

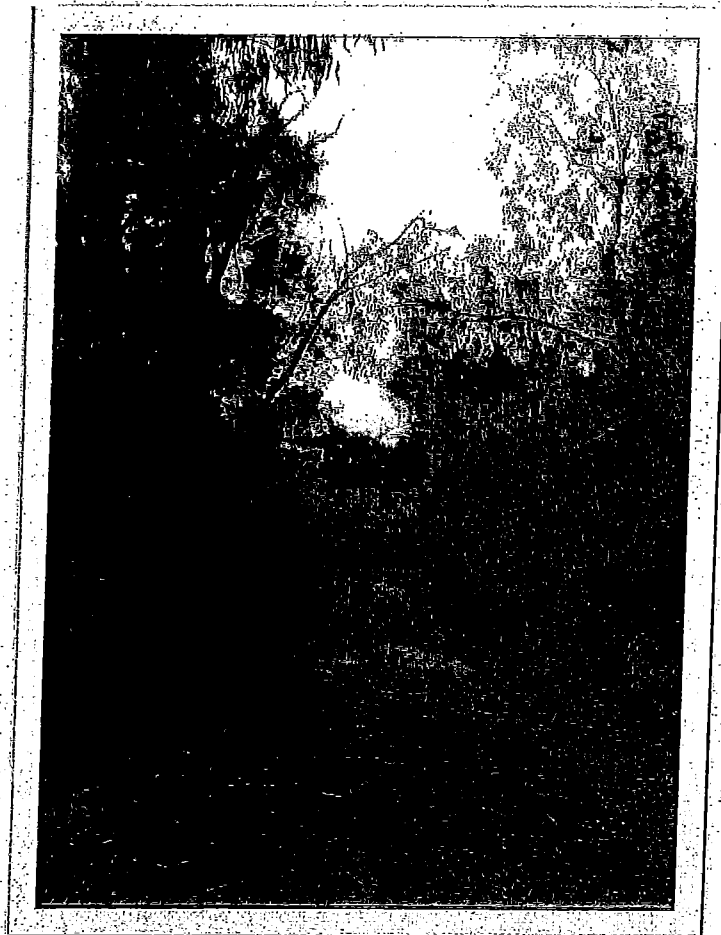
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Isaacs Ridge Recreation Facility Community Engagement and Concept Plan



Isaacs Ridge, July 2011

Prepared by Anthony Burton and Associates for Territory & Municipal Services Directorate

November 2014

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Anthony Burton and Associates



Anthony Burton – Principal

Principal - Mr Anthony Burton is a member of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand. He is a nationally recognised planner with experience in recreation, urban, health and social planning and is currently finalising his PhD with the University of Western Sydney. He has 14 years experience as a planner with the ACT Government, non-government organisations and now in private practice.

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1 Executive summary

Aim:

- To identify an initial path forward for engaging the recreational community, in particular mountain bike riders, in the development and management of recreational assets (mountain bike and multi-use trails) that the land manager (Parks and Conservation Service) is prepared to allow with land managed by them.
- Develop a cost estimate for a range of options for the ongoing development of the site including:
 - The development and implementation of a community engagement and consultation plan
 - The development of a full or partial master plan
 - The development of the area as a recreational venue including costs of infrastructure such as trails and supportive infrastructure

The Isaacs Ridge Recreation Facility Community Engagement and Concept Plan recommends the following:

- Targeted community consultation with
 - The mountain bike community (CORC);
 - Local community (Residents of Isaacs);
 - The equestrian community (ACT Equestrian Association);
 - Park care representatives;
 - Rural leases adjoining Isaacs Ridge (including the riding schools); and
 - PCS Staff.

Based on this consultation and the desire of PCS to enable club level downhill mountain biking:

- A mountain bike trail network catering for a range of abilities including:
 - One-way downhill trails – mountain bikes only;
- Based on the results of community consultation develop a multi-use trail network including:
 - Bidirectional trails that can form a loop or series of loops that cater for walkers, runners and mountain bike riders;
- An equestrian loop linking existing trails that:
 - allows safe and equitable equestrian use within Isaacs Ridge; and
 - connects to the broader equestrian trail network;
- Facility signage – directional, safety, information and compliance; and
- Linkages with the existing trail network, in particular the Centenary Trail.

2 Background:

Isaacs is a suburb located in the Woden District and has a population of ~2,300 people. The bulk of the suburb was constructed in the late 1980's and consists mainly of large, single detached housing stock. Isaacs is bounded by Yamba Drive, Ngunawal Drive and Long Gully Road and neighbours the suburbs of O'Malley, Mawson and Farrer.

Located directly to the east of the suburb is Isaacs Ridge, part of Canberra Nature Park and a small commercial pine plantation of approximately 23 Ha. This plantation is also known as the Long Gully pine plantation.

Isaacs Ridge has significant value to the local community as a recreational venue and landscape setting for the suburb. It has further value to the broader Canberra community and has been used extensively as a recreational venue both formally and informally by equestrians, mountain bike riders, mountain runners and orienteers. Mountain bike racing, both Downhill and Cross Country have been formally using the site to stage events since 1992 and potentially earlier.

Recently Canberra Off-Road Cyclists (CORC) approached ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) to gain approval to run a club based downhill event using on an existing trail on the southwest slopes of Isaacs Ridge. This prompted PCS to review the use of the reserve and, in particular, its use for downhill mountain biking.

PCS staff have concerns with:

- The alignment of the trail and the nature of a series of road crossings,
- The safety of the trail, and
- The use of the trail outside of competition.

PCS have engaged Anthony Burton and Associates to

- To identify an initial path forward for engaging the recreational community, in particular mountain bike riders, in the development and management of recreational assets (mountain bike and multi-use trails) that the land manager (Parks and Conservation Service) is prepared to allow with land managed by them.
- To identify how PCS can safely, legally and collaboratively permit Downhill MTB riding in Isaacs Ridge, in particular in formal event activities.
- Develop a cost estimate for a range of options for the ongoing development of the site including:
 - The development and implementation of a community engagement and consultation plan
 - The development of a full or partial master plan
 - The development of the area as a recreational venue including costs of infrastructure such as trails and supportive infrastructure

PCS recognise that mountain biking can be hazardous and that trails may include unmarked obstacles and hazards such as sticks, rocks, logs, trees, steep inclines, drop-offs and loose surfaces.

These trails may include extremely steep, rough and rocky terrain. They specifically recognise that any riders who are attempting these trails do so at their own risk.

PCS also identify that some trails within Isaacs Ridge cross fire roads that are trafficked by management vehicles and used by others. The safety of all users of the park is paramount and PCS wish to identify safe ways that all people can use and enjoy Isaacs Ridge.

3 Isaacs Ridge Recreation Facility Community Engagement

3.1 Plan how to engage with the community

A key to the on-going success of a facility is the engagement and ownership that the local community and user groups feel. As such, community consultation is a key to opening the door and beginning that appropriate level of community engagement. Anthony Burton and Associates would recommend a mixed-use methodology to complete an appropriate level of consultation:

3.2 Who needs to be engaged?

As a minimum, the following groups should be engaged:

- The mountain bike community (CORC);
- Local community (Residents of Isaacs);
- The equestrian community (ACT Equestrian Association);
- Park care representatives;
- Rural leases adjoining Isaacs Ridge (including the riding schools); and
- PCS Staff.

3.3 Consultation methodology

- A series of 5-7 qualitative independent interviews with key stakeholders. A matrix of key ideas should be developed and thematically analysed.
- An online self-selecting quantitative survey tool run through the ACT Government's "Time to Talk" website (www.timetotalk.act.gov.au) incorporating 10-12 questions with multiple choice and free text options to allow for the capture of additional qualitative data. This consultation platform should be advertised through government networks, at the local shops close by the venue, on-line through sites like, but not limited to 'The Riot Act', 'The Berm' and 'Rotorburn' and in newspapers (Canberra Times and the Chronicle).
- A face-to-face community information session(s), at local shops with an opportunity to discuss the project with government representatives and other community members.

Individuals and organisations could also be invited to write directly to Anthony Burton & Associates to raise specific concerns.

4 Development of a Master Plan

4.1 Why develop a master plan for the site?

A master plan for the site identifies current and future potential use for the site through the constraints that the area has. Getting a master plan right enhances an area, maintains community engagement and ultimately reduces management challenges.

4.2 What are the constraints and opportunities of the site?

A desk top review of Isaacs Ridge identifies that it has a number of potential constraints that include but are not limited to:

- Proximity to residential areas
- A range of uses (that are potentially in conflict with each other);
- Steep topography (also considered a benefit); and
- Areas of conservation value.

The desktop review also identifies a number of opportunities that lend it to being an active recreational hub for the inner south including:

- Proximity to residential areas
- A range of existing user groups already exist;
- Links to the Centenary Trail; and
- Steep topography.

4.3 What Activities may appropriate within Isaacs Ridge?

Within Isaacs Ridge there is potential for:

- Mountain bike specific trails (specifically down hill trails);
- Multi-use trails;
- Equestrian Trails; and
- Walking Only Trails.

4.3.1 Pedestrian and/or multi-use trails

Isaacs ridge is a popular spot for local residents to walk and run. The provision of trails running

through appropriate treed areas of the reserve would likely enhance the recreation value of the reserve.

4.3.2 Mountain bike and multi-use trails

The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) has developed principles for designing and locating sustainable mountain bike and multi-use tracks. Detailed guidelines for implementing these principles need to be implemented so that:

- The need for on going maintenance is minimised (maintenance will still be needed);
- Trails are safe, but interesting and, where appropriate, challenging;
- Aligned on appropriate gradients relative to the topography,
- Impacts upon flora and fauna is minimised;
- Water flows (to reduce erosion and sediment movement, track widening) are managed (noting that gullies are likely to be key features used in design); and
- User conflict is managed; and trail users are confined to the tracks.
- Located in a way that is sympathetic to the natural values of the area.

Any cross-country trails must be functional to pedestrians and mountain bike riders.

- All trails except the downhill will be bi-directional

To do this trails should:

- Adopt a 'Rolling Contour Trail' design
- Use of outsloped full bench tread with frequent rolling grade dips
- Use rock armouring and natural rock to harden the tread surface to increase its resistance and stability where required
- Manage risk by providing safe, well maintained, well sign-posted and appropriately located trails and trail features.

Be maintained to an appropriate standard on an ongoing basis

4.3.3 Potential Down Hill Corridors

Downhillers are usually advanced riders who use sophisticated equipment specifically designed for descending challenging trails. That, by their nature will incorporate rocks, logs, dirt jumps and drop offs. Since downhill bikes are heavy, riders tend to seek trails with vehicle access to the start of the trail. Within Majura pines the potential for 'shuttled runs' is limited with no open road access to the upper slopes of the reserve.



Within Isaacs Ridge is ample opportunity for a number of downhill trails including less advanced and advanced downhill sections. A less advanced trail should be:

- Designed for mountain bike riders only;
- Fast and open;
- Be designed so that a rider on most mountain bikes could ride it; and
- This section could form part of an intermediate to advanced level cross country section.

Intermediate to advanced level sections already exist in the south western section of the park. The further development of this area, aimed at a higher level of riders could include:

- Designed for mountain bike riders only;
- Significant technical sections including off camber turns, rock gardens, drop offs, jumps and higher speed sections catering for a broad range of users and riding styles to provide challenging and interesting options;
- Be designed to accommodate club level downhill events with the potential to allow for higher-level events as needed.
- Where these trails cross management tracks, design and signage identifying the issue will be used to maximise safety and minimise potential user conflict.

4.3.4 Equestrian Use

Isaacs ridge is a popular equestrian area with riding schools and horse agistment paddocks located close by. Existing equestrian opportunities are not to be diminished with the additional of additional users.

If a cyclist or another person encounters a horse they:

- Should yield to horses by stopping and asking permission of the horse rider to pass.
- Must allow horse riders time to position their horses for safety.
- Should not ring bells as they may startle a horse - voice contact is preferable. A frightened horse is a danger to you, the horse rider and other park users.
- Should not to pass within a metre of a horse as they may kick if startled and have considerable reach.

The equestrian trails should be developed based upon their needs, safety, minimising potential conflicts and meeting local expectations. Under these principles the trails that are identified as Equestrian trails will, necessarily, need to bypass the higher speed mountain bike only down hill corridor(s). As a result these trails will, by and large be located on existing fire roads adjacent and, potentially, several short sections of wide single tracks (bridlepaths). These trails should not be viewed in isolation but as a loop(s) in the context of the broader equestrian network.

The aim is for these routes to be suitable for novices and more experienced riders, social groups and others seeking a relatively short distance trail riding. These routes support the riding schools and commercial trail riding opportunities in the area.

4.4 What Activities are not appropriate within Isaacs Ridge?

The small size of the site, the focus on active, non-motorised recreation combined with the conservation values and the proximity of the venue to residential blocks precludes the site being used for motorised sport such as rally driving and trail-bike (motor bike) Riding. The government currently provides some trail bike facilities in Fairbairn and is investigating dedicated trail bike facilities to the west of Canberra.

5 Cost estimate for development

This section will identify approximate costs of:

- The development and implementation of a community engagement and consultation plan
- The development of a full or partial master plan
- The development of the area as a recreational venue including costs of infrastructure such as trails and supportive infrastructure

Development and implementation of a community engagement and consultation plan

Community Engagement Protocol	300
Community Workshop (Preparation and Facilitation)	600
Specific Stakeholder Consultation	1400
"Time to Talk" Survey	200
Interpretation and Development of Stakeholder draft report	2400
Final Stakeholder Report	1200
	\$6,100

Question set up. Remainder undertaken by TAMS Staff

Master plan cost estimates are based on simple trails based Master Plan that is developed as a result of community consultation.

Development of approved master planned trail network & consultation	
Initial alignment planning and mapping	3000
Additional consultation including onsite walk throughs	1500
Finalised master planning	3000
	3000
	\$10,500

Cost estimates for the development of the trails are a guide based on current market rates only. More specific pricing is available on request¹. Given that no trails have been planned it is difficult to estimate the total potential cost.

Tasks	Professional Trail Construction		Professional Trail Maintenance		Hybrid ² Trail Construction		Hybrid ² Trail Maintenance	
	Per Km	Per Km	Per Km	Per Km	Per Km	Per Km	Per Km	Per Km
Approximate Construction costs								
Downhill	25,000	2000	20,000	4,000	500	1500		
Multi-Use	20,000	250-500	17,000	3,000	250	1250		
XC	20,000	250-500	17,000	3,000	250	1250		

*

¹ Noting that the cost of trail development depends upon a range of factors including soil, slope, ease of access and trail feature among others

² Hybrid models are the least preferred model for professional builders but can be favoured by the community



6 How can PCS work with event managers?

This section will identify how PCS could work collaboratively with event partners to allow legal and safe Downhill MTB racing on Isaacs Ridge and could inform other formal events and activities within the reserve.

PCS recognise that mountain biking can be hazardous and that trails may include unmarked obstacles and hazards such as sticks, rocks, logs, trees, steep inclines, drop-offs and loose surfaces. These trails may include extremely steep, rough and rocky terrain. They specifically recognise that any riders who are attempting these trails do so at their own risk.

PCS also identify that some trails within Isaacs Ridge cross fire roads that are trafficked by management vehicles and used by others. The safety of all users of the park is paramount and PCS wish to identify safe ways that all people can use and enjoy Isaacs Ridge.

This section will cover:

- Risk management
- Insurance
- Traffic management
- Crowd Control
- Event signage
- Fire control
- Waste management
- Noise management
- Lighting
- Camping.

6.1 Risk management

There are clearly risks associated with undertaking activities within Isaacs Ridge. To mitigate these risks a Safety Plan must be prepared at least once per annum. It is the joint responsibility of PCS and the event manager to ensure accuracy of the plan.

6.1.1 Emergency Management, Response & Access

PCS are to name/number access gates and inform event managers prior to any event being held on Isaacs Ridge.

Isaacs Ridge has mobile phone coverage across most parts of the Park however; there may be some areas, where coverage is limited or not available. In the event of an emergency or a serious accident, users, in the first instance, are to contact the emergency services via mobile phone if available.

In all cases, the PCS manager is to be contacted immediately to ensure the emergency vehicle/s have access to the appropriate area. In order to ensure the emergency services and PCS manager receive the most accurate information, the following must be advised:

- Your name;
- Your location. Be specific (attempt to give distances and reference points if possible);
- What is the problem (describe the emergency, provide as much information as possible such as injured person, how it happened, obvious visual injury, etc)
- How the emergency services get to your location (Describe which gate to enter, etc)

Additional safety measures should be implemented for an event such as:

- The Event Management volunteers/staff communicating via designated radios.
- The appropriate emergency services will be advised of an event.
- The Event management staff to ensure the presence of qualified First Aid.
- The inclusion of specific safety management plans, identifying key access points, egress areas and the necessary assembly areas for both spectators and athletes.

6.2 Insurances

If an organisation wishes to use Isaacs Ridge for an event, they are to have current public liability insurance not less than \$10,000,000. A copy of currency is to be provided to PCS prior to conducting the event.

The PCS will retain copies of the certificate of currency of all organisations' insurances.

6.3 Traffic management and Parking

For day-to-day use, off road parking along Long Gully Road is encouraged, noting that users must follow current road rules and ensure that they and their vehicles are parked in a safe

manner and located safely away from the road.

For events, traffic management will become the responsibility of the event management to ensure compliance with ACT Roads and ensure safety for competitors, spectators and other members of the public. Depending upon the size and scale of the event, an event Traffic Management plan may be required. This would be discussed with the relevant event management organisation at the time of the request for an event.

6.4 Crowd Control

Patron safety is the priority for all events, both recreational and organised. The management of events is to take into consideration spectator location, athlete staging or preparation areas and suitable safety distances between the two. It is the responsibility of the event organisers to ensure maximum safety provisions are in place when conducting events.

6.5 Event Signage

Event managers are permitted to place temporary signage (flags, banners or corflute signs) when conducting events. It is the responsibility of the users to ensure no damage occurs when placing the signage. Users are responsible for removing all signage when an event has finished.

Signs should be placed at appropriate entry points to the reserve and at locations where non-participants/spectators may come within 50m 25m and 10m of a trail crossing.

6.6 Fire Control

The lighting of fires is strictly forbidden. The exception to this is any controlled burn-off approved and undertaken by suitably qualified ACT Government staff.

6.7 Waste management

To ensure the area is kept clean and environmentally friendly, users and event managers are responsible for the removal of all waste associated with their activity. This includes recreational users.

6.8 Noise management

For events, PA's can be used but noise levels must not be excessive and must have consideration for the safety of competitors and the amenity of near by residents. In the event that excessive noise is occurring, PCS are to be informed and take action as necessary.

6.9 Lighting provision

It is not anticipated that there will be significant activities undertaken at night, however, where lighting is needed it should be localised and not impact upon the amenity of local residents.

6.10 On site camping

Camping is not allowed.