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'Take nothing but photos - leave nothing but footprints'

Major issues affecting the Fiordland tramping industry since 1952, using the Routeburn, Hollyford and Milford tracks as case studies

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the BA honours degree in history at the University of Otago.
Dunedin, New Zealand
1995
Preface

When I began this project I had hoped to include in it an analysis of who in fact walked the different tracks and how this changed over time. An interesting fact noted in the Tourist and Publicity files in 1965 was that women trampers outnumbered men almost three to one on the Milford track.¹ Other postgraduate studies such as Colin Harris's dissertation and Ciaran Keogh's masters thesis also highlighted age disparities and the differing nationalities of trampers. These developments have clearly become significant issues. However both Harris's and Keogh's studies were restricted to the Routeburn track and the statistical information required for any comprehensive analysis is simply not available. In 1989 the Department of Conservation began recording the numbers of different nationalities, among independent trampers, walking the Milford track. A graph showing these statistics is included in Appendix A. While the number of overseas' trampers appears to be growing in relation to the number of New Zealand trampers the short time span allows few comprehensive conclusions to be drawn. The fact that it is restricted to one track and independent trampers also means few comparisons or generalisations over the tramping industry as a whole can be drawn.

I would like to thank the Te Anau DOC staff and particularly Ross Kerr for their assistance in providing me with much of the material I required to complete this project. Thanks also to my supervisor Erik Olssen, without whose help I might have been decorating the corridor outside his office for another year.

¹ Tourist and Publicity Department files (herein after TO), w.2729, 63/8, v.i., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78', National Archives (Wellington).
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List of Abbreviations

CMS: Conservation Management Strategies
FNP: Fiordland National Park
FNPAR: Fiordland National Park Annual Report
FNPB: Fiordland National Park Board
FNPM: Fiordland National Park Management Plan
L&S: Lands and Survey Department
MANPMP: Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan
MTMP: Milford Track Maintenance Plan
NPA: National Parks Authority
NPB: National Park Board
ROS: Recreational Opportunity Surveys
RTMP: Routeburn Track Maintenance Plan
SCBP: Southland Conservancy Business Plan
T&P: Tourist and Publicity Department
Map showing the section of Fiordland National Park encompassing the Hollyford, Routeburn and Milford Tracks.
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the major issues affecting the tramping industry since 1952. In order to highlight these issues three tracks, the Milford, Hollyford and Routeburn, have been singled out for closer analysis. Their histories, outlined in chapter one, highlight the differing visions people had for the development of the fiordland region. While the mineral, timber and farming potential of the Milford and Routeburn areas was soon discredited, the Hollyford valley continued to be used for farming up to the 1930s. During the early half of the twentieth century tourism was seen by 'conservationists' as an ally of the environmental lobby which campaigned to have the unique fiords and native environment protected. Exploitation of minerals, potential grazing land or hydro power, the environmentalists argued, would severely threaten the scenery on which tourism relied. The environmental cause appeared to win out with the passing of the 1952 National Parks Act which set aside much of the Fiordland region as a National Park and stated that protection of the environment was to be a paramount consideration of the controlling bodies. This did not stop the debate between the pro-development and the conservationist lobbies which is investigated more fully in chapter three.

The act also failed to cater specifically for those demanding that one function of the parks should be to provide areas free from development but open to the public for recreational purposes. The Federated Mountain Clubs was at the forefront in making such calls. The FMC also championed the cause of freedom of access which is dealt with in chapter four. This debate has often been reduced to the question of whether National Parks should be first and foremost an asset for the enjoyment by New Zealanders or an economic asset to be exploited for its maximum tourist dollar. In fact the issue is considerably more
complex, involving issues such as whether facilities should cater for a wider cross-section of the tourist market, like the less fit or inexperienced. Debate over this issue centred around the Milford track, where the government owned concessionaire wanted to exclude freedom walkers from the track. The end result appeared to be a victory for freedom walkers who were permitted to walk the track. However restrictions were imposed on their numbers which continued to anger some free access proponents.

The rise in overall numbers using the National Parks, and walking tracks in particular, analysed in chapter five, forced a reappraisal of the above arguments. Those who argued it was the right of every New Zealander to experience their National Parks faced the reality that, if everyone was permitted to do so, the very wilderness they valued so much would be a wilderness no longer. Similarly, those pushing for increased utilisation of the parks tourist potential had to question whether such exploitation was sustainable. This was particularly relevant in the Fiordland region where the environment, while seemingly vigorous, was in fact very susceptible to damage and slow to recover. Thus the government bodies responsible for the parks had to take into account many considerations, environmental, social as well as economic.

In order to keep the image of New Zealand's tourist industry intact and economically viable there were moves, in the late 1960s, to formalise government control over the concessionaires operating within the parks. The specific moves taken will be dealt with in chapter six.
BACKGROUND

General history of the area:

Maori, in search of the much prized greenstone, had been traversing the Fiordland region for many years prior to the arrival of Europeans. A settlement, Kotuku, had been established at the area now called Martin's Bay, although the Department of Lands and Survey maintained that there was 'no evidence ... of permanent settlements or villages' in the region. Different types of greenstone were present in the area, one used for tools and weapons and the other for ornaments. The area also provided access to the sea from which an abundance of fish could be caught and there were numerous birds in the forest. The timber stands were also used by the Maori for canoe building. The last of the greenstone expeditions took place in the 1850s by which time Kotuku had been abandoned by all but two families.¹

A mineral of different hue led to the first concerted explorations of the region by Europeans. Ever keen for more sources of gold, prospectors began probing westward from Queenstown and Southland. Ironically it was two runholders, David McKellar and George Gunn, looking for new grazing land, who were the first Europeans to describe the Hollyford valley (although they mistook it for George Sound). While it was not what Gunn and McKellar had been looking for others hoped it might offer a viable pass which could link the Queenstown and Arrowtown Goldfields to the West Coast and facilitate links with Australia. P.Q. Caples (a prospector) believed he had discovered a feasible link with the West Coast when he crossed the Harris Saddle

and walked the length of the Hollyford in 1862-63. Caples was responsible for naming the Harris saddle, the Hollyford valley (after his birthplace in Ireland), Lake McKerrow, Pyke's Creek and Lake Morton. In 1863 another exploring party, under Captain Alabaster, took a ship to the upper Hollyford Valley. From there they climbed Key Summit, followed the Pyke River and thus discovered what is now known as Lake Alabaster. Oblivious to either of these 'discoveries', James Hector, Chief geologist to the Provincial Government of Otago, explored the Greenstone Valley and then the Hollyford, connecting the two in 1863.²

At the same time the area which became known as Milford was also being discovered for the second time. James McKerrow had surveyed Lake Te Anau and named the Clinton river, which the Milford track now follows, in 1862. Samuel Moreton, in the same year, rowed up the Clinton River to where Quintin MacKinnon was later to erect his hut as part of the Milford track. The following year an exploratory and geological expedition, which entered the Milford Sound and explored the Cleddau Valley, reported spectacular scenery which encouraged further journeys.³

Just what was to be done with this area was being debated in government circles at the turn of the century. In 1904 the Superintendent of the Tourist Department proposed that the 'Fiord Country' be set aside as a scenic reserve. While conceding that this might be beneficial, the Surveyor General maintained that until the area had been better explored, in case there was evidence of mineral wealth, the likely need for fishing stations or 'special settlements', such a decision should be postponed. He also considered the tourist potential but emphasised that whatever was done had to be in the best interests of the


³ Anderson, Milford Trails, pp.27-8.
colony and stressed that employment and wealth were prime considerations.\(^4\) Despite the Surveyor Generals caution one journalist maintained the proposed 'Sounds National Park' would make 'a noble holiday ground' not only for New Zealanders but also thousands of visitors from abroad. Much of the area was incorporated under the Sounds (Fiordland) National Reserve in 1904.\(^5\)

In 1905 the Tourist and Health Resorts Department (formed in 1901) expressed concern over the damage to fauna and flora in the National Reserve and wanted not only the power to prosecute offenders, given in the 1901 Act, but also the authority to 'control and regulate traffic' within the National Reserve. As a compromise a Crown Lands Ranger was appointed for the Southland District with the duty of patrolling the area.\(^6\) On the discovery of a route from Te Anau to Wakatipu Tom MacKenzie noted that he 'was not advocating that tourist tracks should be opened before roads for settlement', rather that the two should go on at the same time. With a healthy degree of irony he went on to point out the possibilities for the timber trade, the preservation of flora and fauna and in the liberation of deer, chamois and other game!\(^7\) This somewhat ad hoc policy towards the Sounds National Reserve continued until 1952, allowing the utilisation of the area by private concerns (through application to the Lands and Survey Department) and ensured a largely open door policy regarding public access. The National Parks Act of 1952 introduced a more

\(^4\) Correspondence between Tourist Department and Surveyor General (Dep't of Lands and Survey), (1903/4), in TO, series 1, 38/72, 'Fiordland National Park 1904-62'.

\(^5\) 'Our New National Park', New Zealand Times, Sat Aug 27 (1904). TO, series 1, 38/72, 'Fiordland National Park'.

\(^6\) Correspondence between Tourist Dep't and Lands and Survey 1905. in TO, series 1, 38/72, 'Fiordland National Park'.

\(^7\) 'Proposed Tourist Track', The Free Press, 12 Feb 1907. in TO, series 1, 38/51, v.1. 'Te Anau - Wakatipu Travel 1904-9'. 'Selecting Routes for Tourists', The Auckland Herald, 11 Feb 1907, in TO, series 1, 38/51, v.1., 'Te Anau - Wakatipu Track 1904-9'.
systematic approach to the management of New Zealand's parks and reserves.

TRACK HISTORIES:

Prior to MacKenzie's statement on the role of the Sounds National Park considerable private initiatives had already been undertaken. While gold had proved elusive in the Fiordland region there were concerted attempts to exploit the region's farming and tourist potential. While the former ambition was to fail the latter flourished, which led to a number of tramping tracks being established by both private and government bodies. This chapter expands on the individual track histories to around the 1960s.

Routeburn [see map overleaf]:
The Harris Saddle, seen primarily as a link to the west coast after its initial discovery, soon became an asset in its own right. Indeed its tourist potential as a tramping track was utilised before either the Hollyford or Milford tracks. The Bryant family of Kinloch initiated the first tourist venture in the 1880s, a time when tourism was becoming more important economically as mining continued to decline. Harry Bryant guided groups of up to 17 people up the Routeburn Flats on horseback where they camped the night. The next day they went by foot to the Harris Saddle and returned to Kinloch the following day. At one stage a more ambitious journey which linked the Milford, Hollyford and the Routeburn was undertaken. It started on horseback up the Routeburn Flats, went over Harris Saddle by foot, down to the Hollyford, up to Lake Howden at the head of the Greenstone, along the Livingstone Range, down into the Eglington Valley at Cascade Creek, over the Dore Pass to the Milford Track, then to Milford Sound and back to Lake
The Routeburn Track

[Source: traced from map in Anne Relling, Routeburn Track Maintenance Plan, 1994, p.5.]
Te Anau. This trip took a two and a half weeks.⁸[see map overleaf]

In 1912 the Minister of Tourism, Sir Thomas MacKenzie, called for the extension of the track from the Harris Saddle to Lake Howden.

Sir Thomas MacKenzie, Minister of Tourism and (briefly) Prime Minister, who pushed development of both the Routeburn and Milford tracks at the turn of the century. Lake Mackenzie is named after him. (Alexander Turnbull Library)

⁸ [Source: Philip Temple, The BP Guide to the Routeburn Track, p.7.]

A suitable route was discovered by Harry Birley who at the same time discovered, what was christened, Lake MacKenzie. The Public Works Department was commissioned to extend the track to Lake Howden and work began in 1913. The track was developed from both ends but the call to War in 1914 left the section between the Harris Saddle and Lake MacKenzie uncompleted.⁹ Only in 1939 was the track finished, linking the beginning of the track at Lake Wakatipu with the Milford road.¹⁰ While the government helped with the track's development it was left to private enterprise to run up until the mid 1960s when, in response to increasing demand, the Department of Lands built its own huts on the track for use by independent trampers.


¹⁰ Relling, Routeburn Maintenance Plan, pp.1, 7.
Harry Bryant's two and a half week guided tour

[Source: traced from Department of Survey and Land Information map, 'Fiordland National Park', 1993.]
Survey map of Martin's Bay and Jamestown settlements 1884

[Source: John Hall-Jones, Martin's Bay, Invercargill, 1987.]
The development of the Hollyford Track resulted from more ambitious plans based on establishing a settlement at Martin's Bay. In 1863 Hector claimed that, at 'moderate expense', a road could be forged linking east with west, ending at Martin's Bay. This was challenged by J.T. Thomson (engineer and surveyor) and Francis Howden (surveyor) who between them estimated that it would cost at least £125,000. William Arthur, Chief Surveyor of Otago, and W.C. Wright, another surveyor, had also given negative reports on the possibility of a settlement at Martin's Bay. A major consideration had been the problems associated with the Hollyford Bar which had already claimed a supply ship. Such reports failed to dampen the enthusiasm of James Macandrew, the Superintendent of Otago, who wanted to establish a port at Martin's Bay. A select committee was appointed by the Provincial Council in 1868 and found in favour of such a settlement. The committee argued that access to magnificent stands of timber, gold and other minerals in the area would enable the settlement to thrive. Indeed Hector's route to Jackson's and Martin's Bay was at the time being used by gold miners. As a result sections were sold at Jamestown (see map) on the assumption that a road would be constructed connecting Jamestown to Queenstown and that the lagoon entrance would be dredged to make it easily navigable. Work did begin on a bridle track up the Routeburn but this was abandoned after four years work. This left settlers at Martin's Bay reliant on a pack track, completed to the Harris Saddle, for mail. By the end of 1870 up to eight houses had been built but with the road link to the East no nearer and the sandbar at Martins Bay no more welcoming (as two ships discovered to their cost), the settlement soon dwindled. Alice MacKenzie's account of her experiences as a child at Martin's Bay during its brief history bear testimony to the hard life.
The Hollyford Track

endured by the settlers.\textsuperscript{11} There had also been resistance from the Dunedin business community to the building of a road to the West. They feared a loss of business to Victoria and New South Wales and pushed instead for an improvement of the roads to the east of Central Otago and South Westland.\textsuperscript{12}

By 1900 only the MacKenzie family remained at Martin's Bay. The McKenzies had arrived in 1876 to join other settlers already there. Daniel MacKenzie's sons, Malcolm and Hugh, continued to run cattle at Martin's Bay after their father's death. A track good enough for horses was completed the length of the Hollyford Valley by the late 1880s. Whenever the MacKenzie brothers drove their cattle to Mossburn, the nearest saleyards (still some 250km away), a track had to be cleared and stockyards set up at various intervals. In 1926 they were bought out by David Gunn who continued to run cattle with assistance from the MacKenzie brothers.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{figure} 
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{mckenzie_homestead.jpg}
\caption{The McKenzie homestead, Martins Bay, 1900. (Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library)}
\end{figure}

[Source: Philip Temple, \textit{The BP Guide to the Hollyford Track}, p. 72]
The very remoteness of the Hollyford which had led to the demise of the Martin's Bay and Jamestown settlements also created opportunities. Trampers had been venturing up the Hollyford from the 1920s and in 1936 David Gunn began guiding tourists up the Hollyford Valley to Martin's Bay. Initially only one group of about a dozen was taken each year and before 1936 the only visitors to do the track came from south of Dunedin. By 1949 300 people passed through the Hollyford annually, allowing Gunn and his new partner, Arthur Hamilton, who had joined in 1945, to employ four guides throughout the year. A launch, the 'Gratitude', was also put on Lake McKerrow which enabled the Demon Trail to be avoided. Gunn and Hamilton also offered a ten-day riding trek which continued round the Big Bay - upper Pyke circuit with meals being provided as on the guided tramp.14

In correspondence between Gunn and Hamilton and the Tourist and Publicity Department (T&P) Gunn stated that they had 'purposely refrained from blazing the track', believing a 'measure of uncertainty' added to one's enjoyment. They also claimed that it was 'the unanimous opinion of those who visited it, the finest [walk] in New Zealand'.15 Murray Gunn continued to guide trampers up the Hollyford and horse trekers around the Big Bay circuit following the death of his father in 1955. Concern over the lack of enthusiasm or consideration shown by Murray Gunn was expressed by the Dunedin district manager of the T&P department. Fewer tours were taken and the T&P department believed some tourists were being left in the lurch. Murray Gunn stopped taking guided tours altogether in 1957, although he still allowed his huts to be used by freedom walkers at the former prices. By 1960, however,
Sutherland's 'City of Milford' - 1870s

City of Milford in the 1870's
John Mackay on left, Donald Sutherland on right
By courtesy of Dominion Museum

[Source: William Anderson, One Hundred Years at Milford Sound, [place and date of publication unknown]]
Both the track and huts had deteriorated considerably meaning many potential trampers missed the beauty of the Hollyford.\textsuperscript{16} It was at this time that the land at Martin's Bay and Jamestown was declared Crown land which allowed it to be incorporated into Fiordland National Park. This led the FNPB to upgrade the tracks, tramping huts and improve the bridging over creeks and rivers.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Milford [see map overleaf]:}
The story of the Milford track differs considerably from that of the Hollyford. From the outset it had been seen primarily as a potential tourist attraction, providing as it did, even fewer opportunities for settlement. The government was also to play a greater role in its development and operation. On the Hollyford Gunn did most of the maintenance work himself. Although he received some grants for work on the track his tours received no publicity from the Tourist and Publicity department.\textsuperscript{18}

Donald Sutherland was the first to push Milford's tourist potential. He arrived in 1877 and as early as 1878 had visions of turning Milford into a tourist resort. Throughout the late 1870s and early 1880s he explored the region. In 1880 he discovered the renowned Sutherland Falls. He also began cutting a track up the Arthur Valley.\textsuperscript{19}

During the 1880s rewards were offered for anyone who

\textsuperscript{16} Correspondence between the Dunedin district manager of the T&P department and the General Manager of T&P in T.O. w.2729, 58/2, v.1. 'Hollyford Valley Travel'. Correspondence between M. Gunn and T&P Department 1957-60. in T.O., w.2729 58/2, v.1. 'Hollyford Valley Travel'. Temple, \textit{The BP Guide to the Hollyford}, p.11.

\textsuperscript{17} N.P.A meeting 12 March (1965), case 1527. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.5., 'National Parks Authority'. Temple, \textit{The BP Guide to the Hollyford Track}, p.11.

\textsuperscript{18} Correspondence between Hollyford Tours and T&P 1945 in T.O. w.2729, 58/2, v.1. 'Hollyford Valley Travel'. Correspondence between Min of Defence and T&P 1952 in T.O. w.2729, 58/2, v.1. 'Hollyford Valley Travel'.

The Milford Track

[Source: traced from map in Anne Relling and Helen Dodson, Milford Track Maintenance Plan, 1993, p.4.]
could discover a feasible passage from the sound to the interior. At one stage the government was offering £50 and the Wallace County Council £300, which were considerable sums at the time. It was not until 1888, following the combined efforts of two expeditions, the first led by C.W. Adams and the second by Quintin MacKinnon and Ernest Mitchell, that such a passage was discovered - although Sutherland 'could have found the track at any time if he'd wanted to do so.' Adams urged the development of the route as a tourist track and progress began almost immediately. While the Sutherland Falls were determined by Adams to be 580 meters high, significantly shorter than Sutherland's estimate of 1000, it still made them the third highest falls in the world and as such they had tremendous tourist potential. Both government and private enterprise worked to exploit this potential.

From 1890 Sutherland played host to trampers in the Milford region while contractors, including Sutherland and MacKinnon, were employed by the government to upgrade the track. Huts and tents were erected by Sutherland and MacKinnon (who also acted as guides), the government and even the Union Steamship Company, although the later were for use by excursion passengers. The first organised parties were walking the track by 1892. The success of the track encouraged the government to undertake construction of a road to Milford Sound which began in 1890 with the use of prison labour. In 1892 the Public Works took over but it was not until 1940 that the Homer Tunnel was completed, allowing a round trip to be made from Te Anau to Milford Sound via the Milford track and back to Te Anau via the Milford road. It was a further fourteen years


before cars and buses could use the Homer Tunnel. The arrival of the steamship Tawera in 1899 at Lake Te Anau meant many more people could use the Milford Track. Maintenance of the track was contracted out for £400 but complaints over the quality of the service were made and it was suggested by the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts that the government should take over this role and also provide the steamer. Administration of the track was taken up by the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts in 1903. Following the Tourist Department purchase of the Te Anau Hotel and the Tawera steamer in 1906 walkers were required to be guided through the track. Once the Tourist Department had taken over the track was upgraded and better accommodation provided.

In 1908 the Milford acquired the title 'The greatest walk in the world', following the publication of an article by Blanche E. Baughan in the *London Spectator*. Originally the work was titled 'A Notable Walk' but thanks to a good dose of editorial licence it was changed to the above title, helping the Milford Track gain world renown. The track was also promoted by the Otago Expansionist League in 1914 when it distributed pamphlets praising the track and its scenic beauty. In 1928 the track came under control of the new Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist and Publicity (which had been combined), as a means of controlling the destruction of plants, carrying of firearms

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28 Correspondence between the League and Gov't Tourist Dept 1914, in T.O. series 1, 4/58, v.1., 'Milford - general'.
and the lighting of fires on the track.\textsuperscript{29} With the Homer Tunnel nearly complete in 1953 Te Anau was made the compulsory starting point and a round trip had to be made.\textsuperscript{30} Under the Tourist Hotel Corporation Act 1955 control of sections of the Milford Track passed to the Tourist Hotel Corporation (THC). The THC continued the policy of charging a set daily amount for trampers walking the track regardless of whether they took part in the package deal offered or not.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} T&P TO, series 1, 38/48, 'Vesting track in name of department'.


\textsuperscript{31} T&P to Ombudsman in T.O. w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

OVERVIEW OF CONTROLLING BODIES

Prior to the 1952 National Parks Act, just who could operate within the Sounds National Reserve was determined by the Lands and Survey Department which was also responsible, in cooperation with the concessionaires, for the maintenance of the tracks. The National Parks Act of 1952 has been the basis for much subsequent legislation affecting the National Park system and consequently the operation of walking tracks within those Parks. The impact this and subsequent Acts have had on the administration of the National Parks system is outlined below. Their implications regarding specific concerns such as tourism and the environment will be considered under the relevant chapters.

The 1952 Act also established Fiordland National Park, New Zealand's largest. Under the 1952 Act a National Parks Authority (NPA) was established which was to be responsible for general policies relating to National Parks which were still to be administered by the Department of Lands and Survey. The NPA's membership included representatives from Internal Affairs, the Royal Society of New Zealand, the Forest and Bird Protection Society, the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand and a National Park Board representative. The director of Forestry and the General Manager of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts were also assured membership. A National Park Board was also to be appointed by the Minister of Lands for each National Park, although there had already been boards responsible for the administration of the four Parks in existence prior to the 1952 Act. These Boards were to put into practice the general policies of the Authority and make suggestions relating to the operation of their particular National Park. The new Boards membership was to consist of the Commissioner for Crown Lands for the district and eight other people appointed by the Minister of Lands on the recommendation of the National Parks
Authority. The 1974 National Parks Amendment Act provided for the membership of the General Manager of the THC on the NPA and where the THC administered land within a Park it was to have membership on the Park Board responsible for that area.

More extensive changes were suggested by the Department of Lands and Survey submission to the Government Caucus Committee on National Parks in 1979. It proposed that the executive board/authority system be abolished and that the National Parks be administered directly by the Department of Lands and Survey. This would have reduced both the boards and the Authority to an advisory role only. The strength of public outcry and a publicity campaign undertaken by the Federated Mountain Clubs against such a move led to a watered down National Parks Bill being passed in 1980. Under this Act the name of the Authority was changed to the National Parks and Reserves Authority while the Boards were renamed the National Parks and Reserves Boards. The role of these 'new' bodies remained much the same, although there was an emphasis on management plans rather than the ad hoc/reactive system of administration of previous years. Provision for membership on the Authority was made for three representatives from Tourism and local government and four people with a 'special knowledge of or interest in matters connected with the policy for and management of national Parks and reserves, regional or community affairs, tourism, recreation, or conservation,...'. Membership for a representative from Internal Affairs, the director of Forestry and the General

34 Ray Burrell, Fifty Years of Mountain Federation, Wellington, 1963, pp.91-93.
Manager of the THC were no longer specifically mentioned.\textsuperscript{35}  

The Conservation Act of 1987 established the Department of Conservation and made provision for a more complex zoning system. The Authority and Boards remained unchanged, however.\textsuperscript{36} The next significant change in administration came with the Conservation Law Reform Act of 1990. This abolished the National Parks and Reserves Authority and National Parks and Reserves Boards, replacing them with the Conservation Authority and Conservation Boards. Again the role of these bodies varied little from their predecessors with the only significant change appearing to be the new emphasis on establishing a more formalised zoning system within the National Parks. The membership of both the Authority and Boards also represented a growing awareness of the concerns of the tangata whenua. There were to be two members on the Authority representing Maori Affairs while the Boards, of up to 12 people, were to be appointed by the Minister of Conservation with regard to the 'interests of nature conservation, natural earth and marine sciences, recreation, tourism, and the local community including the tangata whenua of the area.'\textsuperscript{37}

Thus the administrative apparatus concerning National Parks has become more formalised although much continuity can also be seen between the period of Lands and Survey administration and that of the Authority. A significant change came with the establishment of the NPA and NPBs in 1952, which took much of the responsibility away from the Department of Lands and Survey. While the names and membership of the Authority and Boards changed, as different interest groups were consulted on National Parks,


their essential functions remained the same. The Authority had the responsibility for outlining the general policies regarding National Parks while the boards had the task of implementing these policies and making recommendations specific to their area. Those present on the authority and boards represented a broad spectrum of interests ranging from tourism to conservation. This did not, however, stem the debate about what should be the role of the National Parks and hence the walking tracks within them. This fundamental issue will be dealt with in the next chapter.
Environment versus Tourism:

'...it was "a grief" to see this waste land, desolate and uninhabited, barren and sterile in the absence of man's hand. This dissatisfaction was not based on the appearance of the land so much as the knowledge of its unproductive state. But it was more than a negative response; the wilderness in this view was immoral.'

This attitude reflected the view of many in New Zealand in the early half of the twentieth century. Undeveloped land, or land not utilised, was seen as wasted. Its intrinsic worth was little valued. Indeed pristine bush was often associated with uncivilised life. There were some romantics who were inspired by a '...countryside, wild, magnificent, fresh from the land of nature...', but these were few.

The lack of mineral wealth and suitable farming land in the Fiordland region meant any envisaged development was going to rest primarily with the tourist industry. Initially tourism had been seen as an ally of conservation, as opposed to the interests of mining, logging or farming. Conservationists used the argument that by conserving the environment revenue was brought into the country through tourism - the land was being utilised. With the expansion of tourism however, the threat posed by bulldozers, mines and chainsaws was replaced by the equally real danger posed by numerous hotels, buses, planes and people.

It was not until the 1930s that 'a new conservation

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40 Eugenie Sage, 'Beyond the Picture Postcard; What tourism means for conservation', in Forest and Bird, no.275 (Feb 1995), p.21.
consciousness' developed 'among mountaineers about the future of New Zealand's mountain wilderness.' They joined, under the umbrella organisation of Federated Mountain Clubs, with the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Royal Society of New Zealand, to campaign for greater protective measures for New Zealand's national reserves and parks. They pushed for the 'rationalisation' of the 'rather chaotic system of national parks and reserves' that existed under the Department of Lands and Survey.41 It was largely in response to such pressure that the 1952 National Parks Act was passed. This Act recognised the need to effectively manage the remaining areas of 'untamed' wilderness in order that it could be preserved for present and future generations. Section 3(1) of the Act declared that, '...the provisions of this Act shall have effect for the purpose of preserving in perpetuity National Parks, for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand that contain scenery of such distinctive quality ['ecological systems' was included in 1980 Act] or natural features so beautiful or unique that their preservation is in the national interest.'

At the same time the right of the public to utilise the parks was emphasised in section 3(2)(d); 'Subject to the provisions of this Act and to the imposition of such conditions and restrictions as may be necessary for the preservation of the native flora and fauna or for the welfare in general of the Parks, the public shall have freedom of entry and access to the Parks, so that they may receive in full measure the inspiration, enjoyment, recreation, and other benefits that may be derived from mountain, forests, sounds, lakes and rivers.'

In line with the objective of allowing as many of the public to experience the parks as possible the Board could, with the consent of the NPA, grant 'easements'. These could cover the use of water in the Park, provision for

41 Molloy, 'Wilderness Recreation - The New Zealand Experience', *Wilderness Recreation in New Zealand*, pp.4-8.
access to leased land or '...for the development or use of the Park or any part of the Park as a tourist or public resort...'.\(^{42}\)

It seems clear from the act that provision for commercial enterprise was to be subject to the overriding concerns of protecting the environment. Further to this, certain areas deemed to be of special significance could be put aside as 'special' or 'wilderness' areas. The former was aimed at protecting the native flora and fauna with access subject to the holding of a permit. Wilderness areas were also to be maintained in a state of nature with no roads, tracks or trails to be constructed 'except such foot tracks for the use of persons entering the area on foot as the Board deems necessary or desirable.'\(^{43}\)

While representing a considerable improvement on the previous ad-hoc management of the parks, the act failed to stem the debate over the extent of development that should be allowed. In 1964 the general manager of the T&P, R.S. Odell, expressed concern that the NPA was not taking into consideration the potential tourist market offered by the Parks.\(^{44}\) Two years later he again expressed the concern that the National Parks Act of 1952 had been interpreted so that the importance of preserving the Parks 'for the benefit and enjoyment of the Public' had become secondary to the preservation in their natural state the native flora and fauna and the eradication of introduced flora and fauna. He gave examples such as trout not being able to be introduced, the prohibition on riding tracks, and the discouraging of sightseeing access roads. Added to this he believed the NPA and NPBs over-represented the interests of preservation and conservation concerns at the expense of

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\(^{43}\) 'National Parks Act 1952', *New Zealand Statutes*, section 34.

\(^{44}\) TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.4. 'NPA'.

the users - the primary objective.\textsuperscript{45}

The idea of broadening the representation of the NPBs was backed up by the Minister of Tourism. In 1964 he called for representatives of the tourist industry to be appointed to the National Park Boards as a means of enhancing co-ordination between the two. He maintained this step would in no way compromise their role. The L&S department replied that it would not be feasible as there were so many sectional interests and maintained the interests of the board members should be first and foremost those of the Park and not any sectional concern. It also maintained that there was already effective liaison between tourist interests and the boards.\textsuperscript{46} Like Odell, the Commissioner of Works thought the stance taken regarding the preservation and conservation of National Parks was too rigid and ignored the possibilities of resource development which could be very helpful for New Zealand's economy. Departments, he cited, that were not represented on the Authority included those of Industries and Commerce, Mines, Works, Electricity, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and Agriculture.\textsuperscript{47}

On the other side of the coin there were those who reasserted the paramountcy of protecting the environment when development was considered. D.G. Medway of the Royal Forest and Bird Society, for example, wrote an article entitled 'Preservation, Use and Zoning', in which, while conceding the importance of the Parks for facilitating public enjoyment, argued that the 1952 Act should be interpreted as putting environmental considerations first in any planning process.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} R.S. Odell, \textit{National Park Review}, 1966, pp.2-3. in TO, series 1, 47/25/1, v.9., 'National Parks of New Zealand, 1954-72'.

\textsuperscript{46} Correspondence between the L&S and T&P 1964/65. in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

\textsuperscript{47} Commission of Works submission to Dep't of L&S. in TO, series 1, 47/25/1, v.9., 'National Parks of New Zealand, 1954-72'.

\textsuperscript{48} Mr D.G. Medway in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.14., 'NPA'.
Taking a slightly different angle the FMC argued that concerted efforts should be made to protect the sense of wilderness offered by areas largely untouched by man. Their major concern was preserving such areas for recreational activity rather than for the areas themselves. In this respect they saw weaknesses in the 1952 Act with no areas being defined which catered specifically for wilderness recreation. In 1960 the FMC executive appointed a subcommittee to attempt to define the Federation's view on what constituted 'wilderness'. The subcommittee concluded that their 'primary motivation' was 'to maintain areas wherein trampers and climbers must be entirely dependent on their own resources, preferably for days on end.' Yet the 1952 Act emphasised 'wilderness for plants rather that wilderness for people'. Such a concept of strict preservation of the natural environment, the committee believed, clashed with the fundamental principle of freedom of access to the reserves. At the same time it conceded theirs was a 'comparatively narrow and exclusive' definition of wilderness and that other sectional interests had also to be taken into account. The committee therefore believed provision needed to be made for both concepts of wilderness.  

In 1966 Odell suggested that a zoning system, whereby different areas of the National Parks are set aside for different purposes, would be the best way to cater for the interests of different groups. A year later R.J. MacLachlan argued 'Master Planning' was the key to finding

49 Burrell, Fifty Years of Mountain Federation, pp.99-103.

50 Odell suggested four major categories.
 a) Special Areas where public entry was to be forbidden except for scientific or 'special' purposes. (eg. Takahe area)
 b) Wilderness Area: underdeveloped areas apart from access tracks to be open to the public. Could include introduced flora and fauna.
 c) Conservation: to be all the rest of the parks with conservation the primary objective but at the same time encouraging public access.
 d) Development recreation area: where accommodation and recreation facilities and service to be provided. Exotic flora and fauna would also be allowed to enhance aesthetic value.

R.S. Odell, National Park Review, 1966, pp.3-4. in TO, series 1, 47/25/1, v.9. 'National Parks of New Zealand 1954-72'.
a workable balance between conservation and public use. Zoning, he believed, would be a vital aspect of such planning. Despite all the talk about zoning, by 1967 Tongariro was the only NPB to have implemented such a policy. Yet there was a growing recognition that the two zones defined in the National Park Act needed to be extended in order that recreational facilities could be better controlled.\(^{51}\) In 1969 some guidelines for concessions operating within the park were set out at the NPA meeting. They were to be limited to areas where the least damage to natural features would occur and in areas 'necessary and appropriate' for public use and enjoyment.\(^{52}\)

At the NPA meeting in 1971 zoning categories were again proposed to assist with management of the parks. Four major categories were envisaged. There were to be, 'Special Areas', where any human influences on the environment were to be prevented; 'Wilderness Areas', with foot access only to maintain the 'natural' environment; 'Natural Environmental Areas', where tracks huts and bridges could be established; and 'Facilities Areas', where facilities could be established.\(^{53}\)

In 1975 Bruce Mason, who was a member of the PMC from 1959-64, published a comparative study of North American and New Zealand national parks. In this he argued that 'legislative definition of wilderness areas, isolated from surrounding land uses must be avoided', as it only increased public demand to experience these areas and thus threatened the very wilderness people came to see. Wilderness values within the parks as a whole were also threatened by over commercialisation. The extensive guiding, tracking and hut systems that had developed in North America, Mason believed, had 'systematically' reduced

\(^{51}\) R.J. MacLachlan, NPA, 1967. in TO, series 1, 47/25/1, v.9. 'National Parks of New Zealand 1954-72'.

\(^{52}\) NPA meeting, May 1969, case 2109. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.12., 'National Parks Authority'.

\(^{53}\) NPA meeting March 1971. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.14. NPA.
'each wilderness area to a trail number with detailed description' and 'removed the need for self-reliance and competence'. In this manner the American Wilderness Act of 1964, which established wilderness areas 'intended to be both a condition of physical geography and a state of mind', had been undermined. The same, he feared, would occur in New Zealand if wilderness management 'within broader, co-ordinated land management schemes' was not adopted.54

Despite Mason's warnings the revised National Parks Act of 1980 continued with a zoning policy. Provision was made, alongside 'special' and 'wilderness' areas, which retained much the same definitions given in the 1952 Act, for 'amenities areas'. The amenities areas allowed for the 'development and operation of recreational and public amenities and related services appropriate for the public use and enjoyment of the parks...'. It went on to say that 'the principles applicable to national parks shall, notwithstanding section 4 of this Act [which emphasised preservation], apply only so far as they are compatible with the development and operation of such amenities and services.'55 Clearly this was a major concession to the interests of the tourist sector.

Reports from the Fiordland National Park Board in the 1980s and the Department of Conservation in the 1990s continued to emphasise the importance of preserving, as far as possible, the natural environment of the Parks. The Fiordland National Park Management Plan (FNPMP) of 1981 stated that it was the Boards 'paramount statutory duty to protect and preserve the Park for the benefit of future generations'. It went on to say:

'It must be constantly borne in mind that the Board's obligation to permit freedom of access and to foster public


use and enjoyment of what the Park has to offer remains subservient to the Board's primary duty to preserve the Park in perpetuity.\footnote{Fiordland National Park Board, \textit{Fiordland National Park Management Plan} (FNPMP), 1981.} Similarly in 1991 the \textit{Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan} (MANPMP) stated that 'underlying all decisions must be the need to preserve the Park as far as possible in its natural state. This fundamental principle cannot be compromised.' Indeed the plan stated that this was made clear from the 1980 National Parks Acts.\footnote{Department of Conservation, \textit{Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan} (MANPMP), 1991, pp.3-4.}

Despite this emphasis on preserving the natural environment tourist ventures continued to flourish within the parks, the tramping industry being no exception. Private enterprise continued operating in the Hollyford Valley as it had since 1936, the numbers experiencing the Routeburn continued to rise and the Milford continued to be utilised for commercial operations.

The general debate on the role of national parks was reflected in the tramping industry itself. It can be seen from the map of 'Recreational Management Areas' for 1991 [see overleaf] that the zoning of Fiordland National Park left the three tracks studied, the Milford, Routeburn and Hollyford, under the category of 'Eastern Popular'. The aim of this zone was to 'provide opportunities for a wide variety of recreational activities compatible with national park purposes.'\footnote{The objective of the 'Darrans Remote Area' was to 'provide for rock climbing and alpine climbing opportunities with minimal disturbance from aircraft use.' The 'Western Remote Area' was to 'provide opportunities for low-impact recreation remote from high use areas and extensive facilities.' The 'Southwest Remote Area' was to 'provide opportunities for low-impact recreation, interpretation and limited tourism facilities recognizing the historic and natural attractions of the southern fiords.' Doc, \textit{FNPMP}, 1991, pp.49-51.} The stated objective of the \textit{Fiordland National Park Management Plan} in 1990 had been to 'allow a variety of guided walk operations within the park' but at the same time it was not 'essential to try to provide for
Recruitment Management Areas

- Wilderness
- Darrang Remote
- Western Remote
- Southwest Remote
- Eastern Popular
- Specially Protected Area (Refer Section 2.5)

FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK

SCALE: 1:500,000

DIMENSIONS: 591.4x837.1
every possible user taste or preference'. What was implemented was a categorising of tramps, similar to the zoning system applied to the parks as a whole. In 1990 four categories were defined, walks, high-use tracks, tracks and routes. The high-use tracks were to be managed for 'optimum levels of use, recognising the specific attributes of each and their value to less experienced walkers'. Tracks were to provide opportunities for more experienced back country users' and 'maintained as resources allow'.

The 1994 Work Practices Manual gives an indication of how the above principles were to be applied. A 'path', presumably corresponding to 'walks', was to be 2.5 metres high and 2.0 metres wide. A walking track was to be 2.5 metres high and 1.5 metres wide. A route was to have minimal, if any, clearing. Both the Milford and Routeburn tracks were classified as high-use tracks as was the Hollyford to Lake Alabaster. From Lake Alabaster to Martin's Bay the Hollyford was defined as a 'track'. The Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport and DOC combined to come up with two more general categories in 1993. A 'walking track' was to be 'a defined, formed track. Suitable for most abilities and experience.' A 'tramping track' was to consist of limited track formation, often with steep grades. Suitable for fit experienced and properly equipped people.'

Connected to the debate about how far tracks should be developed was the question of access and whether specific tracks should be set aside for particular user groups.


This debate will be dealt with in the next chapter.
Most of the debate surrounding the freedom of access issue centred around the Milford Track. The depth of feeling on the issue was made all too clear from the correspondence over the issue received by the Tourist and Publicity Department. From 1903 to 1956 the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts had responsibility for the track and a charge was made on all persons walking the track whether they partook in the package deal offered or not. [authority given to them under the Tourist and Health Resorts Control Act of 1908] \(^63\) Not all trampers were happy with this arrangement and some were less than cooperative. In 1954 the General Manager for the Tourist and Publicity Department expressed concern over the number of people walking the track and refusing to pay as they did not use the huts. In response to letters of complaints about the Department's attempts to prohibit non-paying trampers the Minister set out his justification. For one the trampers had to use the launch trip provided across the Milford Sound and maintenance also had to be carried out on the track itself. He also pointed out the occasions when bad weather forced the independent trampers to use the Department's huts - for which they were refusing to pay. The danger to bush from unregulated tramping was also used to justify the restrictions, as was the potential fire risk. In another letter to the Department of Lands and Surveys the Minister argued that the people were paying for the scenery as much as the facilities. In light of these arguments he called for the Department to have exclusive administration and control over the track. The director general of the Department of Lands and Surveys believed that instances of non-payment were 'isolated enough not to cause the Tourist and Publicity Department any concern' and

\(^{63}\) TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'. 
was therefore against any form of exclusive control.64

The Tourist Hotel Corporation Act of 1955 saw the THC take over the Departments assets and liabilities. The THC retained the right to charge those walking the track. As they continued to run a package deal they too called for the authority to prohibit freedom walkers from using the track.65 Yet right up to 1964 the THC still only had control of the huts and the surrounding land, while the track itself was controlled by the FNP Board. Writing in response to a query forwarded by the Dunedin district manager in 1962 the general manager of the Tourist and Publicity department stated that free access was available to the track 'subject to the over-riding provision for the appropriate authority to impose conditions and restrictions considered necessary for the preservation of native flora and fauna and welfare of the area in general'. This was to change in 1964 when control over the entire track was given to the THC. This enabled the THC to restrict use of the track to those partaking in their package deal.66

A number of justifications for this step were put forward at the time. Eric Honey (sales manager for the THC) argued that freedom of access did not necessarily imply freedom from cost. The issue was rather that access was on an equal basis. Odell also pushed this argument, going so far as to suggest the elimination of the 'freedom of access' clauses in the 1952 National Parks Act, which he saw as misleading.67 The Southland Daily News applauded the decision, believing the Milford track had a special role in

64 Correspondence between the T&P and L&S 1954, in TO, series 1, 38/72, 'Fiordland National Park'. Correspondence between Michael Gill and J. Fitzgerald and the Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts, in TO, series 1, 38/72, 'Fiordland National Park'.

65 TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

66 A.E. Simpson for the General Manager 7 Feb 1962, in TO, series 1, 38/72, 'Fiordland National Park'.

67 Eric Honey 1965, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'. R.S. Odell, National Park Review, p.2., in TO, series 1, 47/25/1, v.9., 'National Parks of New Zealand 1954-72'.
offering inexperienced people (believed to be the majority of potential walkers), an opportunity to see Fiordland scenery 'at its best'. In a similar vein the THC maintained that the Milford track was a 'status symbol' for overseas visitors - a position that would be lost if the Board took over the track and provided its own facilities. The issue of maintenance costs, which the THC now had for the track as well, the capital investment that had been required to set up the operation and the fact that they were operating at a loss were also seen to justify the restrictions. The problem of the THC being called out when trouble arose was also raised. The THC also argued that allowing freedom of access for the public for just track fees would make their role impossible as once the precedent was set other groups would follow, inconveniencing those that paid.

Numerous other groups and individuals, however, were not swayed by such arguments. In 1964 the chairman of the FNP Board, maintained that the National Parks Act said 'free access to all parts of national parks must be given to the public'. He pointed out that the THC worked on a concession which should be treated like any other. The New Zealand Alpine club also pushed the issue of freedom of access, maintaining any 'competent, suitably equipped, self-contained party should have right of access to any part of a National Park'. Members of such groups, while they could usually supply their own facilities and had 'efficient' guides, could not necessarily afford the 20

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68 'Right decision made about Milford Track', Southland Daily Times, 9 Sep 1964, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

69 'Milford Track Control For Tourist Hotel', Southland Times, 5 Sep 1964, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

70 Correspondence between L&S and T&P 1964, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

71 TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1. 'Hotel - Milford track 1964-78'.

72 'Milford Track Control By Corporation', Mataura Ensign, 5 Sep 1964, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

pounds it cost to be a member of a THC party.\textsuperscript{73} The debate over the issue continued in full strength throughout 1965 and calls for the setting up of alternative facilities to the THC's became louder. While most conceded there should be a charge for these facilities, this charge they argued, should be based solely on track maintenance costs. This cost could be shared between the THC and Authority on a percentage basis relating to the proportions of guided and independent walkers.\textsuperscript{74} The THC remained unmoved so in 1965 a group of Otago trampers decided to walk the Milford track in the closed season to protest the THC's attempts to restrict access. This protest received significant publicity in newspapers throughout New Zealand.\textsuperscript{75} It also achieved its objective. In 1966 the FNPB decided to provide facilities for independent trampers. No meals or blankets were to be provided for the independent trampers although guides would be provided if necessary. Those groups walking the Milford under the new system were required to be experienced and the size of the groups no bigger than 16 people. The group size was extended to 20-24 people in 1967, being regulated through a booking system.\textsuperscript{76} The THC continued to voice its reservations. It claimed there was a shortage of bus and accommodation space, that THC facilities, such as cooking and toilets, were being used by the freedom walkers and that they were

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{73} Correspondence between NZ Alpine Clubs and National Parks Authority 1964, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78', 'Milford Track Control For Tourist Hotel', 5 Sep 1964 in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.
\item \textsuperscript{74} TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.
\item \textsuperscript{75} The \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 20 April 1965. 'Use of Milford Track challenged', \textit{Evening Post}, 19 April 1965. 'Dispute on Milford Track Use', 20 April 1965. in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1., 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.
\item \textsuperscript{76} 'Competition Bad For Famous Walk', \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 1 Nov 1965, in TO, w.1664, 38/1, v.4., 'Te Anau - Milford Track 1952-74'. NPA meeting 11 Dec 1964, in TO, w.1664, 38/1, v.4., 'Te Anau - Milford Track'. Relling and Dodson, \textit{Milford Track Maintenance Plan}, 1993, p.12.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
sometimes abusive towards those in the guided parties. It also claimed non-recognised groups were being formed to walk the track. Despite the continuing displeasure expressed by the THC over the free access question, both guided and freedom walkers continue to enjoy the track to the present. As figure one indicates the number of independent trampers on the Milford began to rapidly catch up on the number of guided walkers - overtaking them in the 1986/87 season.

Fig. 1. Comparison between independent and guided trampers of the Milford Track 1968-1994

While the Milford track dominated the freedom of access debate the decision to introduce a booking system on the Routeburn track in 1995 saw the focus shift. Spokesman for the Federated Mountain Clubs, John Easton, stated that 'any booking or permit system must protect the rights of New Zealanders to walk the track whenever they wish to do so.' Yet as Dereck Grzelewski argued, in his article on

77 TO, w.1664, 38/1, v.4, 'Te Anau - Milford Track'.
78 Minutes of NPA meeting, March 1967. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.7, 'National Parks Authority'.

the Routeburn track, a booking system might be a 'necessary evil'.

Figures two and three below highlight the big impact independent trampers have made since the mid 1970s.

**Fig. 2.** Comparison between numbers of guided and independent trampers 1968 -1994

![Comparison between numbers of guided and independent trampers 1968 -1994](image)

**Fig. 3.** Totals of guided and independent trampers on the Milford, Routeburn and Hollyford combined 1967-1992

![Totals of guided and independent trampers on the Milford, Routeburn and Hollyford combined 1967-1992](image)

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Clearly the growing numbers using New Zealand's national parks had significant implications for those demanding free access. Allowing free access threatened to spoil the untrammelled environment free access proponents desired so much to preserve. The extent and further implications of growing numbers is dealt with in the next chapter.
THE CONTEXT OF RISING NUMBERS

"...to be reminded that he is caretaker, not creator, of his universe."\(^{80}\)

In the last half of this century New Zealand's tourist industry has grown to become a vital component of our economy with one of our major selling points being our 'clean green' image.\(^{81}\) The success of this image in attracting tourists to our national parks has in some cases been all too successful, causing drastic reappraisals of, not only the role of national parks, but also the ability of those parks to cope with the increasing numbers. With much of the growth stemming from increased demand for action holidays, tramping has often been at the forefront of debate.

It can be seen from figures four and five [see overleaf] that the tramping industry and the Milford and Routeburn tracks in particular has experienced a significant rise in use levels since the 1960s. A number of explanations have been put forward to account for this, the major one being the 'leisure revolution' which began making an impact in the 1950s. Previously those who walked the tracks were predominantly alpinists, skiers, dedicated naturalists or trained trampers. With increasing disposable incomes, more leisure time, and improved communications and road transport, greater numbers of people visited the national parks.\(^{82}\) Added to this was the growing belief in New Zealand in the 1960s that outdoor education and experience should be included as part of New Zealand's tourist industry.

\(^{80}\) As quoted in Molloy, 'Wilderness Recreation', *Wilderness Recreation in New Zealand*, p.9.


Note: Prior to 1979 there were no figures given for independent trampers on the Hollyford of Routeburn tracks.

Source: Data supplied by R.D. Kerr (Conservation Officer, Te Anau). Estimates for Routeburn independent trampers compiled by Sam Beamish.

Source: Data compiled for R.D. Kerr (Conservation Officer).
Zealand's education system. By the 1970s schools had overaken many mountain clubs as back-country training centres, with assistance from the government. The 1980s also saw an increase in demand for more 'active' holidays, a development which had, and continues to have, relevance to the tramping industry. In 1983 for example, W.N. Plimmer (the General Manager of the Tourist and Publicity Department), recognised this trend and called for 'more walkways in National Parks, Forest Parks, and reserves [and] more trekking opportunities...' to be made available to meet the demand.

Those involved in the tramping industry were not blind to these developments. Those concerned with the Milford track recognised that existing track facilities could not keep up with demand. In 1965 the Southland Times expressed concern that the Milford Track was reaching 'saturation point' and considered that 2500 would be the maximum number of people the facilities available at the time could cope with (1964 saw 2404 walk the track). To counter this the paper proposed to extend the services either by allowing more daily parties or increasing accommodation levels. Facilities on the Routeburn were also extended to meet the growing demand. In the 1968/69 season, for example, MacKenzie Hut was extended to accommodate 20 people. In 1976 a number of articles were published emphasising the concern caused by the growing


85 TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1. 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

86 Southland Times, 'Saturation Point' Being Reached; Record Number Walking Milford Track', 4 June 1965, in TO, w.2729, 63/8, v.1. 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'.

numbers of walkers doing the Routeburn track.88

These developments raised a number of important issues which the industry had to face. Foremost among these was the question of how many people the tracks could sustain and yet retain the 'quality of experience'.

Bruce Mason's 1975 report on the problems faced by the recreation industry in America, and their relevance to New Zealand have proved remarkably prophetic and deserve analysis. He believed that demand for wilderness experience was only going to increase which would lead to an unsustainable situation of over-use. North America's experience indicated that the over-use cycle was only aggravated by further development of recreational areas and the increased role of commercial interests. In the 1950s North American parks had upgraded existing trails and constructed new ones in response to growing numbers, believing such moves could absorb the growing demand and minimise the impact on the tracks. Instead the provision of new facilities was 'self-generating of use' and only aggravated the problem.89 In light of this evidence Mason concluded that the only solution was to impose restrictive regulations where needed and implement a 'minimum impact code'.

In Canada a permit system had been in operation for some time in order to restrict use and had proved the most effective method in countering over-use. Initially areas had been divided into 'ecological management zones' on an arbitrary basis. Then, as each zone was studied, an 'acceptable level of user density' was established.90 While Mason's findings received considerable attention in the T&P department at the time, later developments in the tramping

90 Ibid., pp.18-19.
industry suggest they were not applied to effect. Problems of overcrowding had been largely avoided on the Milford following the introduction of a booking system for independent walkers in the late 1960s, something the guided walks had had since they began.91 This system continues to operate on the Milford to good effect but has not been extended in line with the growth in numbers using the other tracks. The main reason for this is that many felt the principle of freedom of access would be compromised if restrictions such as those on the Milford were applied to the Park as a whole.

Thus the Fiordland National Park Board was caught in a catch 22 situation. To impose restrictions would outrage the freedom of access proponents, while to let things continue the way they were heading would seriously threaten the future viability of the tracks. Even in 1977, when users were estimated at under 5000, Sam Beamish concluded that the 'socially acceptable threshold of use' had been reached.92 In 1983 similar conclusions were drawn by Colin Harris, who wrote a dissertation on the 'image and experience' of the Routeburn Track. He maintained that while the track itself could withstand increased numbers without having a negative impact on user perceptions, what he termed the 'social-psychological carrying capacity' of the huts had already been exceeded. From surveys he carried out on people walking the track in the 1982/83 season he found that 54 percent of the trampers interviewed perceived some distraction because of overcrowding. This was understandably higher among independent trampers - whose numbers were not regulated.93

The FNPB therefore looked for solutions to the problem that would not compromise the New Zealand public's right to

91 Relling and Dodson, Milford Track Maintenance Plan, p.9.
92 Beamish, 'The Routeburn Track', p.205.
freely enter the park. It was decided, in the mid 1980s, to establish other tramps in order to relieve pressure on both the Milford and Routeburn. To this end the Kepler track was completed in 1988 but by 1990 it was evident that the Kepler had created its own demand and as such had failed to counter the problems of overcrowding on the Routeburn, bearing out Mason's findings. Yet in 1991 the Mount Aspiring Management Plan stated that, 'where satisfaction is shown to be deteriorating due to increased usage,' numbers would be controlled by 'limiting accommodation, distributing information and encouraging the use of alternative tracks and developing new tracks and facilities'[italics added]. Yet, writing in 1995, Dereck Grzelewski still maintained the sense of overcrowding remained. It therefore appeared evident that the only option was to impose some form of restrictions on the numbers walking the track and in 1995 the Department of Conservation decided to introduce a 'computerised booking system' on the Routeburn. Under this system future trampers would be required to book a season ahead specifying a planned route and time.

Aside from restricting numbers Mason also saw the need to introduce measures that would ensure the visible presence of people in the parks were kept to a minimum. A minimum-impact code had been adopted in America with the above goal but it was generally accepted that it had come too late. For such a code to be effective it needed to be instilled over a long period through promotion by all relevant bodies, including mountain clubs, National Park

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97 Grzelewski, 'Routeburn', New Zealand Geographic, p.22.
98 Ibid., p.30.
authorities, the Forest Service, schools and government ministries. The code Mason proposed in 1975 was comprehensive, covering measures aimed at minimising the visible impact of people and protecting the environment. His code stated that: party size should be kept small, as crowds were incompatible with solitude; if tents were used they should blend in the surroundings and congregation camping should be avoided; trips should be planned to minimise rubbish (avoiding the use of bottles and cans) and all unburnable rubbish should be carried out; trampers should stick to the trails; there be no camping within 100 feet of open water (the most fragile areas); tent sites should be changed to avoid soil compaction and damage to ground cover; soaps and detergents should not be used in streams or lakes; human waste be buried away from open water in a hole 6 to 8 inches deep to stay within the 'biological decomposer' soil layer; gas should be used instead of fire and if fires were lite they should use existing fire places and be kept small.

In a discussion paper on Mason's minimum impact code in 1977 the New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport decided to adopt a simplified version under the title 'Outdoor Code'. The simplified version is shown below as it appears at the back of Philip Temple's pocket guide book.

**MINIMUM IMPACT CODE**

- Keep parties small - respect others' solitude
- Remove rubbish
- Minimise damage when you are camping
- Keep to tracks
- Use portable stoves where possible
- Bury toilet wastes

'Take nothing but photos - leave nothing but footprints'

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101 TO, w.2729, 47/25/1, v.27., ‘NPA’. 

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This approach met with much success, although an awareness of such issues may already have been evident among the New Zealand population. In his 1983 study Harris found that the majority of trampers were unaware of litter and the great majority believed it did not detract from the track.\textsuperscript{102} The Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan, in 1991, also proposed that both tracks and huts be designed so they least interfered with the character of the park.\textsuperscript{103} A major focus of the outdoor code was also to counter potential damage to the environment, an issue made all the more pressing as the numbers of trampers continued to grow.

Despite the abundance of life in Fiordland its ecosystem is in fact extremely sensitive and its soils 'naturally low to very low in fertility and biological activity and weak in structure.' Thus the area is not only prone to erosion but it is also slow to recover.\textsuperscript{104} The impact of thousands of boots, hut development and resulting waste problems therefore caused concern. Under the National Parks Act of 1952, which contained the stated objective of preserving the Parks 'natural features' and 'its native flora and fauna', the Park Boards were given the authority to enforce this principle and could deal with offences which ranged from 'injuring' the soil to dropping rubbish or lighting fires without permission.\textsuperscript{105} The Conservation Law Reform Act of 1990 required the Department of Conservation and the Conservation Boards to prepare Conservation Management Strategies (CMS) to cover all areas under their control. Yet until recent years the impact of trampers on the environment has received little mention. Concern within the Department focused instead on the protection of specific flora or fauna and attempts to

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\textsuperscript{102} Harris, 'Recreation on the Routeburn', pp.53-54.
\textsuperscript{103} MANPMP 1991, pp.54-56.
\textsuperscript{105} 'National Parks Act 1952', New Zealand Statutes, 1952, v.II.
\end{flushright}
eradicate noxious plants and animals in the National Park. Wapiti were of particular concern.\textsuperscript{106}

In 1990 the damage to the parks ecosystems caused by introduced browsing animals and predators remained the major concern of the FNP Management Plan.\textsuperscript{107} As Sam Beamish noted years earlier, what work that was done on tramping tracks had been 'people-orientated rather than land orientated'. Beamish's study of 'Environmental Impact Analysis' on the Routeburn Track was the first comprehensive study focusing on the environmental concerns raised by the growing number of trampers.\textsuperscript{108} In this study he covered the major environmental consequences resulting from tramping. These included, soil compaction and erosion, impact on vegetation and ecosystems and the issues of waste management.\textsuperscript{109}

One of the most obvious environmental impacts made by trampers is web tracking, caused when people seek to avoid wet or boggy tracks in search of easier routes. In particularly fragile areas, such as peat bogs, the damage done in this manner can be considerable. Not only can the track and its immediate vicinity be affected but damage can also be caused by run-off. This problem arises when the natural vegetation is destroyed, allowing water to run more freely down the tracks themselves or in concentrated volume across the tracks. On the Routeburn, for instance, these problems have been most acute and clearly visible on Key Summit and the Harris Saddle.\textsuperscript{110} Numerous web tracks can also be found on the Hollyford track which lacks the rock

\textsuperscript{107} beamish, \textit{The Routeburn Track}, pp.20, 25.
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.10-20.
base prevalent on much of the Routeburn. In order to prevent or counter further erosion Beamish proposed a number of strategies. The erosive impact of water running down tracks could be countered by 'check dams', which would encourage sediment build up and therefore fertility. He also believed drains should be minimised and what drains there were should run 'transverse' to the track where the water first met them. Beamish also looked at the positioning of tracks, pointing out that dryer more stable areas should be chosen. Boardwalks were another effective measure as they provided a good walkway (thus encouraging people to stick to them) and at the same time allowed vegetation to grow underneath them.

Yet Beamish qualified his analysis of erosion to the Routeburn by pointing out that the damage to the track was in fact limited in terms of the total area traversed by the track. The erection of signs to encourage people to stick to the track over the Harris Saddle by the Mount Aspiring National Park Board in the 1979/80 season also helped counter the problem. Anne Relling in the Routeburn Track Maintenance Plan believed the Routeburn track had a 'significant physical capacity to sustain increased use levels'. She was backed up by Grzelewski in 1995 who described the Routeburn, due largely to its solid rock base, as 'almost bulletproof'. The track was broad and dry, all streams and rivers were bridged and some swamps and bluffs were boardwalked. A similar analysis of the Milford could be made with much work having gone in to

113 Ibid., pp.171-2.
making the track strong and resistant. The Hollyford, which unlike the above two has not been defined as a high-use track, has seen less development. While numbers walking the Hollyford are considerably lower than the other tracks the erosion in some parts is considerable.

Problems of erosion and wear are also experienced around hut sites where human activity is concentrated. This is often made worse by the Department's decision to situate huts in pleasant and interesting areas - usually those most susceptible to damage. Yet the Southland Business Plan in 1989 expressed confidence that the 'impact problem' on the Milford and Routeburn tracks had long been recognised and that 'appropriate management strategies' were in place.

The concentration of human activity around the huts also introduced the problem of waste. When open pits were used as the main means of disposal around tramping huts keas, opossums and stoats were attracted to the area - the latter having an adverse impact on the native wildlife population while the opossums damaged native flora. By 1977 use of such refuse pits had been discontinued by the Mount Aspiring Park Board on the Routeburn but they continued to be used by the Fiordland Park Board and the concessionaire. Moves were nevertheless made to encourage users to carry out their own rubbish so that the amount dealt with by the pits was reduced. The sheer volume of sewage concentrated around hut sites is another problem - made all too clear when you consider that in 1995 Grzelewski estimated that almost 3000 rolls of toilet paper where used on the Routeburn alone. Yet in 1977 Beamish

119 Beamish, 'The Routeburn Track', pp.177-79.
120 Grzelewski, New Zealand Geographic, p.22.
considered the sewage issue was not crucial.\textsuperscript{121}

Fire places also posed potential problems the Outdoor Code noted. Not only could they damage the immediate area where they are lit but they, like wood fires in huts, could lead to the depletion of dead wood in the surrounding bush which is vital to nature's recycling process.\textsuperscript{122} Mason's article in 1975 had led to much debate about the use of fuels and at a NPA meeting in 1977 it was recommended the use of woodburners in huts be phased out.\textsuperscript{123} This was done on the Routeburn with coal and gas being substituted for wood. This step has proved beneficial to the environment.\textsuperscript{124} While most people now use portable gas stoves for cooking, wood fires remain in use on the Hollyford track and the new Martin's Bay hut was installed with a new woodburner. This may be in line with the significantly lower numbers using the Hollyford which may allow sustainable use of native wood. Both the Martin's Bay hut and Hokuri hut also have access to driftwood which is not as crucial to the native bush ecosystem.

Use of soaps and detergents for washing posed another problem. Beamish noted from his surveys that up to 65 percent of Routeburn track walkers washed either themselves or their dishes in the natural waterways. The problem becomes more serious when still water is used for washing. Beamish noted that around and in Lake MacKenzie food scraps could take up to three months to disintegrate. In the above case this problem was aggravated at the height of the season when the rainwater supply proved inadequate for the

\textsuperscript{121} Beamish, 'The Routeburn Track', pp.179-80.


\textsuperscript{123} Appx. C, NPA meeting 23/24 March 1977, in TO, w.2729, 47/25/1, v.27., 'National Parks Authority'.

\textsuperscript{124} Beamish, 'The Routeburn Track', p.175.
washing requirements of the people at the huts.\footnote{Beamish, 'The Routeburn Track', pp.175-77. Mason, Back Country Room, pp.16-17.}

It is clear, therefore, that the environmental impact of trampers needs to be monitored. This has been recognised in recent years by DoC with concerted efforts being made to stabilise sensitive areas and promote environmental consideration amongst the users through the Outdoor Code. The Word Practices Manual also devotes much space to the maintenance of tracks to prevent damage to both the track and the surrounding environment.\footnote{DoC, Work Practices Manual, 1994.} Most attention has focused on the high-use tracks with less popular tracks such as the Hollyford receiving less attention. While this could change with increased funding there is also the issue of how far the different tracks, which are seen to cater for different users, should be developed. There is no clear cut solution that would satisfy all concerned parties.

One such group, very much involved with the tracks, were the concessionaires that operated guided walks on the tracks. Clearly those operators played a crucial role in protecting the environment, not only through careful development of their tracks, usually done in association with the Park Boards, but also through educating their tour parties. Prior to the 1952 National Parks Act concessions were granted by the Department of Lands and Survey. Following the Act the granting of concessions became the responsibility of the Park Boards which also had the responsibility of ensuring the concessions were run according to National Park standards.\footnote{'National Parks Act 1952', New Zealand Statutes, sect 32.} The 1980 National Parks Act gave the Minister of Lands (Minister of Conservation after the 1987 Conservation Act) the final say in granting or cancelling concessions.\footnote{'National Parks Act 1980', New Zealand Statutes, sect 54.} Conservation
Boards also have the authority to grant monopoly concessions on 'High Use Tracks' if it is deemed in the best interests of the environment.

At present, if it is believed a proposal 'might significantly affect the human, physical or biological environment, an Environment Impact Report is required'. Precedence for this can be seen in the Commission for the Environment's requirement, from 1973, that any potential impact on the environment be analysed before development took place. This analysis was to be conducted by the agency considering development but would then be subject to public scrutiny with the government having the final say. At the time the idea met with resistance, one such antagonist being the Commissioner of Works at the time who believed the impact statements would 'provide any loudly vocal preservationist minority with a chance and ammunition to press further their narrow interests.' Beamish, on the other hand, pointed out that arbitrary standards could be used by the concessions in submitting environmental impact statements, which could place severe limitations on the scope of environmental considerations. The importance of keeping up strong links with the concessions in order to ensure environmental standards were met was further emphasised by the Southland Conservation Business Plan in 1994/95.

While environmental concerns were clearly an issue with regard to the concessions most of the concern in fact focused around the concessionaires' commitment to customer service and financial viability. This will be dealt with

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131 Beamish, 'The Routeburn Track', pp.24-25.
132 Ibid., pp.3-8.
in the next chapter.
Prior to the 1970s there were few guidelines which concessionaires had to follow apart from abiding by the general principles of the National Parks Act of 1952. This did not stop action being taken when concessions were seen to be inadequate. In 1965, for example, the NPA decided to allow a second concession on the Hollyford Valley due to dissatisfaction with Murray Gunn's operation. The Board believed there was a place for a package tour and this was not being supplied by Gunn. Allowing another concessionaire was also seen as a means of taking pressure off the Milford, specifically by catering for the 'slightly fitter type of tramper'. Similarly in 1968, when Ed Cotters 'Hollyford Valley Adventours', which had taken up the new Hollyford concession, was deemed inadequate the National Park Board again took action. Complaints about the operation focused on the poor condition of the track and facilities and the disparity between the service advertised in the brochures and the reality. Despite assurances that the operation would be improved the complaints kept coming and in 1968 the tours were stopped.

Perhaps in response to these problems the National Parks Authority moved to establish firmer guidelines for concession operations. In its 1969 meeting it outlined a number of criteria under which concessions had to operate. Concessions could be either sponsored by the board or initiated by an applicant. In the former case the Board would advertise a potential position and the applicants would then be screened for suitability. In the latter case an applicant could outline the proposed scheme, following

134 NPA meeting June 1965, case no.'s 1620 and 1531. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.5. 'National Parks Authority'.

135 A.A. Connolly (Tourist Division) also commented that the rates charged were out of proportion to the service received as they were actually higher than those charged for the Milford. Correspondence between Ed Cotter and T&P 1965/66 and between T&P, the Dep't of L&S and Complainants 1968, in TO, w.2729, 58/2, v.1. 'Hollyford Valley Travel'. TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.10, 'National Parks Authority'.
which objections to the proposal would be considered. In both cases a number of requirements had to be met. It was stated that the concessionaire would have to provide a satisfactory service to the public and the Board retained the right to grant concessions to other groups except in 'exceptional circumstances, where exclusive rights [could] be granted'. Entrenching this gave the NPA better control over how the concessions were run. The concessions would have to operate in line with the parks 'principles' and 'standards', which included environmental concerns.  

The MANP concessions policy, of 1991, established differing categories of concessions. Four major categories were outlined and included major, minor, temporary and trial concessions. Major concessions were defined as having substantial structures, being regular, in a protected area and whose impact was likely to have economic or social significance on a national scale. Minor concessions were defined as irregular with no substantial structures and little impact. Temporary concessions were one-offs while trial concessions were to be used to ascertain the marketability of the concession and access the potential impact of the concession. Precedent for the latter had already been set. In 1968, for example, when Jim Gilkison established the Routeburn Walk Ltd he initially ran a trial, his guided tours using Park board huts to gauge its feasibility. When sufficient demand was evident and the use of Park huts proved inadequate he built his own.

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136 NPA meeting, May 1969, case 2109. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.12., 'National Parks Authority'. In response to the board's tougher stance, Jules Tapper, who formed the 'Hollyford Tourist and Travel Co. Ltd', and took over from Cotter, invested heavily in order to up-grade the track in an attempt to attract more tourists and meet the board's standards. This included the construction of new lodges at Martins Bay and the lower Pyke, constructing a new airstrip for his plane and putting a jetboat at Pyke Lodge so that people could be transported down Lake McKerrow. Hall-Jones, Martins Bay, pp.171-72.


The concessions were also evaluated on their financial viability.\(^{139}\) Just how maintenance and protection of the parks could be financed had long been debated and revenue from concessions had been a major consideration. From the 1960s the Lands and Survey Department had permanent trackpeople working in the Fiordland region along with 'hut custodians'.\(^{140}\) A 'user pays' principle had been in operation since the Sounds Reserve was established in 1904 and was reaffirmed by Odell in 1966, but it had been applied in a largely ad-hoc manner up to 1969.\(^{141}\) The concessionaires had been charged a variable rent for the sites used and a fee for the privilege of operating within the Parks was also required. This fee was gauged as a percentage of gross receipts for which the normal rate was 2.5 percent but it could vary from 1.25 to 5 percent.\(^{142}\) In response to this somewhat arbitrary policy a Fiordland Development Committee had been set up which consisted of local concessionaires. This was soon followed by the formation of the New Zealand National Parks Development Association made up of holders of commercial concessions and licences in National Parks throughout New Zealand. The aim of these associations was to co-ordinate concessions, help develop tourist facilities, improve liaison with the Park Board and NPA, and establish a more formalised system of concessions.\(^{143}\)

In 1969 the NPA required better guarantees of an


\(^{140}\) Fiordland National Park Annual Report (FNPAR) 1969/70, p.3.

\(^{141}\) 'National Park Review', 1966, p.6., in TO, series 1, 47/25/1, v.4. 'National Parks of New Zealand 1954-72'.

\(^{142}\) NPA meeting May 1969, case 2109, in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.12., 'NPA'.

\(^{143}\) NPA meeting Nov 1967, case 1937, in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.10., 'National Parks Authority'. 'New National Parks Development Group', *The Press*, 16 Nov 57, in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.10., 'National Parks Authority'. 
operation's viability. Adequate financial backing and a feasible plan became prerequisites for granting concessions. Applicants were also screened on their previous experience or skills which would ensure the operation ran smoothly. Any development plans would have to be approved by the Board, as would the charges made to the public.\textsuperscript{144} This indicated a move towards a more financially orientated approach in which a major goal was to make the most of the tourist potential of the Parks. These basic guidelines have continued to the present although subject to continuing refinement. One of the 'key thrusts' of the Southland Conservation Business Plan in 1989 was to become 'effective and pro-active in tourist concessions management and estate marketing'. Recreational Opportunity Surveys (ROS) were envisaged in this plan so the tourist potential could be better exploited while ensuring the protection of the resources.\textsuperscript{145} In 1990 the FNMP stated that commercial operations were 'integral to the overall management of recreation/tourism use...'.\textsuperscript{146} Even the 'Great Walks' concept mooted in 1992 included, as part of its conditions, the need for a high earning potential before a track was developed.\textsuperscript{147}

An exception to this demand for self-sustaining and profitable operations had been Milford track which, for most of its time under the THC, operated at a loss. In 1964 the Minister of Tourism had justified this by highlighting the revenue the Track brought to Te Anau and Milford Sound as a whole. With the THC relinquishing control of the track to a private firm, the South Pacific Hotel Corporation, in 1991, the Milford operation has been

\textsuperscript{144} NPA meeting, May 1969, case 2109. in TO, w.1845, 47/25/1, v.12., 'National Parks Authority'.

\textsuperscript{145} Southland Conservancy. \textit{SCRP 1989}, pp.8, 45.


\textsuperscript{147} In 1992 those tracks included the Tongariro Northern circuit, the Heaphy Track, the Kepler, the Milford and the Routeburn. Grzelewski, 'Routeburn', in \textit{New Zealand Geographic}, pp.25-27.
required to operate on a commercially viable basis like any other concessionaire.\textsuperscript{148}

Thus while the Department of Lands and Survey administered the FNP prior to the 1952 Act a somewhat ad hoc policy was followed. As the growing tourist potential of tramping tracks was recognised, however, more formalised guidelines were imposed. These covered not only the quality of service offered by the concessionaire but also the financial viability of operations.

\textsuperscript{148} Correspondence between Minister of Tourism and Chairman of the FNPB, in TO, Acc w.2729, 63/8, v.1. 'Hotel - Milford Track 1964-78'. SCBP 1291/92, p.25.
The unique nature of Fiordland had been recognised when much of the area was set aside as a natural reserve in 1904. Yet few agreed what this should entail. 'Conservationists' argued that the crown should, above all, act to protect the area's native flora and fauna. Others maintained that the reserve should be developed so that its full earning potential could be recognised. Alongside the pro-development and conservationist lobbies was a group, dominated by the FMC from the 1930s on, which called for certain areas to be set aside which would be free from development but open to the public for recreational purposes.

Another contentious issue was that of access to the parks. Many New Zealanders saw right of access to New Zealand's national parks as a birthright and reacted strongly to any attempts by the government or commercial interests to impose restrictions. While the numbers using the park remained relatively small the Lands and Survey Department, which administered the reserve, was able to satisfy the demands of most of these interest groups in an ad-hoc manner.

As the number of park users grew, notably after the 1950s, the issues became more complex and tensions between the interest groups rose. The National Parks Act of 1952 represented the first concerted attempt to establish a more systematic approach to the parks system. Under this act much of the Sounds National Reserve was incorporated in the newly created Fiordland National Park. The overall goal of the act was to preserve as far as possible the unique flora and fauna found within the National Parks. To this end a National Parks Authority was appointed to formulate general policy relating to the parks. Park Boards were also appointed for each park with the functions of implementing the Authority's policies and making specific recommendations relating to their area. Clearly a more
hands on and formalised approach had been adopted, but the 1952 Act failed to settle the major issues.

In 1964 the Milford track became the center of much controversy when the THC was given the authority to prohibit freedom walkers walking the Track. The government was forced to backtrack on this decision due to public outcry. Yet some still maintained that the compromise, the use of a booking system to regulate the numbers of independent trampers walking the track, still ran contrary to the freedom of access principle. Debate also continued over the degree of commercialisation that should be permitted within the national parks. Clearly the issues were neither straightforward nor easily resolved.

Aside from the 'ethical' dilemmas raised there remained issues of practicality. The growing numbers of park users not only put considerable strain on the fragile environment of the Fiordland region but also affected the quality of experience the park could offer. This led some to question whether the park could sustain either the impact of the numerous potential freedom walkers or the further development of the tourist industry. Those works which studied the perceive experiences of trampers offered a pessimistic outlook if action was not taken. What little analysis had been done on the environmental impact of tramping tracks indicated that, while damage had not been extensive, the potential problems could have been great and could threaten the unique nature of the parks in which all groups had an interest.

One of the major initiatives stemming from the debate was a zoning system. This was an attempt to ensure that certain areas remained undeveloped while others were, following the 1980 National Parks Act, set aside specifically for commercial development. The ideas influencing zoning were also applied to tramping tracks. Specific tracks, or sections of tracks, were categorised in relation to the different experiences they offered. High-use tracks such as the Milford and Routeburn were singled
out for special attention while much of the Hollyford was to remain suitable only for the experienced tramper.

Tighter regulations were also imposed on concessions operating within the park. The objective was not only to safeguard the environment but also to ensure a high standard of operation was maintained by the concessionaires and that they were commercially viable.

These measures represented attempts by the administering bodies to find a workable compromise between a number of different standpoints. The continuing debate over the Routeburn today highlights the fact that there is no easy solution and that the tramping industry will continue to be affected by historical and contemporary issues.
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Appendix A:

Breakdown by country of those walking the Milford Track 1990 - 1994

Source: Milford Track visitor monitoring data