



QLDC
22 MAR 2016
QUEENSTOWN

March 7, 2016

Mike Theelen
Chief Executive
Queenstown Lakes District Council
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Dear Mike Theelen

Congratulations on your recent appointment as the Chief Executive of the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). This letter is to progress the partnership between the QLDC and the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust (National Trust) in respect to the magnificent Mahu Whenua covenants in your district.

Background

In May 2014 Soho Property Limited (SPL) entered into four covenants with the National Trust to protect more than 53,000 hectares of iconic land across Motatapu, Mount Soho, Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations in the Wakatipu - Wanaka area. These covenants were registered in March 2015. As a consequence, 95% of these four stations have been permanently retired from grazing and are now being managed for their natural, biodiversity, cultural, catchment, landscape, recreation and amenity values and are protected by open space covenants under the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust Act 1977.

The purpose and objectives of the Mahu Whenua covenants are to:

- manage the covenanted land as a kohanga (a nursery area for the surrounding district),
- protect and enhance the indigenous biodiversity and open space values (including: visual landscape, historic, watershed/catchment, listed biodiversity, education, recreation and cultural values)
- encouraging the restoration of indigenous plants and animals including any threatened species originally from this area
- protecting the covenant area, its aesthetic natural landscapes and features which are national landmarks and which contribute to New Zealanders' sense of place.

You may or may not be aware that SPL entered into these covenants voluntarily purely for philanthropic and altruistic reasons. These covenants were not a condition of purchase stipulated by the Overseas Investment Office (OIO). SPL has already put a huge investment into the ecological restoration of these four stations and the establishment of huts, tracks and other facilities.

This massive protected area is essentially the equivalent of a privately funded midsized National Park in both scale, protection and aspiration in the heart of your district.



Prior to entering into these covenants with SPL the National Trust had a number of meetings with support partners including representatives of the Queenstown Lakes District Council and the Department of Conservation. This included an onsite meeting in January 2014, with Adam Feeley (CEO of QLDC), Hon. Nick Smith (then Minister of Conservation) and Lou Sanson (CEO of Department of Conservation) (DOC).

During and post the covenanting process the National Trust had a series of further meeting with QLDC staff, Ngai Tahu, DOC, the NZ Walking Access Commission (WAC) and other parties to explore how those parties could work with the National Trust and SPL to support Mahu Whenua. We were heartened by the level of commitment promised by the QLDC and DOC to support the achievement of the Mahu Whenua vision.

This and a similar letter to QLDC is to seek formal confirmation of QLDC and DOC support with particular regard to the public track network being established over Mahu Whenua.

As a condition of purchase by SPL of Coronet Peak and Glencoe Stations the OIO stipulated that SPL work with WAC to develop and secure public access tracks. This obliges SPL to construct a series of new tracks to a back country standard and to guarantee public access on some already formed tracks. SPL is going well beyond OIO's requirements by also establishing additional tracks to enhance opportunities for public use and enjoyment.

Previous requirements of the OIO relating to the purchase of Mount Soho and Motatapu Stations in 2005 were met by DOC registering easements over and managing the increasingly popular Motatapu Track which is part of the Te Araroa Long Pathway running the length of New Zealand.

The OIO conditions stipulate that the track system must be provided for by easement agreements. The National Trust is working closely with the WAC which will establish walkway easements under the Walking Access Act 2008.

In recognition of the importance of these covenants and its partnership with Soho Property, and to integrate the track system into the management of the covenants, the National Trust has agreed in principle to become the controlling authority for all new public access easements on Coronet and Glencoe Stations following their registration with Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) by the WAC. This decision is based on our understanding that both the DOC and the QLDC is each prepared to support our role as controlling authority by taking over day to day management of parts of the track network.

Our intention is to have signage and marking in place for those tracks constructed prior to DOC and QLDC accepting day to day management responsibilities. For this task we have received assistance from the Conservation Partnership Fund and the Walking Access Commission and hope to attain additional resources from other funders. The National Trust is also preparing interpretation material to be featured at four sites on the properties to aid in the public use and enjoyment of these properties.

We have attached a table to this letter which sets out those sections of track for which we are formally requesting you to take on day to day management for. I understand that Tim Dennis of Southern Land Surveyors has provided QLDC with independent professional advice on the Coronet Loop track, much of which is currently unformed. These tables incorporate comments on track construction and use sourced from the Walking Access Commission. We propose that should QLDC and DOC agree to taking over

responsibility for day to day management for their respective parts of the track network, this agreement will be documented in an MOU between the parties.

It is intended that all tracks are constructed prior to you taking on their management. There is no expectation (or requirement of the OIO) that the standard of the tracks match that of the trail network in the Wakatipu Basin. It is my view that we should take the opportunity to secure these routes and make them legally available to the public as soon as possible given that Glencoe Station was purchased in 2009 and Coronet Peak in 2011.

No doubt over time some tracks will be improved, whilst it may be appropriate that others remain to a 'back country' standard. It is intended that the easements be surveyed over a 50-metre-wide corridor to ensure maximum flexibility for construction and to allow for future realignment. This approach was taken by the Department of Conservation for the Motatapu Track and has proved effective.

The Coronet Loop Trail (CLT) incorporates 5 to 6 OIO specified tracks to comprise the bulk of a mountain biking circuit, and 2 additional tracks Soho Property have offered to form to complete the loop. The intention is to provide a high quality mountain biking loop that may be used for fund raising events.

It is the intention of the National Trust that any funds raised would be used to maintain and develop the CLT and other tracks and support the protection of these covenants.

The future status of the Macetown Road has not been addressed in this proposal due to its complicated matrix of land tenure and complexities relating to maintenance. Its status is however a matter which requires future consideration.

Confirmation from the Department of Conservation and Queenstown Lakes District Council of your acceptance of future management of the tracks listed above would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

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Queen Elizabeth II National Trust

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Long Gully Track - Coronet Peak

Map 1, Track 3 - Walking, Mountain Bikes (MTB), Horse trekking (on a managed basis)

Description
<p>“Currently heavily used by MTB predominantly, less by walkers, and not by horses due ungated fences.”</p> <p>The easement extends from the Coronet Peak ski field road to the start of the Green Gate easement near the ruins of the “Welcome Home Hotel” by the Skippers Road following the Old Skippers Track.</p> <p>The initial section of the proposed track climbs to a low saddle above the ski field road to the north of Skippers Saddle within the Coronet Peak Recreation Reserve. From the saddle the track descends steeply into Long Gully where it joins an existing mountain bike (MTB) trail that follows the Old Skippers Track down the true right side of Long Gully to a point near the Skippers Road where it joins the easement for Track 4.</p> <p>The proposed activity involves the widening and re-grading of the track in Long Gully to a width of 1 to 1.5 metres in width. A large part of this new section of trail has been recently constructed with only a short section above the Long Gully trail requiring construction.</p> <p>Earthworks will be required along the Long Gully section of the track MTB trail to increase the width of the track and improve the grade and evenness of the track surface to ensure the track is suitable for walkers and mountain bikers with a wide range of abilities. The current track with its narrow width, varying grades and rocky surfaces is suitable for mountain bikers seeking a challenging downhill experience. It is possible that the track footprint could extend to a width of up to 3 metres across steeper terrain near stream crossings.</p>

Green Gate Track - Coronet Peak

Map 1, Track 4 - Walking, MTB

Description
<p>A historic pack trail put in to avoid major bluff sections along the river from the end of Long Gully. Some work required to define a route down into Deep Creek to link with Skippers road.</p> <p>This section of track starts from near Skippers Road and climbs steeply over the Green Gate Saddle before descending gradually alongside Green Gate Creek to the Green Gate Huts located by a tributary stream.</p> <p>The proposed activity involves the formation of a track between 1 to 1.5 metres in width for easy grade walking and for mountain biking from the Green Gates Saddle to the Green Gates Huts across relatively gentle terrain in the Green Gate Creek valley. The considerably steeper section of track between the Skippers Road and the Saddle is now formed.</p> <p>Despite the gentler terrain battering earthworks will still be required along this section of track to some extent especially when traversing a steep bank in the vicinity of the Green Gate hut.</p>

Deep Creek to Coronet Creek Track - Coronet Peak

Map 2 & 3, Track 5 - Walking, MTB

Description
<p>A historic pack route linking the Shotover and Arrow Rivers. Coronet Creek to the Arrow is an easy grade as are the upper reaches of Deep Creek.</p> <p>The easement extends from the Green Gate Hut to the Macetown Road and includes two alternative routes near the hut and near the Big Hill track junction. The route generally traverses alongside Deep Creek and Coronet Creek joining the Macetown Road by the confluence with the Arrow River. In places the easement traverses hillslopes above the creeks to avoid confined or incised sections and crosses a low saddle between the creeks.</p> <p>The actual track route may vary along certain sections to avoid areas of difficult terrain and boggy ground, to avoid areas of historic value and to avoid areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.</p> <p>The proposed activity involves the formation of a track between 1 to 1.5 metres in width for easy grade walking and for mountain biking. The earthworks required to form the track will extend beyond the actual trail formation especially where batters and cut-off drains need to be formed along sections of track that traverse steep terrain, including switch back sections. It is possible that the track footprint could extend to a width of up to 3 metres depending on the steepness of the terrain traversed by the track.</p>

Bush Creek – Coronet Peak

Map 4, Track 8 -- Walking, MTB

Description
<p>Includes part of the Sawpit Gully track heading westwards up Bush Creek. A popular day walk. Track is largely on ULR.</p> <p>The easement encompasses part of the Sawpit Gully track beyond the Arrow Irrigation Scheme pipeline and then follows a track that has been recently formed up Bush Creek to a point beyond a large flat and patch of mountain beech forest situated below a rocky promontory.</p> <p>It is not expected that any further earthworks will be required as the track has been formed to a width suitable for walking and mountain biking.</p> <p>The provision of some marker posts is recommended across the large flat towards the western end of the easement.</p>

Sawpit Gully – Coronet Peak

Map 5, Track 9 - Walking

Description
<p>Links Sawpit Gully and Bush Creek. Popular and widely used by locals and visitors. Currently BCA. The proposed activity may involve the placement of some marker posts to improve route finding but overall the track is well defined along its entire length. Suggested locations for marker posts are at the Sawpit Gully crossing near stone hut ruins and the section approaching the “German Hill Saddle” from the north.</p> <p>Periodic trimming of vegetation (sweet briar and matagouri) will be required along the section of track in Sawpit Gully to maintain an unimpeded trail.</p>

Saddle Exit Trail – Alan Reids Road – Coronet Peak

Map 6, Track 13 - Walking, MTB

Description
<p>Soho Properties offered to form this track from Reids Road up the escarpment to the Bush Creek saddle. The easement extends from the end of Jack Reid Road off Malaghan Road to the “Bush Creek Saddle”</p> <p>The proposed activity involves the formation of a track between 1 to 1.5 metres in width across a steep hillslope beneath the saddle. In order to form a track of an easy grade, numerous switch backs will be required over much of the length of the easement.</p> <p>On the steep terrain the earthworks required to form the track will extend beyond the actual trail formation due to the numerous batters and cut-off drains required. It is possible that the track footprint could extend to a width of up to 3 metres across the steeper sections of the track.</p>

Water Race Trail -Coronet Peak

Map 7, Track 14 - Walking, MTB

Description
<p>SPL offered to form this track from the top of Bush Creek to Coronet Peak ski field/Long Gully to complete the CLT.</p> <p>The easement extends from the near the top of Bush Creek to the Coronet Peak ski field road. This connects with the easement for the Long Gully walking and mountain bike track</p> <p>The proposed activity involves the formation of a track between 1 to 1.5 metres in width for easy grade walking and for mountain biking. The earthworks required to form the track will extend beyond the actual trail formation especially where batters and cut-off drains need to be formed along sections of track that traverse steep terrain, including switch back sections. It is possible that the track footprint could extend to a horizontal width of up to 3 metres depending on the steepness of the terrain.</p>

New Chum Gully – Glencoe

Map 8 & 9, Track 15 – Walking

Description
<p>Links from Tobins Track to Arrow river at Sawpit Gully. Popular. This is an existing track that links the Macetown Road with Tobins Track, via New Chum Gully. The track climbs steadily up New Chum Gully and then crosses over a prominent ridge separating the gully from Arrowtown to Tobins Track.</p> <p>The proposed activity shall involve the placement of some marker posts to improve route definition. Suggested locations for marker posts are at and slightly uphill from the Macetown Road junction and slightly uphill from the Tobins Track junction.</p> <p>No earthworks are considered necessary as the track is well defined.</p>

Tobins Drop – Glencoe .

Map 10, Track 16 - Walking

Description
<p>From the Millenium walkway on the Arrow to Tobins Track (formed, ULR). Popular. This is a formed track that links the Millennium Track by the Arrow River with the Tobins Track. The track climbs steeply from the Arrow River up the prominent escarpment that forms a prominent backdrop to Arrowtown and then along the edge of the Crown Terrace to Tobins Track</p> <p>The placement of marker posts along the easement for route definition. No earthworks are considered necessary as the track is well defined.</p>

Brackens Gully – Glencoe

Map 10 – Walking

Description
<p>An old formed miners' track to historic workings at the head of the gully.</p> <p>The easement extends between the Glencoe Road on the Crown Terrace and the historic mine working in Brackens Gully, as shown on Figure 31. From the road the track route extends around the base of Mt Beetham and then climbs steadily on the formation of the historic Miner's Trail to the New Chum Saddle. From the Saddle the route drops into Brackens Gully traversing numerous gold rush workings.</p> <p>The proposed activity shall involve the placement of marker posts along the route between Glencoe road and the start of the Miner's trail and from the New Chum Saddle to the end of the trail.</p> <p>No earthworks are considered necessary as the purpose of the easement is for walking.</p> <p>Note that the first section of this track from Glencoe Road crosses freehold land. Soho Property have an agreement through a Sale and Purchase Agreement to attain an easement for public access over this section. It needs to be clarified in which entity the easement is to be in favour of.</p>

New Chums Ridge Track – Glencoe

Maps 8 & 9, Track 21 - Walking, MTB

Description
<p>SPL offered this track over a formed route for improved visitor experience.</p> <p>The easement extends from the New Chum Track near the Glencoe Station homestead to the Macetown Road beyond Rule Britannia Terrace. The easement follows an existing 4WD farm track of a good formation and grade.</p> <p>The placement of marker posts at periodic intervals along the farm track. No earthworks are considered necessary as the purpose of the easement is for walking.</p>

Peters Way – Glencoe

Map 9 – Walking

Description
<p>SPL offered this track over a formed route for improved visitor experience.</p>

The route lies on a formed 4WD track of good formation and grade which links the New Chums Ridge Track (Track 21) with Brackens Saddle (Track 17).

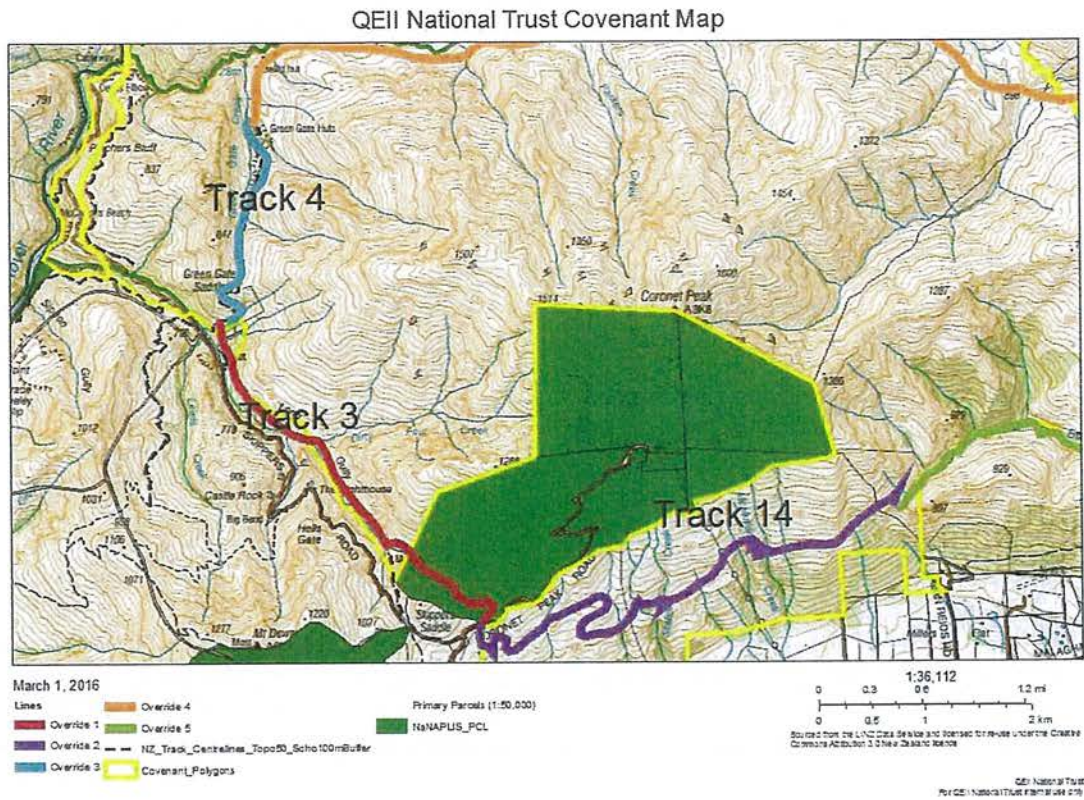
Placement of marker posts at periodic intervals along the farm track would be desirable. No earthworks are considered necessary as the purpose of the easement is for walking.

Miners Trail - Glencoe

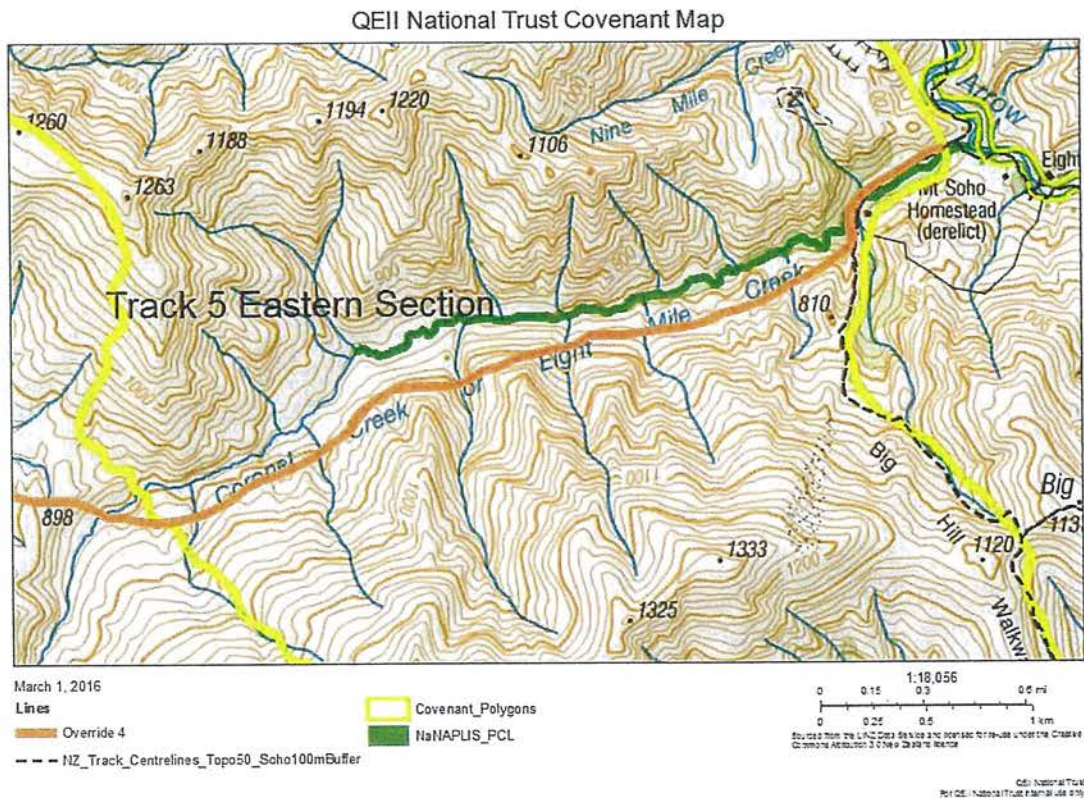
Map 9 - Walking

Description
<p>SPL offered this track over a formed route for improved visitor experience.</p> <p>The route lies on an historic track line of generally easy grade which links the New Chums Ridge Track (Track 21) with Brackens Saddle (Track 17) via a high ridge north of New Chum Gully.</p> <p>Placement of marker posts at periodic intervals along the track would be desirable. No earthworks are considered necessary as the purpose of the easement is for walking.</p>

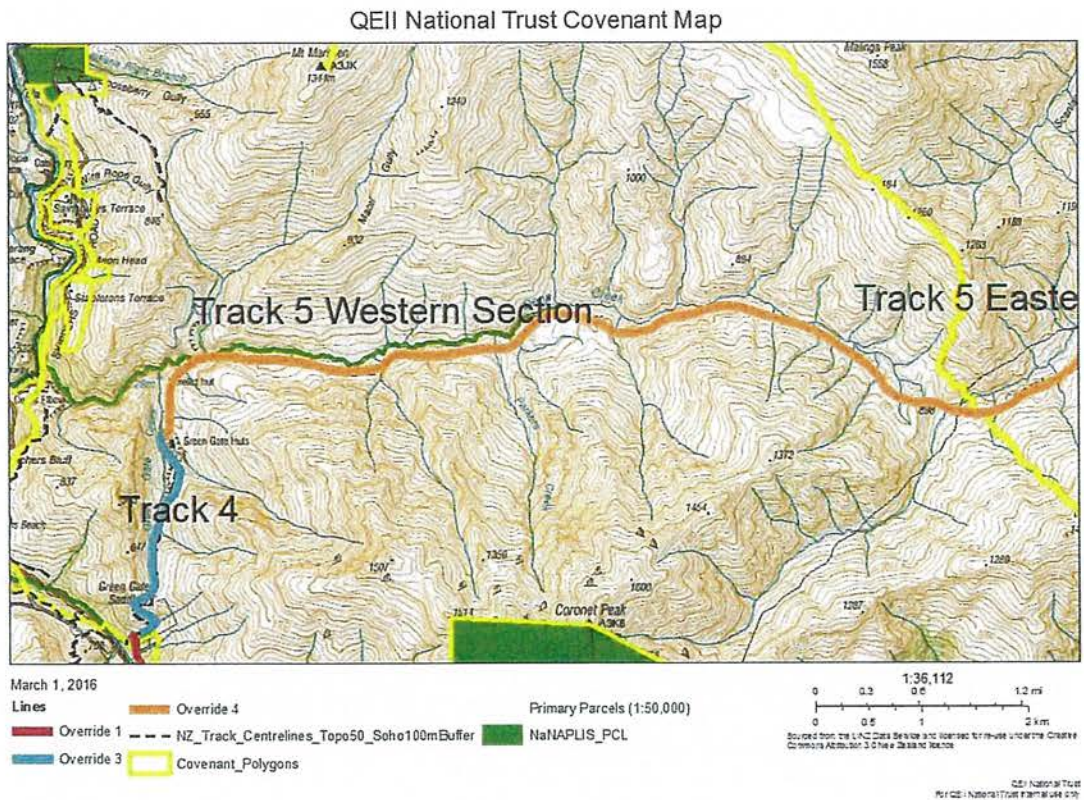
Map 1: Long Gully and Greengate



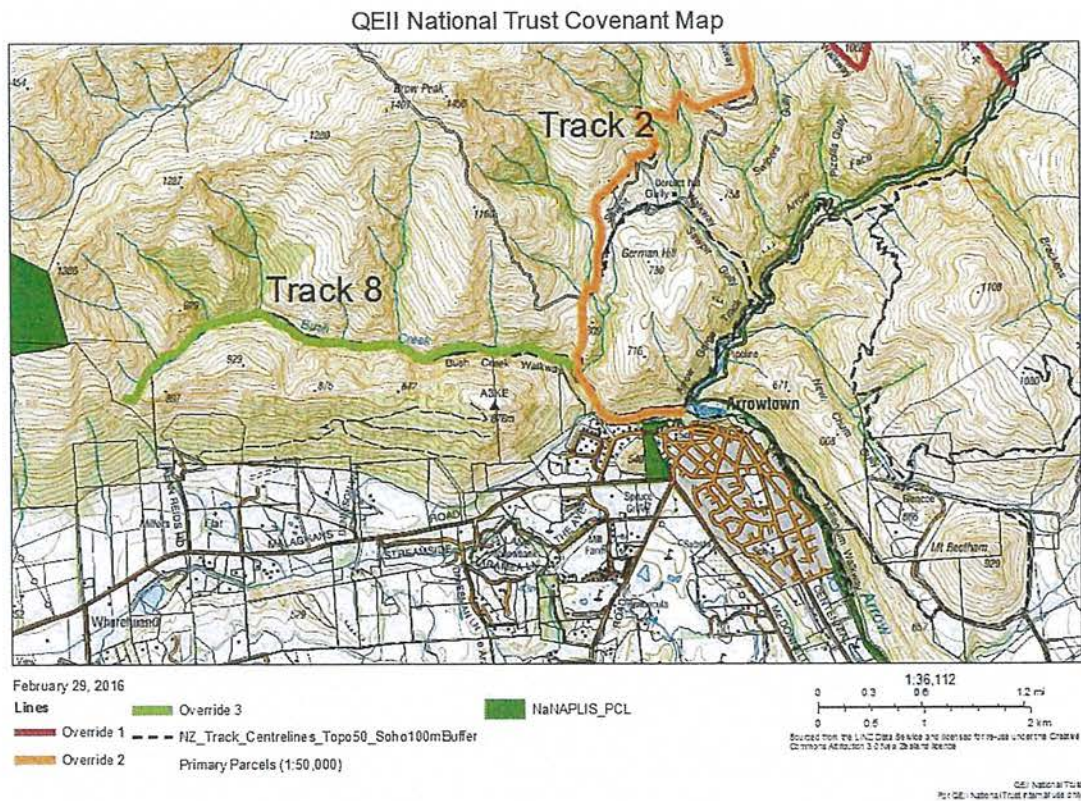
Map 2: Deep Creek – Coronet Creek Eastern Section



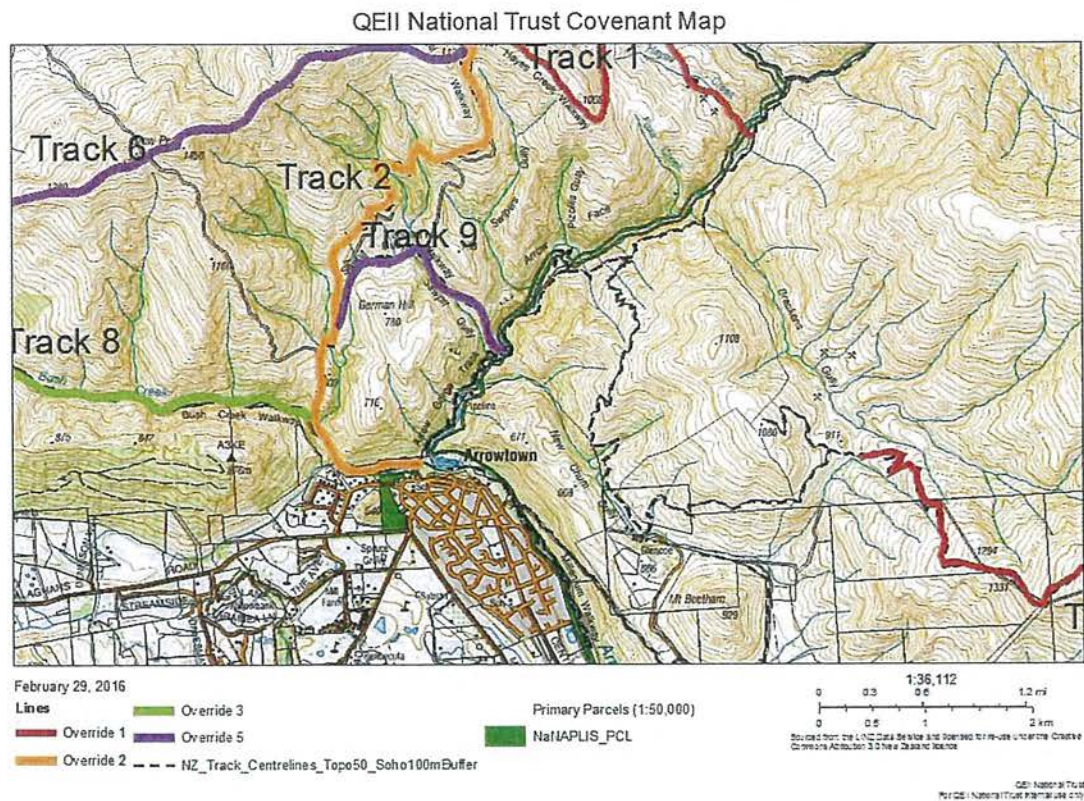
Map 3: Deep Creek – Coronet Creek Western Section



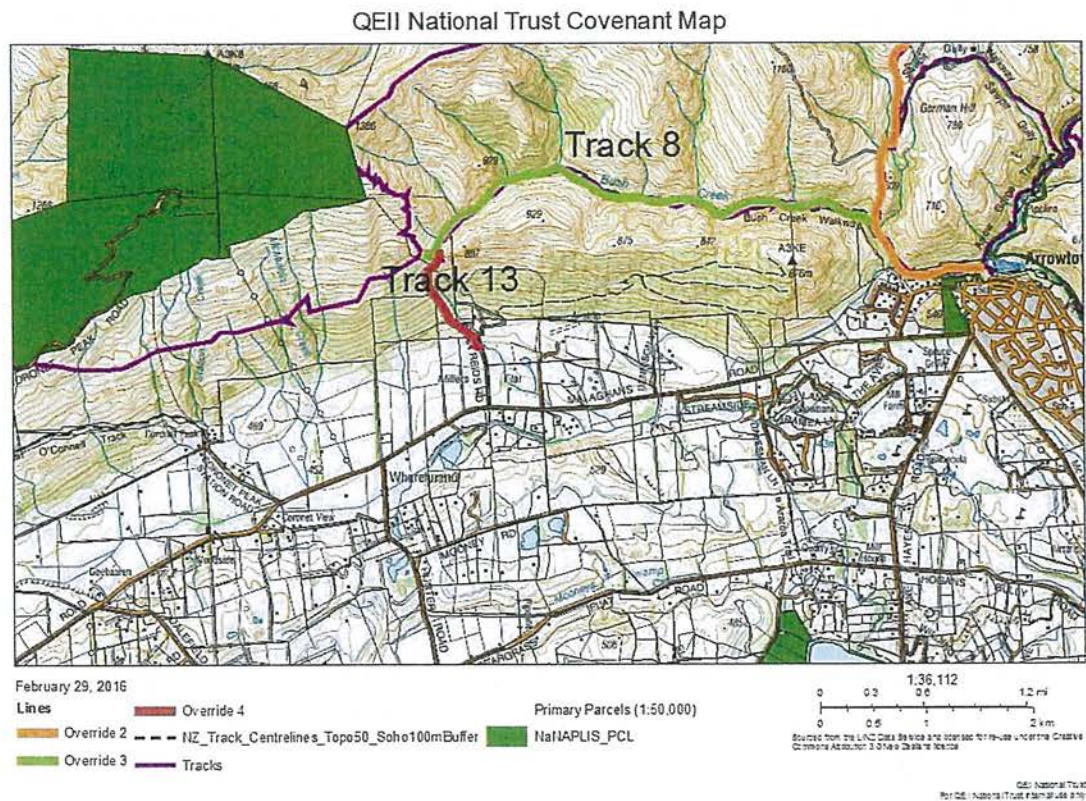
Map 4: Bush Creek



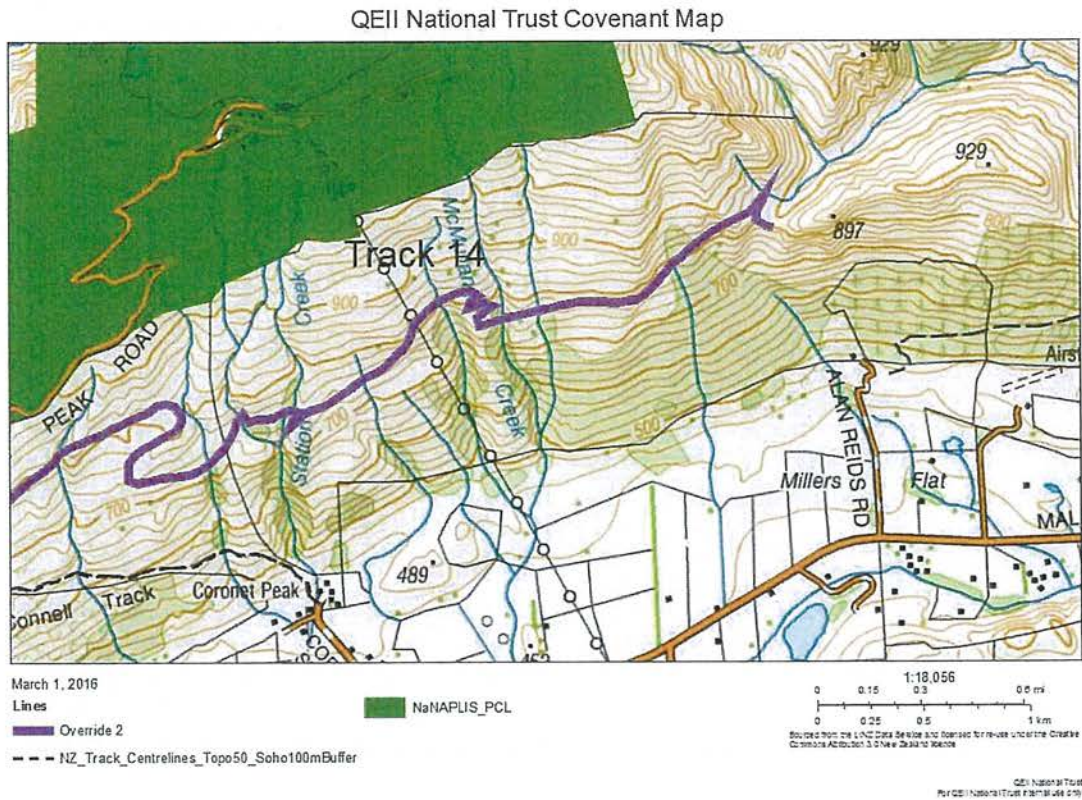
Map 5: Sawpit Gully



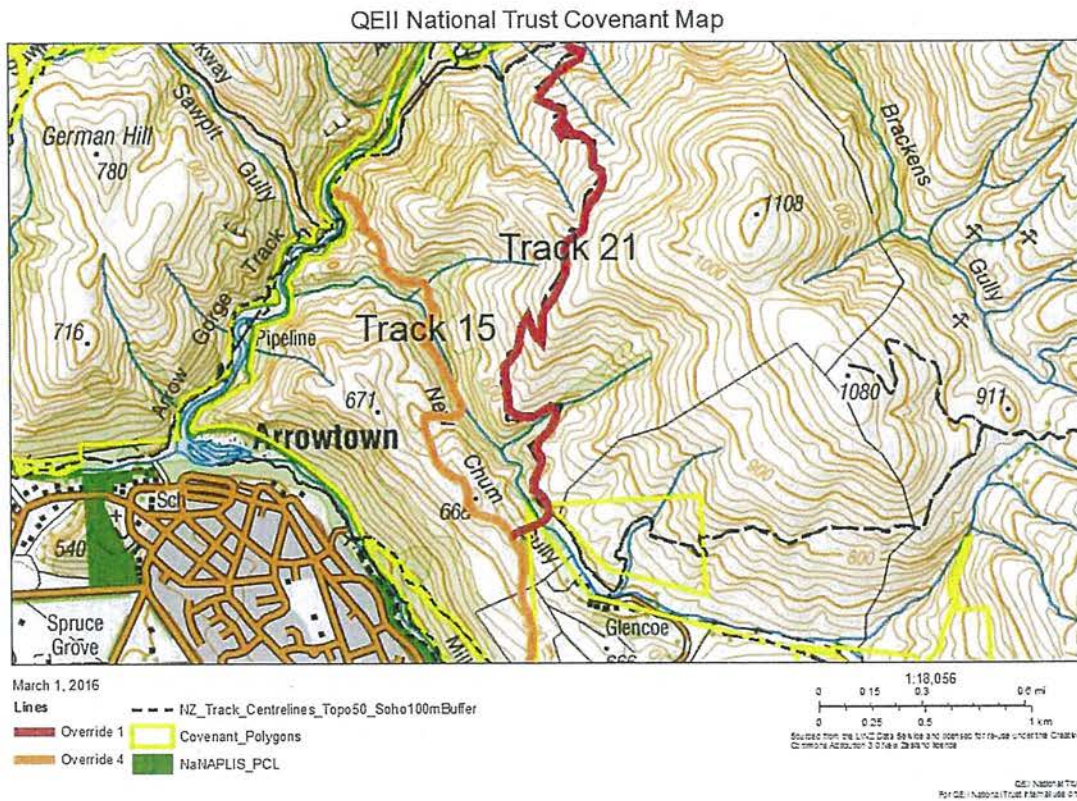
Map 6: Reids Road



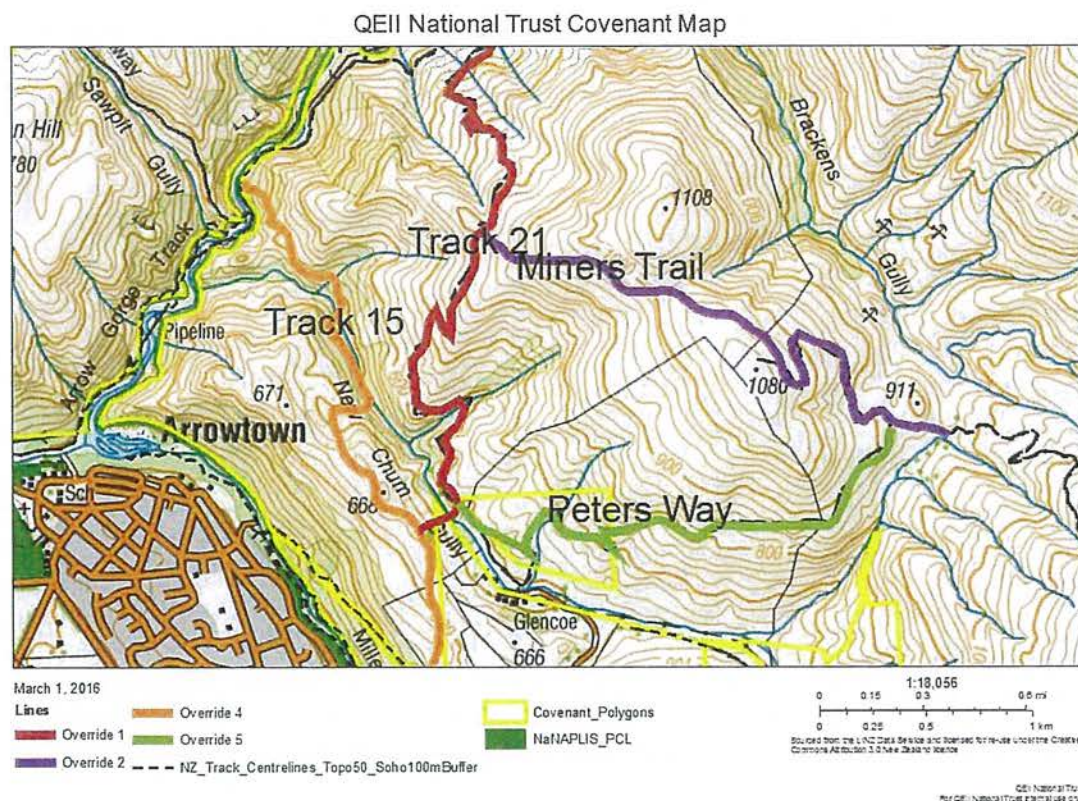
Map 7: Coronet Water Race



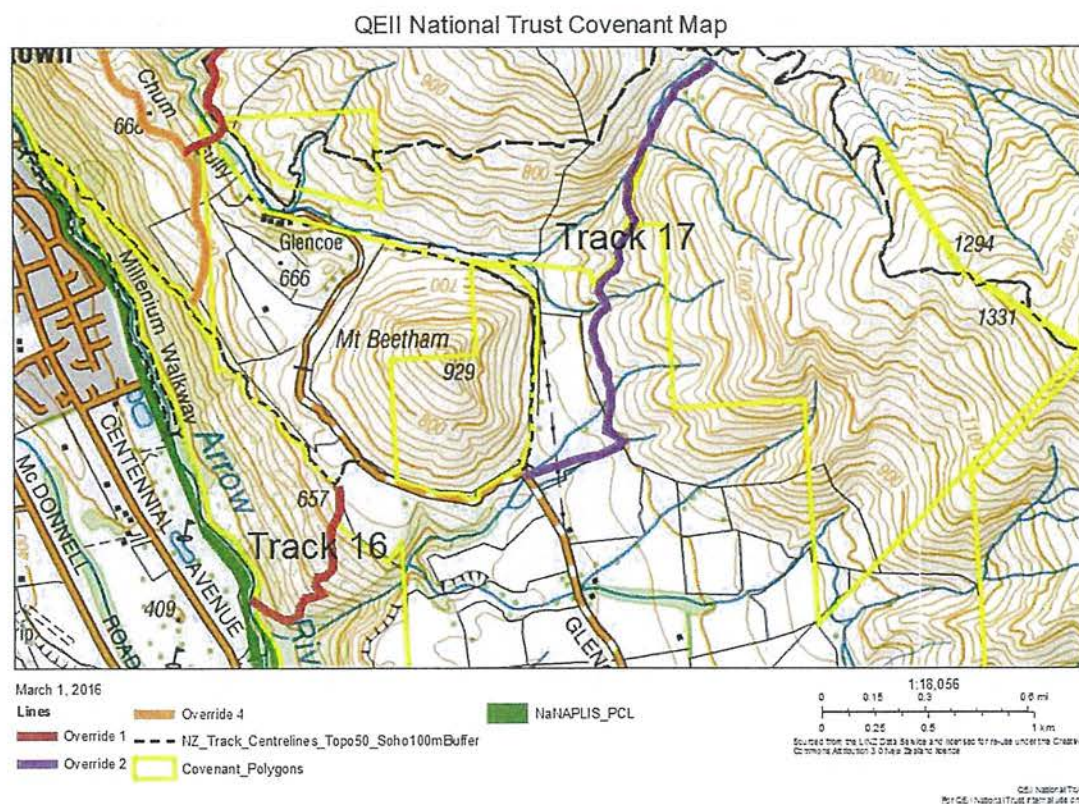
Map 8: New Chum Gully & New Chum Ridge



Map 9: New Chum Gully, New Chum Ridge, Miners Trail and Peters Way



Map 10: Brackens Gully



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09 MAR 2016

RECEIVED