

# **CRAIGIEBURN TRAILS**

**Mountain Biking in the Craigieburn Forest  
Park and Surrounds**



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## Document Purpose

This document sets out to provide an overarching plan for mountain biking in the Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds. It includes a longer-term vision, background on the current trail network, the benefits of the trail network, current and potential issues, goals and actions.

It is hoped this document can be

- a) A guiding template to be used for future questions and issues that arise. It is notable not all issues that the mountain biking community will face in relation to the Craigieburn area will be dealt with in this document but that key guiding tenets can direct the community with the challenges that may arise in the future.
- b) Used for further discussion with stakeholders to ensure consensus around mountain biking in the area.
- c) Used to guide development and maintenance in line with the requirements of the Conservation Management Strategy for Canterbury.

## Vision

**To develop and manage, collaboratively with the Department of Conservation (DoC) and other stakeholders, a high quality, cohesive and sustainable mountain bike trail network that will satisfy current and future demand.**

The Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds is a very high quality, unique, natural backcountry riding location. Our goal is to build and maintain the area to offer a unique multi-day backcountry riding experience utilising existing infrastructure.

We envision a trail running from Arthurs Pass to Springfield, providing multiple options for different levels of experience. It would be unique in two ways. Firstly, the riding would be on more natural trails as is the existing riding (and unlike most other multi-day rides in New Zealand). Secondly, it would provide loops for people to spend time at each stop. Currently multi-day rides in New Zealand are one directional with no side trails.

We see a high quality network of mountain bike trails as aligning with the Department of Conservation's goals.<sup>1</sup>

- *90% of New Zealanders' lives are enriched through connection to our nature*
- *90% of visitors rate their experiences on public conservation lands and waters as exceptional.*
- *90% of New Zealanders think the impacts of visitors on public conservation lands and waters are very well managed.*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/vision-purpose-and-outcomes/>

Appendix 3 lists the key points from the current DoC Conservation Management Strategy. These points outline current policy towards mountain biking in the Waimakariri basin. The Outcomes and Policies for mountain biking are supportive, so long as the development is considered and planned.

## **Background and Context**

### **Location**

The Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds are an area on the eastern side of the Southern Alps around 1 to 1.5 hours from Christchurch. The area has a diverse range of recreation users and is highly accessible from SH73 for day trips from Christchurch and elsewhere, and from camping and accommodation bases from Springfield through to Arthurs Pass. In the winter five ski fields provide an intensive use recreational experiences for visitors, while in between these ski fields, snow fields provide an off-piste experience free of structures.

Out of the winter months, the Craigieburn area is popular for mountain bikers from both Christchurch and increasingly further afield. Within the basin and adjoining Craigieburn Forest Park, a largely community initiative has been developing mountain bike tracks that link existing ski field roads and other recreational facilities and assets.

There is also some internationally acclaimed rock climbing in the area with the wider Castle Hill basin recognised as one of the premier bouldering venues in the world. People also enjoy walking, fishing, boating and swimming in the area.

### **Landscape and climate**

The area is characterised by the Craigieburn Range and a basin containing native beech forest, tussock lands, grazing lands, lakes and rivers, and some notable limestone rock forms. It has a climate that is cold in winter and hot in summer.

The land is primarily public and administered by the Department of Conservation. However there are farms, notably Flockhill Station and Castle Hill Station.

### **Tracks and Access**

The current track network contains a mixture of pre-existing walking tracks adopted as MTB/multi-use tracks, and recently constructed tracks which, although designated as multi-use, are predominantly used by mountain bikers. Mountain bike opportunities are spread though the Craigieburn Forest Park from the Porters Ski Area at the eastern end of the range, to the Craigieburn Ski area at the western end and can be accessed by the available skifield roads. The riding opportunities can be divided into several ‘hubs’ and a point to point experience:

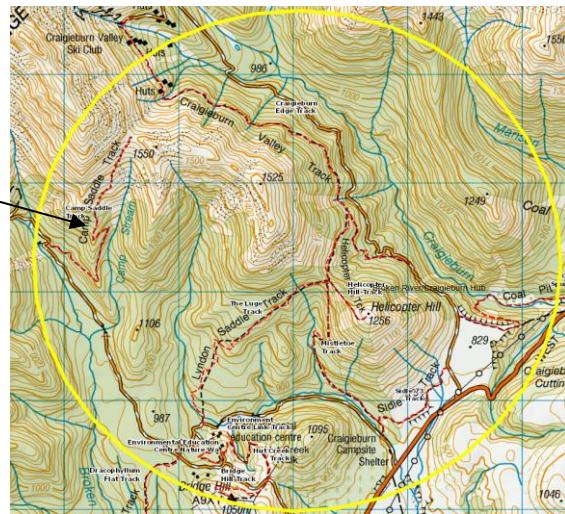
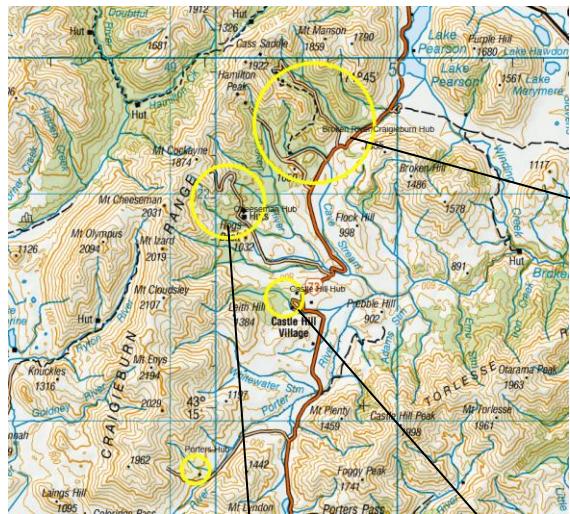
- ***Porters Ski Area Hub***
  - The Porters Ski Area has recently developed mountain bike trails that lead to and from their accommodation lodge at the bottom of the ski field. Rental mountain bikes are also available. There are currently 3 interlinking trails, with future plans to extend this

network onto public conservation land, subject to approval. These tracks are aimed at the beginner/intermediate segment. This area does not currently link to the rest of the network.

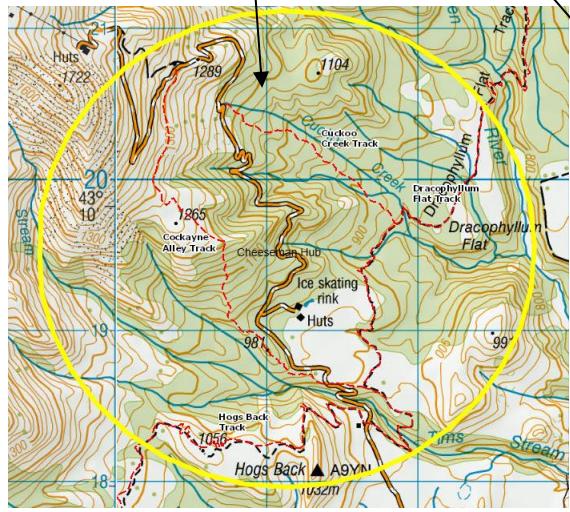
- ***Castle Hill***
  - Several tracks can be accessed from the Castle Hill Village including the Hogs Back Linear Trail which runs to the Cheeseman Skifield area. A small loop can also be ridden from the village utilising the Easy Up climbing trail and the Hogs Back track. This area generally serves the beginner/intermediate market segment and is linked to the other hubs in the area.
- ***Cheeseman Ski Area***
  - Several tracks including Cuckoo Creek and Cockayne Alley Track are now accessible from either the Cheeseman Skifield Road or the Dracophyllum Flat track and can be ridden in a variety of loops from the Forest Lodge accommodation. This area serves more of the advanced/expert market segment and is linked to the other hubs in the area.
- ***Broken River/Craigieburn***
  - The Broken River skifield road and campsite acts a hub for several of the older tracks in the Craigieburn area such as the Edge and the Luge. Additional tracks off pcl can also be accessed from this area. Several different loops can be ridden from the carpark (mountain bikers also park on the Craigieburn road to access the track in a similar way). This area serves the intermediate to advanced market segment and is linked to other hubs in the area via the Dracophyllum Flat Track and Sidle 73 track.
- ***Linear Trail***
  - Two main linear trails exist in the forest park; the Hogs Back Track and Dracophyllum Flat Track. These exist as tracks in their own right, but also serve as links between the hubs and also offer the opportunity, combined with the Coal Pit Spur track, to ride part of the length of the Craigieburn range. This experience currently finishes at Castle Hill Village.

## **Key Trail Hubs in the Craigieburn Area**

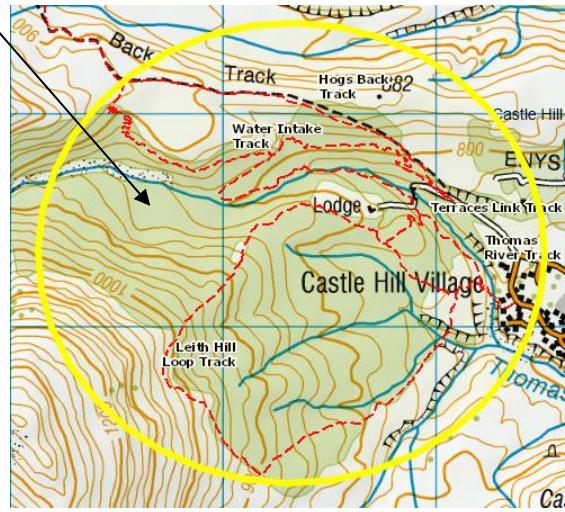
*a. Craigieburn Hub*



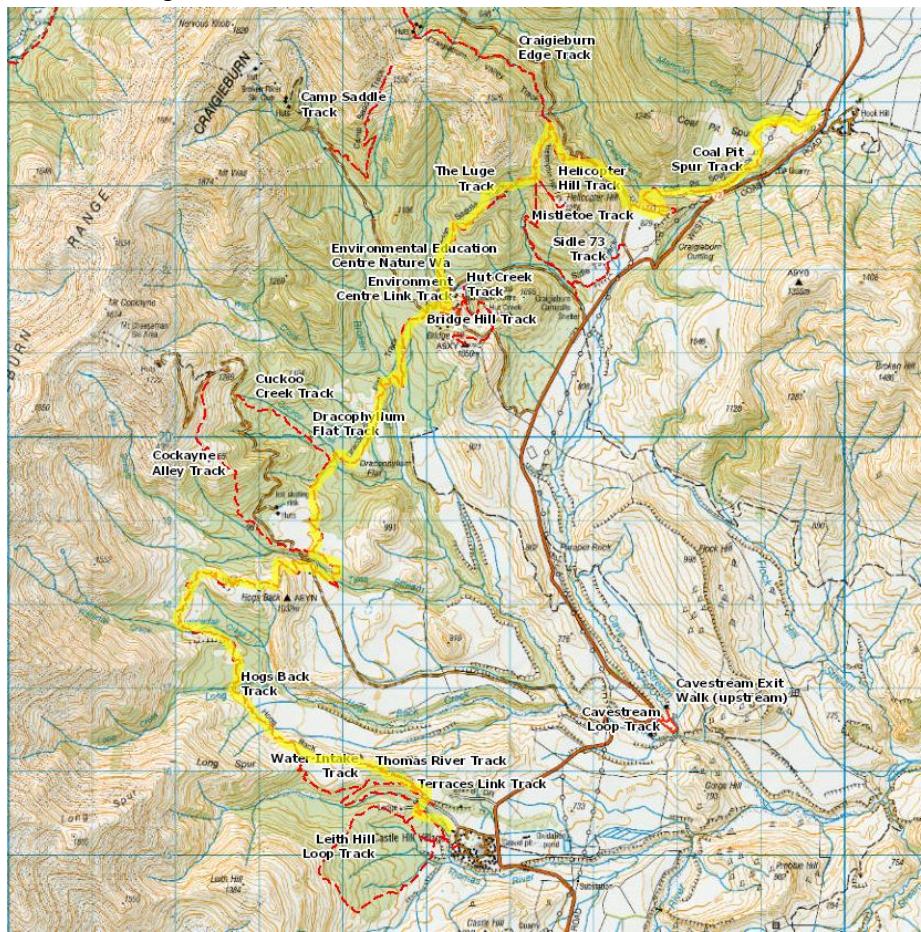
*b. Cheeseman Hub*



*c. Castle Hill Hub*



*d. Current Craigieburn Linear Route*



## Trail Usage and Demand

### Current Use

Track counters are in place on three trails - the Luge Track, Dracophyllum Track and the Hogs Back Track. For both the Luge and Dracophyllum Tracks the counters indicate increasing use year on year, which would support anecdotal evidence from users of the area that the tracks, hubs and associated infrastructure such as car parking feel busier. The Hogs Back has seen declining use since it was first developed, which is often the case with a newly available experience. It is still however, one of the most popular tracks in the area. In addition, the Mt Cheeseman has no track counter and tends to see a distinct group of users. Overall there is probably somewhere around 10,000 – 12,000 visits per annum.

Two races are run annually. Both are enduro events (a multistage mountain bike event with timed stages and untimed liaisons). One is organised by Gravity Canterbury and the other by a private New Zealand race organiser. Both races are well attended and usually sell out.

Two accommodation providers have started offer accommodation (Forest Lodge and Porters Ski Area Lodge) and, in the case of Porters Ski Area Lodge, pickups and shuttles to the trails. Porters Ski Area Lodge noted they would not be able to run without demand from mountain bikers and have noted increasing usage over the last two summers. Both lodges intend to continue operating over summer months.

### Hogs Back Track counter data<sup>2</sup>

| FY        | Count | Change from prev. FY +/- | Prop. days counted |
|-----------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2011/2012 | 8169  | NA                       | 0.24               |
| 2012/2013 | 7528  | -0.08                    | 1.00               |
| 2013/2014 | 8021  | 0.07                     | 1.00               |
| 2014/2015 | 6657  | -0.17                    | 1.00               |
| 2015/2016 | 6261  | -0.06                    | 1.00               |
| 2016/2017 | 6294  | 0.01                     | 0.84               |
| 2017/2018 | 4670  | -0.26                    | 1.00               |
| 2018/2019 | 5695  | 0.22                     | 0.33               |

Table 1: Actual/modelled total counts by Financial Year (period ending 30th June)

<sup>2</sup> Source: DOC <http://counterreports.doc.govt.nz/var/100092536.html>

*Luge Track Counter data<sup>3</sup>*

| FY        | Count | Change from prev. FY +/- | Prop. days counted |
|-----------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2012/2013 | 3589  | NA                       | 0.92               |
| 2013/2014 | 3900  | 0.09                     | 1.00               |
| 2014/2015 | 4748  | 0.22                     | 1.00               |
| 2015/2016 | 4989  | 0.05                     | 1.00               |
| 2016/2017 | 5697  | 0.14                     | 1.00               |
| 2017/2018 | 5357  | -0.06                    | 0.94               |
| 2018/2019 | 5783  | 0.08                     | 0.11               |

**Table 1:** Actual/modelled total counts by Financial Year (period ending 30th June)

*Dracophyllum Track counter data<sup>4</sup>*

| FY        | Count | Change from prev. FY +/- | Prop. days counted |
|-----------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2016/2017 | 1288  | NA                       | 0.71               |
| 2017/2018 | 1499  | 0.16                     | 0.98               |
| 2018/2019 | 1895  | 0.26                     | 0.32               |

### What is the Potential Use?

- i) Domestic – Sport New Zealand found in their activity study in 2013/14 that around 9% of the adult population of New Zealand participated in mountain biking. This alone is a pool of over 45,000 people in Canterbury alone and over 400,000 nationwide. As a growing activity and one where people will travel to (Sport NZ noted that mountain biking has increased in popularity from under 6% in 2007/08 to over 9% in 2013/14 & the Trail Fund Rider Survey found 80% of mountain bikers will travel for mountain biking) we see increased demand in the future.
- ii) International – It is estimated over 4% of visitors to New Zealand participate in some sort of cycling and just under half (46%) participate in mountain biking. At current levels of tourism in Canterbury this is a potential pool of just under 20,000 people which could rise to over 25,000 by 2024. Many international bike brands have used the area as a base for promotional riding.

### What draws or encourages people to ride in the Craigieburn Area, and what contributes to current numbers?

- i) **Setting** - Motivational literature tells us that the mountain bike trail rider has a preference for a single trail in a natural setting. Enjoyment of nature and scenery are identified as top motivating factors for mountain bikers. Research also indicates that one of the main reasons mountain bikers travel to ride is in search of authentic adventure &

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://counterreports.doc.govt.nz/var/100094055.html>

<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://counterreports.doc.govt.nz/var/100101369.html>

escape. They are looking for extraordinary experiences in the middle of nowhere. The basin and range landscape of the Craigieburns is particularly compelling and allows mountain bikers to easily immerse themselves in a mountain setting. The landscape is therefore likely to be a considerable drawcard for mountain bikers to this area.

- ii) **Demographic** - From the 2016 Trail Fund survey, we know that significant numbers of keen and engaged mountain bikers live in the Canterbury region, second only to Wellington. This is likely to have a positive impact on number using the trails.
- iii) **Accessibility** - The Craigieburn area is 1hr 20mins drive along SH73 from Christchurch and a similar time and distance from Rangiora. Users are generally willing to travel up to 1hr for a recreational experience, and up to 2hrs if that experience has an additional 'special' factor. This would be on the cusp of acceptable distance for many people, especially for those riders with additional time limits such as family commitments. However, the scenic beauty of the area may well provide that additional factor as a draw for riders to overcome the extra travel time. All hubs within the area are easily accessible via the SH73 and skifield access roads – mountain bikers can choose to ride at one of several hubs or multiple hubs in a day.
- iv) **Site specific transport** - There is presently a shuttle service running in the Craigieburn area which has been developed by the Porters Ski Area to both access current trails, but also in anticipation of additional mountain bike opportunities within the Porters Ski area. It is likely that this service will expand to service additional tracks such as a linear track, if there is evident demand. Notably the current Hogs Back track is a linear trail but this does not appear to have impacted on use.
- v) **Accommodation** - Accommodation is available at several of the hubs – Porters Lodge, Forest Lodge and various options at Castle Hill Village. A standard DOC campsite – Mistletoe Flat is available at the bottom of the Broken River Road, and a basic DOC campsite – Lake Pearson, is available at the northern end of Lake Pearson. Flock Hill also offer various levels of accommodation.
- vi) **Quality of Trail** - For many riders the trails in the Craigieburns provide the desired mountain bike experience – singletrack riding in forest where the trails provide a sense of flow. There are options which can be ridden variously to create numerous loops and there are also linear trails for those riders wishing to traverse the range. There is also a reasonable diversity of trail in terms of ability level, although there are no true beginner trails. Recently more advanced trails have been added to the network which has attracted more advanced riders.

## Trail Impacts

### Economic Impact

The economic impact of the mountain biking (and other recreational activities) available in the Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds can be summarised in two ways. It must be noted this summary is general in nature and a more accurate figure could be gained through engaging a consulting economist.

Firstly, the direct benefits. This is spending which can be attributed to the presence of the mountain bike trails such as the development of a trail, the building of a house or lodge to support private or commercial use of trails, or the spending by mountain bikers in the area. Specifically, these include

- Building (Castle Hill Village) & Rates (Castle Hill Village): This is the major impact. Over the last 10 years a significant development has happened with a material driver of people building houses in the area being recreational opportunities including mountain biking. An annual rates collection from these houses is included.
- Accommodation (Springfield, Porter's Lodge, Flockhill, Castle Hill Village, Forest Lodge, Craigieburn Valley): This includes spending on accommodation at various providers in the district. While there is restricted options for accommodation this can be found at a range of lodges (many traditionally winter facilities) and in the rental of houses in Castle Hill Village.
- Food & Beverage (Springfield, Sheffield, Porter's Lodge): This includes spending on food and beverages available through the few local providers.

In total this can be summarised as a direct economic impact of \$1.27m attributable to a few mountain bike trails in the Craigieburn Forest Park. Using a multiplier of 1.5 (Similar studies in Nelson and Queenstown have used higher multipliers but for assessing spending in the Selwyn District this lower multiplier is more appropriate) then the total economic impact is \$1.90m. We believe this can grow with the network of trials.

It is worth noting in a wider sense having several high-quality mountain biking destinations throughout Canterbury and New Zealand makes Canterbury and New Zealand an extremely popular destination for mountain biking with a wider benefit to the region and country which is far beyond the scope of this document. As noted above Tourism New Zealand estimates 4% of all visitors engage in cycling when here. This is 160,000+ people travelling to New Zealand each year because of the cycling opportunities.

Secondly, the indirect benefits. Economists refer to these as externalities. These are costs or benefits that people have not directly incurred. Many of these are listed below in section entitled Social Impact. It is hard to quantify these so instead we have just described them

- Make the greater area an attractive place to live and work: People like to work and live in areas where there are good facilities (be it hospitals, roads, and recreational facilities). We believe that the recreational facilities, particularly the mountain bike trails, in the area make the Selwyn District and surrounding areas a more attractive place to live and work.

## **Social Impacts**

As described above there are several positive impacts from a well maintained, exciting and developed mountain bike trail network. These include

- Health & Wellbeing: Cycling is a healthy activity that supports both physical and mental health.
- Family Engagement: Cycling is a popular family activity and there are numerous benefits to families and parents who engage with their children in such, or similar, activities.
- Community Spirit: The development and maintenance of trails involves groups of local people volunteering for a common goal.

## **Conservation Impacts**

- i) Wilding Pines: This is a significant conservation issue in the area at present. Concerted efforts from conservation groups and spending from government are being made to control this issue. It is both a threat to environment and to the recreational benefits the environment provides. We see that recreational groups can be a positive for this. More people passionate about the area means more people likely to support efforts to reduce wilding pines. More tracks in the area can make access to wild pine zones easier for destruction. Tracks also make it easier to run trap and bait lines.
- ii) Climate Change: There is significant infrastructure (roads, lodges and tows) in the area to support skiing in winter. There are five ski areas on the Craigieburn Range. In coming years with rising snowlines this is likely to make these facilities more redundant however mountain biking can make use of these facilities and ensure they are used to fuller effect. It is also noted climate change will have ecological effects (rising tree lines, more pests) and this will add to challenges in the area.

## **Physical Impacts**

- i) MTB Impacts: It is clear there is some impact to the development of mountain bike tracks. However, there is already significant impact to the landscape in the area through roads, ski fields, building, and grazing. In general, the mountain bike community respects the need for balance in terms of providing recreational opportunities versus maintaining the environment. As mountain bikers every effort must be made to make trails of low impact. This means more natural trails, finding difficulty in the tight and off camber nature rather than high speed or steep trails, minimising visual impact and trails in the forest. We also see that a trail network can support other conservation efforts (trapping, wasp-baiting). It is also noted that tracks/trails are used by more than mountain bikers with walkers and runners' significant users of these.
- ii) Maintenance: This has been an issue up until recently however a renewed effort involving CRAIGIEBURN TRAILS, Gravity Canterbury and other active mountain bikers has seen 3 work parties over the past 12 months alongside outside contractors involvement to fix issues such as closing unsustainable lines and re-routing trails, significant drainage work to make trails less fragile, resurfacing trails, new bridges,

and closing and re-routing trails to ensure safer more gradual gradients. CRAIGIEBURN TRAILS and Gravity Canterbury have adopted a maintenance plan with both bi-annual tasks and projects to guide them in coming years.

## User Impacts

- i) Shuttling & Racing: At the moment some trails, notably around Mt Cheeseman, are shuttled. This means mountain bikers are driven to the top of the trail and they ride down. This allows more “downhill” riding to be incorporated into a day’s riding. However, this has detrimental effects on the trails as it hastens wear and tear on both the trails and the access roads. Racing has a similar effect. Ref Appendix 2 DoC counter data for the Mt Cheeseman Skifield road.
- ii) “Community” Trails: One of the other issues in the area has been the development of trails without proper consent. These trails reflect a certain demand. Usually (but not always) they are more difficult trails. Many of these trails in the area are actually developed trails that existed in the past in some shape or form, such as ski field access tracks or deer trails. Purely banning these, and any trail development, will just see a continuation of their development. Other areas in New Zealand (Nelson, Wellington) have successfully managed this issue by using a collaborative approach. This has been achieved by engaging with the mountain biking community, and developing a clear process so the public have input into future trail development. This is the approach currently being adopted here in the Craigieburn Forest Park and surround. There have already been some significant efforts to communicate to the mountain biking community to stop the building of “community” trails.
- iii) E Bikes: These are increasingly popular. They allow a mountain biker to ride considerably further in any given time. This will have effects on trail erosion as it increases rides per trail and in general the bikes are heavier than traditional mountain bikes. This will increase maintenance demands.
- iv) Funding: Currently this is a significant issue facing mountain biking in the Craigieburn area. With no population base or club it is difficult to gain any regular funds and divert these into trail maintenance and development. The landowners, primarily DOC, have little money for this either leaving the trails without obvious regular financial support. SDC (Selwyn District Council) doesn’t view the trails as a community asset and refuses funding. Primarily funding is limited to Backcountry Trust with small donations from race organisers and donations.
- v) Management & Governance Structure: Formally the trails are managed via an agreement between Craigieburn Trails, a sub-committee of the Castle Hill Community Association (CHCA) and DOC. These are essentially a few keen mountain bikers who have houses in Castle Hill Village. This arrangement came from Paul Weber, who did much to develop the area, living in Castle Hill Village at the time and needing a vehicle under which he could apply for funding. More recently a valuable collaboration between Gravity Canterbury and Craigieburn Trails has developed. There are pro’s and con’s to all structures. The structure should be suitable to maintenance and development of trail network for years to come. There is a need to review the current management structure to ensure it is the best possible structure to maintain, govern and fund maintenance and development of mountain bike trails in the area.

## The Future

### A) The Need For More Trails

Currently as per the above background there is a network of trails across the Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds. These trails are often isolated, not well connected, and suffering from overuse in some areas. We feel there is a need for new trails on a variety of levels

- i) Creating cohesive networks for different levels of riders: A great intermediate network is different to a great advanced network or a great expert network. We accept that we can't be all things to all people. An example might be an intermediate rider who will ride up the Easy Up from Castle Hill Village but then be faced with a hard climb towards Mt Cheeseman and beyond and with little riding in the Mt Cheeseman area to satisfy them. This forces them onto the road (SH73) to ride out to Craigieburn Ski Field road and back to the village. This articulates a second reason as well.
- ii) Health and safety mitigation: At present riders are too heavily relying on SH73 and riding down ski field roads. With increased traffic, especially on SH73, there is an increasing risk, often amplified by the group nature of mountain biking. Loops that keep people off the State Highway and extensions that mean they are not riding downhill on ski field roads at speed is likely to reduce the chances of a car-cyclist accident.
- iii) Ensuring we provide interest and quality experiences to mountain bikers: Mountain biking is still a developing activity. It has exploded in popularity in the past 15 to 20 years. Advances in technology have made people more capable. This is continuing to fuel growth in demand. It is important that the trail network in the Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds continues to provide the great experiences it has in the past and this means continuing to develop the trail network. We want to remain world class in quality not quantity.
- iv) Managing increased demand: The combination of increased participation (Sport New Zealand found adult participation rates in mountain biking increased from under 6% to over 9% between 2008 and 2014.) and growth in the domestic population grows and tourist numbers means it there will be increased demand for the trails in years to come.
- v) Continuing to ensure that the Craigieburn Forest Park and surrounds is a recreational area: With changes in the climate and a significant infrastructure in

place we see that mountain biking can become an increasingly important part of the recreational landscape in the area and help ensure the facilities (roads, huts, etc) are utilised as much as possible.

## B) Strategies

- i) Creation of Loops – Creating loops that ensure a cohesive, safe, and high quality trail network that are grade appropriate.
- ii) Maintaining and Developing Current/Old Trails – Making use of existing trails (which may or may not be utilised as mountain bike trails) to ensure these are utilised to their fullest potential.
- iii) Developing Appropriate New Trails – That meet specific demands such as creating a loop of a particular grade, alleviate pressure on other trails, reduce/limit trail conflicts, etc.

## C) Goals

- i) To manage current mountain bike trails to acceptable standard.
- ii) To understand the needs of other users in the area and ensure we provide a forum for managing issues and impacts arising from mountain bikers.
- iii) To ensure mountain bike visitors to the area have safe routes that avoid conflict with vehicles
- iv) To develop a cohesive track network that meets the needs of a diverse range of mountain bikers

## D) Actions



## Potential Additions to the Network

### ***Proposal - Hogs Back Loop Track***

Purpose – the Hogs Back track remains the main and most popular intermediate track in the Craigieburn area. Although popular, its main detraction is the linear nature of the track, and while it is suggested to create a linear trail from Porters Skifield, this would provide an additional experience – it is likely that riders will still want to ride sections such as the Hogs Back. Providing this trail would increase the amount in intermediate trail and remove the need for riders to either shuttle or ride SH73 to return to their starting point. The suggested location is for the trail to be located along Hogs Back Creek, leaving the Hogs Back along the climb from Texas Flat, and re-joining the track at the top of the climb from Castle Hill Village. This would be a multi-use two way trail. Developing this trail would help to:

- Increase the options for intermediate riders and remove pressure from other tracks
- Create a legitimate intermediate loop track which are favoured by riders
- Remove the need to shuttle or ride along SH73 providing a safer experience for riders

### ***Proposal - Cockayne Alley Track/Hogs Back Track Connector***

Purpose – Provides advanced riders with a legitimate longer loop option, rather than the straight up/down experience that is presently offered. This would be a single direction advanced trail to satisfy the requirements of the increasing numbers of advanced riders. Developing this trail would help to:

- Provide advanced riders with additional opportunities and take pressure off other tracks
- Provides an additional longer loop ride within the Cheeseman hub area
- May help to alleviate the demand for and development of ‘pirate’ trails which have become established in the area.

### ***Proposal - Link Trail from Porters Skifield to Castle Hill Village***

All current hubs within the Craigieburn range are currently connected via linear trails, with the exception of the Porters Skifield hub, which exists on its own. The Castle Hill Community would like to explore the possibility of creating a link trail from the Porters Ski area to the Castle Hill Village. This would be approximately 16km long, graded intermediate, and would provide a link to the developing Porters Ski Area mountain bike hub. Additionally, this trail would be combined with the other linear trails in the network – Dracophyllum Flat, Hogs Back and Coal Pit Spur, to create a continuous singletrack mountain bike experience running the length of the Craigieburn range – termed the Lake to Lake trail (from Lake Lyndon to Lake Pearson).

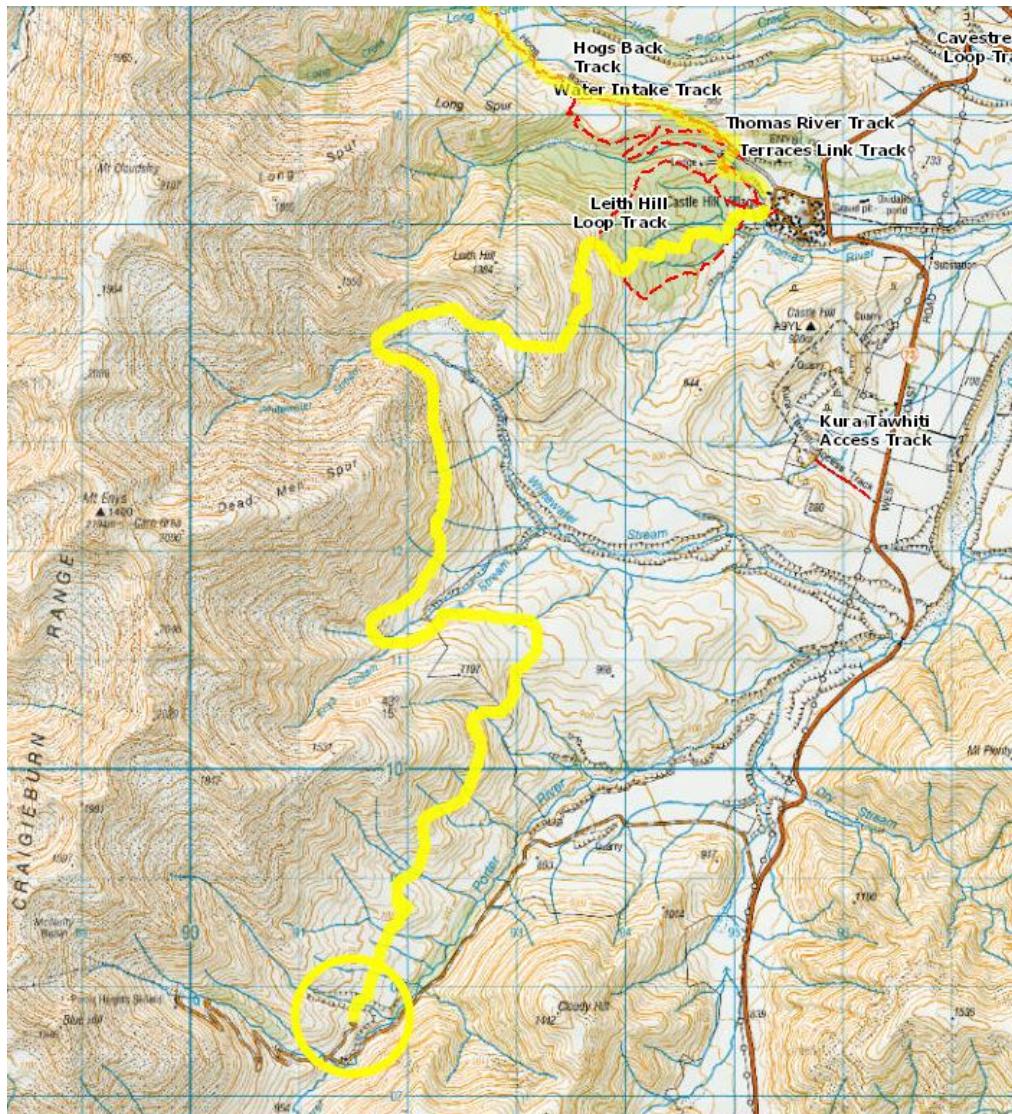
The concept of this track is supported in the current Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy. Graded intermediate, this trail would almost double the length of intermediate trail in the Craigieburn area, and would be accessible to more of the mountain bike market. Developing this trail would help to

- Provide an accessible backcountry experience

- Provide a unique experience of being able to ride the length of the mountain range. It is possible that if this were marketed as a separate experience then demand may increase beyond what is currently expected.
- Would be multi-use so providing additional walking experience
- Will be able to be used by backcountry skiers in the winter months to exit many of the skiable alpine bowls in the area
- Increase the available intermediate level mountain bike experience in the area and help to address moderately increasing demand.
- Connect all hubs within the area.

A suggested indicative route is provided although this would require considerable ground truthing. It is suggested that the trail is designed to be ridden in both directions, with a 2-way climb/descent at both the Castle Hill and Porters Skifield ends (although possibly there could be a single direction up and single direction down at the Castle Hill end), with undulating trail in between.

*Proposed link track from Porters Skifield to Castle Hill*

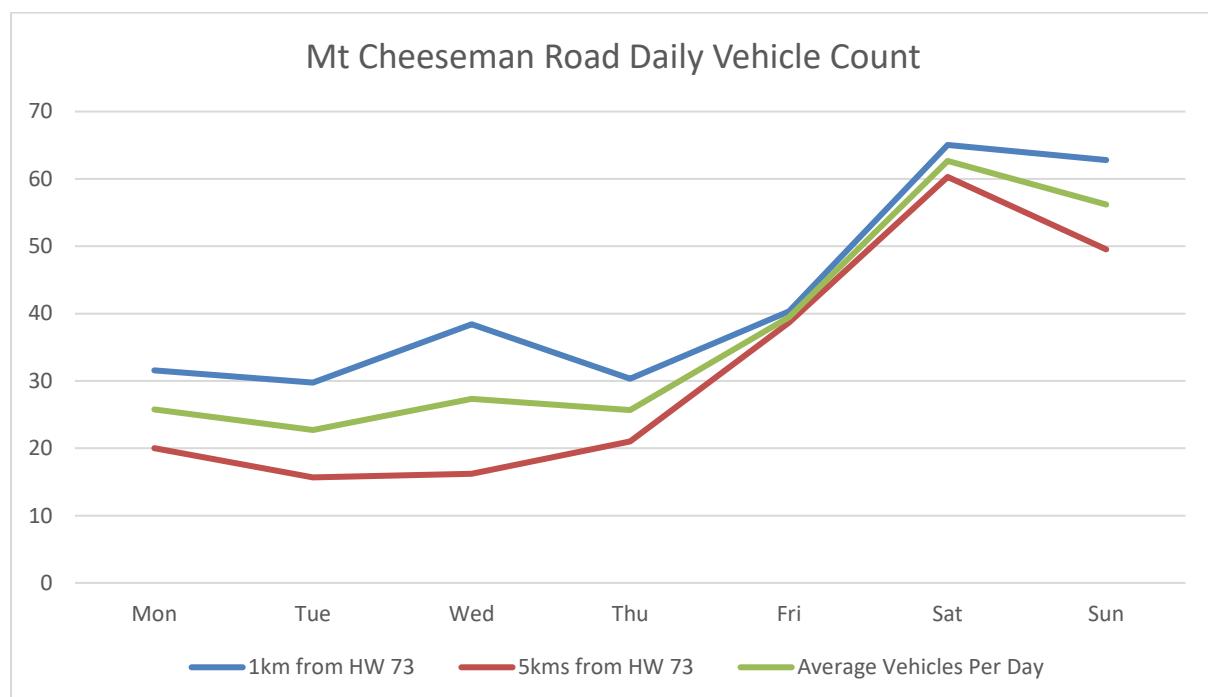
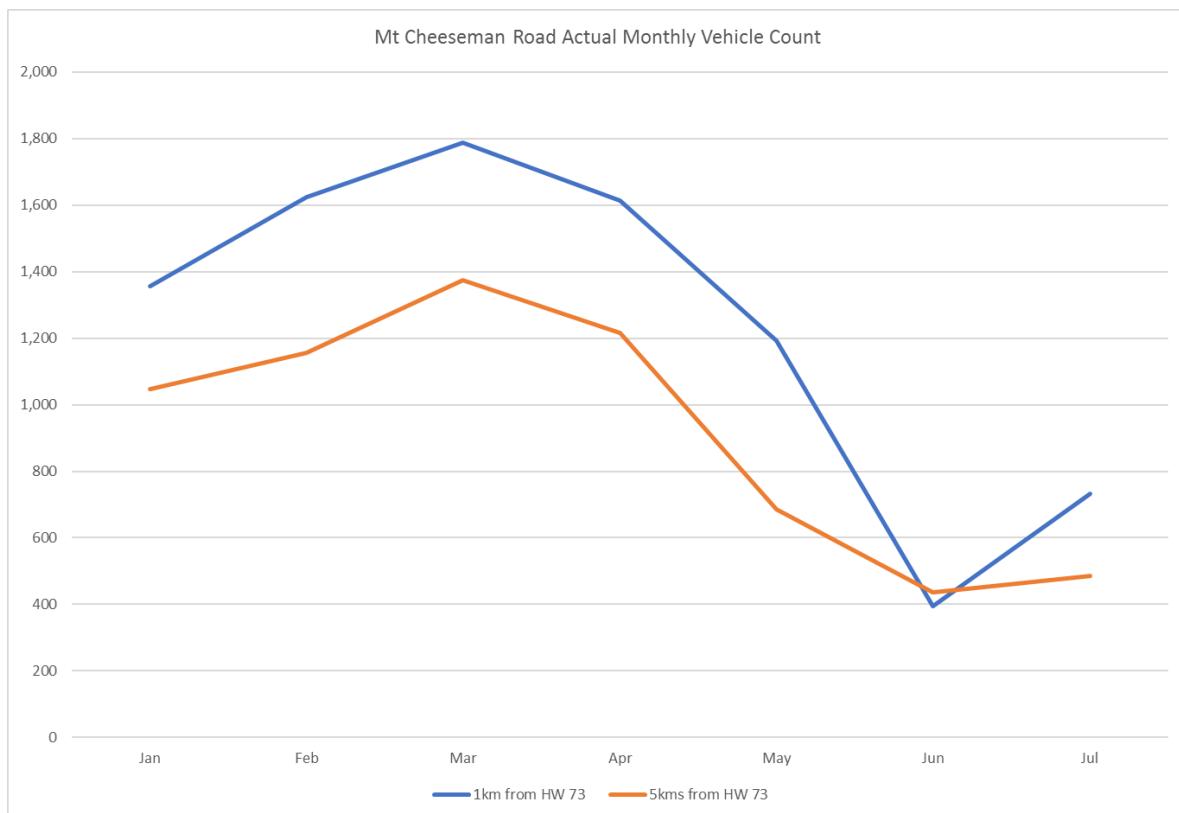


## **Appendix 1: Feedback from the Craigieburn Valley user group meeting held in Castle Hill, June 2018**

The following list was put together following the consolation with representatives of Craigieburn Valley user groups. The meeting was held in the Castle Hill Village Community Hall in June 2018.

- There are a large number of user groups who value the area and want to see future development proceed in a way that is managed and considered
- Useage is going up, and this increase in demand is likely to continue
- Demand is increasing from riders wanting more challenging enduro-type riding
- Craigieburn Trails would like to consider additional track development, including a linear trail which would link with existing trails and would offer the opportunity to ride the length of the Craigieburn mountain range.
- Pirate trail building is an issue, the majority of feedback from the meeting supported the collaborative (rather than the punitive) approach to managing this problem
- Craigieburn Trails is under resourced, relying on volunteers with limited sources of regular income including applications to the Trail Fund/Back Country Trust for maintenance and development projects.
- There is no long-term strategy for future trail development, maintenance and funding
- Maintenance has been very reactive in recent years. This has resulted in a need for large (rather than small & regular) maintenance projects
- The region encompasses a range of ecological areas, some of which are better suited than others to user activities and future development
- A longer-term educational process is needed to make users more aware of how they impact on this environment
- The SDC is not contributing. It may be that an umbrella group that brings together other user groups (consent holders, ski fields, DOC etc) would have more impact when it comes to approaching the SDC and other groups for support.
- We can learn some useful lessons from related projects in other regions eg Chch Port Hills and others
- With increasing demand, pirate tracks and increasing maintenance requirements the DOC model of relying on volunteer user groups to manage the area may not be sustainable.

## Appendix 2: DoC Road Counters – Cheeseman Ski Field Road, Jan-July 2019<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Source: Department of Conservation

## **Appendix 3: Excerpts from the Department of Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Waimakariri Basin.<sup>7</sup>**

### **Place description**

In the basin and into the adjoining Craigieburn Conservation Park, and potentially into the Korowai Torlesse Tussocklands Conservation Park, a largely community initiative is developing mountain bike tracks that link existing ski field roads and recreational and educational facilities. The tracks could potentially extend from Lake Pearson (Moana Rua) to Lake Lyndon, avoiding State Highway traffic. Natural and historic values and existing recreational and educational activity are matters needing particular recognition and/or protection with these track developments.

### **Outcomes for Place**

An integrated set of visitor opportunities is provided on and off public conservation lands and waters alongside State Highway 73 from Porters Pass to Arthur's Pass National Park, with overnight facilities other than standard camping being provided off public conservation lands. Opportunities for conservation interpretation and public recreational access from the TranzAlpine train have been considered. Mountain bike tracks may link long-established facilities in the Craigieburn Forest Park area and may extend between Lakes Pearson (Moana Rua) and Lyndon. Visitors to all sites can expect frequent encounters with other visitors.

### **Policy for Place**

May, in working with community groups and giving effect to the criteria of **Policy 3.3.4**, authorise the development of mountain bike tracks, and assess their potential use by electric power assisted pedal cycles, linking existing ski field roads and recreational and educational facilities on public conservation lands and waters within the Craigieburn Forest Park area, and potentially extending between Lakes Pearson (Moana Rua) and Lyndon, subject to:

- a) consideration of other recreational and educational use of the public conservation lands and waters; and
- b) having regard to **Objective 1.5.3.12.**

### **Specific Policy Requirement 3.3.4 Mountain Bikes**

Should follow the statutory amendment or review process when considering further opportunities for mountain bike use on public conservation lands and waters during the term of this CMS, undertake consultation with cycling clubs, adjoining landowners, tramping clubs, other interested parties and the public, and apply the following criteria for the activity:

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<sup>7</sup> Sources: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/about-doc/role/policies-and-plans/canterbury-cms/canterbury-cms-volume-1.pdf>

- a) is consistent with the purposes for which the lands and waters concerned are held;
- b) is consistent with the desired outcome and policies for the Place where the track or road is, or is proposed to be located;
- c) adverse effects (including cumulative effects) of mountain bike use on natural, historic or cultural values and other recreation

#### **Objectives For Recreation 1.5.3.12**

Encourage recreational opportunities on public conservation lands and waters, especially within the extensive conservation parks and conservation areas of Canterbury, that are consistent with outcomes for a Place, and that meet one or more of the following:

- a) emphasise access from urban areas and Mackenzie and Hurunui basins holiday accommodation areas, and from state highways;
- b) integrate recreational opportunities on and off public conservation lands and waters;
- c) integrate recreational opportunities across the whole of Canterbury and with neighbouring public conservation lands and waters;
- d) integrate recreational opportunities with objectives in 1.5.1–1.5.5;
- e) provide educational benefit to schools and educational groups;
- f) have been subjected to thorough environmental impact assessment and landscape design processes, and are likely to have minimal environmental and landscape impacts; and
- g) are supported or enabled by facilities that are able to be maintained into the future.

## Appendix 4: Summary Trail Programme

| Ref                                | Project Title                  | Grade | Length | Indicative Timing | Contractor/<br>Volunteer | Est Cost | Justification         | Comments   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS</b> |                                |       |        |                   |                          |          |                       |  |
| Nov 2018                           | Dracophyllum Track Corners     | 2 - 3 | 0.5km  | 2018/2019         | Contractor               | \$7,500  | Maintenance, redesign | Re-routing of a very wet section and widen eight corners to help produce a more sustainable and rideable section of trail.       |
| Dec 2018                           | Cockayne Alley Re-Route        | 5     | 3km    | 2018/2019         | Volunteer                | \$0      | Maintenance, redesign | Re-routing of the steep downhill section of trail to produce a more sustainable and rideable trail.                              |
| Feb 2019                           | Ground Effect Corners          | 2 - 3 | 0.2km  | 2018/2019         | Contractor               | \$7,500  | Maintenance, redesign | Rebuilding and widening of the Ground Effect corners near Picnic Rock.   |
| May 2019                           | Dickson's Drainage & New Start | 4     | 2km    | 2018/2019         | Volunteer                | \$0      | Maintenance, redesign | Extending the trail to the top of Bridge Hill and building drainage on the lower half of the track to make it more weatherproof. |

| Ref | Project Title | Grade | Length | Indicative Timing | Contractor/<br>Volunteer | Est Cost | Justification | Comments | Funding | Actions |
|-----|---------------|-------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|
|-----|---------------|-------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------|---------|

| MAINTENANCE PROJECTS - SHORT TERM           |                              |       |       |           |            |          |                                   |   |  |   |
|---|------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1   | Hogsback<br>Redevelopment    | 2 - 3 | 7.5km | 2019/2020 | Mixed      | \$25,000 | Trail improvement and maintenance | Currently trail needs significant catchup maintenance to ensure trail is of suitable quality and standard eg improve climb to lightening tree, before & after Waterfall Creek, develop better descent from lightening tree to CHV, complete repairs to trail before Picnic Rock, re-route trail away after "Ground Effect Corners". | A combination of contractor work (funded by Back Country Trust) and work parties | Duncan & Tom to discuss                 |
| 2   | Realign Scree<br>On The Edge | 4     | N/A   | 2019/2020 | Volunteer  | \$0      | Trail Improvement                 | Currently trail has gravel climb and descent that could be realigned and thus the riding experience improved.   | To be determined after project has been scoped and agreed to by DOC              | Discuss with Jim Henderson (DOC) and CV |
| 3   | Craigieburn<br>Creek Bridge  | 3     | N/A   | 2019/2020 | Contractor | \$20,000 | Trail Improvement                 | Application for funding has been submitted to Transpower by Ton & Simon Hewitt  | Transpower   | Waiting on outcome from Transpower bid  |
| MAINTENANCE PROJECTS - SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM |                              |       |       |           |            |          |                                   |   |  |   |

| Ref                                 | Project Title         | Grade | Length | Indicative Timing | Contractor/<br>Volunteer | Est Cost | Justification  | Comments  | Funding | Actions  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|--|---|---------|--|
| 4                                   | Hut Creek Rehab       | 3     | N/A    | 2020/2023         | Mixed                    | \$10,000 | Improve trail to allow for more use  | Widen bottom corners and reduce gradient to improve climb.  |         |  |
| 5                                   | Jacks Pass Down Rehab | 3     | N/A    | 2020/2023         | Mixed                    | \$10,000 | Reduce speed and braking thus creating safer and more sustainable trail.                 | The final 300m prior to the BR bridge is steep and straight and could be re-routed to improve riding and reduce erosion. Lots of walkers also use this trail and there is a bit of potential for rider/walker crashes at speed which could be reduced. It would also making the climbing much more manageable for most riders. <b>Needs to be considered in light of #8</b> |         |  |
| <b>NEW DEVELOPMENT - SHORT TERM</b> |                       |       |        |                   |                          |          |  |   |         |  |
| 6                                   | Terraces Loop         | 2 - 3 | 10km   | 2019/2020         | Mixed                    | \$50,000 | Removes riders from roads<br>Creates/completes a loop<br>Satisfies demand (intermediate) | Alongside the trails up Broken River this can create a loop from CHV that allows people to avoid riding on SH73. This is currently a significant H&S risk. It also allows creation of a long iconic, moderate loop.   |         | Approach St Andrews & PAPO re concerns over this trail. Revise submission accordingly. |

| Ref | Project Title                                     | Grade | Length | Indicative Timing | Contractor/<br>Volunteer | Est Cost | Justification  | Comments  | Funding                             | Actions   |
|-----|---|-------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 7   | Cheeseman – Hogsback Link                         | 4     | 3km    | 2019/2020         | Volunteer                | \$0      | Satisfy demand (intermediate-expert)<br>Creates/completes a loop<br>Relieves pressure from other areas | Would satisfy demand for fun trails and fill a gap between grade 3 and 5 trails, creating an intermediate/advanced loop.  | Can be largely completed by parties | Complete AEE  |
| 8   | Broken River Ski Club to Dracophyllum Flat Bridge | 2 - 3 | 2km    | 2019/2020         | Volunteer                | \$0      | Removes riders from roads<br>Creates/completes a loop  | Alongside #1 & 5 this would allow people to ride from CHV to Broken River/Craigieburn area without riding on the road thus eliminating a significant H&S risk.<br>Significant parts of trail already exist. |                                     | Complete AEE  |
| 9   | Broken River Trail                                | 2 - 3 | 4km    | 2019/2020         | Mixed                    | \$20,000 | Removes riders from roads<br>Creates/completes a loop  | Alongside #1 & 4 this would allow people to ride from CHV to Broken River/Craigieburn area without riding on the road thus eliminating a significant H&S risk.<br>Significant parts of trail already exist. |                                     | Complete AEE  |
| 10  | K-Line  | 4 - 5 | 3km    | 2019/2020         | Volunteer                | \$0      | Sanctioning of existing trail<br>Relieves pressure from other areas<br>Creates/completes a loop        | Approval process (inc AEE) required. Sections that cross Cheeseman power cable to be reviewed. Work party to rectify a couple of  | This is an existing pirate trail    | Complete AEE<br>Consult with Mt Cheeseman Ski area regarding H&S requirements |

| Ref                                  | Project Title                  | Grade | Length  | Indicative Timing | Contractor/<br>Volunteer | Est Cost   | Justification  | Comments   | Funding  | Actions                                       |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|---------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------|--|--|--|---|
|                                      |                                |       |         |                   |                          |            |  | steeper sections and make the trail more sustainable once officially sanctioned.   |  | for their power cable which crosses the trail |
| <b>NEW DEVELOPMENT - MEDIUM TERM</b> |                                |       |         |                   |                          |            |  |  |  |   |
| 11                                   | Porters to Castle Hill village | 3     | 12-15km | 2020/2022         | Contractor               | \$500,000+ | Creates/completes a loop<br>Satisfy demand<br>Creates iconic trail | Provide link across front of range and create long, yet manageable, backcountry ride.<br>Increase intermediate riding options. Use by walkers and skiers. While this trail would not likely be developed in the short term due to significant planning and funding requirements it is important that planning starts well ahead of construction. | Collaboration between Porters and Craigieburn Trails |   |