



## Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (Inc.)

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### NEW ZEALAND WALKWAYS : REVIEW PAPER

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Walkways system provides easy walking access to an amazing slice of our natural and cultural countryside. The system was started with the passing of the New Zealand Walkways Act in 1975. It sprang from an initiative by Federated Mountain Clubs in the late 1960's to establish a system of scenic trails, similar to the long distance trails of the United Kingdom and North America.

Walkways are important because they provide one of the few means of achieving legal public access over privately owned land. Because New Zealand has the harshest trespass laws in the Western World, this is a most important consideration. Some 75% of New Zealand is privately controlled. Since 1975, under the guidance of the (then) Lands and Survey Department, 130 Walkways, covering some 1350 km, have been set up.

Walkways provide only one part of public foot access to our countryside. National and Forest Parks have their own walks and tracks. Many of these are much tougher than the standard generally encountered on Walkways. As well, one may go anywhere in these Parks, not just on tracks.

What is characteristic and different about Walkways is that they :

- (i) are generally of an easy tramping standard suitable for all ages, although they can be up to 4 days long.
- (ii) often cross private land so can link isolated areas of public land
- (iii) usually go, at least in part, through a rural or modified landscape
- (iv) generally highlight, or link, important scenic, viewing, rural, natural, historic and/or geological features.
- (v) because they can cross private land, have the potential to create countryside walks close to towns and cities
- (iv) are a national system
- (vii) provide the opportunity for long distance trails.

Because of these characteristics and because of two very well prepared AA Handbooks, describing the qualities of each Walk, the walks are widely known. They are also in high demand. One is struck by the interesting and exciting Walks chosen to date. They truly reflect our broad natural and cultural heritage, and encourage us to enjoy walking our countryside. They give a taste of what is possible, should the system continue to grow. Many other possibilities for walks exist, some already planned, others still to be realised.

Since 1987, the Department of Conservation (DOC) has serviced the Walkways system. What has sparked this First Conference on Walkways has been concern about DOC's commitment to Walkways. These include then Conservation Minister, Helen Clark's decision in May 1988, based on DOC's advice, to abolish the Walkways Commission, and its District Committees. These were established under the Walkways Act, to give citizen involvement and support and steer the system.

New Conservation Minister Philip Woollaston is said to favour adding Walkways to the myriad of responsibilities of the yet-to-be constituted Conservation Authority and regional Conservation Boards. FMC and many others fear this will be the death knell of Walkways, or at least of effective user group involvement. Future funding is also an issue, given the strong financial constraints on DOC, at present. As well, with the re-organisation of regional authorities, their role and support for Walkways, and Walking Opportunities generally, should be discussed, as they could play a much larger role.

The Conference will review these and other issues, and where possible, seek consensus and support for the most appropriate way to continue the Walkway System.

## 2 ORIGINS

Walkways grew from a proposal from the Alpine Sports Club of Auckland, to FMC's 1967 AGM, to set up a system of scenic trails. (Reference 1, P35-42). FMC subsequently resolved that

- (i) there was a real need to look to future provision of access to areas of scenic and historic interest, outside national, forest and regional parks
- (ii) this need would best be served by a national organisation, whose job would be to investigate proposals and implement them
- (iii) the organisation would require legal standing eg an Act of Parliament
- (iv) the scope should include the possibility of a trail from North Cape to Bluff.

From information obtained a possible North Cape to Bluff trail was mapped. It was apparent that such a trail would need to cross private land, and that users would need to be educated, not to knowingly or unknowingly abuse the privilege of such access.

In December 1970, FMC presented the then Minister of Lands, Duncan McIntyre with a comprehensive report, covering possible routes, administration and finance. The outcome was support, and a conference with Lands and Survey and Forest Service arranged. A pilot study in the Wellington region showed the concept was feasible.

The Minister officially announced the proposal to create a national walkways system at Labour Weekend, 1971. This engendered opposition from some sections of Federated Farmers, mainly concerning people bringing dogs and guns.

A Central Working Party of Lands and Forests Officials and FMC and Federated Farmers was set up to further the proposal. This spawned district working committees. These became the nucleus for the Walkways Commission and its twelve District Committees.

Areas of potential conflict were identified as firearms, trail bikes, dogs and ponies, and the objective was seen as being purely a walking track for family groups and others to enjoy the countryside. The suggestion that the legislation be part of the Reserves Act was rejected.

Legislation was finally introduced to the House in May, 1975 and was supported by both political parties, an unusual occurrence. But the first Walkways were opened earlier, simultaneously on 7 December 1973 - Colonial Knob (Wellington) and Mt Auckland (North Auckland). These were followed by Hakarimata (Hamilton) and Skyline (Dunedin). All proved popular immediately.

FMC people prominent in establishing Walkways were : Wally Romanes, Ray Burrell, Bob Ussher, Beverley Price, Sue Webb, Brian Hunt and Margaret O'Connor. As well we owe a major debt to Bernie Bartholomew of Federated Farmers, who strongly supported the idea.

### 3 THE NEW ZEALAND WALKWAYS ACT

This Act

(1) is to provide for the "establishment of walking tracks over public and private land so the people of New Zealand shall have safe, unimpeded foot access to the countryside, for the benefit of physical recreation, as well as for the enjoyment of the outdoor environment, and the natural and pastoral beauty and historic and cultural qualities of the areas they pass through"

and

(2) "shall be so established and administered that the rights of property owners, both public and private, shall be fully respected, and that the rights of public access shall be for walking purposes only, unless specifically provided for".

The Act also set up the Walkways Commission, with seven members' nominees. These were from the Municipal Association, Counties Association, FMC, Federated Farmers, the Council for Recreation and Sport, and the Directors General of Lands and of Forests or their nominees. The Chairman is the Director-General of Lands, or his nominee. The Lands and Forest nominees have now been replaced by a DOC nominee. The Commission's functions are to:

- initiate, prepare, investigate and consider proposals for establishment, administration, control and maintenance of walkways
- recommend on financial allocation
- encourage local authorities
- advise the Minister

Its powers include establishing camp grounds, accommodation etc on Walkways and appointing other organisations to look after Walkways. The Commission has an appointed secretary. Twelve district Walkway Committees were also established. These consist of up to 9 members (now 8) including the Commissioner for Crown Lands (now a DOC nominee), who shall be Chairman, one nominee from each of the Counties Association, Municipalities Association, FMC, Federated Farmers, and up to three other persons appointed by the Commission. The District Committees are responsible to the Commission. Term of office is 3 years.

Walkways may be established over both public and private land. Walkways over public land are established by the Minister, on the recommendation of the Commission, with the consent of any other Minister involved, by notice in the Gazette. Walkways over private land require the purchase or gift of an easement, or of the land itself. Walkways over Maori land require liaison with the appropriate Maori Land Advisory Committee. The Commission is the overseeing body. Again, announcement is by notice in the Gazette. Subject to not having a dog or firearm, behaving reasonably, and subject to specific constraints on lambing, fire risk etc, every member of the public may, without charge, at any time, pass on foot, over any Walkway.

Occupiers of Walkway land are generally not liable for damage or injury to walkers, whereas there is no restriction of liability on users (except that trespass laws do not apply).

The Commission can appoint controlling authorities for individual Walkways, including Government departments, local or regional authorities or statutory bodies. These are responsible for maintenance, improvement and promotion, and can be allocated government funds by the Minister. The Commission can also appoint honorary rangers.

Funding of Walkways is primarily from the Consolidated Fund, either directly or through grants. Donations may also be made by the public, and are held in the Walkways Trust Account. This account currently contains \$15,000, but DOC's 1988 Annual Report says \$34,900. Walkway regulations are made by the Governor-General, by Order in Council. A maximum fine of \$200 is possible. The Commission itself may make bylaws, the maximum penalty of which is \$100.

The Act makes it an offence, generally, to:

- (a) have or discharge a firearm within 100 metres of a Walkway
- (b) light fires other than in authorised fireplaces
- (c) ride or lead a horse, or have a dog
- (d) use or have a motor vehicle
- (e) wilfully damage flora
- (f) lay poison or traps
- (g) wilfully damage facilities, crops, livestock or wildlife
- (h) wilfully endanger, disturb or annoy other users on a walkway.

Walkways may be closed for various reasons, including a request from the occupier of the land. It is an offence to enter when closed. Walkways may be revoked.

The Commission is required to make an Annual Report.

1978 and 1980 amendments allowed the Commission to use Walkway funds to meet liability for damage incurred in respect of a gazetted or ungazetted walkway.

#### 4 WALKWAYS 1975-89

Up to mid-February 1989 some 132 Walks covering more than 1350 km have been established, almost the reputed distance from North Cape to Bluff (1600 km).

By far the most active district been North Auckland (422 km, 31 walks); followed by Canterbury (165 km, 20 walks); Otago (122 km, 14 walks) and Nelson (130 km, 11 walks). The distribution is shown below.

Area	Walk ways	Len- gth* km	Land tenure					Highest Point (m)	
			DOC Pk	DOC other	S 58 Leg Rd.	SOE	Priv ate		Local Auth
Nth Auckland	31	422	34	113	151	4	108	6	751
Sth Auckland	11	98		50			48		535
Taranaki	8	79	38	6	11		7	17	
Gisborne	5	21				11	10		
Hawkes Bay	7	52		16	10		25		494
Wellington	10	61	9	9	11	10	4	19	468
North Island	72	733	81	194	183	25	202	42	
Marlborough	5	80							485
Nelson	11	130							1136
Westland	5	45							
Canterbury	20	165							918
Otago	14	122							1747
Southland	5	75							
South Island	60	617							
TOTAL	132	1350							

**Table 1: WALKWAYS STATISTICS**

Source: DOC and AA Hand Books

\* Lengths estimated from AA Walkways Handbooks (as at end 1986). 14 Walkways have been added since then, but their lengths are not readily available

Notes: (1) DOC Pk - across National or Forest Park (2) S.58 - Section 58 strip (now marginal strip); Leg Rd. - legal road; shore - shoreline

From the analysis for the North Island it is apparent that many Walkways cross private land, at least in part. An estimated 202 km out of a 733 km total is across private land. More than half of all North Island Walkways appear to cross private land.

North Auckland and Canterbury stand out as districts that have been very successful. It is claimed this is the result of an enthusiastic committee and departmental reps.

A large number of Walkways link or traverse scenic or other reserves. Some districts eg North Auckland have made good use of foreshore reserves. Many walkways give access to significant viewpoints eg the highest hill in the area. Many pass through native bush. In some districts, eg Dunedin and Taranaki there has been significant co-operation with local authorities, while in others, eg Wellington and Auckland, local and regional authorities have not joined the system. Walkways only traverse National or Forest Parks where the walk was set up prior to the park being established eg Whanganui. A significant lack

is Walkways across Forestry Corporation lands. The future of Walkway across SOE (State Owned Enterprise) land may be in doubt, given Government's intention to sell off these bodies.

The type of Walkway includes:

Peri-urban	eg Cannon Point (Wellington) Pineapple (Dunedin)
Coastal	Whitecliffs (Taranaki), Cape Rienga, Makara (Wellington)
To high viewpoint	Mt Tutamoe (Northland), Mt William (Bombay Hills), Colonial Knob (Wellington), Mt Herbert (Port Hills) Te Mata Peak (Hawkes Bay)
Rural/pastoral	Kerikeri, Methven, Waimate
Historic route/rail	Waioku Coach Road, Karangahake Gorge, (rail); Whitecliffs (Maori trail), Hawkes Bay Coastal
Native bush	Lake Okataina, Matemateaonga
Waterfall/lake	Boundary Stream (Hawkes Bay), Lake Tutira, Lake Kaniere, Taupo, (Huka, Aratiatia)
Historic - Maori	Cape Rienga, Golden Stairs, Kohi Point,
- European	Cook's Cove
- Industrial	Cable Bay, Dun Mountain, Pupu, Charming Ck, Denniston, Ross, Lyell, Six Mile-Matakitaki
Exotic forest	Waikaraka (Northland), Mt Auckland (Northland)
Urban	Waitara West, Te Henui (New Plymouth) Timaru
Important access	Swampy Ridge (Dunedin)
Geological	Crater Rim (Port Hills)
Alpine	Mavora-Wakatipu, St James
Soil Conservation	Wither Hills

Most Walkways are significant for more than one of the above characteristics. The AA Handbooks (3) enlarge on the features of each walk. The location of each walk is shown in the map, Appendix 1.

What has been achieved in the 14 years is a unified national system of high interest for its natural, scenic and cultural values, as well as for its recreational and access value. Because of the way the walks highlight our heritage, they could just as readily be called Heritage Trails, as Walkways. However, there are still many potential walks partly on private land, that should or could be included.

## 5 POSITION IN THE RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM

### 5.1 Walkway Characteristics

The Walkways Commission grades Walkways into three categories:

Walk (W) - usually benched, graded, suitable for families  
 Track (T) - well defined, not benched or graded, good average fitness  
 Route (R) - lightly marked, for experienced and well equipped trampers

This recognises both the physical standard of the path, and the matching physical fitness and competence required of the user. This is the idea of providing a range of difficulty, or a recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS), basic to mountain recreation.

However, only 4 Walkways, all long, are graded as route - Mangamuka Gorge (R), St James (T/R), Silver Peaks (R) and Mavora-Wakatipu (T/R). Most trampers would categorise even these four as easy tramping. The remaining Walkways are almost evenly divided between Walk and Track grade, with the North Island having more tracks and the South Island more walks.

Thus Walkways are characterised by being the "easy walking" end of the tramping spectrum. They are similar to, but considerably more diverse than the type of peri-urban or regional park walk provided by some local and regional authorities. They contrast with the standard of track found in National and Forest Parks, where the vast majority would be classified tramping track or route, and only a small percentage would be the Walkway walk or track grade.

In spite of Walkways often going to high viewpoints, only 8 walkways have high points above 700 metres (about 2200 ft). The highest is Ben Lomond (1747 metres) near Queenstown, followed by St James (1136 metres).

The safety record of Walkways reflects this appeal to easy walkers. As far as we know, only 4 recreation related fatalities have occurred on Walkways. One was on the St James where a person with a fear of heights fell off a bridge and was drowned. The second was when three youths were caught in a freak snowstorm near the Silver Peaks Walkway. It will always be impossible to make Walkways safe against this type of accident.

We conclude that Walkways play an important role in providing generally easy walking, with the opportunity to progress from short duration to longer overnight, or more difficult trips.

Figure 1 shows the position of Walkways in terms of their ROS for:

- trip duration
- physical exertion
- ease of terrain/navigation difficulty
- altitude / threat from the weather
- scenic or cultural interest

and shows their use relative to walking and tramping.

## 5.2 LONG DISTANCE WALKS

The original idea of long distance walkways has been partly realised. The 14 longest walks, all of which take at least a day at family speed, are:

1	Spirits Bay - Cape Rienga - Ninety Mile Beach	133 km	
2	St James (Nelson)	66	(5 days)
3	Mavora - Wakatipu (Southland)	51	(4 days)
4	Kai iwi Lakes - Hoikianga (Nth Auckland)	50	(+ 20 coast)
5	Anakiwa - Endeavour - Kenepuru (Marlborough)	42	
6	Matemateaonga (Taranaki)	40	(3 days)
7	Silver Peaks (Otago)	37	
8	Lake Okataina (Sth Auckland)	31	
9	Waioku Coach Road (Nth Auckland)	23	
10	Nydia (Marlborough)	22	
11	Ngaiotonga - Russell (Nth Auckland)	21	
12	Mangamuka Gorge (Nth Auckland)	19	
13	Ashburton (Canterbury)	19	
14	Hapuakohe (Sth Auckland)	<u>18</u>	
	TOTAL	592	km
		<u><u>592</u></u>	

Many of these walks can be walked in distinct sections. They make up over 40% of total Walkway length.

The Walkways Act is essential to achieve long linked walks in the North Island, where DOC administered land is not contiguous and private land must be crossed. North Auckland is a good example. Any long distance walk at relatively low levels in either Island, will need to cross private land. (Compare experience with the Bruce Trail in Ontario. Ref (4)).

The North Cape to Bluff Walkway is still far from realisation, although there is a walkway at each end. It is most near realisation in North Auckland, where Walkways reach from Cape Rienga almost uninterrupted to Dargaville.

### 5.3 CONFLICT WITH WILDERNESS

Wilderness represents the other end of the recreation opportunity spectrum to Walkways. Wildernesses are large, usually rugged, remote, trackless, hutless, roadless areas - with a total lack of mechanised access - truly wild nature. Man is a visitor that must be self-sufficient, and self reliant. (5)

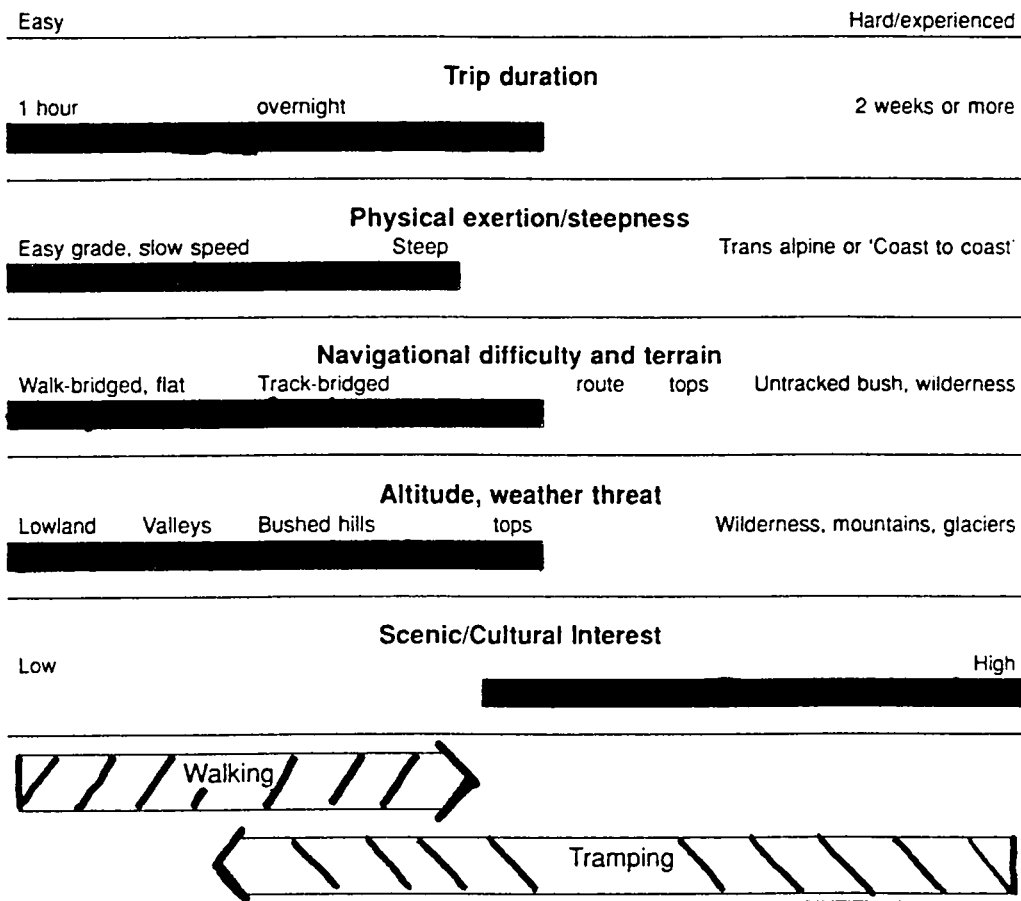
In the early 1980's the Walkways Commission made strenuous attempts to establish a North Island East-West Walkway. The initial part is the Matemateaonga Walk. No public consultation was carried out over possible routes, until controversy arose, and then only reluctantly.

The Commission's choice was to take a route almost solely through what is now DOC land - national and forest park. This appeared an easy option in terms of tenure, but provided other major difficulties.

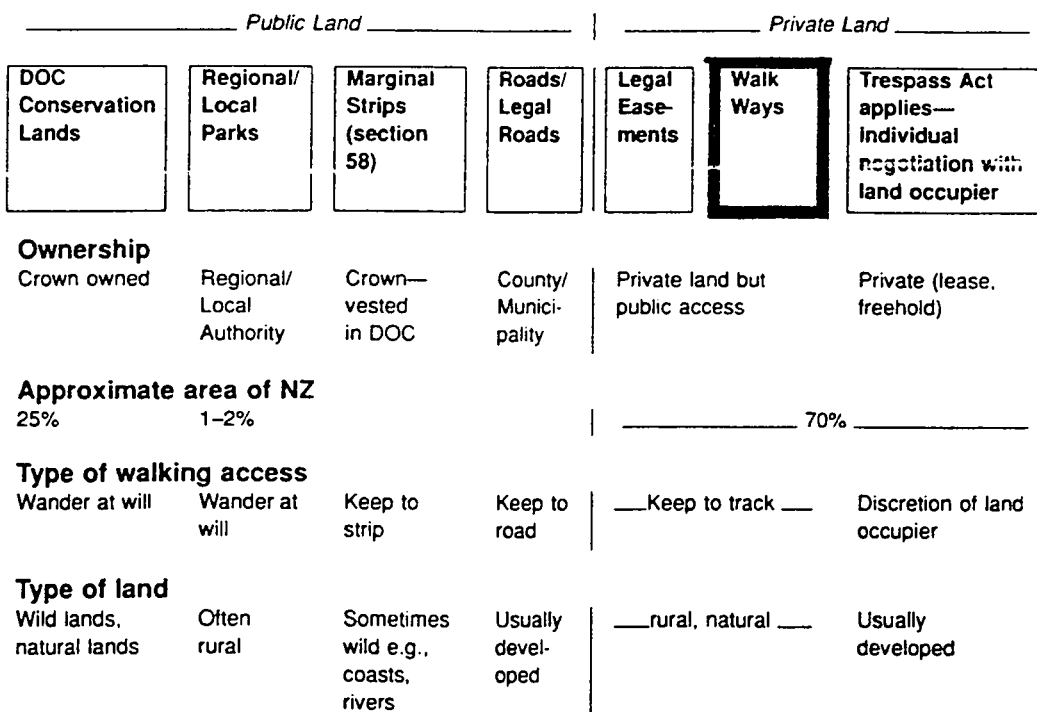
The route was a high altitude one through some of the wildest and remotest country in New Zealand. To make matters more controversial, it would have bisected the only two major North Island wilderness areas - Kaimanawa and Raukumara, and would have compromised their potential wilderness status. (6)



# Figure 1 : Walkways in the Back Country Recreation Use Spectrum



# Figure 2 : Access Spectrum



**Note :** Walkways purpose is to give access across private land. They also cross Crown Land, local body land, marginal strips and legal roads.

Federated Mountain Clubs was concerned at this misguided Commission zeal for using Walkways, like roads, to tame the Wilderness. This, and the folly of putting the typical user, family groups, into this extreme, remote and hostile environment, finally won the day, and the Walkway halted. Alternative feasible routes were identified, but have not been pursued.

It became apparent, too that having both the Walkway Commission and a Park Board jointly responsible for such a high profile pathway is undesirable from an administrative and possibly a planning viewpoint.

This incident dampened legitimate enthusiasm for lower altitude long distance linked rural walks, although this still is a laudible objective.

#### 5.4 RELATION WITH LAND TENURE

Figure 2 shows where Walkways fit in terms of the land tenure spectrum. Their unique value is that they provide walking opportunities over the 70% of New Zealand that is private land. Walks over public land can as readily be dealt with by other means, unless there is a special reason, such as linking with a Walkway across private land, or continuing a long distance walk. Table 1 shows that the estimated length of walks over the DOC estate, legal roads and marginal strips, in this linking role, is considerable. As well, some regional and local authorities eg Auckland, Wellington, provide considerable walking opportunities in their parks. There is also an extensive DOC estate, for those who want to walk or tramp in a natural environment.

Wander at will is not possible through Walkways, but is possible in DOC and Regional/Local Government parks. However, the type of private land used by Walkways, the rural countryside, and peri-urban land, is not available on the public estate, except for a small number of farm parks. There is a gulf between urban street walking, and natural environment tramping.

#### 6 PROMOTION, USE AND VALUE

One of the most successful aspects of Walkways has been their promotion and use. The Automobile Association (Auckland) and Lansdowne Press deserve much of the credit for this. They first published a book (Ref 2) listing 68 Walkways in 1982. This proved very popular, going quickly to a second printing and selling over 60,000 copies. Two updated pocket handbooks (3) have now appeared.

Other promotion activities include Lands & Survey pamphlets, Walk Week, (run in the early 1980's to encourage participation walks) and promotional walks held from time to time.

Actual Walkway use is known qualitatively to be high, but is difficult to record. A research study of St James Walkway users showed they were often family groups that had "cut their teeth" on shorter easier Walkway type walks.

Surveys show that walking is one of the most popular recreational activities. A Wellington Regional Council survey in 1988 (7, P 20) found Walking - coastal (53% of respondents), bush (51%), farmland(20%) and urban (56%) - together

with overnight tramping (10%), had high levels of participation. As far as could be judged, these levels were double a more restricted 1974 Wellington study. Overseas experience shows that interest in walking the countryside is on the increase and may be of boom proportions. There is an increasing interest in long distance trails (8, page 6).

Walkways have value both to the individual, through encouraging exercise, and consequent better mental and physical health, providing a recreational activity, and giving rewards through achievement, and enjoyment, and through walking as a social or group activity eg with family or friends.

From society's view, Walkways, because of their promotion and ease of use, have encouraged a broader spectrum of people to enjoy the outdoors. They are also a decided tourism attraction, and encourage visitors to stay that extra day. This is recognised by the Tourist and Publicity Department, which has made major grants to help establish Walkways, and for other "walking opportunities". A much fuller discussion of the value of Walkways and walking is given in (9).

## 7 LANDS AND SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The Walkways Act is administered solely by the Walkways Commission. Government funds for Walkways are allocated on its recommendation. The other main groups involved are the District Walkways Committees and Walkway Controlling Authorities, ie the organisations designated by the Commission to look after a specified Walkway. The interrelationship between these three groups is shown in Figure 3

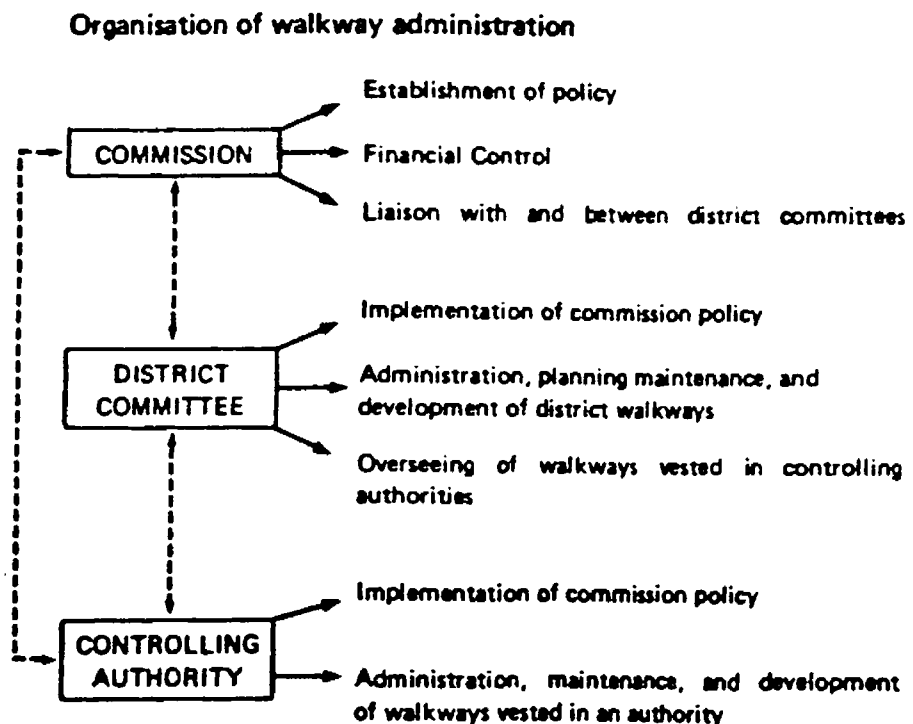


Figure 3 - Organisation of Walkway Administration  
(Appendix NZ Walkway Commission Policy Statement 1984)

From 1975 to 1987 the Commission and Committees were serviced by the Department of Lands and Survey. Chairman of the Commission was the Director General of Lands. This was initially Noel Coad, to 1979 and then Bing Lucas to 1986. The Walkways system owes its existence and success very much to these two men.

Although the system was slow to start, having the Director General as Chairman, and both men's keen interest, gave Walkways a high priority, that overcame obstacles. Funding built up to \$311,000/year in 1980/1 and \$500,000 or above, since 1982/3. Walk construction was greatly assisted by the PEP job creation schemes for the unemployed. Its contribution is unknown, but would have been in the \$millions.

The Walkways Commission established a pattern of meeting five times a year, and carrying out a walk inspection at each meeting. A Walkways Policy Statement was published in 1980. (10)

This Policy Statement is mainly administrative, setting out the respective roles of the Commission, Committees and controlling authorities (Figure 3). It suggests a broad view of encouraging walking opportunities outside of gazetted walkways. It also states (page 9) that "Walkway administration is a joint venture between Commission, district committees, and their constituent organisations" ie including the voluntary organisations of appointed and co-opted members.

The Policy establishes the procedures for appointing the three public voting members on district committees and also the non-voting members.

District Committees are responsible for submitting annual budget proposals to the Commission, and for preparing 3 year plans of Walkway work, and associated budgets. The Commission allocates the funds, on the recommendation of the committees to the controlling authorities on the basis of whether the usage is national, (total funding), regional (partial funding), or local (minimal funding). The Policy points out the advantages of local and regional authorities having their walks in the Walkway system. These are that the authority can negotiate agreements under the Walkways Act, where some liabilities are waived, and the Commission can compensate for damage caused by users. It is unclear the extent to which compensation has been paid.

The Policy establishes four priorities for Walkways as follows:

- High - near urban centres
- national North Cape - Bluff walkway
- walkways over private (rural) land
- Low - walkways solely over public land

The achievements of the Walkways Commission and Committees under the Department of Lands and Survey speak for themselves, as discussed earlier in this Review. A sound base, and a very high standard of walking experience has been established. The Department was the Controlling Authority for most of the 123 Walkways established under its stewardship. Many more walkways have been initiated, but remain in the pipeline. The system is a great start but it still has to grow to maturity.

## 8. DOC ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING

The Walkways Commission and Committees have been serviced by the Department of Conservation (DOC) since 1 April 1987 when the Lands and Survey Department was abolished. Since then progress on Walkways has slowed, with nine new walks and one extension being opened in the two years.

A number of disturbing events have occurred:

- (i) DOC ranked Walkways lowly in its priorities for 1987/8;
- (ii) Walkways Commission meetings have been greatly curtailed with only five taking place in the two years, instead of the usual ten;
- (iii) some District Committees appear to have gone into recess;
- (iv) DOC advocated the demise of the Commission and Committees in its position paper [11,p25] on the Quango Review [12], in spite of majority public support, and strong support from user groups [13,p19-20];
- (v) DOC's total budget, not large initially, was severely trimmed in 1988/89;
- (vi) the Commission does not appear to be recommending on Walkways fund allocations, as required by the Act;

FMC queries to the then Associate Conservation Minister, Fran Wilde, on funding of Walkways showed:

- (1) No record of expenditure had been kept by the Department for 1987/88, in spite of it being the Commission, and not DOC, that recommends on allocation of funds.
- (2) 1988/89 budget was \$692,000 (at 12 October 1988), similar to Lands and Survey's (1984/5 - \$602,000, 1985/6 - \$694,000, 1986/7 \$512,000).

In spite of this, funding appears to be a constraint. DOC and others are said to have sought commercial and other sponsorship. Tourist and Publicity Department recently made grants to help the Karangahake Walkway (\$225,000) and the Waitomo Walkway (\$40,000).

Financial stringency highlights the conflict of interest DOC has in being both the disburser, and the major recipient of Walkways funds. This conflict of interest was also evident under Lands and Survey, where very few controlling authorities, other than the Department, were appointed, and very few funds were distributed outside it.

One can but conclude that Walkways have come much more under Departmental control since 1987, and that the abolition of the Walkways Commission Committees will give the Department greater control. Rather, what is needed, is greater co-operation with other parties.

New Conservation Minister, Phillip Woollaston, is said to have agreed that Walkways will become the responsibility of the yet-to-be constituted Conservation Authority and its regional Conservation Boards. It is not clear at this stage how this will work, whether the responsibility will be a statutory one, whether there will be Walkways Sub-Committees, or how groups interested in Walkways will be represented. The new Bodies will have a host of important responsibilities,

and Walkways could well be something that slips through the cracks. There appear to be better alternatives for interest group involvement than this one.

DOC has also said that a survey of walking opportunities will be undertaken in each District to determine the extent to which Walkways are necessary. This is likely to be a source of delay and uncertainty. Yet it is apparent that there is a shortage of both short walks in a rural environment and long-distance rural walks throughout New Zealand. Also Walkway opportunities depend to a large extent on the Landowner being keen.

## 9. THE FUTURE; IMPROVING THE SYSTEM

Most would agree the Walkways System has been a resounding success, in giving public access across rural private land. It is unique to New Zealand's conditions, and is significantly different from systems that have evolved elsewhere [8], although it shares many of their features and problems. Most people want to see the system continued and strengthened, and enjoy it's heritage qualities as well as it's recreational value.

The future situation will have four important characteristics:

- (i) DOC is likely to remain short of funds.
- (ii) Regional Authorities are being restructured, and will be able to play a greater role in providing walking opportunities.
- (iii) Walking the countryside and especially long distance walking is likely to become increasingly popular.
- (iv) It will continue to be a delicate selling job, requiring considerable enthusiasm, to persuade private landowners to consent to Walkways.

In this environment, greater co-operation between interested parties, rather than less, seems essential.

### 9.1 Why a Walkway Quango is Necessary

The DOC Quango paper [12 p2] lists good reasons for having quangos, including public involvement, representation of interested parties, incorporating wider expertise, and lessening bureaucratic involvement. All are valid for the Walkways Commission/Committees. The great success of the North Auckland and Canterbury District Walkway Committees has been attributed to the enthusiasm of their members, and strong support from Departmental Officers. This success can be contrasted with the lesser performance in other districts, indicating the importance of enthusiastic members and officials. Overseas experience (eg in Ontario) [4], points to the need for committed enthusiasts. Bing Lucas [9], sums it up when he states that walks are "products of inspiration, and perspiration and sometimes confrontation".

Another reason supporting a quango structure is the diverse interests involved - landowners, user groups, volunteers, local and regional authorities, tourism, DOC and the need to maintain goodwill and communication and support between them at both a national and district level. If the system is to encourage sponsors and other Walkways providers, and possibly provide them with some funding, a quango structure becomes important for independence reasons. It would also be desirable, to give greater independence, to have a separate secretariat/manager. The future environment is likely to be even better served by a quango than the past environment.

As well, there are a number of policy changes that will need to be considered, that would be appropriately addressed through a quango.

## 9.2. Funding Options

Almost all funds up to now have come from Central Government, either through vote Lands and Survey/DOC/PEP Schemes, or through Tourist and Publicity grants. There have been private donations, and some volunteer labour.

Future funding options include as well -

- commercial sponsorship;
- administrative support, eg as has been suggested by the Hillary Commission;
- regional government funding;
- use of volunteers for maintenance, as is common overseas.

The objective will be to make the Government dollar go further, and to get better value for it.

## 9.3 Future Walkways Policy

Walkways Commission priorities [10] are:

- (1) (high) Walkways readily accessible from urban population centres;
- (2) a National Walkway from North Cape to Bluff and, where applicable, east-west links;
- (3) over private land, especially when access to public land is improved;
- (4) (low) solely over public land, where supported by the administering authority.

The Commission has not, however, made much progress with its North-South Walkway, outside of North Auckland.

The policy appears to be:

- (i) to serve mainly the 'easy walking' family recreation end of the recreational spectrum;
- (ii) emphasis on access to the 70% of New Zealand that is in private hands, (ie developed countryside), including the linking of scenic natural areas;
- (iii) further linking of walks to give some long distance easy walks;
- (iv) keeping Walkways out of National and Forest Parks (extensive track facilities already exist there), except for giving continuity of access;

Additional policies that appear desirable in future are:

- (v) greater emphasis on using Walkways for access across private land to public land eg to lake shores, river banks, coasts;
- (vi) greater co-operation with local and regional councils, eg encouraging incorporation of their outstanding walks;
- (vii) greater experimentation, eg wander at will, pony ways, cycle ways;
- (viii) a greater interest and involvement in access issues generally;
- (ix) greater involvement of user groups to help maintain the system;

- (x) a more positive attitude to obtaining sponsorship or donations;
- (xi) encouraging Walkways as a National system, on non-DOC land, with a range of controlling Authorities with the best "walking opportunities" to become Walkways;
- (xii) establishing at least one truly long distance walk.

#### 10. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING AND CONTROL STRUCTURES

A range of options to replace the Walkways Commission/Committees suggest themselves.

1. Add Walkways responsibilities to the proposed Conservation Authority/Boards (DOC announced option);
2. Restructure the Walkways Commission/Committees - as above;
3. Replace with a Walkways and Access Trust;
4. Contract out to User-groups to administer/maintain - as in British Columbia, Ontario and the Appalachians;
5. Add to the functions of a related single purpose group, eg. Historic Places Trust, Hillary Commission, Queen Elizabeth II National Trust;
6. Letter DOC administer, with no quango;
7. Abolish Walkways altogether.

FMC favours option 2, followed by 3. We believe options 4 and 5 are not as good, though it is possible they could be made to work. Options 6 and 7 are unacceptable to us. Option 1 is not yet fully defined, but is not attractive.

##### 10.1 OPTION 1 - (Authority/Boards)

This option is not yet fully specified as the Act setting up the Authority/Boards has yet to be introduced to Parliament. The rationale is that only one quango should be responsible for all DOC's responsibilities.

Although fine in principle, this option has the following practical difficulties:-

- (i) Lack of time - their major purpose is likely to be set policy and management plans for the 4 million hectares of DOC conservation land. This in itself is a major undertaking for a group of volunteer members. It is unlikely they will be able to cope with any of the myriad of additional responsibilities also to be heaped on them. Walkways will just be neglected, or assumed by DOC;
- (ii) primarily conservation oriented on public land, - not recreation access to private land;
- (iii) unrepresentative - neither "easy walking" users nor rural landowners interested in Walkways, will necessarily be represented on either the Authority or the Boards;



- (iv) lack of knowledge - the Authority/Boards will have no time or knowledge to identify, discuss with landowners, encourage volunteers, liaise with local or regional authorities, promote access, donations, or consider wider forms of Walkway.

The net result will be a de facto Option 6 or 7, DOC in full control, or slow abolition.

#### 10.2 OPTIONS 2 (restructured Commission) AND 3 (Trust)

Allow the strengths of the present system to be continued, and as well, allow for the identified improvements. Namely - single purpose, directly involves users and landowners, separates funding and policy from the implementers, allows enlargement of the concepts of Walkway and Access, allows involvement of user volunteers. Option 2 is easiest to implement, except that it appears to require Government to go back on its decision.

#### 10.3 OPTION 3 (Trust)

Gives greater independence from DOC. (Compare with the UK Countryside Commission, a similar Body in many respects). It also requires more commitment from constituent groups.

#### 10.4 OPTION 4 (User Groups)

Would be more difficult and does not necessarily allow representation of user group organisations. It would probably become a de facto Option 3, as consultation and co-ordination between users and landowners is essential. Government would need to provide significant funding and give statutory powers, eg by amending the Walkways Act. A coalition of FMC, Forest & Bird, and Youth Hostels Association, for instance, could well provide the required administration and expertise. All maintain huts and tracks to some extent now. A specially appointed director and staff would be needed, as would also be the case with Options 2 and 3.

#### 10.5 OPTION 5 (Combine with another quango)

Again, the primary purpose of each of the three named quangos is very different from "easy walking and access in the countryside". The Historic Places Trust is perhaps the most suitable, as many Walkways have an historic side. The National Trust is primarily concerned with conservation on private land, and access is seen by many landowners as quite different and often conflicting issue. Both Trusts have the advantage of a regional presence, and deal with private owners. The Hillary Commission is primarily a broad recreation funding and promotion organisation. As such it would not be appropriate to be the policy body and driving force for Walkways, but could be a source of some funding. The Hillary Commission has taken the initiative in looking for a funding package to continue Walkways.

All three organisations would require major changes in their structure, staffing, membership and objectives to adequately take on Walkways, but it could be done.

It is ironic that at a time when State trading organisations are being made more single purpose, and corporatised, single purpose bodies with social objectives, are being suggested for merging with obvious disadvantages, in overwork, and too many objectives.

#### 10.6 OPTION 6 (DOC)

This downgrades landowner and user involvement. DOC Head Office have shown little commitment to Walkways to date. User representatives are likely to be more committed and innovative advocates than DOC. DOC also has a conflict of interest, as noted earlier. A DOC takeover is unlikely to encourage users or landowners to support the system more.

### 10.7 OPTION 7 (Abolish)

This appears likely, indirectly, unless present difficulties can be overcome.

### 11. CONCLUSION

The Walkways System has been established and is a major success. Its future is in doubt because of Government's decision to abolish the Walkways Commission/Committees, and because funding appears uncertain.

The future structure and involvement of interested groups is uncertain, and after 31 March, when the Walkways Commission is abolished, there will be no public overview body.

One interim proposal that appears highly desirable would be to set up an Interim Walkways National Committee of interested parties, to monitor progress, and to advocate continuation of the Walkways System.

There are many other suggestions in this paper that should be canvassed. There are a number of other initiatives that are under way. The Department of Conservation should be a key player and it is unfortunate that the Department appears headed for another major restructuring. It is hoped that co-operative approaches to the problems faced by Walkways can be found at the Conference.

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