

**Have
your
say!**

Te Tai o Poutini Plan Proposed Plan

Submission form

We need your feedback. We want to hear from you on the proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan. What do you support and what would you like changed? And why? It is just as important to understand what you like in the Proposed Plan as what you don't. Understanding everyone's perspectives is essential for developing a balanced plan.

Your details:

First name: Hadley Surname: Mills

Are you submitting as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation? Individual Organisation

Organisation (if applicable): _____

Would you gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission? Yes No

If you **could** gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission please complete the following:

I am /am not directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that (a) adversely affects the environment; and (b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

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Signature: hadley mills

Date: 10/11/2022

Your submission:

The specific provisions of the proposal that my submission relates to are:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Direction | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy Infrastructure and Transport | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Risks |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical and Cultural Values | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Environment Values | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General District Wide Matters | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zones | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schedules |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appendices | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General feedback | |

All submitters have the opportunity to present their feedback to Commissioners during the hearings process. Hearings are anticipated to be held in the middle of 2023. Please indicate your preferred option below:

I wish to speak to my submission I do not wish to speak to my submission

If others make a similar submission, would you consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing?

Yes, I would consider presenting a joint case No, I would not consider presenting a joint case

Public information - all information contained in a submission under the Resource Management Act 1991, including names and addresses for service, becomes public information. The content provided in your submission form will be published to the Te Tai o Poutini Plan website and available to the public. It is your responsibility to ensure that your submission does not include any personal information that you do not want published.

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Te Tai o Poutini
PLAN
A combined district plan for the West Coast

Report to: West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board	Meeting Date: 9th September 2021
Title of Item: Planning for a Ross to Ōkārito link for the wilderness trail	
Report by: Hadley Mills (Board Member)	

Discussion

Recently there were a series of workshops for the South Westland Long Term Visitor Plan facilitated by the Department of Conservation (DoC). The sessions were facilitated by Jonathan (Jock) Edmondson, Senior Regional Visitor Planner at the Nelson DoC office.

During the workshop there was discussion about a proposed project for a tourism trail between Ōkārito and Fox Glacier. It was clear that there was a strong appetite to support such a project. Local Government representatives (planning staff) and tourism industry stakeholders were in attendance. It is understood that there were separate workshops held with Poutini Ngai Tahu regarding the Visitor Plan.

Promisingly, the trail project could potentially support the Central Governments “four wellbeing’s”, but more specifically it could support increased conservation education and help initiate regenerative tourism.

While the project is an excellent concept there is further opportunity during the planning stage to earmark a future connection between this proposed trail and the existing Wilderness Trail ending at Ross, i.e. Ross to Ōkārito. There would be significant benefit in such a link, particularly for promoting conservation and education.

In order to earmark this future link, it is recommended that DoC staff commission a report by a suitably qualified consultant to prepare a report/map that plots a proposed trail corridor through the Conservation estate, from Ross to Ōkārito. This report/map should be used in a submission to the Te Tai Poutini Plan (once notified in 2022) with the intention of having an appropriate district planning classification/overlay for the trail corridor. The overlay should be accompanied in the TTPP with a suite of permissive planning rules (with clear environmental conditions and limits) for construction of the trail. The opportunity to submit on the notified TTPP (in early 2022) and earmark the project is an opportunity that shouldn't be missed.

Recommendations

Recommendation is that the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board resolve to:

1. *Support in principle a link between the existing wilderness trail and the proposed trail from Ōkārito to Fox Glacier.*
2. *Support including planning documentation for a link between the existing wilderness trail and the proposed trail (along with the planning documentation of the proposed trail from Ōkārito to Fox Glacier)*
3. *Support commissioning a report/map that could be used as a submission to the TTPP (once notified) in order to get a specific classification/overlay for the trail corridor (Ross to Fox Glacier).*

3/11/2022

Submission on the Te Tai o Poutini Plan

Prepared by Hadley Mills

1. Thank you for taking the time to read my submission on the Te Tai o Poutini Plan (TTPP).
2. My name is Hadley Mills and I am a registered landscape architect in New Zealand (NZILA) and Australia (AILA) with approximately 15 years professional experience across landscape architecture, planning and senior leadership. I am a “Making Good Decisions” certificate holder, and the former Planning and Science Manager for the West Coast Regional Council. I am also a past member of the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board. I have a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture with Honors, a Diploma of Management and a Certificate of Outdoor Recreation.
3. While I am currently living in Brisbane, Australia, I was born and raised on the West Coast, at Nelson Creek, and consider myself a Coaster.
4. I have no conflicts of interest in the matter of the TTPP, my motivation for this submission comes from my deep and enduring connection with the Coast and its people.
5. This submission was prepared in a personal capacity, not on behalf of an organisation.
6. My submission focuses on three main areas of the proposed Plan:
 - a. Outstanding Natural Landscapes,
 - b. a proposal for a permitted activity rule for multi-use tracks; and
 - c. general observations and feedback.

Outstanding Natural Landscapes

7. The West Coast region is approximately 2,327,600 Hectares (2.3m Ha) in area.
8. The Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL) overlay currently covers an area of 1,820,324 Hectares (1.8m Ha). This means the vast majority of the West Coast region (78%) has been proposed as ONL.
9. The Conservation Act, administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC) already protects 85-89% (GIS estimates vary) of the West Coast and most (if not all) of the area of proposed ONL. Therefore the protection required under Section 6(b) of the Resource management Act (RMA) is already achieved. The ONL layer is simply a duplication of policy with the same protection/restriction outcome and would be an inefficient use of policy.
10. I have observed the ONL maps, read relevant parts of the proposed plan, read relevant parts of the Section 32 evaluation and read relevant parts of the landscape expert report/s (Brown Reports).

11. I question the validity of the landscape assessment used to classify the ONL overlays across 1.8m Ha. The Brown Reports assessing ONLs have misused the application of “outstanding” in the context of the West Coast.
12. A landscape is considered outstanding if it is “conspicuous, eminent, remarkable or iconic” within the context of the area concerned – the context being a district if the assessment is being undertaken for a district plan, a region if for a regional plan or national if for national legislation or policy.
13. The NZILA Best Practice Note - Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1, states: “Outstanding Natural Landscape is a natural landscape that is particularly notable at a local, district, regional or national scale”.
14. Taking item 12 and 13 into consideration, the TTPP must only be concerned with the district or regional context, not national or international.
15. The Brown Reports state that the assessment has been done from a regional or “West Coast context”: “ONFL THRESHOLDS: (Overall Evaluation of Landscape Values in the context of the West Coast Region)”. This seems appropriate at face value, given we are dealing with a combined district plan.
16. I say “face value” because the Brown Reports have either mistakenly assessed the ONLs not from a regional context, but from a national context or have failed to assess the 1.8m ha thoroughly enough for a district/regional level assessment, i.e. at an appropriate scale. To suggest 79 photos (Brown Report - photos of Outstanding Natural Landscapes on the West Coast) is evidence to support classifying over 1.8m Ha as ONL defies any reasonable logic.
17. The TTPP is a combined district plan, and as mentioned above, the landscape assessment must be concerned with ONL’s from a district or regional context, not a national or international context. The majority (78%) of the West Coast may be an “outstanding, conspicuous, eminent, remarkable or iconic” natural landscape from a national or international perspective (emphasis on maybe), but from a district or regional (West Coast) perspective, at 78% coverage, no, of course not.
18. The West Coast almost entirely consists of a contiguous strip of mountains, forests and pristine waterways. It understandably follows that experts are awestruck when they visit, forgetting about “appropriate context” and as a result see almost everything (78%) as outstanding from a national perspective. While it is totally understandable that experts are awestruck, it does introduce an element of bias to the process and defies the course of natural justice.
19. ONL’s should obviously stand out or be “particularly notable” compared to the majority within its context; they must not be the majority within its relevant context. 78% is an absolute majority. Clearly, this simple logic has been lost in the process of identifying ONL’s.
20. For example, within ONL Unit 28 (approx 200,000 Ha) there are at least 14 vast mountainous valley systems captured in the overlay, some more than 20km long. While the expert may

have visited some of the valleys and hiked some of the tracks, they would actually need to visit and assess each of these valley systems, and experience the genius loci, at least, in order to determine if they should be classified as ONLs within the Unit.

21. If all 14 valleys were in fact visited by an expert landscape architect, they should then have determined that some, (not all) of those valley systems (including mountains, forests, rivers etc), are outstanding, i.e. the most conspicuous, eminent, remarkable or iconic within the group. But by bundling all 14 valley systems into one ONL unit, the result is counterproductive, everything is outstanding, and the concept of Outstanding Natural Landscapes is utterly devalued.
22. Three photos representing Unit 28 appear as evidence to suggest that approximately 200,000 Ha is ONL. To present three photos that represent the landscape character of 200,000 Ha is inadequate. I would expect many more, perhaps hundreds of photos for an area this size, not three. How can this possibly convey the identified evaluation factors.
23. It appears the expert assessing the ONLs has in fact, unintentionally, assessed them from a national or international scale or context.
24. Is 78% or the vast majority of the West Coast outstanding from a national or international perspective? Again, maybe, but the TTPP is not an appropriate planning instrument to be testing/assessing this. We cannot assess the outstandingness of the natural landscape from a national context in the district plan. While I would not support it, a National Policy Statement or Act of Parliament would be an appropriate place to test this. A district plan would be an inappropriate place.
25. Some may argue that ONLs should be assessed from a national context because the Resource Management Act 1991 promotes the “protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development” as a matter of national importance, in Section 6(b). It is very important to point out that it doesn't say ONLs should be assessed from a national context. What it does mean, is that within their local context, (here, a district context) the “protection” of ONLs are a matter of national importance. This difference should not be confused.
26. The blanket approach to classifying ONLs is totally inappropriate with no rigor or appropriate ground validation involved. It would be irresponsible to classify this vast area as ONL. There are vast valley systems, plateaus, mountains, lakes within most of the ONL units that will not have been viewed or visited. It is “painting with the same brush” to say the sum of their parts makes them outstanding. We could say and argue this point for anything.
27. The ONL overlay units and accompanying policy framework, as a package, is, by its nature, restrictive to natural resource use and development. It is restrictive for no particular reason, other than it is a requirement under the West Coast Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and RMA. For this reason we should ensure the overlay (if needed at all) is as minimal as possible. Keeping it as it is currently proposed will be unnecessarily restrictive to future low impact activities.

28. As mentioned in item 9, the vast majority (if not all) of the area covered by ONL is already Department of Conservation (DOC) estate, and protected under the Conservation Act. Proposed activities, land use or development within the DOC estate already need to go through a rigorous assessment process to get approval, including environmental impact assessments and potentially public hearings. It is already protected from inappropriate use and development.
29. The ONL layer, where it overlaps DOC estate (most if not all of it) is simply a duplication of protection/restrictive policy and certainly not an efficient or effective application of policy. Duplication of restrictive policy will only serve to discourage future appropriate activity in these areas, such as sustainable eco-tourism developments, walking tracks, biking tracks etc.
30. Some Planners may argue that they are taking a precautionary approach, to protecting matters of national importance, in protecting ONLs, but as mentioned above, the majority of the area is already protected under the Conservation Act. Precaution is already applied.
31. It is dangerous to cast restrictive policy across a vast area of landscape with limited ground assessment.
32. It is dangerous because perverse outcomes may well follow, where Coasters, through pure frustration in the bureaucracy and RM system, “take things into their own hands” with potential negative environmental effects. From a pragmatic point of view, it would be hard to blame them.
33. Considering the above points 7-32 I put it to the Decision Maker/s that the expert report/s assessing ONLs, unknowingly assessed the ONLs from a national (not district or regional) perspective, only using a handful of ground truthing assessments to cast inappropriate assumptions across 1.8m Ha. This being said, transparent, robust decision-making cannot be achieved based on the evidence provided.
34. The relief I seek relating to ONLs is as follows:
35. Either remove the ONL overlays and relevant policy framework and add a new policy outlining how the Conservation Act already provides for RMA S6(b) protection, or;
36. Remove the ONL overlay (keeping the relative policy framework) and insert a new policy that simply states - ONLs will be assessed, identified and mapped, strictly within the context of the West Coast, using a robust (including appropriate site by site ground truthing) methodology. This assessment, identification and mapping will occur within 5 years of when this plan comes into effect or when the West Coast Regional Council, who must fund the TTPP, has the appropriate resources to do so.

Proposal for a permitted activity rule for multi-use tracks.

37. I propose a series of permitted activity rules be written to allow for future bush clearing, earthworks, waterway culverts, bridge building and any other activities and land use

associated with the development, use and maintenance of multi-use recreation trails (similar to the West Coast Wilderness Trail).

38. These permitted activities should cut across all overlays except for perhaps wetlands layers.
39. Permitted activities should have strict environmental conditions regarding things like, clearance width, earthworks volume limits /km etc.
40. Please refer to Appendix 1, a Report to the West Coast Conservation Board, which outlines a particular application of the proposed permitted activity.

General observations

41. There are other major issues elsewhere in the plan of which I have not had time to address. I am concerned that some parts of the plan have been written from a national planning perspective, not taking into consideration West Coast resource management nuances or the interests of Coasters and their future generations. If a policy or rule does not conform perfectly to best practice national planning, that's ok, we should be bold and creative with policy.
42. Regretfully, I feel that in multiple chapters the TTPP does not take into consideration the matter of resource use and development in the West Coast context and feel the plan needs a full independent review. If it takes 2 years longer, to get it right, so be it. This is no fault of the TTPP committee, they have worked hard, it is simply a symptom of a rushed and underfunded program of work. With a rating base of approx 32 thousand residents it was always going to be underfunded and an uphill battle.
43. It is clear now that the West Coast has been used as an experiment for a combined district plan by the Central Government under the Local Government Reorganisation Scheme (West Coast Region) Order 2019. It has not gone as they planned and now they are considering local government reform/amalgamation as a result (which should have happened in the first place). For this reason the TTPP committee and WCRC should demand the Central Government fund all future TTPP work, further expert assessments and ongoing expenses as needed. West Coast ratepayers should not foot the bill for the government's experiment. If they were serious about it, they would have fully funded it from the start.
44. Considering items 7- 43, the scope of my submission covers the entire plan including every chapter.

Appendix 1 – Report to the West Coast Conservation Board.