are opposed to the proposed mountain bike trail within the Mount Hallowell Reserve R46618, vested in the Shire of Denmark, WA.

The following statement is from the Mount Hallowell Reserve Management Plan 2008 as produced by Green Skills for the Shire of Denmark and received and adopted by Council at the meeting on 22 July 2008.

"1.2 MANAGEMENT GOALS

1.2.1 Conservation

The Reserve is a conservation priority area for the maintenance of the flora, fungi and fauna and all ecological processes pertaining to the natural environment. It is recognised that the Reserve is a significant scientific reference site.

Management should maintain the integrity and conservation value of the vegetation, and the habitat values for fungi and fauna as well as ensure that the edges of the reserve are not compromised.

1.2.2 Recreation

Recreational amenities are to be provided for the public on existing walk trails in the reserve, whilst maintaining the conservation values of the Reserve."

For the reasons outlined below we believe that a mountain bike trail within the reserve is NOT in alignment with the management goals for the reserve and that the integrity and conservation values of the reserve would be compromised if the trail was approved.

- Negative impacts on biodiversity values and vegetation
- Increased risk of erosion
- Increased risk of spread of *Phytophthora* Dieback
- "Kooryunderup", Mount Hallowell is a Culturally significant area
- Negative impacts on sensitive granite outcrops
- Denmark has a large number of trail for use by bike riders already
- The Conservation values of the reserve are already being compromised by Mountain Bikers
- Expensive additional facilities may be required on site



CONTINUED

Negative impacts on Biodiversity Values and Vegetation

- Mount Hallowell Reserve consists of mostly virgin (unlogged) old growth forest and is an area of high biodiversity with a range of vegetation types.
- The edges of the reserve are under increasing pressures as a result of increasing population and impacts from residential developments adjoining the reserve.
- It is important to ensure the core of the reserve has limited environmental intrusion to maintain the highest biodiversity value.
- Exposing the core of the reserve to mountain bikes means damage to vegetation, increased soil erosion (slopes are particularly subject to erosion) and increases the potential for the spread of Dieback to Die-back free areas.
- Impacts would be greatly reduced if trails were established using only existing fire access tracks within the reserve

Increased Risk of Erosion

- To ensure erosion is limited a suitable surface would need to be created on any trail proposed. This often requires machinery which is likely to result in off-site damage and is NOT appropriate in this reserve.
- Creation of a suitable surface is expensive.

Increased Risk of Spread of *Phytophthora* Dieback

- *Phytophthora cinnamomi* has been identified as present in areas of the reserve. The management plan recommends limiting the spread of Dieback.
- Creation of a mountain bike trail supports not limits the spread of Dieback.
- Dieback mapping has not been done recently and is needed to identify areas which are Dieback-free so these can be avoided by any trails
- It cannot be guaranteed that riders will ensure their tyres are clean and thus that they are not spreading Dieback from elsewhere.
- Bike riders are able to cover larger distances of the reserve in a shorter time compared with walkers.
- Evidence from riders using the lower limits of the reserve suggests that tracks are NOT being adhered to and that riders are actively moving soil around to create jumps and new tracks.

“Kooryunderup”, Mount Hallowell is a Culturally Significant Area

- Members of DWAG have knowledge of the cultural significance of “Kooryunderup”, Mount Hallowell from personal communications with the Noongar community, although there are no Aboriginal Heritage Sites in the Reserve listed on the Department of Indigenous Affairs website.
- There are large numbers of lizard traps on many of the granite outcrops. These have been mapped by TAFE students in 2010 under the guidance of Mark Parre. At the request of Pibbelmen elder Wayne Webb the results of this study were not made public.
- DWAG recommends full consultation with the Noongar community (Pibbelmen and Minang) prior to any works within the Mount Hallowell reserve.



CONTINUED

Negative impacts on Sensitive Granite Outcrops

- Granite outcrops have associations with particularly sensitive vegetation often with high number of endemic species.
- DWAG proposes that bikes should NOT be allowed on granite outcrops or the surrounding associated vegetation.

Denmark already has a large Number of Trails for use by Bike Riders

- Both the WOW trail and “Munda Biddi” provide opportunities for more adventurous bike riders who enjoy the off-road experience in scenic surroundings.
- How many people actually use these trails? Can the cost of establishing another trail both financially and environmentally be justified?

The Conservation Values of the reserve are already being Compromised by Mountain Bikers

- Considerable damage is being caused by mountain bike riders in the more easily assessable lower slopes of the reserve
- Areas are becoming rapidly eroded by movement of soil and the creation of jumps
- Vegetation has been damaged
- We do not want to see others areas opened up to this types of damage

Expensive additional Facilities may be required on site

- Attracting additional visitors to a site requires additional facilities which is expensive and would require native vegetation to be cleared.
- Parking is limited both at Monkey Rock Carpark and at the start of the Sheila Hill Memorial Walk off Ocean Beach Road, extra parking maybe needed.
- There are no toilets or rubbish disposal facilities on site
- Who will be responsible for on-going maintenance costs to ensure the conservation values of the reserve are NOT compromised?

DWAG members have an intimate knowledge of the reserves of vested in the Shire Denmark and we spend more time on-ground caring for these reserves than any other organisation in the Denmark area. We understand the values and the threats faced by reserves in Denmark. WE KNOW that Mount Hallowell reserve is the “jewel in Denmark’s crown”. It is the best condition reserve in Denmark and can be enjoyed and appreciated without compromising its conservation values.

Angela Dickinson
 Andrew Dickinson
 Diane Harwood
 Nadine Laphorne
 Alistair Marshall
 Robert Fenwick
 Donna-Marie Carmen
 Tanya Garvin



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 23 January 2020 9:28 AM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Re:
Attachments: image001.jpg; 20200116 133522.jpg

200123_0928

Thank you for your reply
I'm sorry if that was the case
I would like to have input to the trails around this area.
I have just over 23000 signers for a dedicated footpath cycling trail from town to the Whaling museum.
I will keep gathering like minded people as I would like to see an interesting path taking in our most beautiful southern ocean.

Kind regards [REDACTED]





From: Emily Hardie <info@greatsoutherntreasures.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 January 2020 12:13 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Re: flyer for Public Comment - draft Regional Trails Master Plan

Flag Status: Flagged

200128_1213

Hi Karl,

Page 41, opportunity to include paddling on the Frankland River (upstream) at Rocky Gully.

Page 45, a big section of our market is apparently relatives visiting family. I guess they could be seen as one of our main markets and trails will provide these visitors activities during their visit??

Page 49, Map. Jerramungup, Boxwood and Bremer have the yellow trail removed.

Page 46 & 47, the Jerramungup Shire trails (nodes) can remain but we need to make sure that they do not look like part of the actual Great Southern Treasures Drive Trail.

I will call to discuss.

Kind regards
Emily

Emily Hardie
Great Southern Treasures
m: 0408 900 337
a: C/- Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup
PO Box Tambellup WA 6320
w: www.greatsoutherntreasures.com.au e: info@greatsoutherntreasures.com.au





From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 28 January 2020 5:37 PM
To: info@gscore.com.au
Subject: Enquiry from gscore.com.au

200128_1737

Respondent 0801

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Number: [REDACTED]

Message Body:
hi.

At the GSCORE and Locals meeting in April last year at the Porongurup shop, a lot of suggestions for trails were done.

Nic (Albany Mountain bike club) suggested trails in the Porongurup National Park, his suggestion was in the draft trails masterplan.

I suggested trails not in the park but around the park: my suggestion is not in the draft masterplan.

I also suggested trails on private land: not to find back in the masterplan.

So my conclusion is that GSCORE is very keen on planning trails in the national park and not looking for alternatives.

Since the January 9 meeting in the Porongurup hall I noticed that more people are suggesting: no trails in the park and trails on private land as a solution.

I am very curious if GSCORE will still keep these three suggestions out of the final report:: no trails in the Park, trails around the park and trails on private land.

About the hang gliders; did read it somewhere but the thing is, if there are roads to trailheads high up the mountain: hang gliders will follow. You know that.

regards.





22 Collie Street,
Albany WA 6330



9892 0113



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