

Mountain Bike Trail Proposal for the Waipa District Council

Sainsbury Rd Forest

Waipa Mountain Bike Club

November 2008

Overview

The Waipa Mountain Bike Club Incorporated would like to develop a mountain bike (MTB) trail for public use on Waipa District Council land at Sainsbury Rd. This would be a significant recreational asset for the community and visitors to the district. This proposal outlines the design of the trail, how it would be construction and maintained, compatibility with the existing forestry operation, how public access could be administered, and how the trail and its development could be managed.

The Waipa Mountain Bike Club is a newly formed organization which was established to encourage participation in mountain biking and to promote, develop and maintain mountain biking trails in the Waipa District. We formed in the winter of 2008 and currently have over 50 local mountain bikers on our mailing list. We also have close links with the Hamilton Mountain Bike Club, which has over 200 members.

There is currently limited opportunities for mountain biking in the Waipa District or the Waikato basin. The club has reviewed a range of potential locations and the Waipa District Council forestry block on Sainsbury Rd, Pirongia is the ideal location. This is due to a combination of factors including terrain, accessibility, ownership by a local authority, the amenability of exotic forests to trail construction and the prime location next to another well-used recreational asset in our district, Pirongia Forest Park. Ultimately we see that this forestry has the potential to grow into a significant recreational asset for the community, in parallel with its use as a commercial forest. Examples of similar shared use forests exist throughout New Zealand. In particular, we see the long term potential to develop a network of multi-use MTB and walking trails in this area. As a first step, we propose to build a short MTB trail in the forest, as described in this proposal. This will

provide an opportunity for the club and the council to assess the feasibility of further recreational development on this land.

Vision for mountain bike trails in Sainsbury Rd Forest

To create a purpose built mountain bike trail system for Waipa residents and visitors to enjoy, using best practice trail building techniques, to ensure an sustainable, challenging and safe mountain biking experience for both beginner and experienced riders.

Trail Design and Construction

Location of trail

Figures 1 and 2 indicate the areas of forest where we propose to build the trail. Figure 3 indicates the approximate route of the MTB track within those areas. The trail is close to the main access road which runs through the forest, which will allow riders to use the road to climb to the top of the trail. The trail is in two sections, an upper section (approximately 1500m in length – with two separate tracks side by side) and a lower section (approximately 1000m in length), separated by a short section of road. We also propose to build a beginner skills area, which will be a small area with some low obstacles such as logs and ramps, set into the ground, for beginners to practice basic mountain biking skills, and for groups to use for skills training. This area of the forest was chosen as (1) the trees have recently been planted so logging will not take place for some time (2) the terrain is the correct slope for trail building (3) the access road provides good access to the MTB trail and (4) this part of the forest provides attractive views over the Waikato and towards Mt Ruapehu. The trail would predominantly pass through pine forest but there are several short sections of native bush.

Design of trail

The proposed trail will be built and maintained by trained volunteers from the Waipa Mountain Bike Club. The increase in popularity of mountain biking over the last 20 years has seen the development of specialist approaches for the design, building and maintenance of MTB trails. The trail will be built according to the guidelines of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), which is the international body which represents mountain biking. These guidelines are published in the Sustainable Trails Handbook (see Appendix A for example of guidelines). To train club members in trail building skills, we are arranging a trail building workshop to be run by Ric Balfour, Manager of the Western Bay of Plenty Council's All-Terrain park, who was previously employed as a professional trail developer by the IMBA. Funds for this course have been provided by a Waipa District Council Community Grant we recently received.

Construction and maintenance of trail

The proposed trail will be a fully benched track, approximately 0.5-1 M in width, cut into the ground (refer Appendix A). Rather than descending directly down the hillside (which

would promote water erosion) the trail will traverse back and forth across the slope, slowly losing height. The trail will slope slightly outwards and will include regular grade reversals (small rises and dips which control rider speed and allow the trail to shed water). The trail surface will be compacted to resist erosion, but we may need to supplement sections of trail with gravel and Geotextile fabric to harden the surface. Trail construction will not require any pine trees to be removed or damaged, except for a 25m x 25m area for the beginner skills area. Trail construction will predominantly be by hand, but some of the vegetation removal will require the use of a petrol-driven scrub bar. The finished trail will be inspected and maintained on a regular basis by members of the Waipa Mountain Bike Club.

Difficulty of trail

The main trail will be designed to cater for beginner and intermediate level riders. The challenge will be derived from the use of turns and alternating gradients, which will make the trail difficult to ride at speed, but relatively easy if ridden slowly. We also propose to build a second trail, parallel to the upper section of the main trail, which is suitable for intermediate – advanced riders. This will be clearly marked to distinguish it from the main trail. This trail will make use of obstacles such as fallen logs and low wooden structures (< 1m in height) such as narrow boardwalks, to make it more challenging. The challenge will be technical, ie the MTB rider has to use skill to ride their MTB along the difficult trail, but the low height of any obstacle will minimize any physical hazard.

Inclusion of artificial obstacles and structures on trail

We would like to include a variety of low artificial obstacles or structures in the beginner skills area and intermediate-advanced trail. If we were not permitted to construct these, then we could still we could develop the mountain bike trail in a simpler form. However, there are some significant advantages to including these features on the trails and skills area. The principal advantage is that it allows us to incorporate managed challenges into the trails – there by creating a riding area in which mountain bikers can grow their skills in a safe environment. In certain riding areas this can be achieved through natural obstacles such as rocky trails, but these types of natural features do not exist in Sainsbury forest (nor anywhere in the Waikato). By including this emphasis on skill development, we would be creating a mountain biking area which would have strong appeal to groups such as local schools, who could use it as part of their outdoor

education programme. It also enables us to create a interesting riding experience in a relatively small area and to minimise the impact of riders on sensitive areas such as streams and bogs. Building the these features requires careful planning and would only be undertaken at a later date, following the preparation of a full proposal for these structures, which we would submit for council approval and comment. Any structures would comply with the building code. The planning for these advanced features would be done while we are building the main beginner trail, which does not include any such artificial structures.

Funding for Trail

Cost for developing and maintaining the trail will be sourced by the Waipa Mountain Bike Club through fundraising and sponsorship.

Timeframe for project

If permission is given to us to develop the trail, then work could begin in February 2009. We expect to complete the upper section of the beginner trail and clear the lower section of the beginner trail by the end of summer. Over winter we would prepare a detailed concept for the intermediate-advanced trail and skills area, with the objective of completing these during the summer of 2009/10.

Compatibility with Forestry Operation

Examples of MTB trails in commercial forests

MTB trails are commonly sited within commercial forestry blocks within New Zealand. Examples of these are the Whakarewarewa Forest MTB trails outside Rotorua (Kaiangaroa Timberlands) and Woodhill Forest near Auckland (Carter Holt Harvey), both of which successfully combine a variety of forest users with actively managed forest.

Logging and fire hazards

Public access to the trail would be closed during logging and other hazardous forest management activities. This would be indicated by signs at the entry to the forest and advertised through our club website and the national MTB website. The forest is accessed through two roads, so we would suggest that the trail could remain open when

logging is only taking place on the northern side of the forest, which is accessed through the lower road. Public access could also be closed during times of extreme fire hazard. Mountain biking poses no greater risk of fire than walkers, so we suggest it would be unnecessary to close the forest except at times of extreme hazard. The Waipa Mountain Bike Club is an affiliate club of BikeNZ, the national cycling organization of New Zealand, and we are covered by BikeNZ's insurance policy. This includes \$5 million public liability and a \$1 million Forest Fire extension clause. This covers all club sanctioned activities, including trail building, races and club rides, which might take place in the forest. A copy of this insurance agreement is attached (Appendix B).

Trails and logging

We realize that, as an actively logged forest, any MTB trail will ultimately be destroyed when the trees are felled. The site we have selected contains immature trees so we expect this trail will have a reasonable lifetime. Long term, as different sections of the forest are felled and replanted, new sections of trail could ultimately be built, to keep a trail system running in the forest.

Public Access

Who will use the trail?

This trail would be built for public use. Once built, the trail will be promoted through information sites such as the Te Awamutu Visitor Centre and the Pirongia Tourism Association, Hamilton MTB club and Waipa Mountain Bike Club websites, so a mixture of Waipa district residents and visitors will use the trail. There is support in the Pirongia community for the development of trails in the Sainsbury Forest, as indicated by the support given to our proposal by the Pirongia Ratepayers Association (Oct meeting). We also plan to discuss our proposal with other local community groups, including the Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society and the Pirongia Tourism Association, and residents on Sainsbury Rd.

Parking

The proposed trail is relatively short, so we do not expect it will attract large numbers of people in its current form. There is parking for at least six cars at the forest entrance,

which we expect should be sufficient, but we will also encourage mountain bikers to park in Pirongia village and to ride up Sainsbury Rd. If a more extensive trail network is developed in the future then we may need to consider how larger visitor numbers could be handled, perhaps by enlarging the parking area.

Information and signage

We propose to erect an information board at the entrance to the forest. This would indicate what activities are permitted (mountain biking and walking only) and a map indicating the position of the MTB trail and areas of the forest where access is permitted. We would also like to include the MTB code of conduct on the information board. Trail markers would direct mountain bikers to the trail entrance. Signs at the beginning and end of each section of trail would indicate that the trail is recommended for mountain bikers only. Some trails are suitable for both walkers and mountain bikers, but with a purpose built MTB trail such as we are proposing, with tight corners and short sightlines, it would be best to discourage walkers from using the trail. Later developments could include trails which are suitable for multi use.

Access gate

Access to the forest is currently barred by a vehicle gate. There would be no need to alter this, as mountain bikers can easily lift their bikes over. We prefer this stays in place, as it makes it more difficult for motorbikes and quads to access the forest. Motorbikes and quads would quickly erode and destroy the MTB trail- hence our desire to keep them out of the forest. We would request a key to the gate so that we can access the 4WD road with a vehicle while we are building the trail.

Management of the trail and its development

We would suggest that a memorandum of understanding be prepared between the Waipa Mountain Bike Club and the Waipa District Council which clearly defines how the trail is developed and managed. This need not be a complicated document and could be based upon this proposal. Essentially, we envisage an arrangement by which the Waipa Mountain Bike Club develops and maintains the trail in consultation with the Waipa District Council.

Longer term, the Sainsbury Forest has great potential for the development of a network of mountain biking and walking trails. In 18 to 24 months time, following completion of the proposed MTB trial, it would be an opportune time to review what these options might be, so maximum use of these forest can be made for both recreational users and commercial harvesting.

Contact details

Waipa Mountain Bike Club

c/o Dr Brendan Haigh (President)

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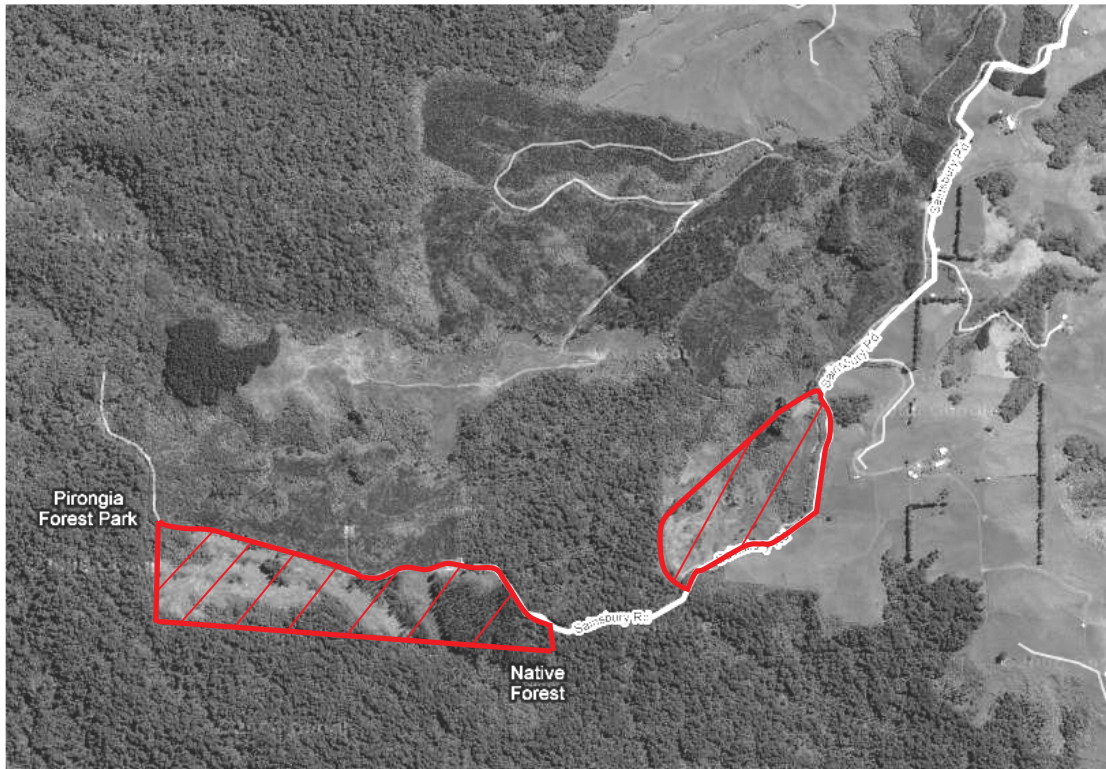


Figure 1. Overview of Forest (satellite image)

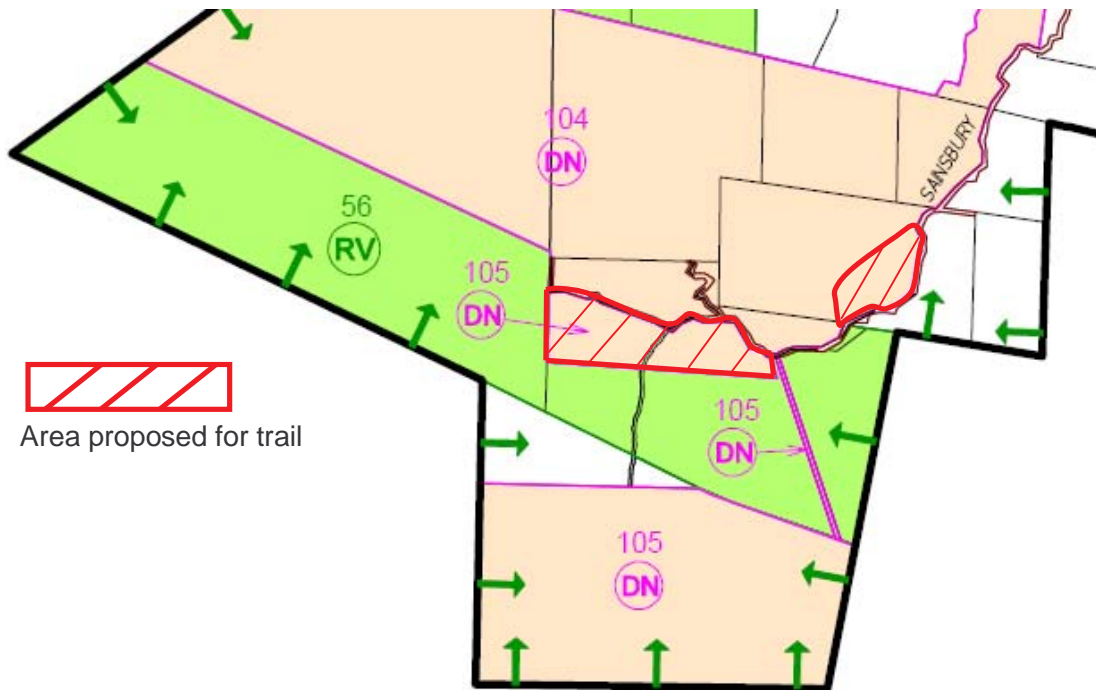


Figure 2. Overview of Forest (District plan)

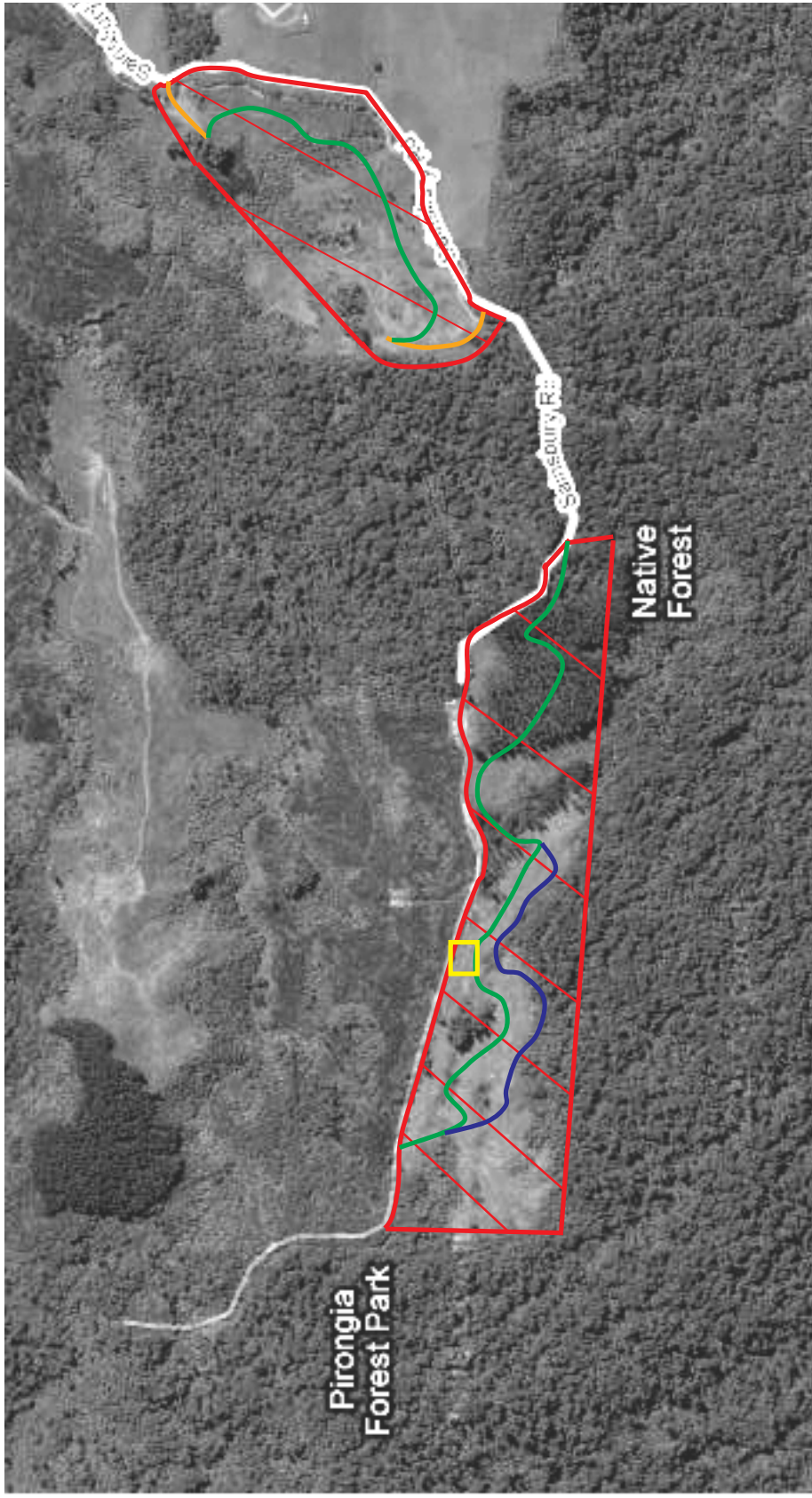
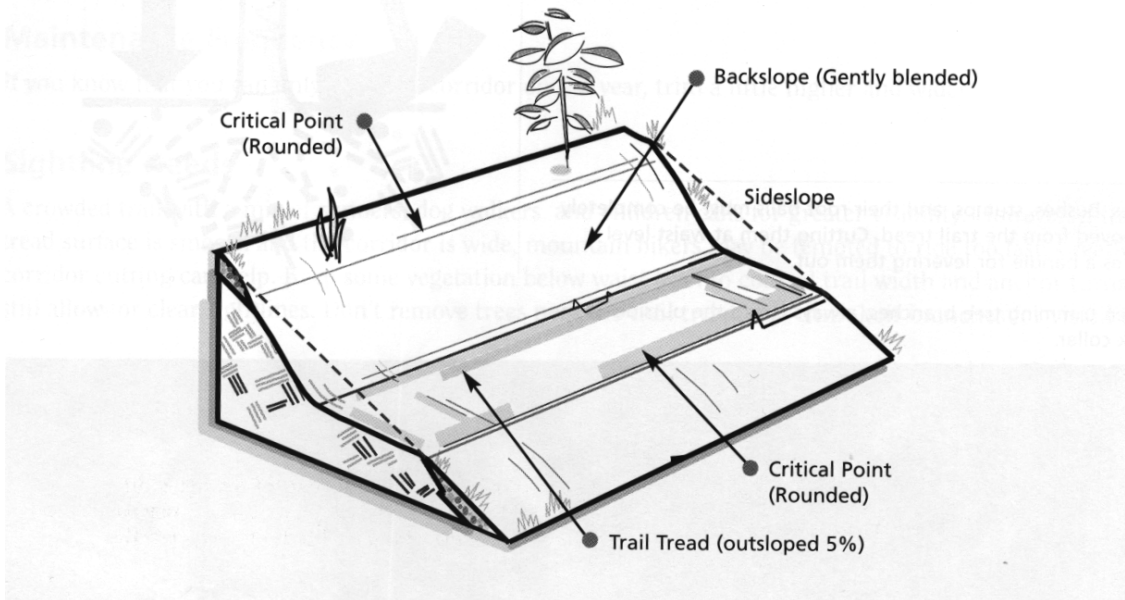


Figure 3. Approximate route of MTB trail

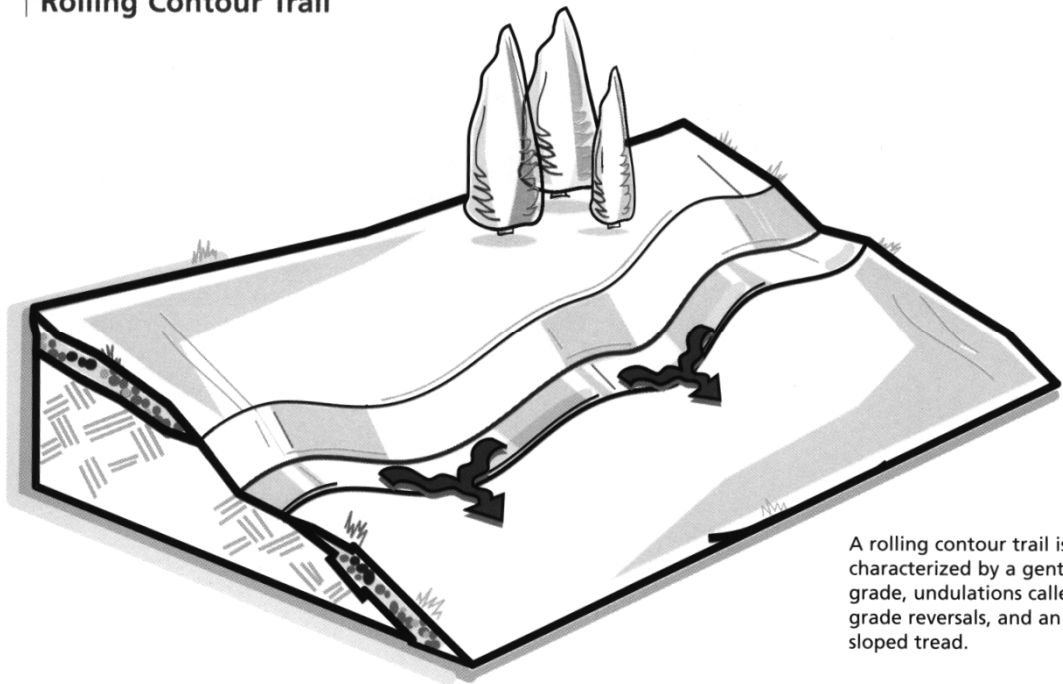
- Beginner - intermediate trails
- Intermediate - advanced trail
- Existing logging track
- Beginner skills area

Appendix A. Examples of trail design guidelines from Sustainable Trails Handbook
(International Mountain Bike Association)

Full Bench Trail



Rolling Contour Trail



A rolling contour trail is characterized by a gentle grade, undulations called grade reversals, and an out-sloped tread.

Appendix B. BikeNZ insurance policy



**Lumley General Insurance (N.Z.) Limited
General Liability Insurance
Policy Schedule**

Policy Number: 2182136

Insured: Bike NZ Incorporated

Policy Wording: NZ GL 1103

Period of Insurance: From: 28-Feb-2008 - 4pm local time
To: 31-Dec-2008 - 4pm local time

Territorial Limits: Worldwide excluding USA and Canada

Jurisdictional Limits: Worldwide excluding USA and Canada

Business of Insured: National Sports Administrator

Date of Proposal Form: 28-Nov-2007

Limit of Indemnity: \$5,000,000 any one Occurrence
\$5,000,000 in the aggregate – Goods Products
The policy includes a number of sub-limited sections - please refer to the policy document.

Claims Excess: \$500 each and every claim
Different excess levels may apply to the various sub-sections of the policy or attached endorsements – please refer to the policy document.

Premium: As agreed

Signed on behalf of Lumley General Insurance (N.Z.) Ltd:

H. Tebbel
Signed



04 MAR 2008

Date

Lumley General Insurance (NZ) Limited has an "A" financial strength rating given by Standard & Poor's (Australia) Pty Limited on 07 November 2007. The rating scale is:

AAA Extremely Strong	AA Very Strong	A Strong	BBB Good	BB Marginal
B Weak	CCC Very Weak	CC Extremely Weak	R Regulatory Action	NR Not Rated

Plus (+) or minus (-) signs following ratings from "AA" to "CCC" show relative standing within the major rating categories.

Endorsements.

Policy Number	Name of Insured
2182136	Bike NZ Incorporated

Business Advice or Service Exclusion 1.

It is agreed that 3.1 (b) of Automatic Coverage Clause 3.1- Business Advice or Service clause is deleted.

Nothing herein contained shall be held to vary, alter, waive or extend any of the terms, conditions, provisions, agreements or limitations of the above mentioned Policy other than as above stated.

Forest & Rural Fires Act.

The Policy is extended to include liability for:

(a) Those costs incurred by any Fire Authority under section 41 of the Forest & Rural Fires Act 1977 and which are levied against the Insured in accordance with Sections 46 and 47 of the Forest & Rural Fires Act 1977.

(b) Those costs and/or amounts claimed by any other party in order to protect their property from fire but only if the Insured is responsible for such fire.

Where such costs and/or amounts arise from physical injury to or destruction of tangible property caused by an outbreak of fire during the Period of Insurance excluding:

(a) Levies for expenditure under Sections 44 and 45 of the Forest & Rural Fires Act 1977.

(b) Fines and Penalties imposed against the Insured in respect of an offence against the Forest & Rural Act 1977.

Subject to a Limit of \$1,000,000 any one occurrence and for any one policy period.

Nothing herein contained shall be held to vary, alter, waive or extend any of the terms, conditions, provisions, agreements or limitations of the above mentioned Policy other than as above stated.

For and on behalf of
Lumley General Insurance (N.Z.) Limited

H. Tabor

Authorised Representative



Lumley General Insurance (NZ) Limited has an "A-" financial strength rating given by Standard & Poor's (Australia) Pty Limited on 07 November 2007. The rating scale is:

AAA Extremely Strong	AA Very Strong	A Strong	BBB Good	BB Marginal
B Weak	CCC Very Weak	CC Extremely Weak	R Regulatory Action	NR Not Rated

Plus (+) or minus (-) signs following ratings from "AA" to "CCC" show relative standing within the major rating categories.