

The Dunedin cloud forest connection

Notes

Long time trampers Dick and Barbara Calvert gave a considerable sum of money to complete this section. Barbara had an association with the Otago Walkways Committee in its formative days.

OTMC to act as agents to handle the monies and construction on behalf of the DCC.

Ken and Peter Mason to oversee and main contractors. Normally very cautious about working on behalf of a committee. About to discover, with an unprecedented misuse of power and breach of contract, by the OTMC president in particular, why. Accusation of dishonesty made against me at public meeting. Stained both my and Peter's reputations. Bugged Peter's health.

Track Committee

This tramping standard track is designed to show off the Cloud Forests of Leith while bringing you into close proximity to, rock, log and water features. It also attempts to provide a varied and tactile walking experience while minimising ecological damage. Being all hand constructed.

Any boardwalking is kept to a non intrusive minimum and is designed to be both physically and visually stimulating. Enjoy having to think while using the stepping stone concept or descending into and stepping across creeks. Many tracks tend to separate you from the immediate environment

Boardwalking is kept to an inattractive level as it is not a path.

Break down the effects of a mass boardwalking and its jarring on the body.

Designed to blend into the environment.

Have to think while walking.

Step across the creeks.

Visually and physically stimulating/varied

Stepping stones

Varied slopes, boardwalking slopes uphill/down hill gives foot a rest.

Follows the ground/slope/terrain

Gives the foot and leg muscles variety. Stride length choice/variety

Hopefully not predictable

no hand rails.

Improve your balance, place your feet, feel the trees. Monitoring over the following two years will determine if and where, adjustments and boardwalking will take place. No unauthorised “improvements”

Designed to show the forest off by avoiding old fire damaged areas. An illusion.

I coined the names 'The Cloud Forests of Leith' and 'The Escarpment Track'

The 5km of track has three distinct parts. The Cloud Forests of Leith Track above Sullivan's Dam, the Escarpment Track connecting to Mt Cargill and a linking track between.

All hand cut except use of chainsaws to drop pines at Pigeon Hill.

Not been put in as a mini road for use of machinery with emphasis on ease initial construction. Low impact. Not avoiding water. Linking up all the interesting features.

Boardwalking breaking new concept ground. Tactile experience. Stimulating walking and non intrusive variety are the order of the day. Overall there is a stepping stone concept; creeks remain as features; no handrails; choice of stride length and variety of slope for legs etc. The boardwalking is taking a sculpture like form within its environment.

By using an adaptable modular construction system we are able to precision cut or assemble in the workshop and so eliminate many hassles and wastages in the field. As everything is carried to site, reducing timber weight by drying has been very important.

All ground contact timber is coated with bituminous paint to increase its life and reduce preservative chemical leakage into the ground water.

A selection of comments by track users.

Former OTMC'er “. . . especially enjoyed descending and climbing in and out of the creeks.”

Over 50's Tramping Club. “we are enjoying the track before it is improved!”

A City Forests Ltd Manager re the big rock outcrop “What a fantastic place to share with friends”

Regular user “a great track to teach children how to tramp – can't do that on Bethunes.”

“Bethunes Gully and Pineapple Track have been 'maintained' into becoming paths.”

Over 60's T. C. (their second time) Enjoy the “bit of a challenge” and “the settings of the rock outcrops on the Escarpment Track.”

A boardwalk user:- “Oh, your've got to look where you're putting your feet!” said with pleasant surprise.

Otago university TC'ers. “great to actually have a tramping track so close to town”

A Canadian regular “especially enjoy the rocky upper sections of the track . . . reminds me of the trails back home.”

Jane Bruce (10/02) “. . . especially enjoyed descending and climbing in and out of the creeks. (2 main water features Stage I)

Sullivan's Dam Caretaker (11/02)- "Just like it the way it is - don't boardwalk it."

Neil Copeland addressing the New Edinburgh Folk Club. 12/02.

". . . how much he enjoyed the (new) track and having to use his arms on trees in places to pull himself up . . . appreciated the steeper grades - would deter mountain bike use.”

Bloke who worked on the ORC Taieri Gorge

Millenium Track. 02/03.

“The dozer driver who did the job suggested leaving some rocks in for people to enjoy (walking on) was then apparently told to take them all out.”

ORC Track Rep (02/02) on first hearing of the new Sullivans/Mt Cargill Track.

"Great! What type of machine are you using on it?"

Paul Coffey (DCC Community Projects Officer) - from answer phone message. 03/02/03

“Did it (the track) in the weekend . . . bloody fantastic”

“The places that you worked on are incredible”

“Pauline and I were most impressed”

DOC Coastal Otago Manager on a site inspection. “Of course DOC wouldn't allow a track like this to be built so close to town. You can go to Fiordland if you want this sort of experience” Me “A lot of people can't afford to go to Fiordland. Don't want to go all the way to Fiordland. Haven't the time to go to Fiordland.”

DoC would have probably put the kaibosh on it had much of the Escarpment Track not been under City Forest control. Story behind this

Mountain bike analogy re not all the same easy grade etc. More accepted today

Not the fastest way/time to top etc etc

The Calvert/Entwistle wish "A tramping track (experience) suitable for adults with teenage children."

Stage I opening (11/02) - people up to mid 70's had no trouble negotiating the logs across the track - some enjoyed looking at the wood texture - enjoyed the variety of the track and using their arms here and there.

Working with hand tools CAN allow consideration and thought to take place before action.

Our work concept :-

Try not to be condescending to the users walking ability.

This involves overcoming the urge to remove things 'incase they might be a problem' You can modify or remove at a later date if it proves to be a concern.

What's the hurry . . . lets get it right - the end result is likely to be around for atleast 100 years.

We don't have all the answers. In attempting to avoid past concerns we may invent a few new ones.

Comments Re Tracks Designed Around Machinery/Boardwalking.

19/08/03 Ray Willis on Radio National Programme. An organiser of the Kepler Challenge running race. "Kepler Track - wonderful surface - could push a pram over 3/4 of it."

- # Unrelenting
- # Imposed (on nature)
- # Monotonous
- # Predictable
- # Footpath
- # Featureless
- # Unmemorable
- # Packhorse track
- # Isolated from nature
- # "Efficient"
- # Characterless
- # Ironed out
- # Made for the boy's toys.
- # Unforgiving on the body.

Track development/provision comes from wrong end - usually designed around machine construction and maintenance rather than its original purpose of providing varied and interesting walking.

Multiple Use Policies: -

The experience is downgraded to the lowest common denominator. Taken to its extreme it could mean motor vehicle usage everywhere as walkers can still use the road.

Dunedin needs a wider range of walking experiences. (first mentioned in a 1985 MSc thesis)

For twelve years from 1977 I had served as a FMC representative on the Otago Land District Walkway Committee and the Work Party that preceded it..

Over that time we had many successes forming new walkways and using walkway leverage to save existing tracks under threat. However we were unable to complete our Skyline concept joining all the major hills overlooking Dunedin. The 5km section through the heavy bush above Sullivan's Dam to Mt Cargill had been put in the too hard basket.

Veteran trampers Dick and Barbara Calvert had left \$100 000 to the Dunedin City Council in early 2002 to construct "a tramping track suitable for adults with teenage children". Knowing that more monies might need to be raised, the DCC formed a joint committee with the incorporated Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club as the banker.

I felt quite honoured when our club, the OTMC asked my youngest brother Peter and I to complete the Skyline Walkway. Barbara Calvert had also served on the Walkway Committee. When mountain stalwarts Bob and Evelyn Entwistle heard of Pete's and my involvement, another \$10 000 landed in the bank.

There had been a building dissatisfaction with the way tracks were being constructed and maintained. We were now in the wonderful situation of trampers being able to hand-make a stimulating track

[As far as I got, except identifying some docs, photos + captions]

