



Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

2020-2029



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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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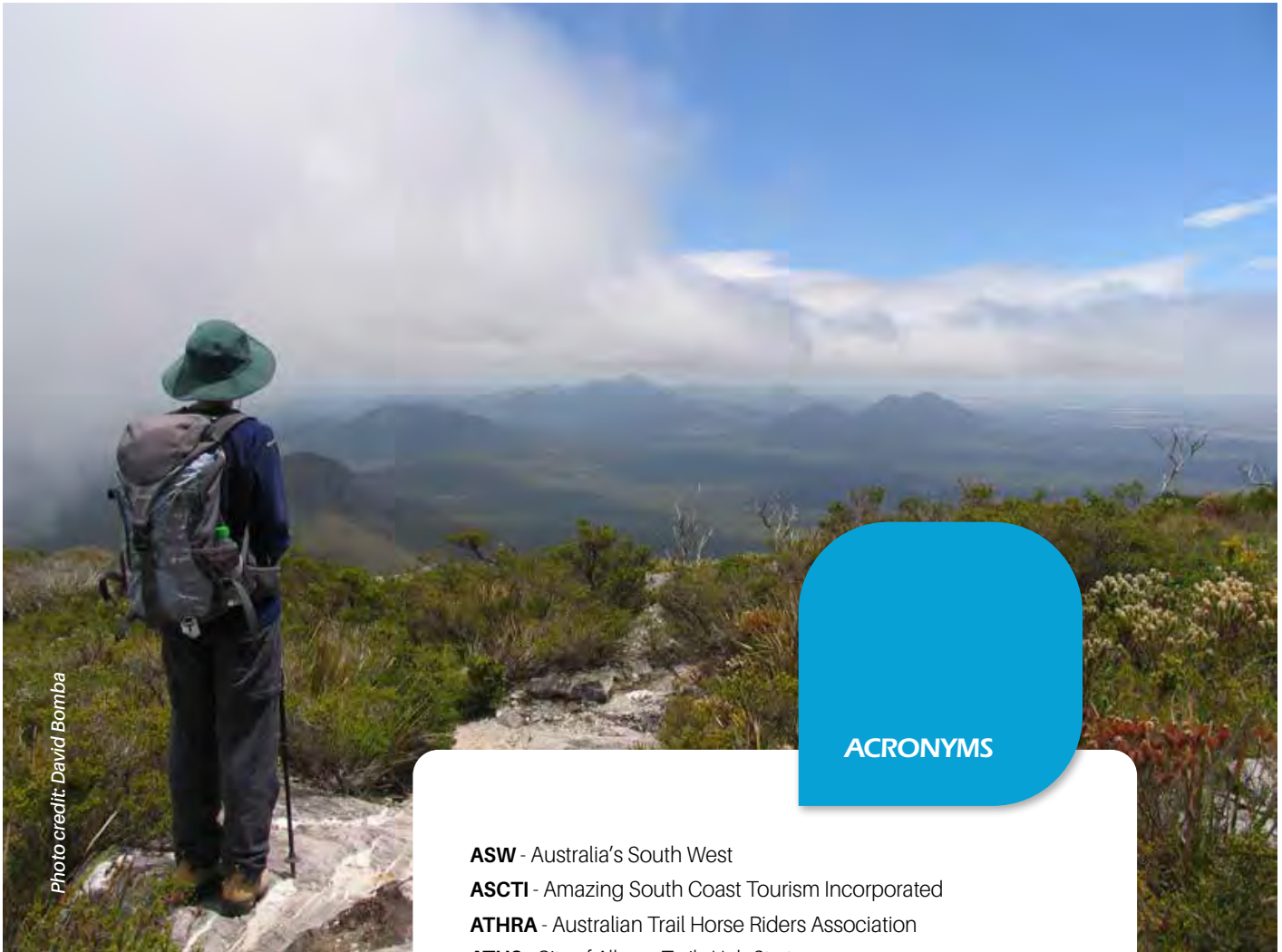


Photo credit: David Bomba

ACRONYMS

- ASW** - Australia's South West
- ASCTI** - Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated
- ATHRA** - Australian Trail Horse Riders Association
- ATHS** - City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy
- DMO** - Destination Marketing Organisation
- DOT** - Department of Transport
- DBCA** - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- DLGSC** - Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- GSCORE** - Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence
- GSDC** - Great Southern Development Commission
- GST** - Great Southern Treasures
- GSTRC** - Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit
- GSTRG** - Great Southern Trails Reference Group
- IMBA** - International Mountain Bicycling Association
- LGA** - Local Government Authority
- MCA** - Multi-criteria assessment tool
- MTB** - Mountain bike
- RTMP** - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
- SO1-SO5** - The Sea/Open Water Grading System NSW
- SWALSC** - South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council
- TDP** - Trails Development Process

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Southern Regional Trail Master Plan (RTMP) provides a coherent and clearly outlined program of trail infrastructure development across the Great Southern region over a ten-year period (2020-2029). It has been developed to guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and provides a vision of what the trail network across the Great Southern will look like in the future.

This plan has been developed in partnership with all eleven local governments in the Great Southern region – Albany, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling and has involved consultation with the adjoining Shire of Manjimup. The plan has the support of 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).

The RTMP is identified as a priority project in both the Great Southern Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2019-2021, and the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan (2018). It supports the 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.

This plan aims to establish the Great Southern as a World-Class Trails Destination.

To achieve this vision, trail development needs to focus on creating remarkable and accessible trail experiences, improving existing trails, building associated infrastructure, and developing a comprehensive marketing strategy.

To address the gaps in current trail supply, this plan identifies three trail development opportunities:

- (i) create new trail experiences;
- (ii) develop trail linkages; and
- (iii) enhance or upgrade existing trail networks.

VISION STATEMENT

By 2030, the Great Southern Region will provide a diverse range of quality trail experiences that showcase the region's unique landscapes, biodiversity, geology, Aboriginal culture and settler heritage.

The trail network will be built to a high standard and managed on a sustainable basis to enhance environmental and educational outcomes.

Trail experiences will be highly valued by local communities who regularly use them for recreation.



They will also attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors, leading to improved health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for the region's people and places.



Some of the trail proposals described in this plan are flagged as "Priority Trails". These trails or trail networks are integral to achieving the region's vision of becoming a world-class trails destination. They should be incorporated into local and state government planning documents as projects of regional importance that require prioritised funding. Other trail proposals included in this plan – including trail linkages and other trail enhancements – are important but are of lower priority. They provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans and implemented as and when funding is available.



The proposed priority trails were identified through a rigorous assessment process that involved extensive consultation with communities and stakeholder groups across the Great Southern. A multi-criteria assessment tool was used to identify which trail proposals should be prioritised for development (see Section 3). This plan recommends the construction of twelve new regional priority trails or trail networks; and enhancements to two existing nationally significant trails that require urgent maintenance. In combination with the proposed trail linkages and improvements, these new trails will provide a diverse range of iconic trail experiences for hiking, cycling and paddling.




The Priority Trail proposals are listed below according to the anticipated timeframe for construction and are sorted by activity type (hiking, cycling, and paddling). They are not ranked by order of priority. The timeframe for the delivery of these projects is based on a combination of factors, including the need to undertake detailed environmental and heritage assessments as well as additional community consultation, the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers, and the need to secure funding for construction.

! PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 SHORT 1-2 Years	Tower Hill MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Bald Head Walk Trail Albany Heritage Park Mounts Trail Corridor Link	

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 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 Stage 2 Poikeclerup MTB Trails Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Porongurup MTB Trails Munda Biddi Trail Realignment	

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 LONG 6-10 Years	Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Grain Train Rail Trails Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	

TRAIL TYPE		
 Hiking	 Cycling/Mountain biking	 Paddling

To achieve the vision outlined in this master plan, it is essential that an effective implementation strategy is adopted. Given the range of stakeholders involved in delivering the priority trail proposals, it is important that these roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and projects are delivered to a high standard. The following recommendations provide an implementation strategy to achieve the vision outlined in this master plan. The strategies are aligned with each of the agreed objectives (see Section 2) and have been prioritised over a five-year timeframe. Specific actions and agency responsibilities aligned with these strategies are included as Appendix 4.

- 1**  **Integrated Planning & Management**
 Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.
- 2**  **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.
- 3**  **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.
- 4**  **Community and Economic Development Opportunities**
 Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan is the product of a strong partnership between local and state government, and reflects the aspirations of diverse trail user groups, community organisations and businesses. Progressively implementing these projects over the next decade will ensure that the Great Southern achieves its potential as a nationally recognised trail destination.





Photo credit: Camp Quaranup

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Trails are pathways or routes that are used for recreation, tourism and appreciation of natural and cultural values. Trails may be short or long; be part of a trail network or a single journey; be used for one activity or be shared by several different trail activities; be primarily used by local residents or form a visitor attraction; be purpose-built paths or routes designated by signage and information.

WHAT ARE TRAIL EXPERIENCES?

Active leisure trails may be terrestrial (e.g. hiking, walking, running, mountain biking, cycling, equestrian) or aquatic (e.g. paddling, snorkelling, diving). They can also involve the use of motorised transport where a vehicle is the primary means of experiencing the natural environment (e.g. trail bikes) or where it provides a means to access recreation sites (e.g. 4WD, on-road vehicles).

Many trail experiences include a focus on local culture, heritage, and produce (e.g. arts trails, food and wine trails). Trails may form part of a designated and sanctioned trail network or can be informal (and in some cases unsanctioned by land managers). They can be linear or looped and may be standalone or linked to trail centres and towns. Trails are categorised according to an agreed classification system and standard (i.e. grades). These standards are specific to each trail type (e.g. walking) and are not interchangeable (see Appendix 1).

WHY IS THE MASTER PLAN NEEDED?

The Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017–2021¹ is a high-level strategic planning document produced by the Western Australian state government to guide future investment and ensure planning consistency and sustainable trails development across the State¹. It recognises the role that trails play in encouraging participation in outdoor recreation and driving economic growth through nature-based and adventure tourism. The Blueprint recommends the development of regional trails master plans as critical planning tools for all tiers of government.

There has been relatively little local level planning to meet the growing demand from residents for the construction of trails and trail networks within the Great Southern. Except for the City of Albany, which is implementing its Trails Hub Strategy, none of the other local governments in the Great Southern have current local Trails Master Plans or equivalent documents. However, the need for trails master planning is listed as a priority in the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan and is documented in several local government community or recreation plans.

While there are currently few formal trails plans in place, some local governments have trails committees or project groups. The City of Albany has a Trails Project Control Group overseeing the implementation of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy, as well as project-specific working groups for individual trails/reserves. The Shire of Jerramungup has a Bremer Bay Trails committee which has active aspirations for new projects that align with the RTMP. The Shire of Plantagenet recently formed a trails working group which has undertaken a review of its local trails master plan. It is recognised that seven of the region's eleven local government areas (LGAs) have population bases below 2000 residents and struggle to commit capital and human resource towards trail planning and development. It is anticipated that this master plan will prove to be a valuable resource to all local governments across the Great Southern region.

¹ Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017-2020, Department of Sport and Recreation, page 18.

HOW WAS THE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPED?

The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) developed this plan in partnership with all regional stakeholders. In undertaking this work, GSCORE employed the Trail Development Process (TDP). The TDP was developed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) in partnership with international trail specialists, key stakeholders, and the trail community². This planning process provides guidelines to assist land managers, trail professionals and trail groups to develop and manage trails sustainably, and maximise environmental, social and economic benefits.

Integration of TDP guidelines into this plan and all future planning will ensure that trails are a recreational asset to the Great Southern community, not a liability. The guidelines are an important resource and tool for land managers, trail professionals and trail groups, providing guidance and a consistent development approach to trails across Western Australia.

The Trail Development Process involves eight stages (see Figure 1 below) and encompasses a constant evaluation, review and improvement process as trails are being developed, maintained, extended or renewed.

Figure 1: Trail Development Process

STAGE	OUTCOME	
1. Trail Proposal	A trail development proposal is either supported in principle by the land manager/owner, or not supported (due to environmental, social, cultural or other constraints). The purpose of a proposal could be to identify potential suitable areas for consideration.	DESKTOP
2. Framework	A project outline developed by the steering group (stakeholders), including: project objectives, project management model, stakeholders, roles, target market, requirements, execution, and ongoing management model.	
3. Site Assessment	Broad-scale study of the area and identification of opportunities, constraints and characteristics such as soil types, vegetation etc.	
4. Concept Planning	Identification of opportunities and conceptual trail plan, including broad trail corridors and infrastructure requirements.	
5. Corridor Evaluation	Detailed assessment of trail corridors for use in determining the final trail alignment.	FIELD
6. Detailed Design	Detailed trail design and alignments physically flagged in the field. Includes detail on the trail classifications, technical trail features, construction methods and specifications.	
7. Construction	Trail constructed in line with the Detailed Design.	
8. Management	Management plan implemented detailing maintenance and monitoring requirements.	

In developing the RTMP, GSCORE and associated consultants undertook an extensive community consultation process that involved landowners, land managers, local governments, the regional development commission, Aboriginal communities and individuals, tourism organisations, peak recreational bodies, user groups, and the broader community. The main data collection techniques were face-to-face workshops, meetings with stakeholder groups, and an online survey.

The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local governments for trail development, see RTMP Background Report.³

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. With that aim in mind, the following planning principles were endorsed by the project partners.

² Trails Development Series: Part A – Trail Development Process: <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/trails>

³ Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) Background Report - June 2019 (hereafter RTMP Background Report)

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING



Attract visitors from outside the region



Nationally & regionally significant trails



Provide community and economic development for traditional custodians of the land



Build sustainable and safe trails

The project will adopt the sustainable trail design principles in the WA Trail Development Process



Work in partnership with Noongar communities to identify opportunities for training, employment, cultural interpretation and Noongar language or dual naming of trails



Cater to different user groups and abilities

Include a range of different trail activities, grades and styles.



Enable health and wellbeing benefits for local communities



Develop community-based easy grade trails



Disperse visitors across the region

Identify trail projects across the entire region



Showcase and protect our unique landscapes and biodiversity



Build experiences around our unique points of difference and provide interpretation and education

Build partnerships across LGA boundaries and with local communities



Identify projects that cross boundaries and engage communities



Keep visitors in the region for longer

Provide a coherent and exciting array of experiences



Collaborate not compete



Put the user experience first

These principles have guided key decision-making for the plan.

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SECTION 2 SITUATION ANALYSIS

Photo credit: Tourism WA

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Trail users are increasingly seeking authentic, exciting outdoor experiences. Successful trail destinations such as Tasmania and New Zealand attract visitors seeking adventure, wilderness, and experiences that provide a sense of discovery and personal achievement. Creating attractive experiences requires consideration of:



Unique trail experiences matched to the region's landscapes



Marketing and promotion - 'experience' packaging



Capacity to host events



High-quality, diverse, iconic, scenic trail experiences



Revenue generation opportunities



Partnerships and political support



Accessibility, accommodation, attractions and activities

Successful trail destinations contain a range of different landscapes, experiences, trail lengths, classifications and style (linear, loop) within an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks which provide the necessary services such as information, accommodation, infrastructure and complementary activities. They also provide opportunities for residents to recreate and enjoy improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

HOW WE COMPARE TO ESTABLISHED TRAIL DESTINATIONS

Australia has a diverse range of landscapes and trail opportunities are being developed in every State. The popularity of active leisure, individual fitness and outdoor recreation activities is increasing, and trail-based activities are recognised as central to tourism growth in many regions across the country.

Tasmania is the best-known trails destination within Australia, with five of the twelve 'Great Walks of Australia' located in that state. With the opening of the Three Capes Walk in 2015, the number of tourists visiting Tasmania for overnight bushwalks grew by almost 70%. The Cape to Cape Walk Track in Margaret River is the only Western Australian trail included as a Great Walk. In the Great Southern region, the section of the Bibbulmun Track from Walpole to Albany is often recognised as one of the best sections of this extensive internationally recognised trail. With improved marketing and increased support services, this section of the track has the potential to elevate the status of the Great Southern as a hiking destination.

Tasmania is also becoming recognised as an international mountain biking destination, with Blue Derby and Maydena being the most well-known

locations. More than 40,000 people visited Tasmania to participate in mountain biking and cycling in 2018/2019. **Closer to home**, established and emerging mountain biking facilities can be found in Margaret River, Perth Hills, Nannup, Pemberton, Dwellingup and Collie. 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.

The landscapes of the **Great Southern** region offer a range of marketable experiences, equal to, or exceeding those sought in other destinations across the country. The region is internationally recognised as a biodiversity hotspot famous for its unique and endemic species. The diversity of flora and fauna, rich cultural heritage, dramatic coastline and mountain ranges are major drawcards. Visitors to Western Australia are drawn to its natural beauty, with almost 90% of holiday makers experiencing 'amazing natural landscapes or national parks'⁴.

⁴ Understanding Repeat Visitation to Western Australia, Tourism Research Australia, March 2018.

ANALYSIS OF OUR CURRENT TRAIL OFFERING

An audit of existing and planned trails in each LGA across the region shows that the Great Southern region has many tracks and trails (Table 1). However, because most of these have been developed in isolation from each other, the region lacks a coherent trail offering. There is a high concentration of trails close to coastal areas, while inland areas, despite having natural attractions including parks and reserves, are very poorly served by trail infrastructure. Throughout the region there are many informal trails used primarily by residents.

Walking is relatively well catered for with a variety of grades available, although most-accessible trails suitable for the leisure market are concentrated in the Lower Great Southern. Several shires in the central and northern parts of the region have heritage trails and town walks, though most are not well marketed or known outside of the local area. There are very few looped trails, and most of these are short town walks.

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. A lack of infrastructure and marketing limits use of the river systems, lakes, inlets and harbours for paddling. Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders, and there are only two designated bridle trails used almost exclusively by local riders.

In addition to significant gaps in trail supply, the region also lacks consistent **trail signage**. There is no comprehensive source of information about the region-wide trail offering, and there are few physical and/or promotional linkages between trails. There are a diversity of trail construction and maintenance standards, funding sources and governance arrangements, and there are currently no recognised trail towns (hubs), trail centres, or trail networks.

Analysis of current trail offerings has enabled better understanding of **current gaps** in trail provision, and opportunities for future trail development.⁵ In brief, while there are many trails throughout the region, there are significant gaps in the types of trails and trail experiences available. This includes a gap in trails which highlight Noongar heritage and culture. This could be addressed by engaging with the Noongar community to integrate culture and creative expression in each of the trail proposals.

The current trail supply is insufficient to meet the needs of both residents and visitors. Apart from the two iconic, long distance trails (Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Trail) there are few trail products that appeal to a broad market and attract mass visitation. This plan examines these gaps and identifies opportunities and priorities for development.

⁵ The RTMP Background Report provides an overview of the current trail networks in the region and an understanding of the social, health, economic, and environmental benefits of trails.

Table 1: Existing sanctioned trails in the Great Southern (as at 31 May 2019)

TRAIL TYPE	NUMBER OF TRAILS	TOTAL DISTANCE (KM)
Hike	91	194
Hike (long distance)	2	179
Mountain Bike (MTB)	1	1.3
Dual-use (hike and cycle)	18	103
Off road cycle touring	2	243
Paddle	10	81
Dive/snorkel	2	0.6
Equestrian/bridle	2	84
TOTAL TRAILS	128	886



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.

The aims, planning requirements and level of investment associated with each of these approaches are outlined in Table 2. These approaches inform the specific trail plans contained in Section 4.

The Great Southern region has the opportunity to maximise and market trail use, with the diversity of trail experiences and landscapes providing a compelling destination to visit.

With a focus on unique biodiversity and Aboriginal culture and heritage, visitors and locals will be enticed to explore the different values and experiences. It is expected that repeat visitation and length of stay will increase as a result.

Table 2: Approach to trail development: aims, planning and investment

APPROACH	AIM	PLANNING REQUIRED	INVESTMENT
CREATE new trail experiences	<p>Develop trails to meet unmet and emerging demand.</p> <p>Develop and market new trail experiences to suit target markets.</p>	<p>Integrate planning across multiple tenures, approvals from several land managers, detailed concept designs for development of different trails experiences, and services, branding and signage.</p> <p>Management and maintenance model is required at the planning stage.</p>	<p>High cost for planning, design and construction.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance costs should also be factored into initial planning.</p> <p>Need to leverage funding from all tiers of government.</p>
DEVELOP trail linkages	<p>Develop trails linkages to maximise use of existing trail networks.</p> <p>Extend trails to create links between existing routes and town centres.</p>	<p>Coordinated planning approach to develop and establish links with existing routes.</p> <p>May require new trail infrastructure such as new trails, signage, interpretation or mapping; or improvements to road connectivity.</p>	<p>Low cost where trails already exist. Relatively low cost for installation of new signage, mapping and interpretation.</p> <p>Higher costs associated with new trail construction and installation of other infrastructure.</p>
ENHANCE existing trails	<p>Enhance and/or upgrade existing designated trails and/or upgrade informal recreational trails to create new trail experiences and improve access for different user groups.</p>	<p>Enhance access by improving trail surface or assistance infrastructure (steps, handholds, etc.) where possible.</p> <p>Upgrade trail infrastructure and improve signage, interpretation and mapping.</p> <p>Close or rehabilitate unsanctioned/ informal trails.</p>	

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SECTION 3 IDENTIFYING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Photo credit: Project 3

IDENTIFYING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The goal of the RTMP is to establish an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks that cater to different trail user groups. To achieve this vision, the plan draws on the trail model outlined in the Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint. A trail model defines how a trail or set of trails can be developed and applied to a population centre or an individual site. Trail models heavily influence all parts of trail planning, design, construction and management (see Appendix 2).

Successful and sustainable trails require a strategic planning approach that ensures appropriate trail models and trail types are developed in appropriate locations.

HOW WERE PRIORITY TRAIL PROJECTS IDENTIFIED?

The following trail prioritisation process was used to identify regional trail development opportunities within the Great Southern. The criteria used are described in Table 3. The following sections describe these criteria in further detail.

Table 3: Trail prioritisation process

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITISATION CRITERIA
1 Market Potential	Activity markets are categorised as high, medium or low potential. Factors accessed: size of current market (how many people currently visit); existing catchment (where do visitors come from); visitation trends (what will attract visitors now and into the future); and potential for market growth (will trail development attract new markets).
2 Destination Significance	Destination locations are categorised as having national, regional or local significance. Factors assessed include: connectivity (population demographics and proximity); scope (available land); character (setting and landscape appeal); profile (existing services); and desirability (user demand)
3 Destination Opportunity	Destination locations are identified as having excellent, good, average, or low opportunity based on the location's relative importance and uniqueness. Factors assessed include: tenure ; access ; value (landscape); quality (landscape); and diversity (trail type).
4 Destination Deliverability	Destination locations are identified as having long, medium or short-term deliverability. Factors assessed include: demand (established); supply (existing trails); stakeholders (existing); planning (level of support); and land use (existing).

1 MARKET POTENTIAL

Substantial investment in trails is occurring around the world and trails are being actively marketed to keep tourists longer in different destinations. Trails tourism has many benefits – it increases length of stay by low-impact visitors, can promote repeat visitation, and drives tourism dollars to local businesses.⁶ In general, trail walkers and hikers are the largest trails market world-wide. However, due to longer average time staying at a location (3-5 days) and often higher than average daily spend on food and accommodation,⁷ mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market.

Two distinct visitor markets have traditionally been identified within trail tourism segmentation:

- **Destination Trail Users:** Experienced trails users who regularly travel with trails as a primary motivator. They have likely visited other Australian or international trails destinations. They seek high quality trails with good supporting infrastructure in scenic/natural locations.
- **Trail Users While on Holiday:** Typically less experienced trail users whose primary motivator for travel is not trails. While they view trail use as a secondary motivation for their visit they will participate in trail activities and will likely hire or require equipment. They may place less emphasis on the trail and more on accessibility of the facility, the setting and nearby attractions and amenities.

This master plan further differentiates market segments as:

- **Leisure Trail Users:** 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.
- **Active Trail Users:** 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.
- **Adventure Trail Users:** dedicated trail users who will seek out challenging trails or unique and extended experiences. Time spent on trails is often overnight and multi-day.

⁶20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in 2018 (p.26): <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/2018-trends-report-continued-growth-innovative-marketing-technology>

⁷Economic Impacts of Mountain Biking Tourism – 2016 Update: <https://www.pinkbike.com/news/economic-impacts-of-mountain-bike-tourism-2016-update.html>

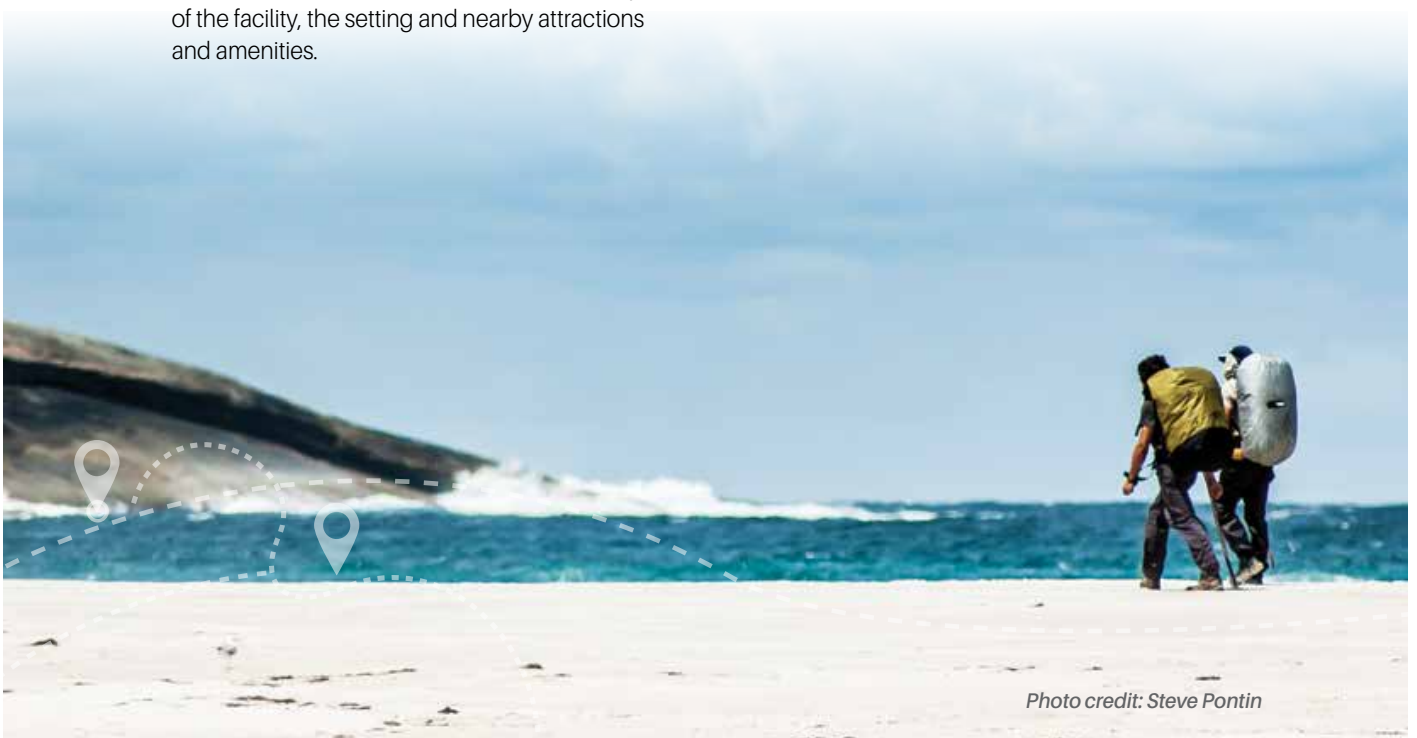


Photo credit: Steve Pontin

Table 4 provides an overview of the characteristics of these market segments. It is important to note that the type of experience sought by different groups, such as young people, families and seniors, is often self-determined according to ability and appetite for adventure, rather than by age or other demographic factors. It would be remiss to expect that older people or family groups will only seek leisure experiences, when those with skills and knowledge may well seek adventure experiences. Recent industry analysis is predicting increasing interest in adventure-based and trails tourism across all market segments⁸. This master plan identifies current market gaps and opportunities to cater for these diverse markets.

Table 4: Trails market segmentation

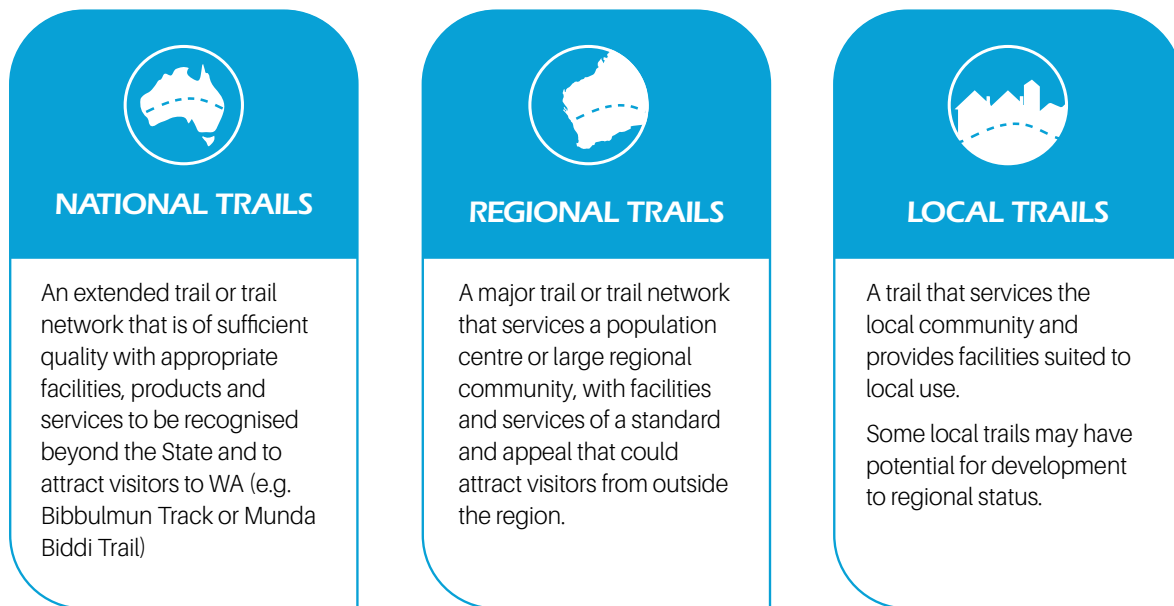
 <p>LEISURE</p>	<p>GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Typically holiday makers who seek out accessible trails for use with family and friends. Time spent on trails is often short to half-day in duration.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Tourist, family, friends</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: Well-marked trails to suit range of abilities. Easy access trails linked to town site and/or accommodation camping, and day use sites in natural areas.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: LOW-MEDIUM - Limited experience seeking accessible, achievable trails</p> <p>VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH</p>
 <p>ACTIVE</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Competent outdoor enthusiasts seeking challenge, skill development</p> <p>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.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: MEDIUM-HIGH - Experienced seeking opportunity for skill development and socialisation</p> <p>VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH-MEDIUM</p>
 <p>ADVENTURE</p>	<p>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-day.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Experienced and willing to travel for iconic experience.</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: More remote experiences with limited facilities.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: HIGH - Very experienced seeking high-level challenge and adventure</p> <p>Visitor Numbers: LOW</p>

⁸ 20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in 2018 (p.26): <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/2018-trends-report-continued-growth-innovative-marketing-technology>

2 DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE

Regional master planning typically identifies the significance of different destinations, defined by desired recreation and tourism outcomes and the opportunity for different scales of infrastructure and other associated development in a particular location. Destination significance is categorised as being nationally, regionally or locally significant, and relates to the willingness of visitors to travel from other parts of the country, from within the region, or from within local areas to use trails (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Trail hierarchies



The RTMP focuses on nationally and regionally significant trails that have the potential to attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors to our region. These trails will be complemented by an array of locally significant trail-based experiences and services across the region that will encourage visitors to remain in the region for longer. The activity plans for trails development (see Section 4) identify the destination significance of each location where high quality, sustainable and accessible trails could be developed, including locations capable of hosting state, national and international events.

3 DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY

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. Locations that are serviced by major transport routes, with a good mix of tourism products and services, including accommodation, attractions, and activities, and are supported by marketing and promotion activities, have greater opportunity than those where the existing tourism market is small or under-developed. Opportunity also takes into consideration the amount of land available, existing tenure arrangements, and the geo-physical advantages of different locations (i.e. the most suitable soil types for trail construction).






4 DESTINATION DELIVERABILITY

Deliverability refers to the timeframe within which proposed trail projects can be achieved. The deliverability was determined through assessing established demand, existing trail and infrastructure supply, landholder and stakeholder objectives, planning constraints and sensitivities, and existing land use. Projects with high deliverability can potentially be achieved within a short timeframe, whereas those that face a range of constraints or challenges, have long-term deliverability.

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A multi-criteria assessment (MCA) tool that uses the criteria outlined above was developed to assess trail opportunities across the Great Southern. The MCA was applied to all trail ideas collected through the community consultation process. The current status of each trail activity type is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Activity type, market potential, destination significance, opportunity and deliverability

	ACTIVITY TYPE	MARKET POTENTIAL	CURRENT DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE	POTENTIAL DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE	DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY	DESTINATION DELIVERABILITY
	Bushwalking	High	National	National	Excellent	Short
	Trail Running	Medium	Regional	National	Good	Short
	Mountain biking	High	Local	Regional	Good	Med-long
	Cycle touring	Medium	Local	Regional	Excellent	Med-long
	Paddling	Medium	Local	Regional	Good	Short
	Snorkelling	Medium	Local	Local	Average	Short
	Adventure trail bike touring	High	None	Regional	Good	Med
	Trail bike riding	Low	Local	Local	Average	Long
	Equestrian	Low	Local	Local	Average	Long

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 there is limited opportunity to develop regionally significant equestrian trails and trail bike trails 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.

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 4 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



Photo credit: City of Albany

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

This section outlines key recommendations to develop a range of locally and regionally significant trail experiences suited to a diversity of trail users, types and experiences, and includes future planning for relevant trail towns, trail networks and visitor services across the Great Southern. In line with the objectives of the RTMP, **trail plans have been developed for hiking, mountain biking and cycle touring, and paddling**. These plans include discussion of existing supply and suitability for different market segments; market demand; development opportunities and constraints; and deliverability of the proposed projects.

Each activity area includes at least one regional priority trail or trail network.

Trail development proposals are grouped into three categories:

Create new trail experiences







Develop trail linkages

Enhance existing trails

Following the rationale and using the assessment criteria outlined in previous sections, priority locations and projects were identified across the Great Southern region. Fourteen regional priority trails are proposed (see Figure 3). They are listed according to the anticipated timeframe for construction and are sorted by activity type (hiking, cycling, and paddling). They are not ranked by order of priority.

Figure 3: Proposed Regional Priority Trails

! PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 SHORT 1-2 Years	Tower Hill MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Bald Head Walk Trail Albany Heritage Park Mounts Trail Corridor Link	
 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 Stage 2 Poikeclerup MTB Trails Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Porongurup MTB Trails Munda Biddi Trail Realignment	
 LONG 6-10 Years	Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Grain Train Rail Trails Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	

The majority of the proposed regional priority trails are new trails or trail networks (see Map 1). Developing these priority trails is integral to achieving the region's vision of becoming a world-class trails destination. They provide a diverse range of iconic trail experiences for hiking, cycling and paddling. Progressively implementing these projects over the next decade will ensure that the Great Southern achieves its potential as a nationally recognised trail destination.

Other trail proposals included in this plan – including trail linkages and trail enhancements – are important but are of lower priority. They provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans and implemented when funding is available.

The timeframe for the delivery of the proposed trails is based on a combination of factors, including land manager and broad community support, the need to secure funding for construction, 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.

The deliverability timelines relate to when it could be expected all trail site assessment, planning and design would be complete, and a trail project would be 'shovel-ready' for construction as per Stage 7 of the Trail Development Process (refer to Figure 1):



Short (S) = 1-2 years
(construction commences 2020-2021)



Medium (M) = 3-5 years
(construction commences 2022-2025)

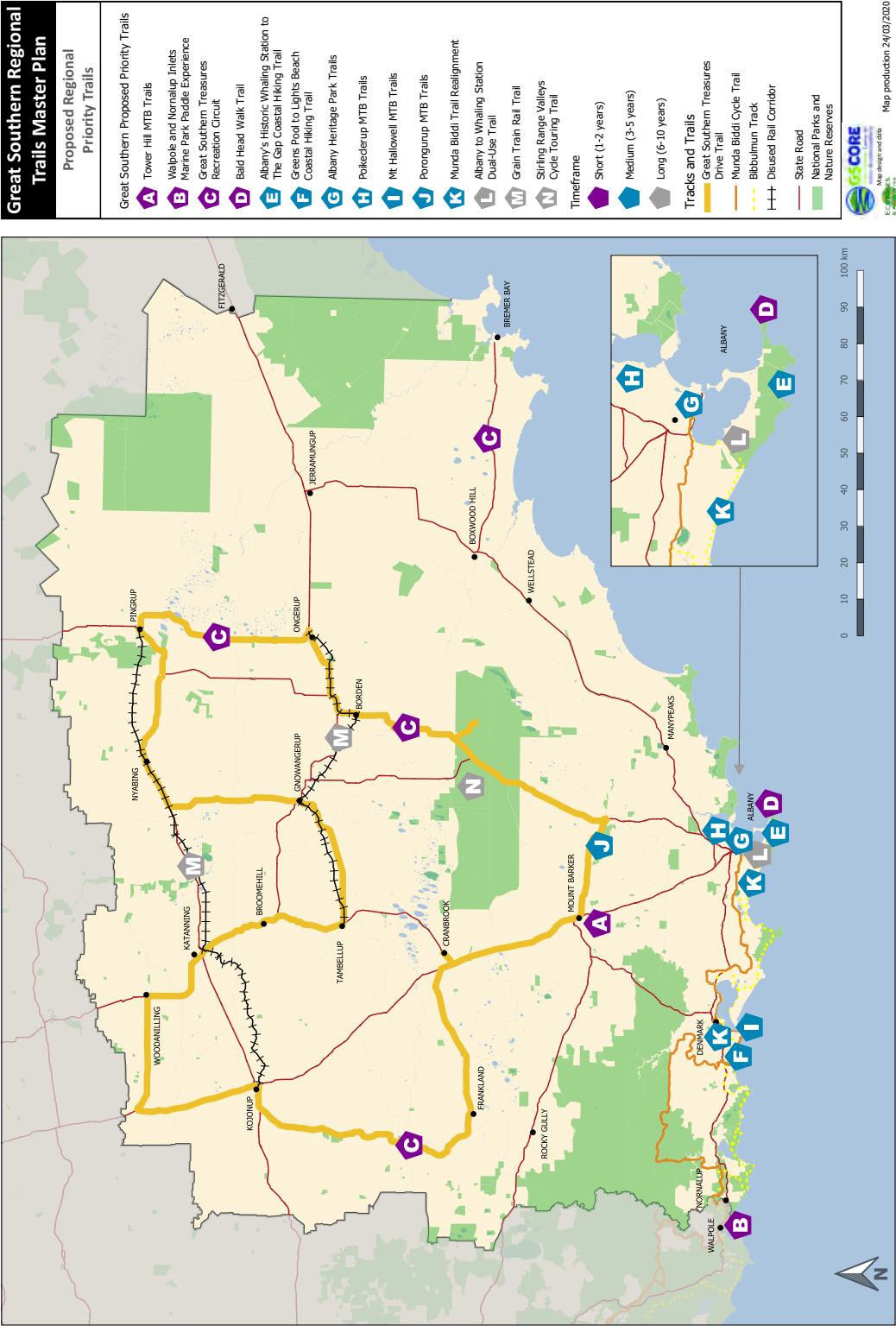


Long (L) = 6-10 years
(construction commences 2026-2029)



Photo credit: David Bomba

Map 1: Proposed regional priority trails.



HIKING TRAILS

The Great Southern region has limited existing recognition as a hiking trail destination, but it is known for 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. Adventure trail users rate the Walpole to Albany sections of the Bibbulmun Track and the Ridge Walk in the Stirling Range as some of the best hiking in the State. These trails are complemented by many locally significant walking trails. A full trails inventory is not included here for brevity, but a summary is contained in the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Background Report 2019.⁵

The Great Southern region has the opportunity to become Western Australia's premier hiking destination, offering an array of walking and trail running experiences in diverse landscapes.

Short half day walks are the most popular length of hiking trail, particularly within the leisure market, however longer day and multiday walks provide options for trail users to extend their visit or tailor their experience according to their own preferences. New and emerging trail activities, particularly trail running and trail running events, provide opportunities to expand the existing hiking market. Trail runners use established hiking trails, with mountain biking trails often being used for organised events.

Table 6 outlines the current state of the regional hiking offering and the proposed strategy to enhance existing trail experiences.



Table 6: Current status of hiking trails and proposed strategies to address gaps

FOCUS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STRATEGY
Trail significance	The Bibbulmun Track is a nationally significant trail. There are 15 regionally significant hiking trails spread across the Great Southern.	Market and promote the region's existing trail network.
Destination significance	Albany and Denmark have sufficient supply of quality trails and supporting facilities to become trail towns. Porongurup and the Stirling Range have sufficient supply of quality hiking trails and supporting facilities to become trail centres.	Work with local governments, land managers and businesses to achieve trail town/trail centre status.
Facilities	Albany and Denmark are established tourism destinations with a diverse offering of attractions and experiences. Porongurup/Mount Barker has a small tourism offering.	Build tourism capacity within the Shires of Plantagenet, Gnowangerup and Cranbrook.
Market	Bushwalking is undertaken by over half of international visitors and approximately 1 in every 5 intrastate and interstate visitors to the Great Southern region.	Integrate hiking and trail running experiences into destination marketing campaigns.
Participation	While the adventure market is well catered for, there are fewer trails suited to the leisure and active markets.	New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of the leisure and active markets.
Uniqueness of experience	Hiking trails showcase the region's unique geology and biodiversity, including a good spread of trails in coastal, forest and mountain landscapes. However, there are few opportunities for leisure hikers to experience coastal or mountain environments.	New trail development for the leisure market in coastal and mountain areas.
Trail type	There are few looped hiking trails, or short (half-day) trails. There is no medium length, or multi-day trail experience with high-end lodge accommodation.	Create loops of different lengths. Re-brand and package sections of the Bibbulmun Track to make it more marketable as a 3-5 day experience.
Quality	Trail quality varies, with some significant erosion and maintenance issues on iconic trails.	Prioritise maintenance and improvements to iconic trails.
Location	With the exception of the Stirling Range National Park, all trail networks are within 20km of a city or town centre.	Improve signage and maps to encourage regional dispersal. Seal the access road to Point Ann to improve accessibility of the iconic multi-day Mamang Trail.
Useability	Signage, maps, trail information and trail interpretation are generally poor to average.	Develop a regional trail signage and wayfinding strategy, and interpretation strategy. Prioritise improvements to trailhead facilities, including the Bibbulmun Track southern terminus.

PROPOSED HIKING TRAILS

As there are already many established, well-recognised hiking trails in the Great Southern, **this plan focuses on enhancement of hiking trail experiences, rather than the creation of many new trails** (see Table 6). Concepts from existing plans and strategies such as the Albany Trails Hub Strategy, and the Kinjarling Trail Stories and Strategic Plan should be considered where possible. The region has the opportunity to become Western Australia's premier hiking destination, offering an array of walking and trail running experiences in diverse landscapes. This vision can be achieved in the medium-term by:

- Better promoting the region's current hiking offering;
- Improving existing trails; and
- Filling key gaps in the supply of hiking trails suited to the leisure and active markets.

The projects outlined in Table 7 include opportunities to create new trail experiences, develop trail linkages, and enhance existing trails. See Map 2 for trail locations.

KEY

LEAD ORGANISATION

DBCA - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

ALB - City of Albany

BT - Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

CRAN - Shire of Cranbrook

DEN - Shire of Denmark

GNOW - Shire of Gnowangerup

JERR - Shire of Jerramungup

KATT - Shire of Katanning

KENT - Shire of Kent

KOJ - Shire of Kojonup

PLAN - Shire of Plantagenet

WOOD - Shire of Woodanilling

TIMEFRAME



Short (1-2 years)



Medium (3-5 years)



Long (6-10 years)

SIGNIFICANCE



Local



Regional



National

MARKET SEGMENT



Leisure



Active



Adventure



Table 7: Proposed hiking trails










































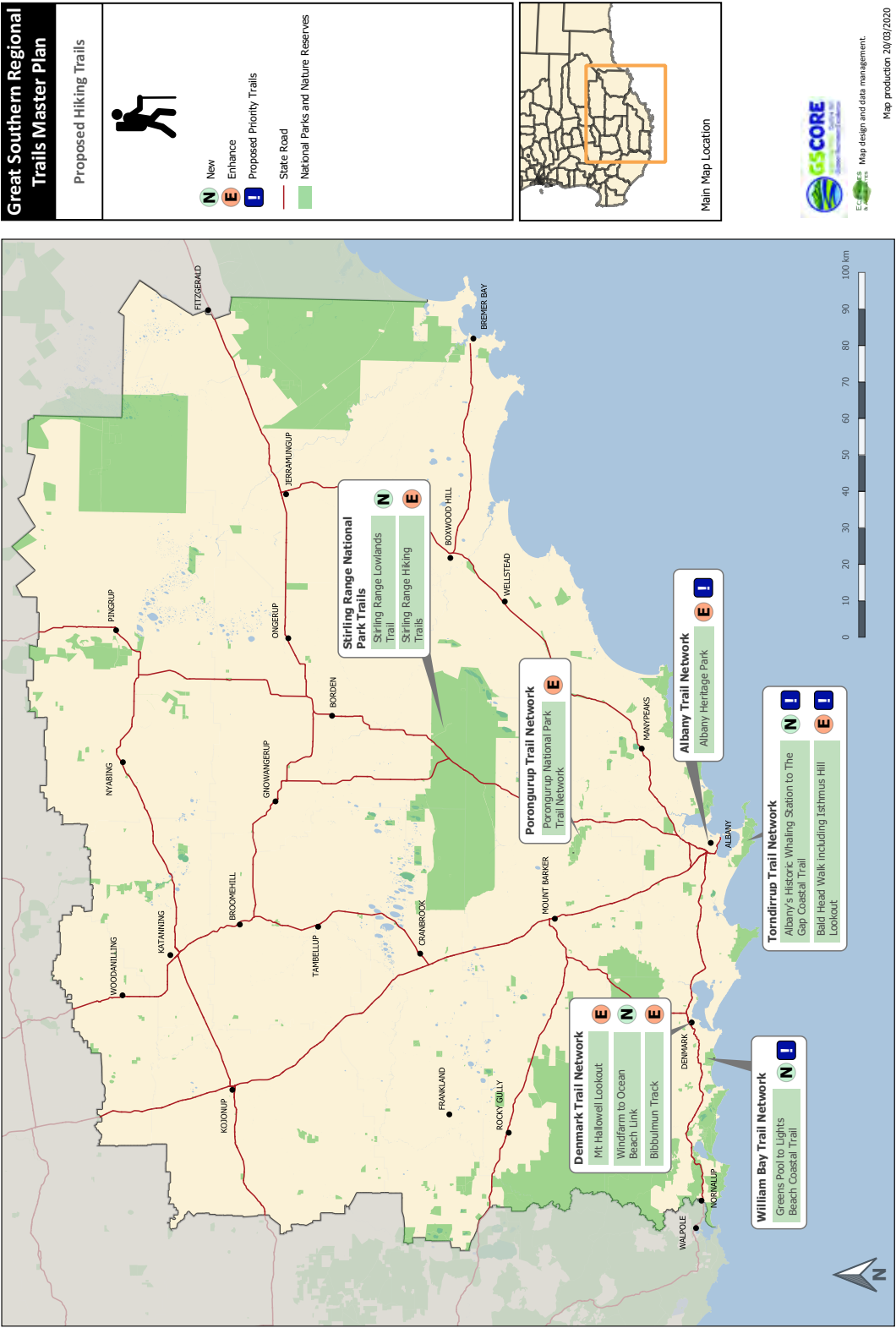
<div>  Priority Regional Trails </div>		PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
<div>  Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail William Bay National Park </div>		DBCA		 	
Creation of new trail within William Bay National Park that would link Greens Pool 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. Approx. 6km Grade 2-3.					
<div>  Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Trail Torndirrup National Park </div>		DBCA		 	
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. Approx. 10km Grade 3-4.					
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail Stirling Range National Park		DBCA			
Creation of a new trail loop that showcases the Stirling Range peaks and mountain vistas from the valley floor. Approx 3km Grade 2.					
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES					
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Denmark		DEN		 	
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]					
Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite to Nullaki Peninsula) Denmark		DBCA DEN		 	
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.					
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
<div>  Albany Heritage Park - Mounts Granite Trail Albany </div>		ALB		 	
An extension of the popular Granite Trail this new trail will accommodate hikers only, taking them from the CBD to Padre White Lookout, to Mt Adelaide and down to Middleton Beach. The corridor and trail alignment for the Link was identified in both the Albany Trails Hub Strategy and the Albany Heritage Park Trails Concept Plan. 5km Grade 3.					
<div>  Albany Heritage Park - Stage 2 Albany </div>		ALB		 	
The City of Albany Trail Hub Strategy identifies trail improvements, including upgrades to trail surface, rectifying erosion issues, and improved signage and trail heads, for hiking and dual-use trails within the Albany Heritage Park precinct.					

Table 7: Proposed hiking trails cont.

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS <i>CONT.</i>				
 Bald Head Walk Torndirrup National Park	DBCA	N		
The Bald Head Walk is regarded as one of the best hikes in the South West. The trail climbs and descends along the narrow ridge line of the Flinders Peninsula, a granite formation that juts out from the landscape into the vastness of the Southern Ocean. The trail is currently in poor condition in some sections.				
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk Torndirrup National Park	DBCA	R		
Upgrade of the Isthmus Hill lookout will provide a short walk option which takes in some of the spectacular views of the Bald Head Walk.				
Mt Hallowell Lookout Denmark	DEN	N		
This trail follows a stretch of the Bibbulmun Track and takes hikers via Monkey Rock to the summit of Mt Hallowell. Need to upgrade trail head information and improve signage to the lookout at the top of Mt Hallowell.				
STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK TRAILS	DBCA	R		
Mt Hassell, Mt Magog, Talyuberlup Peak, Mt Toolbrunup, Mt Trio Assess maintenance requirements and opportunities to enhance existing trails				
PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK TRAIL NETWORK	DBCA	R		
Bolganup Trail, Castle Rock Loop, Devil's Slide, Nancy's Peak Assess maintenance requirements and opportunities to enhance existing trails				



Map 2: Proposed hiking trails by location



MOUNTAIN BIKING AND CYCLE TOURING TRAILS

The Great Southern region has limited existing recognition as a cycling destination. The following proposed projects have the potential to attract intra-state and interstate visitors and cater to the needs of residents seeking a diverse range of cycling experiences. The plan focuses on three types of cycling trails:

- **Mountain bike trails** – single track (i.e. dedicated) trails for Downhill (DH) and/or Cross-country (XC) styles of mountain bike riding (see Appendix 1 for a description of MTB trail types).
- **Dual-use trails** – shared use trails for exercise and leisure by walkers and cyclists.
- **Off road cycle touring trails** – long distance trails that incorporate overnight camping or accommodation with a focus on connecting riders with existing towns or points of interest.

The diversity of the experiences and landscapes described in this plan will create a compelling destination to visit. Realising the potential of the proposed priority projects will see the benefits of trails grow for both visitors and locals.

The plan recommends:

- Creating accessible cycling experiences for all markets from leisure to adventure (see Table 8)
- Establishing Albany, Denmark and Mount Barker as accredited trail towns
- Creating areas for cycle skills development, such as the Pump Track in the Albany Youth Precinct. Pump tracks and skills development trails play an important in developing rider skill and should also be considered in other local government areas, with Denmark and Mount Barker priority locations.

To achieve outcomes that benefit the whole community, cycling trail development will require **extensive planning, community engagement and support**. The proposed trails and trail networks outlined in this plan will require detailed site assessments and concept planning before they can progress. This includes ongoing stakeholder engagement across the community.



Photo credit: Travis Deane

Table 8: Current status of cycling trails and proposed strategies to address gaps

FOCUS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STRATEGY
Trail significance	The Munda Biddi Trail is a nationally significant trail.	Improve and maintain the Munda Biddi Trail to attract interstate and international visitors.
Destination significance	There is a small supply of locally significant dual-use cycling trails. There is approximately 1km of sanctioned MBT trail, and four locally significant dual-use cycle trails.	Increase the trail supply to achieve regional status as a mountain biking and cycling destination.
Facilities	Albany and Denmark are established tourism destinations with a diverse offering of attractions and experiences. Porongurup/Mount Barker has a small tourism offering.	Build capacity and capability amongst existing businesses to take advantage of trail-based tourism opportunities.
Market	Cycling is undertaken by approximately 1 in 6 international visitors, and 1 in every 10-day trippers	Promote opportunities for cycling in destination marketing campaigns.
Participation	There are few trails suited to MBT users across the leisure, active and adventure markets.	New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of all MTB trail user groups and accommodate riders of various abilities.
Uniqueness of experience	The Munda Biddi Trail and two rail trails showcase coastal and forest landscapes. However, there are few opportunities to experience different types of cycling in elevated environments.	New trail development should prioritise elevated landscapes and other landscapes which are unique to the Great Southern. Detailed consultation with the Aboriginal community is required..
Trail type	There are few looped cycling trails, or short (half-day) trails. Apart from one short trail in Albany, there are no purpose-built trails for mountain biking	Create MTB trails of various lengths and grades. Develop a short touring route (2-3 days).
Quality	Trail quality varies, with sections of the Munda Biddi Trail on existing road systems.	Prioritise re-alignments for iconic trails.
Location	All dual-use trails are within 20km of a city or town centre.	Improve signage and maps to encourage use of trails across the region.
Useability	Signage, maps, trail information and trail interpretation are generally poor to average.	Develop a regional trail signage and wayfinding strategy, and interpretation strategy. Prioritise improvements to trailhead facilities.



Photo credit: Kelly Waterhouse

PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS

Recreational participation in mountain biking is rapidly increasing in Western Australia. In the Great Southern, demand for purpose-built MTB trails is high and there is an urgent need to address the gap in trail supply (see RTMP Background Report; Albany Trail Hub Strategy). Meeting this demand will achieve significant health, wellbeing and liveability benefits for the region's residents, and will help to address the environmental impact of unsanctioned trail construction. Proposed trails will be designed in a manner which protects important biodiversity and cultural heritage values.

Given the strong interest in mountain biking globally, creating purpose-built high quality single track MTB trails in the Great Southern will also value-add to the region's existing trail tourism offering. The region offers the variety of landscapes and experiences required to attract interstate visitors, and the opportunities are of comparable scale to other successful MTB destinations. However, due to a range of accessibility, environmental, cultural and social constraints, the opportunity for large scale development is limited. There is excellent potential for a diverse range of locally or regionally significant trail experiences which together will create a compelling mountain bike region and will provide for the community and drive intrastate visitation.

This plan therefore recommends that five MTB trail networks, which on their own are either locally or regionally significant, be developed and promoted to residents and visitors as a 'whole-of region' MTB offering. Successful mountain biking destinations offer experiences with diversity, uniqueness, quality, accessibility and community. For this reason, trail development should focus on creating remarkable and accessible visitor experiences, diverse trail styles, quality infrastructure and connections across a number of regionally significant locations. The five proposed sites will offer different riding experiences, landscapes, and points of difference.

Albany Heritage Park Trail Network – This vital trail network will connect the Albany CBD with Middleton Beach via beginner and intermediate high-quality trails. The locally significant trail network will engage visitors with scenic riding including coastal views and provide the community with an excellent recreation resource. The trails will focus on descending cross-country trails, with a combination of flow and technical elements, with all descents serviced by an independent climb.

Case study

A whole-of-region approach to MTB destination development has been successfully implemented in Scotland with the world renowned '7 Stanes' which links seven unique MTB locations under the one marketing banner. Each location offers a different experience, length of trail and grade. The distances between each site vary from 30-150km and is not a barrier for users. The 7 Stanes (or stones) are represented by a unique stone sculpture that reflects the culture and heritage of each specific site and provides a common theme connecting the sites together.

Mt Hallowell Descending Trail Network – Located close to Denmark town site and in an existing high visitation area, the network will cater for all users from beginner to advanced through a small, locally significant trail network of descending cross-country trails providing a range of flow and technical trails in a forest setting. The core conservation zone at Mt Hallowell will be excluded from trail proposals.

Porongurup Adventure Trail – The iconic views across the region from the Potato Patch provide the perfect landscape for an immersive and contemplative trail experience unlike anything else in WA. While there is potential to develop a regionally significant trail centre, environmental, social and heritage constraints dictate that a smaller, local-scale adventure trail on an already disturbed landscape would be more appropriate.
































Poikeclerup Gravity Park – Poikeclerup (off Nanarup Road), presents an ideal opportunity to create a local community-focused gravity park within an already impacted landscape. There is potential to develop a range of gravity focused downhill and freeride trails with constructed features to service the existing community demand.

Tower Hill Community Trail Networks – An opportunity for a locally significant descending focused trail network for the local community, which will also drive visitation to the area. The proximity of the trail network to Mount Barker town site combined with views across to the Porongurups will provide excellent trail opportunities.

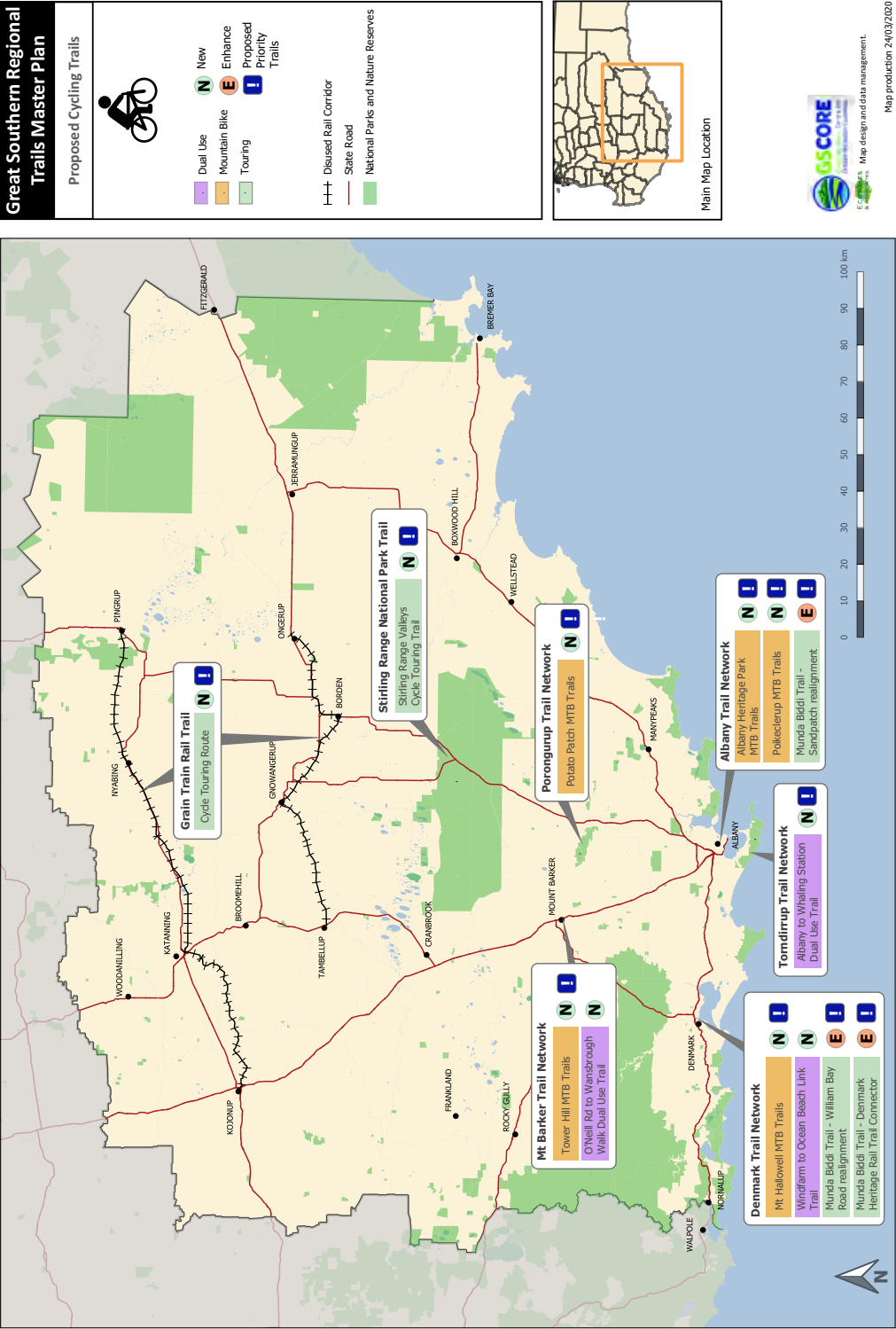
It is important to stress, that the proposed trail networks outlined above and described in further detail in Table 9 will all require extensive site assessment to determine the length and location of potential trail corridors. Development will need to be staged over time to ensure that extensive community consultation and robust planning occurs.



Table 9: Proposed Mountain Bike Trails

 Priority Regional Trails	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
	CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES			
 Albany Heritage Park - Mounts Link Trail Albany	ALB		 	
A single use descending mountain bike trail from Padre White Lookout back to the CBD and descending from Padre White Lookout to Middleton Beach. The corridor and trail alignment for the Link was identified in both the Albany Trails Hub Strategy and the Albany Heritage Park Trails Concept Plan. 4.5km Green-Blue				
 Tower Hill MTB Trails Mount Barker	PLAN		 	
Small scale MTB network to service the local Mount Barker community and to provide additional experiences for visitors to the region, the network will also include a disability access walk trail at the top of Tower Hill. 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.				
 Porongurup MTB Trails Porongurup National Park	DBCA		 	
There is potential for MTB trails at the Potato Patch which is an elevated and modified landscape. Looped networks featuring cross country 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		 	
MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Trails 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 Stage 2 Albany	ALB		 	
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 2016 and detailed design has begun on sections of the network. This project is contained within the Albany Heritage Park Trails Network Concept Plan 2016.				
 Poikeclerup MTB Trails Nanarup	ALB		 	
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.				

Map 3: Proposed Cycling Trails by location and type





PROPOSED DUAL-USE TRAIL PROJECTS

Dual-use trails which combine walking and cycling in a safe manner, provide important leisure experiences for residents and visitors. They can also be important transport connectors between residential areas, commercial centres and visitor attractions. For this reason, they are an important element of the Western Australian government's Regional 2050 Cycling Strategy for the Great Southern. This strategy will guide the delivery of a safe, comfortable and integrated cycling network in the region and outlines how different towns can realise their cycling potential, leading to a healthier, happier and more engaged community. **This plan proposes an extension to the existing dual-use trail that links the Albany CBD to Little Grove, and a new dual-use trail connecting Mount Barker townsite to the Porongurup National Park** (see Table 10).

PROPOSED OFF ROAD CYCLE TOURING AND RAIL TRAILS

Off Road Cycle touring – also known as bike touring or bike-packing – is a form of riding that typically involves overnight stays at different locations or a long single-day bike ride. Cycle touring includes inn-to-inn riding where food and clothing is carried by a vehicle that meets the rider along the route; or a solo or group adventure where all clothing, equipment, food and tools are carried on the bicycle.

The Munda Biddi Trail is an example of a cycle touring route suited to the active and adventure markets. At 1000kms in length, it can be undertaken as a long-distance, remote camping experience; or in short day or overnight sections.

This plan identifies a unique cycle touring option through the valleys of the Stirling Range

The scenery, vistas and unique vegetation offer significant appeal to leisure riders seeking day or overnight experiences. It would be unique within WA and will attract the intrastate touring market with strong potential to attract interstate and international visitors.

Extensive site assessment will need to occur to identify a potential route. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the existing supply of accommodation and camping within and surrounding the National Park to develop overnight packaged holiday experiences.

Rail trails - many cycle touring routes utilise rail trails which closely follow a former railway line or run beside an active railway for most of its length. What sets rail trails apart from other trails is that they are gently graded, and interpretation can provide information about historical use. Rail trails are suitable for walking, and depending on the surface, can also be used by mountain bikes, hybrid bikes, strollers and wheel chairs, and even four wheel 'gophers'. Some trails allow use by horse riders.

In the Great Southern, sections of the former Albany to Nornalup railway line are managed as rail trails.

This plan recommends improvements to sections of these trails. Longer-term, consideration may be given to the development of the remaining sections of the original rail corridor, resulting in a rail trail of approximately 100km.

This plan identifies an important opportunity to develop two inactive east-west rail lines in the north of the region - Kojonup-Katanning-Pingrup, and Tambellup-Gnowangerup-Ongerup lines – as well as a potential trail along the active north-south line. These **"Grain Train Rail Trails"** would require support from all local governments in order to enter into negotiations with the current land owners (Public Transport Authority) and lessee (Arc Infrastructure).

Table 10: Proposed off cycle touring and dual-use trails





 Priority Regional Trails	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
 O'Neill Road to Wansbrough Walk Dual-use Trail Mount Barker	PLAN	L	 	
Multi-use trail linking Mount Barker with the Porongurup National Park. This trail would link proposed trails in the Shire of Plantagenet Local Trails Plan with walking and cycling opportunities on the south side of Porongurup National Park. 25km Grade 2				
 Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Albany	ALB	R	 	
Creation of a new shared use trail to connect Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the the existing dual-use trail from Albany CBD to Little Grove. The Kinjarling Trail Stories and Strategic Plan should be revisited to incorporate key ideas. There is an opportunity to create a spur off this trail to The Gap recreation site, and potentially along Vancouver Peninsula, and to incorporate enhancements to the Frenchman Bay Heritage Trail. Approx. 17 km Grade 2.				
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park	DBCA	R	 	
Touring trail through the foothills of the range. This proposed trail would offer a good introductory trail for distance touring, while catering for enthusiasts who may undertake the trail in a single day. The trail would focus on landscape, rather than technical trail features. This product would capture a different market to those undertaking the Munda Biddi.				
 Grain Train Rail Trail Kojonup, Katanning, Nyabing, Pingrup, Tambellup, Gnowangerup, Ongerup	GSCORE	R	 	
Disused rail corridors in the hinterland provide an opportunity for dual-use recreation activities. The disused east-west rail corridors between Kojonup-Katanning-Pingrup (157km) and Tambellup-Gnowangerup-Ongerup (94km) can be developed to provide dual-use opportunities for walking and easy grade mountain biking. It is proposed that these trails could be developed as part of a new cycle touring trail and marketed as the "Grain Train Rail Trail".				
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES				
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Denmark	DEN	R	 	
Extend existing Denmark trail network beyond Ocean Beach to Denmark Wind Farm to create dual-use link to WOW Trail. This would create a day loop suitable for beginner and experienced riders using the Denmark Heritage Rail Trail, Munda Biddi Trail, WOW Trail and Ocean Beach dual-use trail. [This trail is also referenced in the Hiking Plan]				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Southern Trailhead Terminus Albany	ALB	N		
Realign the current terminus for both trails to the Albany City Centre library and interpretive site.				
 Munda Biddi Trail - Sandpatch Albany	DBCA ALB	N		
Realign section of Munda Biddi Trail east of Elleker via Sandpatch to avoid Lower Denmark Rd, improve safety and enhance user experience.				
 Munda Biddi Trail - William Bay Road William Bay National Park	DBCA DEN	N		
Realign Munda Biddi Trail off William Bay Road to improve safety and enhance user experience.				
 Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail connector Denmark	DBCA DEN	R		
Realign section of Munda Biddi Trail and Denmark Heritage Trail at South Coast Hwy/McLeod Rd junction and reduce road crossing to one point only, to improve safety and enhance user experience.				

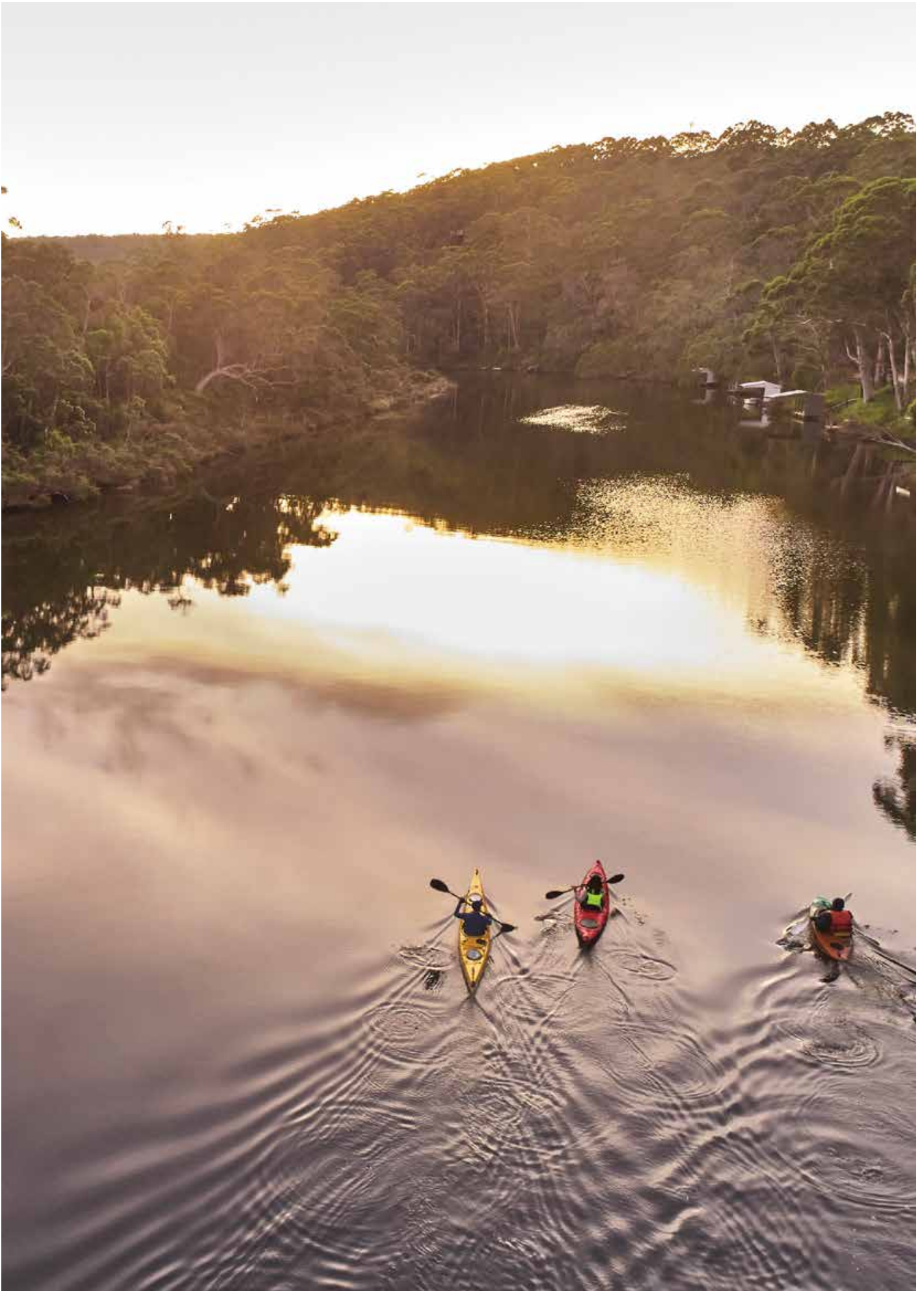


Photo credit: Francis Andrijich

PADDLING TRAILS

A successful paddle trail destination provides a range of experiences that cater to different abilities, with trails of varying distance and degree of challenge. Paddlers seek out areas of exceptional natural beauty, where local flora, fauna, and geological features add to the interest. Some paddlers cherish a tranquil, nature-based experience in wilderness or remote locations; whereas other seek the challenge of white-water and rapids.

There are currently no formal paddling trails in the Great Southern region. However, many of the river systems – Denmark, Frankland, Kalgan and inlets, are currently used by paddlers (canoe, kayak and stand up paddle board). While there is no available market research on demand for paddle trails in the Great Southern region, anecdotal evidence of the number of vehicles transporting canoes and kayaks suggests paddling is a popular activity. Seasonal canoe hire businesses in Albany, Denmark, and Nornalup report existing demand for paddling experiences, with half-day experiences being most popular.



PROPOSED REGIONAL PADDLING TRAIL PROJECT

This plan proposes a network of paddling trails in the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park. This trail experience would provide a network of 55km of flat-water paddle trails which are mostly suitable for Grade 1 (easy) with conditions at certain times requiring a Grade 2 (moderate) experience level.

The scenic quality, biodiversity and heritage value of the area, and variety of trails would attract paddlers from within the region and further afield. The rivers and inlets provide a true nature-based experience, being a haven for water birds, other wildlife, and quiet observation.

Adequate planning and support facilities are central to the destination offering. 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.

The Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience will be complemented by an array of locally significant paddle trails throughout the Great Southern, including riverine and estuary paddling trails and inland lake paddling experiences. These local experiences will provide a 'value-add' experience to all visitors to the region.

Table 11: Proposed paddling trails

Priority Regional Trails

PROJECT LEAD

SIGNIFICANCE

MARKET SEGMENT
















TIME FRAME

CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES

Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience

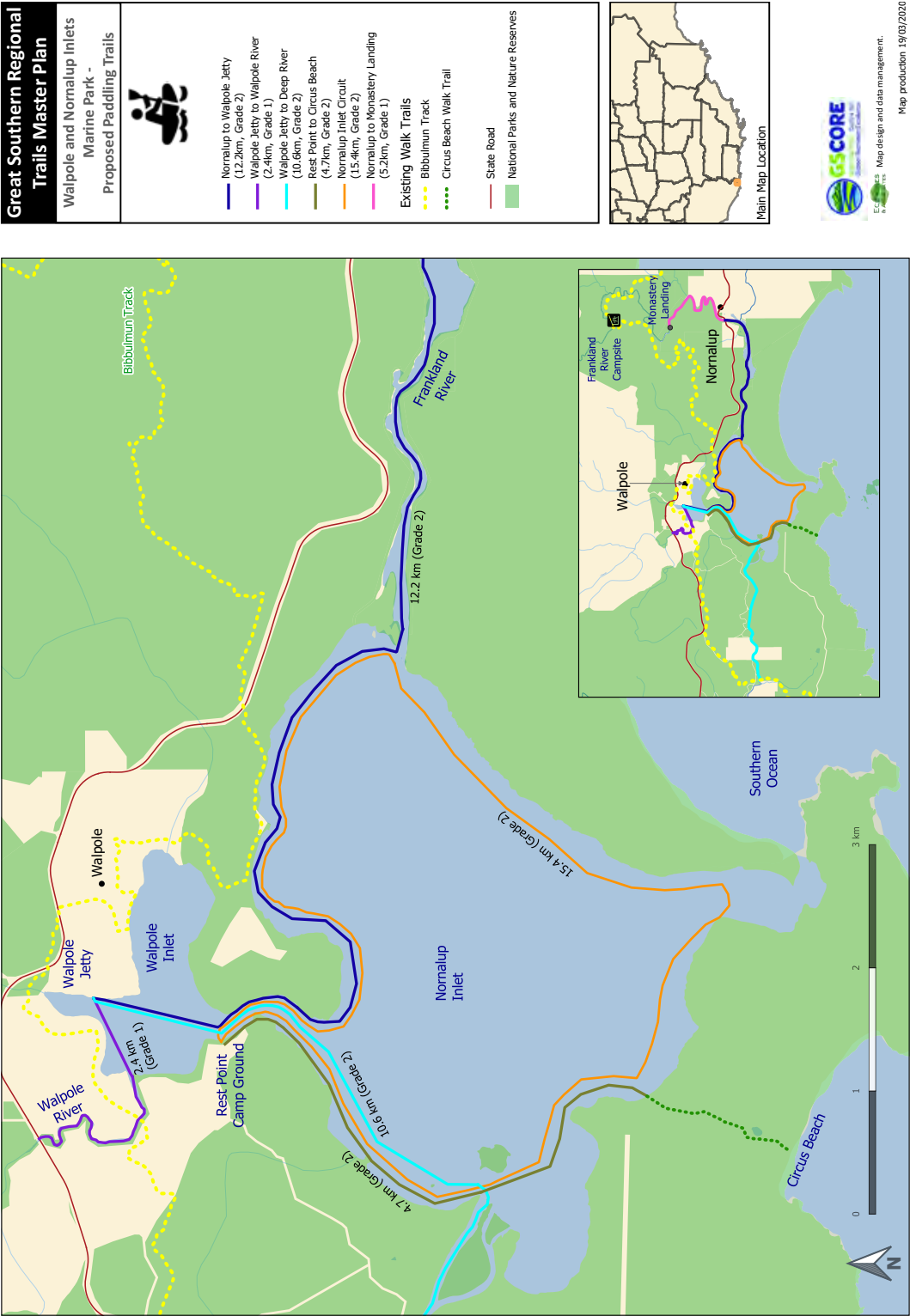
Advanced and enthusiastic paddlers have an opportunity to complete all of the paddle trails of the Marine Park, providing close to 55km different of Grade 1 and 2 experiences.

Walpole River	DBCA	R		
<p>This trail travels across the Walpole Inlet to the sheltered Walpole River, providing an easy paddle along the river. The river is fringed by coastal vegetation and low forest, in a peaceful setting. 5km return trail across the Walpole Inlet providing an easy Grade 1 paddle along Walpole River.</p>				
Deep River	DBCA	R		
<p>This trail travels across the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets to the sheltered Deep River. The trail offers a scenic paddle along the river, fringed by coastal vegetation in the lower reaches, changing to tall ancient karri forest. Terrestrial and aquatic wildlife encounters are possible. Grade 1 or 2, with a potential 21 km return. There are options for shorter trips along the way.</p>				
Nornalup to Walpole	DBCA	R		
<p>A scenic half to full day paddle from either Walpole or Nornalup, with dense vegetation, vistas, and the chance of wildlife encounters. This trail is Grade 1 and Grade 2 along the lower reaches of the Frankland and into the Nornalup inlet due to variable weather conditions of the inlet.</p>				
Rest Point to Circus Beach (+ hike)	DBCA	R		
<p>Travel across the Walpole and Nornalup inlets to the mouth of the Deep River, continue past Newdegate Island to Sealers Cove before disembarking for a hike across to historic Circus Beach. Trail involves an 11km return, Grade 2 paddle, and 2.6km return easy hike.</p>				

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES (CONT.)				
Nornalup Inlet circuit	DBCA	R		
This trail circuits the Nornalup Inlet taking in scenic points and features of the landscape, passing Deep River, Sealers Cove, Newdegate Island, and traversing the river mouth. Grade 2, 15km loop trail.				
Frankland River Overnight Paddle (+ camp) Walpole Wilderness	DBCA	R	 	
Frankland River Day Paddle - Nornalup to Monastery Landing trail on the Frankland River. The Frankland River, Nornalup to Monastery Landing trail has potential to provide a paddle through spectacular forest scenery and could offer an overnight bush camping experience. Alternatively, the trail allows for a nature based half or full day paddle. Grade 1, 10.4km return.				
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES				
Monastery Landing to Bibbulmun Track Walpole Wilderness	DBCA	R		
After paddling from Nornalup to Monastery Landing, trail users complete a short walk along the existing access road to join the Bibbulmun Track and hike in to the Frankland River hut. Total walking distance is less than 3km. Alternatively, a new low impact camp site could be developed close to the riverbank, without public road access to maximise the experience.				
LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT 'VALUE-ADD' EXPERIENCES				
Kalgan River Paddle Trail	ALB	L		
This canoe trail along the lower Kalgan River takes advantage of a particularly scenic part of the river system between the southern entry/egress at Albany Rowing Club, and the northern entry/egress from the informal launch near Upper Kalgan Bridge. Identified as a priority in the Albany Trails Hub Strategy 2015-2025. 20km return Grade 1				
Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit - paddle trails	GSCORE in partnership with LGAs	L		
These trails give opportunities for easy grade paddles at several inland lakes. They provide a different context and environment to river and estuarine paddling. The lakes at Poorrarecup, Nunijup and Ewlyamartup offer regular paddling opportunities, while Lake Queerearrup is less reliable, being more ephemeral. (see Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Plan).				
Wilson Inlet Paddle Trail	DEN	L		
A challenging paddle depending on wind conditions, suitable for or Grade 2 and 3 with considerable experience. There are many routes which could be chosen, short return routes along the shoreline or longer routes around the inlet which require a full day's paddle. There are various access and launch points, but currently no recognised trail signage.				
Bremer River Paddle Trail	JERR	L		
This trail presents a unique paddling opportunity within the Fitzgerald River National Park, which is accessible from Bremer Bay. Existing facilities at Bennett St would make this a nature based 4km Grade 1 return paddle.				



Map 4: Proposed paddling trail network in Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park





SNORKEL TRAILS

The Great Southern region is not recognised as a snorkel trail destination and there are no reliable estimates on snorkelling as a visitor recreational activity in the region. Even so, there are established trails at Whaling Cove in Albany and Little Harbour in Bremer Bay. Apart from these locations, the region has several sheltered bays, with easy access, shallow waters and good visibility that can provide enjoyable experiences for beginner to more advanced snorkelers. Development of new snorkelling experiences at Greens Pool in William Bay National Park will enhance visitation at this popular swimming and outdoor recreation site.

It is envisaged that all these trails will remain locally significant (see Table 12). However, improvements to the existing snorkelling trails, and the development of new snorkel trails in Greens Pool, will provide a value-add experience for visitors who are already in the region. The role of these local snorkel trails is thus to enhance the overall trail offering of the destination.

Table 12: Proposed snorkelling trail projects

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
Greens Pool William Bay National Park	DBCA	L		
Greens Pool has the potential to develop into a significant snorkelling destination. The beach is sheltered by large natural granite boulders making it an ideal spot for snorkelling activities. Four snorkel trails, ranging from easy to advanced, with a total distance of 990 metres, are proposed within Greens Pool				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
Whaling Cove Albany	City of Albany	L		
Whaling Cove is an existing 400 metre snorkelling trail located on a peninsula close to the Point Possession Heritage Trail. An underwater plinth has been constructed to inform snorkelers about the marine environment. Entry signage upgrade and maintenance to the underwater plinths required.				
Little Boat Harbour Bremer Bay	Shire of Jerramungup	L		
The 260 metre Little Boat Harbour snorkel trail is used as a local diving and snorkelling site. There is opportunity to enhance the overall snorkelling experience by improving existing parking and toilet facilities and availability of trail information (signage).				



THE GREAT SOUTHERN TREASURES RECREATION CIRCUIT

There are numerous examples within Australia and internationally where small regional and rural communities have benefited from economic development associated with trails. To be successful, however, trail destinations need to showcase distinctive natural or cultural landscapes and/or enable users to interact with local people and cultures.

An assessment of the Upper Great Southern region's potential for trail-based tourism determined that it lacks a single location for a regionally significant trail project. However, there is an opportunity to develop a network of locally significant trails which, when promoted collectively, have the potential to achieve regional significance. The aim is to **create a circuit of recreation 'nodes' with each node providing one or more trail experiences** (e.g. walking trail, cycle trail, paddle trail).

Combined with other tourism assets (e.g. accommodation, attractions, services), these recreation nodes will enhance the tourism offering of each town. The **Great Southern Treasures Drive Trail** provides the route (or circuit) connecting these nodes. The advantage of using the existing drive trail is that it already connects most towns and recreation sites in the region and has a brand and marketing presence.

The Drive Trail (*previously branded as "Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern"*) encompasses eight local government areas – Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling. The Drive Trail links each of the shires using a recommended route and a list of things to see and do. It has the status of a touring route rather than a thematic trail – there is no interpretation linking sites or locations or a thematic framework that encourages visitors to explore based on a topic or interest area.

The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit builds on this existing drive trail to provide new opportunities within the region (see Table 13). This can link to existing trails in the Shire of Jerramungup and new ideas such as the 'Horse Power Highway' in the Shire of Gnowangerup. The existing Drive Trail invites visitors to experience the cultural, heritage and biodiversity of the region. The proposed Recreation Circuit will add value to the existing drive trail by creating a series of 'outdoor recreation nodes' (see Map 4).









Creation of a new drive itinerary and integration of a network of walking, cycling, and paddling trails (or nodes) will provide residents and visitors with a diverse array of active leisure opportunities that showcase the region's unique inland landscapes, heritage and culture, and encourage participation in outdoor recreation. The trail focused on two key markets:

(i) Day trippers – the proposed trail will provide residents with enhanced active leisure experiences within a relatively short driving distance. Given the small resident population and ratepayer base of each rural community, it is not feasible to develop multiple trails for different activities in each location. By spreading these out within a 60km radius of each townsite, a diverse array of activities can be catered for, while at the same time, spreading the financial cost of construction and maintenance amongst neighbouring local government areas.

(ii) Over 55s Empty Nesters – intrastate and interstate retired or semi-retired, travellers. They spend a greater number of nights per annum driving and staying within rural areas as compared to other travellers. A significant proportion participate in active leisure pursuits such as walking, cycling and paddling. Providing these opportunities (along with low-cost camping and other amenities) will encourage longer stays. The goal is to get these visitors to increase their length of stay in the region and visit as many locations as possible.

The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit is a descriptive title used for planning purposes only. A compelling trail name will need to be chosen that can be used in branding and marketing of the trail.

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk Bremer Bay	H	Jerramungup	L		
Extending the current path will showcase Bremer Bay, and provide opportunity for whale watching, access to John Cove and fishing spots, terminating at Rock Cairn, a great lookout with its own history.					
Pingrup Grain Silos walk Pingrup	H	Kent	L		
Develop a short walk trail from the caravan park to the grain silos as part of the Silo (art) trail					
Tower Hill Mount Barker	H C	Plantagenet	L		
Rising to 147 meters above sea level, Tower Hill has a stunning lookout with sweeping views. This location is ideally suited for recreation activities, including development of hiking, and mountain biking trails, less than 3km from town.					
Pink Lake Cranbrook	H	Cranbrook	L		
This 'Pink Lake' is receiving high visitation from passers-by, but there is no designated viewing point or parking bay. A vehicle parking bay, interpretive signage, and or, walk trail should be investigated.					
Bremer River paddle Bremer Bay	P	Jerramungup	L		
A paddle trail in the lower reaches of the Bremer River, travelling north from Bennett St jetty for approximately 4km return. A scenic paddle with the Fitzgerald River National Park on the western shoreline.					

KEY Hiking Cycling/Mountain biking Paddling Snorkelling Leisure Active Adventure

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit cont.

































	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Boot Rock Reserve Broomehill	H	Broomehill- Tambellup	L		S
Signage and interpretation to rationalise existing use of bush tracks and trails. Potential to recognise three trails which can be dedicated to dual-use, hiking and cycling.					
Kojonup Heritage Walk Kojonup	H	Kojonup	L		S
Visitors to the town can tour historically significant sites, such as the Kojonup Spring, Elverd Cottage, The Flora & Fauna Sanctuary or the Noongar Sharpening Rock. Signage upgrade is required.					
Mondurup Reserve Mount Barker	H	Plantagenet	L		S
Signage and interpretation infrastructure is required at this site to rationalise the various informal and formal walk tracks through this important flora reserve.					
Tambellup Heritage Trail Tambellup	H	Broomehill- Tambellup	L		M
Three short walking loops require improved signage and trail infrastructure.					
Sukey Hill lookout Cranbrook	H Viewpoint	Cranbrook	L		M
Short walk including a new lookout with sweeping views and potential link to Motocross circuit.					
Frankland River Wildflower walk Frankland	H	Cranbrook	L		M
Local flora walk trail 0.4km. Improve walk trails and signage.					
Salt River Rd Wildflower walk Cranbrook	H	Cranbrook	L		M
Flora reserve, 1.8km circuit walk, picnic area. Improve trails and signage.					
Lake Poorrarecup Cranbrook	H P	Cranbrook	L		M
Lake Poorrarecup is the largest lake in the Shire of Cranbrook and is popular for swimming and skiing during the summer months. Changerooms, toilets, and camping are on site. A Grade 1 paddle trail would add to the visitor experience.					
Lake Nunijup Cranbrook	H P	Cranbrook	L		M
Lake Nunijup is used for walking, swimming and has BBQ facilities. A short paddle trail could be developed around the edge of the Lake.					
Gnowangerup Heritage Walk Gnowangerup	H	Gnowangerup	L		M
A 2km walk trail which explores highlights of Gnowangerup's history through its heritage buildings. There are five interpretive signs, and further development could expand the Aboriginal story of the area.					

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit cont.

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre Ongerup	H	Gnowangerup	L		
Existing walk trail requires maintenance and improved signage, could link with a walk to Ongerup townsite.					
Native Snail Trail Bremer Bay	H C	Jerramungup	L		
Dual-use 3.4km linear trail linking Bremer Bay townsite with Bremer Beaches Caravan Park, via native bushland and interpretive stations. Additional trailhead required.					
Town Heritage Walk Jerramungup	H	Jerramungup	L		
1km walk trail, extend and make suitable for all users, families and elderly.					
Lake Ewlyamartup Katanning	H P	Katanning	L		
100 ha recreation site popular with water skiers, paddlers, swimmers, and has 95 species of birds. A designated paddling trail with interpretation is recommended.					
Police Pools / Twonkwillingup Katanning	H	Katanning	L		
Reserve used for informal recreation, walking and swimming, Aboriginal heritage values. Upgrade existing loop trail.					
Town Walk Trails Katanning	H	Katanning	L		
3 short town walks, local history. Improve trails and signage.					
Farrar Reserve Kojonup	H C	Kojonup	L		
Farrar Nature Reserve supports a variation of flora and fauna due to the diversity of soils and profile. The Old Railway Dam is home to numerous water birds, frogs and the long-necked tortoise. Designated walk tracks and a cycle way would add to the visitor experience.					
Myrtle Benn Reserve Kojonup	H C	Kojonup	L		
1.5 km walk trails, flora reserve close to town. Improve trails and signage.					
Kendenup Nature Trail Kendenup	H	Plantagenet	L		
A short local trail in and around the Kendenup townsite, which can be developed to include local heritage and nature. Requires signage.					
Lake Queerearrup Woodanilling	H P	Woodanilling	L		
This large lake is used for recreational and leisure activities including water skiing, swimming and picnicking. The lake has a surface area of approximately 430 ha and often has a pink tinge. The lake could develop an interpretive paddling trail, understanding the seasonal nature of the lake.					
Woodanilling Heritage walk Woodanilling	H	Woodanilling	L		
There is an opportunity to extend the 970m Heritage Walk to include further interpretive points of interest, and to link with the Prime Minister's Walk.					

Map 5: Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit





TRAIL BIKE TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders in the Great Southern. An examination of opportunities for trail bike riding has identified three potential target markets and associated trail experiences (see Table 14).

The Great Southern region has the route inventory, quality and diversity of landscapes and experiences with aligned services to provide nationally and regionally significant adventure bike routes. This rider group is deemed to be most attractive by local government and land managers with immediate economic benefits evident, minor investment required, no legal impacts, few constraints and the least user group and community conflicts. Mapped and marketed **Great Southern Adventure Bike Experiences** would provide a significant point of difference for the region.

Development of legal, off-road trail bike trails may prove difficult to achieve as the region lacks enough trail to meet demand. Land managers are currently reluctant to open additional trail supply. An extensive planning exercise to identify appropriate sites would be required before the region could be marketed as a trail bike destination. 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.

Table 14: Trail bike trail feasibility

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FEASIBILITY
Adventure Bike Routes	Full or multi-day rides (250-300km per day); combination of sealed and unsealed roads; with strong focus on experience (accommodation, meals, fuel stops, attractions)	There is strong opportunity to focus on route mapping and ride experience, and then market routes and itineraries in a similar way to drive trails. Achievable in the short term.
Trail Riding	Would require development and/or identification of 80-150km of off-road trails or tracks, with technical challenge being important	Currently there is lack of sufficient inventory of legal trail networks to meet the needs of off-road trail bike riders. Future development will require substantial long-term planning
Families and Juniors	Fit for purpose locations to suit family groups and juniors would need to provide a safe environment with trails and facilities that cater to different abilities and ages	There is potential to work with LGAs to identify suitable locations (public or private land) for future development, and provide advice and information

Photo credit: Lex Porebski





REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Currently there are few equestrian opportunities formally provided in the Great Southern Region apart from the Stidwell Bridle Trail complex (33km network) near Albany and sections of rail trail on the original Elleker to Nornalup rail line. The Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail is a multiple use trail used by horse riders. Formal beach access is provided at Peaceful Bay, Boat Harbour, Parry Beach and a part of Middleton Beach.

There is strong demand for local bridle trails and these should be formalised and improved with land manager support. Within the City of Albany the Sandpatch and Stidwell bridle trails are well used by riders and require improved signage and designation as single use.

Ongoing discussion with DBCA as land manager is improving access to Gull Rock National Park.

No trails of regional significance are proposed for the following reasons:

- 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 and in some cases Shire support for 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.
- 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.
- Equestrian trails have recently been developed in the adjacent South West region, Warren Blackwood Stock Route. And monitoring of these trails by the land manager and will inform the feasibility of additional regional trails in the next few years.

Table 15 provides a summary of equestrian trail opportunities in the region.

Table 15: Equestrian trail feasibility

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FEASIBILITY
Local	Short distance localised trails close to townsites or settlements, with easy access. Focus on providing single use equestrian trails (e.g. areas within Sandpatch and Gull Rock National Park). Consultation and previous work has identified desire for local bridle trails in state forest (e.g. Denmark, Mount Barker area), beach access (e.g. Cheynes Beach, Shoal Bay), and close to townsites with existing facilities (e.g. Albany, Mount Barker and Woodanilling).	Local users to liaise with land managers for improved access, designation of trails and improved signage. These trails would be well supported and used by the community.
Long Distance Trails	Long distance trails within the Great Southern or linked to trails in adjacent regions. Would require the development of 60km plus trails to be regionally significant in attracting visitors.	Liaison with different land managers is required and consideration of relevant planning and policy documents including DBCA Management Plans, and DWER public drinking water source areas. Remoteness, accessibility and lack of supporting infrastructure are challenges. There is little information on trail user demand for long distance trails meaning the scale of development would need to be rationalised to provide value for money.
Stock Routes or Heritage Trails	Long distance historic stock routes up to 80-100km such as the Forest Hill, Moriarty and Camballup routes. There has been interest in developing these routes as multi-use trails for many years. There is some provision for stock route in the Walpole Wilderness Area and adjacent reserves Management Plan, (WWAMP) though not through the core wilderness area.	Liaison with different land managers is required. There is strong local interest in re-opening historic stock routes for equestrian trails by residents, but the visitor market is unknown. The Shire of Plantagenet is continuing to investigate the status of historic stock routes with a view to building on their recognition as Heritage Trails. The Shire has an active trails working group interested in equestrian trail development.
Rail Trails	Consultation with user groups has confirmed that the safe, vehicle free environment provided by disused rail corridors is attractive for equestrians. Medium to longer distance trails, 10-55km single direction, with potential for overnight stays.	Existing sections of the Denmark to Nornalup rail trail and the Torbay to Elleker rail trail are being used by equestrians. Designation of new rail trails requires a high level of community and local government support to present a strong rationale for development. As land managers the Public Transport Authority and Arc Infrastructure are generally opposed to leasing of rail corridors for recreation activities.

Great Southern
Regional Trails
MASTER PLAN

SECTION 5
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



Photo credit: Tourism WA

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide an implementation strategy to achieve the vision outlined in this master plan. The strategies are aligned with each of the agreed objectives (see Section 2) and have been prioritised over a five-year timeframe. Specific actions and agency responsibilities aligned with these strategies are included as Appendix 4.

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
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	High	Within 1 year
1.2	Stakeholder Reference Group endorse the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy	High	Within 1 year
1.3	Link identified regional priority trails to local and state government strategic plans	Medium - High	1-2 years

2



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.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
2.1	Trail development undertaken as per the schedule outlined in each Action Plan	High	1-5 years
2.2	All land managers adopt best practice guidelines in development and management of regional priority trails including protection of biodiverse and culturally sensitive areas and values.	Medium - High	1-5 years



Photo credit: Kelly Waterhouse

3



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.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
3.1	Prepare and implement a Regional Trails Marketing strategy that includes biodiversity, Aboriginal and settler culture and heritage	High	Within 1 year
3.2	Prepare and implement a thematic interpretation strategy for all nationally and regionally significant trails and trail networks	Medium	2-3 years

4



Community and Economic Development Opportunities

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

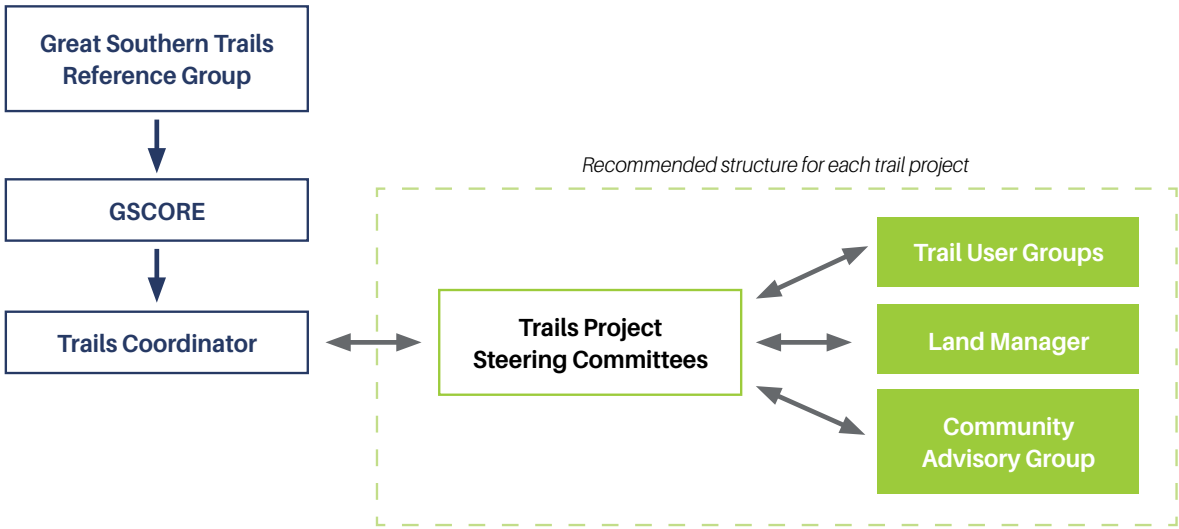
NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
4.1	Economic benefits - Encourage and support new trail business opportunities and identified gaps in service provision	Medium	1-5 years
4.2	Liveability benefits - Ensure that regional priority trail developments cater for and encourage active transport	Medium	1-5 years
4.3	Health - Actively promote the health and wellbeing benefits of active leisure activities	Medium	3-5 years
4.4	Culture - Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects	High	1-2 years
4.5	Environmental - Adopt and promote the Trail Development Series as best practice for trail planning, construction and maintenance	High	Within 1 year



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

To achieve the vision outlined in this master plan, it is essential that an effective and efficient governance and management structure is established. Given the range of stakeholders involved in delivering the master plan, it is important to have broad representation and a willingness by all parties to accept some level of responsibility. To ensure that these roles and responsibilities are understood and carried out to a high standard, the following governance hierarchy should be adopted (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Governance Structure



A Great Southern Trails Reference Group (GSTRG) should be formed and given responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the master plan. The GSTRG should include a representative from each local government, DBCA, DLGSC, GSDC, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar Working Party. The GSTRG will be responsible for overseeing strategic trails development and management. The group should meet quarterly to coordinate project priorities.

The RTMP Stakeholder Reference Group has recommended that the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) should be contracted as the overall Project Manager for the implementation of the master plan for projects where there is little or no existing capacity. This would be subject to performance against indicators developed by the GSTRG. GSCORE will be responsible for providing governance and secretariat support to the GSTRG, grant writing, project management, marketing coordination, training and capacity building, and trail monitoring (see Figure 5). This approach has been

endorsed by local government stakeholders and the Project Management Executive Group.

GSCORE will employ a Trails Coordinator responsible for overseeing the implementation of each trail project. The Trails Coordinator will liaise with a Trail Project Steering Committee responsible for each trail project. These committees may be existing (e.g. Albany Trails Hub Strategy Project Control Group) or may be formed specifically for each project.

It is recommended that for each trail project, a community advisory group is established and include representation from organisations that have a vested interest in each specific trail or trail network. This could include destination marketing organisations, chambers of commerce, arts and cultural groups, and natural resource management groups. The reference group would provide input and advice on trail development and management. In addition to the community advisory group, the Steering Committee should also liaise with key trail user organisations and clubs relevant to the specific trail activity (e.g. MTB club or bushwalking club).

Figure 5:

GSCORE'S RESPONSIBILITIES



PROJECT GOVERNANCE

- Establish governance framework
- Monitor implementation through action plans

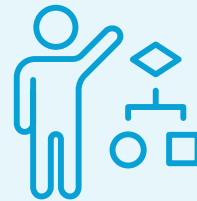


GRANT WRITING

- Identify funding sources and prepare applications on behalf of stakeholders

MARKETING COORDINATION

- Implement marketing strategy
- Implement signage plan
- Maintain Trails WA database



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Develop project scoping documents, consultant briefs, business plans
- Develop and execute stakeholder engagement plans
- Undertake community consultation



TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Develop and deliver training for land managers and trail managers
- Implement business capacity building program



TRAIL MONITORING

- Priority trail maintenance audit
- Develop maintenance schedules
- Implement monitoring programs

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

For the Great Southern to become a recognised and desirable trail destination, it is imperative that models are established for ongoing sustainable trail management, maintenance and development. A variety of development and management models need to be considered and should form part of the concept planning phase of all trail development projects. These models include:

- **Public management** – A government agency (e.g. a local shire or DBCA) has sole management responsibility of the trail facility. Commercial and event operators may contribute financially to the management of trails.
- **Volunteering agreements** – An agreement is developed following discussion between a land manager and trail user group/club about options for volunteer maintenance of trails.
- **Partnerships** – Multiple stakeholders share management responsibility of the trail facility. Partners could include non-government incorporated agencies, government bodies, Aboriginal Corporations, Aboriginal Ranger Programs, commercial entities, foundations or trusts, and volunteer groups.
- **Private management** – The development of trail networks will encourage visitation and expenditure, resulting in a tangible economic impact for the surrounding communities and the region. This may in turn provide opportunities to establish and grow businesses that complement trail activities and encourage public and private investment in future trail developments.

The successful delivery and ongoing management of trail projects will also depend on the active engagement and participation of local trail user groups and peak bodies (e.g. Trails WA, HikeWest, Westcycle, and Paddling WA), Aboriginal communities, land management groups, and communities and the WA Trails Reference Group which advises on implementation of State trail strategies and monitors progress and proposed actions and outcomes reporting back to government and industry.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and promotion of the Great Southern trail offering will be essential to increase participation and encourage visitation. Currently, the promotion of trails in the Great Southern is ad-hoc and does not form a key part of the promotional activities of the region's destination marketing organisations (DMOs) – Australia's South West (ASW), Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated (ASCTI) and Great Southern Treasures.

DMOs lack up-to-date information on trails, including maps, and have few good quality digital marketing assets for the region's existing trails. To better market and promote Great Southern trails, these organisations require images and content that can be used in local signage, websites, social media, and printed material such as visitor guides.

There also needs to be closer alignment between the marketing campaigns of these regional organisations and other groups responsible for marketing trails, including the Bibbulmun Track Foundation, the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation, Tourism WA, and Trails WA.

This plan recommends the development and implementation of a **Great Southern Regional Trails Marketing Strategy**. This document will establish a coordinated approach to branding and promotion of trails in the region, and make recommendations on consistent signage, wayfinding, and interpretation. The Marketing Strategy should be developed in 2020, so that all marketing organisations can begin to actively promote the region's existing trail offering. Harnessing the power of word-of-mouth marketing will enable the region to build a strong brand and generate anticipation amongst trail users and other visitors during the trail construction phase.

The plan recommends a focus on unique points of difference from other regions including unique biodiversity and geology, and Aboriginal culture.

Photo credit: Tourism WA

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: TRAIL TYPES AND GRADES

HIKING Walking Track Classifications



GRADE 1

Provide an opportunity for most visitors, with no previous experience, including those with reduced mobility, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have abundant opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.



GRADE 2

Provide an opportunity for many visitors, with no previous experience, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have many opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.



GRADE 3

Provide an opportunity for visitors, with a moderate level of fitness and a small degree of skill and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Provision of interpretive information is not common, but many opportunities will be available to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment of the track. A map is generally not required and directional markers and management signs may be present. Users are responsible for their own safety that could be affected by adverse weather conditions such as storms or extreme heat.



GRADE 4

Provide an opportunity for many visitors, with a higher level of fitness and specialised skills and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Only management and directional signs may be present. There will be many opportunities to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment. Maps and navigational aids may be required, and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.



GRADE 5

Provide an opportunity for visitors with high levels of fitness and advanced specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to find their way along often indistinct tracks in remoter natural areas. Only minimal management signage may be present. Maps and navigational aids will generally be required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.

GRADE 6

Provide an opportunity for highly experienced walkers with high levels of fitness and specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to navigate through remote, challenging natural and wilderness areas - there is no physical track. Maps and navigational aids are always required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain Bike Trail Type

Trail type defines the style of trail and its typical attributes. Different trail types suit different styles of riding and typically each trail type will have a specific kind of mountain bike designed to suit. Different cohorts use different types of trails and all trail types can have varying classifications.

TYPES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS	
Cross Country (XC)	<p>Primarily single-track orientated with a combination of climbing and descending trails and natural trail features of varying technicality.</p> <p>Cross Country trails appeal to the majority market and can cater for timed competitive events.</p> <p>Typically, bikes are lightweight with shorter travel dual suspension or no rear suspension.</p>
All Mountain (AM)	<p>Similar to Cross Country and primarily single-track orientated, with greater emphasis on technical descents, with non-technical climbs.</p> <p>All Mountain trails can cater for timed Enduro competitive events. Bikes are typically light-medium weight with medium-travel dual suspension.</p>
Downhill (DH)	<p>Purely descent only trails with emphasis on speed and technical challenge. These trails can cater for timed Downhill competitive racing.</p> <p>Downhill trails appeal to the more experienced market and typically require uplift to the trailhead via chairlift or vehicle shuttle.</p> <p>Bikes are designed for descending and are typically long-travel dual suspension and built for strength over weight.</p>
Freeride (FR)	<p>Typically, descent focused trails with emphasis solely on technical challenge.</p> <p>Trails feature both built and natural terrain technical features with a focus on drops and jumps.</p> <p>Appeals to the more experienced market and caters for competitions judging manoeuvres and skills only. Bikes are typically medium to long-travel dual suspension and are built for strength.</p>
Park (PK)	<p>Built feature environment with emphasis on manoeuvres, skills and progression.</p> <p>Appeals to wide market including youth and can cater for competitions judging aerial manoeuvres. Can include Jump and Pump Tracks and Skills Park.</p> <p>Typically, dirt surfaced but can include hardened surfaces. Bikes are typically built for strength, with short travel suspension.</p>
Touring (TR)	<p>Typically, long distance riding on reasonably uniform surface conditions and lower grades.</p> <p>Touring trails are dual direction linear trails or long distance circuits with a focus on reaching a destination. Touring trails can include rail trails, access/fire roads and single track. While there is a limited market for long distance mountain biking, touring trails can be ridden in sections making them accessible to all.</p> <p>If carrying panniers bikes are usually robust with limited suspension, however, for short sections or day trips most mountain bikes are suitable.</p>

Mountain Bike Trail Classification

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) trail difficulty rating system has been adopted worldwide and forms the basis of the Mountain Bike Trail Classification used in the Western Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines. The system classifies trails from Easiest through to Extreme, relative to the physical attributes of the trail, such as its width, gradient, surface type, technical trail features and obstacles.



EASIEST

This symbol indicates typically wide trail with smooth terrain and low gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times but free from unavoidable obstacles.

Recommended for novice riders.



EASY

This symbol indicates typically flowing open trails on firm terrain with gentle gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times. Riders may encounter small rollable obstacles and technical trail features.

Recommended for beginner mountain bikers.



**MORE
DIFFICULT**

This symbol indicates typically narrow trail with loose, soft, rocky or slippery sections and hills with short steep sections. Riders will encounter obstacles and technical trail features.

Recommended for intermediate riders with some technical mountain biking experience.



**VERY
DIFFICULT**

This symbol indicates trail with variable surfaces and/or steep gradients. Riders will encounter large obstacles and technical trail features.

Recommended for experienced riders with good technical skill levels.



**EXTREMELY
DIFFICULT**

This symbol indicates the trail may contain highly variable surfaces, very challenging terrain and/or very steep sections. Riders will encounter committing and unavoidable obstacles and technical trail features that may not be rollable.

Recommended for very experienced riders with high level technical skill.

EQUESTRIAN/HORSE RIDING TRAILS

Horse Riding Trail Classification

The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA) classifies trails from Easy through to Difficult, relative to physical attributes of the trail, such as its width, gradient and surface type.



EASY

Most suitable for novices, social groups and others seeking a relatively short distance trail requiring a basic level of skill and horse and rider fitness.

Most likely to be firebreaks or wide single tracks (bridle paths) with a gentle grade (not exceeding 10%) and a relatively obstacle free, hardened natural surface.

Likely to be shared-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers and runners can be expected.



MODERATE

Most suitable for individuals and smaller social groups seeking a short to medium distance trail requiring a moderate level of skill and fitness.

Most likely to be a combination single trail and/or firebreaks with obstacles, variable surfaces, and a moderate slope.

Likely to be shared-use so encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders should be expected.



DIFFICULT

Suitable for individuals and small social groups seeking a very challenging trail requiring a high level of skill, fitness, and basic navigation skills.

Most likely to consist of challenging single trail and/or firebreaks with many obstacles, variable surface, and steep sections.

Some trail routes may not be marked at all.

May possibly be shared-use so encounters with other users possibly including cyclists, walkers, vehicles and other stock should be expected, however, many of these trails may be located in remote areas and encounters with others is expected to be minimal.



PADDLING

Trails proposed in the Regional Trails Master Plan adopt the International River Grading System, as none of the trails are on open ocean. There is no universally accepted grading system for the sea, estuaries and large areas of open water. The current grading system SO1-SO5 has been developed by Paddle NSW qualified Sea Instructors to assist in describing all waterways.

The International River Grading System⁸ uses six levels each referred to as "Grade" or "Class" followed by a number. The grade of a river may change with the level of flow.

- **Grade 1 Easy** (slow to medium flow, relatively few obstacles, easy path to follow)
- **Grade 2 Moderate** (regular waves / medium rapids which are manageable with basic strokes)
- **Grade 3 Difficult** (rapids/ high waves, manoeuvring around obstacles is required).
- **Grade 4 Difficult rapids** (have high, powerful, irregular waves, broken water, often boiling eddies, ledges, drops and dangerous exposed rocks. The passage often difficult to recognize and precise sequential manoeuvring is required).
- **Grade 5 Very powerful rapids** (very confused and broken water, massive waves, large drops, violent and fast currents, abrupt turns, difficult powerful stopper hydraulics. Numerous obstacles in the main current, including dangerous, possibly life-threatening hazards).
- **Grade 6 Extremely dangerous** - classified as unraftable. (Very confused, very violent, exploding and folding water so difficult that controlled navigation by raft is virtually impossible).

SNORKELLING

Trails WA classifies snorkel uses three classifications of snorkel trails:

- **Easy** – suitable for beginners
- **Moderate** – suitable for those with some experience
- **Difficult** – considerable experience required, open water conditions, waves

⁸ Paddle WA. Grading System. <http://www.waterwaysguide.org.au/GradingSystem>

1

TRAIL NETWORK

A collection of linked trails, often of same type, typically accessed via a trailhead. Eg. Pemberton, Porongurup National Park, Bremer Bay.

APPENDIX 2: TRAIL TOWNS AND TRAIL NETWORKS

2

TRAIL CENTRE

A managed trail or trail network supported by dedicated on site trail related services and facilities. May be stand alone or part of a trail hub. Eg. Margaret River



3

TRAIL TOWN

A population centre that offers a large range of high quality trails, trail user related services, facilities, businesses, branding and signage. (Also known as a trail hub). The aim of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy is for Albany to become a trail town.

APPENDIX 3: TRAIL USERS

Visitation to the Great Southern is currently dominated by intrastate trips (refer to Table 16) with having a holiday being the main purpose for visiting by both domestic and international tourists.

Table 16: Purpose of visit to Great Southern Region 2016-2017

Estimated Visitors to Great Southern region	Period - YE Dec 2016-2018							
	Average Annual Visitors	Holiday		Visiting friends and relatives		Business		Other
Domestic	586,000	317,700	49%	189,700	30%	115,700	18%	25,700
International	58,500	51,000	87%	6,200	11%	900	2%	1,600
Total Overnight	701,833							
Intrastate Daytrips	773,000	401,000	52%	118,300	15%	91,000	12%	162,700

Visiting national parks and bushwalking (hiking) are activities undertaken by a majority of international visitors (71% and 52% respectively), and by approximately 1 in every 5 intrastate and interstate visitors to the Great Southern the region. Cycling is undertaken by approximately 1 in every 6 international visitors, and by 1 in every 10 day trippers.

Table 17: Average annual visitors, visit national parks and participate in bushwalking (hiking), and cycling

Estimated Visitors to Great Southern region	Period - YE Dec 2016-2018						
	Average Annual Visitors	# visit national parks	% of visitors	# participate in bushwalking	% of visitors	# participate in cycling	% of visitors
Intrastate	586,000	488,000	17	154,300	24	20,000	3
Interstate	57,333						
International	58,500	126,900*	71	30,700*	52	9,600	16
Total Overnight	701,833						
Intrastate Daytrips	773,000	243,700	7	83,300	11	70,300	9

*Activity participation is captured at a total trip level (not destination specific) for international visitors; therefore International visitors may have undertaken activity elsewhere in Australia.

Source: Tourism Research Australia, International and National Visitor Survey.



Photo credit: South Coast NRM

APPENDIX 4: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE AGREED OBJECTIVES

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
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	RTMP received and endorsed by all Great Southern LGAs and State government agencies	High	Immediate	Lead: LGAs DBCA, DLGSC
1.2	Adopt the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy	Allocate adequate resources to ensure GSRTMP is implemented	High	Immediate	Lead: LGAs DBCA, DLGSC
		Form a Regional Trails Reference Group to oversee the Implementation Strategy	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Participating LGAs and other stakeholders
		Establish a mechanism for the Regional Trails Reference Group to communicate efficiently with the WA Trails Reference Group	High	Immediate	Lead: DLGSC Support: GSCORE
		Review the RTMP within 5 years of its release to ensure its ongoing relevance and to examine its implementation	Med	5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
1.3	Link identified regional priority trails to local government strategic plans	Develop local trail plans	Med	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
		Ensure regional priority trails are included in local government planning documents (including asset management, community development and financial plans)	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: LGAs

2

**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.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1	Trail development undertaken as per the schedule outlined in each Activity Plan	Develop concept plans and business cases for all regional priority trails in line with the timeframes identified in activity-specific trail plans	High	1 – 5 years	Lead: Land managers Support: GSCORE
		Secure funding commitments from all partners and leverage additional resources through State and Federal Government grants	High	1 – 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, GSDC, RDA
		Prepare and implement a priority trailhead and wayfinding strategy as identified within specific trail plans	Med	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers
		Ensure all trail planning is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines contained in the WA Trail Development Series	High	1 – 2 years	Lead: Land managers Support: GSCORE
2.2	All land managers adopt best practice guidelines in development and management of regional priority trails including protection of biodiverse and culturally sensitive areas and values.	Facilitate the sharing of knowledge related to trail planning, construction and management between all land managers, local government authorities, clubs, key user groups, and community organisations	High	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: DLGSC, DBCA
		Collaborate with land managers, scientific institutions and community organisations to monitor ongoing usage and impacts of individual trails to improve management practices over the long-term	Med	1 – 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers
		Develop and implement a trail-building training program for land managers, community groups and contractors to improve sustainability outcomes for all trails	Med	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers



3

**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.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1	Prepare and implement a Regional Trails Marketing Strategy	Develop brand position statement for Great Southern Regional Trails	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs)
		Prepare and implement a marketing and promotions plan	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Develop trail maps	High	1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Develop signage and style guide	High	1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Implement a Noongar naming strategy for new trails and dual-naming strategy for existing trails	High	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Wagyl Kaip, SWALSC
		Produce digital assets for all regional priority trails	High	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs
3.2	Prepare and implement a thematic interpretation strategy that includes biodiversity, Aboriginal and settler cultural heritage, for all nationally and regional significant trails and trail networks.	Provide guidance in the creation of unique and memorable visitor experiences, provide a point of difference, and aid in raising the profile of regional trails	Medium	2 – 3 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, traditional custodians, DMOs

4

**Community and Economic Development Opportunities**

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.








NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1	Economic benefits - Encourage and support new trail business opportunities and identified gaps in service provision	Expand the Tourism Experience Accelerator Program (TEAP) across the entire region	Med	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, industry groups
		Support key regional towns to obtain trail town accreditation	Med	2 - 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
4.2	Liveability benefits - Ensure that regional priority trail developments cater for and encourage active transport	Adopt the Regional Cycling Strategy 2050 for the Great Southern	Med	2- 5 years	Lead: Department of Transport (DoT) Support: LGAs, DLGSC
4.3	Health - Actively promote the health and wellbeing benefits of active leisure activities	Implement and promote outdoor recreation education and participation programs. Ensure access for all is incorporated with provision of facilities	Med	3-5 years	Lead: DLGSC Support: LGAs, GSCORE, Department of Health
4.4	Culture - Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects	Ensure that representatives from SWALSC and/or Wagyl Kaip sits on the Great Southern Trails Reference Group	High	1-2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: SWALSC
		Ensure that Aboriginal community engagement plans are developed for all trail projects	High	2-3 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, SWALSC
4.5	Environmental - Adopt and promote the Trail Development Series as best practice for trail planning, construction and maintenance	Establish a trail building network that includes land manager and trail managers. Use the network to promote the TDP	High	Within 1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs, DBCA



APPENDIX 5: STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLANS

This appendix provides an action plan for each local government stakeholder. Trail proposals are sorted by priority and timeframe. A separate table has been created for all projects on DBCA estate. These action plans outline the next steps required to progress each trail proposal.

KEY

TRAIL TYPE		
 Hiking	 Cycling/Mountain biking	 Paddling
	 Snorkelling	
TIMEFRAME		
 Short (1-2 years)	 Medium (3-5 years)	 Long (6-10 years)
LEAD ORGANISATION		
<p>DBCA – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions</p> <p>ALB – City of Albany GNOW – Shire of Gnowangerup KOJ – Shire of Kojonup</p> <p>BT – Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup JERR – Shire of Jerramungup MANJ – Shire of Manjimup</p> <p>CRAN – Shire of Cranbrook KATT – Shire of Katanning PLAN – Shire of Plantagenet</p> <p>DEN – Shire of Denmark KENT – Shire of Kent WOOD – Shire of Woodanilling</p>		












CITY OF ALBANY

 Priority Regional Trails























TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Albany Heritage Park, Mounts Trail Corridor Link	 		ALB	Detailed design and construction. Extend the Granite Trail (hiking) and the Mounts Link Trail (MTB) as per Concept Plan.
 Bald Head Walk			DBCA	Support DBCA to secure funding for required upgrades
 Munda Biddi Trail – Sandpatch			ALB	Secure funding to implement trail realignment
 Albany Heritage Park - Stage 2	 		ALB	Consultation, concept planning, secure funding.
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail			DBCA	Support DBCA to develop Concept Plan
 Poikeclerup MTB Trails			ALB	Site assessment, Concept Plan
 Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail	 		ALB	Site Assessment
Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Southern Terminus Trailhead	 		ALB	Collaborate with DBCA to relocate the existing Southern Terminus for both trails to the Albany town square/visitor centre.
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk			DBCA	Provide input to DBCA on site assessment
Whaling Cove			ALB	Identify management group to maintain underwater plinths and signage
Kalgan River			ALB	Waymarking, interpretation

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF BROOMEHILL-TAMBELLUP






TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit		  		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations
GSTRC	Boot Rock Reserve	 		BT	Trailhead, waymarking
	Tambellup Heritage Trail			BT	Trailhead, waymarking, new interpretive panels
 Grain Train Rail Trail		 		GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF CRANBROOK






TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit		  		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations
GSTRC	Pink Lake Cranbrook			CRAN	Trailhead, car parking
	Sukey Hill Lookout			CRAN	Site assessment for waymarking, construction
	Frankland River Wildflower walk			CRAN	Trail maintenance
	Salt River Rd Wildflower walk			CRAN	Trail maintenance
	Lake Poorrarecup	 		CRAN	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
	Lake Nunijup	 		CRAN	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park				DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF DENMARK

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD ORG	ACTION REQUIRED
 Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience	P	S	DBCA	Work with DBCA on consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail	H	M	DBCA	Support DBCA to implement Recreation Management Plan
 Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Shire of Denmark	C	M	DEN	Assist GSCORE with community consultation
 Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail connector	C	M	DEN	Consultation and site assessment
 Munda Biddi Trail -William Bay Road	C	M	DBCA	Assist DBCA to secure funding to Implement trail realignment
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link	H C	S	DEN	Site assessment and trail design
Mt Hallowell Lookout	H	S	DEN	Waymarking
Greens Pool - snorkel	S	S	DBCA	Work with DBCA to implement snorkel trail signage
Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite-Nullaki)	H	L	DEN	Site assessment
Wilson Inlet	P	L	DEN	Waymarking

SHIRE OF GNOWANGERUP



TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
 Gnowangerup Heritage Walk	H	M	GNOW	Additional interpretive information
 Yongerghnow Malleefowl Centre	H	M	GNOW	Improve signage, and waymarking
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	C	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C	L	GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail	H	L	DBCA	DBCA consultation and site assessment

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF JERRAMUNGUP






TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit		H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk	H	S	JERR	Secure funding for construction (detailed design is complete)
	Bremer River paddle	P	M	DBCA	Collaborate with GSCORE, LGA, Site assessment
	Jerramungup Town Heritage Walk	H	M	JERR	Make trail suitable for all users, surfacing
	Native Snail Trail	H C	M	JERR	Trail maintenance
	Little Boat Harbour – snorkel	S	M	JERR	Identify management group to maintain plinth and signage

SHIRE OF KATANNING

TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit		<div>H</div> <div>C</div> <div>P</div>	<div>S</div>	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Police Pools, Twonkwillingup	<div>H</div>	<div>M</div>	KATT	Trail proposal, site assessment.
	Katanning Town Walk Trails	<div>H</div>	<div>M</div>	KATT	Improve signage, and waymarking
	Lake Ewlyamartup	<div>H</div> <div>P</div>	<div>M</div>	KATT	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
 Grain Train Rail Trail		<div>H</div> <div>C</div>	<div>L</div>	GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF KENT






















TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P		GSCORE	LGA's and Great Southern Treasures collaborate to develop a marketing strategy, in cooperation with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC Pingrup Grain Silos Walk	H		KENT	Develop new walk trail with waymarking
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C		GSCORE	LGA's collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF KOJONUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P		GSCORE	LGA's and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC Kojonup Heritage Walk	H		KOJ	Improve signage, and waymarking
Farrar Reserve	H C		KOJ	Install signage, and waymarking
Myrtle Benn Reserve	H C		KOJ	Promotion, marketing
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C		GSCORE	LGA's collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET











 Priority Regional Trails

TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Tower Hill Trails		 		PLAN	Community consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit		  		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Mondurup Reserve			PLAN	Trailhead, waymarking
	Kendenup Nature Trail			PLAN	Trailhead, waymarking
 Porongurup MTB Trails				DBCA	Assist DBCA with community consultation
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail				DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail				DBCA	DBCA consultation and site assessment

SHIRE OF WOODANILLING

TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit		  		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Woodanilling Heritage Walk			WOOD	Extend trail with new interpretive panels
	Lake Queerearrup	 		WOOD	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking

DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Bald Head Walk			DBCA	Secure funding for required upgrades
 Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail			DBCA	Implement Recreation Management Plan
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail			DBCA	Develop Concept Plan
 Porongurup MTB Trails			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark - Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail connector			DEN	Consultation and site assessment
 Munda Biddi Trail - William Bay Road			DBCA	Seek funding to Implement trail realignment
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail			DBCA	Confirm alignment with district priorities
Greens Pool - snorkel			DBCA	Implement infrastructure upgrades to include land-based snorkel trail signage during 2019/20
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk			DBCA	Site assessment
Mamang Trail			DBCA	Investigate funding to seal the road access to Point Ann to improve access to trailhead.
Bremer River paddle			DBCA	Collaborate with GSCORE, LGA, Site assessment
STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK TRAILS				
Bluff Knoll			DBCA	Assess trail maintenance requirements and implement measures.
Stirling Range Ridge Walk			DBCA	Trail is to remain as a challenging Class 6, unmarked ridge walk. Education and information to be provided
Mt Hassell, Mt Magog, Talyuberlup Peak, Mt Toolbrunup, Mt Trio			DBCA	Assess trail maintenance requirements and implement measures.
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail			DBCA	Consultation and site assessment
PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK TRAIL NETWORK				
Castle Rock Loop			DBCA	Assess maintenance requirements and opportunities to enhance existing trails
Bolganup Heritage Trail				
Devil's Slide				
Nancy's Peak				



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Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Stakeholder Reference Group Briefing
(April 2020)



RTMP - Progress since October 2019

Date	Activities
Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Regional Trails Master Plan completed in December 2019 and released for Public Comment (5 weeks)
Jan 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public comments provided to and considered by PMEG and land managers
Feb 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback has been considered & changes incorporated where appropriate Draft RTMP presented to each LGA via Council briefing sessions (excluding Shire of Woodanilling – print brief provided)
Mar 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback collated and distributed to each LGA Final RTMP re-drafted Concept plans started for 3 priority projects
Apr 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final RTMP distributed to each LGA for Council endorsement (ideally completed by May 2020)

Establishing the
Great Southern as a
World-class Trail
Destination

Summary of Public comment



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

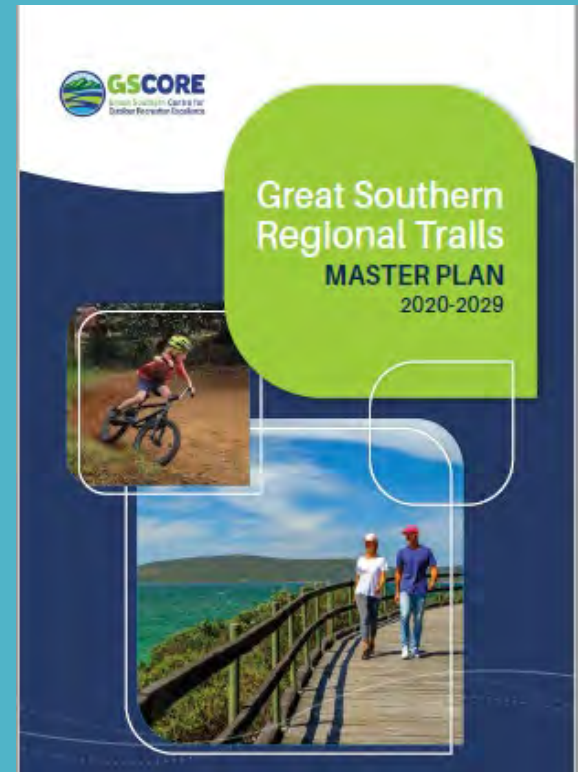
While we received lots of positive feedback on the plan, we received a significant number of submissions raising concerns about trail proposals in national parks and nature reserves. You told us that you want assurance that land managers are taking an environmentally sensitive approach to planning.

- Just over 200 comments received (public & organisations)
- Majority were favourable
- Significant number opposed to mountain biking in Porongurup National Park and a smaller number of opponents to MTB trails elsewhere
- Public comment document will be publicly available following endorsement of final RTMP by LGAs



Regional Trails Master Plan

- Final document completed early April
- To be endorsed by LGAs at May 2020 Council meetings
- Link to final document has been provided to funding stakeholders
- A final copy of the RTMP will be available to all stakeholders (including other SRG members) once endorsed by LGAs



Changes made to draft




Minor Modifications


- RTMP strategic objectives were expanded to provide more emphasis on Aboriginal engagement and involvement
- Two of the planning principles were combined based on feedback received
- Introduced new principle focused on community benefit

Priority Trail Projects – Regional Trails Master Plan

I PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
S SHORT 1-2 Years	Tower Hill MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Bald Head Walk Trail Albany Heritage Park Mounts Trail Corridor Link	

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
M 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 Stage 2 Polkeclerup MTB Trails Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Porongurup MTB Trails Munda Biddi Trail Realignments	

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
L LONG 6-10 Years	Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Grain Train Rail Trails Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	

TRAIL TYPE

H Hiking

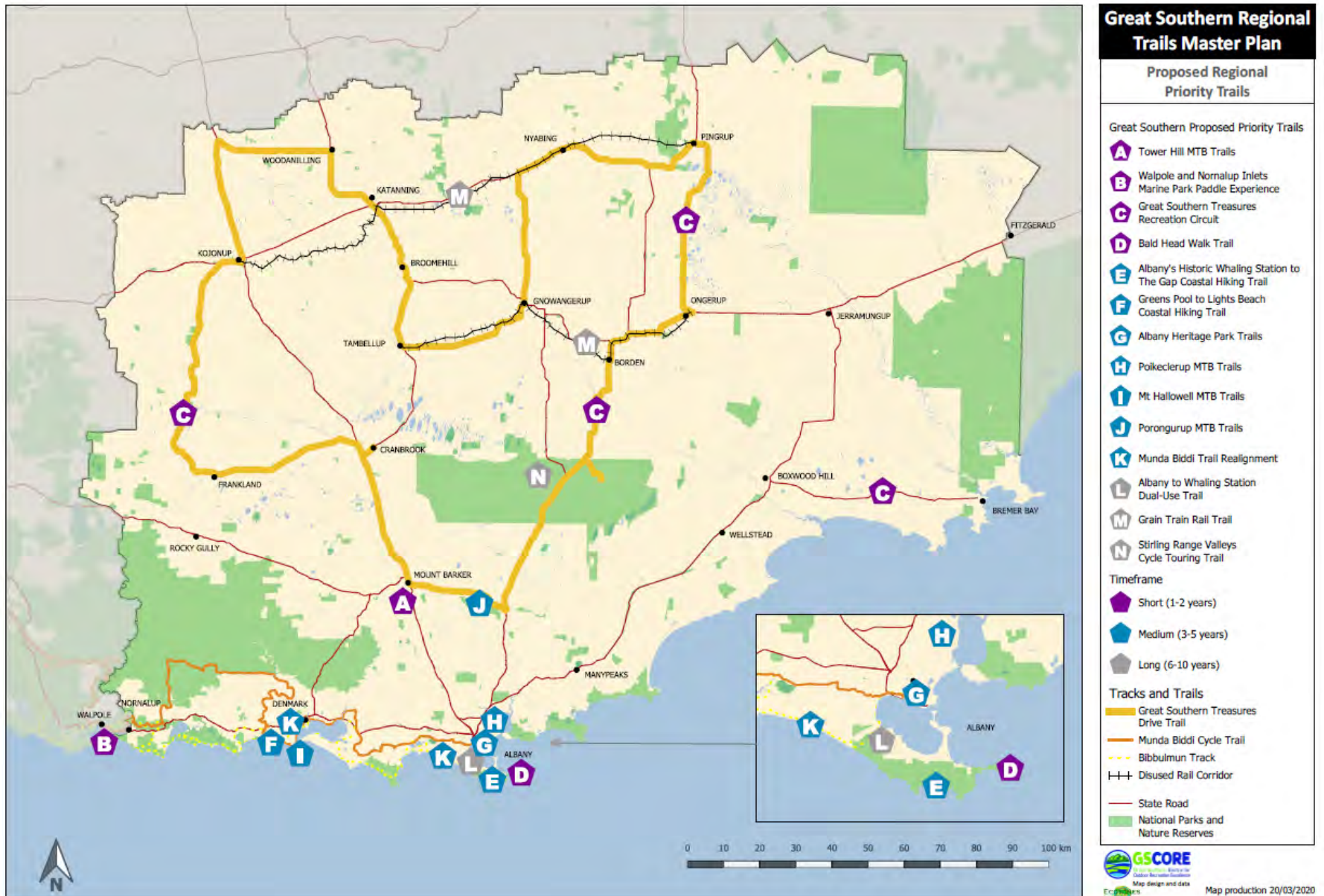
C Cycling/Mountain biking

P Paddling

14 regional
priority trails
identified

Modification to Priority Trail projects

1. **Albany Heritage Park** – projects split across two timeframes – short term and medium term (these are counted as one priority trail proposal but spread across multiple time periods)
2. The following **Trail Enhancements/Maintenance** were added to the regional priority list. This was based on land manager feedback (e.g. trail significance, pre-planning, existing programs and desired works which are supported by one or more land manager).
 - **Bald Head Trail, Torndirrup NP** – is identified by Trails WA as an “iconic” trail. Requires urgent maintenance & upgrade (short timeframe for works)
 - **Munda Biddi Trail** – focus on trail realignments at three locations to improve nationally significant trail for cycle touring/MTB (medium term)
 - *Sandpatch – realign section to avoid Lower Denmark Rd (east of Elleker)*
 - *Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Trail – realign dangerous double crossing SC Hwy.*
 - *William Bay Road – divert trail from road into William Bay, Greens Pool*



1. **Tower Hill MTB Trails (Mount Barker)** – trails concept plan, up to 10km different types of MTB trails and summit walk track. Partnership with Shire of Plantagenet. Site assessments completed, consultant engaged to develop Concept Plan.

2. **Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park** – trails project plan for staged implementation of 6 paddle trails, offering easy to intermediate grade paddles. DBCA (lead) with support from Shires of Denmark, Manjimup, & GSCORE.

3. **Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit** – develop project plan to confirm proposed sites, infrastructure requirements and costings. Develop an overall funding bid to develop project, and marketing plan. Partnership with Great Southern Treasures.

4. **Mt Hallowell MTB Trails (Denmark)** - MTB trail network - beginner to advanced riders with technical and descending focused trails. Requires community engagement and site assessments.

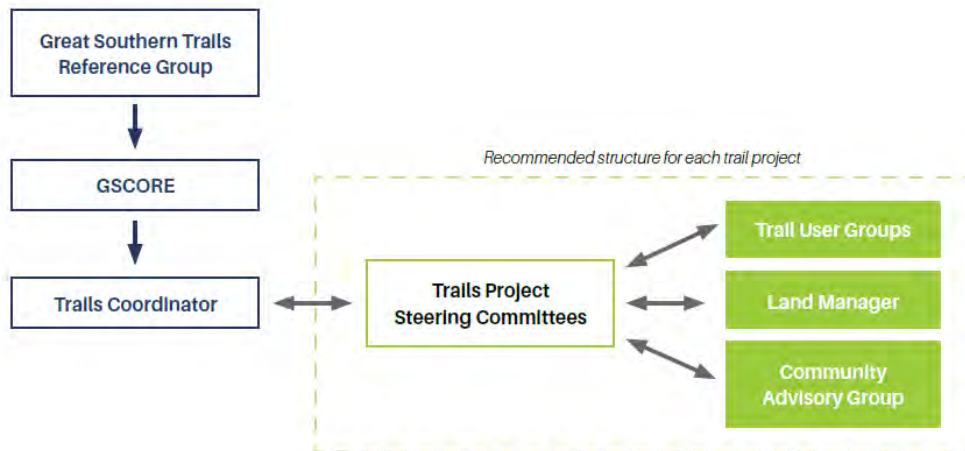
GSCORE priorities to June 2020

Concept Plan
development

Implementation Strategy post-June 2020

Service Agreements with LGAs

- GSCORE is liaising with each LGA to secure service agreements to implement the RTMP post 30 June 2020
- GSCORE's role and functions are outlined in the next slide
- **Formation of Great Southern Trails Reference Group**
 - Will have a similar structure and function to current SRG
 - SRG will remain in place until 30 June 2020 – we anticipate providing you all with another briefing in early June once LGAs have endorsed the RTMP



GSCORE's future roles



PROJECT GOVERNANCE

- Establish governance framework
- Monitor Implementation through action plans



GRANT WRITING

- Identify funding sources and prepare applications on behalf of stakeholders



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Develop project scoping documents, consultant briefs, business plans
- Develop and execute stakeholder engagement plans
- Undertake community consultation

MARKETING COORDINATION

- Implement marketing strategy
- Implement signage plan
- Maintain Trails WA database



TRAIL MONITORING

- Priority trail maintenance audit
- Develop maintenance schedules
- Implement monitoring programs



TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Develop and deliver training for land managers and trail managers
- Implement business capacity building program



DRAFT

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

2020-2029



DISCLAIMER

This document has been published by the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE). The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) 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.

The trail projects identified in the RTMP are based on existing information available from local and state agencies, community organisations and not-for-profit groups. Estimates of infrastructure, timeframes and costs are indicative only. Projects may be subject to review and change to meet new circumstances. Projects identified in the RTMP should not be taken as a commitment by stakeholders to fund these projects. Unless otherwise indicated, public funding of projects is not confirmed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

GSCORE gratefully acknowledges the funding support of the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund and Lotterywest in funding the development of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



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; members of the Stakeholder Reference Group and Project Management Executive Group; the following consultants – Px2, Vicki Winfield and Associates, Common Ground Trails, May Carter, Ecotones and Associates, Maren Heckel, Synergy Graphics, Graphic As Design; and University of Western Australia student interns – Sonja Pascho, Trent Moss, Ben Maisey Kyle-Little, and Fiona Chan.

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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Photo credit: David Bomba

ACRONYMS

- ASW** - Australia's South West
ASCTI - Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated
ATHRA - Australian Trail Horse Riders Association
ATHS - City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy
DMO - Destination Marketing Organisation
DOT - Department of Transport
DBCA - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
DLGSC - Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
GSCORE - Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence
GSDC - Great Southern Development Commission
GST - Great Southern Treasures
GSTRC - Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit
GSTRG - Great Southern Trails Reference Group
IMBA - International Mountain Bicycling Association
LGA - Local Government Authority
MCA - Multi-criteria assessment tool
MTB - Mountain bike
RTMP - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
SO1-SO5 - The Sea/Open Water Grading System NSW
SWALSC - South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council
TDP - Trails Development Process

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Southern Regional Trail Master Plan (RTMP) provides a coherent and clearly outlined program of trail infrastructure development across the Great Southern region over a ten-year period (2020-2029). It has been developed to guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and provides a vision of what the trail network across the Great Southern will look like in the future.

This plan has been developed in partnership with all eleven local governments in the Great Southern region – Albany, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling. It has the support of 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).

The RTMP is identified as a priority project in both the Great Southern Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2019-2021, and the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan (2018). It supports the 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.

This plan aims to establish the Great Southern as a World-Class Trails Destination.

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:

VISION STATEMENT

By 2030, the Great Southern Region will provide a diverse range of quality trail experiences that showcase the region's unique landscapes, biodiversity, geology, Aboriginal culture and settler heritage.

The trail network will be built to a high standard and managed on a sustainable basis to enhance environmental and educational outcomes.

Trail experiences will be highly valued by local communities who regularly use them for recreation.

They will also attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors, leading to improved health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for the region's people and places.

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

2



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.

3



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.

4



Community and Economic Development Opportunities

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.






















A multi-criteria assessment process was used to identify which trail proposals should be prioritised for development (see Section 3). The majority of the proposed priority trails are new trails or trail networks (see figure below). 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 the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers.





Developing these priority trails is integral to achieving the region's vision of becoming a world-class trails destination. Therefore, this master plan recommends that the following eleven proposed priority trails are incorporated into local and state government planning documents as projects of regional importance and that funding be allocated to implement these projects. Other trail proposals included in this plan – including trail linkages and trail enhancements – are important but are of lower priority. They provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans and implemented when funding is available.

Eleven regional priority trails or trail networks are proposed. They are listed according to the anticipated timeframe for construction and are sorted by activity type (hiking, cycling, and paddling). They are **not** ranked by order of priority.

! PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 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 combination with the proposed trail linkages and improvements, these new trails will provide a diverse range of iconic trail experiences for hiking, cycling and paddling. Progressively implementing these projects over the next decade will ensure that the Great Southern achieves its potential as a nationally recognised trail destination.

TRAIL TYPE			
 Hiking	 Cycling/Mountain biking	 Paddling	 Snorkelling

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Trails are pathways or routes that are used for recreation, tourism and appreciation of natural and cultural values. Trails may be short or long; be part of a trail network or a single journey; be used for one activity or be shared by several different trail activities; be primarily used by local residents or form a visitor attraction; be purpose-built paths or routes designated by signage and information.

WHAT ARE TRAIL EXPERIENCES?

Active leisure trails may be terrestrial (e.g. hiking, walking, running, mountain biking, cycling, equestrian) or aquatic (e.g. paddling, snorkelling, diving). They can also involve the use of motorised transport where a vehicle is the primary means of experiencing the natural environment (e.g. trail bikes) or where it provides a means to access recreation sites (e.g. 4WD, on-road vehicles).

Many trail experiences include a focus on local culture, heritage, and produce (e.g. arts trails, food and wine trails). Trails may form part of a designated and sanctioned trail network or can be informal (and in some cases unsanctioned by land managers). They can be linear or looped and may be standalone or linked to trail centres and towns. Trails are categorised according to an agreed classification system and standard (i.e. grades). These standards are specific to each trail type (e.g. walking) and are not interchangeable (see Appendix 1).

WHY IS THE MASTER PLAN NEEDED?

The Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017–2021¹ is a high-level strategic planning document produced by the Western Australian state government to guide future investment and ensure planning consistency and sustainable trails development across the State¹. It recognises the role that trails play in encouraging participation in outdoor recreation and driving economic growth through nature-based and adventure tourism. The Blueprint recommends the development of regional trails master plans as critical planning tools for all tiers of government.

There has been little local level planning to meet the growing demand from residents for the construction of trails and trail networks within the Great Southern. Except for the City of Albany, which is implementing its Trails Hub Strategy, none of the other local governments in the Great Southern have current local Trails Master Plans or equivalent documents. However, the need for trails master planning is listed as a priority in the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan and is documented in several local government community or recreation plans.

While there are currently few formal trails plans in place, some local governments have trails committees or project groups. The City of Albany has a Trails Project Control Group overseeing the implementation of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy, as well as project-specific working groups for individual trails/reserves. The Shire of Jerramungup has an active Bremer Bay Trails committee. The Shire of Plantagenet has recently established a trail working group. It is recognised that seven of the region's eleven local government areas (LGAs) have population bases below 2000 residents and struggle to commit capital and human resource towards trail planning and development. It is anticipated that this master plan will prove to be a valuable resource to all local governments across the Great Southern region.

¹ Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017-2020, Department of Sport and Recreation, page 18.

HOW WAS THE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPED?

The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) developed this plan in partnership with all regional stakeholders. In undertaking this work, GSCORE employed the Trail Development Process (TDP). The TDP was developed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) in partnership with international trail specialists, key stakeholders, and the trail community². This planning process provides guidelines to assist land managers, trail professionals and trail groups to develop and manage trails sustainably, and maximise environmental, social and economic benefits.

Integration of TDP guidelines into this plan and all future planning will ensure that trails are a recreational asset to the Great Southern community, not a liability. The guidelines are an important resource and tool for land managers, trail professionals and trail groups, providing guidance and a consistent development approach to trails across Western Australia.

The Trail Development Process involves eight stages (see Figure 1 below) and encompasses a constant evaluation, review and improvement process as trails are being developed, maintained, extended or renewed.

Figure 1: Trail Development Process

STAGE	OUTCOME	
1. Trail Proposal	A trail development proposal is either supported in principle by the land manager/owner, or not supported (due to environmental, social, cultural or other constraints). The purpose of a proposal could be to identify potential suitable areas for consideration.	DESKTOP
2. Framework	A project outline developed by the steering group (stakeholders), including: project objectives, project management model, stakeholders, roles, target market, requirements, execution, and ongoing management model.	
3. Site Assessment	Broad-scale study of the area and identification of opportunities, constraints and characteristics such as soil types, vegetation etc.	
4. Concept Planning	Identification of opportunities and conceptual trail plan, including broad trail corridors and infrastructure requirements.	
5. Corridor Evaluation	Detailed assessment of trail corridors for use in determining the final trail alignment.	FIELD
6. Detailed Design	Detailed trail design and alignments physically flagged in the field. Includes detail on the trail classifications, technical trail features, construction methods and specifications.	
7. Construction	Trail constructed in line with the Detailed Design.	
8. Management	Management plan implemented detailing maintenance and monitoring requirements.	

In developing the RTMP, GSCORE and associated consultants undertook an extensive community consultation process that involved landowners, land managers, local governments, the regional development commission, tourism organisations, peak recreational bodies, user groups, and the broader community. The main data collection techniques were face-to-face workshops, meetings with stakeholder

groups, and an online survey. The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local governments for trail development.

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. With that aim in mind, the following planning principles were endorsed by the project partners.

² Trails Development Series: Part A – Trail Development Process: <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/trails>

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING



Attract visitors from outside the region



Nationally & regionally significant trails

Build sustainable and safe trails



The project will adopt the sustainable trail design principles in the WA Trail Development Process



Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land



Noongar language or dual-naming of trails; and cultural interpretation



Develop a range of different trail experiences (terrestrial and aquatic)

Include a range of different trail activities



Cater to different user groups and abilities



Include a range of grades, levels of difficulty, and styles



Disperse visitors across the region

Identify trail projects across the entire region



Showcase and protect our unique landscapes and biodiversity



Build experiences around our unique points of difference and provide interpretation and education

Build partnerships across LGA boundaries and with local communities



Identify projects that cross boundaries and engage communities



Keep visitors in the region for longer

Provide a coherent and exciting array of experiences



Collaborate not compete



Put the user experience first

These principles have guided key decision-making for the plan.

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 2 SITUATION ANALYSIS

Photo credit: Tourism WA

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Trail users are increasingly seeking authentic, exciting outdoor experiences. Successful trail destinations such as Tasmania and New Zealand attract visitors seeking adventure, wilderness, and experiences that provide a sense of discovery and personal achievement. Creating attractive experiences requires consideration of:



Unique trail experiences matched to the region's landscapes



Marketing and promotion - 'experience' packaging



Capacity to host events



High-quality, diverse, iconic, scenic trail experiences



Revenue generation opportunities



Partnerships and political support



Accessibility, accommodation, attractions and activities

Successful trail destinations contain a range of different landscapes, experiences, trail lengths, classifications and style (linear, loop) within an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks which provide the necessary services such as information, accommodation, infrastructure and complementary activities.

HOW WE COMPARE TO ESTABLISHED TRAIL DESTINATIONS

Australia has a diverse range of landscapes and trail opportunities are being developed in every State. The popularity of active leisure, individual fitness and outdoor recreation activities is increasing, and trail-based activities are recognised as central to tourism growth in many regions across the country.

Tasmania is the best-known trails destination within Australia, with five of the twelve 'Great Walks of Australia' located in that state. With the opening of the Three Capes Walk in 2015, the number of tourists visiting Tasmania for overnight bushwalks grew by almost 70%. The Cape to Cape Walk Track in Margaret River is the only Western Australian trail included as a Great Walk. In the Great Southern region, the section of the Bibbulmun Track from Walpole to Albany is often recognised as one of the best sections of this extensive internationally recognised trail. With improved marketing and increased support services, this section of the track has the potential to elevate the status of the Great Southern as a hiking destination.

Tasmania is also becoming recognised as an international mountain biking destination, with Blue

Derby and Maydena being the most well-known locations. More than 40,000 people visited Tasmania to participate in mountain biking and cycling in 2018/2019. **Closer to home**, established and emerging mountain biking facilities can be found in Margaret River, Perth Hills, Nannup, Pemberton, Dwellingup and Collie. 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.

The landscapes of the **Great Southern** region offer a range of marketable experiences, equal to, or exceeding those sought in other destinations across the country. Visitors to Western Australia are drawn to its natural beauty, with almost 90% of holiday makers experiencing 'amazing natural landscapes or national parks'³. The diversity and uniqueness of the flora is a major drawcard, alongside the dramatic coastline, mountain ranges and idyllic rural and seaside towns.

³ Understanding Repeat Visitation to Western Australia, Tourism Research Australia, March 2018.

ANALYSIS OF OUR CURRENT TRAIL OFFERING

An audit of existing and planned trails in each LGA across the region shows that the Great Southern region has many tracks and trails (Table 1). However, because most of these have been developed in isolation from each other, the region lacks a coherent trail offering. There is a high concentration of trails close to coastal areas, while inland areas, despite having natural attractions including parks and reserves, are very poorly served by trail infrastructure. Throughout the region there are many informal trails used primarily by residents.

Walking is relatively well catered for with a variety of grades available, although most accessible trails suitable for the leisure market are concentrated in the Lower Great Southern. Several shires in the central and northern parts of the region have heritage trails and town walks, though most are not well marketed or known outside of the local area. There are very few looped trails, and most of these are short town walks.

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. A lack of infrastructure and marketing limits use of the river systems, lakes, inlets and harbours for paddling. Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders, and there are only two designated bridle trails used almost exclusively by local riders.

In addition to significant gaps in trail supply, the region also lacks consistent **trail signage**. There is no comprehensive source of information about the region-wide trail offering, and there are few physical and/or promotional linkages between trails. There are a diversity of trail construction and maintenance standards, funding sources and governance arrangements, and there are currently no recognised trail towns (hubs), trail centres, or trail networks.

Analysis of current trail offerings has enabled better understanding of **current gaps** in trail provision, and opportunities for future trail development⁴. In brief, while there are many trails throughout the region, there are significant gaps in the types of trails and trail experiences available. The current trail supply is insufficient to meet the needs of both residents and visitors. Apart from the two iconic, long distance trails (Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Trail) there are few trail products that appeal to a broad market and attract mass visitation. This plan examines these gaps and identifies opportunities and priorities for development.

⁴ The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Background Report (GSRTMP Background Report) provides an overview of the current trail networks in the region and an understanding of the social, health, economic, and environmental benefits of trails.

Table 1: Existing sanctioned trails in the Great Southern (as at 31 May 2019)

TRAIL TYPE	NUMBER OF TRAILS	TOTAL DISTANCE (KM)
Hike	91	194
Hike (long distance)	2	179
Mountain Bike (MTB)	1	1.3
Dual use (hike and cycle)	18	103
Paddle	10	81
Dive/snorkel	2	0.6
Equestrian/bridle	2	84
TOTAL TRAILS	128	886



Photo credit: Tourism WA

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. The aims, planning requirements and level of investment associated with each of these approaches are outlined in Table 2. These approaches inform the specific trail plans contained in Section 4.

The Great Southern region has the opportunity to maximise and market trail use, with the diversity of trail experiences and landscapes providing a compelling destination to visit.

With a focus on packaging diversity as an asset, enticing visitors and locals to explore the different values and experiences, it is expected that repeat visitation and length of stay will increase.

Table 2: Approach to trail development: aims, planning and investment

APPROACH	AIM	PLANNING REQUIRED	INVESTMENT
CREATE new trail experiences	Develop trails to meet unmet and emerging demand. Develop and market new trail experiences to suit target markets.	Integrate planning across multiple tenures, approvals from several land managers, detailed concept designs for development of different trails experiences, and services, branding and signage. Management and maintenance model is required at the planning stage.	High cost for planning, design and construction. Need to leverage funding from all tiers of government.
DEVELOP trail linkages	Develop trails linkages to maximise use of existing trail networks. Extend trails to create links between existing routes and town centres.	Coordinated planning approach to develop and establish links with existing routes. May require new trail infrastructure such as new trails, signage, interpretation or mapping; or improvements to road connectivity.	Low cost where trails already exist. Relatively low cost for installation of new signage, mapping and interpretation. Higher costs associated with new trail construction and installation of other infrastructure.
ENHANCE existing trails	Enhance and/or upgrade existing designated trails and/or upgrade informal recreational trails to create new trail experiences and improve access for different user groups.	Enhance access by improving trail surface or assistance infrastructure (steps, handholds, etc.) where possible. Upgrade trail infrastructure and improve signage, interpretation and mapping.	

Great Southern Regional Trails MASTER PLAN

SECTION 3 IDENTIFYING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

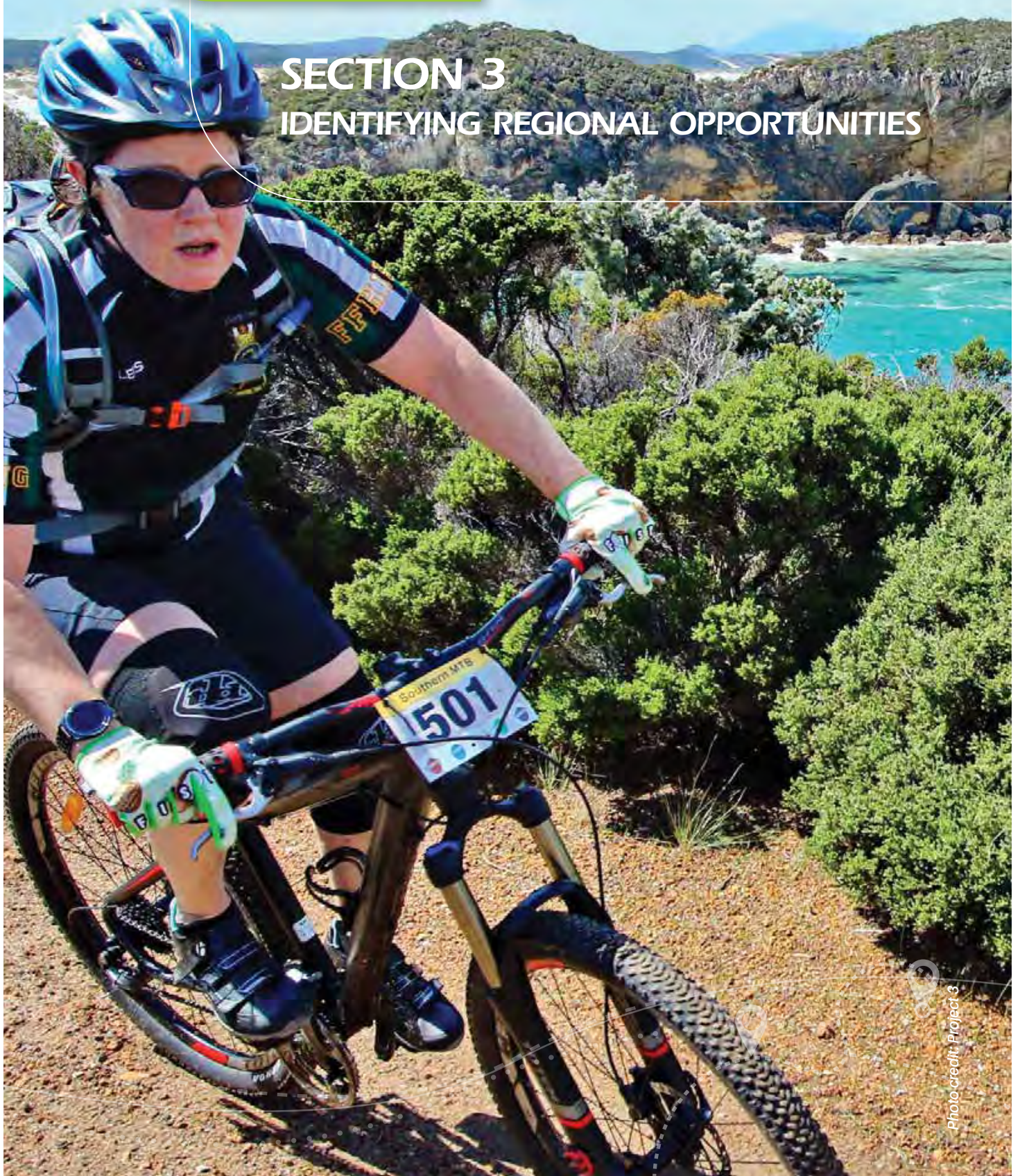


Photo credit: Project 3

IDENTIFYING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The goal of the RTMP is to establish an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks that cater to different trail user groups. To achieve this vision, the plan draws on the trail model outlined in the Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint. A trail model defines how a trail or set of trails can be developed and applied to a population centre or an individual site. Trail models heavily influence all parts of trail planning, design, construction and management (see Appendix 2).

Successful and sustainable trails require a strategic planning approach that ensures appropriate trail models and trail types are developed in appropriate locations.

HOW WERE PRIORITY TRAIL PROJECTS IDENTIFIED?

The following trail prioritisation process was used to identify regional trail development opportunities within the Great Southern. The criteria used are described in Table 3. The following sections describe these criteria in further detail.

Table 3: Trail prioritisation process

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITISATION CRITERIA
1 Market Potential	Activity markets are categorised as high, medium or low potential. Factors assessed: size of current market (how many people currently visit); existing catchment (where do visitors come from); visitation trends (what will attract visitors now and into the future); and potential for market growth (will trail development attract new markets).
2 Destination Significance	Destination locations are categorised as having national, regional or local significance. Factors assessed include: connectivity (population demographics and proximity); scope (available land); character (setting and landscape appeal); profile (existing services); and desirability (user demand)
3 Destination Opportunity	Destination locations are identified as having excellent, good, average, or low opportunity based on the location's relative importance and uniqueness. Factors assessed include: tenure ; access ; value (landscape); quality (landscape); and diversity (trail type).
4 Destination Deliverability	Destination locations are identified as having long, medium or short-term deliverability. Factors assessed include: demand (established); supply (existing trails); stakeholders (existing); planning (level of support); and land use (existing).

1

MARKET POTENTIAL

Substantial investment in trails is occurring around the world and trails are being actively marketed to keep tourists longer in different destinations. Trails tourism has many benefits – it increases length of stay by low-impact visitors, can promote repeat visitation, and drives tourism dollars to local businesses⁵. In general, trail walkers and hikers are the largest trails market world-wide. However, due to longer average time staying at a location (3-5 days) and often higher than average daily spend on food and accommodation⁶, mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market.

Two distinct visitor markets have traditionally been identified within trail tourism segmentation:

- **Destination Trail Users:** Experienced trails users who regularly travel with trails as a primary motivator. They have likely visited other Australian or international trails destinations. They seek high quality trails with good supporting infrastructure in scenic/natural locations.
- **Trail Users While on Holiday:** Typically less experienced trail users whose primary motivator for travel is not trails. While they view trail use as a secondary motivation for their visit they will participate in trail activities and will likely hire or require equipment. They may place less emphasis on the trail and more on accessibility of the facility, the setting and nearby attractions and amenities.

This master plan further differentiates market segments as:

- **Leisure Trail Users:** 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.
- **Active Trail Users:** 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.
- **Adventure Trail Users:** dedicated trail users who will seek out challenging trails or unique and extended experiences. Time spent on trails is often overnight and multi-day.

⁵ 20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in 2018 (p.26): <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/2018-trends-report-continued-growth-innovative-marketing-technology>

⁶ Economic Impacts of Mountain Biking Tourism – 2016 Update: <https://www.pinkbike.com/news/economic-impacts-of-mountain-bike-tourism-2016-update.html>



Photo credit: Steve Pontin

Table 4 provides an overview of the characteristics of these market segments. It is important to note that the type of experience sought by different groups, such as young people, families or grey nomads, is often self-determined according to ability and appetite for adventure, rather than by age or other demographic factors. It would be remiss to expect that older people or family groups will only seek leisure experiences, when those with skills and knowledge may well seek adventure experiences. Recent industry analysis is predicting increasing interest in adventure-based and trails tourism across all market segments⁷. This master plan identifies current market gaps and opportunities to cater for these diverse markets. More information about activity-based trail users and market size is included as Appendix 4.

Table 4: Trails market segmentation

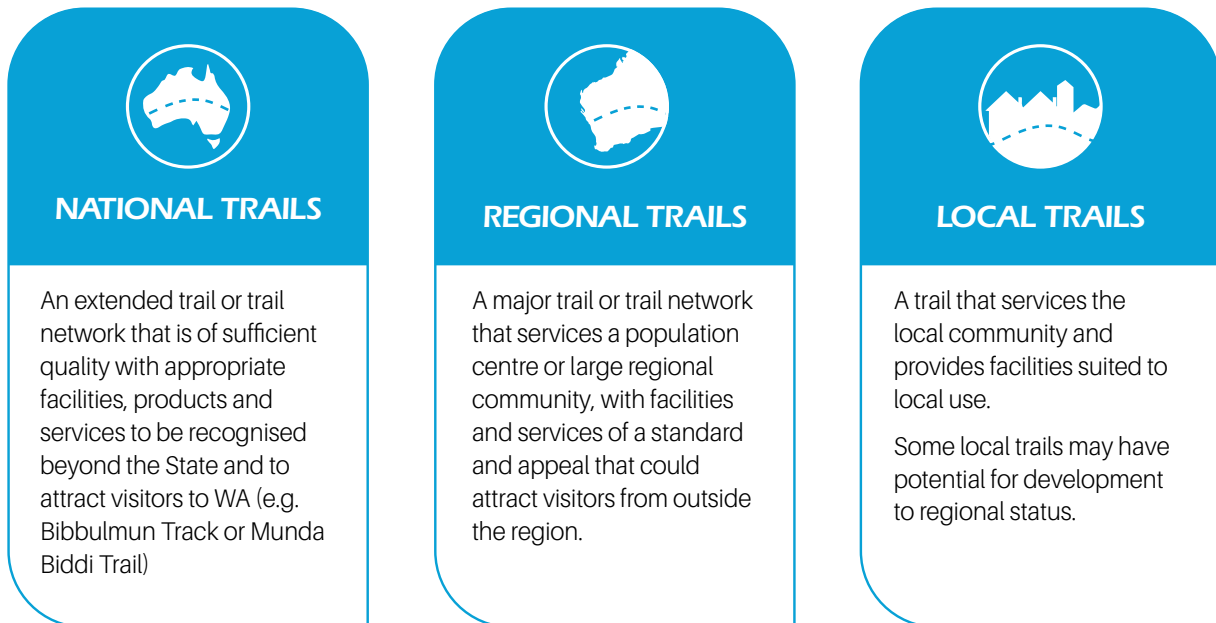
 <p>LEISURE</p>	<p>GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Typically holiday makers who seek out accessible trails for use with family and friends. Time spent on trails is often short to half-day in duration.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Tourist, family, friends</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: Well-marked trails to suit range of abilities. Easy access trails linked to town site and/or accommodation</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: LOW-MEDIUM - Limited experience seeking accessible, achievable trails</p> <p>VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH</p>
 <p>ACTIVE</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Competent outdoor enthusiasts seeking challenge, skill development</p> <p>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.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: MEDIUM-HIGH - Experienced seeking opportunity for skill development and socialisation</p> <p>VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH-MEDIUM</p>
 <p>ADVENTURE</p>	<p>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-day.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Experienced and willing to travel for iconic experience.</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: More remote experiences with limited facilities.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: HIGH - Very experienced seeking high-level challenge and adventure</p> <p>Visitor Numbers: LOW</p>

⁷ 20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in 2018 (p.26): <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/2018-trends-report-continued-growth-innovative-marketing-technology>

2 DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE

Regional master planning typically identifies the significance of different destinations, defined by desired recreation and tourism outcomes and the opportunity for different scales of infrastructure and other associated development in a particular location. Destination significance is categorised as being nationally, regionally or locally significant, and relates to the willingness of visitors to travel from other parts of the country, from within the region, or from within local areas to use trails (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Trail hierarchies



The RTMP focuses on nationally and regionally significant trails that have the potential to attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors to our region. These trails will be complemented by an array of locally significant trail-based experiences and services across the region that will encourage visitors to remain in the region for longer. The activity plans for trails development (see Section 4) identify the destination significance of each location where high quality, sustainable and accessible trails could be developed, including locations capable of hosting state, national and international events.

3 DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY

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. Locations that are serviced by major transport routes, with a good mix of tourism products and services, including accommodation, attractions, and activities, and are supported by marketing and promotion activities, have greater opportunity than those where the existing tourism market is small or under-developed. Opportunity also takes into consideration the amount of land available, existing tenure arrangements, and the geo-physical advantages of different locations (i.e. the most suitable soil types for trail construction).






4 DESTINATION DELIVERABILITY

Deliverability refers to the timeframe within which proposed trail projects can be achieved. The deliverability was determined through assessing established demand, existing trail and infrastructure supply, landholder and stakeholder objectives, planning constraints and sensitivities, and existing land use. Projects with high deliverability can potentially be achieved within a short timeframe, whereas those that face a range of constraints or challenges, have long-term deliverability.

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A multi-criteria assessment (MCA) tool that uses the criteria outlined above was developed to assess trail opportunities across the Great Southern. The MCA was applied to all trail ideas collected through the community consultation process. The current status of each trail activity type is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Activity type, market potential, destination significance, opportunity and deliverability

	ACTIVITY TYPE	MARKET POTENTIAL	CURRENT DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE	POTENTIAL DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE	DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY	DESTINATION DELIVERABILITY
	Hiking	High	National	National	Excellent	Short
	Trail Running	Medium	Regional	National	Good	Short
	Mountain biking	High	Local	Regional	Good	Med-long
	Cycle touring	Medium	Local	Regional	Excellent	Med-long
	Rail Trail	Medium	Local	Regional	Good	Long
	Paddling	Medium	Local	Regional	Good	Short
	Snorkelling	Medium	Local	Local	Average	Short
	Adventure trail bike touring	High	None	Regional	Good	Med
	Trail bike riding	Low	Local	Local	Average	Long
	Equestrian	Low	Local	Local	Average	Long

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.

Great Southern Regional Trails MASTER PLAN

SECTION 4 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



Photo credit: City of Albany

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

This section outlines key recommendations to develop a range of regionally significant trail experiences suited to a diversity of trail users, types and experiences, and includes future planning for relevant trail towns, trail networks and visitor services across the Great Southern. In line with the objectives of the RTMP, **trail plans have been developed for hiking, mountain biking and cycle touring, and paddling**. These plans include discussion of existing supply and suitability for different market segments; market demand; development opportunities and constraints; and deliverability of the proposed projects.

Each activity area includes at least one regional priority trail or trail network.

Trail development proposals are grouped into three categories:

Create new trail experiences







Develop trail linkages

Enhance existing trails

Following the rationale and using the assessment criteria outlined in previous sections, priority locations and projects were identified across the Great Southern region. Eleven regional priority trails are proposed (see Figure 3). They are listed according to the anticipated timeframe for construction and are sorted by activity type (hiking, cycling, and paddling). They are not ranked by order of priority.

Figure 3: Proposed Regional Priority Trails

! PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS


TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 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	


The majority of the proposed regional priority trails are new trails or trail networks (see Map 1). Developing these priority trails is integral to achieving the region's vision of becoming a world-class trails destination. They provide a diverse range of iconic trail experiences for hiking, cycling and paddling. Progressively implementing these projects over the next decade will ensure that the Great Southern achieves its potential as a nationally recognised trail destination.

Other trail proposals included in this plan – including trail linkages and trail enhancements – are important but are of lower priority. They provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans and implemented when funding is available.

The timeframe for the delivery of the proposed trails 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 the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers.

The deliverability timelines relate to when it could be expected all trail site assessment, planning and design would be complete, and a trail project would be 'shovel-ready' for construction as per Stage 7 of the Trail Development Process (refer to Figure 1):

 Short (S) = 1-2 years
(construction commences 2020-2021)

 Medium (M) = 3-5 years
(construction commences 2022-2025)


 Long (L) = 6-10 years
(construction commences 2026-2029)



Photo credit: David Bomba

Map 1: Proposed regional priority trails.



HIKING TRAILS

The Great Southern region has limited existing recognition as a hiking trail destination, but it is known for 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. Adventure trail users rate the Walpole to Albany sections of the Bibbulmun Track and the Ridge Walk in the Stirling Range as some of the best hiking in the State. These trails are complemented by many locally significant walking trails.

The Great Southern region has the opportunity to become Western Australia's premier hiking destination, offering an array of walking and trail running experiences in diverse landscapes.

Short half day walks are the most popular length of hiking trail, particularly within the leisure market, however longer day and multiday walks provide options for trail users to extend their visit or tailor their experience according to their own preferences. New and emerging trail activities, particularly trail running and trail running events, provide opportunities to expand the existing hiking market. Trail runners use established hiking trails, with mountain biking trails often being used for organised events.

Table 6 outlines the current state of the regional hiking offering and the proposed strategy to enhance existing trail experiences.



Table 6: Current status of hiking trails and proposed strategies to address gaps

FOCUS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STRATEGY
Trail significance	The Bibbulmun Track is a nationally significant trail. There are 15 regionally significant hiking trails spread across the Great Southern.	Market and promote the region's existing trail network.
Destination significance	Albany and Denmark have sufficient supply of quality trails and supporting facilities to become trail towns. Porongurup and the Stirling Ranges have sufficient supply of quality hiking trails and supporting facilities to become trail centres.	Work with local governments, land managers and businesses to achieve trail town/trail centre status.
Facilities	Albany and Denmark are established tourism destinations with a diverse offering of attractions and experiences. Porongurup/Mount Barker has a small tourism offering.	Build tourism capacity within the Shires of Plantagenet, Gnowangerup and Cranbrook.
Market	Bushwalking is undertaken by over half of international visitors and approximately 1 in every 5 intrastate and interstate visitors to the Great Southern region.	Integrate hiking and trail running experiences into destination marketing campaigns.
Participation	While the adventure market is well catered for, there are fewer trails suited to the leisure and active markets.	New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of the leisure and active markets.
Uniqueness of experience	Hiking trails showcase the region's unique geology and biodiversity, including a good spread of trails in coastal, forest and mountain landscapes. However, there are few opportunities for leisure hikers to experience coastal or mountain environments.	New trail development for the leisure market in coastal and mountain areas.
Trail type	There are few looped hiking trails, or short (half-day) trails. There is no medium length, or multi-day trail experience with high-end lodge accommodation.	Create loops of different lengths. Re-brand and package sections of the Bibbulmun Track to make it more marketable as a 3-5 day experience.
Quality	Trail quality varies, with some significant erosion and maintenance issues on iconic trails.	Prioritise maintenance and improvements to iconic trails.
Location	With the exception of the Stirling Range National Park, all trail networks are within 20km of a city or town centre.	Improve signage and maps to encourage regional dispersal. Seal the access road to Point Anne to improve accessibility of the iconic multi-day Mamang Trail.
Useability	Signage, maps, trail information and trail interpretation are generally poor to average.	Develop a regional trail signage and wayfinding strategy, and interpretation strategy. Prioritise improvements to trailhead facilities.

PROPOSED HIKING TRAILS

As there are already many established, well-recognised hiking trails in the Great Southern, **this plan focuses on enhancement of hiking trail experiences, rather than the creation of many new trails** (see Table 6). The region has the opportunity to become Western Australia's premier hiking destination, offering an array of walking and trail running experiences in diverse landscapes. This vision can be achieved in the medium-term by:

- Better promoting the region's current hiking offering;
- Improving existing trails; and
- Filling key gaps in the supply of hiking trails suited to the leisure and active markets.

The projects outlined in Table 7 include opportunities to create new trail experiences, develop trail linkages, and enhance existing trails. See Map 2 for trail locations.

KEY

LEAD ORGANISATION

DBCA - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

ALB - City of Albany

BT - Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

CRAN - Shire of Cranbrook

DEN - Shire of Denmark

GNOW - Shire of Gnowangerup

JERR - Shire of Jerramungup

KATT - Shire of Katanning

KENT - Shire of Kent

KOJ - Shire of Kojonup

MANJ - Shire of Manjimup

PLAN - Shire of Plantagenet

WOOD - Shire of Woodanilling

TIMEFRAME



Short (1-2 years)



Medium (3-5 years)



Long (6-10 years)

SIGNIFICANCE



Local



Regional



National

MARKET SEGMENT



Leisure



Active



Adventure



Table 7: Proposed hiking trails














































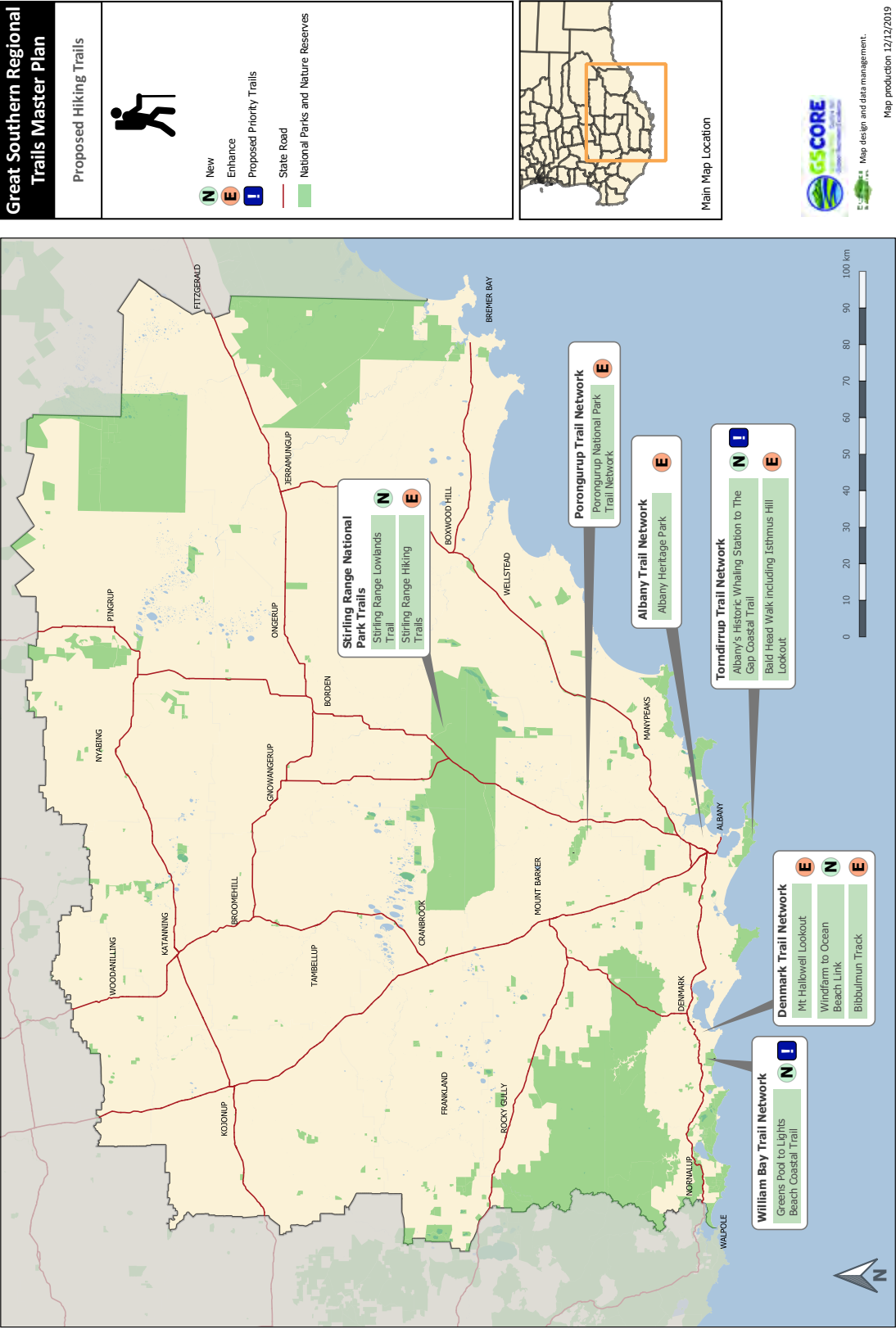
 Priority Regional Trails	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail William Bay National Park	DBCA		 	
Creation of new trail within William Bay National Park that would link Greens Pool with Madfish Bay, Waterfall Beach 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.				
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Trail Torndirrup National Park	DBCA		 	
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.				
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail Stirling Range National Park	DBCA			
Creation of a new trail that showcases the Stirling Range peaks and mountain vistas from the valley floor.				
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES				
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Denmark	DEN		 	
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]				
Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite to Nullaki Peninsula) Denmark	DBCA DEN		 	
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.				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
 Albany Heritage Park Albany	ALB		 	
The City of Albany Trail Hub Strategy identifies trail improvements, including upgrades to trail surface, rectifying erosion issues, and improved signage and trail heads, for hiking and dual-use trails within the Albany Heritage Park precinct.				

Table 7: Proposed hiking trails cont.

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS CONT.				
Bald Head Walk Torndirrup National Park	DBCA	N		
The Bald Head Walk is regarded as one of the best hikes in the South West. The trail climbs and descends along the narrow ridge line of the Flinders Peninsula, a granite formation that juts out from the landscape into the vastness of the Southern Ocean. The trail is currently in poor condition in some sections.				
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk Torndirrup National Park	DBCA	R		
Upgrade of the Isthmus Hill lookout will provide a short walk option which takes in some of the spectacular views of the Bald Head Walk.				
Mt Hallowell Lookout Denmark	DEN	N		
This trail follows a stretch of the Bibbulmun Track and takes hikers via Monkey Rock to the summit of Mt Hallowell. Need to upgrade trail head information and improve signage to the lookout at the top of Mt Hallowell.				
Bluff Knoll Stirling Range National Park	DBCA	R		
Bluff Knoll at 1098m above sea level, is the highest and most spectacular peak in the South West, and accessible for a person of average fitness. To meet increasing demand, this trail needs to be upgraded. Work is being undertaken in 2020 by DBCA to upgrade the trail surface and rectify erosion issues.				
Ridge Walk Stirling Range National Park	DBCA	R		
The Ridge Walk is a Grade 6 unmarked route popular with experienced adventure seekers seeking personal challenge. Improvements to route information will make this route safer and ensure ill-equipped and inexperienced walkers understand the difficulty level.				
Castle Rock Loop Porongurup National Park	DBCA	R		
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	R		
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	R		
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	R		
Extension of Bolganup Heritage Trail to include interpretation of natural features and biodiversity.				

Map 2: Proposed hiking trails by location





MOUNTAIN BIKING AND CYCLE TOURING TRAILS

The Great Southern region has limited existing recognition as a mountain biking or cycle trail destination, with a small network of dual-use trails in Albany and Denmark. The long-distance Munda Biddi Trail touring route also traverses the region and terminates in Albany. The following proposed projects have the potential to elevate the Great Southern to a regionally significant mountain biking and cycling destination, attracting a diverse range of mountain biking and cycling markets. This could be achieved through:

- Creating accessible mountain bike and cycle trail experiences for all markets from leisure to adventure
- 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
- Creating high end, high quality, overnight mountain biking experience through iconic locations like the Stirling Ranges
- Capturing growing leisure cycle markets, such as those interested in food and wine experiences, through creation of cycle touring routes
- Apart from trails development, supporting infrastructure such as the planned Pump Track in the Albany Youth Precinct, play an important introductory role through developing rider skill and experience. Construction of a pump track and skills development trails should also be considered in other local government areas, with Denmark and Mount Barker priority locations.

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).

Table 8: Current status of cycling trails and proposed strategies to address gaps

FOCUS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STRATEGY
Trail significance	The Munda Biddi Trail is a nationally significant trail.	Improve and maintain the Munda Biddi Trail to attract interstate and international visitors.
Destination significance	There is a small supply of locally significant dual-use cycling trails. There is approximately 1km of sanctioned MBT trail, and four locally significant dual-use cycle trails.	Increase the trail supply to achieve regional status as a mountain biking and cycling destination.
Facilities	Albany and Denmark are established tourism destinations with a diverse offering of attractions and experiences. Porongurup/Mount Barker has a small tourism offering.	Build capacity and capability amongst existing businesses to take advantage of trail-based tourism opportunities.
Market	Cycling is undertaken by approximately 1 in 6 international visitors, and 1 in every 10-day trippers	Promote opportunities for cycling in destination marketing campaigns.
Participation	There are few trails suited to MBT users across the leisure, active and adventure markets.	New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of all MTB trail user groups and accommodate riders of various abilities.
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.
Trail type	There are few looped cycling trails, or short (half-day) trails. Apart from one short trail in Albany, there are no purpose-built trails for mountain biking	Create MTB trails of various lengths and grades. Develop a short touring route (2-3 days).
Quality	Trail quality varies, with sections of the Munda Biddi Trail on existing road systems.	Prioritise re-alignments for iconic trails.
Location	All dual-use trails are within 20km of a city or town centre.	Improve signage and maps to encourage use of trails across the region.
Useability	Signage, maps, trail information and trail interpretation are generally poor to average.	Develop a regional trail signage and wayfinding strategy, and interpretation strategy. Prioritise improvements to trailhead facilities.

PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS

To establish the Great Southern as a nationally significant mountain biking destination, development needs to focus on creating remarkable and accessible visitor experiences, diverse trail styles, quality infrastructure and connections across a number of regionally significant locations. Due to land size and other constraints, there is no single site within the Great Southern that has the potential on its own to become a nationally significant mountain biking destination. Instead, this plan recommends that **five individual sites**, which on their own are either locally or regionally significant, be developed and promoted as a 'whole-of region' offering.

Case study. This approach has been successfully implemented in Scotland with the world renowned '7 Stanes' which links seven unique MTB locations under the one marketing banner. Each location offers a different experience, length of trail and grade. The 7 Stanes (or stones) are represented by a unique stone sculpture that reflects the culture and heritage of each specific site and provides a common theme connecting the sites together. The distances between each site vary from 30-150km.

In the Great Southern, the five proposed sites all offer a different riding experience, landscape and point of difference. Like the 7 Stanes, these five sites should be marketed as one regional offering. There is an



opportunity to integrate Noongar culture and creative expression at each site to highlight the region's unique history and landscape.

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.

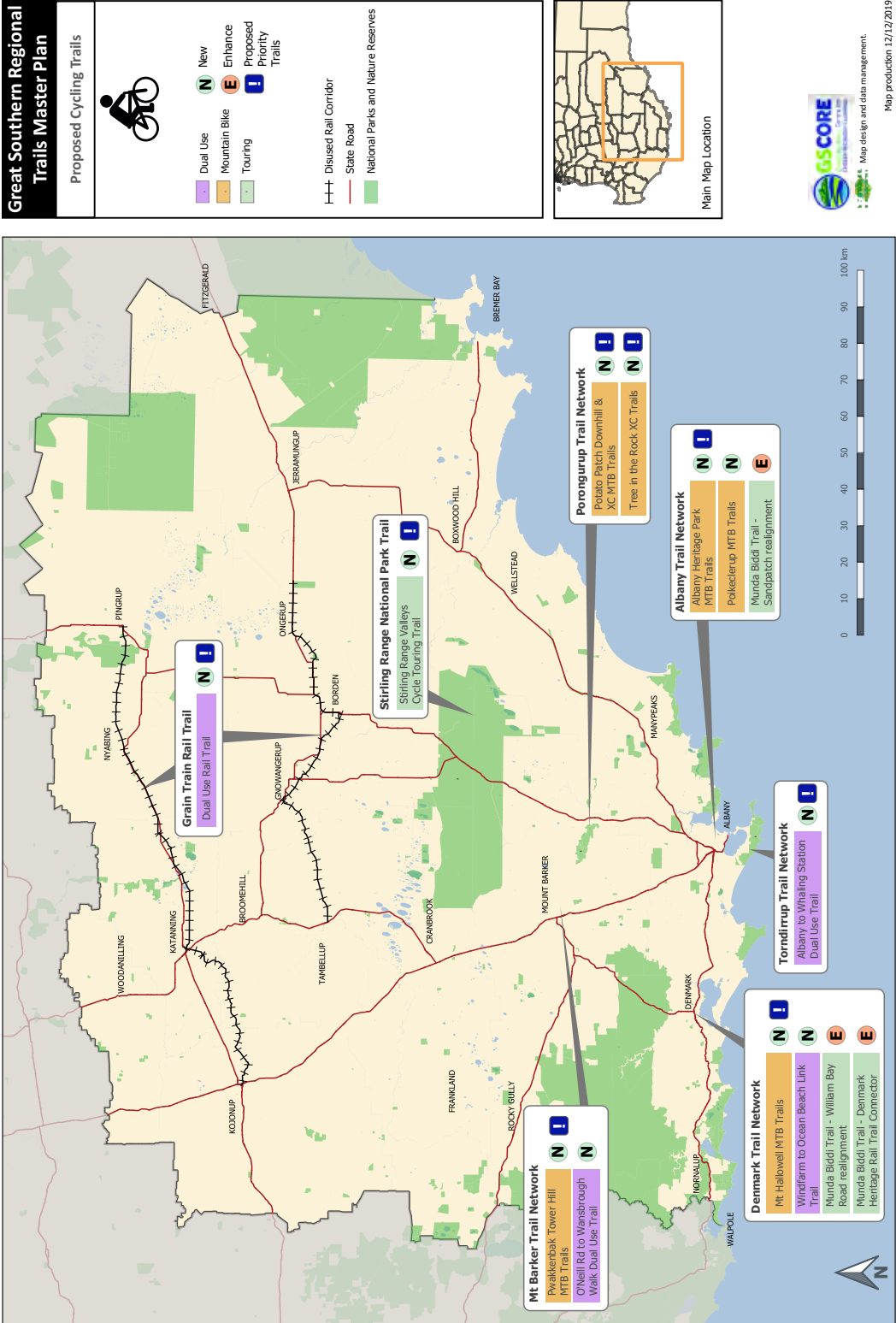
Each site will also support the growing demand from residents for accessible trails and address the increasing occurrence of unsanctioned trail construction. It is important to stress, that the proposed trail networks outlined below (see Table 9) will all require extensive site assessment to determine 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.



Table 9: Proposed Mountain Bike Trails

! Priority Regional Trails	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
	CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES			
! Pwakkenbak MTB Trails Mount Barker	PLAN	L	 	
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	 	
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	 	
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	 	
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 2016 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	 	
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				

Map 3: Proposed Cycling Trails by location and type





PROPOSED DUAL USE TRAIL PROJECTS

Dual-use trails which combine walking and cycling in a safe manner, provide important leisure experiences for residents and visitors. They can also be important transport connectors between residential areas, commercial centres and visitor attractions. For this reason, they are an important element of the Western Australian government's Regional 2050 Cycling Strategy for the Great Southern. This strategy will guide the delivery of a safe, comfortable and integrated cycling network in the region and outlines how different towns can realise their cycling potential, leading to a healthier, happier and more engaged community. **This plan proposes an extension to the existing dual-use trail that links the Albany CBD to Little Grove, and a new dual-use trail connecting Mount Barker townsite to the Porongurup National Park** (see Table 10).

PROPOSED CYCLE TOURING AND RAIL TRAILS

Cycle touring – also known as bike touring or bike-packing – is a form of riding that typically involves overnight stays at different locations or a long single-day bike ride. Cycle touring includes inn-to-inn riding where gear, food and clothing is carried by a vehicle that meets the rider at various checkpoints along the route; or a solo or group adventure where all clothing, equipment, food and tools are carried on the bicycle.

The Munda Biddi Trail is an example of a cycle touring route suited to the active and adventure markets. At 1000kms in length, it can be undertaken as a long-distance, remote camping experience; or in short day or overnight sections.

This plan identifies a unique cycle touring option through the valleys of the Stirling Range (see Table 10). The scenery, vistas, elevation changes and unique vegetation offer significant appeal to leisure riders seeking day or overnight experiences. It would be unique within WA and will attract the intrastate touring market with strong potential to attract interstate and international visitors.

Extensive site assessment will need to occur to identify a potential route. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the existing supply of accommodation and camping within and surrounding the National Park to develop overnight packaged holiday experiences.

Rail trails - many cycle touring routes utilise rail trails which closely follow a former railway line or run beside an active railway for most of its length. What sets rail trails apart from other trails is that they are gently graded, and interpretation can provide information about historical use. Rail trails are suitable for walking, and depending on the surface, can also be used by mountain bikes, hybrid bikes, pram and wheel chairs, and even four wheel 'gophers'. Some trails allow use by horse riders.

In the Great Southern, sections of the former **Albany to Nornalup railway line are managed as rail trails** (see Table 10). This plan recommends improvements to sections of these trails. Longer-term, consideration may be given to the development of the remaining sections of the original rail corridor, resulting in a rail trail of approximately 100km.

This plan identifies an important opportunity to develop two inactive east-west rail lines in the north of the region - Kojonup-Katanning-Pingrup, and Tambellup-Gnowangerup-Ongerup lines – as well as a potential trail along the active north-south line. These **"Grain Train Rail Trails"** would require support from all local governments in order to enter into negotiations with the current land owners (Public Transport Authority) and lessee (Arc Infrastructure).

Table 10: Proposed cycle touring and dual-use trails






! Priority Regional Trails	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
O'Neill Road to Wansbrough Walk Dual-use Trail Mount Barker	PLAN	L	 	
Multi-use trail linking Mount Barker townsite with the Porongurup National Park. This trail would link with walking and cycling opportunities on the south side of Porongurup National Park.				
Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Albany	ALB	R	 	
Creation of a new shared use trail to connect Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the the existing dual-use trail from Albany CBD to Little Grove. There is an opportunity to create a spur off this trail to the Gap recreation site, and potentially along Vancouver Peninsula. This trail would incorporate the Frenchman's Bay Heritage Trail.				
Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park	DBCA	R	 	
Touring trail through the foothills of the ranges. This proposed trail would offer a good introductory trail for distance touring, while catering for enthusiasts who may undertake the trail in a single day. The trail would focus on landscape, rather than technical trail features. This product would capture a different market to those undertaking the Munda Biddi.				
Grain Train Rail Trail Kojonup, Katanning, Nyabing, Pingrup, Tambellup, Gnowangerup, Ongerup	GSCORE	R	 	
Disused rail corridors in the hinterland provide an opportunity for dual use recreation activities. The disused east-west rail corridors between Kojonup-Katanning-Pingrup and Tambellup-Gnowangerup-Ongerup can be developed to provide dual use opportunities for walking and easy grade mountain biking. It is proposed that these trails could be developed as part of a new cycle touring trail and marketed as the "Grain Train Rail Trail".				
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES				
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Denmark	DEN	R	 	
Extend existing Denmark trail network beyond Ocean Beach to Denmark Wind Farm to create dual-use link to WOW Trail. This would create a day loop suitable for beginner and experienced riders using the Denmark Heritage Rail Trail, Munda Biddi Trail, WOW Trail and Ocean Beach dual-use trail. [This trail is also referenced in the Hiking Plan]				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
Munda Biddi Trail - William Bay Road William Bay National Park	DBCA DEN	N		
Realign Munda Biddi Trail off William Bay Road to improve safety and enhance user experience.				
Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark Heritage Rail Trail connector Denmark	DBCA DEN	R		
Realign section of Munda Biddi Trail and Denmark Heritage Trail at South Coast Hwy/McLeod Rd junction and reduce road crossing to one point only, to improve safety and enhance user experience.				
Munda Biddi Trail - Sandpatch Albany	DBCA ALB	N		
Realign section of Munda Biddi Trail east of Elleker via Sandpatch to avoid Lower Denmark Rd, improve safety and enhance user experience.				

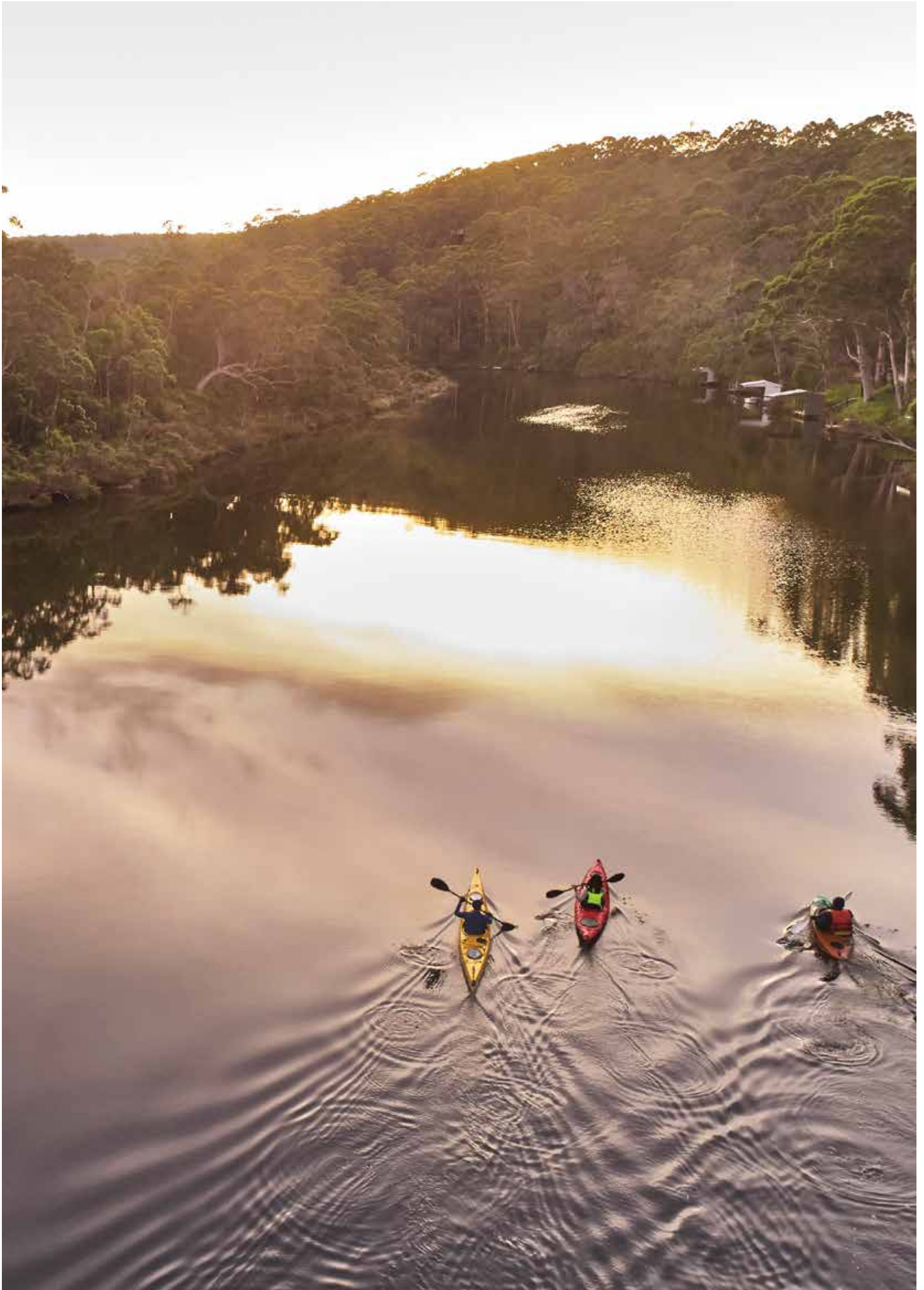


Photo credit: Francis Andrijich

PADDLING TRAILS

A successful paddle trail destination provides a range of experiences that cater to different abilities, with trails of varying distance and degree of challenge. Paddlers seek out areas of exceptional natural beauty, where local flora, fauna, and geological features add to the interest. Some paddlers cherish a tranquil, nature-based experience in wilderness or remote locations; whereas other seek the challenge of white-water and rapids.

There are currently no formal paddling trails in the Great Southern region. However, many of the river systems – Denmark, Frankland, Kalbar and inlets, are currently used by paddlers (canoe, kayak and stand up paddle board). While there is no available market research on demand for paddle trails in the Great Southern region, anecdotal evidence of the number of vehicles transporting canoes and kayaks suggests paddling is a popular activity. Seasonal canoe hire businesses in Albany, Denmark, and Nornalup report existing demand for paddling experiences, with half-day experiences being most popular.



PROPOSED REGIONAL PADDLING TRAIL PROJECT

This plan proposes a network of paddling trails in the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park. This trail experience would provide a network of 55km of flat-water paddle trails which are mostly suitable for Grade 1 (easy) with conditions at certain times requiring a Grade 2 (moderate) experience level.

The scenic quality, biodiversity and heritage value of the area, and variety of trails would attract paddlers from within the region and further afield. The rivers and inlets provide a true nature-based experience, being a haven for water birds, other wildlife, and quiet observation.

Adequate planning and support facilities are central to the destination offering. 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.

The Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience will be complemented by an array of locally significant paddle trails throughout the Great Southern, including riverine and estuary paddling trails and inland lake paddling experiences. These local experiences will provide a 'value-add' experience to all visitors to the region.

Table 11: Proposed paddling trails

!

Priority Regional Trails

PROJECT LEAD

SIGNIFICANCE

MARKET SEGMENT

TIME FRAME

CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES

!

Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience

Advanced and enthusiastic paddlers have an opportunity to complete all of the paddle trails of the Marine Park, providing close to 55km different of Grade 1 and 2 experiences.

Walpole River

DBCA

R

S

This trail travels across the Walpole Inlet to the sheltered Walpole River, providing an easy paddle along the river. The river is fringed by coastal vegetation and low forest, in a peaceful setting. 5km return trail across the Walpole Inlet providing an easy Grade 1 paddle along Walpole River.

Deep River

DBCA

R

S

This trail travels across the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets to the sheltered Deep River. The trail offers a scenic paddle along the river, fringed by coastal vegetation in the lower reaches, changing to tall ancient karri forest. Terrestrial and aquatic wildlife encounters are possible. Grade 1 or 2, with a potential 21 km return. There are options for shorter trips along the way.

Nornalup to Walpole

DBCA

R

S

A scenic half to full day paddle from either Walpole or Nornalup, with dense vegetation, vistas, and the chance of wildlife encounters. This trail is Grade 1 and Grade 2 along the lower reaches of the Frankland and into the Nornalup inlet due to variable weather conditions of the inlet.
















Rest Point to Circus Beach (+ hike)

DBCA

R

S

Travel across the Walpole and Nornalup inlets to the mouth of the Deep River, continue past Newdegate Island to Sealers Cove before disembarking for a hike across to historic Circus Beach. Trail involves an 11km return, Grade 2 paddle, and 2.6km return easy hike.

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES (CONT.)				
Nornalup Inlet circuit	DBCA	R		
This trail circuits the Nornalup Inlet taking in scenic points and features of the landscape, passing Deep River, Sealers Cove, Newdegate Island, and traversing the river mouth.				
Frankland River Overnight Paddle (+ camp) Walpole Wilderness	DBCA	R		
Frankland River Day Paddle - Nornalup to Monastery Landing trail on the Frankland River (10.4km return trip, Grade 1). The Frankland River, Nornalup to Monastery Landing trail has potential to provide a paddle through spectacular forest scenery and could offer an overnight bush camping experience. Alternatively, the trail allows for a nature based half of full day paddle.				
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES				
Monastery Landing to Bibbulmun Track Walpole Wilderness	DBCA	R		
After paddling from Nornalup to Monastery Landing, trail users complete a short walk along the existing access road to join the Bibbulmun Track and hike in to the Frankland River hut. Total walking distance is less than 3km. Alternatively, a new low impact camp site could be developed close to the riverbank, without public road access to maximise the experience.				
LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT 'VALUE-ADD' EXPERIENCES				
Kalgan River Paddle Trail	City of Albany	L		
This canoe trail along the lower Kalgan River takes advantage of a particularly scenic part of the river system between the southern entry/egress at Albany Rowing Club, and the northern entry/egress from the informal launch near Upper Kalgan Bridge. Identified as a priority in the Albany Trails Hub Strategy 2015-2025				
Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit - paddle trails	GSCORE in partnership with LGAs	L		 
These trails give opportunities for easy grade paddles at several inland lakes. They provide a different context and environment to river and estuarine paddling. The lakes at Poorearecup, Nunijup and Ewlyamartup offer regular paddling opportunities, while Lake Queerearrup is less reliable, being more ephemeral. (see Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Plan).				
Wilson Inlet Paddle Trail	Shire of Denmark	L		
A challenging paddle depending on wind conditions, suitable for or Grade 2 and 3 with considerable experience. There are many routes which could be chosen, short return routes along the shoreline or longer routes around the inlet which require a full day's paddle. There are various access and launch points, but currently no recognised trail signage.				
Bremer River Paddle Trail	Shire of Jerramungup	L		
This trail presents a unique paddling opportunity within the Fitzgerald River National Park, which is accessible from Bremer Bay. Existing facilities at Bennett St would make this a nature based 8km return paddle.				

Map 4: Proposed paddling trail network in Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park

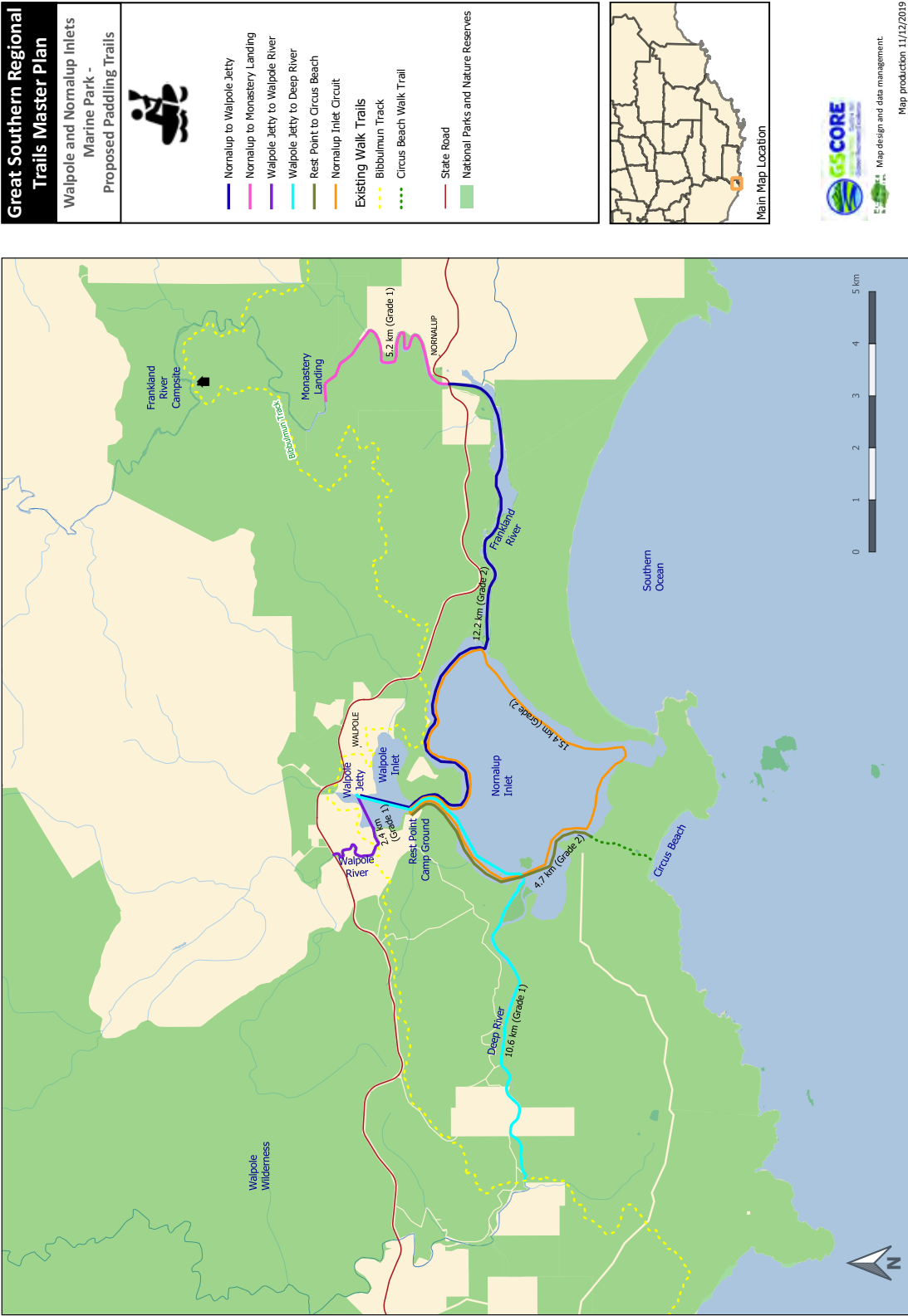










Photo credit: Tourism WA

SNORKEL TRAILS

The Great Southern region is not recognised as a snorkel trail destination and there are no reliable estimates on snorkelling as a visitor recreational activity in the region. Even so, there are established trails at Whalers Cove in Albany and Little Harbour in Bremer Bay. Apart from these locations, the region has several sheltered bays, with easy access, shallow waters and good visibility that can provide enjoyable experiences for beginner to more advanced snorkelers. Development of new snorkelling experiences at Greens Pool in William Bay National Park will enhance visitation at this popular swimming and outdoor recreation site.

It is envisaged that all these trails will remain locally significant (see Table 12). However, improvements to the existing snorkelling trails, and the development of new snorkel trails in Greens Pool, will provide a value-add experience for visitors who are already in the region. The role of these local snorkel trails is thus to enhance the overall trail offering of the destination.

Table 12: Proposed snorkelling trail projects

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
Greens Pool William Bay National Park	DBCA	L		
Greens Pool has the potential to develop into a significant snorkelling destination. The beach is sheltered by large natural granite boulders making it an ideal spot for snorkelling activities. Four snorkel trails, ranging from easy to advanced, with a total distance of 990 metres, are proposed within Greens Pool				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
Whaler's Cove Albany	City of Albany	L		
Whaler's Cove is an existing 400 metre snorkelling trail located on a peninsula close to the Point Possession Heritage Trail. An underwater plinth has been constructed to inform snorkelers about the marine environment. Entry signage upgrade is required.				
Little Boat Harbour Bremer Bay	Shire of Jerramungup	L		
The 260 metre Little Boat Harbour snorkel trail is used as a local diving and snorkelling site. There is opportunity to enhance the overall snorkelling experience by improving existing parking and toilet facilities and availability of trail information (signage).				



THE GREAT SOUTHERN TREASURES RECREATION CIRCUIT

There are numerous examples within Australia and internationally where small regional and rural communities have benefited from economic development associated with trails. To be successful, however, trail destinations need to showcase distinctive natural or cultural landscapes and/or enable users to interact with local people and cultures.

An assessment of the Upper Great Southern region's potential for trail-based tourism determined that it lacks a single location for a regionally significant trail project. However, there is an opportunity to develop a network of locally significant trails which, when promoted collectively, have the potential to achieve regional significance. The aim is to **create a circuit of recreation 'nodes' with each node providing one or more trail experiences** (e.g. walking trail, cycle trail, paddle trail).

Combined with other tourism assets (e.g. accommodation, attractions, services), these recreation nodes will enhance the tourism offering of each town. The Great Southern Treasures Drive Trail provides the route (or circuit) connecting these nodes. The advantage of using the existing drive trail is that it already connects most towns and recreation sites in the region and has a brand and marketing presence.

The Drive Trail (*previously branded as "Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern"*) encompasses nine local government areas – Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling. **The Drive Trail links each of the nine shires** using a recommended route and a list of things to see and do. It has the status of a touring route rather than a thematic trail – there is no interpretation linking sites or locations or a thematic framework that encourages visitors to explore based on a topic or interest area.

The Great Southern Treasures Recreation

Circuit builds on this existing drive trail to provide new opportunities within the region (see Table 13). The existing Drive Trail invites visitors to experience the cultural, heritage and biodiversity of the region. The proposed Recreation Circuit will add value to the existing drive trail by creating a series of 'outdoor recreation nodes' (see Map 4).























Creation of a new drive itinerary and integration of a network of walking, cycling, and paddling trails (or nodes) will provide residents and visitors with a diverse array of active leisure opportunities that showcase the region's unique inland landscapes, heritage and culture, and encourage participation in outdoor recreation. The trail focused on two key markets:

(i) Day trippers – the proposed trail will provide residents with enhanced active leisure experiences within a relatively short driving distance. Given the small resident population and ratepayer base of each rural community, it is not feasible to develop multiple trails for different activities in each location. By spreading these out within a 60km radius of each townsite, a diverse array of activities can be catered for, while at the same time, spreading the financial cost of construction and maintenance amongst neighbouring local government areas.

(ii) Over 55s Empty Nesters and Grey Nomads

– intrastate and interstate retired or semi-retired, travellers. They spend a greater number of nights per annum driving and staying within rural areas as compared to other travellers. A significant proportion participate in active leisure pursuits such as walking, cycling and paddling. Providing these opportunities (along with low-cost camping and other amenities) will encourage longer stays. The goal is to get these visitors to increase their length of stay in the region and visit as many locations as possible.

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
Boot Rock Reserve Broomehill		Broomehill-Tambellup			
Signage and interpretation to rationalise existing use of bush tracks and trails. Potential to recognise three trails which can be dedicated to dual use, hiking and cycling.					
Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk Bremer Bay		Jerramungup			
Upgrade of this existing path will showcase Bremer Bay, and provide opportunity for whale watching, access to John Cove and fishing spots, terminating at Rock Cairn, a great lookout with its own history.					
Pingrup Grain Silos walk Pingrup		Kent			
Develop a short walk trail from the caravan park to the grain silos as part of the Silo (art) trail					
Pwakkenbak Mt Barker	 	Plantagenet			
Rising to 147 meters above sea level, Pwakkenbak (Tower Hill,) has a stunning lookout with sweeping views. This location is ideally suited for recreation activities, including development of hiking, and mountain biking trails, less than 3km from town.					
Pink Lake Cranbrook		Cranbrook			
This 'Pink Lake' is receiving high visitation from passers-by, but there is no designated viewing point or parking bay. A vehicle parking bay, interpretive signage, and or, walk trail should be investigated.					
Bremer River paddle Bremer Bay		Jerramungup			
A paddle trail in the lower reaches of the Bremer River, travelling north from Bennett St jetty for approximately 4km then return. A scenic paddle with the Fitzgerald River National Park on the western shoreline.					

KEY

Hiking



Cycling/Mountain biking



Paddling



Snorkelling



Leisure



Active



Adventure

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit cont.




















































































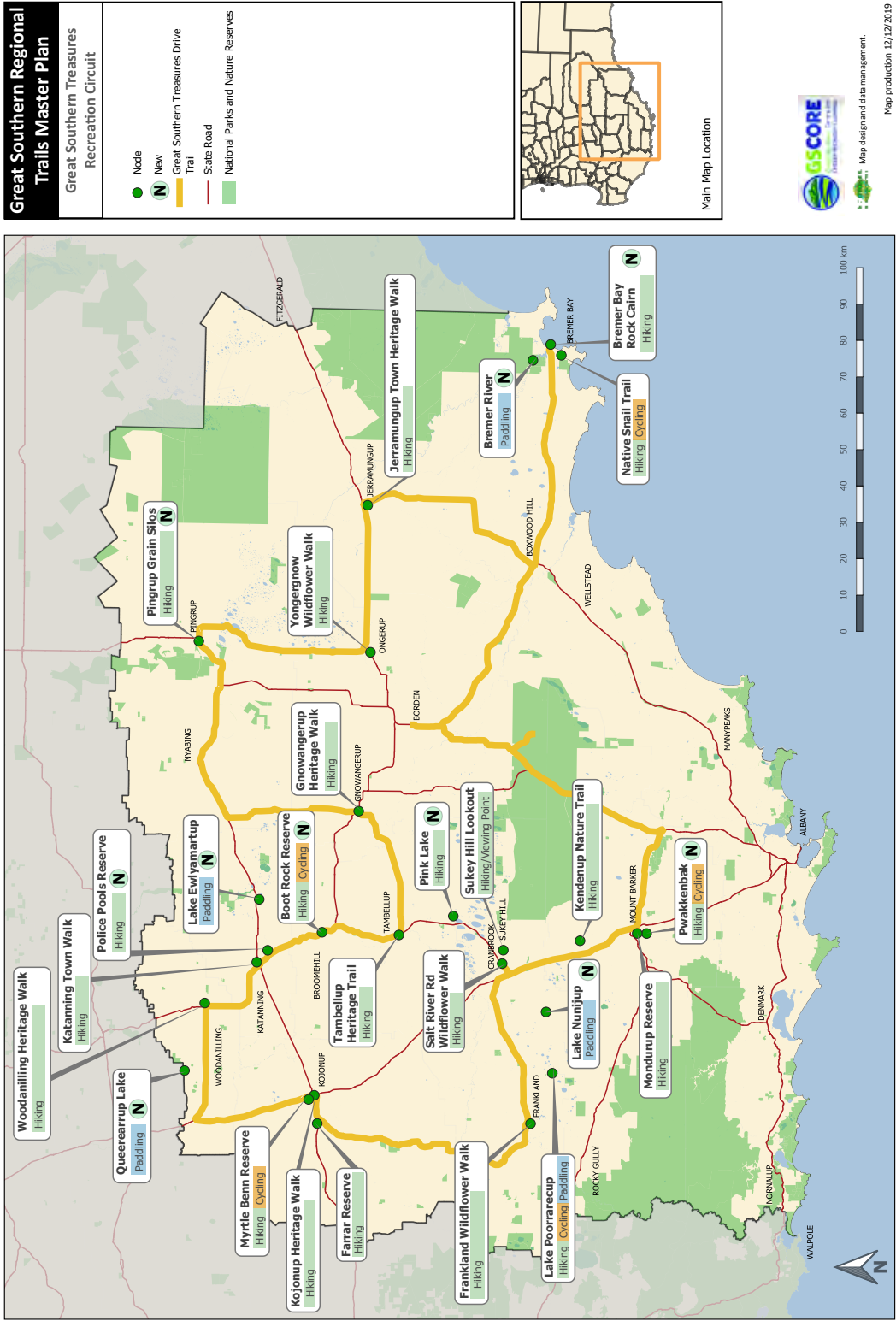
	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Kojonup Heritage Walk Kojonup		Kojonup			
Visitors to the town can tour historically significant sites, such as the Kojonup Spring, Elverd Cottage, The Flora & Fauna Sanctuary or the Noongar Sharpening Rock. Signage upgrade is required.					
Mondurup Reserve Mount Barker		Plantagenet			
Signage and interpretation infrastructure is required at this site to rationalise the various informal and formal walk tracks through this important flora reserve.					
Tambellup Heritage Trail Tambellup		Broomehill-Tambellup			
Three short walking loops require improved signage and trail infrastructure.					
Sukey Hill lookout Cranbrook	 Viewpoint	Cranbrook			
Short walk including a new lookout with sweeping views and potential link to Motocross circuit.					
Frankland River Wildflower walk Frankland		Cranbrook			
Local flora walk trail 0.4km. Improve walk trails and signage.					
Salt River Rd Wildflower walk Cranbrook		Cranbrook			
Flora reserve, 1.8km circuit walk, picnic area. Improve trails and signage.					
Lake Poorrarecup Cranbrook	 	Cranbrook			
Lake Poorrarecup is the largest lake in the Shire of Cranbrook and is popular for swimming and skiing during the summer months. Changerooms, toilets, and camping are on site. A Grade 1 paddle trail would add to the visitor experience.					
Lake Nunijup Cranbrook	 	Cranbrook			
Lake Nunijup is used for walking, swimming and has BBQ facilities. A short paddle trail could be developed around the edge of the Lake.					
Gnowangerup Heritage Walk Gnowangerup		Gnowangerup			
A 2km walk trail which explores highlights of Gnowangerup's history through its heritage buildings. There are five interpretive signs, and further development could expand the Aboriginal story of the area.					
Lake Ewlyamartup Katanning	 	Gnowangerup			
100 ha recreation site popular with water skiers, paddlers, swimmers, and has 95 species of birds. A designated paddling trail with interpretation is recommended.					

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit cont.

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre Ongerup		Gnowangerup			
Existing walk trail requires maintenance and improved signage, could link with a walk to Ongerup townsite.					
Native Snail Trail Bremer Bay	 	Jerramungup			
Dual use 3.4km linear trail linking Bremer Bay townsite with Bremer Beaches Caravan Park, via native bushland and interpretive stations. Additional trailhead required.					
Town Heritage Walk Jerramungup		Jerramungup			
1km walk trail, extend and make suitable for all users, families and elderly.					
Police Pools Katanning		Katanning			
Reserve used for informal recreation, walking and swimming no designated trails, Aboriginal heritage values. Improve trails and signage					
Town Walk Trails Katanning		Katanning			
3 short town walks, local history. Improve trails and signage.					
Farrar Reserve Kojonup	 	Kojonup			
Farrar Nature Reserve supports a variation of flora and fauna due to the diversity of soils and profile. The Old Railway Dam is home to numerous water birds, frogs and the long-necked tortoise. Designated walk tracks and a cycle way would add to the visitor experience.					
Myrtle Benn Reserve Kojonup	 	Kojonup			
1.5 km walk trails, flora reserve close to town. Improve trails and signage.					
Kendenup Nature Trail Kendenup		Plantagenet			
A short local trail in and around the Kendenup townsite, which can be developed to include local heritage and nature. Requires signage.					
Lake Queerearrup Woodanilling	 	Woodanilling			
This large lake is used for recreational and leisure activities including skiing, swimming and picnicking. The lake has a surface area of approximately 430 ha and often has a pink tinge. The lake could develop an interpretive paddling trail, understanding the seasonal nature of the lake.					

Map 5: Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit







TRAIL BIKE TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders in the Great Southern. An examination of opportunities for trail bike riding has identified three potential target markets and associated trail experiences (see Table 14).

The Great Southern region has the route inventory, quality and diversity of landscapes and experiences with aligned services to provide nationally and regionally significant adventure bike routes. This rider group is deemed to be most attractive by local government and land managers with immediate economic benefits evident, minor investment required, no legal impacts, few constraints and the least user group and community conflicts. Mapped and marketed **Great Southern Adventure Bike Experiences** would provide a significant point of difference for the region.

Development of legal, off-road trail bike trails may prove difficult to achieve as the region lacks enough trail to meet demand. Land managers are currently reluctant to open additional trail supply. An extensive planning exercise to identify appropriate sites would be required before the region could be marketed as a trail bike destination. 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.

Table 14: Trail bike trail feasibility

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FEASIBILITY
Adventure Bike Routes	Full or multi-day rides (250-300km per day); combination of sealed and unsealed roads; with strong focus on experience (accommodation, meals, fuel stops, attractions)	There is strong opportunity to focus on route mapping and ride experience, and then market routes and itineraries in a similar way to drive trails. Achievable in the short term.
Trail Riding	Would require development and/or identification of 80-150km of off-road trails or tracks, with technical challenge being important	Currently there is lack of sufficient inventory of legal trail networks to meet the needs of off-road trail bike riders. Future development will require substantial long-term planning
Families and Juniors	Fit for purpose locations to suit family groups and juniors would need to provide a safe environment with trails and facilities that cater to different abilities and ages	There is potential to work with LGAs to identify suitable locations (public or private land) for future development, and provide advice and information

Photo credit: Tourism WA

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Currently there are few equestrian opportunities formally provided in the Great Southern Region apart from the Stidwell Bridle Trail complex (33km network) near Albany and sections of rail trail on the original Elleker to Nornalup rail line. Formal beach access is provided at Peaceful Bay, Boat Harbour, Parry Beach and a part of Middleton Beach.

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

No trails of regional significance are proposed for the following reasons:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide an implementation strategy to achieve the vision outlined in this master plan. The strategies are aligned with each of the agreed objectives (see Section 2) and have been prioritised over a five-year timeframe. Specific actions and agency responsibilities aligned with these strategies are included as Appendix 5.

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
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	High	Within 1 year
1.2	Stakeholder Reference Group endorse the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy	High	Within 1 year
1.3	Link identified regional priority trails to local and state government strategic plans	Medium - High	1-2 years

2



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.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
2.1	Trail development undertaken as per the schedule outlined in each Activity Plan	High	1-5 years
2.2	All land managers adopt best practice guidelines in development and management of regional priority trails	Medium - High	1-5 years



3

**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.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
3.1	Prepare and implement a Regional Trails Marketing Strategy	High	Within 1 year
3.2	Prepare and implement a thematic interpretation strategy for all nationally and regionally significant trails and trail networks	Medium	2-3 years

4

**Community and Economic Development Opportunities**

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

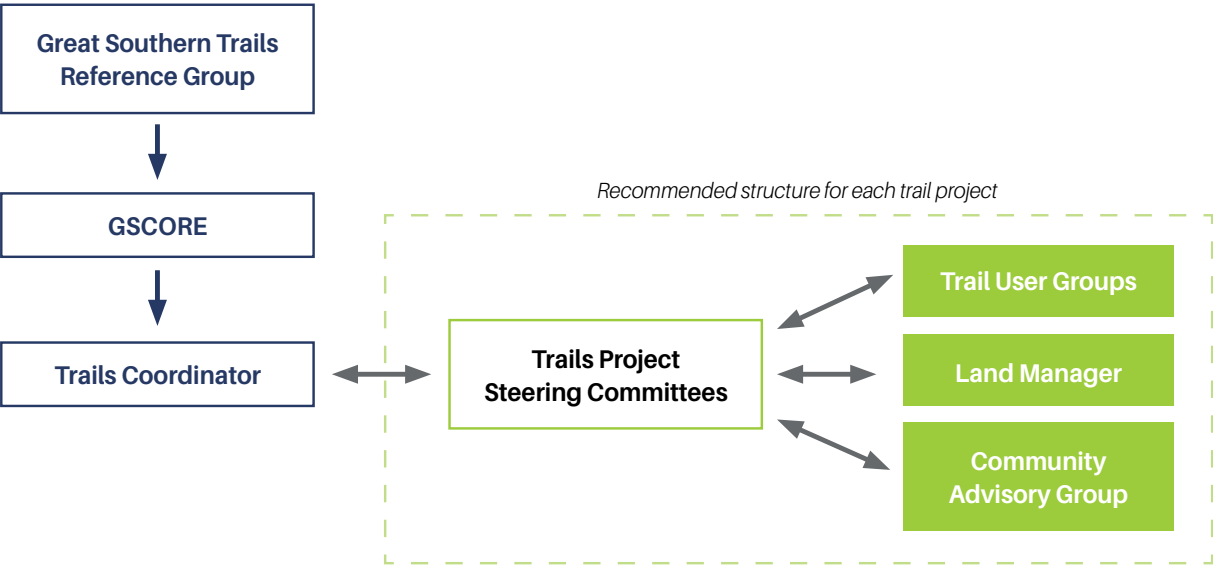
NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
4.1	Economic benefits - Encourage and support new trail business opportunities and identified gaps in service provision	Medium	1-5 years
4.2	Liveability benefits - Ensure that regional priority trail developments cater for and encourage active transport	Medium	1-5 years
4.3	Health - Actively promote the health and wellbeing benefits of active leisure activities	Medium	3-5 years
4.4	Culture - Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects	High	1-2 years
4.5	Environmental - Adopt and promote the Trail Development Series as best practice for trail planning, construction and maintenance	High	Within 1 year



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

To achieve the vision outlined in this master plan, it is essential that an effective and efficient governance and management structure is established. Given the range of stakeholders involved in delivering the master plan, it is important to have broad representation and a willingness by all parties to accept some level of responsibility. To ensure that these roles and responsibilities are understood and carried out to a high standard, the following governance hierarchy should be adopted (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Governance Structure



A Great Southern Trails Reference Group (GSTRG) should be formed and given responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the master plan. The GSTRG should include a representative from each local government, DBCA, DLGSC, GSDC, and South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC). The GSTRG will be responsible for strategic trails development and management. The group should meet quarterly to coordinate project priorities.

The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) should be contracted as the overall Project Manager for the implementation of the master plan. GSCORE will be responsible for providing governance and secretariat support to the GSTRG, grant writing, project management, marketing coordination, training and capacity building, and trail monitoring (see Figure 5).

GSCORE will employ a Trails Coordinator responsible for overseeing the implementation of each trail project.

The Trails Coordinator will liaise with a Trail Steering Committee responsible for each trail project. These committees may be existing (e.g. A Hub Strategy Project Control Group) or may be established specifically for each project.

It is recommended that for each trail project, a community advisory group is established and include representation from organisations that have a vested interest in each specific trail or trail network. This could include destination marketing organisations, chambers of commerce, arts and cultural groups, and natural resource management groups. The reference group would provide input and advice on trail development and management. In addition to the community advisory group, the Steering Committee should also liaise with key trail user organisations and clubs relevant to the specific trail activity (e.g. MTB club or bushwalking club).

Figure 5:

GSCORE'S RESPONSIBILITIES



PROJECT GOVERNANCE

- Establish governance framework
- Monitor implementation through action plans

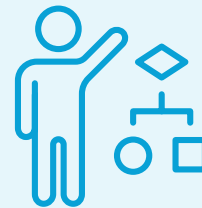


GRANT WRITING

- Identify funding sources and prepare applications on behalf of stakeholders

MARKETING COORDINATION

- Implement marketing strategy
- Implement signage plan
- Maintain Trails WA database



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Develop project scoping documents, consultant briefs, business plans
- Develop and execute stakeholder engagement plans
- Undertake community consultation



TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Develop and deliver training for land managers and trail managers
- Implement business capacity building program



TRAIL MONITORING

- Priority trail maintenance audit
- Develop maintenance schedules
- Implement monitoring programs

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

For the Great Southern to become a recognised and desirable trail destination, it is imperative that models are established for ongoing sustainable trail management, maintenance and development. A variety of development and management models need to be considered and should form part of the concept planning phase of all trail development projects. These models include:

- **Public management** – A government agency (e.g. a local shire or DBCA) has sole management responsibility of the trail facility. Commercial and event operators may contribute financially to the management of trails.
- **Volunteering agreements** – An agreement is developed following discussion between a land manager and trail user group/club about options for volunteer maintenance of trails.
- **Partnerships** – Multiple stakeholders share management responsibility of the trail facility. Partners could include non-government incorporated agencies, government bodies, commercial entities, foundations or trusts, and volunteer groups.
- **Private management** – The development of trail networks will encourage visitation and expenditure, resulting in a tangible economic impact for the surrounding communities and the region. This may in turn provide opportunities to establish and grow businesses that complement trail activities and encourage public and private investment in future trail developments.

The successful delivery and ongoing management of trail projects will also depend on the active engagement and participation of local trail user groups and peak bodies (e.g. Trails WA, HikeWest, Westcycle, and Paddling WA), and the WA Trails Reference Group which advises on implementation of State trail strategies and monitors progress and proposed actions and outcomes reporting back to government and industry.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and promotion of the Great Southern trail offering will be essential to increase participation and encourage visitation. Currently, the promotion of trails in the Great Southern is ad-hoc and does not form a key part of the promotional activities of the region's destination marketing organisations (DMOs) – Australia's South West (ASW), Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated (ASCTI) and Great Southern Treasures.

DMOs lack up-to-date information on trails, including maps, and have few good quality digital marketing assets for the region's existing trails. To better market and promote Great Southern trails, these organisations require images and content that can be used in local signage, websites, social media, and printed material such as visitor guides.

There also needs to be closer alignment between the marketing campaigns of these regional organisations and other groups responsible for marketing trails, including the Bibbulmun Track Foundation, the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation, Tourism WA, and Trails WA.

This plan recommends the development and implementation of a **Great Southern Regional Trails Marketing Strategy**. This document will establish a coordinated approach to branding and promotion of trails in the region, and make recommendations on signage, wayfinding, and interpretation. The Marketing Strategy should be developed in 2020, so that all marketing organisations can begin to actively promote the region's existing trail offering. Harnessing the power of word-of-mouth marketing will enable the region to build a strong brand and generate anticipation amongst trail users and other visitors during the trail construction phase.

Photo credit: Tourism WA

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: TRAIL TYPES AND GRADES

HIKING Walking Track Classifications



GRADE 1

Provide an opportunity for most visitors, with no previous experience, including those with reduced mobility, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have abundant opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.



GRADE 2

Provide an opportunity for many visitors, with no previous experience, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have many opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.



GRADE 3

Provide an opportunity for visitors, with a moderate level of fitness and a small degree of skill and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Provision of interpretive information is not common, but many opportunities will be available to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment of the track. A map is generally not required and directional markers and management signs may be present. Users are responsible for their own safety that could be affected by adverse weather conditions such as storms or extreme heat.



GRADE 4

Provide an opportunity for many visitors, with a higher level of fitness and specialised skills and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Only management and directional signs may be present. There will be many opportunities to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment. Maps and navigational aids may be required, and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.



GRADE 5

Provide an opportunity for visitors with high levels of fitness and advanced specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to find their way along often indistinct tracks in remoter natural areas. Only minimal management signage may be present. Maps and navigational aids will generally be required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.

GRADE 6

Provide an opportunity for highly experienced walkers with high levels of fitness and specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to navigate through remote, challenging natural and wilderness areas - there is no physical track. Maps and navigational aids are always required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.

MOUNTAIN BIKING




Mountain Bike Trail Type

Trail type defines the style of trail and its typical attributes. Different trail types suit different styles of riding and typically each trail type will have a specific kind of mountain bike designed to suit. Different cohorts use different types of trails and all trail types can have varying classifications.

TYPES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS	
Cross Country (XC)	<p>Primarily single-track orientated with a combination of climbing and descending trails and natural trail features of varying technicality.</p> <p>Cross Country trails appeal to the majority market and can cater for timed competitive events.</p> <p>Typically, bikes are lightweight with shorter travel dual suspension or no rear suspension.</p>
All Mountain (AM)	<p>Similar to Cross Country and primarily single-trail orientated, with greater emphasis on technical descents, with non-technical climbs.</p> <p>All Mountain trails can cater for timed Enduro competitive events. Bikes are typically light-medium weight with medium-travel dual suspension.</p>
Downhill (DH)	<p>Purely descent only trails with emphasis on speed and technical challenge. These trails can cater for timed Downhill competitive racing.</p> <p>Downhill trails appeal to the more experienced market and typically require uplift to the trailhead via chairlift or vehicle shuttle.</p> <p>Bikes are designed for descending and are typically long-travel dual suspension and built for strength over weight.</p>
Freeride (FR)	<p>Typically, descent focused trails with emphasis solely on technical challenge.</p> <p>Trails feature both built and natural terrain technical features with a focus on drops and jumps.</p> <p>Appeals to the more experienced market and caters for competitions judging manoeuvres and skills only. Bikes are typically medium to long-travel dual suspension and are built for strength.</p>
Park (PK)	<p>Built feature environment with emphasis on manoeuvres, skills and progression.</p> <p>Appeals to wide market including youth and can cater for competitions judging aerial manoeuvres. Can include Jump and Pump Tracks and Skills Park.</p> <p>Typically, dirt surfaced but can include hardened surfaces. Bikes are typically built for strength, with short travel suspension.</p>
Touring (TR)	<p>Typically, long distance riding on reasonably uniform surface conditions and lower grades.</p> <p>Touring trails are dual direction linear trails or long distance circuits with a focus on reaching a destination. Touring trails can include rail trails, access/fire roads and single track. While there is a limited market for long distance mountain biking, touring trails can be ridden in sections making them accessible to all.</p> <p>If carrying panniers bikes are usually robust with limited suspension, however, for short sections or day trips most mountain bikes are suitable.</p>

Mountain Bike Trail Classification

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) trail difficulty rating system has been adopted worldwide and forms the basis of the Mountain Bike Trail Classification used in the Western Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines. The system classifies trails from Easiest through to Extreme, relative to the physical attributes of the trail, such as its width, gradient, surface type, technical trail features and obstacles.

 <p>EASIEST</p>	<p>This symbol indicates typically wide trail with smooth terrain and low gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times but free from unavoidable obstacles.</p> <p>Recommended for novice riders.</p>
 <p>EASY</p>	<p>This symbol indicates typically flowing open trails on firm terrain with gentle gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times. Riders may encounter small rollable obstacles and technical trail features.</p> <p>Recommended for beginner mountain bikers.</p>
 <p>MODERATE</p>	<p>This symbol indicates typically narrow trail with loose, soft, rocky or slippery sections and hills with short steep sections. Riders will encounter obstacles and technical trail features.</p> <p>Recommended for intermediate riders with some technical mountain biking experience.</p>
 <p>DIFFICULT</p>	<p>This symbol indicates trail with variable surfaces and/or steep gradients. Riders will encounter large obstacles and technical trail features.</p> <p>Recommended for experienced riders with good technical skill levels.</p>
 <p>EXTREME</p>	<p>This symbol indicates the trail may contain highly variable surfaces, very challenging terrain and/or very steep sections. Riders will encounter committing and unavoidable obstacles and technical trail features that may not be rollable.</p> <p>Recommended for very experienced riders with high level technical skill.</p>

EQUESTRIAN/HORSE RIDING TRAILS

Horse Riding Trail Classification

The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA) classifies trails from Easy through to Difficult, relative to physical attributes of the trail, such as its width, gradient and surface type.



EASY

Most suitable for novices, social groups and others seeking a relatively short distance trail requiring a basic level of skill and horse and rider fitness.

Most likely to be firebreaks or wide single tracks (bridle paths) with a gentle grade (not exceeding 10%) and a relatively obstacle free, hardened natural surface.

Likely to be shared-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers and runners can be expected.



MODERATE

Most suitable for individuals and smaller social groups seeking a short to medium distance trail requiring a moderate level of skill and fitness.

Most likely to be a combination single trail and/or firebreaks with obstacles, variable surfaces, and a moderate slope.

Likely to be shared-use so encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders should be expected.



DIFFICULT

Suitable for individuals and small social groups seeking a very challenging trail requiring a high level of skill, fitness, and basic navigation skills.

Most likely to consist of challenging single trail and/or firebreaks with many obstacles, variable surface, and steep sections.

Some trail routes may not be marked at all.

May possibly be shared-use so encounters with other users possibly including cyclists, walkers, vehicles and other stock should be expected, however, many of these trails may be located in remote areas and encounters with others is expected to be minimal.



PADDLING

Trails proposed in the Regional Trails Master Plan adopt the International River Grading System, as none of the trails are on open ocean. There is no universally accepted grading system for the sea, estuaries and large areas of open water. The current grading system SO1-SO5 has been developed by Paddle NSW qualified Sea Instructors to assist in describing all waterways.

The International River Grading System⁸ uses six levels each referred to as "Grade" or "Class" followed by a number. The grade of a river may change with the level of flow.

- **Grade 1 Easy** (slow to medium flow, relatively few obstacles, easy path to follow)
- **Grade 2 Moderate** (regular waves / medium rapids which are manageable with basic strokes)
- **Grade 3 Difficult** (rapids/ high waves, manoeuvring around obstacles is required).
- **Grade 4 Difficult rapids** (have high, powerful, irregular waves, broken water, often boiling eddies, ledges, drops and dangerous exposed rocks. The passage often difficult to recognize and precise sequential manoeuvring is required).
- **Grade 5 Very powerful rapids** (very confused and broken water, massive waves, large drops, violent and fast currents, abrupt turns, difficult powerful stopper hydraulics. Numerous obstacles in the main current, including dangerous, possibly life-threatening hazards).
- **Grade 6 Extremely dangerous** - classified as unraftable. (Very confused, very violent, exploding and folding water so difficult that controlled navigation by raft is virtually impossible).

SNORKELLING

Trails WA classifies snorkel uses three classifications of snorkel trails:

- **Easy** – suitable for beginners
- **Moderate** – suitable for those with some experience
- **Difficult** – considerable experience required, open water conditions, waves

⁸ Paddle WA. Grading System. <http://www.waterwaysguide.org.au/GradingSystem>

1

TRAIL NETWORK

A collection of linked trails, often of same type, typically accessed via a trailhead.
Eg. Pemberton, Porongurup National Park, Bremer Bay.

APPENDIX 2: TRAIL TOWNS AND TRAIL NETWORKS

2

TRAIL CENTRE

A managed trail or trail network supported by dedicated on site trail related services and facilities. May be stand alone or part of a trail hub.
Eg. Margaret River



3

TRAIL TOWN

A population centre that offers a large range of high quality trails, trail user related services, facilities, businesses, branding and signage. (Also known as a trail hub). The aim of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy is for Albany to become a trail town.

APPENDIX 3: TRAIL USERS

Visitation to the Great Southern is currently dominated by intrastate trips (refer to Table 15) with having a holiday being the main purpose for visiting by both domestic and international tourists.

Table 15: Purpose of visit to Great Southern Region 2016-2017

Estimated Visitors to Great Southern region	Period - YE Dec 2016-2018								
	Average Annual Visitors	Holiday		Visiting friends and relatives		Business		Other	
Domestic	586,000	317,700	49%	189,700	30%	115,700	18%	25,700	4%
International	58,500	51,000	87%	6,200	11%	900	2%	1,600	3%
Total Overnight	701,833								
Intrastate Daytrips	773,000	401,000	52%	118,300	15%	91,000	12%	162,700	21%

Visiting national parks and bushwalking (hiking) are activities undertaken by a majority of international visitors (71% and 52% respectively), and by approximately 1 in every 5 intrastate and interstate visitors to the Great Southern the region. Cycling is undertaken by approximately 1 in every 6 international visitors, and by 1 in every 10 day trippers.

Table 16: Average annual visitors, visit national parks and participate in bushwalking (hiking), and cycling

Estimated Visitors to Great Southern region	Period - YE Dec 2016-2018						
	Average Annual Visitors	# visit national parks	% of visitors	# participate in bushwalking	% of visitors	# participate in cycling	% of visitors
Intrastate	586,000	488,000	17	154,300	24	20,000	3
Interstate	57,333						
International	58,500	126,900*	71	30,700*	52	9,600	16
Total Overnight	701,833						
Intrastate Daytrips	773,000	243,700	7	83,300	11	70,300	9

*Activity participation is captured at a total trip level (not destination specific) for international visitors; therefore International visitors may have undertaken activity elsewhere in Australia.

Source: Tourism Research Australia, International and National Visitor Survey.

APPENDIX 4: PROPOSED TRAILS AND TRAIL NETWORKS

KEY

CARPARK, TOILETS, TRAILHEAD, WAYFINDING

✓ - Existing

R - Required

X - Not necessary

TRAIL TYPE

H

Hiking

C

Cycling/Mountain biking

P

Paddling

S

Snorkelling

TRAIL MODEL

I - Individual

N - Network

!

Priority Regional Trail

SIGNIFICANCE

L

Local

R

Regional

N

National

MARKET SEGMENT

▲

Leisure

▲

Active

▲

Adventure

LEAD ORGANISATION

DBCA - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

ALB - City of Albany

BT - Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup

CRAN - Shire of Cranbrook

DEN - Shire of Denmark

GNOW - Shire of Gnowangerup

JERR - Shire of Jerramungup

KATT - Shire of Katanning

KENT - Shire of Kent

KOJ - Shire of Kojonup

MANJ - Shire of Manjimup

PLAN - Shire of Plantagenet

WOOD - Shire of Woodanilling

TIMEFRAME

S

Short (1-2 years)

M

Medium (3-5 years)














L

Long (6-10 years)



























































PROPOSED HIKING TRAILS

<div><div>!</div><div>Priority Regional Trails</div></div>	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
Trail name												
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES												
<div><div>!</div><div>Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail William Bay National Park</div></div>	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	2-3	6	R		DBCA	M
<div><div>!</div><div>Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail Torndirrup National Park</div></div>	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	3-4	10	R		DBCA	M
<div>Stirling Range Lowlands Trail Stirling Range National Park</div>	R	✓	R	R	H	I	2	5-10	R		DBCA	L
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES												
<div>Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Shire of Denmark</div>	✓	✓	R	✓	H	I	2-3	0.5	R		DEN	S
<div>Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite-Nullaki) Shire of Denmark</div>	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	2	TBC	N		DEN	L
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS												
<div><div>!</div><div>Albany Heritage Park (includes dual use) City of Albany</div></div>	✓	✓	R	R	H	N	2	25	R		ALB	M
<div>Bald Head Walk Torndirrup National Park</div>	✓	R	✓	✓	H	I	4	12.5	N		DBCA	S
<div>Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk Torndirrup National Park</div>	✓	x	R	R	H	N	2	1	R		DBCA	S
<div>Mt Hallowell Lookout Shire of Denmark</div>	✓	x	R	R	H	I	4	0.5	R		DEN	S
<div>Bluff Knoll Stirling Range National Park</div>	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	I	4	6	R		DBCA	S
<div>Ridge Walk Stirling Range National Park</div>	✓	✓	x	x	H	I	6	26	R		DBCA	S
<div>Castle Rock Loop Porongurup National Park</div>	✓	✓	R	R	H	N	3	4	R		DBCA	M
<div>Nancy's Peak Circuit Porongurup National Park</div>	✓	x	✓	✓	H	N	4	5.5	R		DBCA	M
<div>Devil's Slide Porongurup National Park</div>	✓	x	✓	✓	H	I	4	5	R		DBCA	M
<div>Bolganup Heritage Trail Porongurup National Park</div>	✓	✓	✓	✓	H	I	2	0.6	R		DBCA	M

PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

<div>  Priority Regional Trails </div>	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
	Trail name											
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES												
 Pwakkenbak MTB Trails Shire of Plantagenet	R	R	R	R	C	N	Green-Black	10	L		PLAN	
 Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Shire of Denmark	✓	R	R	R	C	N	Green-Double black	TBC	L		DEN	
 Albany Heritage Park MTB Trails (includes dual use) City of Albany	✓	✓	R	R	C	N	Green-Black	25	L		ALB	
 Porongurup MTB Trails Porongurup National Park	R	R	R	R	C	N	Green-Black	TBC	R		DBCA	
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS												
Poikeclerup MTB Trails City of Albany	R	R	R	R	C	I	Green-Double Black	7	L		ALB	







PROPOSED CYCLE TOURING AND DUAL USE TRAILS

<div><div></div>Priority Regional Trails</div>	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
Trail name												
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES												
O'Neill Road to Wansborough Walk Shire of Plantagenet	R		R	R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	I	2	25			PLAN	
<div><div></div>Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail City of Albany</div>			R	R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	I	2	17			ALB DoT	
<div><div></div>Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park</div>			R	R	<div><div>C</div></div>	I	2	70-80			DBCA	
<div><div></div>Grain Train Rail Trail</div>			R	R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	N	2	40-80			BT, GNOW, KATT, KENT, KOJ	
<div><div></div>Farrar Reserve (Kojonup) to Pingrup</div>			R	R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	N	1	157			KATT, KENT, KOJ	
<div><div></div>Tambellup-Gnowangerup Ongerup</div>			R	R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	N	1	94			BT, GNOW	
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES												
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Shire of Denmark			R	R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	I	1	0.6			DEN	
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS												
Munda Biddi Trail -William Bay Road Shire of Denmark			R	R	<div><div>C</div></div>	I	2	8			DBCA	
Munda Biddi Trail Denmark Heritage Rail Trail connector Shire of Denmark				R	<div><div>C</div><div>H</div></div>	I	2	TBC			DBCA	
Munda Biddi Trail - Sand-patch City of Albany					<div><div>C</div></div>	I	2	15			ALB	




PROPOSED PADDLING TRAILS

<div>  Priority Regional Trails </div>	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
	Trail name											
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES												
 Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience	✓	✓	R	R	P	N	2	54 (total)	R		DBCA	S
Nornalup to Walpole Jetty	✓	✓	R	R	P	I	1-2	11.6	R		DBCA	S
Walpole River	✓	x	R	R	P	I	1	5 (return)	R		DBCA	S
Deep River	✓	R	R	R	P	I	1-2	21 (return)	R		DBCA	S
Rest Point to Circus Beach	x	x	R	R	P	I	1	8.8 (return)	R		DBCA	S
Nornalup Inlet Circuit	✓	✓	R	R	P	N	2-3	15.4 (loop)	R		DBCA	S
Frankland River Nornalup to Monastery Landing	✓	R	R	R	P	I	1	10.4 (return)	R		DBCA	M
Wilson Inlet Shire of Denmark	✓	x	R	R	P	N	2-3	Various lengths	L		DEN	S
Kalgan River City of Albany	✓	R	R	R	P	I	1	20 (return)	L		ALB	M
Bremer River Shire of Jerramungup	R	✓	R	R	P	I	1	4 (return)	L		DBCA	L
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES												
Monastery Landing to Bibbulmun Track Walpole Wilderness Shire of Manjimup	x	✓	R	R	H P	I	1	2.5	R		DBCA	M





















PROPOSED SNORKELLING TRAILS

Trail name	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES												
Greens Pool William Bay National Park	✓	✓	R	R	S	N	Easy to Advanced	1	L		DBCA	
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS												
Whaler's Cove City of Albany	✓	✓	R	X	S	I	Easy	0.4	L		ALB	
Little Boat Harbour, Bremer Bay Shire of Jerramungup	✓	✓	R	X	S	I	Easy	0.3	L		JERR	

PROPOSED GREAT SOUTHERN TREASURES RECREATION CIRCUIT

<div>  Priority Regional Trails </div>	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
	Trail name											
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES												
<div>  Pwackenbak Mt Barker </div>	✓	R	R	R	H C	I	Green/ Black 2-3	10	L		PLAN	
Boot Rock Reserve Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	✓	✓	R	R	C H	I	1	1.4	L		BT	
Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk Shire of Jerramungup	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	0.6	L		JERR	
Pingrup Grain Silos walk Shire of Kent	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	1.3	L		KENT	
Bremer River paddle Shire of Jerramungup	✓	✓	R	R	P	I	1	4	L		JERR	
Pink Lake Shire of Cranbrook	R	X	R	R	H	I	1	0.3	L		CRAN	
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS												
Kojonup Heritage Walk Shire of Kojonup	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	1.5	L		KOJ	
Mondurup Reserve Shire of Plantagenet	✓	X	R	R	H	I	1	6	L		PLAN	
Tambellup Heritage Trail Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	1.3	L		BT	
Sukey Hill Lookout Shire of Cranbrook	X	X	R	R	H	I	1	0.3	L		CRAN	
Frankland River Wildflower walk Shire of Cranbrook	✓	X	R	R	H	I	1	0.4	L		CRAN	
Salt River Rd Wildflower walk Shire of Cranbrook	✓	X	R	R	H	I	1	1.8	L		CRAN	
Lake Poorrarecup Shire of Cranbrook	✓	✓	R	R	H P	I	1	4.2	L		CRAN	
Lake Nunijup Shire of Cranbrook	✓	✓	R	R	H P	I	1	3.1	L		CRAN	
Gnowangerup Heritage Walk Shire of Gnowangerup	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	2	L		GNOW	
Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre Shire of Gnowangerup	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	1.2	L		GNOW	

PROPOSED GREAT SOUTHERN TREASURES RECREATION CIRCUIT CONT.

Trail name	Car Park	Toilets	Trailhead	Wayfinding	Trail Type	Trail model	Grade	Length (km)	Significance	Market Segment	Lead Organisation	Timeframe
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS CONT.												
Town Heritage Walk Shire of Jerramungup	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	1	L		JERR	
Native Snail Trail Shire of Jerramungup	✓	✗	R	R	H C	N	1	3.4	L		JERR	
Police Pools Shire of Katanning	✗	✗	R	R	H	I	1	1.2	L		KATT	
Town Walk Trails Shire of Katanning	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	2.4	L		KATT	
Lake Ewlyamartup Shire of Katanning	✓	✓	R	R	H P	I	1	3.2	L		KATT	
Farrar Reserve Shire of Kojonup	✓	✗	R	R	H C	I	1	2.4	L		KOJ	
Myrtle Benn Reserve Shire of Kojonup	✓	✗	R	R	H C	I	1	1.5	L		KOJ	
Kendenup Nature Trail Shire of Plantagenet	✗	✗	R	R	H	I	1	0.6	L		PLAN	
Woodanilling Heritage Walk Shire of Woodanilling	✓	✓	R	R	H	I	1	1	L		WOOD	
Lake Queerearrup Shire of Woodanilling	✓	✓	R	R	H P	I	1	7	L		WOOD	



APPENDIX 5: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE AGREED OBJECTIVES

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
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	RTMP received and endorsed by all Great Southern LGAs and State government agencies	High	Immediate	Lead: LGAs DBCA, DLGSC
1.2	Adopt the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy	Allocate adequate resources to ensure GSRTMP is implemented	High	Immediate	Lead: LGAs DBCA, DLGSC
		Form a Regional Trails Reference Group to oversee the Implementation Strategy	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Participating LGAs and other stakeholders
		Establish a mechanism for the Regional Trails Reference Group to communicate efficiently with the WA Trails Reference Group	High	Immediate	Lead: DLGSC Support: GSCORE
		Review the RTMP within 5 years of its release to ensure its ongoing relevant and to examine its implementation	Med	5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
1.3	Link identified regional priority trails to local government strategic plans	Develop local trail plans	Med	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
		Ensure regional priority trails are included in local government planning documents (including asset management, community development and financial plans)	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: LGAs

2



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.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1	Trail development undertaken as per the schedule outlined in each Activity Plan	Develop concept plans and business cases for all regional priority trails in line with the timeframes identified in activity-specific trail plans	High	1 – 5 years	Lead: Land managers Support: GSCORE
		Secure funding commitments from all partners and leverage additional resources through State and Federal Government grants	High	1 – 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, GSDC, RDA
		Prepare and implement a priority trailhead and wayfinding strategy as identified within specific trail plans	Med	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers
		Ensure all trail planning is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines contained in the WA Trail Development Series	High	1 – 2 years	Lead: Land managers Support: GSCORE
2.2	All land managers adopt best practice guidelines in development and management of regional priority trails	Facilitate the sharing of knowledge related to trail planning, construction and management between all land managers, local government authorities, clubs, key user groups, and community organisations	High	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: DLGSC, DBCA
		Collaborate with land managers, scientific institutions and community organisations to monitor ongoing usage and impacts of individual trails to improve management practices over the long-term	Med	1 – 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers
		Develop and implement a trail-building training program for land managers, community groups and contractors to improve sustainability outcomes for all trails	Med	1 – 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers



3

**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.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1	Prepare and implement a Regional Trails Marketing Strategy	Develop brand position statement for Great Southern Regional Trails	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs)
		Implement an Noongar naming strategy for new trails and dual-use naming strategy for existing trails	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Wagyl Kaip, SWALSC
		Prepare and implement a marketing and promotions plan	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Develop trail maps	High	1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Develop signage and style guide	High	1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Produce digital assets for all regional priority trails	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs
3.2	Prepare and implement a thematic interpretation strategy	Provide guidance in the creation of unique and memorable visitor experiences, provide a point of difference, and aid in raising the profile of regional trails	Medium	2 - 3 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, traditional custodians, DMOs

4

**Community and Economic Development Opportunities**

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.








NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1	Economic benefits - Encourage and support new trail business opportunities and identified gaps in service provision	Expand the Tourism Experience Accelerator Program (TEAP) across the entire region	Med	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, industry groups
		Support key regional towns to obtain trail town accreditation	Med	2 - 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
4.2	Liveability benefits - Ensure that regional priority trail developments cater for and encourage active transport	Adopt the Regional Cycling Strategy 2050 for the Great Southern	Med	2- 5 years	Lead: Department of Transport (DoT) Support: LGAs, DLGSC
4.3	Health - Actively promote the health and wellbeing benefits of active leisure activities	Implement and promote outdoor recreation education and participation programs	Med	3-5 years	Lead: DLGSC Support: LGAs, GSCORE, Department of Health
4.4	Culture - Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects	Ensure that a representative from SWALSC sits on the Great Southern Trails Reference Group	High	1-2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: SWALSC
		Ensure that Aboriginal community engagement plans are developed for all trail projects	High	2-3 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, SWALSC
4.5	Environmental - Adopt and promote the Trail Development Series as best practice for trail planning, construction and maintenance	Establish a trail building network that includes land manager and trail managers. Use the network to promote the TDP	High	Within 1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs, DBCA



APPENDIX 6: STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLANS
























This appendix provides an action plan for each local government stakeholder. Trail proposals are sorted by priority and timeframe. A separate table has been created for all projects on DBCA estate. These action plans outline the next steps required to progress each trail proposal.

KEY

TRAIL TYPE		
 Hiking	 Cycling/Mountain biking	 Paddling
	 Snorkelling	
TIMEFRAME		
 Short (1-2 years)	 Medium (3-5 years)	 Long (6-10 years)
LEAD ORGANISATION		
<p>DBCA – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions</p> <p>ALB – City of Albany GNOW – Shire of Gnowangerup KOJ – Shire of Kojonup</p> <p>BT – Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup JERR – Shire of Jerramungup MANJ – Shire of Manjimup</p> <p>CRAN – Shire of Cranbrook KATT – Shire of Katanning PLAN – Shire of Plantagenet</p> <p>DEN – Shire of Denmark KENT – Shire of Kent WOOD – Shire of Woodanilling</p>		

CITY OF ALBANY






 Priority Regional Trails

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail			DBCA	Support DBCA to develop Concept Plan
 Albany Heritage Park	 		ALB	Secure funding to build trails and implement
 Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail	 		ALB	Site Assessment
Albany Trailhead	 		ALB	Detailed planning and implementation as part of ATHS
Bald Head Walk			DBCA	Support DBCA to secure funding for required upgrades
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk			DBCA	Provide input to DBCA on site assessment
Whaler's Cove			ALB	Identify management group to maintain underwater plinths and signage
Poikeclerup MTB Trails			ALB	Site assessment, Concept Plan
Munda Biddi Trail – Sandpatch			ALB	Secure funding to implement trail realignment
Kalgan River			ALB	Waymarking, interpretation











Refer to legend Page 80

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF BROOMEHILL-TAMBELLUP




TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations
GSTRC	C H		BT	Trailhead, waymarking
	H		BT	Trailhead, waymarking, new interpretive panels
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C		GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF CRANBROOK





TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations
GSTRC	Pink Lake Cranbrook		CRAN	Trailhead, waymarking
	Sukey Hill Lookout		CRAN	Site assessment for waymarking, construction
	Frankland River Wildflower walk		CRAN	Trail maintenance
	Salt River Rd Wildflower walk		CRAN	Trail maintenance
	Lake Poorrarecup	H P 	CRAN	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
	Lake Nunijup	H P 	CRAN	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park	C		DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF DENMARK

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD ORG	ACTION REQUIRED
 Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience	P	S	DBCA	Work with DBCA on consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail	H	M	DBCA	Support DBCA to implement Recreation Management Plan
 Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Shire of Denmark	C	M	DEN	Assist GSCORE with community consultation
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link	H C	S	DEN	Site assessment and trail design
Mt Hallowell Lookout	H	S	DEN	Waymarking
Greens Pool - snorkel	S	S	DBCA	Work with DBCA to implement snorkel trail signage
Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark Heritage Rail Trail connector	C	M	DEN	Consultation and site assessment
Munda Biddi Trail -William Bay Road	C	M	DBCA	Assist DBCA to secure funding to Implement trail realignment
Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite-Nullaki)	H	L	DEN	Site assessment
Wilson Inlet	P	L	DEN	Waymarking

SHIRE OF GNOWANGERUP



TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGA's and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
 Gnowangerup Heritage Walk	H	M	GNOW	Additional interpretive information
 Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre	H	M	GNOW	Improve signage, and waymarking
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	C	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C	L	GSCORE	LGA's collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA
Stirling Range Ridge Walk	H	S	DBCA	DBCA confirm whether trail is to remain as challenging, unmarked route. Monitor progress.
Bluff Knoll	H	M	DBCA	DBCA secure funding for required maintenance. Monitor progress.
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail	H	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF JERRAMUNGUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk	H	JERR	Secure funding for construction (detailed design is complete)
	Bremer River paddle	P	DBCA	Collaborate with GSCORE, LGA, Site assessment
	Jerramungup Town Heritage Walk	H	JERR	Make trail suitable for all users, surfacing
	Mamang Trail	H	JERR	Secure funding to seal the road access to Point Anne to improve access to trailhead.
	Native Snail Trail	H C	JERR	Trail maintenance
	Little Boat Harbour – snorkel	S	JERR	Identify management group to maintain plinth and signage






SHIRE OF KATANNING

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Police Pools	H	KATT	Trail proposal, site assessment.
	Katanning Town Walk Trails	H	KATT	Improve signage, and waymarking
	Lake Ewlyamartup	H P	KATT	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C	L	GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA





Refer to legend Page 80

 Priority Regional Trails

SHIRE OF KENT




TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures collaborate to develop a marketing strategy, in cooperation with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC Pingrup Grain Silos Walk	H		KENT	Develop new walk trail with waymarking
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C		GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF KOJONUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Kojonup Heritage Walk		KOJ	Improve signage, and waymarking
	Farrar Reserve		KOJ	Install signage, and waymarking
	Myrtle Benn Reserve		KOJ	Improve signage, and waymarking
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C		GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET

 Priority Regional Trails

TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
	Pwakkenbak Trails	H C	S	PLAN	Community consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
	Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Mondurup Reserve	H	S	PLAN	Trailhead, waymarking
	Kendenup Nature Trail	H	M	PLAN	Trailhead, waymarking
	Porongurup MTB Trails	C	M	DBCA	Assist DBCA with community consultation
	Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	C	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.
	Castle Rock Loop	H	S	DBCA	Assist with community consultation
	Nancy's Peak	H	M	DBCA	Monitor progress
	Devil's Slide	H	M	DBCA	Monitor progress
	Bolganup Heritage Trail	H	M	DBCA	Monitor progress
	O'Neill Road to Wansborough Walk	H C	M	PLAN	Site assessment
	Stirling Range Lowlands Trail	H	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.

SHIRE OF WOODANILLING

TRAIL NAME		TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
	Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
	Woodanilling Heritage Walk	E	M	WOOD	Extend trail with new interpretive panels
GSTRC	Lake Queerearrup	H P	M	WOOD	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking

DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail			DBCA	Implement Recreation Management Plan
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail			DBCA	Develop Concept Plan
 Porongurup MTB Trails			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail			DBCA	Confirm alignment with district priorities
Bald Head Walk			DBCA	Secure funding for required upgrades
Castle Rock Loop			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
Greens Pool - snorkel			DBCA	Implement infrastructure upgrades to include land-based snorkel trail signage during 2019/20
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk			DBCA	Site assessment
Stirling Range Ridge Walk			DBCA	Confirm whether trail is to remain as challenging, unmarked route
Bluff Knoll			DBCA	Secure funding for required maintenance
Bremer River paddle			DBCA	Collaborate with GSCORE, LGA, Site assessment
Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark Heritage Rail Trail connector			DBCA	Consultation and site assessment
Nancy's Peak			DBCA	Upgrade trail
Devil's Slide			DBCA	Upgrade trail
Bolganup Heritage Trail			DBCA	Site assessment
Munda Biddi Trail - William Bay Road			DBCA	Seek funding to Implement trail realignment
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail			DBCA	Confirm alignment with district priorities



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DISCLAIMER

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.

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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
We heard from a number of people who want to see improved maintenance of existing hiking trails	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.
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.	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.
We received a few comments on the need to integrate existing trail networks and address gaps or problems with exiting paths and trails.	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.
We heard from a number of people who want to see strategies to address the creation of unsanctioned trails.	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.
Several submissions suggested that the term 'dual-use' is inappropriate for trails that are unlikely to be used by hikers.	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.
We heard from several people who suggested that firebreaks could be used by mountain bike riders, thus avoiding the need to build new trails.	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.

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
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>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>
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>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.
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.	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.



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

We heard from a number of people who raised concerns about the impact of cycling trails on threatened species in the Albany Heritage Park.	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.
We heard from a number of people who were concerned ongoing funding to maintain trails.	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.
We heard from a few people who were worried about the environmental impact of adventure bike riding.	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.

THEME 3: SOCIAL VALUES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
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>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>
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>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>
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.	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.
We heard from several people who advocated for an Aboriginal naming convention for new trails.	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.

THEME 3: SOCIAL VALUES CONTINUED

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.	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.
Many commented on the positive benefits of trails for engaging young people and providing things for kids to do close to where they live.	We agree.
Some of you emphasised the important health benefits of encouraging trail use and having trails close to where people live.	We agree.
A few people commented that sanctioned mountain bike trails are important for elite athlete progression.	We agree. Although the focus of the RTMP is on community and economic development, trails can also play a role in sports development.
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.	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.

THEME 4: ECONOMIC VALUES

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
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.	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.
Some of you highlighted a desire to see local jobs and business opportunities emerge from trail projects.	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.
Some of you were excited about the opportunity to link events, festivals and business opportunities to trails.	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.

THEME 5: PLANNING PROCESS

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	PROJECT RESPONSES
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).	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.
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.	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.
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>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>
A few submissions asked us to clarify why detailed environmental assessment occurs after master planning, rather than before.	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.

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 plan.

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



From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Monday, 23 December 2019 1:33 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
Trail plan consultation

191223_1333

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]



PAGE 22



-- 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 them selves 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





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/>

PAGE 24



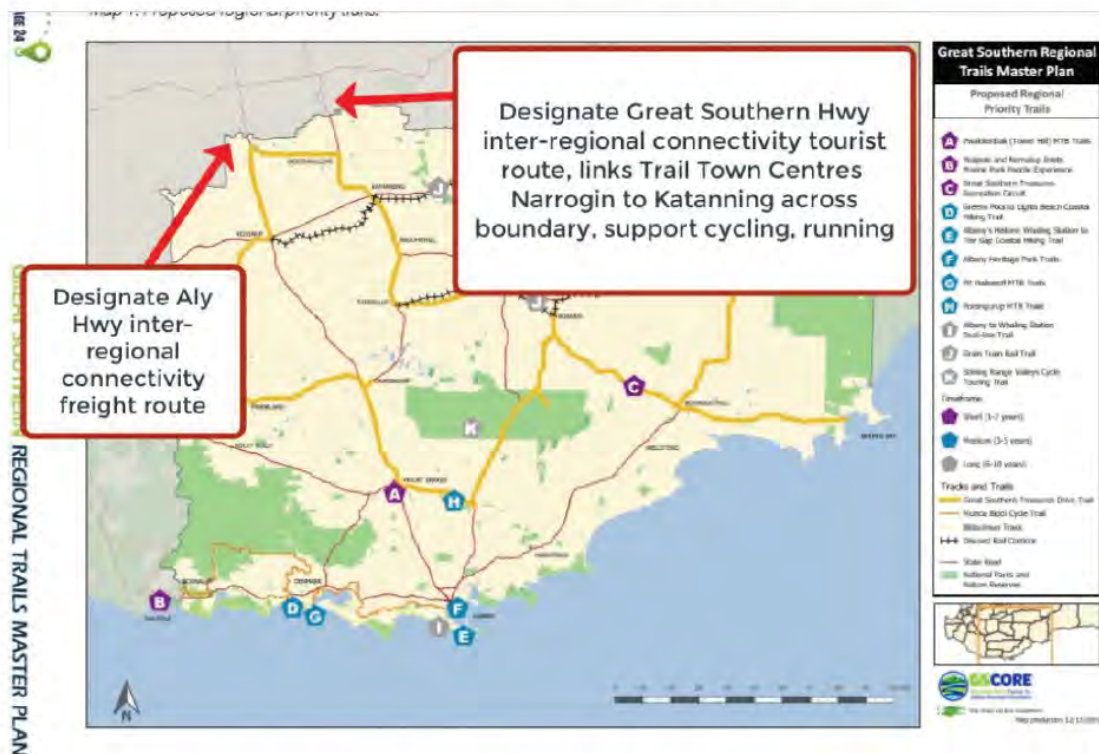
CONTINUED

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-----

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-----

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-----

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]



From:
Sent:
To:

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

191228_1230

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]
[REDACTED]
[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







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:

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:

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

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

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!!





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

200109_2157

Public submission regarding the proposed Regional Trails Master Plan

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 their 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 disrespectful 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 their 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 tourists would be taking their bikes to many different locations while staying in the great southern and this plan could turn into an 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



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 signature]



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, thankyou 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 Mounts 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 Mounts.

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. Mounts 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 (I8c). 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 I8c which will be difficult and expensive to construct, will be valued by a smaller sector of the community and will duplicate I8c – 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 caf  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 Wesfarmer'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

200113_0935

13 January 2020

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 trail 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 at 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 activities such as 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 environmental conservation, provides recreational activities, connects a cultural history and promotes it to the rest of the world. Unlike the Stirlings and Porongorups 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.



**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.





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.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





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 accommodation 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-----

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

Repondent 0801

200114_1608

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:

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 signature]



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:

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,



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

15 January 2020 3:09 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Feedback on Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200115_1509

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 exiting developments for the great southern, myself and family look forward to it progressing further.



Respondent 0805

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

Wednesday, 15 January 2020 4:10 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Public comment for the draft Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200115_1610

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.



PAGE 75





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

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:**

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





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 GSCOREs 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 GSCOREs 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 need 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 though 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 fuana 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:**

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 Patch 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-----

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

Respondent 0801

200116_1814

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:**

[REDACTED]

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**

[REDACTED]

Date: January 16, 2020

[REDACTED]

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 RTMP 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.

[REDACTED]
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.



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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Thursday, 16 January 2020 10:52 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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.

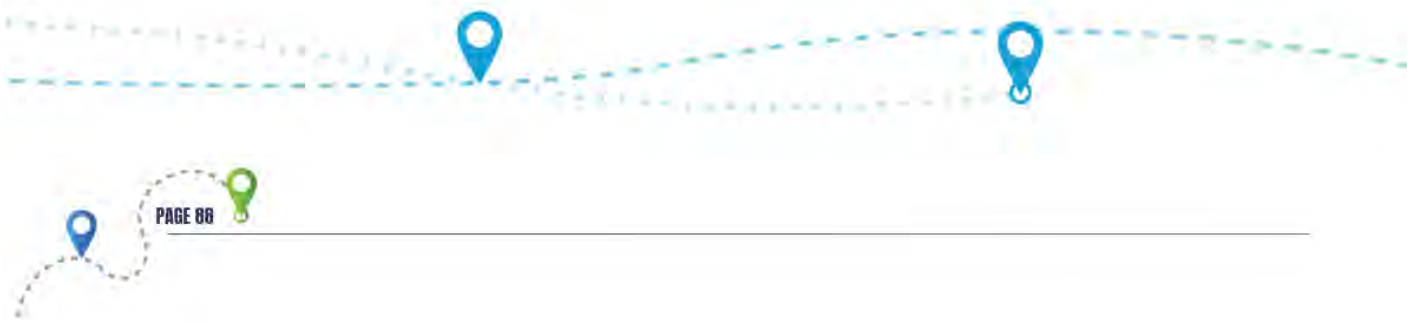
Another neighbour rides his ATV around. My sons have seen him riding over the crests at speed between the model aircraft clubhouse and Princess Avenue. They stated that he appeared to be try to use them as jumps. Imagine if a horse / pony was also on the track at the same time.

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 friendly wave 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.







200117_0849

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

17 January 2020 8:49 AM

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 thought 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!





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





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

200117_1240

Respondent 0806

Regards to the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
 Section 4 Trail Development Proposal
 Proposed Mountain Biking and Cycle Touring Trail (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]



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

200117_1426

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-----

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

200117_1535

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

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





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Friday, 17 January 2020 3:42 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 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 Pwakenbak 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 Biddi 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.

[REDACTED]



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 approach’⁷, 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/Trail%20Development%20Series%20Part%20B%20A%20Guide%20to%20Community%20Consultation.pdf>

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

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

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



CONTINUED

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-Rock"

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]

PAGE 104





1/1/2022
2.



200117_lott

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.



CONTINUED

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





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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



CONTINUED

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:****To:****Subject:**

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





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 'Staness' 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 Porongurups 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 Porongurups. 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 Porongurups by the local Noongar community.
18. The Porongurup 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 Porongurup 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 whatso ever 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!




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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,




From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:


 Saturday, 18 January 2020 7:48 AM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 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




From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 8:29 AM
trails@gscore.com.au
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]

[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 soooooooo 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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 10:56 AM
trails@gscore.com.au
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]



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GREAT SOUTHERN REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN - PUBLIC COMMENT

Prepared by Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence



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 $\frac{3}{4}$ 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

[Redacted signature]



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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Saturday, 18 January 2020 2:46 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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 Signature]





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:04 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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:
Sent:
To:

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:05 PM
trails@gscore.com.au

200118_1505

Yes please to mtb trails in the great southern..





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:06 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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 ALBANY's 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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 3:16 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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 albanian 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 albania 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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Saturday, 18 January 2020 4:17 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 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,



From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Saturday, 18 January 2020 4:32 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 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 signature]





From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

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

[REDACTED]
Saturday, 18 January 2020 5:17 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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.





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]



200118_1923

Submission to Draft of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan 2020 to 2029

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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)



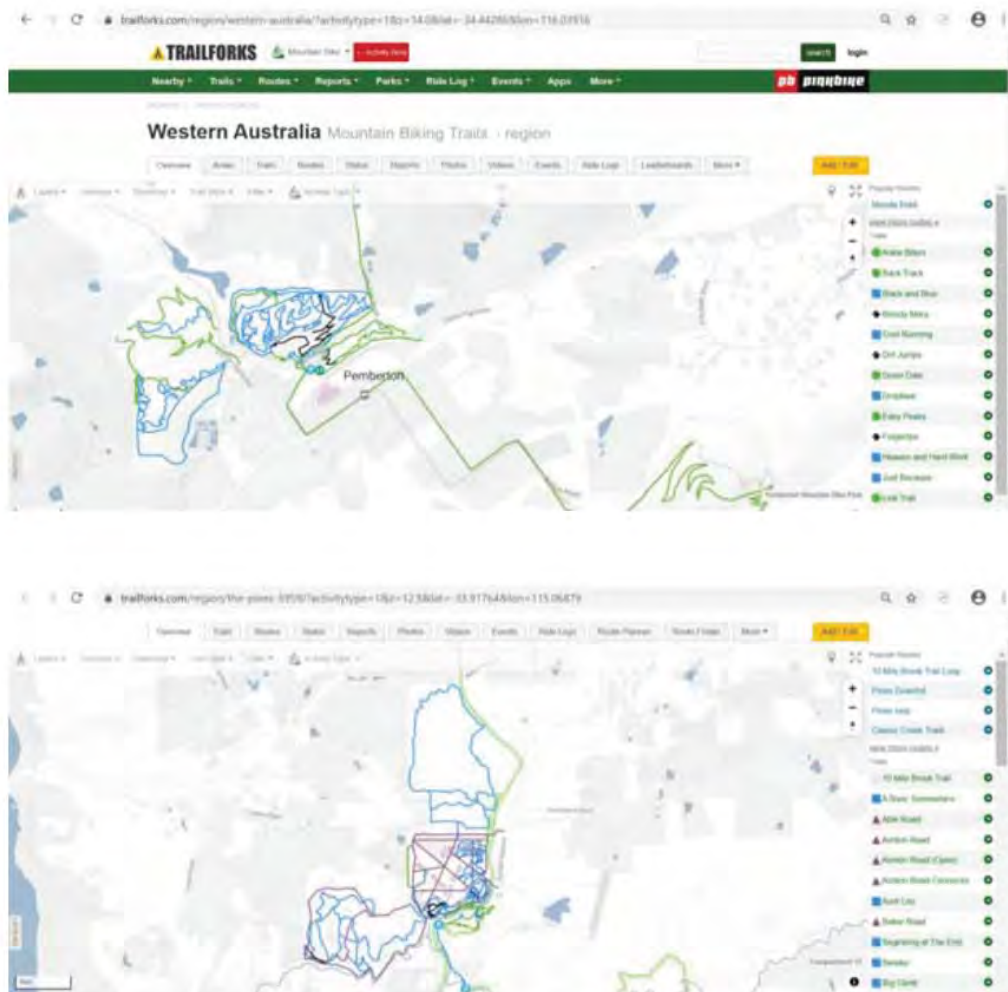
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3.2 Large footprint of existing MTB Trails on conservation reserves

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:



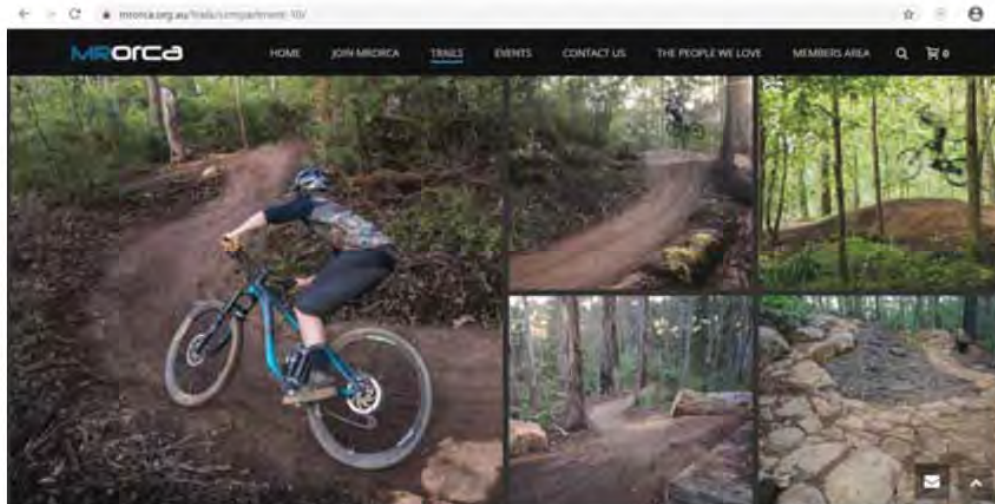
This scale of trail building in a small reserve would undoubtedly have negative impacts on flora but especially on fragmentation of habitat for fauna as outlined above.

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 is 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.



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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, Goft & 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"







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.



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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:
Sent:
To:

Saturday, 18 January 2020 8:26 PM
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 have been of benefit to other communities both locals and visitors. Examples include Margaret River Collie Pemberton and others.



From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:14 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
Submission from [REDACTED] on the Draft Trails Plan

200118_2314

Flag Status:

Flagged

To: trails@gscore.com.au

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:

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 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

*This is my personal opinion and does not [REDACTED] and will not affect our working relationship



Photo credit: David Bomba

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

Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:48 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

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. It 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.

From:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

Saturday, 18 January 2020 11:54 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Submission - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200118_2354

Submission

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

I support 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 Pwackenbac 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.



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.

CONTINUED

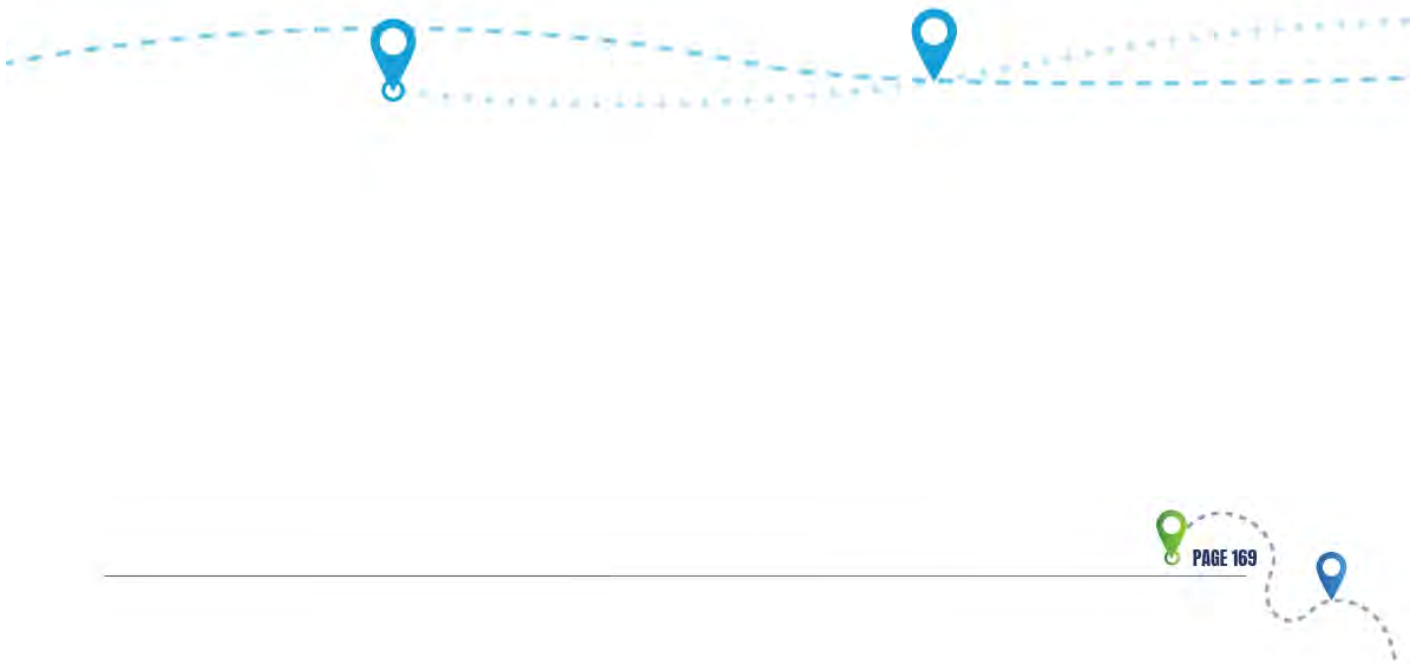
Culturally and environmentally, the Noongar prefer that the uplands of this ancient Range be left undisturbed.

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 Pibblemin 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."**



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 we'll 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.





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.







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-----

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 mounts 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.

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 name]

To:

Subject:

[Redacted email address]

Sunday 19 January 2020 5:33 AM
trails@gscore.com.au
Addendum to my previous submission

200119_0533

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

200119_0912

Flag Status: Flagged

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

Flag Status: Flagged

200119_1003

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 Pwackenbak, 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 exacerbated 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:

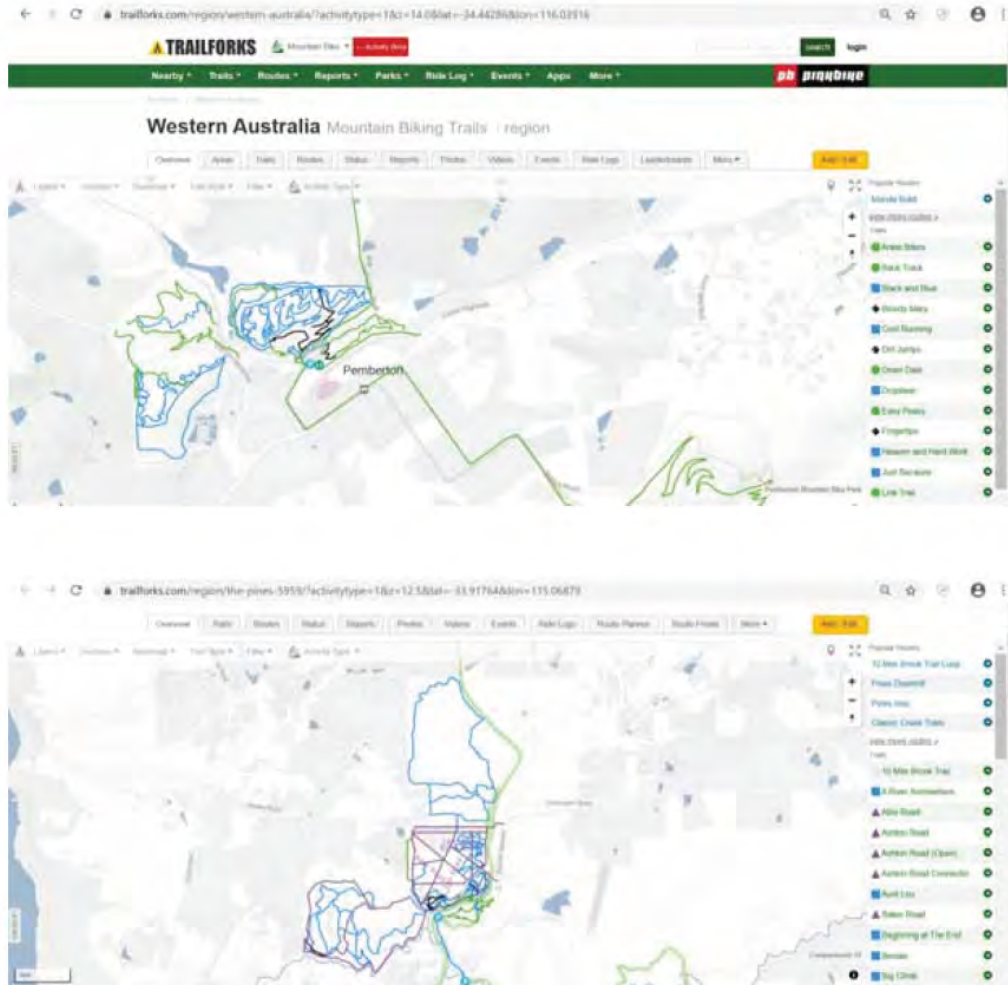
² Goeft & Alder 2001 Sustainable Mountain Biking: A Case Study from the Southwest of Western Australia. Article in Journal of Sustainable Tourism.

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



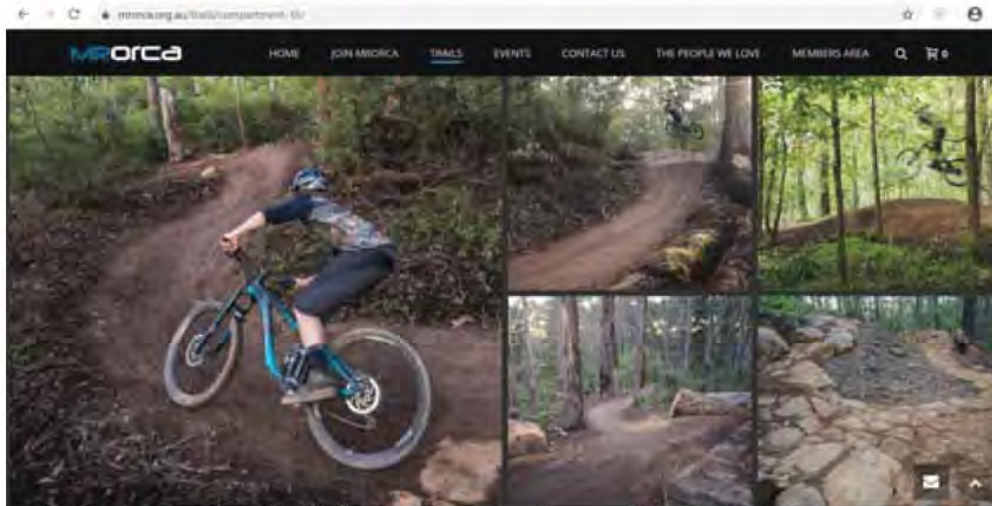
This scale of trail building in a small reserve would undoubtedly have negative impacts on flora but especially on fragmentation of habitat for fauna as outlined above.

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 Wensbrough 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 Bidi 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				
1 Pwakenbak 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.				
1 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.				
1 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.				
1 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 2016 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 Nannarup	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

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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 Wagyl 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 Biddi, 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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Sunday, 19 January 2020 1:23 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
Trails yes please

200119_1323

Flag Status:

Flagged

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.

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

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

Ps: the email address from the newspaper has kept bouncing back. That seems like a significant error

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Sunday, 19 January 2020 1:48 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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!!



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.





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.



CONTINUED

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

May be 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.



CONTINUED

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.





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
S SHORT 1-2 Years	Pwakkenbak (Tower Hill) MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit
M 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
L 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.

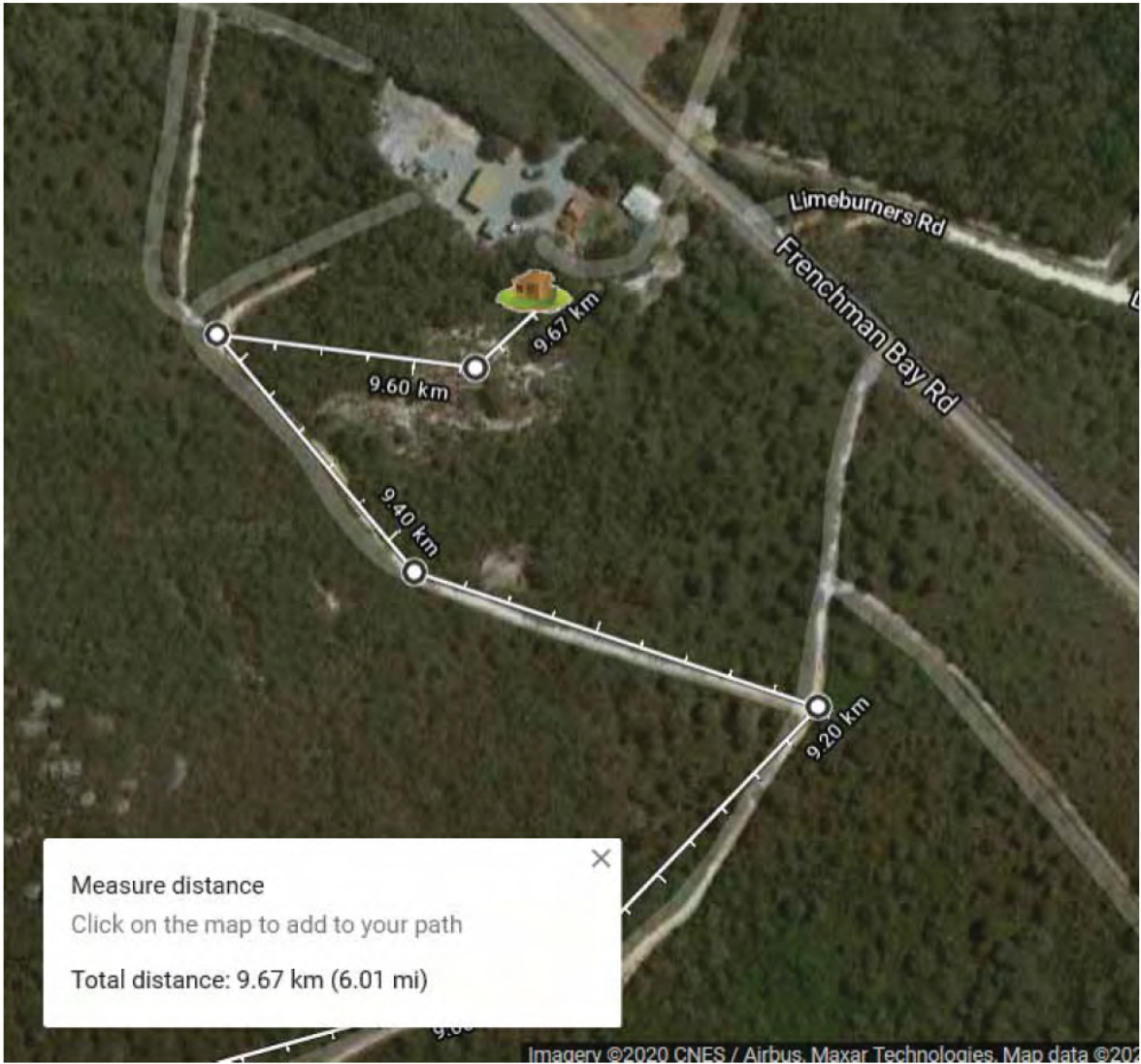
With a more professional tourism sea terminal in use, the number of tours that can use the Discovery Bay hub for departure then addresses who is coming to all other items.

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.



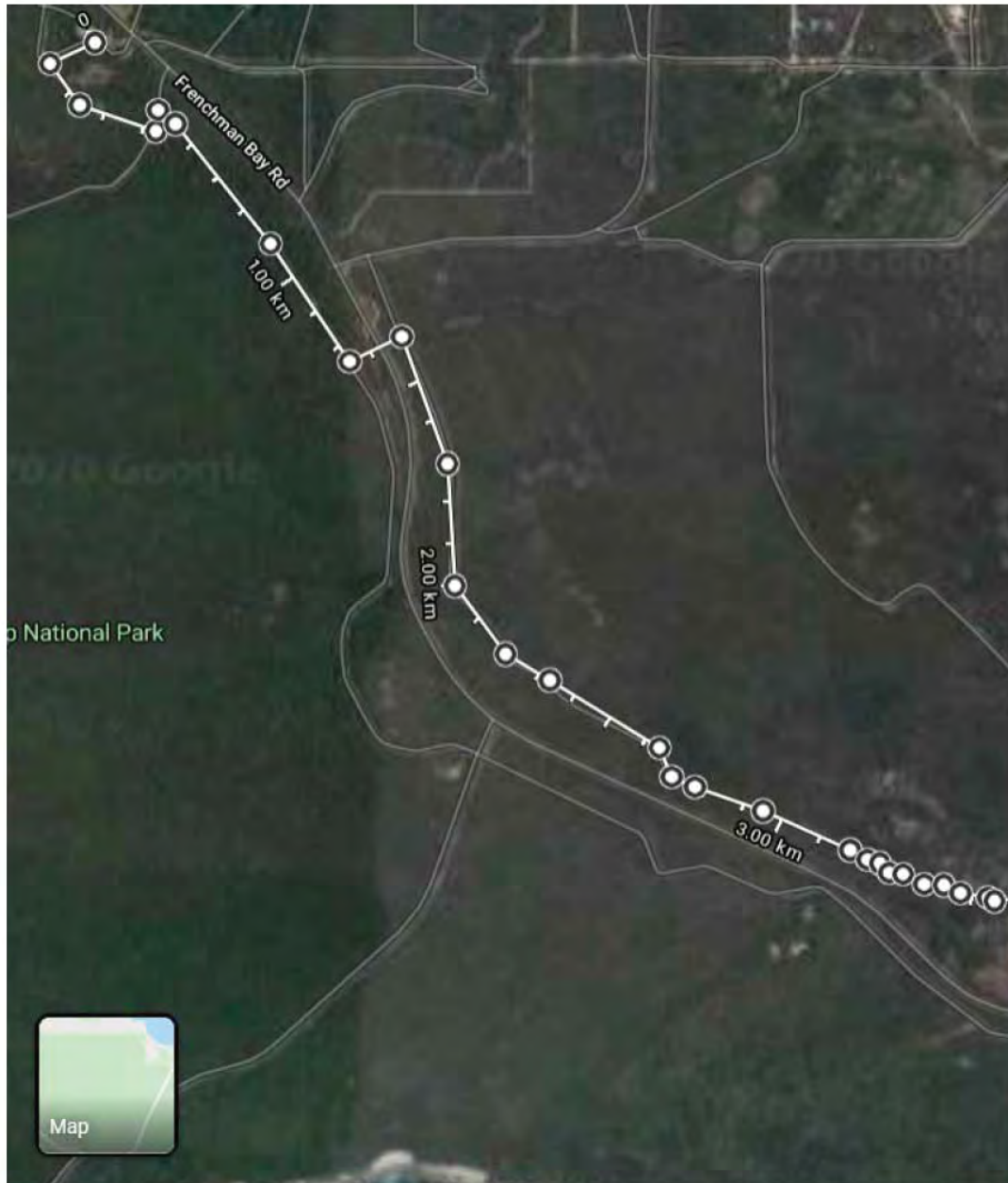
CONTINUED



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.



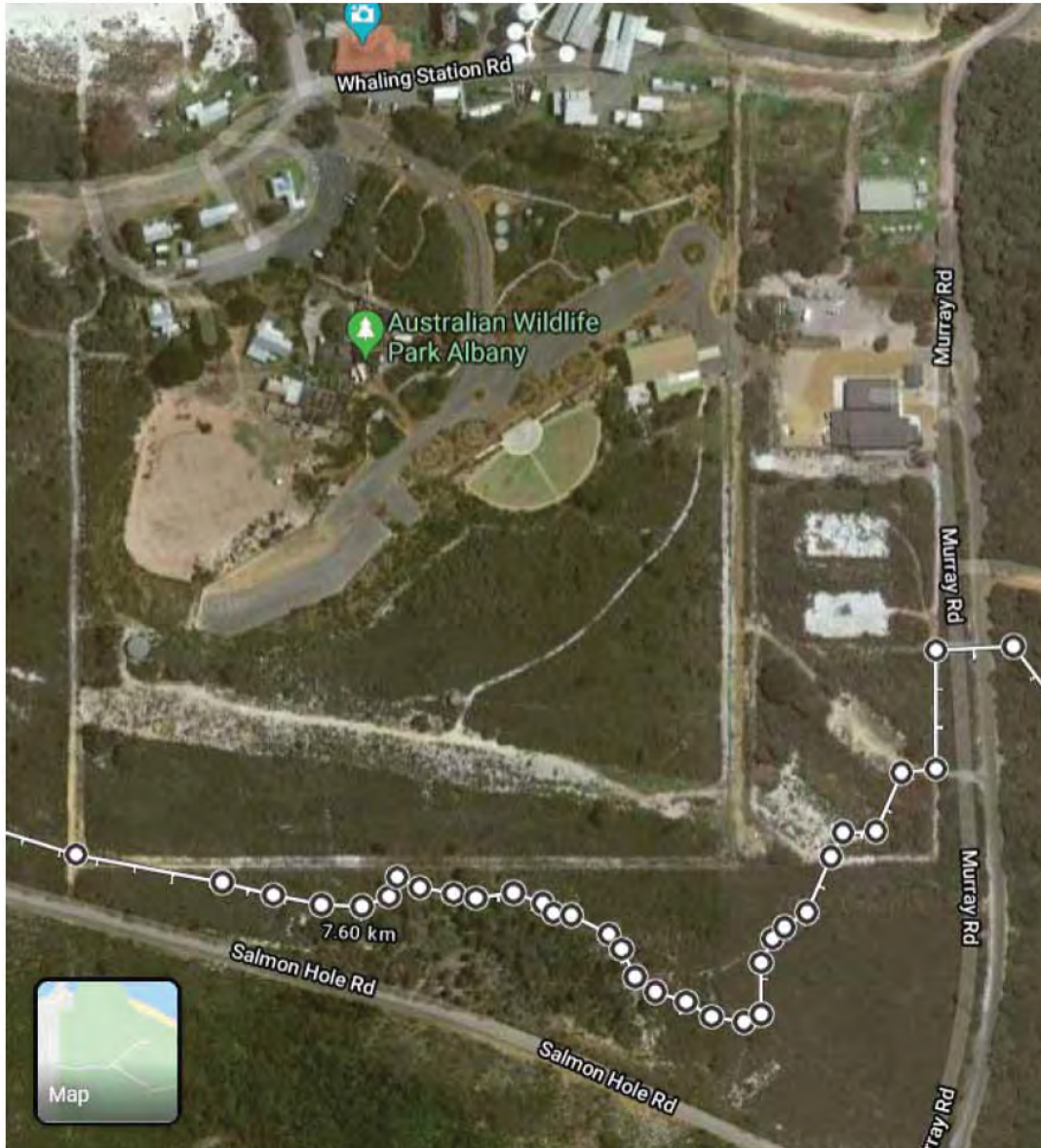
CONTINUED



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.



CONTINUED



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.

[REDACTED]



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.

[REDACTED]





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:

Sent:

To:

Subject:

Sunday, 19 January 2020 2:27 PM

trails@gscore.com.au

Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) - Mountain Bike Trail Comments

200119_1427

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 signature]





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 lightening 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-NbISpi_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.



CONTINUED

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-



CONTINUED

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





CONTINUED

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 Pwackenbak 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

200119_1935

Flag Status: Flagged

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 Biddi 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

200119_1944

Flag Status: Flagged

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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Sunday, 19 January 2020 8:18 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au

200119_2018

Public comment - in Disagreement on development of Porongurup MB trails

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 signature]



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.

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

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?





CONTINUED

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 yahooing 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?



CONTINUED

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.





CONTINUED

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.





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- 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” lesson 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.

[REDACTED]



From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

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 as 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.



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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.





CONTINUED

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.)*





CONTINUED

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 significants 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 RMTP 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
----------	------	------	------------	-------------------	---------

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]
 [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:****Sent:****To:****Subject:**

Sunday, 19 January 2020 9:42 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
Submission - SAFETY

200119_2142**Flag Status:**

Flagged

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 racine 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
Flag Status: Flagged

200119_2155

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 asterisk 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



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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.





CONTINUED

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.





CONTINUED

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:

If there is a great way to finish the event, the Club and Albany should be proud to host such a great and dispersed weekend. With the majority of riders coming from out of town, Nick Watts the Club President said, "It is a great opportunity to show what Albany has to offer in terms of mountain biking".

This is a very worked comment that really is after the fact, it is a pity that Albany has virtually no sanctioned MTB trails. It is great to see that an active community of riders built with a good total of time on the road and 100km of MTB trail. It shows that something is seriously wrong. For the whole year there is no reason, or a reason to visit Albany, there is simply nothing to do. But in September every year the locals come together and put on something remarkable and for that weekend of the year there is every reason to come and experience something amazing in Albany.

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.



CONTINUED

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 world's 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, Pwakkenbak 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





CONTINUED

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 Biddi 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 Biddi 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.



CONTINUED

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: [REDACTED]
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
 [REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 19 January 2020 10:55 PM
To: trails@gscore.com.au
Subject: Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

200119_2255_1

Flag Status: Flagged

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 local the 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. How thin 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





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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.





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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.



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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 publically 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:

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

CONTINUED

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 Pwakenbac 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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:
Attachments:

Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:15 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 Regional Trails Master Plan Comments due 19/1/20
 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 Signature]



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





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.

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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED]
Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:15 PM
trails@gscore.com.au
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.

RE: Section 4. Trail Development Proposals.

200119_2336

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:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Sunday, 19 January 2020 11:38 PM
 trails@gscore.com.au
 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





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





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 Quaranup 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 Lapthorne
 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 signeters 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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GSCORE
Great Southern Centre for
Outdoor Recreation Excellence

Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

BACKGROUND REPORT



June 2019

Disclaimer

This document has been published by the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE). The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Background Report (hereafter Trails Background Report) 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.

The trail projects identified in the Trails Background Report are based on existing information available from local and state agencies, community organisations and not-for-profit groups. The trails list is not comprehensive and estimates of infrastructure, time frames and costs are indicative only. Projects may be subject to review and change to meet new circumstances. Projects identified in the Trails Background Report should not be taken as a commitment by stakeholders to fund these projects. Unless otherwise indicated, public funding of projects is not confirmed.

Acknowledgment

GSCORE gratefully acknowledges the funding support of the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) and Lotterywest in funding the development of the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan.



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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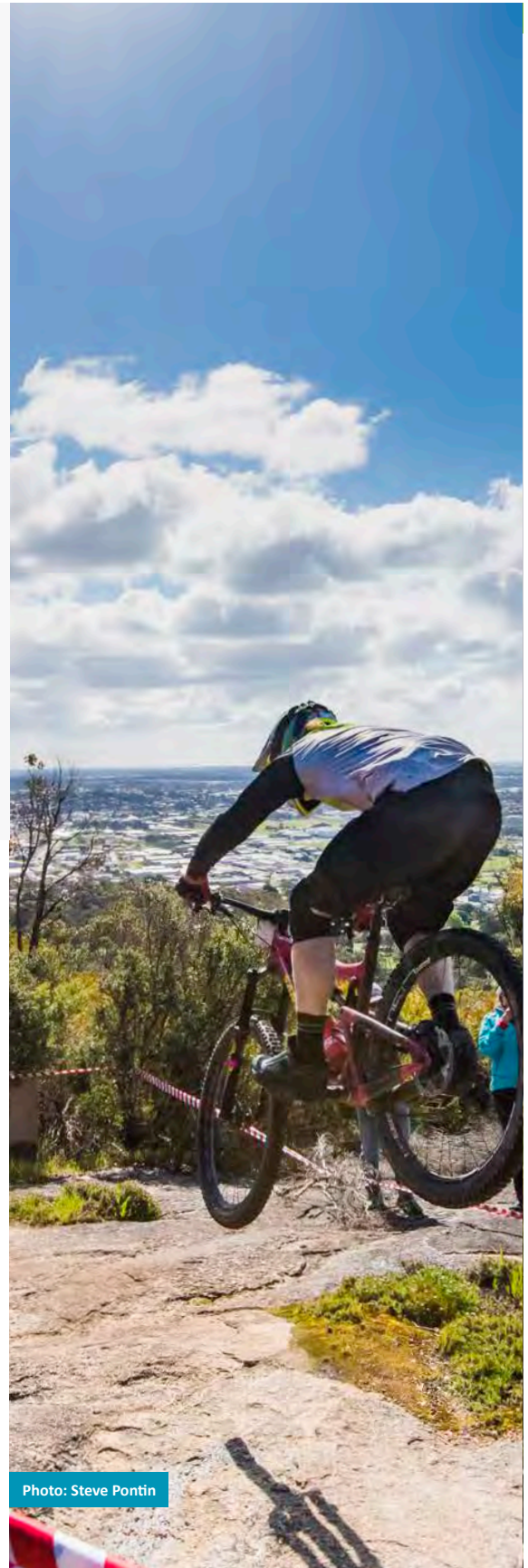


Photo: Steve Pontin

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Photo: David Bomba

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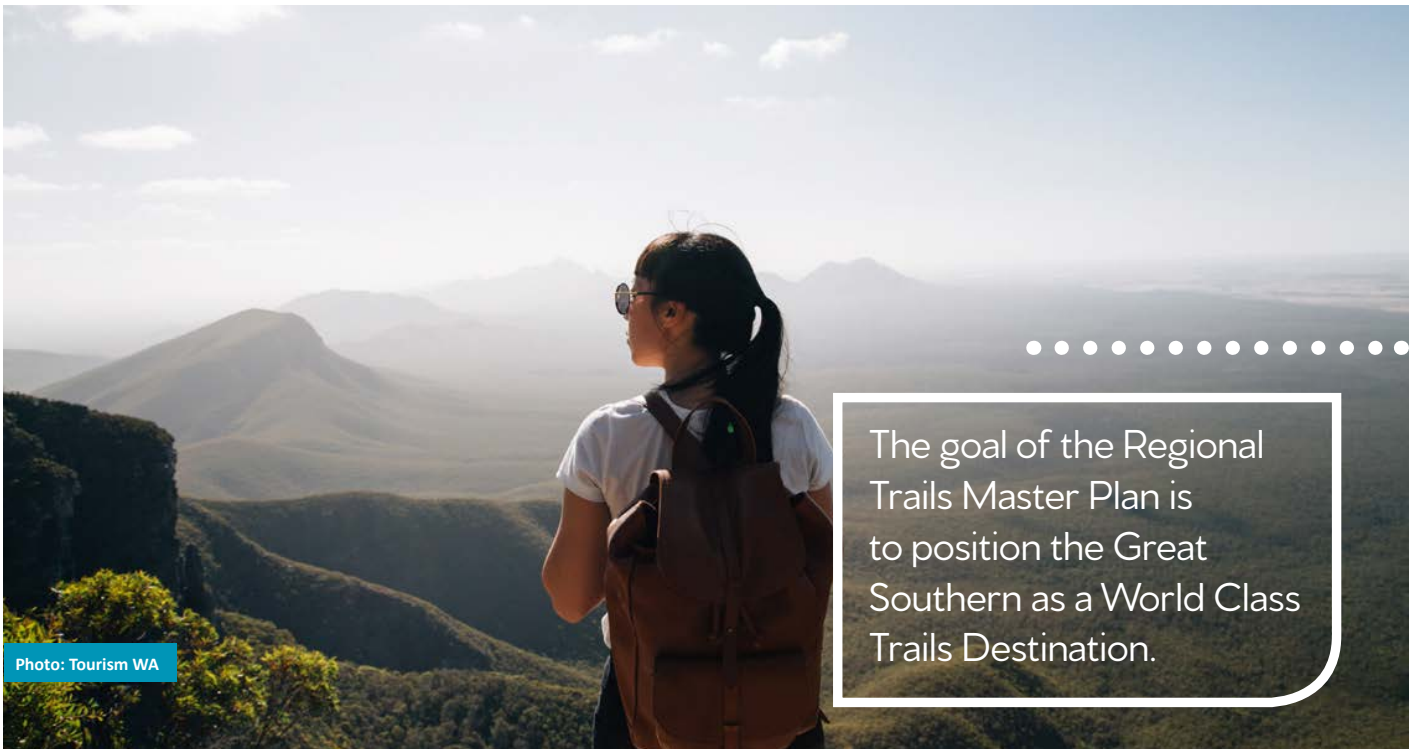
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The goal of the Regional Trails Master Plan is to position the Great Southern as a World Class Trails Destination.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Great Southern region is currently engaged in a master planning process for the development of active leisure trails. Many examples from trail destinations nationally and internationally demonstrate that effective planning and management of trail networks, associated with strategic investment in trails and related infrastructure, leads to better long-term outcomes in relation to trail planning, design, construction and maintenance. The need for a regional trail master plan is identified in the Great Southern Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2018-2020 and the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan (2018).

The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) will identify a coherent and clearly outlined program of trail infrastructure development across the Great Southern region over a ten-year period (2019-2029). The Master Plan will focus on a range of nationally and regionally significant trail experiences suited to different user groups across the Great Southern. It will guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and provide a vision of what the trail network across the Great Southern will look like in the future. It will cater for a diversity of trail users, types and experiences, and involves future planning for relevant trail towns, trail networks and visitor services.

The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) is delivering this project in conjunction with project partners - the 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). The project has received funding support from all our project partners, as well as Lotterywest and the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF).

Purpose of the Trails Background Report

The Trails Background Report is the first deliverable in the master planning process. The purpose of this background report is to provide the RTMP project partners with an overview of the current trail networks in the region and an understanding of the social, health, economic, and environmental benefits of trails in order to identify opportunities for potential trail development.

WHY DO WE NEED TRAILS?

*The Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017–2021*¹ is a high-level strategic planning document produced by the Western Australian state government to guide future investment and ensure planning consistency and sustainable trails development across the State. It recognises the role that trails play in encouraging participation in outdoor recreation and driving economic growth through nature-based and adventure tourism. It also highlights the importance of trails in helping communities to realise important health and wellbeing benefits, to make social and cultural connections, and, when correctly designed, to provide environmental benefits.

What are trails?

“Trails are pathways or routes that are used for recreation, tourism and appreciation of natural and cultural values. Trails may be short or long; be part of a trail network or a single journey; be used for one activity or be shared by several different trail activities; be primarily used by local residents or form a visitor attraction; be purpose-built paths or routes designated by signage and information.”²

Active leisure trails may be terrestrial (e.g. hiking, walking, running, mountain biking, cycling, equestrian) or aquatic (e.g. paddling, snorkeling, diving). They can also involve the use of motorised transport where a vehicle is the primary means of experiencing the natural environment (e.g. trail bikes) or where it provides a means to access recreation sites (e.g. 4WD, on-road vehicles). Many trail experiences include a focus on local culture, heritage, and produce (e.g. arts trails, food and wine trails). Trails may form part of a designated and sanctioned trail network or can be informal (and in some cases unsanctioned by land managers). They can be linear or looped and may be standalone or linked to trail centres and towns.

The WA Strategic Trails Blueprint classifies trails according to a hierarchy of local, regional, and national significance depending on their social, community and economic characteristics. Trails are also categorised according to an agreed classification system and standard (i.e. grades). These standards are specific to each trail type (e.g. walking) and are not interchangeable.



National Trails

An extended trail or trail network that is of sufficient quality with appropriate facilities, products and services to be recognised beyond the State and to attract visitors to WA (e.g. Bibbulmun Track or Munda Biddi Trail)



Regional Trails

A major trail or trail network that services a population centre or large regional community, with facilities and services of a standard and appeal that could attract visitors from outside the region



Local Trails

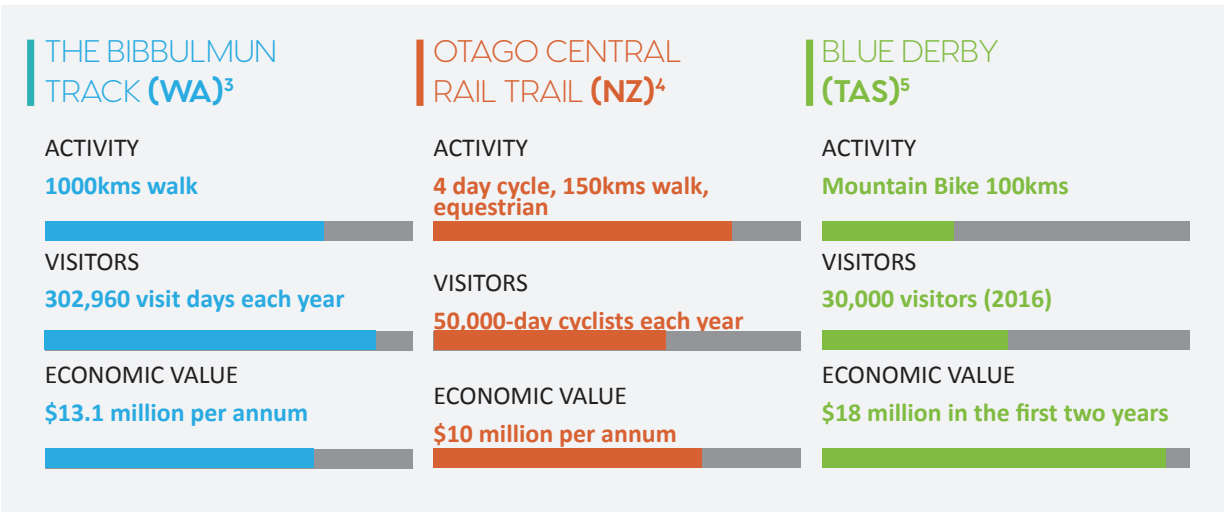
A trail that services the local community and provides facilities suited to local use. Some local trails may have potential for development to regional status

THE BENEFITS OF TRAILS

Trails are used by residents, tourists, outdoor enthusiasts, sporting clubs, schools, and other interest groups. They can be accessed by people of all ages and abilities and provide an opportunity for the community to experience improved health outcomes and cultural enrichment through interaction with the environment. Trails encourage outdoor recreation activity leading to improved physical and mental wellbeing for residents.

Communities also benefit from economic development associated with trails. They provide employment and business opportunities associated with trail development, construction, and maintenance, as well as tourism and events. Numerous examples for trail development projects in Australia and internationally demonstrate the economic value of trails.

Trails are popular for active leisure and they bring social, economic and health benefits to individuals and communities.



WALKING

Nationally, walking is the most popular form of exercise enjoyed by 32% of men and 52% of women.⁶

Nationally, running and jogging is the fourth most popular form of exercise (15%) and trail running is experiencing unprecedented growth.⁶



CYCLING

Between 2016-2018, 7% of Australians had a cycle holiday experience in WA, and 26% of Western Australians undertook a daytrip in WA involving cycling.¹⁰

In 2015, 19% of Western Australians owned a mountain bike, and this figure is growing with over 120,000 mountain bikes purchased every year.⁸

Cycling is undertaken by 14% of men, and 9% of women nationally.⁶



Trail trends

The popularity of active leisure, individual fitness and outdoor recreation activities is increasing, and trail-based activities are central to this growth.

Visitors are drawn back to WA to experience its natural beauty time and again. **Almost 90%** of those whose last two trips to WA were for a holiday experienced 'amazing natural landscapes or national parks' on both trips.¹²

Of the **3,371,100** visitors to Australia's South West in 2018, the majority were from WA. These visitors had a **total spend of \$1.615M**.¹³

2.7 MILLION

An estimated 2.7 million overnight visitors to WA participated in a nature-based activity in 2015-2016.¹¹



EQUESTRIAN

64% of horse riders spend 2-8 hours per week recreational riding, and 54% regularly ride 2-5km.⁷



SUP

Sales of stand-up paddleboards and kayaks point to a growing interest and demand for water-based trail activities.⁹



GSCORE

Trails Background Report

GREAT SOUTHERN TRAIL NETWORK

In January 2019, GSCORE conducted an audit of existing and planned trails in each local government area (LGA) across the Great Southern region. This audit revealed that the Great Southern region has many trails with different characteristics. However, because most of these have been developed in isolation from each other, the region lacks a coherent trail offering. There is a high concentration of trails close to coastal areas, while inland areas, despite having natural attractions including parks and reserves, are very poorly served by trail infrastructure.

Existing trails in the Great Southern

Trail Types

- Walking is relatively well catered for with a variety of grades available, although trails are concentrated in the Lower Great Southern.
- There is a significant lack of sanctioned mountain bike trails.
- There are a number of informal road cycling routes, but very few recognised cycle trails.
- There are two recognised dive trails, and few formally recognised canoe trails.
- There are two designated bridle trails.
- Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders.

Trail Experiences

- There are very few looped trails, and most of these are short town walks.
- Apart from the two iconic, long distance trails (Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Trail) there are few trail products that appeal to a broad market and attract mass visitation.
- Several local governments in the hinterland areas have heritage trails and town walks.
- There are many informal routes (e.g. walking, cycling, bridle, trail bike) used primarily by residents.

Trail Information

- The region lacks consistent trail signage.
- There is no comprehensive source of information about the region-wide trail offering.
- There are few physical and/or promotional linkages between trails.

Trail Management

- There are a diversity of trail construction and maintenance standards, funding sources and governance arrangements.
- There are currently no recognised trail towns (hubs), trail centres, or trail networks.

Table 1: Existing Sanctioned Trails in the Great Southern (31 May 2019)

Trail type	Total Distance (km)	Number of trails
Walk	194	91
Walk (long distance)	179	2
Dual use (walk and cycle)	103	18
Off road cycle (long distance)	243	2
Mountain Bike (MTB) Trails	1.3	1
Equestrian/Bridle Trails	84	2
Dive Trails	0.6	2
Aquatic Trails	81	10
TOTAL TRAILS	885.9	128

Note: This audit only considered designated or sanctioned trails, not informal and/or unsanctioned trails.

Table 2 describes the spread of these trails across each LGA. A complete list of trails in each LGA has been provided to the project partners.

Table 2: Number of sanctioned trails by trail type in each LGA (31 May 2019)

LGA	Walk	Walk (long)	Dual	Cycle (long)	MBT	Bridle	Dive	Aquatic	Total
Albany	35	1	5	1	1	1	1	10	55
Broomehill-Tambellup	3								3
Cranbrook	3								3
Denmark	18	1	9	1		1			30
Gnowangerup	5								5
Jerramungup	9		1				1		11
Katanning	6								6
Kent									0
Kojonup	3		2						5
Plantagenet	8		1						9
Woodanilling	1								1

Note: Includes trails managed by DBCA or other bodies where these are located within LGA boundaries

Lack of trail planning at a local or regional level

In addition to a trails audit, GSCORE undertook a comprehensive review of existing planning documents at a local, regional and state level. This audit revealed that there has been little local level planning to meet the growing demand from residents for the construction of trails and trail networks. Except for the City of Albany, which is implementing its Trails Hub Strategy, none of the other local governments in the Great Southern have current local Trails Master Plans or equivalent documents. However, the need for trails master planning is listed in the LGA priorities in the *Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan* and is identified in several LGA strategic documents, including community or recreation plans.

Some LGAs have trails committees or project groups. The City of Albany has a Trails Project Control Group overseeing the implementation of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy, as well as project-specific working groups for individual trails/reserves. The Shire of Jerramungup has an active Bremer Bay Trails committee; and the Shire of

Denmark has a trail planning group in recess. The Shire of Plantagenet has recently established a trail working group. Seven of the region's eleven LGAs have population bases below 2000 residents and struggle to commit capital and human resource towards trail planning and development.

While there are many trails, there are significant gaps in the types of trails and trail experiences. The current trail supply is insufficient to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

WHAT KIND OF TRAILS WOULD THE COMMUNITY LIKE TO SEE DEVELOPED?

Throughout March to May 2019, GSCORE undertook an extensive community consultation process that involved key stakeholders, including landowners, land managers, local governments, the regional development commission, tourism organisations, peak recreational bodies, user groups, and the broader community. The main data collection techniques were face-to-face workshops, meetings with stakeholder groups, and an online survey. The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local government for trail development. See Appendix A for a summary of the community and stakeholder engagement process; and Appendix B for a summary of the online survey results.

Trail ideas

Stakeholder groups and community members were asked to identify gaps in local and regional trail provision and to generate ideas for future trails. Most of the discussion focused on local trail ideas that would cater to the needs of residents. Opportunities to increase visitation to the Great Southern through trail-based tourism were also discussed.

• Long distance walk trails

These trails could follow rivers, stock routes, and historic sites. Link or extend trails and where possible link with existing long-distance trails.

• Local town and heritage walks

Strong desire to see local informal trails recognised, and existing trails to be upgraded and better advertised to promote the town.

• Walk trails

There is strong interest in developing looped trails of short to medium length (half-day to day walks), particularly off the Bibbulmun Track and/or associated with existing attractions.

• Drive trails

Desire to see an extension of existing trails, Silo Trail, Great Southern Treasures etc, and new trails which link historical places, natural values, or other linkages.

• Mountain bike

Need for designated mountain bike trails including purpose-built MTB park within City of Albany, Shire of Denmark, and/or Porongurup National Park. MTB to cater for all users from black/double black, to beginner rides for families.

• Road Cycling

Desire to improve signage and mapping for using existing roads to enable long distance cycling routes into the hinterland areas, linking with national parks.

• Equestrian

This group is not well catered for and requires specifically designed trails. Short and long-distance trails were discussed, following old stock routes. Common issues were inadequate parking facilities, access, and knowing where to go as signage is poor or absent.

• Rail trails

Particularly in the Shires of Woodanilling, Kent, Kojonup, Katanning, and Gnowangerup, which could be developed into a network offering different rail trail experiences.

• Snorkel trails

Development possible at four different sites in the Shire of Denmark, with extended opportunities at each site.

• Cultural heritage




Desire to see walk or drive trails that focus on Aboriginal stories of significant places and history. This could involve interpretive information via signage or via audio (using an App) and/or using Aboriginal guides.

• Trail bikes

Are not catered for at all, with no dedicated trails or official trail bike tracks in the Great Southern.

Common themes

In addition to trail ideas, the consultation process also elicited information on several key issues associated with planning, maintenance, and promotion of trails:

	<h3>planning</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails are not a current priority for many LGAs • There is no coordinated approach to trail planning within LGAs or across LGA boundaries • LGAs lack knowledge of existing trails in their area • LGAs lack trail planning documents • There is concern about the costs associated with building trails • Trail users are concerned about safety issues with dual and multi-use trails • Uncertainty about who the responsible organisation or land manager is for PROPOSED trails
	<h3>maintenance issues</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty about who the responsible organisation or land manager is for EXISTING trails • Little or no budget for maintenance (LGAs and DBCA) > work is opportunistic or doesn't occur at all • Approvals - process unclear or takes time • LGAs lack knowledge of trail design • LGAs are concerned about ongoing maintenance costs for future trails • Trail users are concerned about the poor condition of many trails
	<h3>promotion</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no coordinated approach to marketing or promoting trails • Lack of understanding of promotion opportunities • Most trails are not listed on the Trails WA website • Lack of signage • Lack of knowledge about where to go to access a trail

Support from land managers

Many of the trail ideas that emerged through the community consultation process involve planning and collaboration across multiple land tenures. The exceptions to this are town trails and short walking and cycling trails.

GSCORE has initiated discussion with all key land manager groups to consider their appetite for trail upgrades or new trail development. Individual organisations are bound by their own policies and procedures, which may conflict with future trail development.

Table 3: Summary of feedback from land managers (May 2019)

Organisation	Role	Support	Concerns
LGAs	Key land manager, roads, inactive rail lines, public open spaces, recreational areas.	High	Cost of construction and maintenance.
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)	Operational Policy 13 (Recreation on Crown Land) stipulates that the level of activity permissible must be at 2012 levels only, and that any new activity since then is not permissible. Public drinking water source areas (PDWSAs) are surface water catchments and groundwater areas that provide drinking water to cities, towns and communities throughout the state. PDWSAs are proclaimed under the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947. DWER has responsibility but will consider offering management to others.	Low-Medium	Will discuss options when the project has more detail (Round 2 consultation). Project will need to work around boundaries or catchment areas.
Water Corporation	As above	Low	Exclusion zones apply. Plan work around boundaries.
Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions	Key land manager for parks and reserves, and crown land. Responsible for overall management of Munda Biddi Trail and Bibbulmun Track.	Medium	Supportive of two potential Munda Biddi realignment considerations. Will consider other opportunities on a case by case basis. Trails need to comply with identified uses listed in individual Management Plans.

Table continued on following page

Organisation	Role	Support	Concerns
Main Roads WA	Responsible for all state roads except within designated town sites. Responsible for 1,609 km in the Great Southern.	Medium	Road reserve width varies greatly and may contain native vegetation which is subject to clearing regulations.
Department of Transport	Regional Bike Network Plan identifies cycling opportunities as part of transport routes. Opportunity for smaller towns and City of Albany to be part of Great Southern Cycle Strategy.	High	Looking for opportunities to collaborate on regional transport routes.
Public Transport Authority (PTA)	Owens the leases for active and disused rail corridors. Manages lines to the west of the north-south freight line.	Low	Usually unsupportive of any development in the past.
Arc Infrastructure	Leases rail corridors and manages lines to the east of the main north-south freight line.	Low	As above.
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	Provides support and access to planning documents and frameworks.	High	Ensure consistent planning across the region. Need to focus on unique points of difference.
Peak Bodies and local user groups	Such as Outdoors WA, Bushwalking WA, Bibbulmun Track Foundation, Munda Biddi Trail Foundation, and local MTB clubs, cycling clubs, equestrian clubs, bushwalking and trail running groups, and kayaking groups.	High	Desire to see trails infrastructure improved at local and regional level.

Strong desire for trails development from the community, requires collaboration and tenure agreements.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THIS PROJECT?

The goal of the Regional Trails Master Plan is to position the Great Southern as a World Class Trails Destination.

The trail audit and community consultation process has shown that to achieve our vision there is an urgent need to develop a range of different trail types that will address local needs while providing unique and diverse trails experiences to increase visitation. The following key objectives for the RTMP have been endorsed by the project partners:



Table 4: Project and planning principles

Principles	Implications for planning
We want to ensure sustainable trail development	The project will adopt the sustainable trail design principles in the DLGSC/DBCA Trail Development Series
We want to develop a range of different trail experiences (terrestrial and aquatic)	Include a range of different trail activities
We want to cater to different user groups and abilities	Include a range of grades, levels of difficulty, and styles
We want to disperse visitors across the region	Identify trail projects across the entire region
We want to showcase our unique landscapes	Build experiences around our unique points of difference
We want to build partnerships across LGA and regional development commission boundaries	Identify projects that cross boundaries
We want to provide a coherent and exciting array of experiences across the region that keep visitors in the region for longer	Focus on experiences not trails
We want to collaborate not compete	Put the user experience first
We want to attract visitors from outside the region	Focus is on nationally and regionally significant trails

Importantly, the RTMP will identify nationally and regionally significant trails that have the potential to attract residents, intrastate, interstate and international visitors to our region. These trails will be complemented by an array of trail-based experiences and services across the region that encourage visitors to remain in the region for longer. The project will identify and prioritise areas where high quality, sustainable and accessible trails could be developed, including locations capable of hosting state, national and international events.

Our goal is to establish an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks that cater to different trail user groups. In doing so, we draw on the trail model outlined in the WA Strategic Trails Blueprint. A trail model defines how a trail or set of trails can be developed and applied to a population centre or an individual site. Trail models heavily influence all parts of trail planning, design, construction and management. These three trail models are shown in the diagram that follows.

1.

TRAIL NETWORK

A collection of linked trails, often of same type, typically accessed via a trailhead.
E.g. Pemberton, Porongurup National Park, Bremer Bay

2.

TRAIL CENTRE

A managed trail or trail network supported by dedicated on site trail related services and facilities. May be stand alone or part of a trail hub. E.g. Margaret River

TRAIL CENTRE

Individual Site

TRAIL TOWN

A population centre that offers a large range of high quality trails, trail user related services, facilities, businesses, branding and signage. (Also known as a trail hub). The aim of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy is for Albany to become a trail town.

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OPPORTUNITIES

Funding for trails is not unlimited, and the cost of maintaining trails to a high-standard should not be underestimated. Rather than developing a long 'wish list' of potential trail projects, the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan will create a short list of opportunities

that can be realistically delivered within the ten-year time frame. Based on the recognised trail models described on the previous page, there are several ways that our project partners can engage in future trail development (see Table 5).

Table 5: Trail development opportunities

Trail Focus	Aim	Planning Required	Investment	Example
Existing local trails	Develop and enhance designated local trails and/or upgrade informal recreational trails to meet the criteria of becoming a trail network .	Upgrade trail infrastructure such as signage, interpretation or mapping.	Low cost, many trails already exist, often managed by LGA.	Enhance local town walks, cultural heritage walks, or short cycling routes using a common theme based on history, culture, or nature.
Develop trail linkages	Develop trails to meet the criteria of becoming a trail network and or trail centre .	A coordinated planning approach to develop and establish links with existing long-distance routes for cycling and or walking. Requires trail infrastructure such as new trails, signage, interpretation or mapping.	Higher costs associated with new trail construction; relatively low cost for signage, mapping and interpretation.	Develop a drive or cycle trail map and interpretation that uses the existing network of sealed and unsealed roads. Re-align or connect existing trails through short sections of purpose-built trail.
Construct new nationally or regionally significant trail experiences	Develop trails to meet the criteria of trail centre or trail town .	Integrated planning across multiple tenure, approvals from several land managers, detailed concept designs for development of different trails experiences, and services, branding and signage.	Higher cost needed to leverage funding from all tiers of government.	Support the implementation of the City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy to enable the city to meet its aim of becoming a designated Trail Town. Other opportunities where there is currently little to no provision for trails are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose-built mountain bike parks offering a full range of experiences • Long distance road and off-road cycling, including rail trails • Purpose-built trail bike riding area • Medium length (10-20km) equestrian trails • Aquatic trails

How will the project support these opportunities?

In the next phase of the project, GSCORE will work with specialist consultants to develop regional trail plans for different trail activities (e.g. walking, mountain biking, etc). The different elements of Phase 2 of the project are outlined below.



Photo: Travis Dean

- ✓ Identify opportunities for local trail projects and regional trail linkages
- ✓ Identify regionally and nationally significant trail projects
- ✓ Regional Trails Marketing Plan
- ✓ Trail Building Network

This Trails Background Report includes an inventory of existing trails in each LGA management area. This will help to identify potential opportunities for local trail upgrades or regional trail linkages.

The next stage of the project is to develop a list of priority trail projects. We will do this by identifying facilities, uses and organisations that might benefit from co-location, and provide opportunities to coordinate these activities around clearly defined trail centres and trail networks.

Several LGAs have identified marketing and promotion as a current gap. Project partners will have access to marketing resources via established links with Australia’s South West, the Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated, and Great Southern Treasures.

The network will enable sharing of resources, training and information across LGAs thus reducing the financial burden on any one ratepayer group. It will lead to improved outcomes in relation to trail standards and quality, and ongoing trail maintenance, thus ensuring that infrastructure spend delivers long-term sustainable benefits to the community.

Regional planning has already provided an opportunity for many stakeholders to be consulted early in the process and to develop a common vision. GSCORE is working at a regional level ensuring that a wide spectrum of community interests, including land managers, trail user groups, cultural groups, and local service groups, are engaged in the project. Acting in partnership will give strength and scale to trails development, increasing the potential for new development and funding opportunities for LGAs and other land managers.

This approach will ensure that the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan will meet the growing demand from residents for sustainable trail development and capitalise on the economic opportunities associated with trail-based tourism. GSCORE looks forward to delivering a well-considered, realistic, and cost-effective Regional Trails Master Plan for the Great Southern.

APPENDIX A – Community Consultation Methodology

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Activities

GSCORE employed a range of different methods to maximise engagement opportunities:

Table A1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Techniques

Method	Description
Community Engagement	
Community workshops	Facilitated 15 community trails workshops across the region. There has been an extremely positive response with local community members, outdoor enthusiasts and elected representatives contributing to the sessions. A total of 184 people attended the workshops (<i>see Table A2 below for a complete list of workshops</i>).
Online Survey	An online user survey was widely promoted via Facebook, on the GSCORE website, and at community workshops. 367 responses were received. See Appendix B for a summary of the survey results.
Albany residents	The project has not held open community consultation meetings in the City of Albany, as the RTMP aims to align with the existing Albany Trails Hub Strategy. However, the project team is involved in the City of Albany Trails Project Control Group, and the project coordinator has met with five Albany-based trail user groups and clubs. A significant number of Albany residents completed the online survey (see Appendix B).
Stakeholder Engagement	
Noongar Engagement	The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and Wagyl Kaip have appointed an Aboriginal representative to the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG). A representative of the Wirrpanda Foundation also sits on the SRG. Members of the Aboriginal community have been engaged through a Noongar consultation workshop.
Council Briefings	To date, GSCORE has presented to nine Shire Councils on the economic and social benefit of trails at Council meetings.
Members of Parliament	Briefings have been held with Federal and State elected representatives.
Business Groups	Through the Stakeholder Reference Group, the project is engaging with business organisations and tourism bodies in the region, including Australia's South West, Great Southern Treasures, the Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated, Regional Development Australia – Great Southern, the Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Denmark Chamber of Commerce, all of whom are represented on the SRG.
Publicity and Promotion	
Social media	GSCORE and its partners have promoted the project extensively via social media, particularly Facebook.
eNews	An eNewsletter (n = 605) is distributed monthly.
Media Coverage	In 2019, ten news stories or interviews have appeared in local and state print media and on radio.

Community Consultation Workshops

Workshops, of one and a half to two hours in length, were held in the following locations during Phase 1. The workshops were promoted via Facebook, an eNewsletter, in local papers and via Shire news bulletins, and through direct invitation by Shire staff.

The workshops were facilitated by Karl Hansom, RTMP Project Coordinator, and focused on collecting: (i) information about existing trails in each area; (ii) ideas for local trails; and (iii) ideas for regional trails.



Table A2: Number of participants at each community consultation workshop (Phase 1)

LGA	Location	Date	Number of participants
Broomehill-Tambellup	Broomehill	28 March 2019	9
	Tambellup*	8 May 2019	10
Cranbrook	Cranbrook	2 March 2019	8
Denmark	Denmark	10 April 2019	21
	Valley of the Giants	26 April 2019	10
Gnowangerup	Gnowangerup	22 March 2019	6
Jerramungup	Jerramungup	2 May 2019	6
	Bremer Bay	3 May 2019	15
Katanning	Katanning	3 March 2019	8
Kent	Nyabing	9 May 2019	9
Kojonup	Kojonup	3 April 2019	22
Plantagenet	Mount Barker	22 March 2019	8
	Mount Barker	4 April 2019	20
	Porongurup	9 April 2019	17
Woodanilling	Woodanilling	8 May 2019	15
TOTAL			184

*Noongar elder engagement workshop

APPENDIX B – Trail User Survey Responses

An online trail user survey was open for six weeks during April and May 2019. The survey was promoted via Facebook, through direct email to a database of trail users which included workshop participants and members of the public who attended the 2018 Albany Trail Forum, and through Shire-based social media.

Number of Respondents

There were 367 respondents, of which 255 (69.5%) were residents of the Great Southern. The majority of Great Southern respondents were from the Lower Great Southern region (Albany, Denmark, Plantagenet).

Table B1: All respondents by place of residence

Location	Number	%
Great Southern	255	69.48
Other location	101	27.52
No response	11	0.29
TOTAL	367	100

Table B2: Great Southern respondents by local government area

LGA	Number	%
Albany	149	58.43
Broomehill-Tambellup	6	2.35
Cranbrook	3	1.18
Denmark	46	18.04
Gnowangerup	2	0.78
Jerramungup	2	0.78
Katanning	4	1.57
Kent	1	0.39
Kojonup	5	1.96
Plantagenet	30	11.76
Woodanilling	7	2.75
TOTAL	255	100

Demographic Summary

69% of survey responses were aged between 25 and 54. Less than 4% were under 25 years of age. 53% of all respondents were men. Among Great Southern respondents, however, 53% were women.

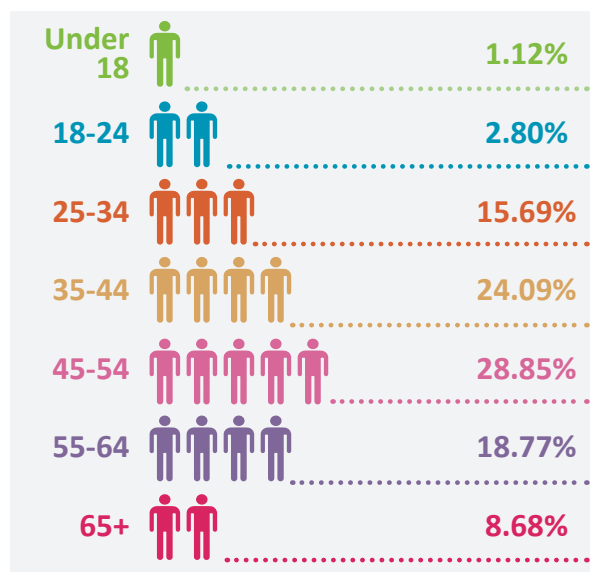


Figure 1: Age of all respondents (n=357)



Photo: SUPline WA

Trail Use

The respondents were all active trail users. 75% of Great Southern respondents used trails in the region a few times a month, with 40% using trails in the region every week. 50% spent between two and four hours on trails each visit.

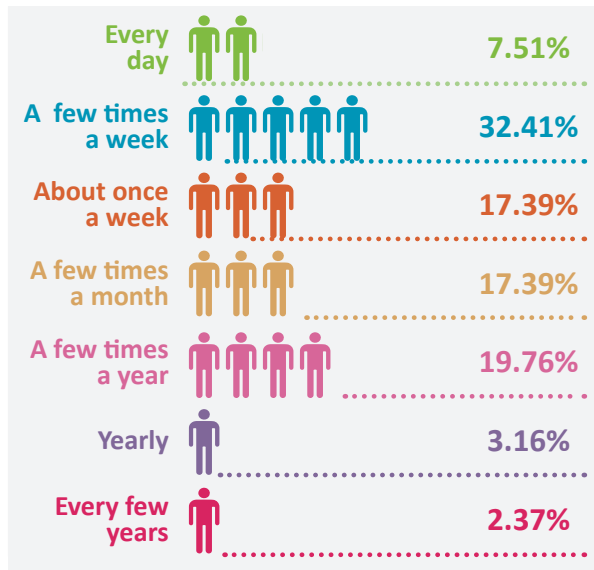


Figure 2: Frequency with which Great Southern respondents used trails (n=253)

The majority of respondents rated their hiking ability as intermediate or advanced (73%). There was a more even spread of abilities amongst other activities.

Table B3: Level of ability for all trail types, all respondents

	Never Tried	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Hiking	7%	20%	51%	22%
Mountain biking	29%	28%	29%	16%
Cycling	25%	24%	41%	10%
Horse riding	51%	26%	12%	12%
Snorkeling	22%	34%	36%	9%
Kayaking /Canoeing	16%	42%	37%	5%
Trail biking	42%	16%	24%	18%

Walking/Hiking (71%), mountain biking (40%), and trail bike riding (26%) were the most popular trail activities from all respondents. Amongst Great Southern respondents, the most popular activities were walking/hiking (73%), mountain biking (44%), and paddling (26%).

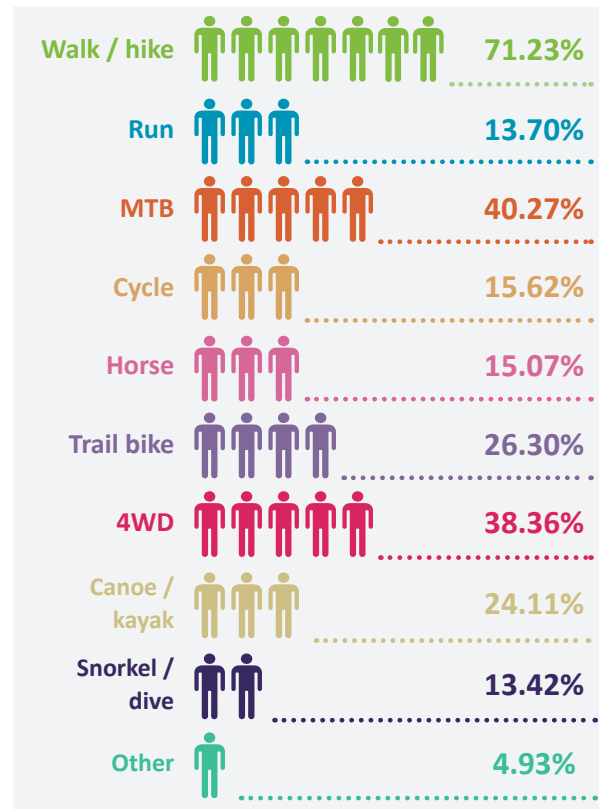


Figure 3: Most popular trail activities, all respondents (n=365)

Social Aspects of Trail Use

Most respondents preferred to explore trails with a friend or partner (72%), however many also indicated that they used trails solo (49%), with their family (40%) or in a small group of less than six (52%).

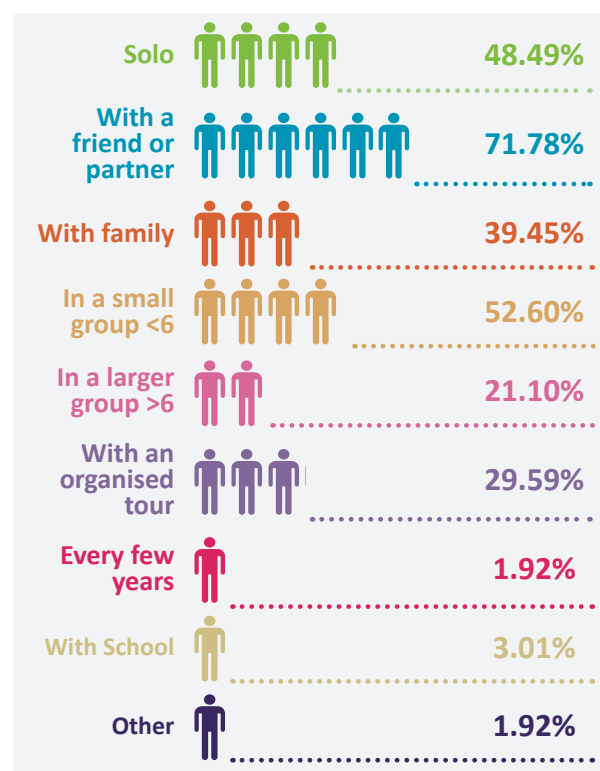


Figure 4: Who the respondents explore trails with, all respondents (n=365)

38% of Great Southern respondents were members of a trail-based group or club, 26% were members of an online trail group (e.g. Facebook), and 48% were not members of any group.

Trail Promotion

Great Southern respondents gathered information about trails through word of mouth (73%), friends and family (54%) or social media (45%). For responses outside the Great Southern social media ranked highest (67%).

Table B4: How respondents find out about trails, all respondents

Answer choices	Responses (%)
Word of mouth	67.67
Social media pages	50.14
Friends/family	49.04
Brochures/maps	34.25
Social media groups	31.23
Club	27.40
Trails WA website	26.58
Books/guides	20.27
Trail apps (e.g. Strava, AllTrails)	19.45
Internet/blogs	19.18
Events	13.70
Other	7.12
Tour operators	2.74
Teacher/school	2.74
Podcasts	1.92
Television	0.82
Radio	0.82



Trail Visitation Habits

60% of respondents who resided outside of the region, visit the Great Southern to access trails several times a year.

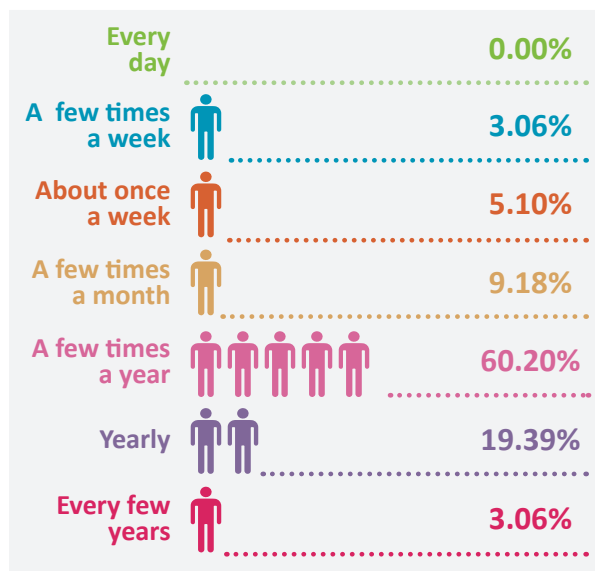


Figure 5: Frequency of visits to Great Southern trails, non-residents (n=98)

59% of Great Southern respondents would travel more than 50km to access a trail, with 44% stating they would travel more than 100km. 67% of non-resident respondents would travel over 100km to access a trail.

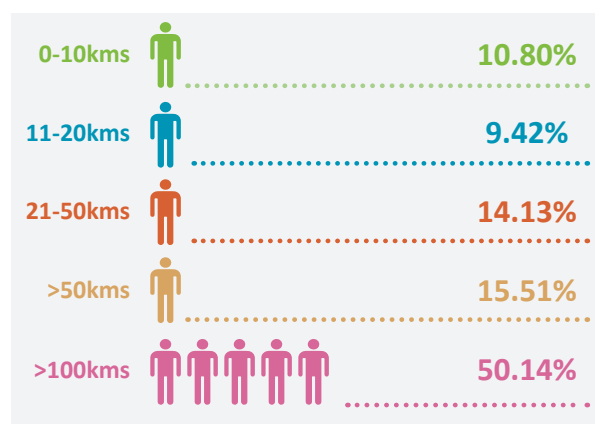


Figure 6: Willingness to travel to use trails, all respondents (n=361)

Trail Ideas

Respondents were asked what type of trail experiences they would like to see developed in the region. The most common responses were: mountain bike trails (25%), trail bike trails (18%), hiking trails (14%), and bridle/equestrian trails (14%). 285 survey respondents provided suggestions for new trail locations and these have been incorporated into the trail ideas database.

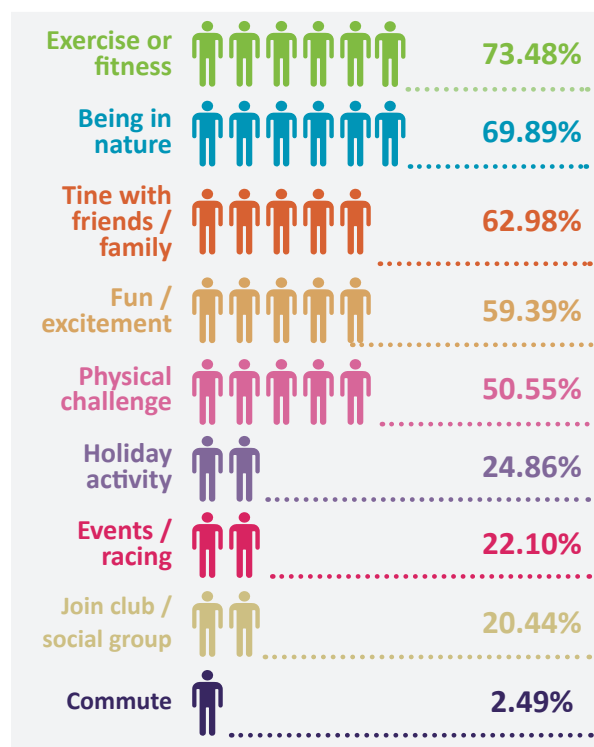


Figure 7: Main reasons for using trails, all respondents (n=362)

Reasons for Trail Use

The main reasons for using trails were Exercise/Fitness (74%), Being in Nature (70%) and Time with Friends/Family (63%)

Feedback on Great Southern Trails

- 265 respondents provided open-ended comments on trails in the region. Their responses focused on:
- The need for more trails (18%)
- Improvements in trail facilities (e.g. parking, signage, water, toilets) (11%)
- Management issues (e.g. maintenance, safety, design, sustainability) (22%)
- Improved marketing and maps (7%)

Endnotes

1. *Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017-2020*, Department of Sport and Recreation.
2. Ibid, page 18.
3. *Bibbulmun Track User Survey Report 2014-2015*, Bibbulmun Track Foundation.
4. *Otago Central Rail Trail User Survey 2014-2015*, Otago Central Rail Trail Trust.
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