



Recreation Trails Development Plan 2017



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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Policy Framework	4
Introduction	5
Recreation Trail Development Plan.....	7
Project Proposals.....	8
1. Glass House Mountains Trail Network (Map 1).....	8
2. Nambour to Coolumb Recreation Trail (Map 2).....	11
3. Sugar Bag Road Mountain Bike Park (Map 3)	13
4. Parklands Regional Park (Map 7):	15
5. Northern Region Recreation Trails (Map 5 & 6)	17
6. Buderim Walking Community Plan (Map 7)	19
7. Kawana Forest Recreation Trail Network (Map 8)	20
8. Sunshine Coast Great Ride (Map 9).....	21
9. Sunshine Coast Canoe Trail Development	23
10. Sunshine Coast Horse Trail Development	24
11. Other Programs	25
Community Activation and Promotion Proposals.....	26
Recreation Trails Communication and Promotion Plan	26
Web/Mobile based: Get Active Site.....	28
Google Trekker Event.....	29
Review.....	29

Executive Summary

The Sunshine Coast Recreation Trail Plan was developed and endorsed by Council in 2012. The plan established a network blue print and identified a wide range of opportunities to assist the coast in being a Smart, Healthy and Creative community. It is recognized that while some progress has been made in advancing recreation trail outcomes there is a need to have a cohesive and focused approach to achieve some of the larger outcomes identified by the plan. Thus the recreation trails activation project was initiated in late 2015 to provide a foundation for a dedicated program that focused resources and fostered and maintained strong partnerships to deliver a well-planned, multi tenure recreation trail outcomes that realise a range of economic, social, health and environmental benefits for the Sunshine Coast community.

This Recreation Trails Development Plan has been developed to establish a working program of investment to deliver a range of projects identified from the 2012 plan. These projects, when complete, will enhance outcomes from both a local and tourism perspective by providing iconic experiences that will encourage people to enjoy the coast on foot, by bike, canoe or on horseback.

The following list is a brief summary of the identified projects that could be developed over the coming years with a focused effort:

- Glasshouse Mountains 7 Peaks Walk and Regional Trail network
- Nambour to Coolum Recreation Trail
- Parklands Conservation Park Recreation Trails
- Sugar Bag Road MTB Park
- Northern Region Recreational Trail networks(Eumundi Conservation Park, Doonan, Lake Weyba)
- Buderim Recreation Trail/Pathways
- Sunshine Coast Great Ride, a bike tour route
- Mooloolah River Recreation Trail
- Improvement and development of a number of canoe trails(Maroochy River, Currimundi Lake, Mooloolah River, & Bells Creek)
- Horse riding access improvements at a number of known horse riding sites(Parklands, Beerwah, Ewen Maddock, Mapleton)

While recreation trail linkage opportunities will be explored to and from the Coastal Pathway it must be noted that this the Coastal Pathway is developed in accordance with the Council endorsed Coastal Pathway Master Plan and capital program.

Finally, the Recreation Trails Development Plan must be considered a dynamic document to ensure that Council's investment in trail development remains current. As such the document will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the delivery of the program remains targeted to demand, reflective of emerging opportunities, leverages off external funding and partnership investment and is cost effective in implementation.

Policy Framework

The strategic policy framework supporting the following Development Plan are as follows:

- Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2014-2019
- Sunshine Coast Open Space Strategy 2011 (2014ed)
- Sunshine Coast Recreation Trail Plan 2012

Introduction

Recreation trails and paths are generally provided for walking, horse riding, canoeing, cycling and mountain biking. They may be multi-use or specialized user groups and traverse through a range of land tenures.

The broad appeal nature based recreation and the growing demand of trails in both the domestic and international visitor markets supports a strong case for investment in better recreation trail networks on the Sunshine Coast. Recent examples of mountain bike and rail trail developments in New Zealand, Victoria and Tasmania clearly show that there are significant economic returns and benefits to local communities associated with investment in recreation trail development. For example the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail in Victoria cost approximately \$15 million to construct but returns annually \$21 million to the local economy.

As noted below other studies undertaken in Lincoln, Nebraska demonstrated a clear correlation to the health benefits and associated savings in medical costs:

“Per capita annual cost of using the trails was \$209 (\$59 construction and maintenance, \$150 equipment and travel). Per capita annual direct medical benefit of using the trails was \$564. The cost-benefit ratio was 2.94, which means that every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in direct medical benefit.”

— A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Physical Activity Using Bike/Pedestrian Trails, Wang, G., et al., (2004)

Generally, equipment and travel costs are borne by the user which seemingly indicates a cost benefit ratio of c. 10 to 1 for trail construction in health benefits alone. Whilst this number may be different in an Australian context, it shows a strong link between recreation trail networks and achieving healthy communities.

As such in 2012 Council endorsed the Recreation Trails Plan (the Plan) that clearly articulated and identified a range of investment opportunities for the development of a range of recreation trail experiences that would promote both tourism and local lifestyle outcomes across the coast. Its findings were based on assessing the quality and distribution of the existing 569 km of signed trails that exist in the Sunshine Coast region, 146 km of which are council managed. It highlighted that we have significant lengths of recreation trails that are at different levels of development and that coordination was needed to manage the multi-tenure nature of some of these trail experiences.

The Plan generated a list of 117 recommended actions to increase the quality and functionality of the region's recreation trails. These actions can roughly be summarised as:

- better promotion and branding to encourage use
- improving access to the networks via better signage and trail head facilities
- completing missing links
- developing new opportunities to cater for existing shortfalls and future growth, and
- coordinating the approach taken by the various land managers and community in the region.

The challenges associated with a lack of marketing and trail upgrade standards and coordinated design and delivery were compounded in 2014 when the State Government of the time initiated changes to the infrastructure planning and charging framework, and removed recreation trails as trunk infrastructure and as such was no longer subject to infrastructure charges. As a consequence, and with no dedicated council recreation trail development capital program, many of the identified opportunities have not had any direct development over the last few years due to lack of resources to fund the planning and implementation process.

In response to this, the recreation trails activation program was implemented in late 2015 to both reassess and begin the delivery of quality recreation trail outcomes across the coast by taking a more coordinated council approach to recreation trail planning and development. The first year of the program has primarily been focused on exploring current and emerging recreation trail development opportunities and establishing the relationships required to work across the multiple tenures that

these trails mainly traverse; and establishing foundational relationships with community organisations, peak industry bodies and government agencies. The second year of the program now aims to initiate targeted planning that will see these trail opportunities develop in the coming years.

Thus the following Development Plan serves to highlight a number of recreation trail opportunities showing the potential outcomes to be achieved, current challenges, potential partners, and a proposed staged development timeline for each of the listed projects. Underpinning the listed projects, the following principles will guide the planning, scoping, and delivery of future recreation trails:

Value of Experience: All projects will take into account the user perspective to achieve the best possible experience. This will be done by consulting heavily with the preferred user groups of a given trail experience during the planning and development of a trail corridor.

Partnership & Leveraging Investment: The program will develop strong partnerships in the delivery of recreation trails across the coast. These partnership will involve other land managers/owners, recreation groups, local businesses, cultural groups and other key stake holders with the aim to find ways to leverage opportunities and costs between the partners to achieve high value outcomes.

Connectivity: Trails are about connectivity between the landscape and the people who live and visit it, as such the trails projects will endeavour to connect communities to each other and the natural environment where ever possible.

Empowering the economy: Projects will be developed in consideration of opportunities to empower local business where ever possible. This will be done by creating linked experiences that flow into and out of our local communities and providing space for related value adding businesses to interact with the trail system where appropriate.

Recreation Trail Development Plan

Council is uniquely positioned to explore and investigate issues of land tenure, and develop networks and partnerships that are required to cross between multiple land managers with a focus on outcomes for our region. As an example, while Queensland Parks and Wildlife is arguably the holder of the bulk of the coast's current nature-based recreation trails, they are constrained by their borders and their wide area of coverage. This leads to an outcome where two networks can literally be 500 metres apart but not well connected due to it sitting outside of their estate. In the first twelve months of the recreation trails activation program a positive dialog has begun around facilitating these opportunities to create the linkages that can enhance some of the trails on state lands along with actions that can be taken to enhance council networks.

Adding to the complexity is the fact that the spaces between continuous managed parcels of land can be a mix tenure of council controlled land (Road Reserves, Parks, riparian buffers etc.) and free hold land. While this can be a challenging landscape to work in the example of the Noosa trail network underpins the fact that agreements can be reached to establish effective cross landscape trail networks. With council facilitating these arrangements trail networks can be established that are effective and create the experiences the community are seeking.

One of the other key factors of this program is to coordinate and leverage off partnerships with key user groups, other land managers, and donations either in time and/or money from the community and organisations that promote nature based recreation. The mountain bike trail development at Sugar Bag Road Reserve in Caloundra is a good example of the effectiveness of coordinated response from council to partner and work with the community organisation - Caloundra Off Road Cycling Association (CORCA) to leverage investment and reduce maintenance costs for trail development.

This has led to an increased popularity of the location with one of the core trails increasing from 12,000 rides per year up to a forecast of 35-40,000 rides per year over the last 12 months. To respond to this increased demand and to leverage off Council's funding, CORCA, given this funding and the formalised relationship with Council are uniquely positioned to seek external funding. Under current State Government funding arrangements CORCA would be eligible to apply for grant significant funding for the continued development of the Mountain Bike Trail system. Similarly, it is envisioned that the projects listed in this development plan will leverage community and business involvement to achieve more holistic, cost effective outcomes.

In addition to these community driven contributions the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing have recently produced data showing that the Queensland populace takes their exercise through non-organised sports. With this growing understanding of recreation use patterns the State Government is now seeking opportunities to find ways to fund the development of nature-based recreation outcomes. The primary challenge for many of these proposals is navigating the complex land tenure landscape and having confidence that funding is invested into successful programs. It is proposed that with a scoped, semi-funded and ready to deploy recreation trail development program council would be in a strong position to attract State and Federal Government funding. This could be realised in the form of either the traditional grants programs or potentially, for the more iconic programs, a direct funding and delivery partnership or facilitated outcomes via land tenure arrangements.

In summary it is clearly recognised that the full cost of delivery of the following proposals is beyond the resources of council to deliver. However, it must be noted that the intent is for council to act as the coordinating or facilitating agency and provide the seed funding to generate the energy and support required to bring these projects to fruition. The following proposals have varying levels of land tenure, and funding challenges. However these issues can be resolved by identifying the opportunities of building partnerships with the community, business and other agencies and when combined with an increased focus on promoting and marketing these opportunities the Sunshine Coast stands to have a high quality recreation trail network that will promote our region as the smart, creative, and healthy community it is.

Project Proposals

The following proposals represent the primary opportunities that have been identified in the 2012 recreation trails plan along with discussions with a range of community groups, recreation user groups, and other land managers. As such they have been selected due to (a) demonstrated community demand, (b) notional feasibility based on land manager desire and/or (c) assessment of the achievable potential outcomes and partnerships.

While the nominated trail development opportunities have been identified by both notional demand and feasibility to deliver a high quality experience that will draw users to the trail, it must be noted that full scoping, planning and community consultation processes are required to identify potential partnerships and progress the options discussed in a staged and cost effective manner

1. Glass House Mountains Trail Network (Map 1)

Background

The Glass House Mountains are one of the Sunshine Coast's most iconic features. With strong traditional value to the original peoples and sacred sites, the term 'Glass House' was given to the mountains by Captain James Cook in 1770. The range officially consists of eleven peaks, which are volcanic plugs formed about 27 million years ago. They are all currently protected as part of a National Park.



Aspirational Vision

Creating an interconnected nature-based recreation trail network that allows visitors to choose from a range of opportunities to engage in the natural and scenic spaces of the Glass House Mountains could easily become a signature destination on the Sunshine Coast. It would promote the local communities by connecting them to the surrounding National Parks and state forests along with each other, providing both economic and health outcomes in the local and Sunshine Coast region.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

Currently there are a range of walking and bike routes that exist largely within the National Parks, with limited connecting sections of pathways outside their estate. The core of these experiences consists of the three walks up Mt Ngungun, Mt Tibrogargan and Mt Beerwah, with a couple of secondary circuits around Tibrogargan (**Map 2**). Many of these offer a very high quality experience with outstanding natural and scenic amenities that encompass one of the iconic natural assets in the Sunshine Coast region.

Current Limitations

- **Capacity** – There are strong indicators that demand is increasing on the existing network. A recent upgrade by QPWS to the Ngungun summit trail has seen usage rates go up by over 200%. Furthermore, the existing trailhead infrastructure overflows on the weekends and during peak holiday seasons, as such much of the existing infrastructure regularly reaches and exceeds peak capacity.
- **Fragmentation** – As can be seen in Attachment 1 (solid green lines), the various recreation opportunities are fragmented across a number of the National Park units. The local residential and business communities have limited access to the National Park network outside of the road network. There are also indicators that this is leading to relatively shallow engagement by visitors, where they will drive to locations and spend relatively little time in the locality before moving on to the north or the south.

- **Safety** – One of the primary issues facing the management of the recreational use in this region is the current ability of visitors to quickly engage with fairly extreme hiking experiences. Both of the major climbs (Beerwah and Tibrogargan) are steep and unsuitable for the average visitor, who would be unprepared for such an ascent. There are regular closures and emergency responses on both mountains to deal with these issues.

Desired Outcomes

- Connect all major National Park units to Beerwah, Glass House, Beerburrum and Peachester via a pathway / trail network;
- Create multi-user options that allow for tour mountain bike riding and bushwalking;
- Align scenic trails that take in the natural and agricultural highlights of the region;
- Engage the network with the three local train stations in such a way as to form an integral part of the system, thus promoting non-car-based visitation;
- Encourage longer engagement times by visitors to the region;
- Develop sustainable trails that mitigate cultural and environmental impacts of increased use predicted in the region;
- Plan for safe routing for all visitors across the landscape; and
- Support tourism and active healthy lifestyles via effective trail network provisions.

Potential Partners

- DNPSR: Queensland Parks and Wildlife: Supportive of the proposal and keen to partner in managing the use patterns in the region (see Attachment 1)
- HQ Plantations: Key partner for a number of links, as they are the current leaseholder for a number of parcels of state land that would provide for some of the trail alignments
- Celebrate Beerwah and Glass House Chamber of Commerce: Marketing and promotion with local businesses
- Glass House Mountains Advancement Network (GMAN): Community grants
- Glass House Mountains Bushwalking Club: Community grants

Proposed Development

Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe

- Glass House to Ngungun – Extend existing urban pathways and build new trail to connect Glass House train station to Mt Ngungun trailhead. Provide way-finding and informational signage along the route.
- Beerburrum to Solider Settler track – Install way-finding and informational signage between train station and trailhead.
- Begin negotiations and planning for links between Glass House and Beerwah townships, Mt Ngungun and Mt Beerwah, Trachyte Circuit and Glass House Lookout.
- Develop promotional materials around visiting the region by train.

Stage 2 – 5-9 year timeframe

- Develop links between Glasshouse and Beerwah townships, Mt Ngungun and Mt Beerwah, Trachyte Circuit and GlassHouse Lookout.
- Begin planning for Peachester–Beerwah linkage.

Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe

- Develop Beerwah–Peachester linkage.
- Continue to plan and develop ancillary linkages.

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2. Nambour to Coolum Recreation Trail (Map 2)

Background

The concept of a recreation trail from Nambour to Coolum was first identified when the Moreton Mill in Nambour closed in 2003, making the cane train line corridor redundant. Initially, trail investigations focused on the cane train line corridor, however, the cessation of rail easements over private land in 2003 made securing a continuous trail corridor along this cane train alignment extremely difficult, and as such, the concept has expanded beyond the original rail alignment.



Aspirational Vision

When completed as proposed, the Nambour to Coolum Strategic Trail will provide numerous route options crossing a diversity of landscapes, natural and cultural features across various terrains. The proposed trail will provide a significant outdoor recreation opportunity for local residents and visitors to the region, providing strong appeal to walkers, runners and recreational bike riders, along with some appeal to bike riding commuters.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

There is no similar existing experience along the proposed corridor for this trail. The landscape has a number of local pathways and roads that provide access to some the interesting features in the area but not in the continuous way that this project proposes to establish.

Current Limitations

- **Incomplete alignment:** The primary limiting factor to this proposal is the lack of resolution around the routing of the primary trail corridor for some significant sections. While initial construction of local trail sections commences, the rest of the trail corridor needs to be secured.

Desired Outcomes

- Develop a multi-user trail network that allows for an east-west connection between Nambour and Coolum and the coastal pathway;
- Provide local recreation trail opportunities for the Nambour, Coolum and Bli Bli communities; and
- Support local history by showing some of the old cane train infrastructure and network where possible.

Potential Partners

- Department of Sport and Recreation (DNPSR): Funding source for trail development.
- Department of Education and Training (DET): Partner for key section of trail alignment out of Nambour.

Proposed Development

Multi-year development based on recommendations from Nambour to Coolum rail trail feasibility study.

- **Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe:** Development of first local links along secured alignments near Nambour, Bli Bli, and Coolum.

- **Stage 2 – 5-9 year timeframe:** Extend system to connect Coolum to Bli Bli.
- **Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe:** Explore, define and establish remaining strategic link between Nambour and Bli Bli.

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3. Sugar Bag Road Mountain Bike Park (Map 3)

Background

The management of Sugar Bag Road Town Reserve changed hands from state to Council in late 2015. It came across with an extensive (~11km) trail network built for mountain bike use. These trails contain a number of challenging timber features built by local riders over the last three or more years. The site has previously been identified for a Sunshine Coast wide recreation park.



Aspirational Vision

To develop a bike-themed recreation reserve that is a leading example of urban mountain bike park design in a natural setting; one that is beginner friendly yet allows for mountain bike riders of all skill levels to find challenges to suit their riding style; one that will encourage visitation from riders across the state as they seek unique riding opportunities.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

The current trail network is comprised of 11 named trails ranging in length from 4km to under 500m. These trails are generally of an intermediate skill level with challenging side features located throughout the reserve. This leads to a good ride experience for those who are familiar with the trail network.

Current Limitations

- **Lack of signage / promotion:** While the local club has installed temporary trail maps and trail signs, riders generally need to know the system well to get the most out of the riding on offer. It is gaining popularity with the riding community, but at this stage has no official recognition or reserve signage inviting people to engage with the space.
- **Restricted parking:** The closest official parking for the location is at Ben Bennett Park, which is about one kilometer from the trailhead. This is leading to road verge parking all along Sugar Bag Road in unofficial locations.
- **Needs rationalised trail system:** While the network has opportunities for a range of riding skills, they are intermixed within the trail offering, with no clearly defined green trail systems. It would also benefit from a series of skills progression areas that will allow riders to work on a specific riding skill in a more open environment before trying them on the network itself.
- **Safety:** The existing built MTB trail features are of largely a sub-standard construction and must be replaced and upgraded. The system also needs clear signage to allow riders to be clearly informed of the level of risk they are undertaking when riding various trails and features.

Desired Outcomes

- Create a world class mountain bike park that works with the unique natural values the site has to offer;
- Offer a wider range of beginner friendly offerings that allow for the entire family to engage with the sport of mountain bike riding;
- Establish a signature bike-themed recreation space for the Sunshine Coast that draws people from across the region and state;
- Provide a ride experience that can engage a visitor for 2+ hours per visit;
- Develop and maintain strong support from the community via sponsorship from local businesses.

Potential Partners

- Caloundra Off-Road Cycling Association: A key partner for the development and management of the reserve, CORCA is integral to maintaining and inspecting the trail system and assisting in the overall development of the reserve. CORCA is also eligible to apply for a number of grants that can be utilised for future development of riding features. At current volunteer rates and with potential grants, the club will likely contribute an average of \$100-\$200k per year in labour and cash contributions.
- Sunshine Coast Trail Alliance: This regional trail care community can provide expertise and further volunteer hours for future trail works.
- Local business: Via sponsorship and other mechanisms of engagement, the goal would be to attract \$250-\$500k in materials and cash contributions from community donations for riding development.

Proposed Development

- **Stage 1 – 1-2 year timeframe:** Rationalisation of existing trail network, install way-finding signage, rebuild existing timber features to meet new standard (all currently underway).
- **Stage 2 – 2-5 year timeframe:** Develop skills progression areas as guided by the reserve master plan, along with any other riding features for which the reserve master plan allows. Examples include extended green trail loop, dual slalom downhill course, downhill jump track, pump track and mountain bike trials course.
- **Stage 3 – 5+ year timeframe:** Establish community park infrastructure under LGIP funding.

4. Parklands Regional Park (Map 7):

Background

Parklands Regional Park is a 655ha block of former state forest that was gazetted under the Nature Conservation Act in 2001, which subsequently became a conservation park in 2006. It has an extensive network of fire and single track trails, with over 60 km of overall distance throughout the park. It is currently being used by a wide range of groups, from horse riding to mountain biking. Its central location on the coast, land size, existing trails and topography make it potentially one of the key nature-based recreation nodes on the Sunshine Coast.



Aspirational Vision

To enhance the recreation opportunities in such a way as to promote ongoing engagement by a wide range of recreational users while preserving the high value natural setting that makes it a great nature-based recreation location.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

The park is currently used by horse riding, trail running and mountain biking enthusiasts quite extensively. The trail system is roughly split 50/50 between fire roads and single track, allowing for each group to coexist with their own trails and routes. It is regularly used by Parkrun as one of their more difficult runs on the coast, and is used for regular club rides and events by the local mountain bike clubs, most importantly the Bushrangers. The Bushrangers have an ongoing partnership with Queensland Parks and Wildlife to help manage the mountain bike trails on site.

Current Limitations

- **Limited access and facilities:** The current trailhead facility can only hold about six cars, with no real staging area or facilities. As such for most organised events, the parking extends along the road verge. It also has limited sightlines, making it an insecure parking location at night or during the quieter periods of the day.
- **Limited promotion:** While there is a growing use pattern, the park is not overly promoted to the community as a recreation venue given its central proximity to most of the population centers along the Sunshine Coast.
- **Sustainable trail development required:** While much of the system is quite well established and the new trail work is of high quality, there are a number of old fire trails and single track sections that would need to be reworked to contour with the landscape, reducing their impacts on the park and providing a more enjoyable user experience.

Desired Outcomes

- Develop an access point with trailhead facilities that will promote the use of the park by the local and tourist community;
- Look for opportunities to continue to promote and develop the location as a nature-based recreation park centrally located on the Sunshine Coast; and
- Facilitate multi-modal nature-based recreation events by connecting the internal trail system to the wider landscape.

Potential Partners

- DNPSR – Queensland Parks and Wildlife: Land manager for Parklands, currently actively managing the recreation groups with a focus on partnering the MTB community to manage their trail network. Initial conversations have shown a reluctance to explore options around this location.
- Bushrangers Mountain Bike Club: Currently active in partnering with QPWS to enhance and maintain the existing MTB trail network, they have already won and delivered a number of significant grants to improve the trail network.
- Parkrun: Active regular users of the park, potential additional funding source for trail development to suit their needs.
- Australian Trail Horse Riders Association: Active users of the park and have expressed interest in better access to the trail system.

Proposed Development

No proposed development at this stage, but will continue to explore options to partner state land managers to scope potential opportunities to develop the park further. Initial attempts to commence this process have been declined at this time.

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5. Northern Region Recreation Trails (Map 5 & 6)

Background

The Eumundi / Doonan region is a semi-rural area with ongoing expansion of urban development in a few key locations. There is a vibrant walking, MTB and horse riding community in the area, utilising a range of roads and tracks. The region has two secured bushland areas – Eumundi Conservation Park and Doonan Environmental Reserve. These will form the core areas for future nature based recreation.



Aspirational Vision

A recreation trail network that connects the landscape between the two nature reserves in the area and the coast line that will promote the local communities by connecting them to the surrounding National Parks and conservation reserves along with each other. This will provide both economic and health outcomes in the local and Sunshine Coast regions, particularly promoting the existing horse riding opportunities in the Eumundi Conservation Park (ECP), along with future explorations of the wetlands around Doonan and its birdlife.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

Currently ECP provides the key experience in the area, with an extensive trail network open to walkers, horse riders and mountain bikes. There also a number of horse riding locals using the unsealed road network to connect a number of properties and reserves in the region.

Current Limitations

- **Complex land tenure:** The nature of the landscape is complex with a mosaic of private lands, state lands, and Council-controlled reserves. This makes it difficult in places to find workable alignments away from existing roads.
- **High conservation value areas:** The protected areas have a high value for conservation purposes. In particular, the wetlands in Doonan have been identified as one of three key significant areas by QPWS. As such, any trail development must be of the highest standard and planned to avoid any further impacts in the natural areas of the region.

Desired Outcomes

- Develop a multi-user trail network that connects Emmundi and Perigian Springs to the surrounding natural areas and potentially to each other.
- Create a range of trail offerings for a number of user groups that allows them to engage in at least an hour-long experience.

Potential Partners

- DNPSR – Queensland Parks and Wildlife: Land manager for ECP and other surrounding state conservation areas.
- Yandina Creek Progress Association: Active trails working group, potential funding partner.
- Eumundi Historical Association: Community group interested in trail development in their region, previously partnered with QPWS to improve signage inside ECP.

Proposed Development

- **Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe:** Improve linkage between north and south sections of ECP along existing unmade road reserve. Also improve northern access point of ECP to better accommodate horse floats and user access to the trail network. Begin planning for Lake Weyba foreshore trail.
- **Stage 2 – 5-9 year timeframe:** Develop Lake Weyba Trail. Plan and Develop Linkages around Doonan and ECP with view to grow east west Recreation Trail
- **Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe:** Explore, define, and establish remaining future linkages as opportunity provides to establish and East-West Recreation Trail.

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6. Buderim Walking Community Plan (Map 7)

Background

The Buderim Township has a number of interesting natural spaces and historical sites that make it an ideal community to encourage people to walk thru via the existing pathways. With connections to Buderim Forest and the Tramway Trail the community can provide a mixed urban/natural walking experience.



Aspirational Vision

To promote Buderim as a walking community by providing wayfinding that encourages people to walk thru their communities to explore the natural, historical, and communal environment of the township.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

There is currently an extensive network of on road pathways mixed with a number of natural reserves and trails scattered around the Buderim Area. Key trails are the Buderim Forest Park and the Tramway Trail along with a number of local and district parks with internal trails and pathways.

Current Limitations

- **Lack of wayfinding:** There is little to no wayfinding between parks and reserves to encourage use of the on road network as part of the experience.
- **Parking at trailheads:** Current parking is currently overflowing on many weekends at key locations.
- **Complicated road network:** The road network between the trailheads and Buderim Central is complicated, with a number of intersections and high traffic roads.

Desired Outcomes

- Develop a connected network of paths to the trails that allows people to walk into and out of Buderim Central; and
- Encourage continued support of the heritage group to continue to develop historical information along walking routes.

Potential Partners

- Buderim-Palmwoods Heritage Tramway Inc: Currently the active community group interested in the community and historical value of the old rail alignment.

Proposed Development

- **Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe:** Improve way finding to trail head from town with themed signage.
- **Stage 2 – 5-9 year timeframe:** Connect current trailhead with pathway into Lions Park using current road reserves by improving local pathway network.
- **Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe:** Pending future alignment development.

7. Kawana Forest Recreation Trail Network (Map 8)

Background

The Kawana Forest, Lower Mooloolah natural areas are a largely underutilised natural spaces on the coast. With the development of Palmview, there will be increasing pressure on the reserves and national parks along the river, driving the need to formalise the network into a rational and consistent whole.



Aspirational Vision

To establish a network of different types of recreational trails across the region that meet the recreational needs of the local community while preserving the high ecological value of the natural areas in the region. Further to this aim, provide east-west connectivity between Sippy Downs / Palmview and the coast communities.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

Currently there are number trail offerings in the area, formal and otherwise: A network of trails inside Mooloolah River National Park, the Kawana Forest track and some informal use of Laxton Road Reserve.

Current Limitations

- **Incomplete alignment:** The primary trail corridor between the communities has yet to be defined.
- **Difficult landscapes:** The low lying nature of this area makes for challenging sustainable trail building as it frequently floods.

Desired Outcomes

- Establish an east-west linkage that facilitates local users from Sippy Downs and Palmview, engage with the coastal pathway via the Currimundi Lake trail network and the new hospital precinct;
- Utilise existing and proposed current infrastructure development opportunities as trail corridors to limit further damage and clearing of the remaining natural areas; and
- Establish some nature-based walks that enhance the National Park trails by allowing for low key exploration of the natural values along the river.

Potential Partners

- DNPSR – Queensland Parks and Wildlife: Land manager for the Lower Mooloolah National Park.
- Unity Water: Establishing and widening existing pipe infrastructure easements, main trails best located within these easements to limit further damage.

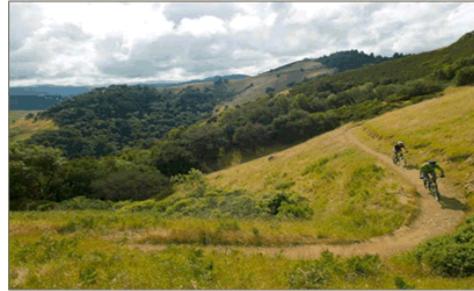
Proposed Development

- **Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe:** Refurbish existing north-south gravel trail alignment post sewage infrastructure construction. Complete bridge linkage on south side of trail system.
- **Stage 2 – 5-9 year timeframe:** Establish east-west gravel trail linkage between Palmview and Kawana Forest Trail. Build bridge connection across the Lower Mooloolah river.
- **Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe:** Harden trail to facilitate better all-weather usage as active transport corridor.

8. Sunshine Coast Great Ride (Map 9)

Background

The Great Ride Concept was first proposed as an attempt to find a bike touring route that could take riders through the Sunshine Coast hinterland from Beerburrum in the south to Eumundi in the North. It had some initial uptake by the state early on to conjoin with the Great Walk, but at some stage that route became walkers only.



Aspirational Vision

To create a network of tracks, country roads and pathways that can be ridden in a 4-5 day journey as a moderately hard cycle tour that connects to the rural townships on the western edge of the Sunshine Coast Council region, creating an experience that showcases the beauty of Sunshine Coast's rural environment.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

There is no currently published route for the Great Ride. There are fragments of connected tracks that are currently being ridden by the community between the towns in the area, but at the moment these are only locally known.

Current Limitations

- **Complex land tenure:** The nature of the landscape is complex, with a mosaic of private lands, state lands and Council-controlled reserves. This makes it difficult in places to find workable alignments away from existing roads.
- **Dangerous road connections:** Some of the required road sections are very busy country roads with limited shoulders and high vehicle speeds. Pathways or alternative alignments need to be determined in these areas.
- **Difficult landscapes:** There are a number of relatively steep climbs required that would need to be contoured to a more gradual climb.

Desired Outcomes

- Define main routing that is safe and achievable for a fit rider to complete;
- Establish a route and theme that promotes the ride to the wider cycle touring community; and
- Refine the route in the long term, with improvements that open the experience to a wider range of users.

Potential Partners

- Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (DNPSR): Funding source for trail development.
- Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF): Active lobby for recreation infrastructure development.
- Local community development groups in each region: GMAN, YCPA, etc.

Proposed Development

- **Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe:** Establish and promote a route using existing routing with promotional material and on-the-ground way-finding.
- **Stage 2 – 5-10 year timeframe:** Reroute key pinch points and difficult spots with better trail alignment and surfaces to open the route up to a wider range of users group.

- **Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe:** Continue to improve the ride experience until it is passable to a cycle tour rider of a moderate level of fitness.

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9. Sunshine Coast Canoe Trail Development

Background

While the Sunshine Coast has a predominantly beach-focused local and tourism culture, this is supported by a number of high quality river and estuarine systems that allow for a variety of on-water recreation opportunities. This supports and adds value to our aquatic-based lifestyles.

Aspirational Vision

Showcase the Sunshine Coast's high value waterways by promoting non-motorised exploration of our numerous water bodies.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

The Sunshine Coast currently has two formalised canoe trails; the major one being the Maroochy River Canoe Trail, with a total water distance of over 40km. Currimundi Lake Canoe Trail is the second offering, which is a shorter, more localised experience. Informally, many of the contained water bodies and rivers have access points that are being used for non-motorised recreation.



Current Limitations

- **Water access points:** While there are numerous access points across the coast, there are a number of locations and communities that could benefit from formalised access to their local water body.
- **Disability access:** Further work is required to allow disability access to a number of locations.

Desired Outcomes

- Establish two new canoe trails on the coast and promote their use to a range of users;
- Enhance current access points to encourage the use of our waterways in a non-motorised fashion; and
- Promote the high quality aquatic experiences that exist in the Sunshine Coast region.

Potential Partners

- Local Paddling Groups: Sunshine Coast Paddle Sports, Outrigger Caloundra Canoe Club along with a number of other paddling groups on the coast.

Proposed Development

- **Stage 1 – 1-4 year timeframe:** Refine current strategy and placement of water access infrastructure to promote active use. Enhance current canoe trail infrastructure where needed to promote use, along with providing better disability access.
- **Stage 2 – 5-10 year timeframe:** Establish Lower Mooloolah Canoe Trail, negotiate and install non-motorised access points at three key locations to form a 'trail'.
- **Stage 3 – 10+ year timeframe:** Explore and develop Bells Creek Canoe Trail.

10. Sunshine Coast Horse Trail Development

Background

There are a number of actively used horse trails across the coast that are largely on state-controlled lands where Council controls the access roads and points. These access points are normally very informal and can create traffic and other hazards as horse trailers take up a large amount of space.



Aspirational Vision

To have an active and healthy horse riding community on the Sunshine Coast by improving access to and promoting the horse trail networks that currently provide good riding experiences.

Current Recreation Trail Opportunities

There is a wide range of horse riding trails across the Coast. Below is a subset of locations that might benefit from further investment / investigation:

- Parklands Regional Park
- Glass House Mountains Region
- Eumundi Conservation Park
- Ewen Maddock Dam

Current Limitations

- Parking and access points: While there are main approved forestry roads and tracks that are suitable for horse riding, the primary limiting factor is parking and access requirements for vehicles with horse floats.
- Continuous landscape linkages: With the increase in development and more sealed roads, the old routes that many people rode in the areas are becoming fragmented.

Desired Outcomes

- Improve known access points to facilitate enough space for social and group rides to take place; and
- Complete cross-landscape connections between horse riding trails where feasible to do so.

Potential Partners

- DNPSR – Queensland Parks and Wildlife: Land manager for the Lower Mooloolah National Park.
- Australian Trail Horse Riders Association: Local representative body from the horse riding community.
- Yandina Creek Progress Association: Active trails working group, potential funding partner.

Proposed Development

- Improve an access point every two years for the next ten years.
- Identify and improve cross-landscape linkages between horse trails where appropriate to do so.

11. Other Programs

Community Grant Program - Nature Based Recreation Infrastructure

This grant would allow the community to lead and guide nature-based recreation infrastructure projects. Funding would be a maximum of \$20,000 per project per year thus allowing the community to maximise on the state sport and recreation grant process that can see up to another \$100,000 in funding. This would allow council to flexibly meet community demand and maximise on the funding spent by leveraging state and volunteer contributions.

Advocacy for Trail investment and development

The development of recreation trail opportunities are being limited by a number of legal and state policies that both make it harder, from a risk and financial perspective, to deliver the types of experiences that the community are after. Recognizing the value that these experiences can bring to our community it is proposed that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council take a leadership role in advocating for changes that will unlock the spaces our community desire to recreate in.

This can be done by advocating and presenting in regional and state forms via LGA around Queensland's current liability laws. This can also be achieved more directly by engaging at an executive level between the Sunshine Coast Council and relevant State Government Departments to explore potential partnership opportunities and mutually beneficial tenure arrangements that would facilitate regionally beneficial outcomes associated with the development of improved recreation trails and associated facilities on the Sunshine Coast.

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Community Activation and Promotion Proposals

Recreation Trails Communication and Promotion Plan

The aim of this project is to promote Sunshine Coast trails as a way to encourage the community to actively use them. To point out the great routes we have here, that the community should be taking advantage of.

Communication objectives

The objectives of this communication plan are to:

- make the community aware of trails on the Sunshine Coast
- encourage the community to use our trails
- help identify trails in each area and possible routes
- motivate the community to use our trails

Communication approach

Council will employ a number of different tactics to achieve its communication goals. Social media will be employed quite heavily throughout this campaign to reach the community and promote our trails. A mixture of paid and organic posts will help to expand our reach and the use of an incentive prize will encourage the community to use the trails. We may also create a survey to first understand how the community view our trails, and to establish if they know where trails are on the Sunshine Coast.

Media releases will also be written throughout the campaign to further spread our message and promote specific trails.

We may explore the possibility of guided tours, hosted by local social media influencers, through our trails to better educate our community and guide them through unfamiliar trails. Employing an influencer will help expand our reach because we will engage their audience as well as our own. This may provide an opportunity to employ a videographer, or use a GoPro to capture the trail, and create a short promo video for social media and the TVC.

Communication goals

To promote/raise awareness of trails on the Sunshine Coast and encourage the community/visitors to use them more often.

Target Audience & Key messages

General

- Our beautiful Sunshine Coast is not only a great place to live and work but it's a great place to explore and discover.
- Take advantage of our great trails, explore them alone, with friends, or as part of a fitness group

Competition

- Get active and explore all the Sunshine Coast trails have to offer to be rewarded
- Help us promote our beautiful Sunshine Coast trails, be part of the community and go in the draw to win.

Target audience	Demographics	Key Messages
Local residents	Male and female Live in the region	Explore our beautiful Sunshine Coast. Take advantage of these great trails on your doorstep
Fitness clubs/gyms	Male and female Local	Mix up your exercise regime, get outdoors and take advantage of the great trails we have on the Sunshine Coast. We have several trails with a variety of difficulties levels
Influencers	Male and female Within Australia Popular – would provide large reach Interested in sport and exploration Promotes travel and destinations	Come to the Sunshine Coast and explore the great trails we have to offer. Take photos of our breathtaking views and share your experience on social media, encourage your audience to visit.
Qld/other states	The rest of Australia – Australians Male and female International + interstate residents	Come to the Sunshine Coast! We're not just a beach destination, we have lots to offer. Great views, exploration and trails. Get active and explore the Sunshine Coast

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Web/Mobile based: Get Active Site

Given the nature and scope of the Recreation Trails Activation project and its remit to promote the use of existing and new outdoor recreation opportunities it is proposed that council develop or support the development of an information directory taking a user focus approach. It is proposed to develop a site that:

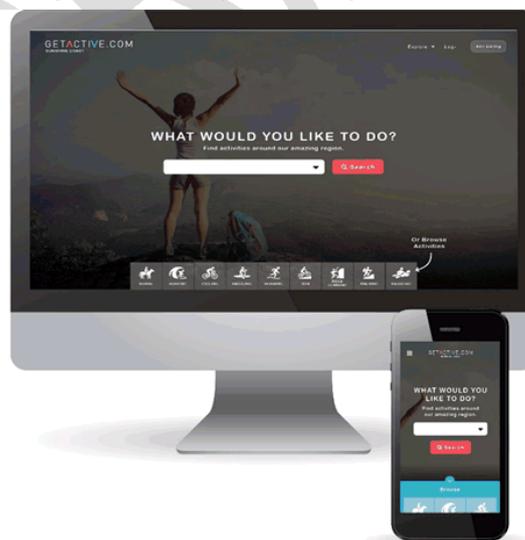
- Takes a user focused approach to development
- Directs users to the experience they are after in no more than three clicks
- That it is designed in a mobile first manner, with backwards compatibility to website and printed material
- That maintains an open data perspective to allow the community to input and reflect on Sunshine Coast recreation experiences.

It appears no groups or institutions are currently engaged in providing a solution such as this. Whilst activities that would likely be included are covered either broadly in tourism focused directories or specifically in focused interest groups (say horse riding). There does not appear to be anything that allows disengaged individuals to easily find and explore outdoor, low to no cost, activities within their region.

A directory of this type has many advantages from both a social and economic perspective, including:

- Working alongside tourism bodies to raise the regional offerings (highlighting local features, attractions and experiences, both free-use and commercial)
- Engaging local community in their region (instilling a sense of belonging and increase value of local assets)
- Support mechanism for volunteer and not-for-profit groups to raise profile (attracting members and volunteers who provide large in-kind benefits to assets)
- Potential to generate sustaining income to maintain its viability and limit financial burden.
- Independent credibility to provide a reliable source of information

Furthermore due to directory sites being well established as a website form. There are working models, in both functionally and economic terms, available as reference material in order to take a cost effective approach moving from a feasibility to a working model. See concept image below:



Google Trekker Event

This is a multi-week event focused around securing the Google trekker to visualize all of our key trails across the coast online. It will involve the coast hosting a blogger/hiker who can document their journeys on the coast and produce a number of promotional outputs with the core focus being on the key imagery from the trekker backpack.

The Google Street View Trekker will allow council to capture 360 degree imagery of our region's trails in national and local parks. Under this program, Google may offer to lend council a Street View Trekker backpack or a Street View app-compatible 360 camera, depending on availability and what may best match council's needs.

The success of this application will depend on the successful partnership between Sunshine Coast Council, Noosa Council, Visit Sunshine Coast and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services.

This is a tremendous opportunity for the region to promote its trails locally, at a state and national level as well as internationally with the added value of the Google Trekker.

List of potential trails:

- Coastal Pathway (one week)
- Buderim Tramway Trail
- Mt Ninderry Summit Trail
- Mary Cain Cross
- Botanic Gardens
- Buderim Forest Park
- Maleny Precinct Trail
- Maroochy River Canoe Trail (two days)
- Currimundi Canoe Trail
- Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk (three–four days)
- Glass House Mountains walks (one–two days)
- Mt Coolum
- Parklands Main loops(two days)
- Dularcha National Park Rail Line walk
- Eumundi Conservation Park
- Conondale NP
- Noosa National Park (Noosa Shire Council area)
- Mt. Tinbeerwah (Noosa Shire Council area)
- Ewen Maddock Dam

Review

The Recreation Trails Development Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. The trail development opportunities identified in the plan should not be considered the only trail development opportunities on the Sunshine Coast. To ensure that Council remains current in its feasibility studies, planning and development of trails the Recreation Trails Development Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

