

# DRAFT: Mahu Whenua Management Plan Volume I



## Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	4
1.1	Key Stakeholders.....	4
1.2	Vision.....	4
1.3	Abbreviations .....	5
2	OPERATIONAL AREAS.....	6
2.1	Biodiversity .....	6
2.1.1	Native ecosystems .....	6
2.1.2	Rare and threatened plant species .....	6
2.1.3	Restoration initiatives by third parties (including public/private partnerships) .....	7
2.1.4	Planting and active restoration by SPL.....	7
2.1.5	Native wildlife releases .....	8
2.2	Weeds .....	9
2.2.1	General weeds (non-tree species) .....	9
2.2.2	Wilding conifers .....	9
2.2.3	Other exotic tree weeds .....	10
2.2.4	Exotic amenity plantings .....	11
2.3	Cultural/historic .....	11
2.3.1	Ngāi Tahu cultural values .....	11
2.3.2	Post-colonial archaeology/history .....	12
2.4	Interpretation.....	13
2.5	Research.....	13
2.5.1	University of Otago .....	13
2.5.2	Research by other entities .....	14
2.6	Fencing.....	14
2.7	Recreation.....	15
2.7.1	Tracks Advisory Group .....	16
2.7.2	Existing tracks with easements .....	17
2.7.3	Existing tracks: Unconsented or with no easement.....	18
2.7.4	Aspirational tracks .....	18
2.7.5	Revenue from commercial recreation use.....	19
2.7.6	QEII administered Front Country Track Management Fund.....	19
2.7.7	Informal or unauthorised recreation not on formed tracks or formalised routes .....	19
2.8	Huts .....	20
2.8.1	Huts belonging to Soho Property.....	20

2.8.2	Mountain Turks (Mountain Turk Club) .....	21
2.8.3	New huts, turks or similar structures for public use .....	21
2.9	Roads and farm tracks .....	22
2.10	Signage .....	23
2.11	Monitoring .....	23
<b>2.12</b>	<b>Dual Covenant Area .....</b>	<b>24</b>

DRAFT

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This document is Volume I of the Mahu Whenua Management Plan. Its purpose is to:

- Clarify responsibility for managing key aspects of the Mahu Whenua covenants, such as capital expenditure and/or ongoing maintenance.
- Simplify the decision-making process for activities which require consents.
- Clarify the respective roles for entities who are involved in the management of access, enhancement of open space values, research, recreational activities and commercial utilisation of the Mahu Whenua covenants.

**This document sits along alongside Volume II, which contains a comprehensive inventory of facilities; description of open space values (legal term for the array of values protected under QEII open space covenants) on each property; detail on individual operational areas; detailed summary of the roles/responsibilities of various groups and agencies; key contacts and a summary of recreational activity Mahu Whenua and copies of Open Space Covenants and relevant MOU's . Information from Volume II is available on request from interested parties subject to agreement with SPL bearing in mind and the possible need for privacy in relation to certain operational agreements/MOU's.**

This plan looks forward 25 years from the date of its approval. However, due to the complexity of covenant management, the number of partners/interested parties and the variety of projects underway, the plan will be a working document, to be modified as projects progress, the mix of partners evolves and as milestones are achieved.

This plan was approved by the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Board and Soho Property Ltd on the [DATE OF FINAL APPROVAL]

## 1.1 Key Stakeholders

There are numerous stakeholders: Soho Property Ltd, QEII National Trust, Land Information New Zealand, Ngāi Tahu, Department of Conservation, Heritage New Zealand, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Arrowtown Business and Promotion Association, Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Group, Arrowtown Village Association (incorporating Arrowtown Choppers and Arrowtown Predator Group), Wakatipu Tramping Club, Wakatipu Walkers, Lakes District Museum, University of Otago, Queenstown Trails Trust, Queenstown Mountain Bike Club and the Mountain Turk Club. Contact details are in Volume II, and acronyms used in this document are provided in section 1.3 below.

## 1.2 Vision

The long-term vision for Mahu Whenua is to ensure it continues to function as a kōhanga and contributes to every New Zealander's sense of place.

This will be done through protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the covenant area, and by promoting public access to the area.

We aim to protect Mahu Whenua's aesthetic natural landscapes and features, which are national landmarks, ensure that the covenanted area is not adversely affected through modification by humans, and it remains free from the effects of farmed animals, weeds, pests, cultivation, mining or mineral exploration, commercial forestry or other activities detrimental to its natural state.

### 1.3 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout the document:

<b>ABPA:</b>	Arrowtown Promotion and Business Association
<b>AC:</b>	Arrowtown Choppers
<b>AVA:</b>	Arrowtown Village Association (incorporating <b>AWG</b> – Arrowtown Wilding Group and the <b>CCPF</b> - Community Conservation Partnerships Fund)
<b>APG:</b>	Arrowtown Predator Group
<b>AWG:</b>	Arrowtown Wilding Group
<b>CCPF:</b>	Community Conservation Partnerships Fund
<b>DOC:</b>	Department of Conservation
<b>HNZ:</b>	Heritage New Zealand
<b>LDM:</b>	Lakes District Museum
<b>LINZ.:</b>	Land Information New Zealand
<b>MOU:</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MTC:</b>	Mountain Turk Club
<b>NZWAC:</b>	New Zealand Walking Access Commission
<b>OIO:</b>	Overseas Investment Office
<b>QEII:</b>	Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust
<b>QLDC:</b>	Queenstown Lakes District Council
<b>QTMBC:</b>	Queenstown Mountain Bike Club
<b>QTT:</b>	Queenstown Trails Trust
<b>SPL.:</b>	Soho Property Limited
<b>The Trust:</b>	Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust
<b>UO:</b>	University of Otago
<b>WAC:</b>	Wild Animal Control Act
<b>WCG:</b>	Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group
<b>WTC:</b>	Wakatipu Tramping Club
<b>WW:</b>	Wakatipu Walkers

## 2 OPERATIONAL AREAS

Key responsibilities are outlined for each operational area. Stakeholder responsibility for each work is noted in brackets.

### 2.1 Biodiversity

(see Volume II, Appendices 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 for detailed summaries of biodiversity values)

#### 2.1.1 Native ecosystems

**Background:** Protection and enhancement of biodiversity is the key objective for SPL, who hold the four pastoral leases over which the Mahu Whenua covenants are registered. Volume II contains a broad description of values present.

SPL have removed all stock from the covenant area. Anecdotal and early monitoring evidence suggests there has been a marked improvement in native vegetation cover and condition. There are nevertheless significant management challenges covered under the exotic vegetation and pests sections.

**Management objectives:** To protect and enhance the habitat for 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' species through:

- Continuing weed and pest control.
- Increasing the efficiency and extent of predator control.
- Habitat restoration by SPL and outside parties.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Broadscale photo point monitoring of biodiversity (QEII).
- Broadscale land management (primarily weed and pest control) to protect and enhance biodiversity (SPL).
- Assist with initiatives to gain outside resources for enhanced weed and pest control and for landscape scale restoration projects (QEII).

#### 2.1.2 Rare and threatened plant species

**Background:** At least 38 'Threatened' and 'At-Risk' plant, insect and animal species have been recorded and documented on Mahu Whenua. Volume II contains an inventory of these plants and animals.

**Management objectives:** To protect and enhance the habitat for 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' species through:

- Continuing weed and pest control.
- Increasing the efficiency and extent of predator control.
- Habitat restoration (SPL and community groups).

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Maintain inventory primarily through the QEII database and Web Map (QEII).
- Photo-point monitoring, including data storage (QEII).
- Scientific monitoring (UO and other parties on a case-by-case basis).
- Further surveys (Research partners including UO).
- Restoration of populations (Research applicants and interested community groups).

## 2.1.3 Restoration initiatives by third parties (including public/private partnerships)

**Background:** Expressions of interest have been received for large scale restoration projects on Mahu Whenua to be undertaken by third parties (both public institutions and private businesses). Such initiatives have great potential to enhance Open Space values where they are undertaken in an appropriate manner in the right place.

**Management objectives:**

- To encourage the establishment of discrete plantings mostly in highly modified accessible areas, e.g., where wilding conifers have recently been removed and at recreational hubs.
- To encourage large scale restoration initiatives by appropriate third-party entities.
- To plant species which are native, eco-sourced and naturally occurring in the relevant Ecological District.
- To allow the planting of exotic, non-weedy, deciduous tree species on the Arrow Faces as part of a transition programme to replace weedy trees with non-weedy species that exhibit autumn colours.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Primary point of contact (SPL).
- Vetting of proposals against purpose and conditions in the Open Space Covenants (QEII)
- Access agreement (Applicant and SPL).
- Preparation of MOU (QEII, Applicant and SPL).
- Monitoring (Applicant and QEII).
- Weed and pest control required to protect restoration works including plantings (Applicant).

## 2.1.4 Planting and active restoration by SPL

See Volume II under 'Open Space Values on Motatapu Station' for inventory of plantings.

**Background:** SPL has undertaken an extensive ecological restoration programme at Motatapu. Native species have been planted on front faces and track sides, and in wetlands and riparian zones. Species planted include flax, toi toi, tree daisies, cabbage trees, broadleaf, pittosporum, mountain and red beech. An estimated 2.2 million trees and seed balls have been planted to date across 500 hectares of the property. Native birdlife has benefited from these plantings and extensive predator control.

**Management objectives:**

- To speed up the self-restoration of wetlands, shrublands and forest, particularly in the Motatapu Valley.
- To establish vegetation communities, and in doing so provide enhanced habitat for resident fauna, encourage their self-re-introduction and provide habitat suitable for the introduction of bird species which once inhabited the area.

- To plant species which occur naturally in the relevant Ecological District with a preference for using 'eco sourced' material.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Encourage and provide advice to SPL in relation to the planting programme. (QEII).
- Historic photographs of plantings supplied by SPL will be used to create photo points (QEII).
- Maintain a record of species planted and location of new plantings and supply to QEII (SPL).

### 2.1.5 Native wildlife releases

See Volume II for background.

**Background:** The project area incorporates the upper Motatapu Valley on Motatapu Station spanning three catchments: the main Motatapu Valley, the Motatapu North Branch and Highland Creek. The project area comprises an unfenced mainland island where the abundance of pest species has been drastically reduced.

**Management objectives:**

- Continue to improve habitat to encourage the self-reintroduction of native bird species and provide enhanced habitat for released birds (SPL).
- Further reduce predator numbers with an objective of conducting a second successful weka release followed by the release of other native bird species.
- Maintain and expand the "Safe Haven" fenced areas.
- To successfully release weka.
- To build on weka release success with release of additional bird species.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Operation of safe havens – currently all outside of the covenant area (SPL).
- Pest Control (SPL).
- Maintenance of key relationships with DOC and Ngāi Tahu (SPL with assistance from QEII where applicable).
- Permitting for holding and breeding native wildlife (DOC).
- Approval for release from captivity to the covenant area (DOC and QEII).
- Monitoring of released populations (SPL).
- Provide SPL with cultural and technical advice (Ngāi Tahu).
- Provide research assistance as agreed with SPL (University of Otago).
- Subject to predator catch indices and consultation/advice from partners, aim for release of weka into the wild (SPL).
- Continue to investigate increasing efficiency of trapping programme by developing 'smart traps' which communicate catch results (SPL).



## 2.2 Weeds

### 2.2.1 General weeds (non-tree species)

**Background:** An array of non-tree weedy species is present – mostly inhabiting the montane zone and below. Weeds present at each property are documented in [Appendices 3-6x](#). Some weeds including European broom, Spanish heath, buddleia, and Himalayan honey suckle have potential to have significant ecological impact. Others such as sweet briar and hawkweed species are not practical to control and may in time stabilise and form a component of regenerating native vegetation or gradually yield to native competition.

**Management objectives:**

- Monitor location and trends of weed species.
- Keep abreast of advancements in weed species ecology and control.
- Eradicate newly recorded weeds with serious spread potential and ecological impact
- Comply with Regional Council Weed and Pest Management Strategy.
- Minimise impact of weeds on Open Space values through land management practices and control programmes.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Control programmes (SPL. QEII may assist, e.g., advise on the release of bio agents and funding community group initiatives).
- Adherence to covenant and Regional Pest Management Strategy (SPL).
- Monitoring & advice (QEII).
- Liaison with Otago Regional Council (SPL and QEII).

### 2.2.2 Wilding conifers

**Background:** Considerable effort has been made over the years to control wilding conifers on Mahu Whenua. SPL has spent more than \$1.5m on wilding conifer control. Getting on top of the problem requires a concerted control effort in conjunction with control of neighbouring seed sources. In August 2017 QLDC made the decision to embark on an early harvest of Coronet Forest, greatly increasing the practicality of implementing an effective control programme. As of June 2021, removal of the forest is well underway.

WCG have undertaken considerable work in multiple landscape units on Mahu Whenua operating under 20:80 land occupier-government financial contribution formula. Arrowtown Choppers, under the umbrella of the AVA and working on a \$1.1m budget, have taken on primary control responsibility for the Arrowtown area with funding from multiple sources including MPI, Central Lakes Trust, Lotteries and WCG.

**Management objectives:**

- To implement a control programme designed to quickly remove mature seed-producing trees, followed by progressive removal of younger trees.
- To eliminate all remote/sparse wilding infestations, and to work towards eventual elimination of wilding conifers from all of Mahu Whenua.

- Following achievement of the above objectives, to continue active surveillance and control of sporadic infestations (this will be necessary for many decades).

#### **Actions/responsibilities:**

- SPL and WCG to agree on control zones and techniques for works undertaken by WCG. Once programme is agreed upon a written agreement is entered into for SPL to secure 80% funding from the WCG (SPL and WCG).
- Undertake conifer control in Arrowtown zone (Arrowtown Choppers).
- Undertake ongoing conifer control outside of Arrowtown Choppers and WCG control areas (SPL).
- Volunteers play a significant role (Volunteer organisations with prior permission from SPL)
- Volunteer Health and Safety (groups must prepare their own H&S plans and are responsible for compliance).
- Photo point monitoring (QEII).
- Provide advice on wilding conifer control and prioritisation of works (QEII).
- Advocate for wilding conifer removal in the wider planning/resource management arena to protect and enhance covenant values (QEII).
- Encourage and assist community groups to apply for community grants including the Stephenson Fund (QEII).
- Contribute 100% of cost of eliminating *Pinus contorta* as this species is listed as a noxious weed requiring control under the ORC's Regional Weed and Pest Plan (SPL).

#### 2.2.3 Other exotic tree weeds

**Background:** Infestation by exotic deciduous trees dates back to the gold mining era, although as recently as the 1950s much of the area was clear of trees. Several species present, primarily larch, sycamore and rowan represent a serious wilding tree threat. Sycamore spread is particularly aggressive. Control of this species is challenging and its ability to establish within native forest and shrublands concerning.

Conditions imposed on SPL by the OIO prevent them from undertaking broad scale removal of deciduous trees behind Arrowtown. This area comprises terraces and lower slopes primarily on Glencoe Station from the Arrow River to the eastern boundary at White Chapple Road. Tree species present include rowan, sycamore, apples, larch, alder, plums, elderberry, and black poplar. The brilliant array of autumn colours has become a major part of Arrowtown's identity and is successfully used to promote the town as a tourist destination, culminating in an annual Autumn Colour Festival.

The community-driven AWG was formed in 2017 (under the umbrella of the AVA) to address wilding tree issues on 450 ha in the vicinity of Arrowtown. The group, largely through the passion of local resident Ben Teele, has developed a draft strategy involving a staged removal of weedy trees from this sub-zone. The plan proposes progressive removal of exotic trees accompanied by replanting with non-weedy exotic and native species, whilst retaining Arrowtown's autumn colours. The plan has a timeframe of 20 years.

#### **Management objectives:**

- To work with the Arrowtown community to alter the current mix of tree species towards a composition where spread outside the zone is minimal and the annual autumn colour display is retained or enhanced.
- Elsewhere on Mahu Whenua, work towards the elimination of weedy exotic trees species.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Support community initiatives (QEII & SPL).
- Control isolated populations (SPL).
- Establish photo points to monitor progress on control/transformation of the core area (QEII).
- Work closely with SPL, The Trust, LINZ, WWCCG, QLDC, ORC, the local community and potential funders to ensure that their transition programme is successful (Arrowtown Choppers/AVA).

## 2.2.4 Exotic amenity plantings

**Background:** In the vicinity of the Mahu Whenua Lodge on Motatapu Station there are areas of exotic plantings comprising shelter belts and bordering roadways that are included within the Mahu Whenua covenants. Exotic species include silver birch, various Cyprus species, pencil pines, rowan and cedars interplanted with a mix of native trees, shrubs and grasses. Some of these plantings may have potential to be a seed source for weed trees.

**Management objectives:**

- To protect and enhance these plantings whilst preventing unwanted spread into the balance of the Mahu Whenua covenant.

**Actions/Responsibilities:**

- Ensure these planting the vicinity of the Mahu Whenua Lodge are not spreading onto surrounding natural areas (SPL).
- Removal of weedy species (SPL).
- Replacement of weedy species with non-weedy exotics or natives (SPL).
- Photo point monitoring (QEII).

## 2.3 Cultural/historic

## 2.3.1 Ngāi Tahu cultural values

See Volume II for Ngāi Tahu organisational structure and historic overview.

**Background:** SPL and QEII respect Ngāi Tahu's history and interest in the land and currently have a positive and constructive relationship with Ngāi Tahu. Clause 2.2.4 under the Purposes and Objectives of the Mahu Whenua covenants reads, "Recognise and acknowledge Ngāi Tahu cultural values". Clause 6.4 requires QEII and SPL to consult with Ngāi Tahu in relation to a management plan (if prepared).

**Management objectives:**

- To nurture and enhance an ongoing relationship between SPL, QEII and Ngāi Tahu.
- Where consistent with the terms of the covenants, encourage representatives of Ngāi Tahu to access Mahu Whenua for purposes consistent with cultural values.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Maintain primary relationship with Ngāi Tahu (SPL).
- Assist SPL with Ngāi Tahu relationship (QEII).
- Work towards telling the Ngāi Tahu story through interpretative facilities (Ngāi Tahu, QEII & SPL).

- Use Ngāi Tahu place names where appropriate (SPL, QEII & Ngāi Tahu).
- Work towards better protection and enhancement of cultural values within Mahu Whenua (Ngāi Tahu, SPL and QEII).
- Erect appropriate markers, such as a pouwhenua (carved wooden posts), on the Covenant areas (Ngāi Tahu).
- Acknowledge Schedule 4 Clause 3 of the Mahu Whenua Open Space covenant documents (See Volume II) in relation to cultural harvesting of native species (SPL & QEII).
- Consult with Ngāi Tahu over any activity affecting protection and management of the Ngāi Tahu cultural values (SPL/QEII).
- Develop and maintain list of key Ngāi Tahu contacts (QEII & SPL).

### 2.3.2 Post-colonial archaeology/history

See Volume II for a summary of archaeological values on each station comprising Mahu Whenua.

**Background:** SPL and QEII acknowledge that the covenant protects historic early pastoral era farming relicts and a myriad of mining sites originally proposed for protection under a separate Heritage Covenant under OIO conditions. This operational area covers the entire covenant and includes both known and unrecorded sites. The Trust, SPL, HNZ have agreed that these values be protected by way of Open Space Covenant to avoid duplication of protection.

#### **Management objectives:**

- To preserve and where practical enhance historical/archaeological sites through monitoring and strategic maintenance and restorative work.
- To provide interpretation of historic sites at strategic locations.
- To preserve sites and where appropriate undertake works to enhance their legibility.
- To prevent, reverse or slow degradation from vegetation encroachment, erosion and impacts from recreational use or illegal mining activities.

#### **Actions/responsibilities:**

- Develop & maintain relationship with Heritage New Zealand (QEII & SPL).
- Incorporate a representative cross section of historical, archaeological and cultural sites into the current photo point monitoring programme (QEII).
- To facilitate the provision of site interpretation at selected representative archaeological sites (QEII).
- Ongoing inventory and research (HNZ and approved third parties).
- Photo point monitoring (QEII – assisted by HNZ).
- Management advice (HNZ, LDM & DOC).

## 2.4 Interpretation

**Background:** Interpretation information on biodiversity, history, land management and conservation projects are provided at four sites (1) Arrowtown Police Cottage (2) Brackens Saddle (3) Strohes Flat (4) The Richburn. This project was a QEII initiative with funding from the Central Lakes Trust and the Arrowtown Business and Promotion Association. The Lakes District Museum has a close association with the project.

**Management objectives:**

- To tell the Mahu Whenua story.
- To inform the public of the values present.
- To help gain public support for conservation and wider land management initiatives.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Annual monitoring of interpretation facilities (QEII with assistance from our partners).
- Inventory of Interpretation - Webmap and Interpretation Manual (QEII).
- Co-ordination of daily opening of the Arrowtown Police Cottage Site (LDM in conjunction with Dudley's Cafe).
- Replacement and updating of panels as required (QEII).
- Transfer of digital files for interpretation panels into the QEII QUIC database (QEII).
- Work towards integrating the Ngai Tahu story into Mahu Whenua interpretation (QEII/SPL/Ngāi Tahu/Aukaha).

## 2.5 Research

### 2.5.1 University of Otago

**Background:** The Trust was approached by the UO in 2015 with a proposal to engage students in a comprehensive research programme based on the Mahu Whenua covenants. Following a meeting in June 2015 between the QEII National Trust and the UO, students visited the area over the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 summers.

The initial goal of the programme is to undertake research of common interest to Soho Property, the National Trust and UO.

There are currently three MSc botany students, two PhD students and four summer students working on projects involving Mahu Whenua. There is an annual biomonitoring project for Didymo running over five years.

See Volume II for detail on the UO research partnership and a copy of a draft MOU between the Trust and UO).

**Management objectives:**

- To enhance the knowledge base on Open Space values in Mahu Whenua.
- To provide information that enhances covenant management and assists with SPL's goals to restore the natural environment.
- To develop students' knowledge and research skills around environmental management and restoration.

- To add to the scientific knowledge base in ways relevant to Mahu Whenua.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Strengthen and expand the current research programme (UO, SPL and QEII).
- Complete draft QEII/Otago University MOU and sign (QEII/UO).
- Share research findings in an appropriate format with SPL and QEII (UO).
- Assist with field logistics and accommodation (SPL).
- Archive university research reports into QUIC Database (QEII).

### 2.5.2 Research by other entities

**Background:** There is potential to encourage researchers from other universities and scientific institutions to undertake research on Mahu Whenua, for example, Te Papa.

**Management objectives:**

- To enhance the knowledge base on Open Space values in Mahu Whenua.
- To provide information that enhances covenant management and assists with SPL's goals around restoration of the natural environment.
- To add to the scientific knowledge base in ways relevant to Mahu Whenua.

**Actions/responsibilities**

- Research – by agreement with SPL and QEII, third parties are encouraged to undertake research as is currently occurring with the University of Otago (QEII/SPL).
- For major projects, prepare an MOU between research applicant, SPL and QEII (QEII/SPL/Applicant).
- Research by third parties must be shared with SPL and QEII (Research Applicant).

## 2.6 Fencing

**Background:** An extensive fencing programme has been completed by SPL to exclude stock from the covenant area on Motatapu and Soho Stations. Elsewhere covenant boundaries lie on existing fence lines and in some cases on natural boundaries. There is unfenced boundary between covenanted and unencumbered land on Coronet Peak Station in the Upper Shotover Valley near Muddy Terrace, although adjoining unencumbered land is not currently stocked.

The covenants are bound by an estimated 80 km of fencing with neighbouring stations and farms. Fencing between covenanted and un-encumbered land within the four Mahu Whenua stations has been roughly measured at 85km, mostly located on Motatapu and Glencoe Stations.

Most fencing is in good stock proof condition although there is periodic ingress from the Branches Station along the unfenced Polnoon boundary and from poor high-altitude fences on the Alphasburn and Branch Creek stations boundaries. There has been some internal leakage of sheep into the covenanted areas in the Motatapu Valley.

On the Crown Terrace, there is an unfenced boundary between covenanted land on Glencoe Station and Barley Farm on the lower faces of Crown Peak. The boundary lies on a line which cannot be practically fenced. Currently some areas of Barley farm cannot be grazed without stock trespass onto covenanted land.

**Management objectives:**

- To maintain fences in stock proof condition and to work towards removal of redundant fences.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Maintenance of all fencing of covenant boundaries to a stock proof standard including replacement as required (SPL).
- Liaison with neighbours over boundary fencing (SPL).
- Comply with the obligations of the Fencing Act in relation to all external boundaries (SPL).
- Inventory of fencing location and condition in Webmap (QEII long term project with assistance from SPL).
- Opportunistic monitoring of fence condition and adding location and type into QUIC database and Webmap (QEII).
- Soho may clear vegetation along fence lines, use light machinery for fence maintenance and replacement. Any significant new benching work requires consent (SPL with approval from QEII & other relevant authorities).

## 2.7 Recreation

**Background:** The Mahu Whenua covenants receive a great deal of use from walkers, mountain bikers and backcountry skiers. Four-wheel driving is limited to the Macetown Road. Horse riding is limited to the Macetown Road and Dan O’Connell’s Track. Some discussion is happening with horse riding representatives with a view to identifying further possibilities. Most, but not all, of the recreational activity takes place on a formalized track network.

Existing levels of recreational use are consistent with the Mahu Whenua covenant objective of:

*Protecting the Covenant Area, its aesthetic natural landscapes and features which are national landmarks and which contribute to New Zealanders' sense of place (as described further in the Open Space Values), so that the Covenant Area is not materially adversely affected by human modification, and remains free from the effects of farmed animals, weeds and pests, cultivation, mining or mineral exploration, commercial forestry or other activities detrimental to the natural state of the Covenant Area.*

Recreational use of open spaces invariably comes with some tensions and conflicts between user groups (in the Mahu Whenua case mainly between mountain bikers and walkers). Some work has been undertaken on documenting user experiences on Mahu Whenua. This information will be used to guide decision making on new track proposals and in some cases for managing potentially conflicting uses on existing tracks.

Decisions on recreational use will be made in the context of protecting a range of recreation opportunities from remote, with little or no facilities, to front country, where facilities will be more prevalent and user interactions common.

Detailed information on the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum and user group survey results can be found in Volume II (Appendices Twenty-One and Twenty-Two).

Commercial recreational activities undertaken without a recreation permit from LINZ exposes SPL to legal risks.

**Management objectives:**

- To facilitate provision of recreational opportunities and public enjoyment of Mahu Whenua while meeting the primary covenant objectives of protecting and enhancing Open Space values.
- To allow commercial recreation where it is compatible with protection of the values, including the maintenance of a range of high-quality recreational experiences from remote to front country.
- To allow commercial recreation where it does not result in undue damage or wear and tear to facilities (especially tracks).
- To ensure that guided commercial recreation activities on areas open to the public, except for large one-off events, are generally indistinguishable from non-commercial activities (e.g., by limiting guided group sizes to 8 persons).
- To ensure no commercial recreation activities are undertaken by those not holding a valid recreation permit from LINZ.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Completion and implementation of this management plan (QEII).
- Continued liaison with recreational groups (QEII & SPL).
- Ensure commercial recreation operators hold a current LINZ recreational permit (SPL and LINZ with advice from QEII and other parties).

### 2.7.1 Tracks Advisory Group

**Background:** QEII and NZWAC have established an “Advisory Group” comprising key players in relation to public access and track management (QEII/DOC/QLDC/NZWAC/AVA/QTT and SPL). An MOU was signed by all parties in 2018. A copy of this agreement is included in Volume II. The MOU stipulates that DOC will take on day to day management of backcountry tracks and the QLDC will perform this role for front country tracks. As of November 2020, DOC have entered agreed tracks into their Asset Management System and have adopted day to day management of the tracks.

In 2021 a separate agreement was reached with QLDC for \$10,000 annually to be distributed to a QEII administered Front Country Track Management Fund in lieu of the council taking on hands on track management. It has been agreed between QLDC, QEII, SPL and QTT that QTT will be used as a vehicle to distribute funds to local contractors.

**Management objectives:**

- The Tracks Advisory Group will ensure all parties involved in track management and maintenance communicate on a regular basis.
- Focus must be on high level issues such as resource distribution, track standards and compliance issues.
- To review the Tracks Advisory Group Structure in response to changed model for managing front country tracks.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Hold meetings on ‘as required’ basis, preferably annually (QEII).
- Prepare an agenda in consultation with other members (QEII).
- Attendees to update their involvement in track management, share suggestions and observations.



- Establish a track management fund to hold and distribute money for track maintenance derived from agency grants and income derived from commercial activities of the easements (QEII).
- Summarise works and actions required and work with 'Track Managers' to deliver agreed outcomes (QEII).
- Attendees to agree on allocation and use of funds held in track management bank account.
- Prepare an MOU between QLDC, QEII, SPL and QTT formalising funding arrangement for front country tracks (QEII).
- Hold regular meetings and field inspections between QEII, QTT, QLDC and SPL to determine allocation of resources for track works.

See Volume II for track inventories.

### 2.7.2 Existing tracks with easements

**Background:** Twenty-two sections of tracks are, or shortly to be, subject to public access easements in the name of the NZ Walking Access Commission. These were a condition of purchase by SPL by the Overseas Investment Commission (OIO). The OIO required tracks to be bought up to 'Backcountry Adventure Standard' by SPL. QEII is the Controlling Authority for these tracks. Day to day management of backcountry tracks has been handed over to DOC via an MOU dated August 2008. As of September 2020, DOC has taken over responsibility of backcountry tracks. The balance of the track network (front country tracks) is to be managed according to an arrangement between QLDC, QEII, SPL and QTT that QTT as described in the previous section. Community consultation has revealed that there is a preference for tracks to be maintained to a basic level versus standards adopted for 'front country' tracks by other agencies.

**Management objectives:**

- To manage walking tracks to a minimum standard of 'Back Country Adventure' with an emphasis on adequate marking, signage and a maintenance schedule orientated towards minimising erosion and unsightly scarring.
- Management objectives for shared use mountain biking/walking trails are similar although the Coronet Loop Trail is designed to accommodate intermediate riders.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Controlling authority – Address major legal and operational issues including temporary track closures, major breaches of easement terms (QEII).
- Day to day management of front country tracks listed in Volume II including track inspections, sign repair & installation, maintenance of track marking, vegetation clearance, maintenance of cut outs etc (Front Country Tracks Group operational committee comprising QTT, SPL, QEII & QLDC).
- Day to day management of backcountry tracks listed in Volume II, track inspections, sign repair, installation, maintain track marking, vegetation clearance, maintenance of cut outs etc (DOC).
- Monitoring of track use (QEII).
- Completion of easement registration with LINZ (NZWAC).

### 2.7.3 Existing tracks: Unconsented or with no easement

**Background:** Some informal tracks are historic and have SPL consent and have been informally acknowledged by LINZ. Other tracks have no consents or permissions.

**Management objectives:**

- Subject to agreement from SPL and QEII, find a 'track sponsor' to manage these tracks in a sustainable manner.
- Approved tracks must be recorded in a schedule to accompany this management plan (See Volume II) with an objective of achieving legal security by varying the relevant Open Space Covenant (requires LINZ consent) or through the creation of easements.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Add all tracks to Webmap (QEII - some already entered).
- Confirm legitimacy (SPL/QEII).
- Assess tracks against Open Space values (QEII).
- If compatible with Open Space values, add to schedule of informal tracks in Volume II with a view to eventual formalisation. Alternatively, vary QEII covenants to add tracks and document public usage rights by way of covenant variation (QEII with LINZ approval).
- Assign maintenance to group that made track (SPL and QEII).
- Assess signage needs (if any) ('track sponsor').
- Cover costs associated with formalisation ('track sponsor').
- Arrange manufacture & placement of signage ('track sponsor' with QEII stipulating standards and signage style).
- Photo point monitoring of track condition (QEII).
- Maintain & manage impacts and signage as required ('track sponsor').

### 2.7.4 Aspirational tracks

**Background:**

There are several proposals for new tracks from individuals and groups - as documented in Volume II. Any new tracks should be assessed, factoring in remoteness qualities, potential user conflicts, findings gathered from the Mahu Whenua Recreation Meeting on July 16, 2020 and information from a recreation users survey undertaken by Katrine Gellatly as part of her course requirements towards a post graduate Diploma in Sustainable Management at the Open Polytech). Meeting notes and study write up can be found in Volume II.

**Management objectives:**

- Allow new tracks where they are compatible with the protection of Open Space values (including protecting remote/wilderness qualities in parts of Mahu Whenua).
- The sponsor/applicant must be able to demonstrate that they have the resources/expertise to acquire relevant consents, to construct the track and to maintain the facility for the foreseeable future.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Seek consent from SPL and QEII (Sponsor).
- Assess desirability, potential demand, physical impacts and cumulative social effects of new track proposals. (QEII and SPL).
- Undertake community consultation & assess potential conflicts (Sponsor).
- Gain other consents required from LINZ QLDC, Heritage NZ, Iwi) (Sponsor) .

- Fund consent application (Sponsor with possible assistance from funding agencies).
- Prepare a long term and sustainable plan for future track management (Sponsor).
- Fund signage (if required) and maintenance to QEII standards (Sponsor).
- Track added to Schedule in QEII Management Plan with objective of long-term securement by easement (QEII).
- Track and signage information input to QEII Signage manual and Webmap (QEII).

#### 2.7.5 Revenue from commercial recreation use

**Background:** Subject to the requirements of any relevant permit from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, income derived by any of the Parties from commercial use of the Mahu Whenua tracks (excluding the Macetown Road) will be paid into the QEII administered Front Country Track Management Fund referred to on page 16 under the 'Tracks Advisory Group Heading'. The operational account will be administered by QEII, for maintenance and enhancement of the Mahu Whenua Tracks and associated structures. This agreement is set out in an MOU between QEII, DOC, QLDC, SPL, AVA, QTT and NZ WAC, signed in August 2018.

#### 2.7.6 QEII administered Front Country Track Management Fund

**Management objectives:**

- To harness revenue from commercial use of tracks into track and signage maintenance.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Collect revenue (SPL).
- Administer revenue operational account (QEII).
- Distribute funds to signatories with guidance from members (QEII).
- Organise annual meetings of the Tracks Advisory Group annually at which time distribution needs will be discussed (QEII).

#### 2.7.7 Informal or unauthorised recreation not on formed tracks or formalised routes

**Background:**

Some infrequent activities are occurring in areas, and in such a manner, that detrimental effects (physical and social) are minor. Other activities are damaging fragile areas. For example, mountain bike free riding off Brow Peak and illegal trail bike use of high-altitude off Crown Peak are resulting in the creation of unconsented tracks). SPL have a policy of not allowing access by motorised vehicles within the covenant area, except for those parts of the Macetown Road which lie within Glencoe, Coronet Peak and Mount Soho Stations. Vehicle barriers have been built at both ends of the Advance Peak track and locked gates with stiles control access elsewhere.

**Management objectives:**

- To eliminate on-ground mechanised recreation and greatly reduce the frequency and impact of mountain bike freeriding in untracked areas.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Enforce no mechanised recreation policy through education, signage and where necessary through legal means (SPL, QEII).

- Erect additional vehicle barriers where problems are occurring (SPL and track manager).
- Work with mountain bikers including commercial operators to convey the message that freeriding off formalised tracks is not acceptable (SPL, QEII, QTT).
- Establish strategic native plantings on poorly aligned high damage track sections where re-alignment is undertaken to take users away from fragile areas (SPL & QEII to work with the likes of AVA to direct some volunteer planting to these sites).
- Monitor potential impact sites (QEII).

## 2.8 Huts (See Volume II for inventory)

### 2.8.1 Huts belonging to Soho Property

**Background:** Several huts within Mahu Whenua belong to SPL. Most are not available to the public and are used for property management activities. Some (e.g., Cabin Hut in the Polnoon) are derelict but may be improved to provide for public use with permission from SPL Property. A list of huts within Mahu Whenua can be found in Volume II.

#### **Management objectives:**

- To allow the maintenance and enhancement of huts, whilst protecting or enhancing the historical and visual integrity of these structures.
- Where appropriate, facilitate public use of identified huts.

#### **Actions/responsibilities:**

- Determine which huts are available for public use (SPL).
- If available for public use, seek sponsors to renovate and manage them (SPL - primary and QEII -secondary).
- Maintain and upgrade private huts in keeping with the current appearance and sympathetically to their surroundings (SPL).
- Approve construction of new recreational huts where they are consistent with covenant conditions and purposes and protect the values outlined in Volume II (SPL and QEII).
- All necessary consents obtained from QLDC and LINZ (Hut sponsor).
- Enter into agreements with sponsor in respect to ongoing maintenance and compliance issues (Sponsor and SPL with QEII assistance).

### 2.8.2 Mountain Turks (Mountain Turk Club)

**Background:** Six Mountain Turks were erected in 2020 by the Mountain Turk Club (MTC). All turks have consent from SPL, QEII, LINZ and have resource consent from the QLDC. Current information from the Mountain Turk Club can be found at <https://mountainturk.nz/>.

**Management objectives:**

- To support this initiative whilst ensuring that there are no unanticipated environmental consequences on Open Space values.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Maintain turks to consented standards (MTC).
- Keep SPL and QEII informed as to significant management issues or environmental concerns (MTC).
- Manage bookings (MTC).
- Comply with LINZ, QEII and QLDC consent conditions (MTC)
- Photo point monitor sites (QEII).

### 2.8.3 New huts, turks or similar structures for public use

**Background:** There are likely to be future applications for huts and other facilities on Mahu Whenua.

**Management objectives:**

- Allow new huts where they are compatible with the protection of Open Space values. (including protecting remote/wilderness qualities in parts of Mahu Whenua) and comply with covenant objectives and conditions.

**Actions/responsibilities**

- Gain consent from SPL Property and QEII (Sponsor).
- QEII and SPL to consider cumulative effects of facilities.
- Gain other consents required (LINZ, QLDC, Heritage NZ, Iwi) (Sponsor).
- Fund consent application (Sponsor).
- Undertake community consultation & assess potential conflicts (Sponsor)
- Prepare a long term and sustainable plan for future facility management (Sponsor).
- Facility added to Volume II QEII Management Plan & to QEII Webmap Inventory (QEII).
- Site monitored for Environmental impact (QEII).

## 2.9 Roads and farm tracks

**Background:** Farm roads and tracks may be used to drive stock between farmed areas lying outside of the covenant area, provided animals are being actively driven.

**Management objectives:**

- To allow for maintenance of existing roads and farm tracks whilst minimising earth disturbance and other activities which could create negative visual and soil and water impacts.

**Action/responsibilities:**

- Maintain these roads/tracks within their current footprint & consult QEII if significant works are proposed. Consents attained from relevant authorities as required (SPL).
- Monitor tracking as part of covenant-wide monitoring programme (QEII)

## 2.10 Signage

**Background:** Work has been undertaken to achieve a consistent style and standard to directional signage on Mahu Whenua. This is largely complete, however, there are gaps/omissions and periodic repairs/replacements required. The Coronet Loop Trail will require signage when complete. QEII has designed and commissioned signage and installed with the help of Soho Property volunteers. QEII maintains a sign inventory and records signage and location electronically on Webmap.

**Management objectives:**

- To maintain and build on the current signage system using a standard design format.
- To rectify signage omission.
- Replace original signage as required.
- Work with QLDC and other agencies to establish a kiosk with integrated track information for all tracks in the Mahu Whenua and wider Arrowtown area.

**Actions/responsibilities:**

- Maintain signage manual and update Webmap sign inventory for tracks subject to easements, including the Coronet Loop Track, currently under construction (QEII).
- Design and commission manufacture of new and replacement signs for tracks with easements (QEII with assistance from outside funders).
- Install new and replacement signage (Track Manager – DOC/QTT through use of contractors
- Put a value on assets/depreciation rate on signs funded by QEII (QEII).
- Facilitate progress on achieving a multi-agency approach to Arrowtown signage (QEII–QLDC-ABPA).

## 2.11 Monitoring

**Background:** Given the scale of Mahu Whenua, monitoring is by necessity of low intensity in comparison with smaller covenants. However, establishing representative monitoring is a high priority in order to capture changes in land cover following the removal of stock and pest animals, document wilding tree cover, planting programmes, the condition of historic sites and the impacts of recreational use on values. Data in the form of photo points and vegetation transects is valuable for interpreting ecosystem resilience, assessing management practices such as wilding tree control, promoting the benefits of protection, seeking assistance with conservation works and monitoring covenant compliance.

QEII regularly monitors 190 photo points on Mahu Whenua. These include 29 on Coronet Peak Station, 26 on Glencoe Station, 86 on Mount Soho Station (mostly retakes of Landcorp photo points established in 1989) and 49 on Motatapu Station (both new & retakes of Landcorp points established in 1996). Several UO photo points have also been entered into the QEII database. More photo points will be established as opportunities arise and in response to identified monitoring needs (for example recording progress in wilding conifer control and the impact of some recreational activities).

To achieve an adequate level of monitoring it is desirable that outside groups/organisations become involved.

UO students remeasured transects established by Landcorp over the summers of 2016/2016 (Motatapu) and 2016/2017 (Mount Soho). No analysis of transect data has been received yet. QEII undertakes the majority of photo point monitoring although some University of Otago sites have been added to the QEII data base.

**Management objectives:**

- Facilitate the re-measurement of Landcorp transects by the University of Otago at regular intervals (5-7 yearly).
- Document the impact of destocking on montane and subalpine tussock grasslands, assess trends in weed cover including wilding conifers, assess ecosystem health, trends in native vegetation, success of planting programmes cover ecosystems, condition of archaeological sites and impacts associated with recreational use.
- Continue to build the QEII photo point inventory to meet monitoring objectives outlined in this management plan.
- Re-monitoring need not be frequent at high-altitude sites where vegetation cover and composition is stable.

**Action/responsibilities:**

- Endeavour where practical to re-measure photo points every second year (QEII).
- Prioritise locations for new photo-points where there are clear management issues, or the trajectory of change is uncertain (QEII).
- Assist with logistics for establishing and measuring photo points where appropriate (SPL).
- Periodically remeasure and analyse transect data from Mount Soho and Motatapu. Share monitoring and photo point data with QEII (UO).
- Record data from general survey work securely and, in a manner, conducive to re-measuring including bird counts, aquatic inventory and vegetation survey (UO).

## 2.12 Dual Covenant Area

**Background:** Open Space covenants on Motatapu and Mount Soho lie over the top of existing Reserves Act covenants. The three DOC administered covenants were an OIO requirement upon purchase by SPL and registered in 2011. The covenants protect 2621 hectares on Motatapu Station and 1370 hectares on Mount Soho Station. The purpose, objectives, and terms of the QEII Open Space covenants do not conflict with those of the Reserves Act covenants. When the QEII Open Space covenants were registered in 2015, DOC agreed that administration of the Reserves Act covenants would be passive and in obedience to the QEII covenants unless a situation arises whereby the Department is not satisfied that Reserves Act values are being protected or that a breach of covenant may have occurred.

**Management objectives:**

- To achieve the protection afforded by the Reserves Act covenants without undue duplication of resources by DOC and QEII.



**Action/responsibilities:**

- The dual covenant areas will form part of QEII's photo point monitoring programme. The Trust will undertake the principal monitoring role in the dual covenant area (QEII).
- Monitoring results for the dual protection area will be shared on request by DOC (QEII).
- If either DOC or QEII observes a deterioration in values or notes a possible breach of covenant terms, this information shall be shared between the two covenant agencies (DOC and QEII) and a course of action agreed upon.
- DOC shall endeavour to notify QEII when a helicopter is being used within or near to the dual covenant area with a view to assisting with access for monitoring purposes (DOC).

DRAFT