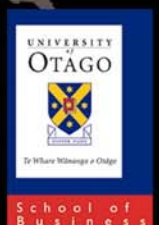


PUBLIC DRAFT



Catlins Tourism Strategy 2003

University of Otago, Department of Tourism
for the
Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party



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Note to Readers

This document contains an Executive Summary; and an Extended Summary - which is in three parts:

Part A: Introduces the Catlins Tourism Strategy process

Part B: Provides a summary of research undertaken on the Catlins in the course of preparing this Strategy

Part C: Contains a summary of the recommendations

The full Recommendations begin on Page 29.

For quick reference, a complete list of all recommendations (in table form) may be found in Appendix 1

*Please note that this document contains only a summary of the research undertaken for this Strategy. A complete version of the research findings is available in a document titled “**Catlins Tourism Strategy - Supporting Research**”. This is available upon request from Venture Southland, Clutha District Council and the Catlins Information Centre at Owaka.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Catlins is an emerging tourism destination in the south-east of the South Island of New Zealand. Increasing numbers of visitors are coming to this region, attracted by the remote and beautiful coastline, the extensive areas of rainforest, the wildlife and the rural kiwi experience that the area offers. The destination is rapidly changing from a traditional summer holiday destination for Southland and Otago residents, to a destination where international visitors are now in the majority, the tourist season extends for over half of the year, and where over 300,000 visitors per annum may not be an unrealistic visitor figure within a few years.

While tourism development is in the early stages, there is already concern among the Catlins residents that tourism is impacting negatively upon the values that they hold dear, in particular the natural environment of the coast, and the vulnerable wildlife that are found in these habitats. The community has also expressed concern about the impact of tourism upon their own “special places” where they recreate, and upon their communities and lifestyles.

This Strategy addresses these issues, and contains a number of key recommendations that will help to take tourism in the Catlins forward in a sustainable manner in the 21st century. The Strategy has been a community-driven process, guided by the Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party, and informed by consultation undertaken within the community and with key stakeholders. Over the past 12 months, extensive research has been undertaken in the Catlins, including: a residents survey; a visitor survey; a Catlins perception study (of non-visitors); an inventory of attractions and services; a business survey; community workshops; and interviews with key stakeholders.

Over 80 recommendations are made under strategic objectives that address the following issues: Protection of natural and cultural resources; Growing the economic value of tourism; Developing the tourism product; Communicating with the visitor; Meeting hospitality needs; Researching visitors and their impacts; Improving the infrastructure; Marketing and promoting the Catlins; and Maintaining service quality.

To steer ongoing destination management, the Strategy proposes the establishment of a new community-based organisation that will address Catlins-wide issues and foster co-operation between all key stakeholders, including: Venture Southland, Southland District, Clutha District, the Department of Conservation, Tangata Whenua, the Catlins tourism industry and the wider community.

Critical recommendations address the development of appropriate infrastructure (e.g. toilets, roads, signage and communications). This is seen as essential to help manage the growing numbers of visitors, and to assist in minimising impacts. Residents and visitors alike raise the issue of inadequate toilets – and these concerns are addressed through proposals that include the establishment of new facilities for key sites.

Further recommendations recognise the need to protect the natural and cultural resources that are integral to Catlins tourism. Crucial to this is enhancing visitor education and interpretation at key attractions. The concepts of a Catlins Care Code and a Catlins “Eco Pass” are advanced. Other important issues that are addressed include the management of freedom camping; conservation management planning, including the development, management and enforcement of conservation concessions; and the sustainable development of tourism services. The need to foster slow and controlled growth of visitors is paramount, and the Strategy promotes a low-volume, high-yield model of tourism rather than a “more visitors at any cost” approach.

SUMMARY PART A: THE CATLINS TOURISM STRATEGY PROCESS

1. A Community Driven Strategy

Visitor interest in the Catlins is growing, and with this growth, there have been concerns from the Catlins community that without tourism development planning, the quality aspects that make the Catlins an attractive place to visit and in which to live may be lost. To this end, a stakeholder group, comprising individuals, and representatives of community organisations, the Territorial Local Authorities (Clutha District Council and Venture Southland) and the Department of Conservation formed in 2002 to work towards involving the whole community in the development of a strategy for tourism the Catlins.

In mid 2002, a public meeting was held in the Catlins to discuss the need to plan for sustainable growth of tourism in the area. The meeting at Tahakopa, attended by around 120 people, expressed unanimous support for the development of a strategy or plan for sustainable tourism, and six local residents (3 from the north and 3 from the south) were duly elected to help take this process forward. This group, with the addition of representatives from Clutha District Council and Venture Southland, is known as the Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party.

The Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party with the essential support of Venture Southland, the Clutha Economic Development Board and the Community Employment Group, has initiated the development of this tourism strategy in consultation with the Catlins community. The intention of the strategy is that it will provide a framework to: *“manage tourism growth and maximise opportunities for the future while maintaining and protecting the integrity of the community, wildlife and the environment”*.

2. How the Strategy Works

The Strategy is based upon research undertaken on the destination, its residents and the visitors in 2003. The research has served to identify a number of Strategic Objectives (see Figure A.1). Each Strategic Objective supports a number of recommendations that will help take tourism in the Catlins forward into the twenty-first century in a sustainable manner. *Please note that this document contains only a summary of the research undertaken for this Strategy. A complete version of the research findings is available upon request. The longer version is likely to be more relevant to tourism operators within the Catlins and those with a special interest in tourism in the area.*

3. Public and Stakeholder Input

As outlined above, this Strategy is a Community Driven Strategy, and consequently, public input, along with that of key stakeholders is a crucial aspect to the Strategy. Figure A.2 illustrates the Strategy process, indicating the approximate timeline, and the opportunities that have been available for public and stakeholder input, and will be available as the Strategy proceeds through a final round of public notification. It is worthwhile to note at this point that consultation with Tangata Whenua (Ngai Tahu), will, upon the request of that party, be undertaken after the completion of the first draft of the Strategy.

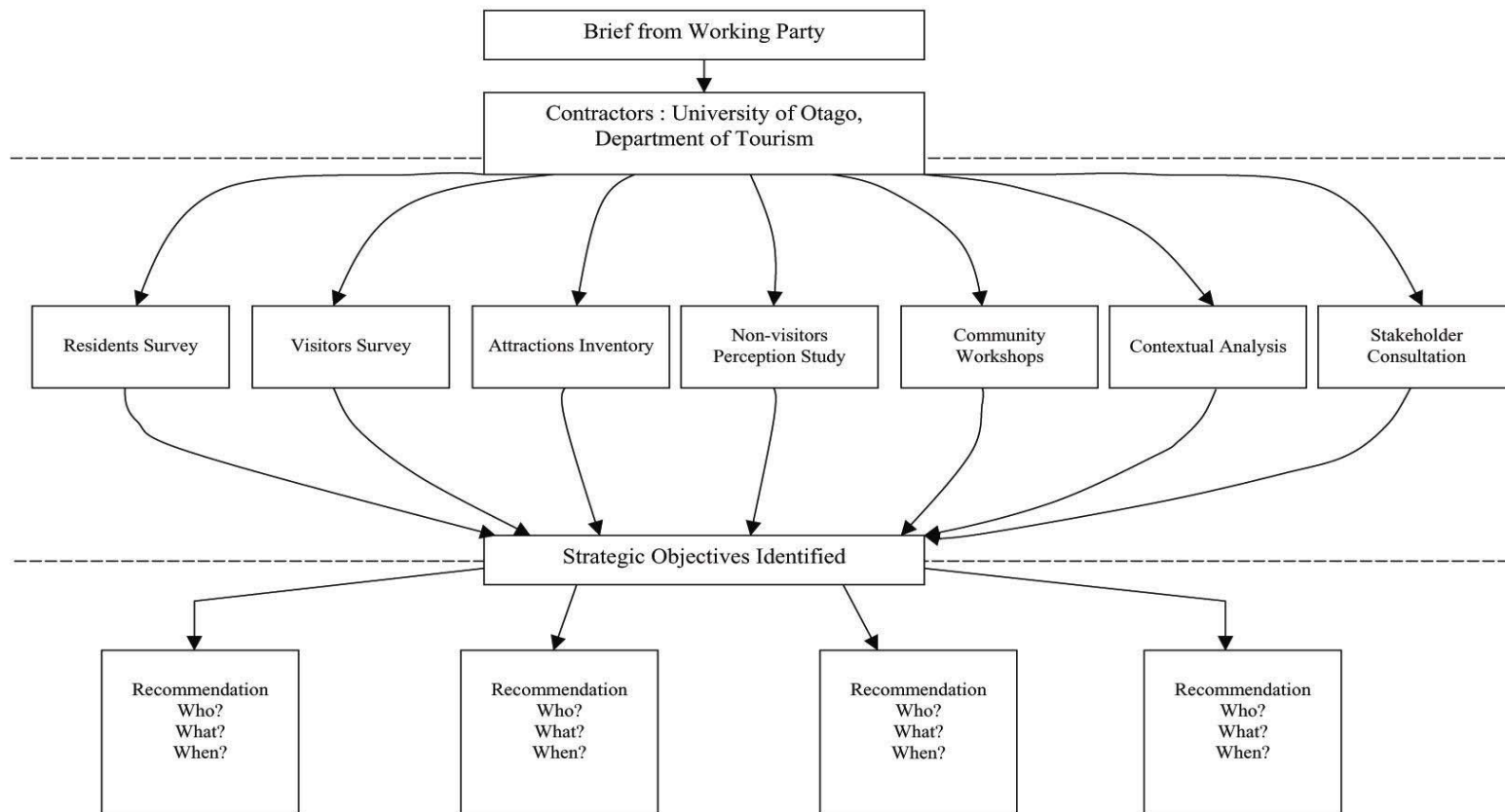
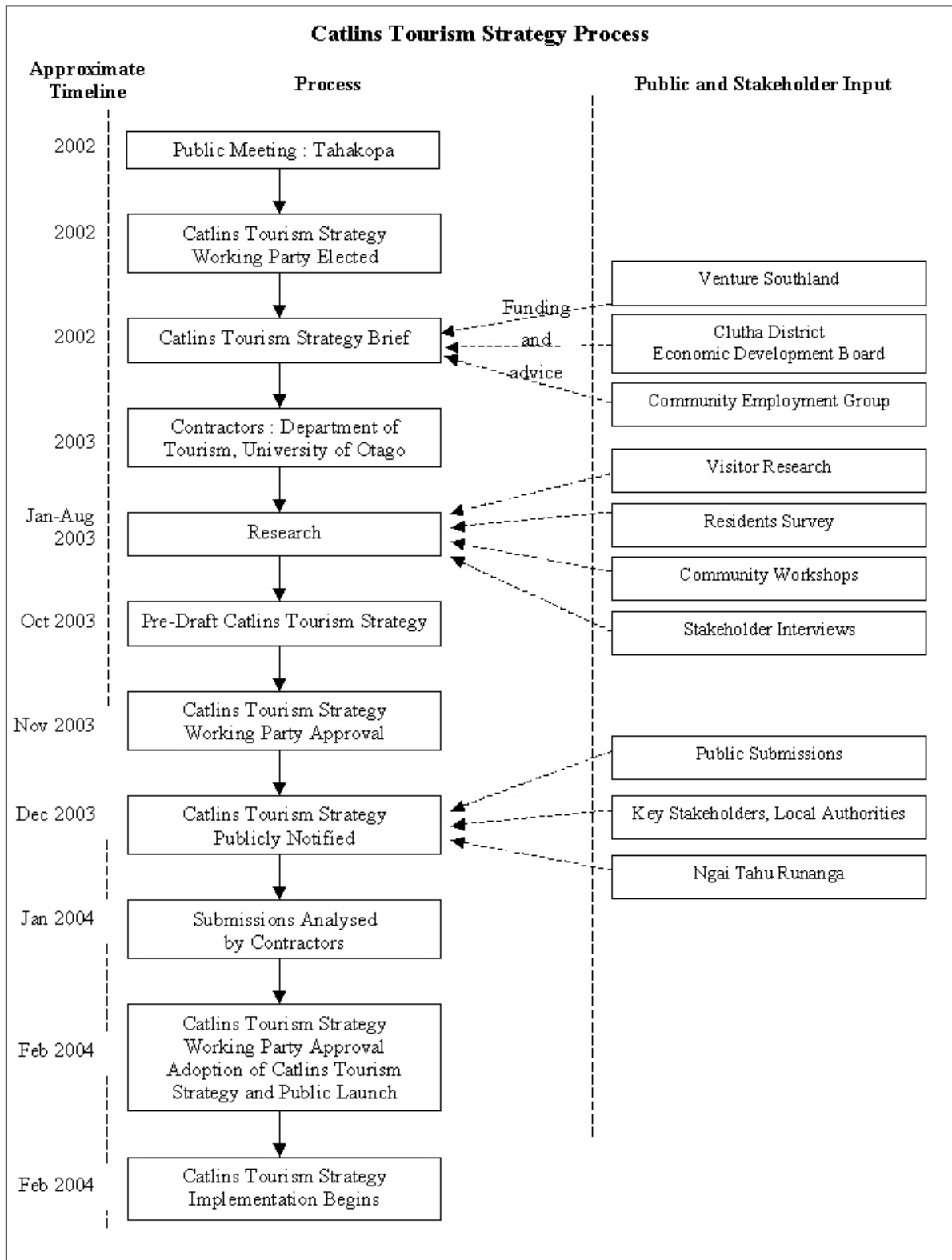


Fig A.1 The Strategy Process



SUMMARY PART B: RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN FOR THIS STRATEGY

The Strategy is built upon research undertaken in the Catlins over 2003. For the purposes of this Strategy, the Catlins is defined as an area bounded in the north by the Clutha River, and in the South by the Mataura River. The Pacific Ocean forms the eastern and southern boundaries, and the Catlins extends inland to include all of the catchments between the rivers mentioned above. At its furthest extent, the interior boundary of the Catlins runs as far as 30km inland from the coast, equating to a line that runs approximately from Balclutha to the Mataura River mouth.



*Figure B.1 Location of the Catlins
(Source: www.catlins-nz.com)*

Research in the Catlins has been undertaken both in the field through the collection of primary data by our researchers, and also through the collation of existing secondary data from a variety of sources. From December 2002 through to August 2003 over 500 hours of on-site research effort have been put into Catlins tourism.

Essential components of this research include:

- An on-site visitor survey of 677 visitors to the Catlins
- A non-visitor perception study of 400 tourists in Te Anau and Dunedin
- An inventory of Catlins attractions and services
- A survey of residents' attitudes to tourism
- A survey of Catlins businesses
- A series of Community Workshops
- Consultation with key stakeholders

From May to July 2003, over 250 people attended public meetings and workshops held throughout the Catlins, and provided input to the Strategy process. In addition, interviews and correspondence with over thirty key stakeholders has been undertaken.

1. Tourist Attractions and Services

The Inventory of Attractions reveals that a broad mix of actual and potential visitor sites exists throughout the Catlins. Around 200 separate sites/attractions were identified in this strategy, comprising natural, cultural and recreational.

Natural sites included rainforests, subalpine tussockland, wetlands, waterfalls; scenic reserves and stops; geological formations; beaches and rocky shores; sea caves; estuaries (wading birds); sites to view penguins; prominent marine mammal viewing sites; oceanic bird viewing sites; and general lookouts and vistas.

Cultural sites included museums; industrial and railway heritage; historic buildings with architectural interest; churches and cemeteries; memorials and monuments; lighthouses and landmarks; archaeological sites; and official gardens.

Recreational sites included camping grounds; tramping and walking tracks; nature trails; picnic grounds; freshwater fishing opportunities; saltwater fishing services; farm visits; sports venues; and lodges/retreats and education centres (Forest and Bird Society Tautuku lodge; Tautuku Outdoor Education Centre).

Key findings regarding sites/attractions include the following:

- Access to most sites/attractions is via a mix of sealed and unsealed roads
- The majority of sites are close to the Southern Scenic Route
- Parking space at the majority of sites is low
- Very few sites can accommodate people with physical disabilities
- Very few sites/attractions provide on-site personnel
- Few sites provide site maps
- Few sites offer information panels that address visitor behaviour and or offer educational content
- Very few sites have basic infrastructure like waste bins
- Overall there is a low level of service provision at sites/attractions such as public toilets, information, food/drink, or retail

The Inventory identified a number of coastal localities that face high visitation and are considered very vulnerable to visitor pressure: Nugget Point/Roaring Bay; Surat Bay; Jack's Bay/Blowhole; Tautuku Bay and Wetlands; Cathedral Caves; and Curio Bay/Porpoise Bay (Figure B.2).

Throughout the Catlins, tourist public services remain rather basic for a large region. There are only a limited number of public toilets at key visitor sites, few public toilet dumps, few locations where a public telephone is available, limited leisure facilities such as library service and public swimming pools, and a very basic level of rubbish disposal, medical, pharmacy, police, fire and emergency services. Food, beverage and shopping opportunities are also rather limited, including several restaurants, pubs, cafes and takeaways, grocery and convenience stores. Only two petrol stations and several craft and souvenir outlets service the entire region. The Catlins region is lacking a bank or automated teller machine (ATM) and a public laundry. Cell phone coverage is poor to non-existent.

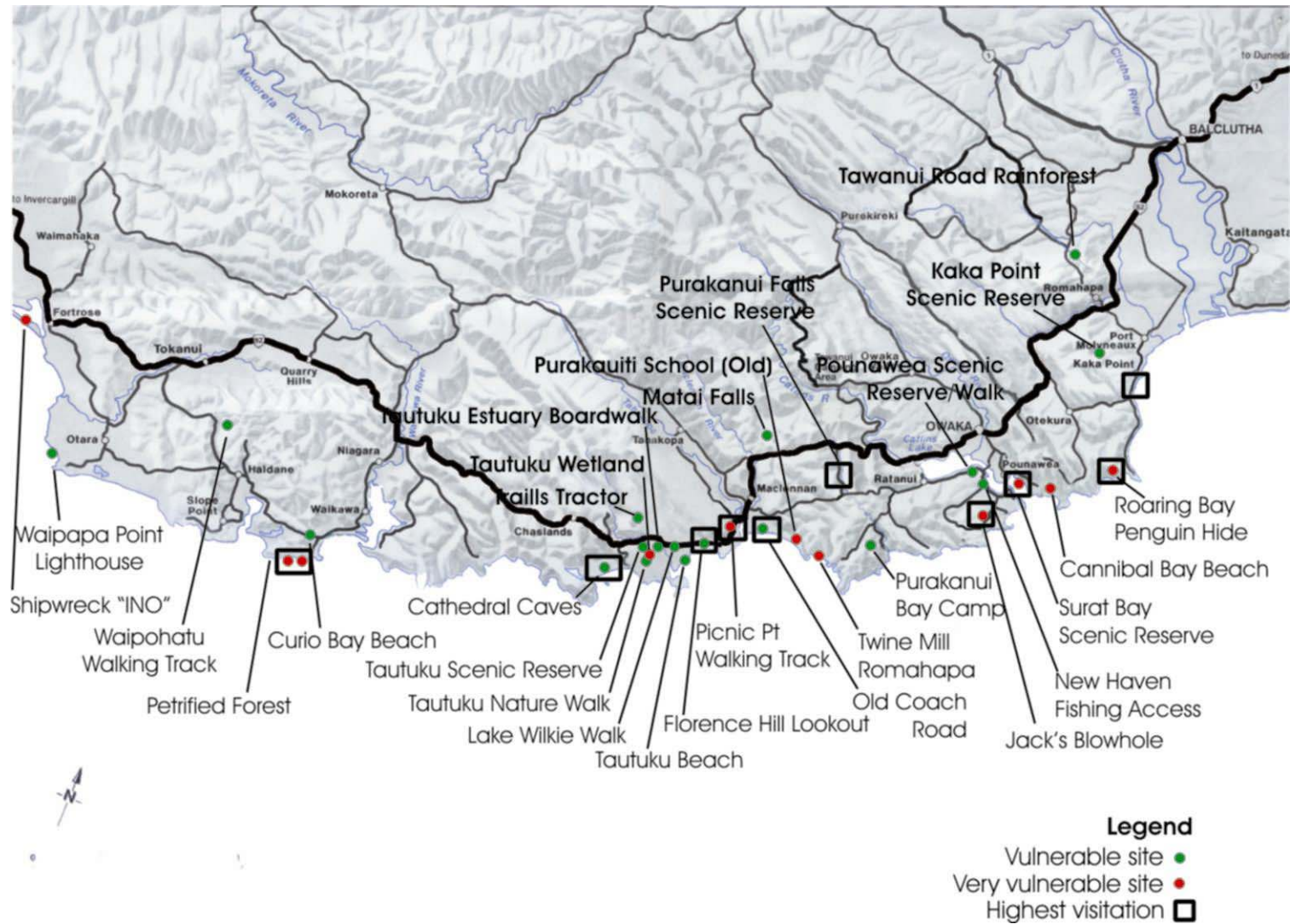


Fig B.2: Vulnerability of visitor sites in the Catlins in relation to current visitor numbers

Tourist accommodation ranges from upmarket lodges to low budget backpackers, but also includes motels, cottages, bed and breakfast offerings, home and farm stays, and motor camps. High quality (3*** plus) accommodation of mid to large scale is not provided.

The above discussion refers to a range of services that are essential to most visitors – and critical if the region is endeavouring to increase length of stay and thus enhance economic returns. Also, in the interests of visitor safety and convenience, what services *are* available should be communicated to visitors before they arrive in the region, so that they can appropriately plan their trip.

2. The Visitor

A visitor survey was undertaken between January and March of 2003. 677 visitor surveys were completed across key sites in the Catlins. This survey population comprised 473 international visitors and 204 domestic visitors. The survey captured information on the demographics, travel characteristics overall and that relating to the time spent in the Catlins, accommodation and services used, and overall visitor experiences of both visitor groups. The following is a précis of the significant findings:

2.1 Demographics

- Both domestic and international visitor samples were similar in terms of gender breakdown and household size
- The domestic visitor profile was: predominantly married, older (>40 yrs) with lower (compared with the international visitor) overall income
- The international visitor profile was: predominantly single, but bi-modal with both younger and older age groups represented, and with higher overall income
- There is a high degree of similarity between domestic and international visitors in terms of employment status, but with higher levels of students and unemployed in the international visitor population

2.2 Travel Characteristics

- Taking a holiday emerged as the dominant reason for travelling (c.f. business travel or VFR)
- A relatively small proportion of overall trip is spent in the Catlins by visitors
- There is a strong repeat market within the domestic visitors
- The majority of international visitors are seeing the Catlins for the first time
- Traditional New Zealand markets are strongly represented (United Kingdom, Germany, United States of America, Netherlands, Switzerland, and Australia) with some new markets emerging (e.g. Israel)

2.3 Travel to the Catlins region

- The main motivation to visit by both groups was to view wildlife
- A range of information sources are used to find out about the Catlins: International visitors preferred guidebooks, whereas domestic visitors placed a higher value on information from friends and family

- Domestic visitors predominantly made the decision to visit the Catlins while based at home, whereas the decision to visit by international visitors was taken while they were in the vicinity of the Catlins e.g. in Dunedin or other southern destinations
- Domestic visitors expressed a preference for more broadly nature-related sites and attractions; international visitors had a preference for sites that offered the opportunity to see and interact with wildlife

2.4 Use of tourist services within the Catlins

- A significant proportion of visitors (18% domestic; 26% international) chose not to stay in the Catlins overnight
- The majority of international visitors made use of budget type accommodation, mainly backpackers
- Domestic visitors had a greater preference for cribs and cottages, linked to their use of the Catlins as a family destination
- The most common length of stay (all visitors) ranged between one and two nights
- The average length of stay for overnight visitors was 2.5 nights (all visitors)
- Very few visitors claimed to have eaten out, citing the lack of eating establishments and choice as the main reasons.

2.5 Overall visitor experience

- The overall experience was high for both domestic and international visitor groups
- Natural attractions/sites were viewed as more important than cultural attractions/sites in shaping the overall visit experience
- Visitors identified very few aspects of their visits to be poor.
- A small percentage rated roading (especially international visitors), signage, and public toilets as being poor or very poor
- The basic level (or lack) of infrastructure is not yet having a significant effect on overall visitor experiences

3. The Non-Visitor

A study of tourists who were not planning to visit the Catlins was undertaken in March 2003 in two gateway centres for the Catlins, namely Te Anau and Dunedin – destinations which are also located at either end of the Southern Scenic Route. The survey size was 400 visitors, where 351 were international and 49 domestic visitors. The survey addressed non-visitors' perceptions of the Catlins, compares the Catlins with other Southland/Otago destinations, and examines awareness of the Southern Scenic Route. The following is a précis of key findings.

3.1 Perception of the Catlins

- There is a high level of awareness of the Catlins among non-visitors
- This awareness did not translate into the intention of visiting the Catlins
- The main reason cited for not choosing to visit the Catlins was insufficient time
- Domestic visitors do not have a strong image of the Catlins
- International visitors image of the Catlins is shaped around wildlife and spectacular scenery

- Certain channels of information not favoured by either visitor group; internet, travel agents, accommodation outlets
- Domestic tourists are aware of the Catlins through talking to friends and family,
- International tourists are aware of the Catlins because of the guidebooks used to travel within the South Island
- Nature activities are important motivators for both visitor groups
- The majority of nature activities planned by visitors can be met within the Catlins, with a few exceptions such as scenic flights, rafting and jetboating

3.2 The Catlins compared to other Southland/Otago destinations

The Catlins was compared to Queenstown, Te Anau, and Dunedin, with visitors being asked to make comparisons based on the image they had of other places or experiences of actually visiting. Places were ranked on the basis of the destinations' nature-related attractions, wildlife-related attractions, water-based attractions, recreation-related attractions, adventure attractions, cultural attractions and family attractions. Key findings to emerge were:

- For wildlife-related attractions, the Catlins scored top marks along with Te Anau, above Dunedin and well above Queenstown
- For more broad nature-related attractions, the Catlins scored slightly below Te Anau, equal with Queenstown, but significantly higher than Dunedin
- For cultural attractions, the Catlins scored well below all other destinations
- For recreation-related attractions, the Catlins scored well below Queenstown, and below Te Anau, but above Dunedin.
- Catlins was perceived as a nature and wildlife destination as opposed to adventure and culture
- There emerged higher support for the Catlins as a family destination among domestic visitors compared to international visitors surveyed

3.3 Southern Scenic Route (SSR)

- There is an awareness for the SSR, but an absence of knowledge about the route itself
- Tourists did not plan to be travelling on the SSR for a significant amount of time

4. The Value of Tourism

The visitor survey revealed that visitor expenditure whilst in the Catlins is relatively low, the majority of spending by both domestic and international visitors goes towards accommodation, food and petrol. The level of spending is slightly higher for domestic over international visitors. Key findings include:

- The average visitor expenditure is low compared to New Zealand averages
- There is a smaller than normal expenditure on admissions, gifts, and other expenses
- Domestic visitors spend more per visitor and per visitor-day than internationals
- The total direct expenditure is estimated to be between \$1.4 million and \$3.1 million
- The total value added to the Catlins economy is estimated to be around \$2.4 million

- Expenditure is low in relation to other broadly comparable destinations in New Zealand (e.g. Kaikoura \$20-30M)

Based on a small sample of businesses surveyed in July and August 2003, Catlins tourism businesses exhibit characteristics that are symptomatic of a visitor destination that is in the early stages of its life cycle. The majority of businesses that replied to the survey provide nature and recreation opportunities, offer guided tours, and provide basic accommodation needs. Key findings of the business survey were:

- The majority of tourism businesses operate between October and April
- Financial turnover varies significantly among businesses, from as little as \$2000 to as much as \$800,000 per annum for some businesses
- Most tourism businesses are small scale, employing few people on a full-time basis
- Tourism businesses expenditure ranged from as little as \$200 to as high as \$40,500 per annum
- Spending on advertising ranged from as little as \$100 up to \$6,000 per annum

5. The Residents Survey

The main objective of the residents survey was to assess Catlins residents' attitudes towards tourism, tourism development and tourism planning within their region. A postal return survey was administered to 1000 households throughout the Catlins, in the summer of 2003, achieving a response rate of 25 %. Key points are summarised below.

- *Perceptions of Tourism* – generally favourable attitudes towards tourism, with the majority seeing tourism as a desired industry for the Catlins in the future.
- *Tourism Advantages* – the economic attributes, such as employment, economic development and inflation of real estate were seen as the major benefits of tourism. This was followed by socio-cultural preservation and development of the community.
- *Tourism Disadvantages* – the effect on the physical environment were the major concerns about tourism, coupled with social change problems of crime and over development.
- *Developmental Issues* – tourism development requirements focused on the physical environment, particularly roading, waste management, and conservation.
- *Tourism's Community Role* – tourism is believed to be an avenue to improve community infrastructure and community spirit. Additionally it is seen as having an important role in conservation of natural assets such as flora and fauna.
- *Economic Development Opportunities* – agriculture is perceived to be the major economic opportunity in the region, followed closely by tourism.
- *Industry Environmental Impact* – Tourism is seen to have a moderate level of environmental impact by the community
- *Cross Regional Cooperation* – Cooperation between the Clutha and Southland regions is seen as an important component of tourism development in the Catlins.
- *Communication Methods* – Information sheets, flyers and brochures are the preferred method of communication between planners and the community. This is followed by public meetings, public review of documents and media campaigns.

- *Stakeholder Involvement* – Local district councils, residents and tourism industry operators are perceived to be very important in the tourism planning process. Maori input is not deemed to be important within this process.

Generally the community is positive about the advent of tourism, particularly with potential economic and social gains. Concern is however voiced over potential environmental degradation, congestion and insufficient infrastructural facilities. Co-operation is seen as integral component of the tourism planning process, with the involvement of community, local government and tourism industry as a key to an effective structure.

6. Community Workshops

Throughout June and July 2003, a series of public workshop meetings were held throughout the Catlins, in order to gain a clearer idea of the Catlins community's views on tourism development. In addition to the workshops, the Contractors gave presentations at a number of community group meetings over that period.

6.1 Feedback on type of Visitor

In general, workshop participants demonstrated a preference for visitors that have a sensitivity towards and respect for the environment. Participants identified the need to match the visitor with the experience i.e. people who appreciate the Catlins for what it is (i.e. unaltered and natural), and who would not be seeking services that may normally be associated with a "mass market" tourism destination. A preference was shown for visitors who had potential for a higher than average tourist expenditure, for example, the older, more affluent international visitors.

In terms of visitor numbers, preference was shown for low numbers, with a slow and controlled increase in numbers. Generally, large groups of visitors, on bus tours were seen as less desirable. Coupled with the above desire to attract visitors who spend money whilst in the Catlins, overall, a low volume, high-yield model was selected. Opportunities for visitors to stay longer, and contribute more to the local economy were seen as valuable.

Key points

- Environmentally aware visitors desired
- Low volume, high yield model preferred
- Enhanced local spending by "upmarket" visitors if possible
- Mix of international and domestic visitors good
- Moderate, controlled growth

6.2 Feedback on Tourist Facilities

Three main areas of concern were raised in the meetings: roads; toilets; and rubbish. Much of the workshop feedback concerned the quality of the roads in the Catlins. While most participants desired better maintenance of roads, this did not necessarily extend to sealing of all main tourist roads. There was a perception among residents of some areas that tour buses

are a main cause of road damage, and impacts on residents, and therefore that operators should contribute to road maintenance and the provision of facilities in some way.

Associated with the issue of roading was that of signage. In addition to improved road safety signage, general tourist information signage was felt to be lacking in some areas. Linked with the above issues were the (lack of) availability of cell-phone coverage and sparsity of public telephones – both issues were felt to impact on visitor (and resident) safety and the ability of visitors to make links with tourist services in the Catlins.

Toilets (or lack of) were the main topic discussed under the heading of tourist facilities. Workshop participants expressed concern at the lack of adequate toilet facilities throughout the Catlins – particularly in the north of the region. This has led to visitors using beach and bush areas for toileting in many locations. Apart from the health issues associated with this practice, it was felt to be at odds with the environmentally friendly image that the Catlins was wishing to portray. An associated issue was that of the indiscriminate dumping of toilet wastes from campervans, mainly associated with freedom camping.

As far as accommodation was concerned, participants felt that new developments should not be located in sensitive areas, and should preferably be small-scale boutique, cottage style, eco-friendly and non-institutional or commercial in style. Many participants also identified a need for evening and wet-weather activities for visitors, and suggestions included a greater range of dining opportunities, extended opening hours for the Owaka Information Centre, coupled with an evening programme of presentations and activities.

Key Points

- Better road maintenance required
- Road safety and information signage needs improving
- Telephone coverage should be better
- More toilet facilities needed
- Litter control required
- New development should be environmentally sensitive, small scale
- Long walks and evening (and wet weather) activities required

6.3 Feedback on Special Places

Much of the discussion concerning Special Places hinged on the dilemma of whether or not to encourage visitors to new areas (dispersal) as opposed to developing and promoting only a few existing sites (concentration). Opinion was divided over these approaches as means of reducing the impact of visitors. However, there was wide support among workshop participants for improved interpretative signage covering the natural and cultural histories of many visitor sites. It was felt that as well as improving the visitor experience, interpretive material could enhance visitor behaviour, particularly with respect to marine wildlife.

Some participants felt that some places should be kept “tourist free” – to protect the natural values (particularly marine wildlife) but also to protect traditional recreational experiences for local residents. Overall, there was unanimous support for improved management of special places, especially beaches, where uncontrolled viewing of marine wildlife was seen to border on harassment in many cases. Particular problems were seen with vehicles, motorbikes and dogs on beaches; education and enforcement were both seen to be necessary.

Key points

- Need for better management of special places (especially beaches)
- Uncertainty over concentration or dispersal as best approach to control negative impacts
- Interpretation, signage and facilities needed at special places to reduce impacts
- Possibly some areas to remain “tourist free” – for locals and wildlife
- Funding from tourists is required for management of special places

6.4 Feedback on Tourism Management

Many participants noted that there were a number of groups currently involved in tourism management/promotion in the Catlins, and that there was unnecessary duplication of efforts. They called for co-operation between all concerned groups.

A number of workshops supported the idea of the current Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party forming the core of a new management group that would act to facilitate the recommendations of this Strategy. There was recognition of the roles that other organisations could play on such a group, and the Department of Conservation was most frequently mentioned as a desired member. The ongoing membership of Southland and Clutha District Councils was seen to be essential.

Key roles of such a group would be to oversee the Strategy implementation – or to see that the “spirit of the strategy” is adhered to (this would be undertaken in co-operation with existing tourism organisations and local authorities). The group would co-ordinate between the north and south Catlins, liaise with landowners regarding the development of attractions and continue to undertake ongoing community consultation.

Key points

- Co-operation between existing tourism groups in Catlins essential
- Current Working Party possibly to form core of new group
- Venture Southland and Clutha District Councils and Department of Conservation membership critical
- Possibly Iwi membership, and broader non-tourism input

6.5 Vision for Catlins Tourism

Workshop groups were asked to condense their views and ideas on tourism in the Catlins into one brief “Vision Statement”. An analysis of these statements revealed that three common themes emerged, defining what Catlins tourism should provide.

Theme 1: Be a natural experience

Theme 2: Benefit the environment and economy

Theme 3: Be positive for residents (as well as visitors)

These three themes were very well represented in all of the workshops, with participants identifying a need to protect the environment, create income for the local economy, and retain community values. A fourth theme, reflecting a desire for no tourism, and a lack of willingness to share the Catlins with outsiders, was far less prevalent, emerging in only two focus groups.

An overall summary of community views, from the community workshops is as follows:

- Tourism is generally accepted by residents to be positive for the Catlins
- Recognition and fear that tourism can further impact negatively on wildlife and habitats
- Strong call from residents for improved tourism infrastructure, especially in relation to reducing visitor impacts
- Low volume, high yield model of tourist development preferred – with controlled growth of visitor numbers
- Dedicated Catlins tourism body called for, with support from and co-operation between Southland and Clutha District Councils, Venture Southland, Regional Tourism Organisations, and participation of the Department of Conservation

6.6 Tourism growth and the Catlins

As tourism destinations grow, they face many challenges. An increase in visitor numbers brings, along with increased income to the locality, a range of other impacts. These impacts may be demonstrated on the natural environment, for example on vulnerable wildlife, on the quality of air and water, and on the landscape, with new developments springing up to cater for growth in tourist numbers. Tourism growth also brings change to the destination communities that host visitors. This change can be positive, for example growth in the community may help to support dwindling local services. However, it may also be negative, resulting in changes to traditional lifestyles.

Tourism researchers have attempted to illustrate how destinations change over time, and the most well-known model is called the *Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution* (Fig B.3.).

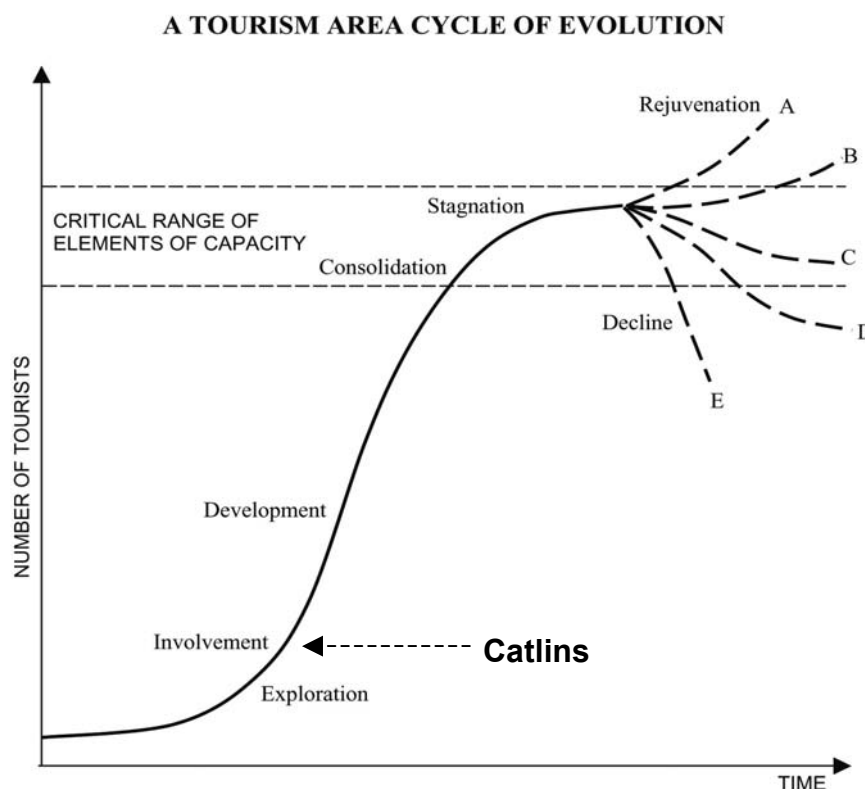


Fig B.3. *Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution* (Butler 1980)

This model shows that destinations may go through a number of different stages as tourist numbers grow over time. The initial stages are termed *Exploration* and *Involvement*, where there are low tourist numbers, and visitors are “exploring” a relatively unknown destination. Soon, some local residents become “involved” in the tourism industry through providing accommodation and other services. From this stage onwards, rapid growth in visitor numbers may be experienced, known as the period of *Development*. Over this stage, visitor impacts may also increase substantially, and there can be a loss of control of the destination as outside investors and decision-makers assume financial control of development. Political control may also fall into the hands of those who benefit directly from tourism, rather than the wider community.

If the destination reaches the *Consolidation* stage, visitor numbers are still growing, but at a slower rate than before. This may be because of overcrowding or other impacts that now make the destination a less attractive place to visit. The local infrastructure (e.g. water, power, sewerage, transport) may not be able to meet the needs of the tourism industry. Thus at this stage, the capacity of the destination to attract and meet the needs of new visitors may be limited, and the destination may head into *Stagnation*.

It is important to note that not all destinations go through the *Tourism Cycle of Evolution*. This model has been presented here, not because this is necessarily the future of the Catlins, but more as a warning that tourism in the Catlins may not be sustainable unless critical decisions are made early in the *Tourism Cycle of Evolution*. The Catlins is at present situated within the *Involvement* stage of the cycle. This Strategy outlines some approaches and makes recommendations that will help to manage tourism in the Catlins - in such a way as to avoid the negative consequences experienced by destinations caught in the latter stages of the cycle.

SUMMARY PART C: RECOMMENDATIONS

For each recommendation, Potential Implementing Partners (PIPs) are identified, and a time frame indicated within which the recommendation should be actioned. A complete list of recommendations can be found in Appendix 1. Key aspects of the recommendations are outlined below.

Strategic Objective One: To provide for the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy through the development of an appropriate body (or bodies) with appropriate mandate, representation and funding.

This objective establishes the organisational framework to operationalise the Catlins Tourism Strategy. This section recognises the institutional barriers that challenge integrated, sustainable tourism in the Catlins, and proposes a cross-border, multi-stakeholder partnership to drive Catlins tourism from this point on. A community-based organisation known in the interim as Tourism Catlins is proposed with a broad community membership (tourism and non-tourism sectors of the community) along with representation of key providers and stakeholders in the region. The involvement of key stakeholders, including Ngai Tahu, along with support from local and central government are identified as critical to the effectiveness of this body.

Strategic Objective Two: To provide for the absolute protection of the natural and cultural resources that are integral to Catlins tourism from the negative physical impacts of tourism.

The second Strategic Objective recognises the need to preserve the natural and cultural resources that are integral to Catlins tourism. The recommendations within this section will serve to facilitate a number of approaches to visitor management in the Catlins. These include educating the visitor on the vulnerability of the resource, enhancing on-site interpretation, maximising opportunities for the visitor to contribute financially and in other ways towards conservation, and growing community stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Further initiatives include the identification of opportunities to create an on-site presence (possibly through the recognition of business opportunities) to manage visitor impacts, stricter enforcement of concession regulations, promotion of accreditation systems, and assistance in the development of conservation management plans. Issues such as the impacts of freedom camping and inappropriate vehicle use of sensitive beach habitats are targeted. This objective also recognises the importance of addressing tourism impacts through resource management planning processes for the region.

Strategic Objective Three: To optimise the value of tourism for local residents, including social and economic benefits.

This objective addresses community concerns over tourism, and in particular the need to optimise economic returns to the community, whilst minimising negative socio-cultural impacts. Specifically, recommendations suggest enhancing information flow from the tourism sector to the wider community, including identifying tourism opportunities in which local residents may wish to invest or participate. The need to monitor, on an ongoing basis, community perceptions and satisfaction with tourism is outlined. Strategies to enhance the economic value of tourism to the community include targeting higher-spend visitors, growing the length of stay through the development of further attractions and activities, including hospitality, retail, and an evening programme of activities in the peak visitor period. Specific

recommendations refer to the possibility of developing coastal walking trails. The issue of freedom camping, a major concern to the community in the sense that it “robs” the community of visitor income, is also addressed.

Strategic Objective Four: To develop opportunities to enhance the visitor experience, in terms of attractions and activities.

Strategic Objective 4 focuses on developing tourism opportunities that enhance existing visitor experiences, by exploring the potential for new attractions and activities. Ideas advanced focus on existing connections to the outstanding natural qualities that the Catlins possess, developing the attraction base further to reveal the dynamism of the region for both international and domestic visitors. Recommendations are presented that would allow for ‘attraction clusters’ to eventually emerge that would contain a variety of attractions and experiences within close proximity to each other and that would be serviced with accommodation and food and retail outlets. Opportunities for attractions and activities are advanced along the following tourism themes: Maori, geology (rock), colonial heritage, farm, walking tracks, food and wine and arts and crafts. An element of this strategic objective examines the role that events play as attractions within the Catlins. Recommendations are offered that call for a review of these, the options to expand on existing events based on market potential and local interest in provision of them.

Strategic Objective Five: To optimise information flow to visitors in the Catlins through the provision of appropriate signage, information, interpretation and associated services.

Strategic Objective 5 provides recommendations with regards to signage, information and interpretation at attractions that help optimise information flow to visitors. Signage is vital for visitors and recommendations are offered that address the need for consistent messages in welcome signs, and that the option to use the SSR as a brand within the Catlins region be further explored. Information needs are also addressed with attention given to upgrading kiosk information, support of the Visitor Information Southland network, and the creation of an official Catlins web page. Recommendations regarding interpretation focus on review of existing information signs and interpretation boards at individual sites, and the option of greater promotion of Maori values and cultural interpretation within sites.

Strategic Objective Six: To cater for the hospitality service needs of the Catlins tourist through provision of appropriate accommodation and food services.

This objective focuses on hospitality service needs, with emphasis placed on appropriate accommodation and food services provision. Recommendations for accommodation consider the types of accommodation available and the options of ensuring that the quality end of the market is met, that accommodation providers are given sufficient information on the needs of visitors and trends in visitor numbers over the next few years, and that the economic benefits of second homes as part of accommodation provision be researched. Food, beverage and shopping recommendations focus on the location of these activities, that they exist in coastal locations or sites that offer vistas, that regular business hours are offered by establishments, and that a range of high quality souvenirs depicting the Catlins be locally developed and made available to visitors.

Strategic Objective Seven: To increase our knowledge of the visitor and their relationship with the community and the environment in the Catlins.

Strategic Objective 7 highlights the importance of developing an applied programme of research into visitor impacts and developing relationships between organisations and individuals with specialist knowledge of the area, habitats, wildlife, culture, history, and visitor behaviour. Consistent approaches to visitor data collection need to be adopted on a Catlins-wide basis.

Strategic Objective Eight: To ensure that the infrastructural requirements of the Catlins tourism industry are addressed.

This objective addresses infrastructural requirements in the Catlins. Recommendations are made with respect to the provision of public toilets, camping ground toilets, campervan waste disposal and solid waste management. Priorities for development in these areas are identified with community, visitor and environmental needs in mind. Road maintenance, safety and bus traffic have also been raised as issues by the community and are addressed in recommendations here. Further issues covered include the need to improve telecommunications, although this is acknowledged as a long-term goal, and thus interim measures to improve visitor-operator communication are suggested. Finally, the need to address access problems relating to some visitor attractions is acknowledged.

Strategic Objective Nine: To match the visitor with the Catlins tourism product through appropriate marketing and promotion.

Strategic objective 9 focuses on marketing and promotion. Recommendations are made that ensure that the Catlins maintains its key positioning around the themes of nature and wildlife, with some diversification to include culture, heritage and special interests, and that the family sector within the domestic market be further explored given the range of accommodation facilities that exist. Other recommendations call for an evaluation of the effectiveness of marketing programmes for the Catlins by destination marketing organisations across the South Island.

Strategic Objective Ten: To assist Catlins tourism operators (and associated services) to achieve an outstanding level of service to their clients.

The final objective offers suggestions to maintain and improving visitor service standards. Ways of enhancing tourism operator business, service and technical skill levels are identified. This section also identifies the need to plan for future human resource requirements – a challenge in a depopulating region, but one with rapidly growing visitor numbers.

Recommendations

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CATLINS TOURISM STRATEGY

Strategic Objective One: To provide for the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy through the development of an appropriate body (or bodies) with appropriate mandate, representation and funding.

1.1 Implementing the Catlins Tourism Strategy

1.1.1 Partnership and Co-operation

Planning and management of tourism in the Catlins is sited within a highly complex planning environment. There are a wide variety of organisations with partial responsibility for aspects of tourism management in the Catlins, whether this limitation be functional or territorial. One obstacle to the effective ongoing management of tourism is the geographical, historic and functional split between the north and south Catlins. Historically, the south has identified with Southland and Invercargill, and this area is contained within the Southland District and Southland Region. The north has identified more with Balclutha, Dunedin and Otago, and is found within the Clutha District and Otago Region.

Despite a willingness within the local groups and territorial authorities of the larger Catlins to work together, this has not been operationalised to date (notwithstanding previous north-south co-operation in the development of publicity material) primarily because of logistics, local politics and funding priorities laying elsewhere. These issues were raised frequently in the Community Workshops and also in the Residents Survey, which identified lack of co-operation between government stakeholders as a serious obstacle to sustainable tourism development in the Catlins.

A critical element that has been lacking to date has been one central, inclusive body that is tasked with co-ordinating the broader requirements of tourism development in the Catlins. In the Catlins, there is no such organisation. We see organisations in the north (central, regional and local government as well as community groups) mirrored by those in the south, with no key stakeholder assuming overall responsibility for co-ordination. To be fair, the imperative to form such a body has not existed until now, when tourism numbers and perceived tourism impacts have reached the point where a revision of existing structures is necessary. There are several advantages to developing stronger partnership and co-ordination among Catlins tourism stakeholders:

Catlins partnership advantages

- **Economies of scale in promotion and marketing**
- **The Catlins is stronger if promoted as a single destination**
- **Greater lobbying power for external funding**
- **Greater potential for community fundraising**
- **Integrated resource management**
- **Development of complementary products**
- **Greater power and legitimacy with respect to external stakeholders**

Across the Catlins, cross-border co-ordination and higher efficiencies may potentially be achieved through better co-operation among the existing key stakeholders. The current Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party is the first substantial example of cross-border collaboration and co-operation in the region and is a good model from which to progress. The Working Party is a good example of what is known as a “bridging organisation” that provides a forum for a number of stakeholders (each with differing positions and perspectives) to come together to work towards common goals.

1.1.2 Potential Future Roles of a Catlins Tourism Organisation?

In terms of the co-ordination requirements discussed above, there are advantages in having one central tourism body in the Catlins – but it is necessary to clarify the roles that such a body may take. These could potentially vary from that of a simple promotional role (this is the form that is commonly taken by destination promotion organisations) to those of a body with a wider mandate. Such a mandate could, at the least, include responsibility for overview of the implementation of the recommendations of this strategy. It could also embrace ongoing roles in monitoring and providing for the ongoing sustainable development of tourism in the Catlins. Some of the range of possible roles of a central Catlins tourism body are shown below:

<p>Potential roles for a tourism body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Destination management ➤ Advice to local authorities ➤ Marketing and promotion ➤ Lobbying of local, regional and central government ➤ Fundraising ➤ Communication with local residents ➤ Monitoring of tourism impacts ➤ Business advice and training for local operators ➤ Research ➤ Management of attractions ➤ Entrepreneur 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>What role should a Catlins tourism body play</p>  </div>
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However, regional tourism organisations that have comprehensive roles are more the exception than the rule, with most having a minimum role of promotion and marketing or at best advising the local authority on tourist policy.

This Strategy argues that there is a good case for the Catlins central tourism body to eventually have a broader mandate than that described above. This is for two reasons: firstly that the current and forecast growth in visitor numbers coupled with the highly sensitive nature of the tourist resource in the Catlins requires an integrated, holistic approach to management; second, that the critical management functions of tourism in the Catlins are currently spread too broadly, with the key decision-making levels too far removed from the resource knowledge base.

However, the above concept is more of an ideal that should be aimed for over the coming years, as tourism numbers grow, and the Catlins becomes more self-sustaining in terms of being able to generate funding and support for such an organisation. In the interim period, it is envisaged that such an organisation would have largely an advisory role, working with current tourism stakeholders as partners in the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy.

Initial roles proposed for a Catlins tourism body

- **As a facilitator or focal point for multiple stakeholders**
- **Communication and liaison with Catlins community**
- **Communication and liaison with local / regional / central government service providers**
- **Overview of implementation of Catlins Tourism Strategy**

1.1.3 Evolution of a Catlins Tourism Body

The figure below illustrates how a Catlins tourism body may evolve from an initial structure of a voluntary organisation (possibly a trust), supported logistically by key stakeholders, to one that has a strong (and legally supported) mandate from key stakeholders and is ultimately able to provide a greater degree of self-funding. This period of transition may require a period of at least five to ten years, to enable sources of funding to be identified, commitment or “buy-in” from stakeholders to be gained, and reconfiguration of tourism-related funding from existing stakeholders to be arranged where applicable. The figure shows how different projects may be progressively achieved as knowledge, support and funding grows over time, and with essential input from partner organisations.

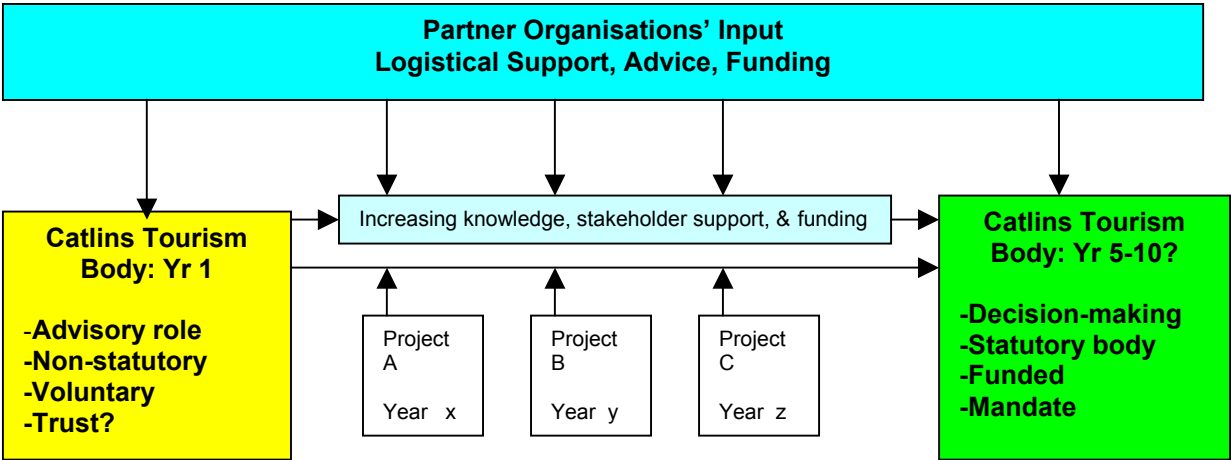


Figure 1.1 Evolution of a Catlins Tourism Organisation

It is important to note that such an organisation would not seek to duplicate the roles of existing organisations. The Strategy advocates a flexible approach to the division and funding of key tasks: for example, the role of marketing and promotion for the Catlins would likely continue to be undertaken by Venture Southland Tourism, but possibly expanded for the entire Catlins; similarly, there are responsibilities that may be funded by Clutha District Council because they may have existing resources (e.g. experienced staff members) that can be most efficiently applied across the entire Catlins. Thus a critical role of such a body would be to maintain communication with service providers within Central, Regional and Local Government.

1.1.4 Composition of a Catlins Tourism Body

An important consideration is the composition of this central body. Community feedback indicates that the current Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party could form the core of such a body. Local authority membership is seen as critical, as is inclusion of the Department of Conservation. There was also some desire to broaden the membership out to include non-tourism representation from the community. Iwi representation is also seen as being useful (Fig 1.2).

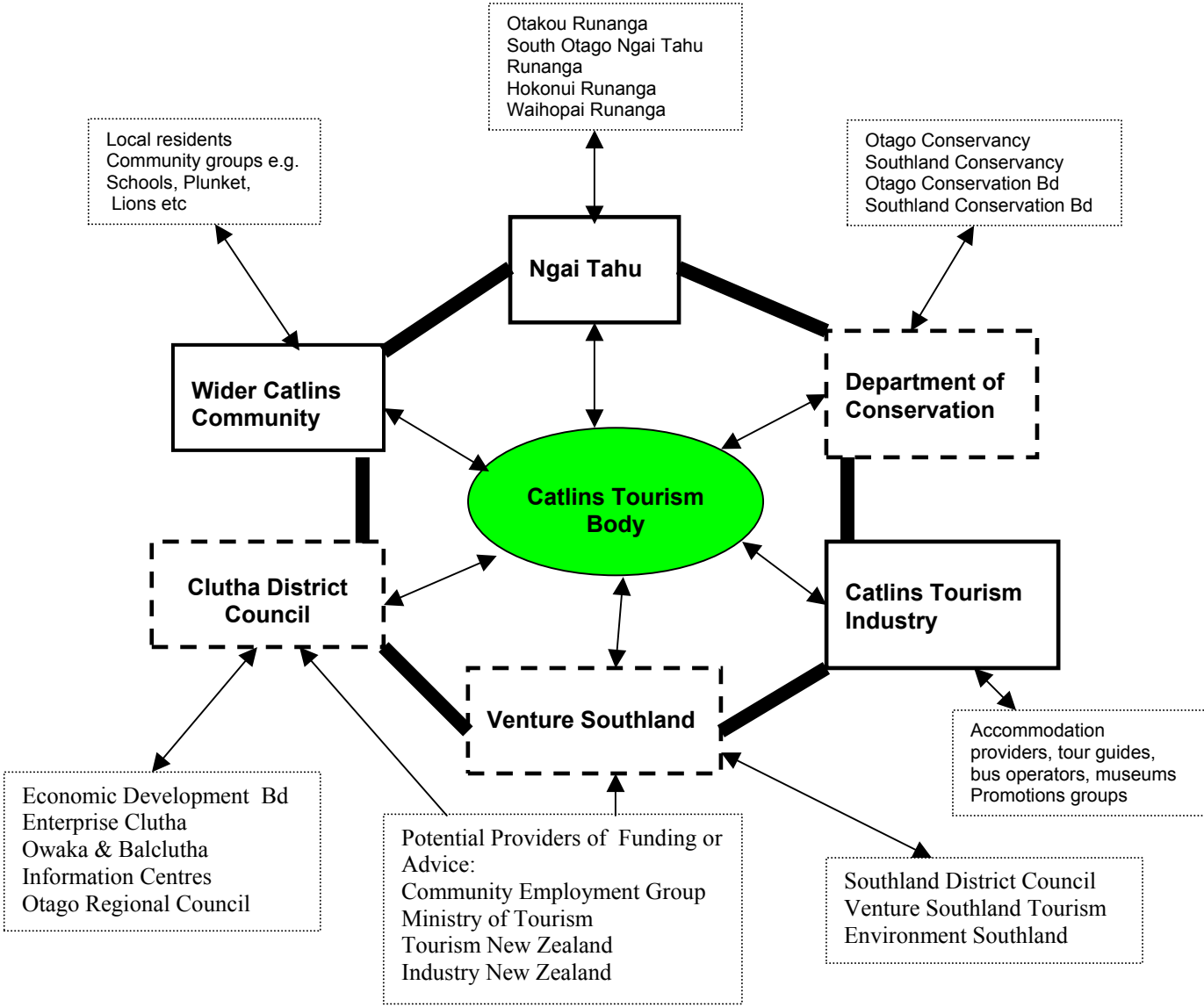


Fig 1.2 Membership and links for Tourism Catlins

Funding of such a body is a key issue, and the level of funding would vary according to the responsibilities eventually agreed upon for the tourism body. As a minimum requirement, funding would provide for logistical support of the body (meetings, communications, transport, administrative assistance etc). As the body evolves over coming years, as discussed above, further sources of discretionary funding may be identified that may could be applied to specific projects identified in this Strategy: e.g. resource management advocacy, promotion, and resource monitoring.

It is important to note that in the creation of such a body it is not intended to make the existing local promotions groups redundant. These groups will continue to play an important role in local communication and co-ordination. However, some of their more ambitious roles could potentially be achieved in co-operation with the larger body or reassigned to that body if seen as appropriate.

Public input will be sought in the development of the community body. Input has already been received via the Residents Survey and Community Workshops undertaken for this Strategy, but it is envisaged that a public meeting be held to discuss implementation of this Strategy, and in particular, Recommendation 1.1.1.

Recommendation 1.1.1

That a community body be created with the key task of overseeing the implementation of this Strategy. That this body be known provisionally as “Tourism Catlins”.

Potential Implementing Partners: Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party, Clutha District Council, Venture Southland

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 1.1.2

That Tourism Catlins have the following specific objectives:

- 1. To overview the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy***
- 2. To liaise with central, regional and local government service providers over specific projects outlined within the Catlins Tourism Strategy***
- 3. To liaise and communicate with the Catlins community concerning Catlins Tourism Strategy issues***

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 1.1.3

That arrangements be made to establish Tourism Catlins, comprising around 10 members as follows:

- 6 Community representatives (to be elected from public meetings in the Catlins)***
- Ngai Tahu representative(s)***
- 1 Venture Southland representative (ex officio)***
- 1 Clutha District Council representative (ex officio)***
- 2 Department of Conservation representatives (ex officio)***

Potential Implementing Partners: *Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party, CDC, Venture Southland, Ngai Tahu, DOC*

Priority: *High priority, preferably upon final approval of the Catlins Tourism Strategy*

Recommendation 1.1.4

That details for the ongoing structure and format of Tourism Catlins be determined by that organisation after its initial formation. Issues to address include: legal status; meeting schedule and format; lines of communication with key stakeholder organisations.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins, CDC, Venture Southland*

Priority: *High priority*

1.2 Support for “Tourism Catlins”

This Strategy identifies a range of roles and tasks for Tourism Catlins, and the issue of support is significant. Partnership and community and industry assistance are seen to be the keys to implementation of this Strategy. However, undeniably, Tourism Catlins will play a crucial role in facilitating the implementation. The proposed initial model for Tourism Catlins is that of a voluntary, community-based organisation. However, the task allotted to Tourism Catlins is not insubstantial and there is a need for a dedicated budget that will provide ongoing logistical support – for meetings and liaison with local authority service providers. Such logistical (and moral) support is seen as essential where this organisation will rely largely upon the goodwill and free-labour of volunteers. Potential sources of funding for specific projects recommended within the Strategy include Venture Southland, Clutha District Council, and central government providers as appropriate.

Recommendation 1.2

That logistical support be provided for Tourism Catlins in order for that body to fulfil its objectives.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Clutha District Council, Venture Southland*

Priority: *High priority*

1.3 Involvement of Maori

The Catlins is a highly significant area to Maori. Despite there being relatively few people of Maori ancestry who currently reside in the Catlins, the area remains important to Ngai Tahu, due to their long association with the area, the existence of sites that hold special significance to the tribe, and also because Maori are an important landowner. Currently there are four Ngai Tahu runanga linked to the Catlins: Otakou, South Otago, Hokonui and Waihopai.

This Strategy recognises the importance of Ngai Tahu Tangata Whenua to Catlins tourism and adopts the view that all tourism development in the area should adhere to the principles and spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Strategy shall give due accord to all statutory requirements that give recognition to Maori kaitiakitaka, and the ongoing relationship between Maori and their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.

Recommendation 1.3

That this Strategy in all its recommendations give implicit recognition of the significance of the Catlins to Ngai Tahu, and that in recognition of this, that relevant runanga, hapu and whanau groups be incorporated into tourism management, development and decision-making processes in the Catlins in a meaningful way.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, VS, CDC, DOC in co-operation with representatives of relevant Ngai Tahu hapu and whanau groups.

Priority: High priority, ongoing

1.4 Review of the Implementation of this Strategy

Perhaps the most important aspect of a strategy such as this is the identification of a process by which its success may be judged. "Success" in this case is largely assessed through the extent to which the recommendations have been implemented, or if they have not been implemented, due to changing circumstances or community wishes not to do so, then the extent to which viable alternatives have been explored and/or implemented. The section above identifies a body, Tourism Catlins, which will be responsible for overview of the implementation of the Strategy. It is proposed that this body also be charged with an ongoing review of the implementation of the strategy. This could be undertaken through an annual analysis of the "checklist" of recommendations (found at the end of this document).

Recommendation 1.4.1

That progress in the implementation of the recommendations of this Strategy be reviewed not more than twelve months after the accepted final version of this Strategy becomes publicly notified, and every 12 months thereafter as necessary. And that this review be widely disseminated in the Catlins community and tourism industry.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 1.4.2

That the need for renewal of this Strategy be assessed by Tourism Catlins within five years of the initial public notification of this document.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins*

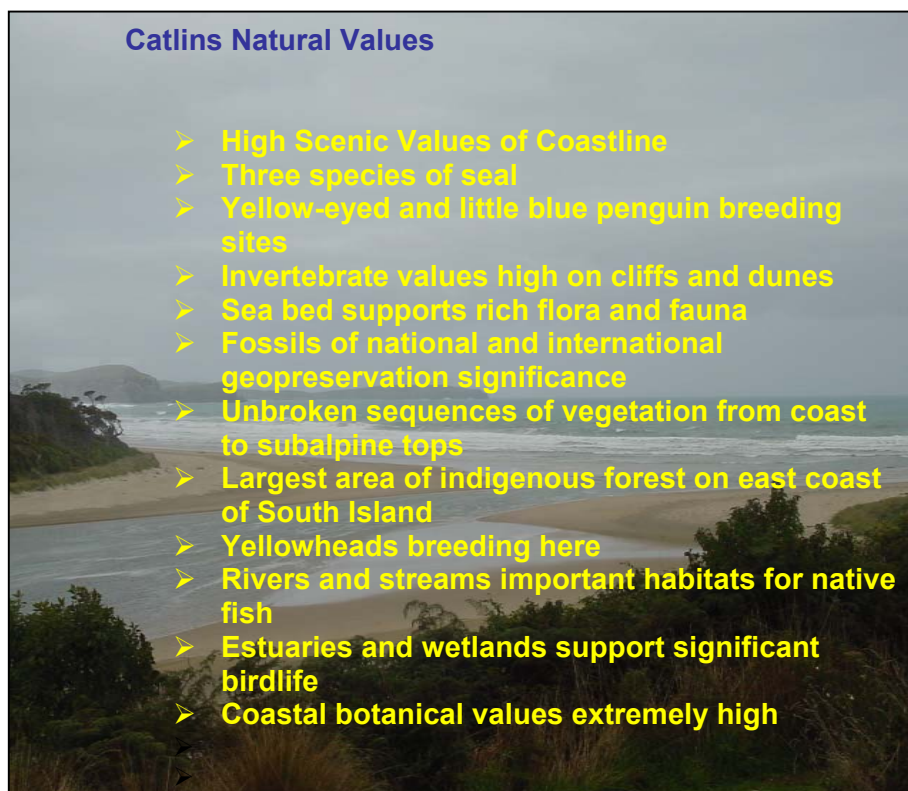
Priority: *Medium priority*

2. PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Strategic Objective Two: To provide for the absolute protection of the natural and cultural resources that are integral to Catlins tourism from the negative physical impacts of tourism.

2.1 Introduction – the Issues

The Catlins region supports natural environments of outstanding value. The Catlins tourism product is primarily composed of natural attractions, including the coastline, native forest, rivers, streams and estuaries, and the significant fauna and flora that are located within those habitats. In particular, the marine wildlife (marine mammals and bird life) are key attractions and key motivations for visitors coming to the Catlins (see Part 1 section 6). However, the populations of the key species (e.g. New Zealand fur seal, Hookers sea lion, yellow-eyed penguin, little-blue penguin, Hector's dolphin) are low and vulnerable to the impacts of tourism. The values of the area may be summarised as follows (Source: Department of Conservation Otago Conservation Management Strategy (1998), Mainland Southland – West Otago Conservation Management Strategy (1998)).



In addition, cultural values are significant, Maori having a long association with the area, and from the mid 19th Century, the area supporting a variety of industries, including whaling, timber, minerals and farming.



Natural values in particular, are an extremely important part of the Catlins attractiveness. Attractions such as wildlife, waterfalls, forests and beaches were revealed by the Visitor Survey to be the main motivation for visitors coming to the Catlins. The Non-Visitor Perception Study showed that there was a high degree of awareness among travellers of the natural values of the Catlins, with the region ranking alongside Te Anau as a nature-based tourism destination.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the range of tourism impacts that have been reported from the Community Workshops, from research undertaken in the Catlins, and from the Catlins Attractions Inventory undertaken as part of this Strategy. The Inventory identified 77 natural attractions and 67 cultural attractions in the region that are currently promoted or publicised in some way for visitors. The Inventory revealed evidence of waste and/or pollution at 20 of these sites, vandalism at 10, and impacts to wildlife at four sites.

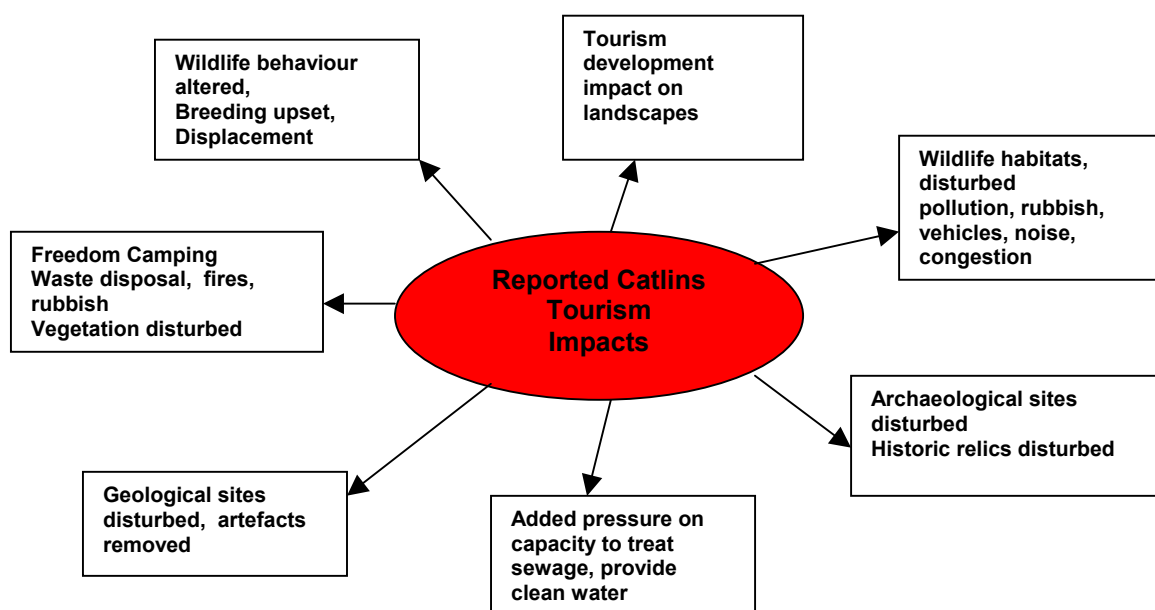


Fig 2.1 Reported Catlins tourism impacts

There is a high degree of reliance upon natural and cultural attractions by the tourism industry. A total of around 50 tourism businesses, with a combined economic contribution of over \$2 million per annum rely extensively on these attractions. As well as this strong economic dependence upon natural and cultural sites, there is also widespread concern among the Catlins community over the future of their special places. Environmental protection emerged as the main tourism issue from the Residents Survey, and this issue was raised repeatedly throughout the Community Workshops. While the community is generally supportive of tourism, the point was clearly made that growth of this industry must not be at the expense of the habitats, wildlife and special places that the community treasure. There is already anecdotal evidence of visitor impacts on wildlife, and widespread perception among the community of the negative environmental impacts of visitors. The occurrence of negative tourism impacts has been supported somewhat by impact studies on specific species or sites (e.g. Heinrich's study on sea lions).

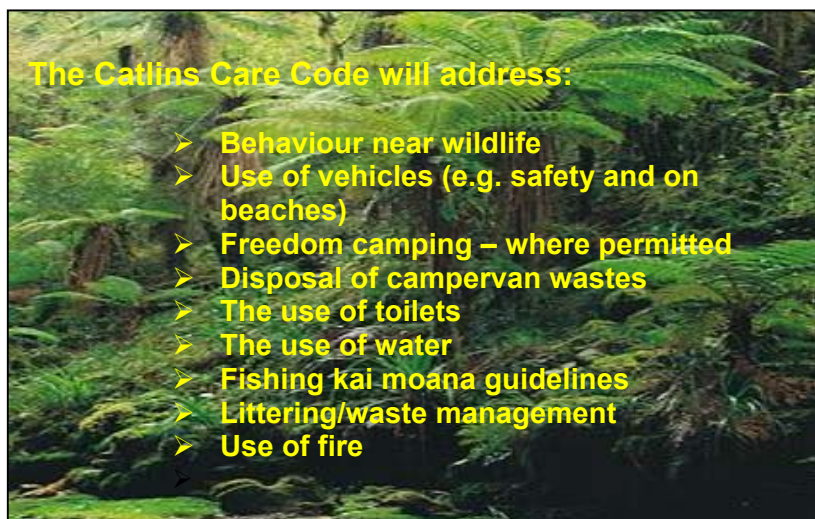
Notwithstanding the intrinsic values of natural and cultural sites, collectively these form the "core" of the Catlins tourism product, and as such require a high degree of protection – both "for tourism" and "from tourism". This section discusses approaches to protecting natural and cultural values in the Catlins, firstly examining ways to manage visitors, then addressing other resource-protection requirements, including appropriate tourism development, research and monitoring needs, concessions and industry accreditation. The issues of freedom camping and beach impacts are specifically addressed.

2.2 Visitor Management

This has been documented in the Catlins and elsewhere in comparable areas. The Department of Conservation's *Hoiho Recovery Plan 2000-2025*, for example, lists sites in the Catlins that are suitable for viewing yellow-eyed penguins, and those that are "no go" areas for tourism.

There are two main ways that tourism can impact negatively upon habitats and wildlife. The first is through the direct actions of the visitor, and the second is through the development of tourist infrastructure and superstructure.

The interaction between visitor and environment can be managed through a number of approaches. These include education of the visitor about appropriate behaviour while in the Catlins.



It is important to present the visitor with a consistent set of guidelines for appropriate environmental behaviour. And this can be set in place across the range of media listed above. While there are currently more general visitor guidelines available (e.g. Environmental Care Code and the Wildlife Care Code) there is a need for something that is more local and meets the needs of the Catlins environment and visitor. A “Catlins Care Code” would provide visitors with a list of specific appropriate behaviours for the Catlins, in relation to the following issues listed above.

Recommendation 2.2

That a “Catlins Care Code” be developed, and that this be consistently presented to visitors through a range of media.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, VS, CDC, DOC

Priority: High priority

It is important that development and dissemination of the Catlins Care Code be undertaken in association with key stakeholders, including the Department of Conservation, local authorities, Venture Southland Tourism, the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association, bus companies, and other tourism operators.

2.2.1 Reaching the Visitor

There are advantages in providing the appropriate information to the visitor or to the *potential* visitor as early as possible in the trip-planning process. If potential visitors are made aware of the fragility of the Catlins environment and its wildlife, and of the “rules of engagement” with wildlife *before* they come to the Catlins, this may lead to two outcomes: first, improved behaviour from visitors and reduced impacts; second, a better experience for visitors by matching expectations with what is appropriate behaviour.

Communication with the visitor could be through:

- **the internet**
- **publicity brochures**
- **on-site signage**
- **first-person interpretation through the use of guides**
- **information-centre advice and displays**
- **informed tourism operators**
- **local residents**

Communication with the visitor is an ongoing role that can utilise a range of media, some of which are outlined above.

Recommendation 2.2.1

That information about appropriate environmental behaviour for visitors (the Catlins Care Code) be included in all Catlins promotional material, including websites.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, north and south Catlins promotions groups and individual operators, Venture Southland Tourism, CDC, Southern Scenic Route Trust, DOC

Priority: High priority

2.2.2 The Role of the Community

An important source of information for the visitors about appropriate environmental behaviour is the local residents. Throughout the process of community consultation, it has become quite clear that local residents feel an intense pride in their area, and wish to protect special habitats and wildlife. While there is only a limited number of people in the Catlins who have statutory powers to enforce conservation regulations (e.g. DOC honorary rangers), the concept of community stewardship is valuable. Local residents need to feel that they can play a valuable role in visitor management, and this can be facilitated by informing and educating them about what environmental behaviour is appropriate and about the practical ways in which they can help. The community stewardship concept needs to be taken forward to the point where every Catlins resident feels that they have the ability to advise visitors and to intervene when non-appropriate behaviour is encountered. It will be necessary to consult the Department of Conservation in clarifying what role the community can play with respect to protected species and sites.



Recommendation 2.2.2

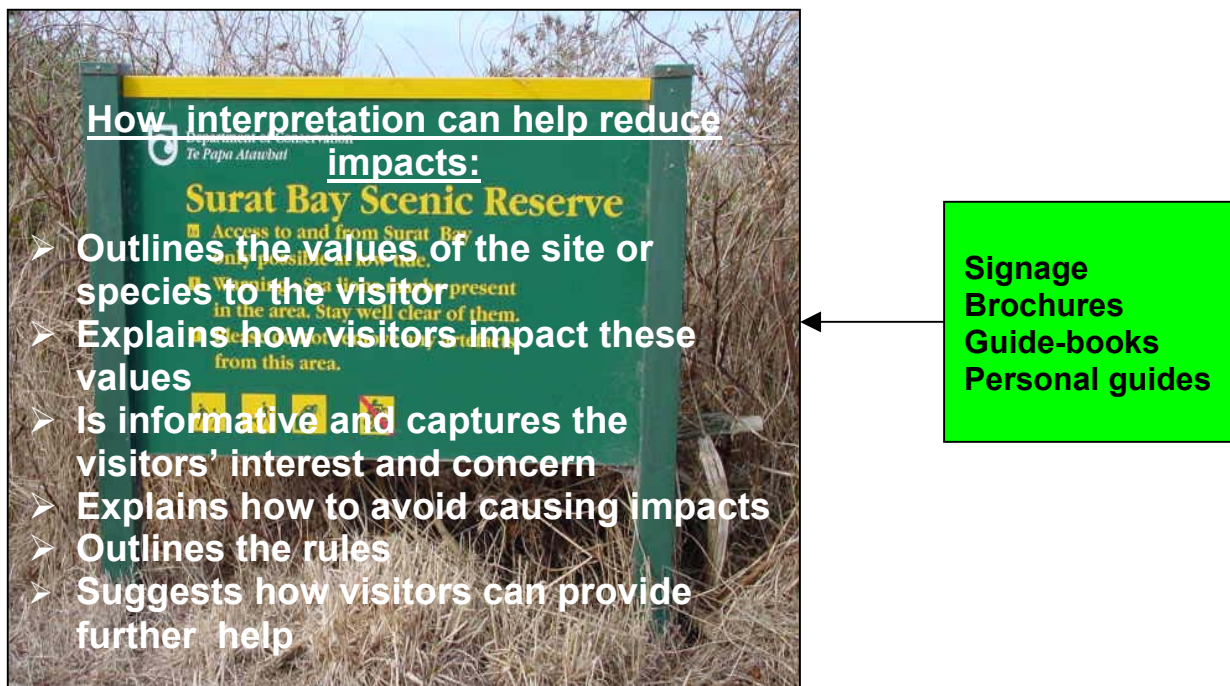
That Tourism Catlins and the Department of Conservation investigate opportunities to foster community stewardship in the Catlins by actively communicating with the community through media releases, public workshops and information sessions, training and education.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins and DOC

Priority: Medium priority

2.2.3 On-site interpretation

An important means of establishing appropriate environmental behaviours among visitors is through provision of on-site interpretation. This can be achieved through signage, provision of written material and the use of guides. The community and stakeholder consultation, and the attractions inventory all highlight the need for improved on-site interpretation. The majority of relevant visitor sites are on Conservation Estate, and while some DOC sites are very well interpreted, the overall small quantity of interpretation has reflected the low priority and lack of resourcing for such projects within that organisation. Provision of interpretation would need to be undertaken in accordance with DOC requirements, and where this is not identified as a DOC priority, possibly developed in co-operation with DOC and funded in partnership with other providers. On other sites, in other public ownership, interpretation should be undertaken in co-operation with the management agency (e.g. local authority) and again funded on a partnership basis. For private sites, the responsibility for interpretation should be a shared role with the owner/manager assuming primary responsibility for funding. Tourism Catlins may help through, for example, providing advice on sources of assistance on design and content, and facilitating workshops for site owners/managers.



While it is valuable to provide some interpretation at most important visitor sites, this could be facilitated through a number of different means: e.g. signage; published material; personal guides. Signage may be desirable at key visitor sites, but at many other sites, there could be prospects for local residents and tourism operators to develop business opportunities around providing interpretive services.

A number of priority areas for enhanced interpretation were identified through consultation with Working Party members, key stakeholders and through the Community Workshops (Figure 2.2). It is acknowledged, however, that there are numerous sites worthy of interpretation (e.g. waterfalls, tussock grassland areas, historic/cultural sites), and the identification and prioritising of these sites should be subject to a detailed *interpretation plan* for the Catlins.

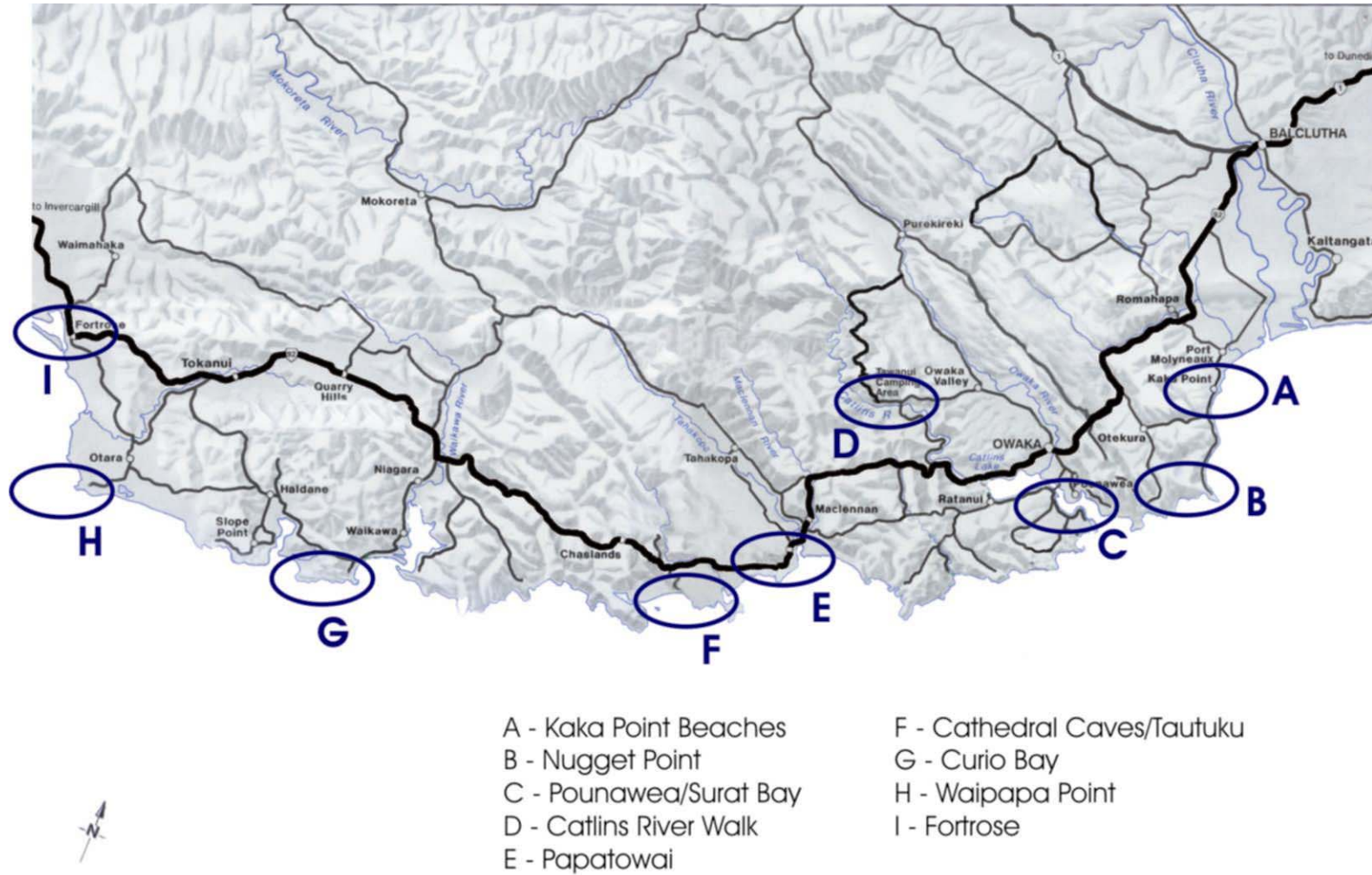


Fig 2.2 Priority areas for interpretation

Recommendation 2.2.3a

That with a view to improving visitor management, interpretation be provided at all key visitor sites with significant conservation or heritage values.

Potential Implementing Partners: Site owners/managers with advice and support from Tourism Catlins, VS, CDC, DOC
Priority: High priority

Recommendation 2.2.3b

That a detailed Interpretation Plan be compiled to allow the identification and prioritisation of interpretation throughout the Catlins.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, DOC, Site owners/managers, CDC, SDC, LPG
Priority: Medium priority

2.2.4 Visitor Charges and Conservation

A large amount of community feedback concerned the lack of funding for protection of natural and heritage values. There is wide recognition that the Department of Conservation has a substantial management role to play in the Catlins, but with very limited resources. A commonly held view was that the tourism industry itself should contribute towards funding of the protection of resources, and that a tax or levy on visitors should be applied or user-pays charging introduced for visitor sites. Such funding could be used to help provide the infrastructure that is required in many sites, including signage, interpretation, toilets and waste management, as well as contribute towards ongoing monitoring and research into the wellbeing of habitats and wildlife.



A number of tourism destinations in New Zealand have investigated the implementation of a “tourist-tax” and have rejected it for a variety of reasons including visitor resistance, tourism provider resistance, and difficulty of enforcement. The concept of a tourist tax is also problematic when it is identified that local residents may be a significant source of many of

the impacts on habitats and wildlife. Thus, while this Strategy does not preclude the future imposition of direct tourist taxes, it does not recommend such an approach at this stage.¹

Rather, the approach recommended is based on educating visitors about conservation needs in the Catlins, providing them an enriching and satisfying experience, and thus developing their subsequent goodwill and generosity. To capitalise on this goodwill, there must be opportunities for visitors to contribute to identifiable projects.

One suggestion is the promotion of a “Catlins Eco-pass”. This would be available for purchase by visitors (e.g. from the proposed “Eco-Museum” at Owaka) throughout the Catlins. It would contain a comprehensive guide for visitors to the Catlins or some value-added opportunity for them, and the aim would be for the Catlins Eco-pass to become a requisite for all visitors. It would be promoted as a means of contributing towards wildlife and habitat protection on the Conservation Estate for *specific identified projects*.

Catlins Eco-pass:

- **Generates funds for specific identified conservation projects on “free-sites”**
- **After purchase gives “free-access” to all public sites in Catlins**
- **High quality, souvenir standard**
- **Contains environmental information**
- **Contains information on how to contribute further financially**
- **Linked to discounts on other tourism products (e.g. accommodation, guided activities, meals)**
- **Sold by local shops, information centres, tourist operators**

In a similar vein, the Catlins community has suggested that opportunities be identified for visitors to contribute to habitat restoration – for example by paying for a tree seedling, its establishment and ongoing care. Thus the visitor gets a concrete reminder of their personal contribution, whilst subsidising local conservation work.

Whatever options are chosen, it is important that identification of opportunities to generate funds associated with visitation to the Conservation Estate be undertaken in close co-operation with DOC and in line with existing DOC policy in this area.

Recommendation 2.2.4

That opportunities for visitors to contribute to funding of conservation management projects in the Catlins be maximised. And that this include the development of a Catlins Eco-pass or similar product.

¹ A recent study of the costs of tourism infrastructure on tourist destinations in New Zealand recognises that there are significant barriers to the introduction of tourist taxes (e.g. bed tax), and that there are no current mechanisms for their introduction (Market Economics 2003).

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in co-operation with local promotion groups and tourism operators
Priority: Medium priority, ongoing

2.2.5 Identification of Concession Opportunities

One of the problems with implementing visitor charges for sites is that most sites are on the Conservation Estate and that currently there is no policy that would enable DOC to charge simply for access to those sites. However, there is the capacity to apply a visitor charge for use of facilities at a site or for visitor services received at a site. Such facilities or services may be provided by the site owner/manager or by a concessionaire – a business operator who has permission to operate a business at the site.

There are a number of sites for which development of facilities or provision of some “value-added” experience could generate conservation funding through visitor charges. The Cathedral Caves is one example of where a private landowner has successfully imposed a visitor charge, albeit primarily for access, but also in part for information, the provision of secure car parking and toilet facilities.



Currently, negotiations are in progress for the integrated management of Curio Bay facilities and attractions, whereby a local provider will be able to generate funding for the ongoing management and protection of that resource. In that case, guided tours of the site will help ensure protection of the site’s values as well as generating conservation funding.

Nugget Point is one further site (there are possibly more) where there may be opportunities to generate revenue for conservation purposes while simultaneously limiting visitor impacts through on-site presence and management. Nugget Point attracts high numbers of visitors and because of the diversity of species that it supports has a high priority for enhanced conservation management (as identified in the DOC Otago Conservation Management Strategy). However, the development of concession operations on the DOC Estate must be considered in line with protection of natural and historic resources, and in accordance with operational Conservation Management Strategies (for Otago and Southland) and Conservation Management Plans.

Recommendation 2.2.5

That further opportunities be investigated for the provision of concession activities in the Catlins that would provide for revenue generation and enhanced visitor management and protection of conservation values.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins in co-operation with Department of Conservation and other partners (e.g. Ngai Tahu, local authorities)*

Priority: *Low priority*

2.3 Tourism Facility Development and Environmental Protection

The other main way that tourism can impact negatively on natural and cultural resources is through insensitive development of infrastructure and superstructure. Infrastructure includes such things as roading, car parks, communications facilities, waste management facilities etc. Superstructure includes the accommodation units, restaurants, shops, visitor centres etc. In both cases, the siting of such development in inappropriate locations can have a profound impact upon habitats and wildlife, and scenic vistas as well as the aesthetics of the surrounding area.

The community has identified the need to carefully manage development in the Catlins, and particularly in the coastal environment. There are a number of approaches that can be adopted to ensure that tourism development is sited appropriately or that it is appropriate to the environment in which it is sited. These include: education of developers about the values of relevant sites; advice on site location and design; and advocacy through statutory processes such as the Resource Management Act and Conservation Act.

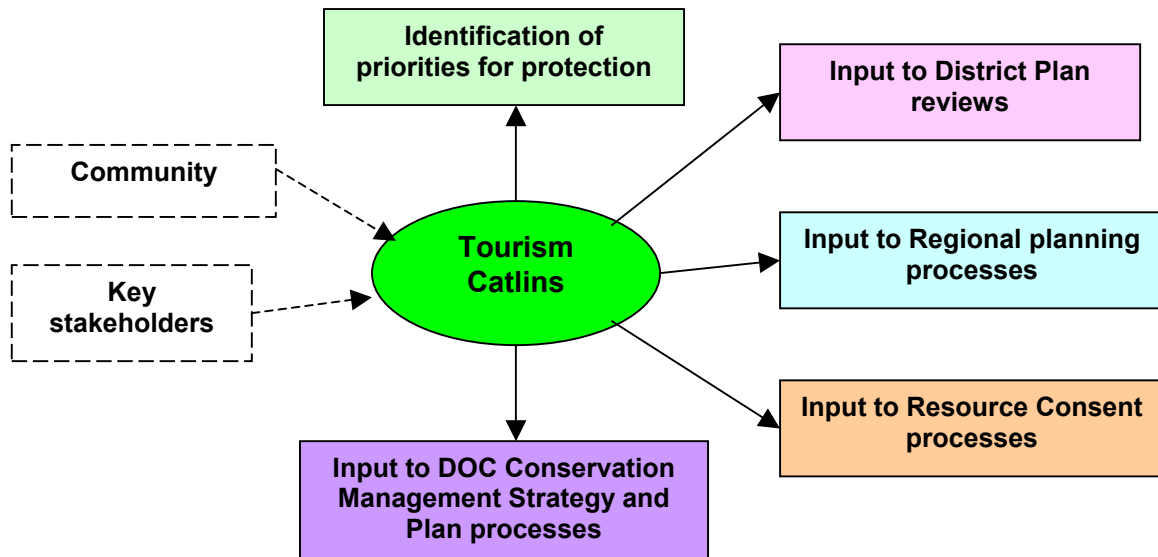


Fig2.3 The Tourism Catlins advocacy role

The current relevant statutory policies and plans (e.g. District Plans) are sensitive to the conservation and landscape values of the Catlins, however, potentially there is latitude in the way that these are interpreted and applied. Thus it is seen as important that tourism industry, community and key stakeholder views are consistently and continually advocated in resource

management policy processes for the region. Tourism Catlins through its tourism industry and community representation could play a role in advocating tourism-specific concerns in conservation and resource management processes (Figure 2.3).

Recommendation 2.3

That Tourism Catlins advocate the protection of conservation and heritage values through input to conservation planning and resource management processes where appropriate.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins
Priority: Medium priority

2.4 Research and Monitoring of the Environment

Decisions on resource use and management should be based upon a sound knowledge of the resource. This Strategy has been a starting point in building that knowledge, but there is a requirement to obtain a far greater level of detail on visitor impacts across a range of habitats in the Catlins. Such data can then be used in visitor management and ultimately to help minimise negative visitor impacts on the environment.

Currently, a range of valuable data is being collected through various research or monitoring programmes or studies, involving, for example, DOC, various departments from the University of Otago, and regional and local authorities. It is important that current data is considered in terms of identifying future research and monitoring requirements.

Basically ongoing research requirements fall into two categories (Figure 2.4): the first set of data would be collected through a monitoring programme aimed at establishing the “State of the Environment” in relation to visitor sites and visitor impacts in the Catlins. This data would be required to be collected on a regular and frequent basis, considering the rapid rate of growth in visitor numbers. It would be communicated to the local residents and key stakeholders and could be considered a key indicator of sustainable tourism in the Catlins. The second set of data would be research required “on call” for specific developments or issues encountered relating to visitor impacts.

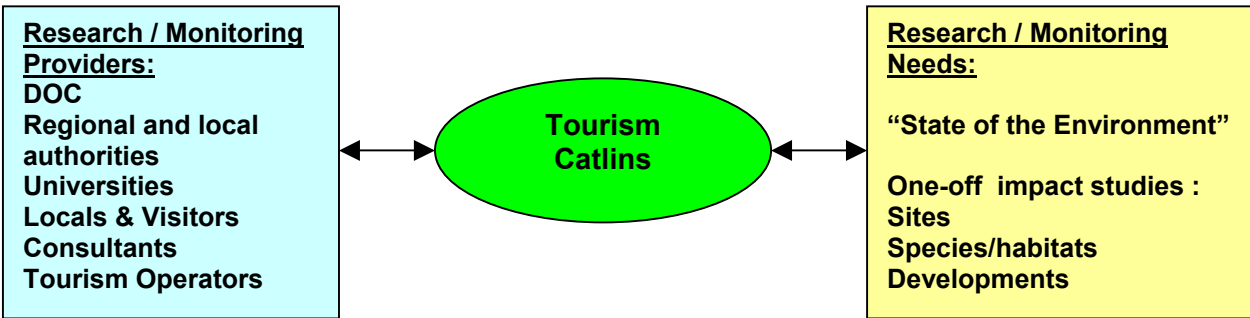


Fig 2.4 Tourism Catlins and research / monitoring needs

A large amount of the data to be collected for the monitoring programme could be gathered by the local tourism organisation, operators, local residents, and even the visitors themselves. The data requirements of the second category would be more exacting, necessitating some input from professional researchers.

Recommendation 2.4.1

That Tourism Catlins facilitate the identification of a programme to monitor the environmental impact of tourism in the region. That this be a joint programme with resourcing based upon ownership or management responsibility of the sites/values to monitored.

*Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, DOC, Venture Southland
Tourism, CDC, tourism operators, research providers*
Priority: High priority

Recommendation 2.4.2

That the programme (2.4.1) include a biennial “State of the Environment” reporting process based upon an environment and visitor-monitoring programme. And that this information be made widely available, as a key indicator of the sustainable tourism performance of the region.

*Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, DOC, Venture Southland
Tourism, CDC, tourism operators, research providers*
Priority: High priority

Recommendation 2.4.3

That Tourism Catlins identify research priorities for visitor impact management within the area, and promote these priorities to potential research providers.

*Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, DOC, Venture Southland
Tourism, CDC, tourism operators, research providers*
Priority: Medium priority

2.5 Concession Management

Many of the Catlins main tourist attractions are located on DOC Conservation Estate or are wildlife species protected by DOC. The Department of Conservation requires that any business activity operating on the Conservation Estate requires a concession. Furthermore, any business activity that involves marine mammals requires a permit issued by DOC under the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations. The concession/permit system is designed primarily to ensure that conservation values are protected in the course of undertaking a business activity on Department of Conservation Estate or involving protected species. Currently, most tourism operators in the Catlins who operate within the Conservation Estate or who are involved with marine mammals have the necessary concessions and permits to do

so. However, consultation for this Strategy revealed that some operators do not have the necessary approvals. This is not a desirable situation as it may mean that their activities, which have not been vetted and approved by DOC, are resulting in greater visitor impacts on wildlife and habitats than those running under a concession or permit. There is concern from the community and from *bona fide* operators that this situation is untenable. From these operators' point of view, it reflects badly on their image, as well as jeopardising the sustainability of wildlife-tourism in the Catlins.

Recommendation 2.5.1

That Tourism Catlins work closely with the Department of Conservation to advocate tourism operator compliance with the concession/permit system.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins in consultation with the Department of Conservation, tourism operators*

Priority: *High priority*

Recommendation 2.5.2

That Tourism Catlins provide input to Department of Conservation concessions through the appropriate processes (i.e. Conservation Management Strategies; Conservation Management Plans; and publicly notified concession applications when relevant).

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins, Department of Conservation*

Priority: *Medium priority*

2.6 Accreditation

If individual tourism enterprises are run on environmentally sustainable grounds, then this contributes to a sustainable tourism industry in the region, and reflects well on the destination in terms of destination image. Methods to encourage the environmental performance of tourism operations include the provision of training and advice, and the use of accreditation programmes (Figure 2.5). Currently there is no nationally accepted accreditation programme for tourism operators in New Zealand (there *are* recognised standards for accommodation e.g. Qualmark). However there are a number of programmes that could potentially be used by operators, including the Enviro-Mark system and Green Globe. Ultimately it is up to the individual operator to choose whether or not they seek to endorse their operation with such an accreditation. However, these programmes are aimed to promote environmentally sustainable business, and thus fit in with the overall thrust of this Strategy. Success in regional and national tourism awards also serve as endorsements for operators, and can act as an incentive for operators to provide an environmentally sound visitor experience. Some nature tourism and eco-tourism award categories are judged in part on environmental performance criteria.

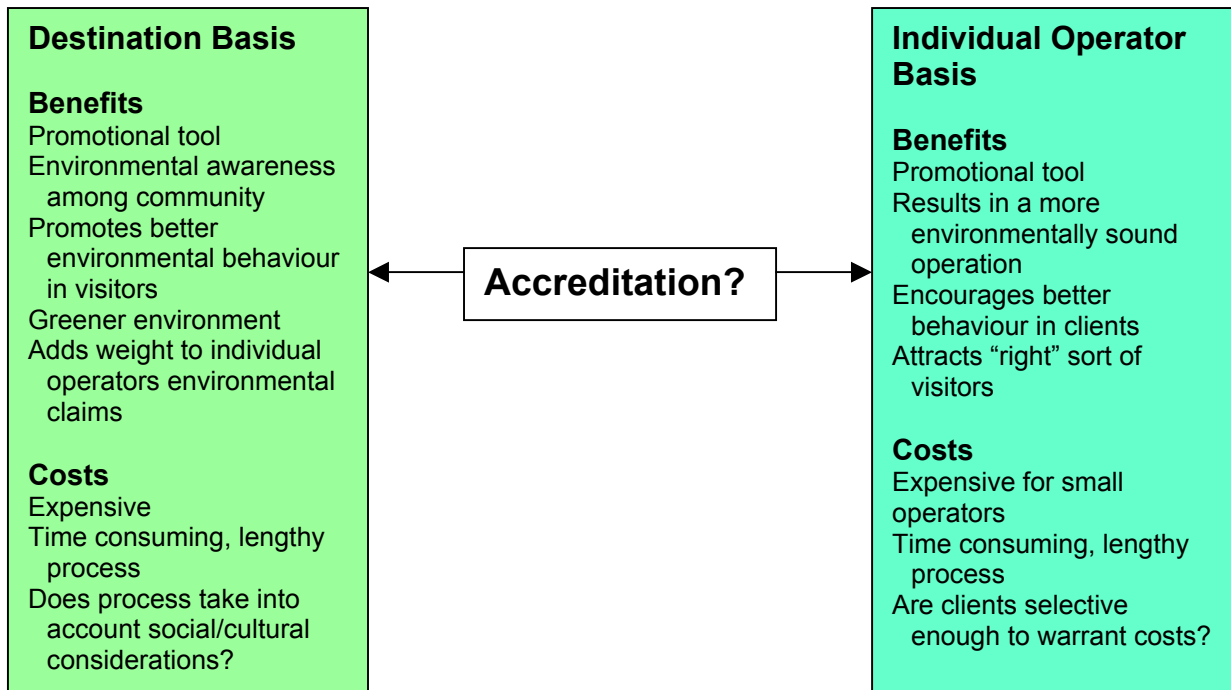


Fig 2.5 Accreditation benefits and costs

Accreditation is also available on a destination or community scale, and has been sought by Kaikoura, which has become New Zealand's first (and only) Green Globe 21 community with "benchmarked status". Kaikoura is pursuing accreditation in order to demonstrate that it isn't just trading on its environment, but is taking steps to protect it. An argument exists for a similar effort from the Catlins, however, the geographic spread of the region and the persistence of some unsustainable land management practices (e.g. native forest logging) would make this difficult. Also the cost of reaching even the benchmarked status is not inconsiderable.

However, other programmes that seek to raise local environmental performance, such as the *Zero Waste by 2020* programme promoted by the Zero Waste New Zealand Trust may be worth investigating.

Recommendation 2.6.1

That tourism operators in the Catlins be provided with information about environmental accreditation systems.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland
 Tourism, CDC, tourism operators

Priority: Low priority

Recommendation 2.6.2

That the Catlins local authorities seek to improve overall destination environmental performance through investigation of the benefits of participation in programmes such as 'Zero Waste by 2020'.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, SDC, CDC
Priority: Low priority

2.7 Freedom Camping

A further issue identified widely by the community and key stakeholders was that of freedom camping. There are a growing number of camper vans and mobile holiday homes being brought into the area, particularly by international visitors. In the summer of 2002/03, about 15% of visitors freedom camped while in the Catlins. Unfortunately, there is a lack of sites that are really managed for this purpose, and as a consequence, this activity can impact negatively on the environment. Commonly reported impacts are litter left behind, construction of fire sites, impact on forests for firewood, areas used randomly for toileting purposes, and campervan toilet wastes discharged indiscriminately. While freedom camping can be seen as desirable in terms of providing the visitor with a “close to nature” experience, the current impacts on the environment are unacceptable.



2.7.1 The Issues and Solutions

There are two issues that have emerged from the community workshops: Firstly, that freedom camping is often occurring in what the community sees as inappropriate locations. Secondly, that freedom camping, even if occurring in permitted locations, is seen to have a range of negative environmental impacts.

The first issue is currently seen to be more important in the north than the south, and requires that more careful consideration should go into identifying specific areas available for freedom camping and areas where camping is prohibited. It is recommended that the CDC adopt a similar approach to Southland, where specific areas are identified, and mapped, and where clear penalties for breaching the Freedom Camping Policy are outlined. Such improvements in policy need to be accompanied by education of visitors about the Freedom Camping Policy. This could be achieved through better signage and availability of published information, including maps of permitted and prohibited sites. Following on from this approach,

enforcement of freedom camping regulations may be required, but admittedly poses challenges because of the scale of the area to be monitored (Figure 2.6).

The second issue, of freedom camping impacts, could be addressed by ensuring that visitors are aware of the need for “green” freedom camping. This could be promoted primarily through the Catlins Care Code, and the provision of onsite signage.

It is important to note that there is no body of research within the Catlins to currently indicate the level of impacts attributable to freedom camping. And while the resident perception is that international visitors and campervans are the major source of impacts, domestic campers over the peak summer period are considered by some to also cause considerable impacts. Research into this area should be included as a priority within the proposed research programme (see Recommendation 2.3.1).

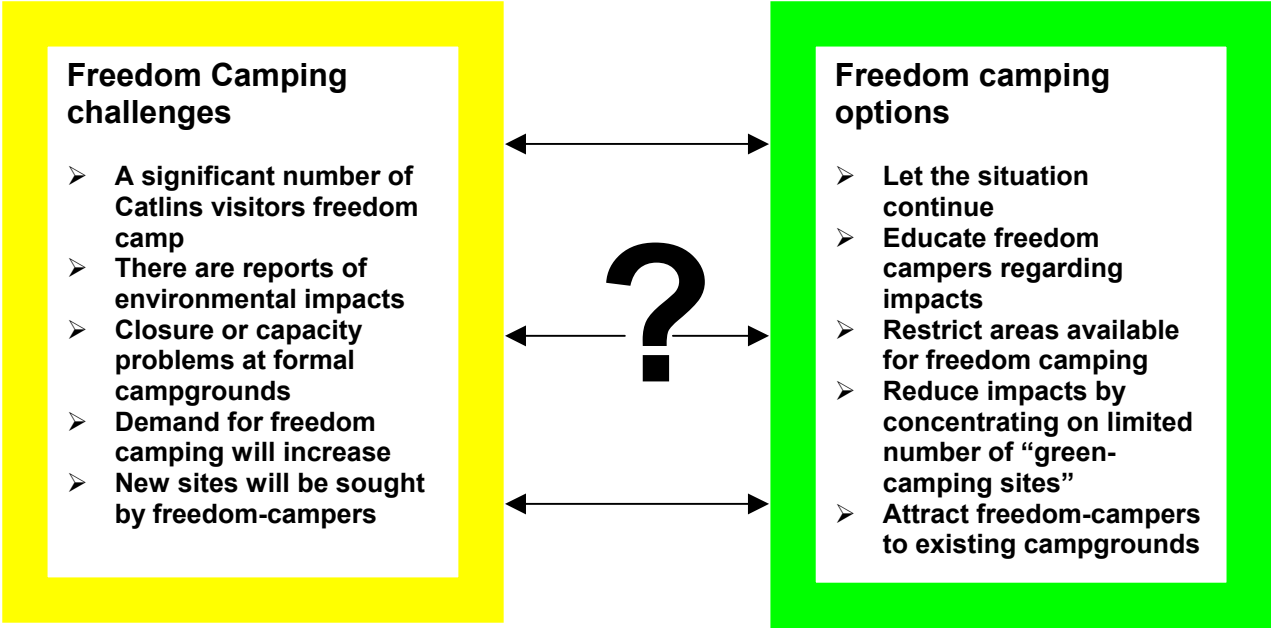


Fig 2.6 Freedom camping challenges and options

Recommendation 2.7.1

That research into the impacts of freedom camping in the Catlins be undertaken.

*Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, DOC, Venture Southland
Tourism, CDC, tourism operators, research providers*
Priority: Medium priority

2.7.2 Existing Policy

Currently, freedom campers are subject to regulation, particularly in the south, where the Southland District Council Camping Bylaw allows for limited camping on reserves and other areas administered by Council. The areas identified where camping is permitted (and where camping is prohibited) are the result of in depth community consultation undertaken prior to this strategy. The Bylaw sets out clear penalties for breaches. This policy was developed after

extensive community consultation, and as well as addressing tourism needs, takes into consideration the role of freedom camping for locals participating in seasonal activities such as whitebaiting.

Clutha District Council has developed a Freedom Camping Policy that allows freedom camping on any CDC controlled land (for a maximum of two nights) apart from specifically identified Prohibited Areas. CDC also has a bylaw imposing penalties for camping in prohibited areas.

The two Districts' approaches to freedom camping are quite different, however, with CDC policy being more open to camping and less specific on its restrictions. However, the CDC policy does retain the flexibility of prohibiting freedom camping in all areas where "No Camping" signs are displayed. Freedom camping also occurs throughout the Catlins on parts of the Conservation Estate. Generally, aside from areas that are promoted as camping sites, this is against DOC policy.

Recommendation 2.7.2a

That a consistent regulatory approach be adopted throughout the Catlins with respect to freedom camping. Such an approach would clearly identify freedom camping opportunities and restrictions to visitors and enforce existing bylaw/policy.

Potential Implementing Partners: CDC, SDC, DOC

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 2.7.2b

That education of the freedom camper about appropriate sites to camp, prohibited areas and environmental care be undertaken through a variety of media, including on site signage and the Catlins Care Code.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland Tourism, CDC, DOC, NZ Motor Caravans Assn, rental companies

Priority: High priority

2.7.3 Identification of Freedom Camping Opportunities

Since there is an obvious demand for freedom camping in the Catlins (and is likely to increase), a further option would be to develop and promote a limited number of sites that are suitable for freedom camping. These would be in suitable locations that do not have at-risk natural or cultural values, and would have appropriate but basic facilities (toilets, built fireplaces and rubbish bins) provided.

In line with the desire from the community and local authorities to not incur the costs of new infrastructure, the use of these facilities would be on a user-pays basis. Thus in a sense these

sites could no longer be considered freedom camping sites – but rather, could be considered and promoted as “Green-camping” sites.

Recommendation 2.7.3

That Tourism Catlins, in co-operation with the Department of Conservation, local authorities and private landowners investigate the potential of developing a limited number of basic user-pays campsites, in order to reduce the amount of freedom camping in the region.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in consultation with the Department of Conservation, local authorities and private landowners

Priority: High priority (also see Recommendation 3.2.3)

2.8 Conservation Management Plans

This Strategy is intended to provide broad direction for tourism in the Catlins, but there is a need for a more micro-scale approach to environmental planning needed for many individual attractions. For attractions located in the Conservation Estate, there is the opportunity for the development of Conservation Management Plans (CMP). These are generally required for significant parts of the Conservation Estate, and may be required under Ministerial direction or if such a need is identified within the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS). Currently there are no operational CMPs for the Catlins. The Otago CMS recommends that a CMP be prepared for Nugget Point after resolution of the marine reserve proposal. However, for some stakeholders, this is not soon enough, as the marine reserve proposal could potentially be a lengthy and protracted process. Meanwhile, they believe that there are demonstrable visitor impacts at the site.

Similarly, there is a need for a comprehensive management plan for the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park and associated Conservation Estate. This is a substantial piece of the Conservation Estate, with essentially national park values, but with current resourcing that does not reflect these values. The Park faces the management challenges of falling into two DOC Conservancies, as well as the ecological challenges associated with being scattered across an archipelago of conservation “islands”. There are also problems with adjacent land use practices, insecure borders, and pests and weeds. There is a perception that the park requires a more integrated approach to management than is currently evident; such an approach would likely assist in the development of the recreational potential of the Park. A CMP for the Park would support tourism in two ways: first by maintaining and improving natural values through clarifying species and habitat protection needs; and secondly by identifying priorities for meeting visitor needs in terms of infrastructure and interpretation. It is important that CMPs are compatible with the Catlins Tourism Strategy.

While CMPs are generally prepared by DOC, there may be the possibility, in order to expedite this process, that this could be funded from outside that department and undertaken by a consultant under DOC guidance or by an employee on temporary contract with DOC.

Recommendation 2.8

That the preparation of Conservation Management Plans for key parts of the Conservation Estate be encouraged. The top priorities shall be Nugget Point and the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park.

Potential Implementing Partners: Department of Conservation
Priority: Medium priority

2.9 Relationships

An important part of protecting natural and historic resources is for information concerning those resources to be readily available to the tourism industry. This may be difficult when that knowledge is held by large central government organisations that are not located within the region, or by experts who reside outside of the region, or by Iwi. Thus, it would be beneficial for ongoing resource protection if there were a central body that the tourism industry could approach to seek advice and information on these resources. Thus it is important that such a body actively seek to form ongoing relationships with organisations such as the Department of Conservation (at a local and conservancy level), the Historic Places Trust, the New Zealand Archaeological Association, and, of course local Iwi.

Recommendation 2.9.1

That Tourism Catlins actively seek relationships with key organisations and individuals that hold important information on the natural, cultural and historic resources of the region. And that information on these sources be developed into a database that is readily accessible for tourism operators

*Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in collaboration with
Venture Southland Tourism, CDC*
Priority: Low priority

2.10 Beach Impacts

While people on foot can place a significant impact on marine mammals such as sea lions, the impacts of vehicles can be far greater (this is supported by research, for example, Heinrich's study into sea lions in 1998). There are a number of beaches that are currently used by vehicles – cars, 4WDs, motorbikes etc. These include Surat Bay, Cannibal Bay and Purakaunui Bay, among others. As well as potentially impacting on the dune vegetation and wildlife, this practice can also impact upon the recreational experience of those using these beaches on foot.

Where the use of vehicles is impacting negatively on the wildlife, or the majority of users, there is a need to discourage this activity. The potential to prohibit vehicles would need to be investigated thoroughly, however, as the legal status for beaches varies, with some being part of the Conservation Estate (e.g. marginal strip) while others are classified as road. Means of

discouraging vehicular access to beaches include the erection of physical barriers (it is more difficult to prevent motorbikes, however), regulatory signage and interpretive messages.



This issue was raised in a number of workshops by local residents, where it was noted, however, that local residents are often the main users of vehicles on beaches. There are beaches where the use of motorised transport has less impact and is more appropriate, and some beaches such as Tautuku, where the use of vehicles is necessary for accessing the peninsula. It is also important to note that some tourism operators currently use vehicles on beaches. Obviously, any move to limit vehicle use of beaches would require a high degree of consultation with the community and tourism operators. In the interim, education of visitors (and locals) of the potential impacts of vehicles may be undertaken through the Catlins Care code, and on-site interpretation.

Recommendation 2.10

That the Department of Conservation and relevant local authorities liaise to give consideration to discouraging motorised access to beaches of high wildlife or recreational significance.

Potential Implementing Partners: Department of Conservation and relevant local authorities

Priority: Medium priority

3. GROWING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF TOURISM

Strategic Objective Three: To optimise the value of tourism for local residents, including social and economic benefits.

3.1 Resident-Visitor Interaction

The basis for tourism in the Catlins is the abundance of resources in the area, and for its success and sustainability the recognition of the community as a key resource and how it can benefit from the advent of tourism. Hence the community needs to understand the roles that tourism can take within their society, both in the positive and negative sense. Additionally it is important for the community to understand what roles they play in the development of tourism in the region (Figure 3.1).

Both the residents survey and the community consultation workshops revealed a high degree of support for tourism in the Catlins. However, there were dissenting opinions expressed, and for some residents, no tourism is the best tourism. A small number of residents felt that interaction with visitors is an imposition, and some felt that they are powerless to influence the way that tourism will be manifested in their community.

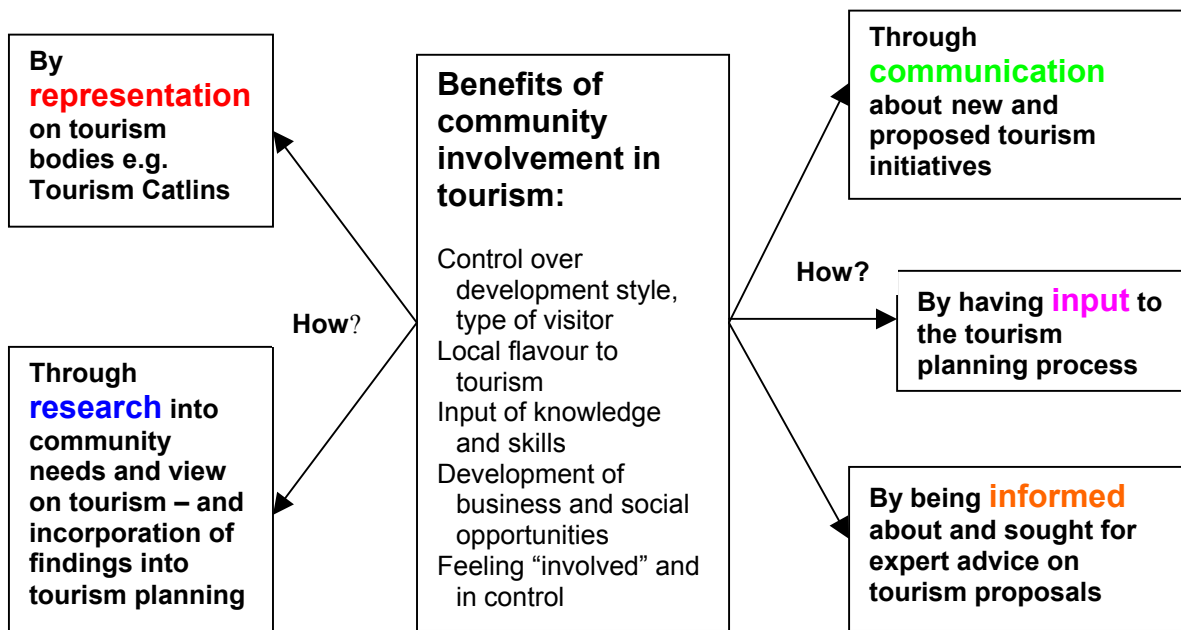


Fig 3.1 The value and process of community involvement in tourism

To remedy these views, it is important that residents feel *involved* – both in tourism decision-making processes and also within the tourism industry itself. Another critical task is developing a sense of *hosting* in the community; that the community has some responsibility for contributing to the “tourist-product” by being a good host, but more importantly, that as a host, the community has some control or power within the tourism industry in the Catlins.

To help achieve this understanding, it is necessary to initiate effective methods and channels of communication and information dissemination. Recognition needs to be given to the requirement to integrate tourism with broader community goals. This can be assisted through

providing for community-based representation in the organisation of the proposed Tourism Catlins body.

Maintaining open channels of communication between tourism interests and the wider community is essential. Initially it is important that the community gains a realistic understanding of tourism and what it can mean to their community. Hence possible positive and negative impacts need to be communicated, and how to optimise or mitigate the situation. This should be complemented with education into acceptance of visitors, to create an environment where desirable tourists visit, and communicate their experience to other desirable tourists. The community needs also to be offered the opportunity to evaluate proposed activities regarding tourism development and are given the opportunity to participate in the variety of processes.

Community members may also be interested in entering the developing tourism industry in the area; hence provision should be made available offer advice and guidance to their introduction to the industry. This role is already undertaken by local authorities (e.g. Venture Southland Tourism) and needs to be continued. Mentoring from established tourism operators can complement the above function, through assistance to new operators.

Recommendation 3.1.1

That a tourism “community outreach” programme be developed, through which the community can learn about Catlins tourism industry news and participate in an informed manner in the tourism planning process. That the programme be facilitated through the use of appropriate media and forums (press, public meetings, displays, mail-outs).

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland Tourism, CDC

Priority: Medium priority

Also see Recommendation 1.1.2

Recommendation 3.1.2

That the above “community outreach” programme provide information and guidance to the community regarding their potential participation and entrance into the local tourism industry. And that opportunities to participate in existing tourism business mentoring programmes be identified and promoted to the community.

Potential Implementing Partners: Venture Southland Tourism, CDC, Tourism Catlins, New Zealand Tourism Industry Association and tourism operators

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 3.1.3

That the wider community be represented in the organisation of Tourism Catlins. And that additional opportunities be identified for interested community members to actively join the tourism planning and development process.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins

Priority: High priority (ongoing)

Also see Recommendation 1.1.3

Recommendation 3.1.4

That an ongoing programme of monitoring Catlins residents' satisfaction with tourism be established. And that this programme be identified within the Venture Southland Tourism Research Strategy.

Potential Implementing Partners: Venture Southland Tourism, CDC

Priority: Medium priority

(also see Recommendation 7.1)

3.2 Optimising the Economic Value of Tourism for Residents

In the community workshops local residents expressed a desire to capitalise on the presence of visitors, and to extract maximum expenditure from them. However, current total expenditure by visitors to the Catlins is low, estimated to be between \$1.42M and \$3.08M per annum (compared with Kaikoura, for example, which has a total visitor expenditure of \$20M - \$30M (Simmons and Fairweather 1998)). Average expenditure per visitor per day is low by national standards.

This reflects a number of characteristics of tourism in the area: first, a significant proportion of visitors do not stay overnight, and thus opportunities to gain income from accommodation, food services and other expenditure are limited; second, a significant proportion (around 15%) of visitors who do stay overnight, freedom camp, with very little or no expenditure; third, even if visitors do stay overnight and use hospitality services, the cost of accommodation and food in the area is not that great; fourth, there is a the lack of retail opportunities for visitors; and fifth, it appears that visitors provision themselves from outside of the area. Another factor is that most of the attractions are located on public lands (Conservation Estate) and opportunities to generate income from these attractions are somewhat limited. The low expenditure may also be symptomatic of the types of visitor that predominate in the Catlins: the domestic visitor is often a budget visitor who stays in local holiday homes, camping grounds, freedom camps, or does not stay longer than a few hours; and a large proportion of international visitors belong to the younger age group and may not have a large amount of discretionary funding available for spending while in the Catlins. In fact, this group may be partly attracted to the Catlins because it is seen as a budget destination.

However, this is not the image of the Catlins that the community wishes to portray. Rather they have expressed a desire to attract up-market visitors with a higher than average

expenditure. There are a number of strategies required to increase visitor expenditure within the Catlins.

First, however, is the requirement to develop appropriate tourism superstructure that would attract the target market i.e. high quality accommodation and food services, a wider range of retail outlets and more activities (Figure 3.2). Once these are in place, then promotional strategies can be developed for that market. Experience in many destinations has shown that as destinations mature, they often attract a more diversified market, with increased demand for more upscale hospitality services. In the Catlins, this process of destination development and market expansion will be accelerated by planned access (roading) improvements.

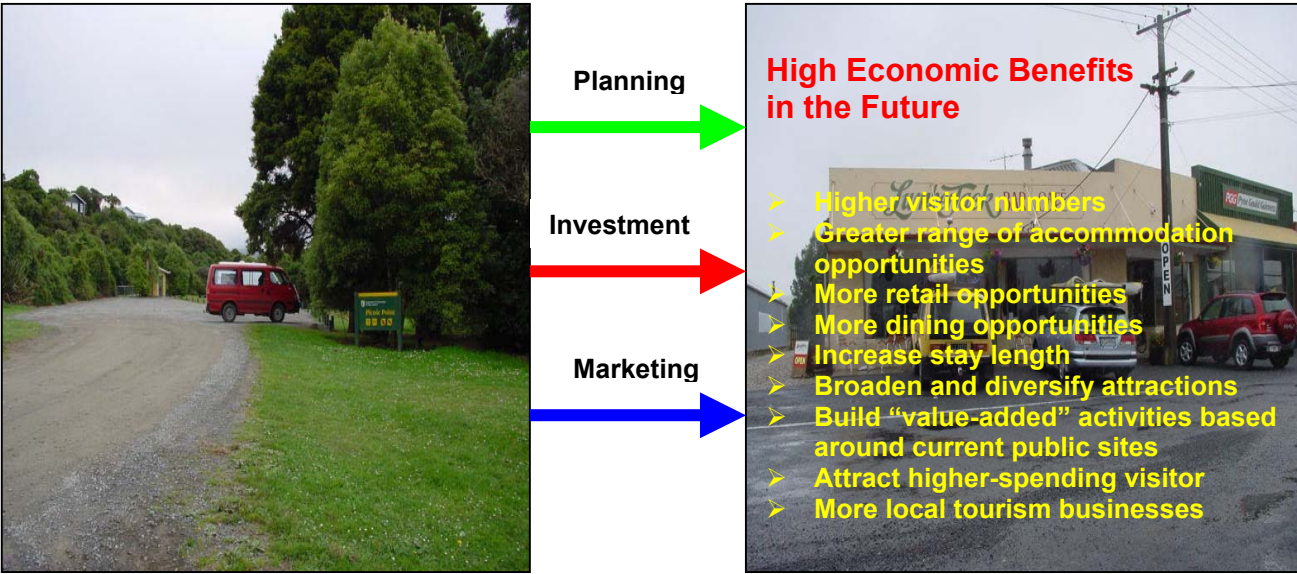


Fig 3.2 Increasing economic benefits to the Catlins community

While the development of new hospitality services will emerge largely as a result of market forces, there are facilitating roles that can assist, including the identification of opportunities for investment, supported by ongoing market research into visitor needs.

Recommendation 3.2.a

That opportunities for the development of further high quality accommodation, food services, retail opportunities and commercial tourist activities be identified and promoted to the local community and investors.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins VS, CDC*
Priority: *Low priority*

Since the gap between the current visitor and the desired visitor (as identified by the community) is substantial, this points to the need to develop a marketing strategy that will help redress this situation. It is important that any marketing strategy for the Catlins take into account neighbouring and linked destinations. For example, the visitor research reveals that

there is a strong association of the Catlins as a destination with Dunedin, and with other destinations along the Southern Scenic Route. Ideally the marketing strategy should be co-ordinated with existing marketing and promotion of these destinations, and of the Southern Scenic Route.

Recommendation 3.2.b

That a marketing strategy be developed for the Catlins that targets visitors who have a higher than average daily holiday expenditure. That this marketing strategy be developed in co-ordination with relevant adjacent destination organisations.

Potential Implementing Partners: Venture Southland Tourism, local authorities and local promotion groups

Priority: Low priority

3.2.1 Evening Activities

One area of potential development is in the provision of evening activities. If visitors are encouraged to stay for an evening activity, they will most likely stay the night, thus providing extra income to the region. Oamaru is one example of a destination that has developed “the perfect attraction” – the little blue penguins, that are only viewable on dusk, and thus maximise overnight stays. Other potential evening activities include illustrated talks that could be held at the Information Centre in Owaka (or the proposed Eco-Museum) or in various local halls, and also evening guided walks. In the past, the Lands and Survey Department and the New Zealand Forest Service both ran highly popular summer programmes that included a number of such events. While such a programme is desirable, it is important that it is self-funding and also that it is not competing directly with local tourism operators’ activities – indeed there are opportunities for such events to be run jointly by public and private providers.

Recommendation 3.2.1

That the Catlins develop a programme of educational/interpretive and entertainment evening events for the peak visitor period (January).

Potential Implementing Partners: Department of Conservation, Catlins Information Centre, local museums and local tourism operators

Priority: Medium priority

3.2.2 Freedom Camping

A substantial amount of potential tourism revenue is lost through visitors freedom camping. This was identified as an important issue by the Community Workshops, and there was a strong feeling in some workshops that this practice should be prohibited, or at the least minimised. Currently, about 15% of visitors to the Catlins engage in freedom camping (Visitor Survey 2003). Freedom camping is a *bona fide* tourism practice in the Catlins, and is appropriate if undertaken at approved locations and in an environmentally sensitive manner. It is unrealistic to expect that freedom camping will ever be entirely prevented, however, efforts

should be made to minimise this practice – especially as it has been identified by the community to be a source of unacceptable environmental impacts – or to generate revenue from this segment in some way (Figure 3.3).



Fig 3.3 Freedom camping issues and solutions

The previous section has discussed the potential to establish basic campsites at a number of suitable locations throughout the Catlins and thus for private landowners to get involved in catering for freedom campers. If these or better facilities were available at existing campgrounds, some revenue could be gained from this group of visitors.

A further option would be to introduce a Catlins-wide charge for freedom camping to address issues such as environmental and community impact. This could be sold in the form a daily freedom-camping passes available from information centres and shops throughout the Catlins.

Recommendation 3.2.2a

That opportunities to substitute freedom camping with the use of commercial accommodation facilities be encouraged through the use of marketing and promotion, and regulation where necessary.

Potential Implementing Partners: Department of Conservation and local authorities, and tourism operators

Priority: Medium priority

(see also Recommendations 2.7.2a, 2.7.2b & 2.7.3)

Recommendation 3.2.2b

That opportunities to generate revenue from freedom campers be investigated, including the option of introducing a Catlins-wide freedom camping pass.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in co-operation Department of Conservation and local authorities

Priority: Medium priority

3.2.3 Recognition of Tourism Business Opportunities

One hurdle to maximising tourism revenue in the Catlins is the dominance of public property attractions that are currently available free-of-charge for the visitor. There are both physical and legal limitations to the extent to which these could be developed into paying attractions. However, opportunities for development of tourism businesses exist for some of these sites. Notably, Curio Bay is one example where proposed community development of this site will generate employment and local income. Nugget Point is another site that the community has identified as having potential for business development.

Recommendation 3.2.3

That opportunities for the development of appropriate tourism businesses be identified and promoted within the community and private sector.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in co-operation with local authorities, and economic development agencies

Priority: Low priority

(see also Recommendations 2.1.5a)

3.2.4 Coastal Walk

Another tourism development opportunity that has been investigated by the community is an extended coastal walk, from the Nuggets to Papatowai. Financial projections for this proposal estimated indirect financial benefits of around \$354,000 per year would accrue to the community over the first five years of operation (Catlins Coastal Walking Track Feasibility Study 2002).

However this proposal has currently been deferred due to logistical issues, and while it may not be useful to further pursue the proposal at this time, it should be revisited in the future e.g. after a period of two years, and on an ongoing basis.

Other opportunities for coastal walks also exist in the south of the Catlins, and in particular from Papatowai to Curio Bay. This track would be of a similar length to the northern proposal, but mainly comprising natural landscapes (in contrast to the predominantly rural environment of the northern proposal). There would be several outstanding stretches of coastline encountered and opportunities to view a variety of wildlife. Such a route could also traverse areas of virgin coastal rainforest (Figure 3.4).

As with the northern proposal, there are opportunities to generate visitor revenue from the walk-fee, accommodation, provisioning, transport and guiding. However, critical considerations are the need to obtain permission and support from landowners (especially iwi, and SILNA trustees as the track would cross a significant amount of Maori owned land), and the need to minimise social and ecological impacts on what is largely an area currently only used by a small number of local residents.

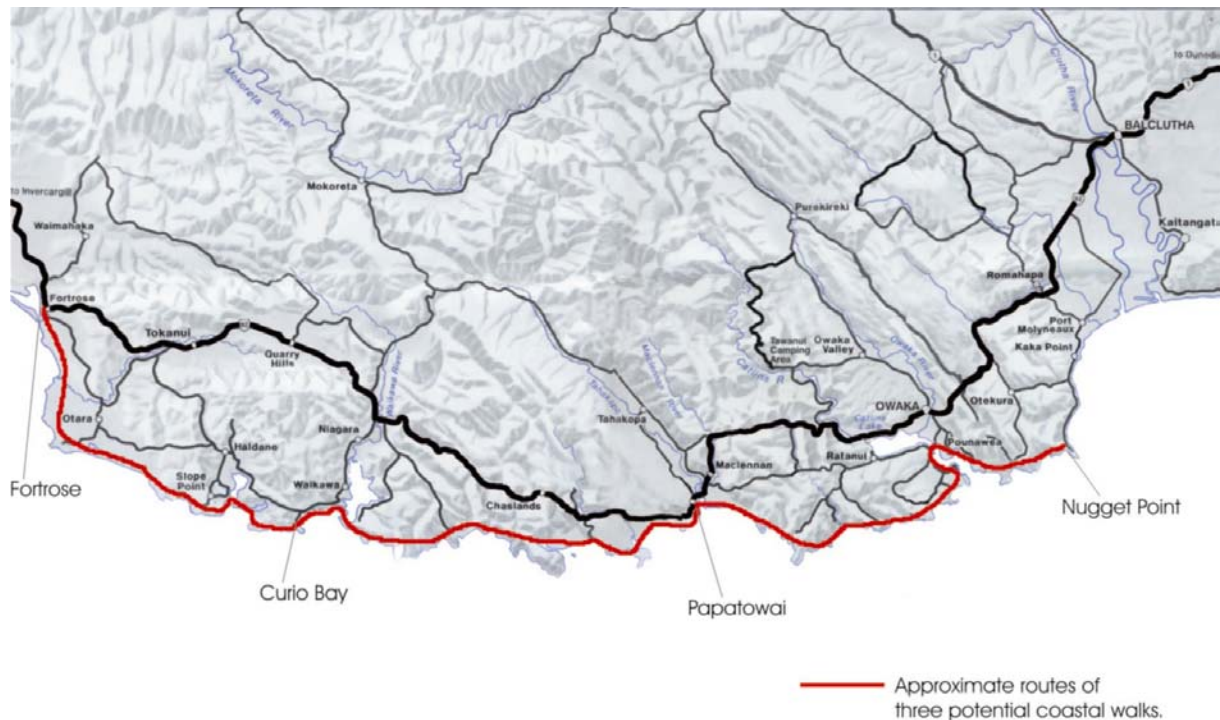


Fig 3.4 Possible routes of three coastal walks

A further walking opportunity is a southern route that would link Curio Bay with Fortrose (Figure 3.4). This is a route that has already been explored by walking groups on a day-walk basis and holds potential to be promoted as offering a distinctive and different walking experience than the Papatowai-Curio Bay route described above. The southern route is characterised by wind-swept, spectacular coastal landscapes, with heritage in the form of historic lighthouses, shipwrecks and associated cemeteries, and the relics of gold mining. The route also has high natural values with wading birds at the Haldane and Mataura River estuaries (Toetoes Harbour) and sealions at Waipapa Point. In some respects, this route offers advantages over the previously discussed northern routes, as there is some existing tourism infrastructure available in the way of farmstays, B&Bs and other accommodation that can form an integral part of this “product”. In common with the northern routes, this route crosses a variety of privately owned land, and a significant amount of Conservation Estate – requiring extensive consultation and co-operation with land-owners and managers.

With this route, there is the possibility of linking with current proposals to develop walking opportunities around the Waituna Lagoon further to the west. Ultimately, there is potential to offer a series of coastal walks providing a link between Bluff and as far north as Kaka Point. With such a development, there would be many business opportunities created for the community and tourism entrepreneurs to provide services to clients along the route.

Although this section focuses on the development of coastal walks, this is not to deny that there are many other opportunities to develop inland walks (see section 4.1.3 & 4.1.5).

Recommendation 3.2.4a

That initial investigation and liaison be undertaken to gauge landowner/manager and local resident support for the development of coastal walks, from Papatowai to Curio Bay, and from Curio Bay to Fortrose.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland, CDC,
Ngai Tahu , landowners

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 3.2.4b

That the opportunity to develop the original Catlins Coastal Walking Track proposal (Nugget Point to Papatowai) be revisited on a regular (preferably biennial) basis.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Catlins Coast Track
Charitable Trust, landowners

Priority: Medium priority

4. DEVELOPING THE TOURISM PRODUCT

Strategic Objective Four: To develop opportunities to enhance the visitor experience, in terms of attractions and activities.

This strategic objective is directed at the development of attractions and activities that ‘identify’ what the Catlins as a region can offer visitors, and which provide the region with a competitive advantage over other areas of New Zealand. Emphasis under strategic objective four is to:

- Develop new attractions that have connections to the natural qualities of the region
- Justification for more attractions as opposed to focus on existing ones
- Reveal the dynamism of the region for providing a variety of visitor experiences
- Create ‘attraction clusters’ where a variety of attractions and experiences exist for visitors within close proximity, and which are serviced with accommodation and food outlets.

The above aims require cooperation between operators and a tourism vision for providing a high quality visitor experience.

Recommendations under strategic objective four are provided for attractions and activities, as well as events.

4.1 Attractions and Activities

4.1.1 Maori Tourism

There exists opportunity to make greater use of Maori ancestry and their interpretation of the Catlins region as a tourism experience. The results of the visitor survey undertaken in the Catlins revealed that international visitors are particularly interested in Maori culture and at present the majority of those opportunities are better developed in the North Island as opposed to the South Island. Maori resident within the Catlins have an advantage in terms that relatively little effort has been made at present in the Catlins to provide visitors with Maori perspectives on nature and experiences involving elements of their culture. The area is rich in heritage of Ngai Tahu, the Waitaha, and Ngati Mamoe iwi that historically travelled through and utilised the area. There are opportunities for specific development of Maori tourism products (activities and events), as well as the opportunity to overlay a “layer of Maori value” on the Catlins tourism product as a whole. In addition, attention towards Maori Tourism may also help to assist in the preservation and protection of special Maori sites and their overall culture.

4.1.2 Rock Tourism

Potential exists to develop “Rock tourism” or geological tourism in the Catlins, as part of a broader interest in geological tours across the Southern reaches of the South Island. The

Catlins is somewhat geologically distinct from other surrounding areas, as it is part of the Murihiku Syncline, comprising predominantly sedimentary rocks. With the petrified forests of Curio Bay, the Catlins possess a geological attraction of world class. This is found within the context of some outstanding coastal geomorphology, and a history that includes some gold mining (with some relics still evident). And admittedly, while rock-tourism may not be a strong attraction in its own right, this theme provides yet another string to the Catlins bow. One way to achieve this is to position the Catlins as one region within a larger tour that covers other areas of the South Island. Once the initial attraction of the Catlins as a place of geological interest gets a foothold, then steps could be taken to provide tours that focus on the Catlins in more depth.

4.1.3 Colonial Heritage Tourism

As for colonial heritage, opportunity exists to develop tours that present visitors with the colonial heritage of the region, with a focus on the logging and farming activities, and way of life of the past, as well as the role the railway played in helping settle the region. One feature of the Catlins is the continual reminder of the settler heritage in the old abandoned farmhouses within a “raw” and developing landscape. There are also several sites where physical relics of the timber industry remain – in the way of machinery used to haul logs out of the bush. There are two very good museums in the Catlins – at Waikawa and Owaka, and the colonial heritage is interpreted very well at those sites. Further opportunities exist to build on that product and develop “mini-heritage trails” that tell stories of some of the key families, and characters, and the issues with which they were faced in the colonial past. These trails could be self-guiding or actively interpreted by tourism operators. Similarly the rail heritage could be interpreted and developed into a useful tourism product. The old railway line from Waimahaka to Tokanui, for example is occasionally utilised – mainly by local events, but could be developed further. Problems however do exist regarding access to stretches of the old railway route as this land has mostly been sold off and is in private hands.

A theme associated with the colonial past, that could be developed, is that of shipwrecks. The Catlins coast is rich with the history of 19th Century shipping misadventures – indeed – the Catlins could quite reasonably be renamed “shipwreck coast”! While some of these sites are currently popular attractions (e.g. Waipapa Point, wreck of the Tararua) there is a need to improve existing interpretation, and to link individual sites into a stronger overall product. There are many stories to be told, and again, mini-heritage trails could be one approach to presenting these.

4.1.4 Farm Tourism

Farming is an essential industry and part of the Catlins and opportunities exist to develop synergies between farming and tourism. There exists a number of farm stays across the region, and opportunity exists to expand that accommodation sector, with experiences of everyday farming life (e.g. tailing, lambing, shearing, feeding animals, driving farm machinery) becoming part of the tourism experience visitors take away. While many accommodation providers on farms do currently integrate their farming activities with tourism, it appears that this is done generally in some informal way. Often visitors can view

or even participate in farm activities, but with little or no return to the farm. There are opportunities in formalising (and thus adding value) to this product. There may be value in co-ordinating on a region-wide basis a network of farms that can provide the above opportunities for visitors to participate in seasonal activities. Certainty of supply of this rural product (weather and nature co-operating!) is important. At the moment there are obstacles to providing visitor opportunities because of the perceptions of provider-liability in terms of Occupational Safety and Health requirements. This is an area where Tourism-Catlins, local authorities and regional tourism organisations can potentially play a role in providing advice to farm tourism operators and assist with clarifying their legal position. Formalising farm-tourism opportunities in the Catlins may also be useful in reducing the impacts on farms that are not willing or able to welcome visitors to their operations (as was identified in the community consultation).

4.1.5 Walking Tracks

The coastal region provides opportunities for new tourism activities, including the development of coastal walking tracks (see Recommendations 3.2.4a & 3.2.4b). While grants are available to assist in developing this type of attraction (e.g. from the Ministry of Tourism) challenges do exist in bringing all landowners together to create such walks. Beach walking and bush walks emerged as very popular activities for those visitors surveyed in the Catlins and opportunity exists to develop the coastal area of rainforest within what may be labelled the ‘Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park’ (CCRFP). While this is an existing idea, the opportunity to develop this further needs to be explored – for example, consistency of using the CCRFP term in promotional and descriptive literature. Current ecotourism attractions tend to focus mainly on showing wildlife to visitors within a beach environment. There is opportunity to expand that viewing region to include the beach/bush interface region. Visitor surveys outlined the popularity of the bush and walking along beaches. Ecotourism operations should capitalize on visitors seeking to experience the flora and fauna of the bush landscape as part of the natural attractions the coastal area offers. The Catlins may be positioned to offer a different experience than what is offered in Dunedin, Fiordland or Stewart Island for example. The Catlins could focus on providing two day walks/tramps rather than multi-day experiences as in Fiordland and Stewart Island, or single day walks as in Dunedin.

4.1.6 Food and Wine Tourism

Food and wine have emerged as important sectors of tourism across New Zealand and certain places have positioned themselves around food themes, such as the Oysters of Bluff and the Wild Foods of Hokitika. Opportunity exists to develop a unique brand of food experience – a “Catlins Cuisine” - which draws on the foods grown and consumed within the Catlins. For this to be advanced beyond the drawing board stage there is the need to establish links between the farming industry, food producers and the tourism industry within the Catlins, but also develop this opportunity as part of a broader Southland food theme.

4.1.7 Other opportunities

Last, but not least, is the opportunity that exists to develop an arts and crafts trail, where visitors are introduced to local communities and their interest in crafts, paintings, quilting, to name but a few.

New Product Development (or expansion of exist product) to be proposed:

- **Maori tourism (nature interpretation, culture and archaeological sites)**
- **Rock tourism (petrified forest; gold mining remnants; world class distinction)**
- **Colonial heritage tours (remnants of the railway corridor, Catlins the ‘Shipwreck Coast’)**
- **Farm tourism**
- **Coastal track developments**
- **Coastal rainforest park**
- **Greater use of bush/beach interface**
- **Catlins Cuisine**
- **Arts and crafts**

The above opportunities require recommendations that assist in their development as well as to how they can be packaged and presented to visitors.

Recommendation 4.1.1

That Venture Southland and Clutha District Council continue to support new business development in the Catlins area and that the North and South Catlins Promotion groups along with Tourism Catlins investigate ideas for new business initiatives and promote these to the wider community and private investors.

*Potential Implementing Partners: Venture Southland, Clutha District Council,
Local Promotion Groups*

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 4.1.2

To identify opportunities to develop a formal Catlins rural-tourism network, whereby opportunities to participate in farming events are “scheduled”, priced and promoted to visitors.

*Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in collaboration with existing
and potential farm-tourism providers*

Priority: Low priority

Recommendation 4.1.3

To identify opportunities to develop themes for guided or self-guided “mini-heritage trails” in the Catlins, with initial themes to be investigated including: “Ghosts of the Past”; and “Shipwreck Coast”.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins

Priority: Low priority

Recommendation 4.1.4

To identify opportunities to establish ‘attraction clusters’ that offer visitors a mix of opportunities and experiences.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins, tourism operators*

Priority: *Low priority.*

Recommendation 4.1.5

To identify opportunities to develop Maori tourism product in the Catlins. That this could be driven by Ngai Tahu but in partnership with and with help from Tourism Catlins, the local community and other tourism operators.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins in collaboration with Ngai Tahu and tourism operators*

Priority: *Medium priority*

4.2 Events

A number of opportunities exist to provide visitors with specific events that relate to the Catlins, some of which are developments of existing events, whereas others are new events. The focus behind expanding existing events is to extend the visitor stay, promoting overnight stays and bringing further income into the region. Woodstock, for example, is a popular music event, held annually but there exists opportunity of developing attractions and sub-events around it. There is potential to link music with food and crafts and broaden the festival to beyond that of music, to be a celebration of a range of items that promote local culture.

Similar thinking applies to the Catlins Coast Rally for cars that takes place centred on Owaka. This is a one-day event and opportunity exists to develop more than the traditional car rally, but extend that to include classic and vintage cars and farm and historic machinery, with an opportunity for visitors to view the cars and talk to some of the drivers. The expansion of the rally beyond one day and beyond the traditional participants may require sponsorship, but that is something that needs to be assessed external to the Strategy document. Again, by making the event more than a day activity, there is opportunity to encourage overnight stays and attract a local and regional market that may not be obvious visitors to the Catlins.

The idea of introducing thinking around a wild-food hunt is to appeal to those interested in hunting and other forms of traditional food-gathering as a recreational experience. It would also be rather unique to visitors to experience such an activity, similar to the rabbit hunt that is popular in Central Otago. This event has linkages with the development of a “Catlins Cuisine”, which a wild-food event would highlight. One element of this event would be the focus on capitalising on the range of introduced mammalian pests in Catlins forests. A theme of “from pest to plate” could be developed, for foods such as wild venison, pork and possum etc.

Other opportunities exist to re-introduce events that were offered in the past by the Department of Conservation. These include the running of evening activities such as talks and night viewing of wildlife. With its limited number of restaurants and cafes and other

evening places for visitors to go, there exists a market that is often forgotten about in peripheral tourism places, namely the evenings. Many visitors will spend this time in campsites, rented homes, commercial accommodation, and campervans and often find that the evening hours are free and they search for activities and events to fill that time.

Opportunities for new events or the development of existing events

- **Expansion of the Woodstock event**
- **Expansion of the Catlins car rally**
- **Introduction of a Possum hunt**
- **Re-introducing overnight events, talks and viewing**

Events are often driven by the needs of the community, but opportunities exist for visitors to attend these events as well. Events can also help stimulate community spirit and togetherness as is demonstrated by the Rural Art Deco celebrations in Ranfurly and the Victorian heritage celebrations by the residents of Oamaru. The following recommendations are offered in developing opportunity around events.

Recommendation 4.2.1

That existing tourism events be reviewed with the potential to expand them beyond their current focus

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, as well as individual groups who run these events and Venture Southland Tourism Events team

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 4.2.2

That new tourism events are explored in terms of their market potential and the local interest in provision of them

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, and other interested groups

Priority: Medium priority

5. COMMUNICATING WITH THE VISITOR

Strategic Objective Five: To optimise information flow to visitors in the Catlins through the provision of appropriate signage, information, interpretation and associated services.

5.1 Signage

Section 2 has already briefly mentioned the issue of signage, in the context of environmental protection and the general infrastructure requirements in the Catlins. However, the focus here is to outline where specific changes and improvements can be made. At present, visitors who enter from the north do not have any awareness that they are in the Catlins. There is no sign to say 'Welcome to the Catlins'. The erecting of a sign is important for a number of reasons. First it helps locate the visitor, in geographic space. Second, it provides a tangible means of greeting visitors and indicating that the region is receptive to them. Third, the sign can be used as part of the wider process of 'branding' the region, and perhaps with community support, the welcome signage can offer visitors with the impression of the vision communities have of the Catlins.

There are clearly challenges in erecting signage (these were raised in the Community Workshops) in relation to design, content and location, and this will require ongoing consultation with the community and with Clutha District Council, as a 'choose to do nothing' approach would be the wrong strategy to follow. It is essential that the visitor is aware of when they have entered the Catlins as many visitors arriving in Owaka at the Visitor Information Centre often asked 'Where are the Catlins?' (pers. comm. Bill Mannix, 2003). The recommendation for where this sign is positioned would be to place it at the turnoff at Telford, where visitors have the option as to which route of the SRR they choose to travel. In the South Catlins a community group paid for a welcome sign at Fortrose, which received consent by Southland District Council to be erected. There appeared within community workshops to be some debate over its location by residents, A more pressing need is to upgrade the sign, and this could be envisaged as a project for the South Catlins Promotions Group.

Both district councils (CDC & SDC) use international symbols for road signage, and erect signs that follow strict guidelines considering safety and resource consent for erection. Individual tourism operators erect private signs based upon their resource consent they receive and therefore the extent to which signs are placed in inappropriate places ought to be minimised.

The presence of the Southern Scenic Route (SSR) and its association with the Catlins is a positive means of promoting the region. Ideally, a Catlins logo should be designed for signs as well as brochures, websites and advertisements, but resource consent restrictions and the fact that it cannot be considered for the Catlins section of the SSR alone means it is impractical for the Catlins logo to appear on SSR signs. Given this limitation, one option open to Tourism Catlins would be to investigate opportunities of coordinating signage between those that mark the SSR and those that promote attractions within the Catlins but which can be reached off the SSR.

Key objectives regarding signage to include:

- Erecting Welcome Sign in North Catlins
- Upgrade the welcome sign in South Catlins
- Coordination of signage in the Catlins and the Southern Scenic Route

Given the above objectives, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation 5.1.1

That interested groups undertake to erect a ‘Welcome to the Catlins’ sign in the north, and that the existing sign in the south be upgraded.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in consultation with the North and South Promotions Groups, and Southland and Clutha District Councils

Priority: High Priority

Recommendation 5.1.2

That SDC and CDC and Transit New Zealand continue to develop appropriate signage and that this be monitored according to existing policy.

Potential Implementing Partners: Both district councils and Transit New Zealand

Priority: Medium Priority

Recommendation 5.1.3

To explore options of using the SSR brand within the Catlins, creating synergy between signage within the Catlins and that used along the SSR.

Potential Implementing Partners: Clutha and Southland District Councils, Transit New Zealand

Priority: Low Priority

5.2 Information

There is the need to upgrade the existing information kiosk located at Fortrose to ensure that all brochured sites are included as well as a map showing their location. There is the need for a similar information kiosk to be located in the north, preferably beside the welcome sign at the Telford turnoff. At a later date, an option may also be to include an information kiosk at a

central location such as Papatowai. Tourism attractions that are not currently brochured should be encouraged to produce one; however, this may be difficult for many of the natural and cultural attractions where responsibility for, or “ownership” of the site is unclear. For example who owns and is responsible for the various memorial sites found throughout the Catlins, or the various lookout sites directly off from the SSR? With respect to specific routes throughout the Catlins, there exists a number of heritage trails, namely the South Catlins Heritage Trail and the Clutha Heritage Trail. Opportunity should be taken to develop essentially a ‘Catlins Heritage Trail’ that combines existing trails developed by Southland and Clutha. This would be an opportunity to further develop synergy between the northern and southern parts of the Catlins.

Research has shown that 87% of potential visitors to New Zealand are likely to use visitor information centres to obtain information while travelling around the world (Mark Burton, Minister of Tourism, August VIN Conference 2003). There is currently only one main visitor information centre in North Catlins, namely Owaka, with several information outlets in South Catlins, namely Waikawa Museum, Waikawa Information Centre and Wildlife tours, Tokanui Southern Oasis, Curio Bay and the Fortrose kiosk. All the information outlets in the South Catlins will be joined together in the network of Southland Information Centres, under the ‘Visitor Information Southland’ program. This will be supported and managed by Venture Southland with the objective of providing quality and consistent information for visitors in an easily identifiable network. Another important development is the creation of links between information outlets and the eco-museum being established in Owaka.

There are a number of websites that provide information about the Catlins. An earlier recommendation is to develop a tourism body called ‘Tourism Catlins’. Part of this development will require the creation of a dedicated web page that will have the advantage of having official (local authority) support, and being “neutral” in terms of its relationship with individual operators. It is recommended that links are made from the Tourism Catlins website to existing websites so that visitors can be directed to the central website from which they can find specific information pertaining to particular attractions and sites.

Key objectives regarding Information:

- Attention be given to upgrading information Kiosk in the South and erect a similar kiosk in the North
- Develop a Catlins Heritage Trail
- Support the ‘Visitor Information Southland’ network and encourage the information outlet at Curio Bay to join
- Creation of a dedicated ‘official’ web page for the Catlins and ensure links are made to other websites within the Catlins

Recommendation 5.2.1

That the existing information kiosk at Fortrose be upgraded and a new kiosk be developed at Telford

Potential Implementing Partners:

Tourism Catlins

Priority:

High priority

Recommendation 5.2.2

That consistent branding be investigated and developed for the two existing heritage trails

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, in consultation with Venture Southland, SDC and CDC

Priority: Low priority

Recommendation 5.2.3

To ensure that adequate financial resources are available to allow for ongoing functions of the existing visitor centre in Owaka and that the community group development of the visitor centre a Curio Bay be encouraged to become members of Visitor Information Southland

Potential Implementing Partners CDC, South Catlins Enterprise Group, Venture Southland

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 5.2.4

To develop a web page for Catlins Tourism that links to existing web pages of individual attractions and operators, and that the website covers the whole of the Catlins

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins (in consultation with CDC, SDC and Venture Southland, and North and South Catlins Promotion Groups)

Priority: Low priority

5.3 Interpretation

At present the majority of attractions rely on non-personal means of interpretation, particularly the use of signs. Section 2 (Recommendation 2.2.3) relates the value of site interpretation to site protection. The following more general recommendations are put forward in response to the existing situation across the Catlins as to how visitors are given information at sites and attractions. The use of signs is a passive way to communicate information to visitors, and the major limitations of signs is that they can become 'dated' quickly, are prone to vandalism, and costly to upgrade. In addition, there is often the danger of putting too much information on signs to the extent that visitors fail to complete reading them. Support for use of signs is that they are the best alternative if attractions and operations do not have the necessary capital to employ people on-site to assist with interpretation and information. At present, very few sites having site personnel and of these, few are present in some official position.

Another benefit of using signs is the opportunity they provide to convey educational material as well as information on appropriate visitor behaviour. There is however, the opposite problem that, in many tourism destinations, signs are over-used and as a consequence

important information is just not read or acknowledged, as visitors get ‘information fatigue’. The opportunity to promote more signs at attractions is a difficult matter as it is influenced by who owns sites (public, local government, private) and the extent to which money is available to provide as much information as possible to visitors. As alluded to above, encouragement should be made to those operators who currently do not have adequate signage and interpretation.

In addition, many of the more established visitor attractions should be encouraged to design information panels in multiple languages, appealing to a variety of international markets. This will be an increasing need as the numbers and diversity of visitors to the Catlins will undoubtedly grow. The use of multiple languages may be particularly necessary at the most highly utilised and vulnerable sites e.g. those with high visitation and high potential for impacts on wildlife. Similarly, there will be an increasing need to provide this key information in written material, (e.g. brochures) in multiple languages – the Catlins Care Code, for example would be most useful in the languages of key markets.

Another area where opportunity does clearly exist would be to promote greater Maori cultural interpretation of sites (Recommendation 4.1.5). Currently there is a lack of a manawhenua component in much of the signage and interpretation in the Catlins. Minimum improvements would include naming relevant sites in Maori, but the selection of sites and the extent of Maori interpretation must be considered in consultation with Ngai Tahu.

Key ‘interpretation’ objectives to include:

- Ongoing review of information signs and interpretation boards at sites
- Brochures of key sites in multiple languages
- Greater promotion of Maori cultural interpretation of site

Recommendation 5.3.1

That encouragement should be given to those tourism operators who have insufficient information and interpretation at sites and develop both according to visitor needs.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in liaison with individual operators and Venture Southland

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 5.3.2

That key visitor information at popular sites with a high degree of vulnerability be provided in the languages of the main visitor markets, and that this should also apply to the Catlins Care Code.

Potential Implementing Partners: Key operators liaison with Tourism Catlins, local councils and Venture Southland

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 5.3.3

That more effort be made to convey Maori natural and cultural values and history in the information and interpretation at key sites.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins in partnership with site owners/managers, tourism operators, DOC and Ngai Tahu*

Priority: *High priority*

6. MEETING VISITOR HOSPITALITY NEEDS

Strategic Objective Six: To cater for the hospitality service needs of the Catlins tourist through provision of appropriate accommodation and food services.

6.1 Accommodation

The Visitor Survey revealed that the majority of visitors used budget type accommodation. Variation existed between types used by international and domestic visitors, but the majority of accommodation used remained predominantly budget. While few accommodation outlets cater for the higher end of the market, there is a need to consider if the current accommodation provision is sufficient to cater to a niche market that will pay a higher price for a high quality of service. A review of this should only take place in consultation with existing tourism accommodation providers to ensure that the top of the market is adequately catered for in future accommodation development. Market forces will have an influence on the preference of what type of accommodation gets developed in the future.

Key accommodation challenges:

- **Ensuring accommodation types exist across the whole range from backpackers to high-end inns/chalets**
- **Good dissemination of information to visitors about accommodation services**
- **Better coordinate farm/homestay accommodation to provide for group (tour) bookings**
- **Investigation of the potential of cribs (holiday homes) as additional accommodation supply**

The above challenges are addressed under the following recommendations.

Recommendation 6.1.1

That consideration be given to fostering the development of accommodation types suiting the top of the market, and those desiring premium service provision

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in cooperation with existing tourism accommodation providers

Priority: Low priority

A high proportion of international visitors, avoid using commercial accommodation, and choose instead to freedom camp. Efforts must be taken to encourage visitors to stay at a commercial accommodation premise, especially given the majority of accommodation provision caters for those preferring to go budget (see Recommendation 2.7.2a on freedom camping).

At present there are 78 accommodation services across the Catlins. A review of the size and nature of the accommodation sector will need to be undertaken over the next ten years, on a periodic basis, to determine if the existing types of accommodation is sufficient to meet the expected ongoing rise in visitors numbers that are predicted for the Catlins in the future.

Recommendation 6.1.2

That information and research about visitors is made available to the public and industry, so that accommodation outlets and types meet the needs of visitors as well as the expected rise in visitor numbers

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in association with the accommodation sector

Priority: Medium priority, ongoing

6.1.1 Cribs

Cribs or holiday homes are an important part of domestic tourism, as domestic visitors who have visited the Catlins with their family and extended families for many years often use this form of accommodation. Throughout the Catlins, there are probably in excess of two hundred cribs, for which the level of occupancy is low for most of the year. However, the availability of this potentially important source of accommodation is little known to most visitors, especially international visitors. This is because this type of accommodation is typically learned about by word of mouth. When they are promoted, this is often through numerous websites that are not linked to main Catlins websites, or in other media that is not widely and readily available to the Catlins visitor. For willing crib owners, there is potential to develop a collective booking service for Catlins cribs that would make more effective use of this form of accommodation, meet visitor needs, and provide a return to crib owners.

Recommendation 6.1.3

That cribs/baches be investigated in relation to their economic benefit to communities, and also in terms of the potential to integrate them more usefully into the accommodation resource of the region.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, crib owners, Venture Southland, Clutha District Council

Priority: Low priority

6.2 Food, Beverage and Shopping

The inventory on tourist services that focused on food and shopping revealed this sector of the tourism industry in the Catlins to be severely lacking. The relative absence of restaurants and cafes was reflected in the high percentage of visitors who chose not to eat out while staying in the Catlins. A number of factors are important to note here. First, there is discordance

between existing places to eat and places visitors prefer to eat, namely looking out on coastlines and vistas; a finding that emerged from responses of visitors within the visitor survey. Second, some establishments have unusual opening hours which are known to residents but do not benefit visitors who are spending only a few days in the region. While the visitor survey and the non-visitor survey revealed that restaurants and cafes were not important in what helps shape the overall experience of a visit, this should not be taken as an excuse to accept that the status quo in terms of existing provision is sufficient for tourism in the future. With the expected growth in visitor numbers over the next number of years, there exists opportunity for private enterprise to get involved in offering new food, beverage and shopping facilities.

Key food, beverage and shopping considerations:

- **Location of new services**
- **Encouragement to adopt regular business hours**
- **Investigate the opportunity to create high quality 'Catlins' souvenirs**
- **Opportunity for uniqueness of style and quality in both food outlets and in souvenirs**

Given the above considerations, the following recommendations and explanations are offered.

Recommendation 6.2.1

That consideration is given in where future eating and drinking establishments are positioned, encouraging locations close to the coast (where this meets landscape protection policies), or offering vistas.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism operators*

Priority: *Low priority*

Recommendation 6.2.2

That eating and drinking establishments are encouraged to have regular business hours, or business hours that meet the needs of visitors

Potential Implementing Partners: *All service providers catering to food and beverages*

Priority: *Medium priority*

While there exists a range of souvenir shops within the Catlins, there does not exist a range of souvenirs that reflect the Catlins in particular. Attention should therefore be taken to decide what type of souvenir should be developed that accurately depicts the Catlins experience.

Recommendation 6.2.3

That there is investigation into creating high quality souvenirs that depict the Catlins and that these be developed locally, and made available to visitors in a variety of locations

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins, Catlins businesses in association with craft and souvenir shop owners*

Priority: *Medium priority*

7. LEARNING ABOUT THE VISITOR AND THEIR IMPACTS

Strategic Objective Seven: To increase our knowledge of the visitor and their relationship with the community and the environment in the Catlins.

7.1 Research and Monitoring

Sustainable tourism development is based upon a sound knowledge base: knowledge of the visitor, their needs and behaviour, and knowledge about the resource – ecosystems and the community.

A previous section (Strategic Objective 2) has already pointed out the need for an ongoing programme of monitoring and research with respect to the impacts of visitors. This section reconfirms that need and expands the research brief to include visitor market composition, behaviour and satisfaction. An ongoing research programme should also collect information on the relationship between visitors and the community, covering such areas as residents’ attitudes to tourism and the economic impacts of tourism in the region (Figure 7.1).



Fig 7.1 Catlins tourism research needs

This research programme should complement existing research strategies in the region, for example the Venture Southland Tourism Research Strategy 2003-2008 which applies to the southern part of the Catlins. A particularly important project to emerge from the Venture Southland Tourism Research Strategy, for example, is that which proposes to investigate community perceptions of tourism, and the economic impacts of tourism on a regional and community level. There are opportunities for research into these areas (and others e.g. physical environment, wildlife impacts) to be undertaken on a collaborative basis between a number of key stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, Department of Conservation and other key stakeholders). It is also important that research undertaken in the north of the Catlins (Clutha District), be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with that in the south, and that ideally, all research undertaken should contribute to a revised Catlins-wide research strategy.

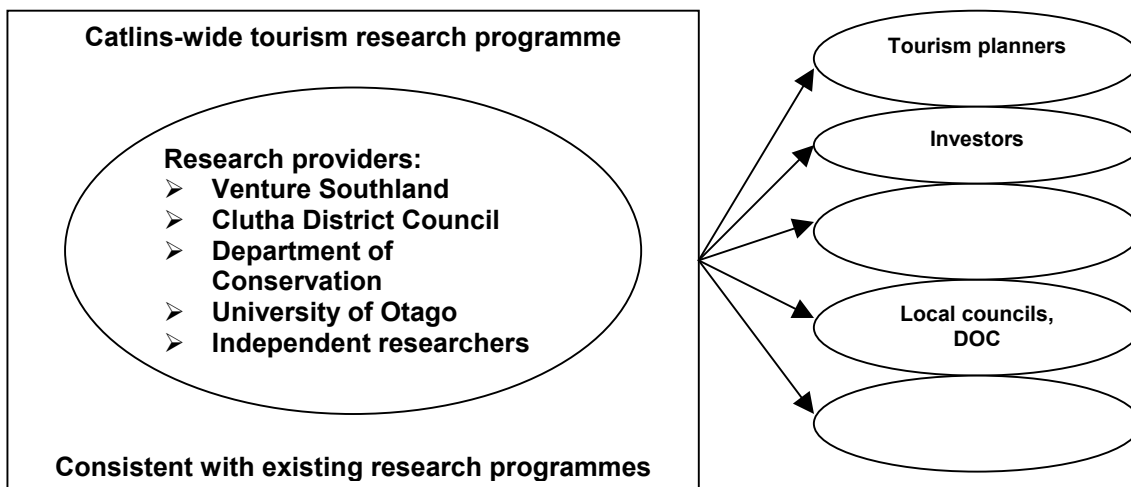


Fig 7.2 Catlins-wide research programme

The ultimate rationale for implementing such a research programme is to better inform destination management and ongoing tourism planning in the Catlins. The findings from the ongoing research programme should be disseminated in a timely manner to key stakeholders, including the community, local providers, operators, and investors (Figure 7.2). Findings from the research programme, as they become available, should be linked to the implementation of individual recommendations within this Strategy and should also feed into future reviews of the Catlins Tourism Strategy (Figure 7.3).

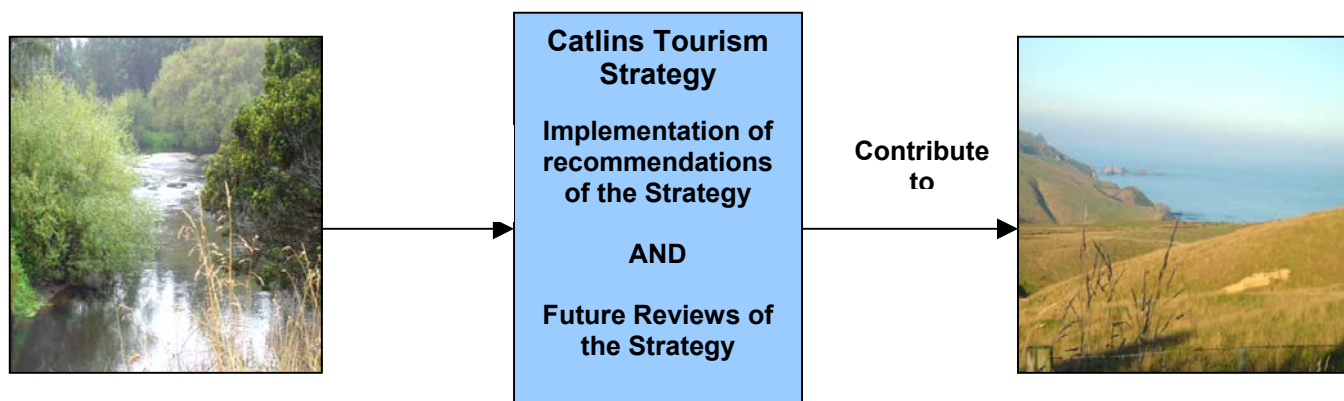


Fig 7.3 Outcomes from the Catlins Tourism Research Programme

Recommendation 7.1.1

That a programme of ongoing research needs concerning the visitor and their relationship with the community and environment be identified.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in co-operation with Venture Southland Tourism, DOC and potential research providers

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 7.1.2

That linkages be developed between the Catlins tourism industry and potential research providers. And that research opportunities/needs concerning the Catlins be promoted widely among the research community.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins in co-operation with potential research providers*

Priority: *Medium priority*

See also recommendation 2.3.1 and 2.3.2

7.2 Visitor Numbers

One of the key data sets required for tourism planning is that comprising information on spatial and temporal distribution of visitors – in other words, where they go and when. To date, individual agencies have been undertaking visitor counts, but often in an incomplete and slipshod manner. It is important that systems are put into place that provide for the *consistent* collection of data across the region – this would involve the use of reliable equipment, and the training of staff in record keeping and data collation.

Recommendation 7.2

That priority be given to improving the consistent collection of data on visitor usage of various natural and built attractions in the Catlins.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins in co-operation with Department of Conservation, local authorities and attraction owners/managers*

Priority: *Medium priority*

8. IMPROVING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategic Objective Eight: To ensure that the infrastructural requirements of the Catlins tourism industry are addressed.

There was overwhelming concern expressed throughout the community consultation process about the capacity of current tourist infrastructure to meet the needs of rapidly growing numbers of visitors. The main concern was for the environment, and the impact that is evident from lack of facilities in some areas.

8.1 Public Toilets

The lack of adequate toilet facilities for visitors throughout much of the Catlins was the most commonly raised issue during the community consultation. There are a number of sites in the Catlins where visitors are using the dunes, forest or roadside for toileting. While this is unpleasant for other visitors, creating a visual impact, it also poses a health threat to visitors, residents and possibly to wildlife. This practice can also impact negatively on the Catlins destination image.

The Visitor Survey (2003) revealed that toilets were the aspect of the visitors' experience with which they were least satisfied (after roading). While 41% of visitors rated toilets as "good" or "very good" a not inconsiderable 21% of visitors found the toilets to be "average", "poor" or "very poor". Figure 8.1 shows the location of existing public toilets and waste dump stations.

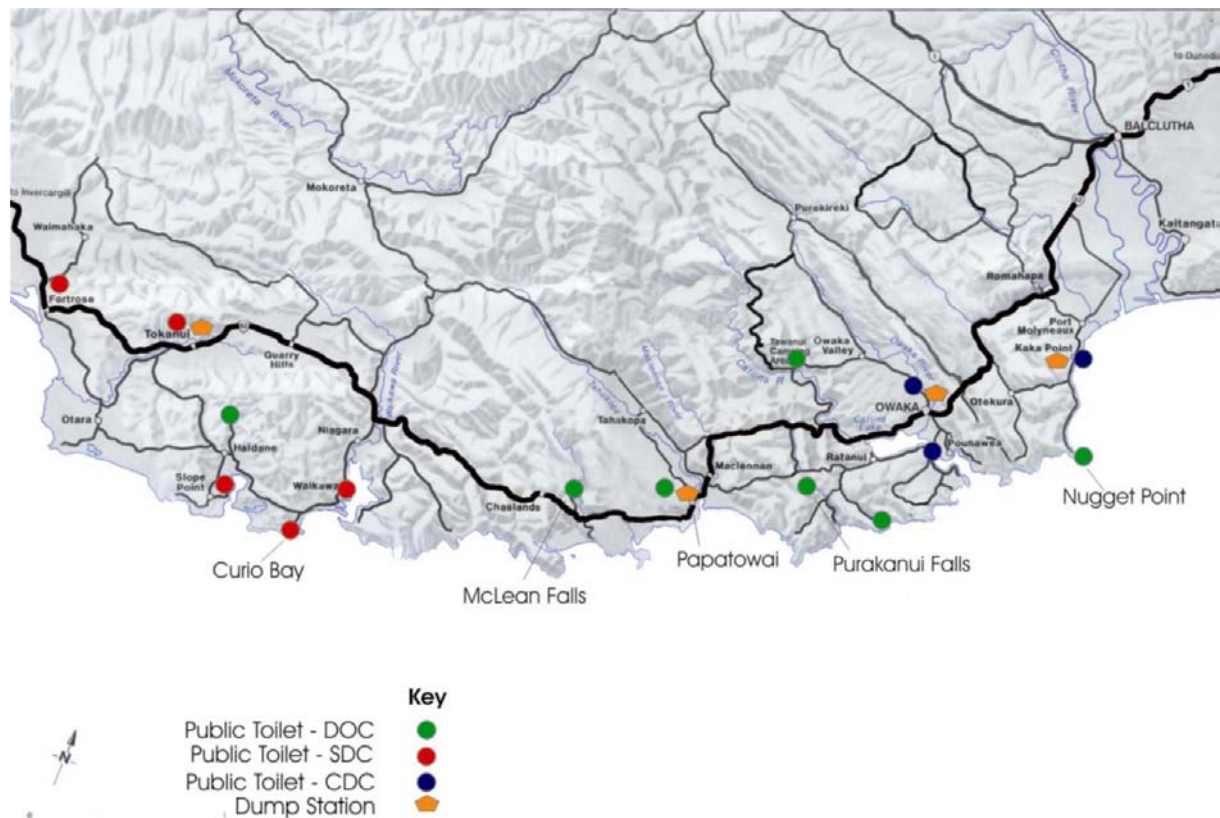


Fig 8.1 Existing public toilets and toilet waste dump stations

The community consultation revealed a major concern that the development of general infrastructure in the Catlins was not keeping pace with the growth in visitor numbers. In all community workshops the issue of public toilets was the main topic discussed. Residents felt that more toilets were needed in some locations. The lack of toilets had led to visitors using bush or sand dune areas for indiscriminate toileting. Visitors had also placed pressure on locals to use their private toilets. Although the need for more toilets was identified by the community, there was a lack of willingness to fund these through increased rates. Rather, residents felt that toilets should be funded on a user-pays basis, with dominant users such as bus-tour operators also making a significant contribution.

8.1.1 Existing policy & plans for Catlins toilets

Relevant policy and plans for the provision of public toilets in the Catlins exists in the form of the Clutha District Council Public Toilets Draft Report (2000) and the Southland District Council Public Conveniences Policy (2002).

The Southland District Council policy notes that since tourism and recreation are actively marketed by Council, "...it is essential that public conveniences match these activities" (SDC 2002, p 3). The policy also notes that since freedom camping is permitted at many sites, that facilities need to be provided at these sites. The policy identifies four factors that need to be considered in the provision of public toilets: location; standard; funding of operations; and timing and funding for maintenance and upgrades. In relation to funding, the policy recognises four categories of toilet facility: bus stop facilities; traveller facilities; destination facilities; and local facilities. Each category has different design, maintenance and funding implications. While it is noted that a "user pays" approach is difficult to implement, the policy recommends that alternative sources of funding be investigated, including dominant user groups. A programme of upgrades is identified (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Existing toilet plans and policy

	Clutha District Council	Southland District Council
Policy / plan	Clutha District Public Toilets Draft Report (2000)	Southland District Council Public Conveniences Policy (2002)
Issues discussed	Evaluates all CDC toilets and notes that many do not meet standards. Notes potential impact on image of district.	User pays difficult to implement; Alternative sources of funding should be pursued.
Key recommendations of policy / report	No additional toilets, but suggests upgrading existing toilets to a higher standard – (Owaka and Kaka Point)	No additional toilets, but suggests upgrading existing toilets to a higher standard (Waikawa and Tokanui)
Budget identified?	Yes - \$100,000 approved + \$100,000 proposed for 2004/2005*	Yes - \$15,000
Time frame identified?	Yes – 2003-2005	Yes 2009-2011

* These figures are from more recent CDC budget allocations.

The Clutha District Public Toilets Draft Report notes that public toilets should provide for “the requirements and expectations of overseas visitors and the travelling public”, and be considered for:

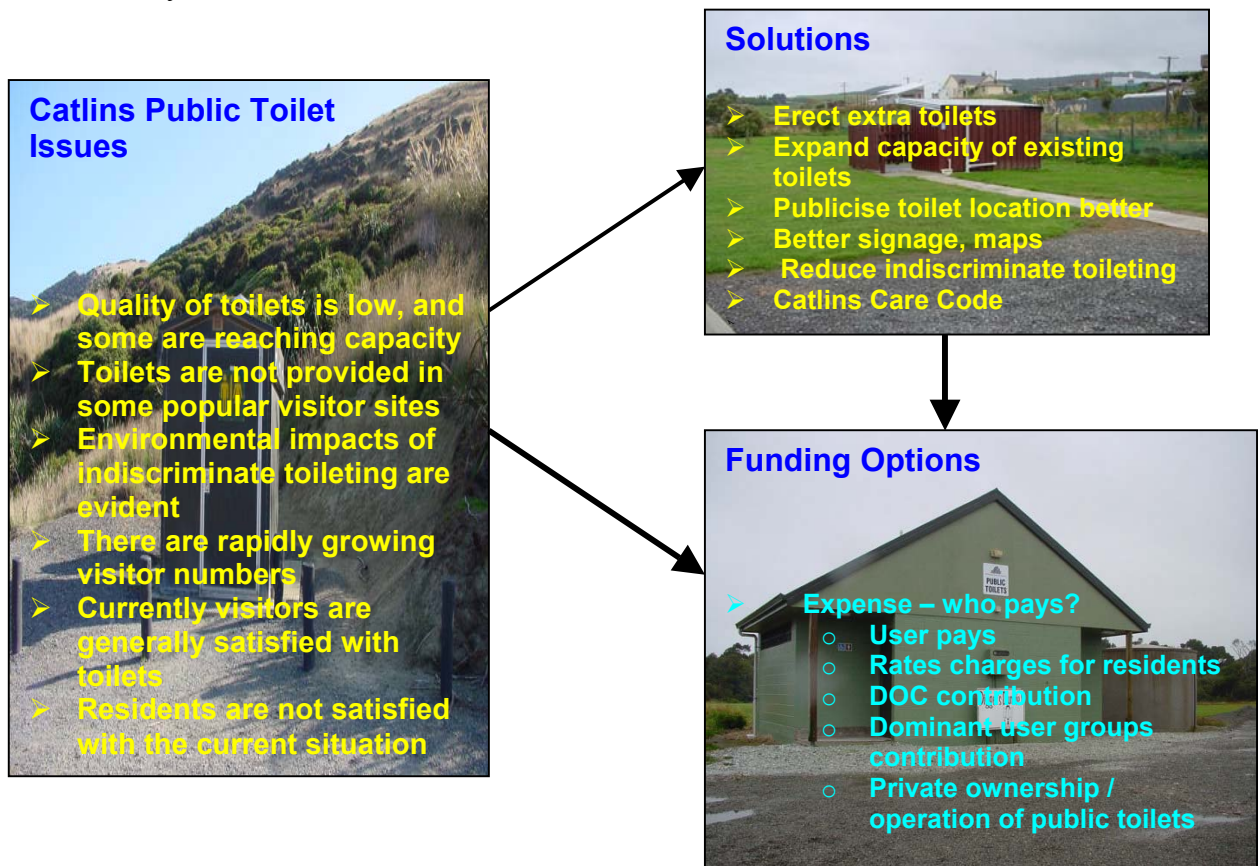
- Locations where people gather such as camping areas and beaches
- Scenic viewpoints and rest areas or picnic areas on travel routes
- Strategic places along popular tourist or travel routes, including service stations

The report presents a rating of public toilets in the District (including DOC toilets) based on an objective system incorporating 28 criteria. Catlins toilets ratings range from a low of 35% (Kaka Point Changing Sheds) to a high of 61% (Kaka point Playground), with most toilets in the region rating around 40—45%. The report notes that the Southern Scenic Route (through the catlins) is well serviced by toilets and although acknowledging requests for a toilet at Tuatuku, does not propose any additional toilets, but suggests upgrading existing toilets to a higher standard. The report identifies a programme of future work, but this has been superseded by more recent budget allocations.

The Department of Conservation, in their recent public consultation on visitor facilities “Towards a better network of visitor facilities” (DOC 2003), has not indicated any intention to either increase the number of toilets or to upgrade existing toilets in the Catlins area.

8.1.2 Options for Catlins toilets

This Strategy recognises that the provision of toilets for visitors is a high priority in the Catlins. It also notes the challenges and costs associated with the construction and servicing of toilets, especially those to be located in proximity to environmentally sensitive areas e.g. near waterways, or the coast.



Improvements to the existing network of toilets that would meet community and visitor needs are proposed and prioritised below (Table 8.2). The provision of toilets at *every* visitor site is not practicable due to the prohibitive cost that this would involve, nor is it necessarily desirable, as toilets can have a negative visual impact at some sites.

Table 8.2 Schedule of priorities for public toilet development

Location	Issues	Proposal	Potential Funding Options
Nugget Point	Existing toilets at Roaring Bay are at capacity for peak season. Not adequate to meet demand from growing number of independent visitors and bus tours. Evidence of indiscriminate toileting at Roaring Bay.	Either upgrade existing toilet or establish an additional toilet at the bus park.	This is a DOC reserve, however the existing toilet was established jointly with the CDC – this funding model could be repeated, as an improved toilet facility here would reduce pressure on other CDC facilities
Cannibal Bay	There is no facility here, but this area receives growing numbers of independent visitors as this is a known sea lion site and is also the start (or end) of a walk to Surat Bay. Placing a toilet here may encourage more freedom camping, however.	To establish a new toilet facility on road reserve	CDC funding through the allocated and proposed funding for Catlins toilets.
Surat Bay / New Haven	There is no facility here, but this is a very heavily used area for both independent travellers and bus tours. There is evidence of indiscriminate toileting in the sand dunes. There is a strong call from residents to re-establish a toilet in this location.	To establish a new toilet facility on road reserve at the New Haven road end.	CDC funding through the allocated and proposed funding for Catlins toilets. Contributions from tour operators.
Jacks Bay	Previous toilet removed due to inappropriate siting. This area receives much usage from visitors, to the beach and also Jacks Blowhole. The community would like to see a replacement toilet in this location.	To establish a new toilet facility on Council reserve.	CDC funding through the allocated and proposed funding for Catlins toilets.
Purakaunui Falls	There is a DOC toilet facility here, but it is under increasing pressure at this key visitor attraction. This toilet received a 42% rating in CDC evaluation. However, upgrade not identified as a priority by DOC in their visitor facilities plans.	Upgrade of existing facility.	CDC funding through the allocated and proposed funding for Catlins toilets in co-operation with DOC. Contributions from tour operators.

Table 8.2 outlines the public toilet issues associated with some key sites in the Catlins, and identifies preferred options for toilet provision.

To maximise the use of toilets and minimise indiscriminate toileting behaviour, the location of toilets needs to be well publicised both in signage and published material. Visitors should also be warned against indiscriminate toileting behaviour via signage and in published material (this could be contained within the proposed Catlins Care Code). There is also the potential that by increasing the number of public toilets, this will encourage freedom camping where it is not desirable – improved signage and enforcement of freedom camping policy will be required at sites where this is a possibility (see Recommendations 2.7.2a & 2.7.2b).

Recommendation 8.1.1

That public toilets be upgraded or new facilities be provided at key, high usage visitor sites, according to the schedule in Table 8.2.

Potential Implementing Partners: CDC, DOC, Central government funding providers

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 8.1.2

That a flexible approach to the funding of toilet provision and maintenance be adopted, including public-private partnerships, and user-pays.

Potential Implementing Partners: CDC, DOC, Central government funding providers, private parties.

Priority: High priority

Recommendation 8.1.3

That the location of public toilets be adequately publicised through signage and published material. And that visitors be warned against indiscriminate toileting via signage and in published material, including the Catlins Care Code.

Potential Implementing Partners: Local authorities, DOC, Southern Scenic Route Trust, Venture Southland Tourism

Priority: High priority

8.2 Camping Ground Toilets

There are also problems reported with the capacity of some camping ground sewage systems to meet current demand. Stakeholder consultation revealed this to be the case for both Papatowai Camping Ground and the Curio Bay Camping Ground.

The Papatowai Camping Ground is operated under a lease from the Department of Conservation, who report that the current sewage system requires “significant upgrading” to meet current standards. The sewage problem at this site is reportedly exacerbated by campervans discharging their wastes into the system. However, DOC indicates that the cost of

this work outweighs use levels. In the DOC public consultation for visitor facilities in Otago Conservancy, “maintenance by community” is suggested.

The Curio Bay Camping Ground has been operated under lease from the Southland District Council. Recently, a community group, the South Catlins Community and Environment Development Trust (SCCEDT) has entered into negotiations with SDC to assume this lease. The Trust notes that “significant upgrading” of the campground is required. The SDC Public Conveniences Policy (2002) classifies the Curio Bay toilet as a “Traveller Facility”, but does not identify any requirement for upgrade or replacement. The SCCEDT proposal for the site includes the provision of upgraded public toilets at Curio Bay, and indicates a partnership approach will be taken with SDC over sewage system requirements.

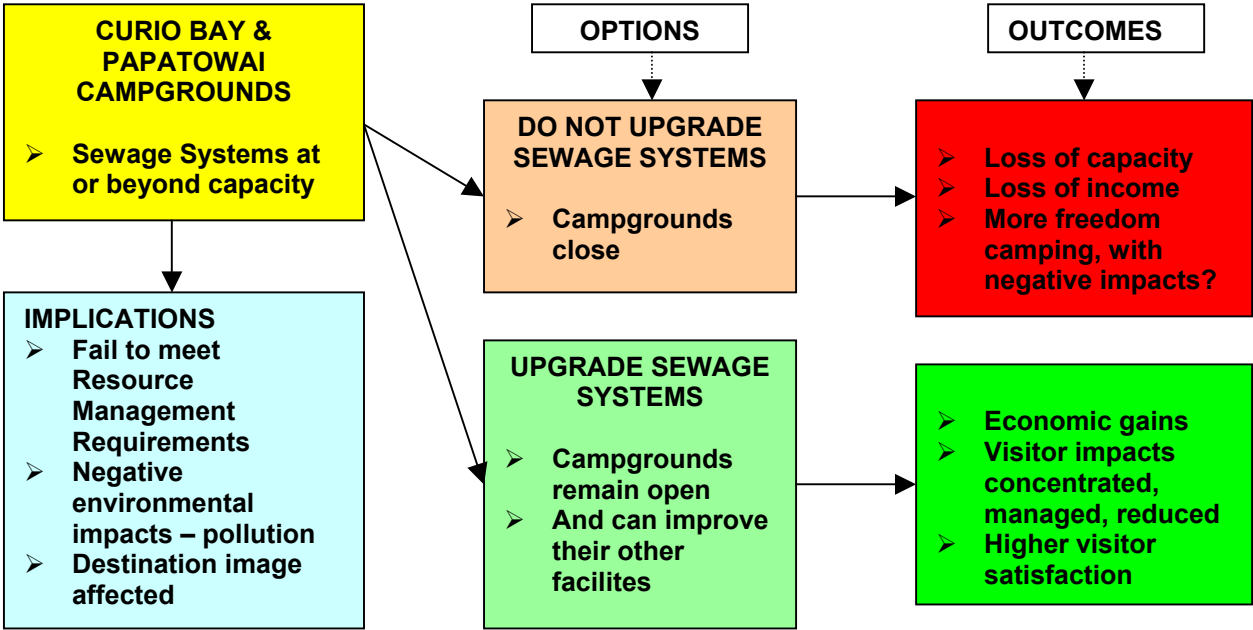


Fig 8.2 Options and outcomes for campgrounds

Both sites are important visitor facilities, Curio Bay, in particular, receiving high (although seasonally concentrated (estimated 5000 visitor nights, Dec-march)) use by domestic and international visitors alike. But in addition to meeting the demand for this style of accommodation, these facilities also play a role in concentrating usage into managed sites, and thus help to reduce the negative impacts of freedom camping. They also act as foci for visitor spending, and a sites where other local tourism operators may promote their services.



Thus it is desirable, in order that these facilities remain operational, that the toilets and sewage treatment systems of both of these sites be upgraded to meet current standards and to meet projected demand from increased visitor numbers over the coming years. However, it is likely, as indicated by DOC, that such upgrades will require considerable investment, which could pose a burden on local providers and/or ratepayers. However, imposing the costs of upgrading facilities onto potential lessees of these sites may also make the ongoing operation of the campgrounds financially unattractive.

Recommendation 8.2

That the relevant authorities investigate options to fund the upgrading of sewage systems at Curio Bay and Papatowai Camping Grounds to meet current and projected demand.

Potential Implementing Partners: Local authorities, Department of Conservation, Regional councils and camping ground lessees

Priority: Medium priority

8.3 Campervan Waste

Indiscriminate dumping of campervan toilet waste has been identified by stakeholders as being a significant issue in the Catlins. However, it is important to note that this problem has not been fully documented. Studies in other parts of New Zealand (e.g. Westland) have revealed that although there is a public perception that campervans are the main culprits with respect to toilet wastes, in reality, it is other travellers who are mainly responsible. It is important that recommendations relating to campervan waste be based upon a solid body of data, and to this end, this Strategy recommends that a detailed study be undertaken into this issue. It is noteworthy that a study into this issue is being undertaken on the Otago Peninsula in 2003/2004, the findings of which may be useful and applicable to the Catlins.

Currently there are a number of sites where campervans can discharge their waste into sewerage systems or septic tanks. However, it may be that users of campervans in the Catlins are not aware of the opportunities to discharge their waste in the acceptable manner. Furthermore, as noted in section 8.2, some camping ground septic tanks (e.g. Papatowai) are being overloaded at peak times, and this problem has been partly attributed to the increasing number of campervans discharging into these systems.

Thus there is conceivably a need not only to enhance the signage and promotion of existing dump facilities (e.g. through the Catlins Care Code), but also to increase the capacity at existing facilities (see Fig 8.1). The concept of developing two or three dedicated camper van dump stations in strategic locations has been identified in the Community Workshops. However, this would require a significant investment, and it is likely that funds would better be spent on promoting the use of existing facilities, or upgrading these should a detailed investigation indicate that this is necessary.

Recommendation 8.3.1

That the relevant authorities undertake a detailed investigation of the campervan waste disposal issue in the Catlins, addressing the extent of the campervan waste discharge problem, and the awareness, use and capacity of existing facilities.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins in collaboration with local authorities, DOC

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 8.3.2

That signage and promotion of campervan dump-stations be enhanced, and that Catlins tourism authorities co-operate with relevant organisations (e.g. rental companies, New Zealand Motor Caravan Association) to promote environmentally friendly campervan practices in the region.

Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CDC in collaboration with local and regional authorities, rental companies

Priority: Medium priority

8.4 Solid Waste Management

Comments made during the community consultation indicate that there is potential to manage solid wastes better – both at visitor sites and also in the resident community. And while the wider issue of community solid waste management is beyond the brief of this Strategy, it is related to tourism. Some members of the community felt that the current waste management (i.e. lack of recycling) detracted from the “clean green” image that the Catlins portrayed (see Recommendation 2.6.2).

While there is some evidence of littering along roadsides and at some visitor sites, the Attractions Inventory undertaken for this Strategy revealed that in general, there is not a litter problem at most attractions. Rubbish facilities are not provided at many sites, although this is variable with some DOC sites still having facilities. The Catlins rubbish policy appears to be progressing towards “carry-in, carry-out”, which should be advanced for the Catlins as a whole, and promoted to visitors through the Catlins Care Code. However, if this practice is to be encouraged, then it is important that waste facilities for visitor use are located in central, accessible locations throughout the Catlins e.g. the main settlements. This is not the case at the moment, where, for example, there is no such facility in Owaka. Rubbish facilities could be provided in conjunction with existing campervan effluent dump stations, and on a public-private partnership basis where practicable.



Where such facilities *do* exist, the enhanced promotion of existing waste facilities and recycling opportunities within settlements could minimise indiscriminate littering at visitor sites and along roadsides (Table 8.3). The location of these facilities needs to be publicised clearly for visitors.

Table 8.3 Current waste management

	Community Facilities	Site Facilities
Clutha District Council	Wheelie bins	Bins provided at some sites.
Southland District Council	Wheelie bins, recycling centre proposed for Tokanui	Bins provided at some sites.
Department of Conservation	N/A	No bins: “Carry-in, carry-out” approach.

Recommendation 8.4.1

That avenues of communication be developed to encourage visitors to use existing waste management and recycling facilities.

Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CDC, DOC

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 8.4.2

That a policy of “carry-in, carry-out” for solid waste continue to be advanced for the entire Catlins, and actively promoted to visitors through the Catlins Care Code and other appropriate means.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, DOC, CDC, VS

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 8.4.3

That in support of the policy 8.4.2, a limited number of waste management / recycling facilities be provided in central locations where they are currently lacking.

Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CD, DOC

Priority: Medium priority

(also see Recommendation 2.6.2)

8.5 Roothing

The most significant roading issue in the Catlins, the sealing of the remaining 19km of the Southern Scenic Route south of Papatowai, has now been resolved. This will mean that the entire Southern Scenic Route main trunk road will be sealed. The sealing of this section will occur progressively over the next two years, thus removing what has been seen by many to be a major obstacle to the growth of

tourism in the Catlins. Simultaneously, the improvement of this section of road will give satisfaction to the community where it is widely viewed that tourists pose a traffic hazard on this section.



Both the visitor survey and residents survey undertaken for this Strategy indicated a high degree of concern over roading. For residents, roading was the most important tourism-related development issue in the Catlins. And while visitors were generally satisfied with most aspects of their visits to the Catlins, roading was one issue for which visitors *did* express some dissatisfaction: Approximately 20% of visitors felt that the roads were “poor” or “very poor”. And although the sealing project above will address many visitors’ concerns, there is still a substantial amount of roading that is unsealed and difficult – especially for international visitors not used to driving in the New Zealand countryside. Table 8.4 lists the unsealed roads that are used to access key visitor sites in the Catlins.

Table 8.4 Unsealed roads to key visitor sites

District	Roads to key visitor sites that are unsealed	Approximate length (km)
Clutha	The Nuggets Rd	8
	Karoro Creek Rd (Southern Scenic Route – to Kaka Point)	6
	Cannibal Bay Rd	11
	New Haven Rd	3
	Jacks Bay Rd & Hina Hina Rd	10
	Purakaunui Stream Rd & Tahakopa Beach Rd (Purakaunui Falls)	7
	Puaho Rd (Purakauni Falls and Takakopa Bay lookout)	9
	Catlins Rd & Tawanui Rd (Catlins River Walk)	10
	Rewcastle Rd (McLeans Falls)	3
Southland	Tokanui-Haldane Rd & Haldane-Curio Bay Rd	15
	Otara-Haldane Rd	9
	Slope Point Rd	5
	Waipapa Lighthouse Rd	4
	TOTAL	91

There are many more unsealed, narrow, and often winding roads leading to some important visitor sites in the Catlins. These include the roads to Purakaunui Bay, Cannibal Bay, Surat Bay, the upper Catlins River, Purakaunui Falls, McLean Falls, Slope Point and Waipapa Point, among many others. This Strategy is certainly not advocating the sealing of all or any of these roads. Indeed, notwithstanding the criticism of the quality of such roads, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that for some visitors, these unsealed country roads contribute to a sense of discovery and are an integral part of the “Catlins experience”.

However, this experience cannot come at the cost of personal risk or damage to vehicles. To this end, efforts should be made to maintain the more popular tourist routes at a level with which most inexperienced international drivers can cope with safely. The sealing of the 19km of Southern Scenic Route south of Papatowai will hopefully reduce the number of tourist-related motor vehicle accidents.

But in addition to road improvements, tourist drivers should be adequately prepared for the conditions and be provided with advice on how to adjust to the conditions. Strategically placed signs (this is already done with the “keep left” signs in part of the Catlins) and highlighted safety advice in published material may assist – including any Southern Scenic Route material.

One stretch of road that has attracted negative comments from both visitors and residents alike is the Karoro Creek Road, approximately 6km of unsealed road between Kaka Point and Owaka. This road gets a reasonably high amount of traffic, as it is part of the widely promoted Southern Scenic Route, and part of the logical tourist route taken by visitors after having visited Nugget Point, and then proceeding south. The traffic on this route includes an increasing number of tour buses. This road has been upgraded in recent years, however, and although unsealed, is acceptable as a main tourist route as long as drivers make allowances for the conditions. One problem is that for many international drivers, this section of road may well be the first stretch of unsealed road that they have driven on. Thus, accidents involving visitors do continue to occur on this road, and on a fairly regular basis. Sealing of this road, therefore, would have to assume top priority, if and when funds became available.

Recommendation 8.5.1

That local authorities continue to collate information on tourist-related vehicle accidents, as well as traffic flows, throughout the Catlins, with a view to making recommendations on possible improvements. And that this information be communicated to community groups, including Tourism Catlins.

Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CDC

Priority: Low priority

Recommendation 8.5.2

That priorities for road upgrading in the Catlins be assigned based on road usage, attraction visitor counts and motor vehicle accident data, with indicative priorities for upgrading being the Karoro Creek Rd, Purakaunui Falls access and the Nuggets roads.

Potential Implementing Partners: Local authorities

Priority: Low priority

8.6 Bus Traffic

One community workshop raised the issue of the impact of bus traffic on local roads. The New Haven Road gets regular visits from buses, who take tours there to visit the sea lions at New Haven beach and Surat Bay. This road is narrow and has become potholed – the latter condition attributed (by residents) mainly to the bus traffic. Here, the tourist traffic, especially buses, is seen to contribute to road deterioration as well as posing a safety issue for local residents.



Roads such as this need to be maintained to a high standard, both for residents and visitors alike. Some residents have called for buses to be banned on this road and from other roads, due to their impacts; or for the bus tour operators to contribute financially to the upkeep of the roads. However, operators already contribute through their road user charges, and prohibiting buses to some areas, despite posing legal difficulties, may not be practicable in terms getting visitors to attractions and generally fostering tourism in the Catlins. However, for some roads, consideration should be given to traffic management, for example applying local speed limits, and also improving the location of bus parking/turning areas.

Associated with the issue of roading is that of facilities such as toilets: those sites that attract bus tours (such as New Haven) should have adequate facilities in terms of information, toilets and waste management.

Recommendation 8.6

That the relevant local authorities maintain communications with local communities (where bus traffic has been identified as an issue) and bus tour operators with a view to meeting the safety and other needs of all interested parties.

Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CDC, bus tour operators
Priority: Medium priority

8.7 Emergency Services

A closely related issue to roading is the likely need for upgrading of emergency services (fire, ambulance, police) in the Catlins, especially with rapidly increasing numbers of visitors, many of whom, as discussed above, are unfamiliar with driving on rural New Zealand roads. The provision of adequate emergency services was ranked highly (3rd equal) by Catlins residents, out of a range of tourism development requirements for the region. While the community largely relies upon volunteers for these services, there are increasing difficulties in filling volunteer positions. This was demonstrated recently by the challenges faced by the St John ambulance service in Owaka in providing a basic volunteer service.

While again, addressing regional emergency service requirements is beyond the brief of this Strategy, a rapidly growing tourism industry will place additional demands upon these services. Thus, as is the case with other infrastructural requirements, there is an increasing need for additional support from outside the region for the maintenance of viable emergency services.

In the interim, it is hoped that by addressing roading and related safety issues, and educating tourists in the areas of driving and other safety aspects, tourism-related calls upon emergency services may be minimised.

Recommendation 8.7.1

That approaches to reduce tourist-related calls upon emergency services be investigated. That these include the provision of information to visitors on road safety, and other areas of concern (e.g. bush-craft, water-code).

Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CDC, DOC, emergency service providers

Priority: Low priority

Recommendation 8.7.2

That the need for improved emergency services (fire service, ambulance and police) be assessed in relation to the increased numbers of visitors utilising the region and its roads.

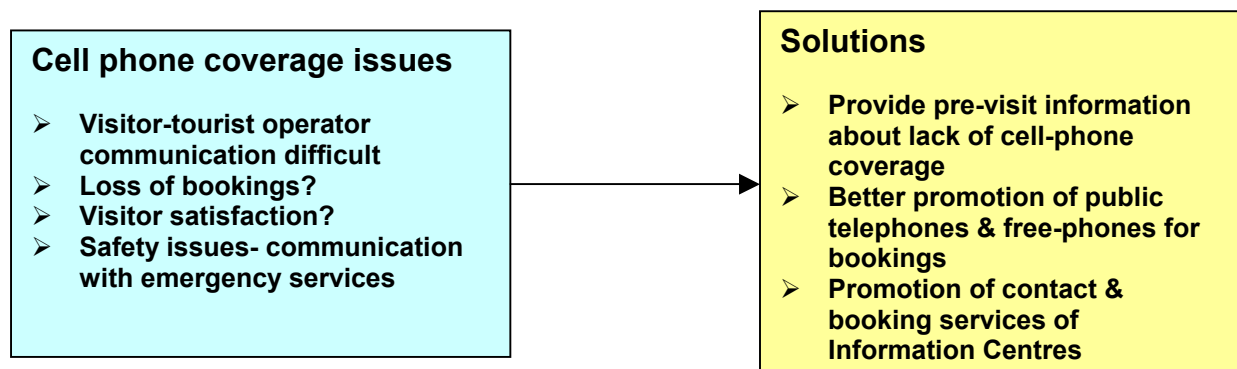
Potential Implementing Partners: SDC, CDC, DOC, emergency service providers

Priority: Medium priority

8.8 Communications

A good communication network is an integral component of the tourism industry. Communications to the Catlins is generally very good, with most operators having at least a land-line telephone and many also having their own e-mail and websites. However, local use of the internet (as reflected in access to internet figures from the 2001 Census) is generally lower than for other parts of New Zealand – and this is partly a reflection of the problems encountered with use of the internet in the Catlins.

Cell-phone coverage in the Catlins is currently very poor; South of Owaka, through to Fortrose, coverage is virtually nil. This hinders communication between tourism providers and their potential customers. If visitors arrive in the Catlins and have not pre-booked accommodation or activities, especially if they arrive after hours when information services are not available, they will not be able to use their cell-phone to contact operators. They must then rely on public telephones, of which there are few in the region. Thus, there is the potential for business to be lost or that visitors experience delay or dissatisfaction by not being able to contact their desired operator or adhere to their planned itineraries.



The lack of cell-phone coverage is also undesirable from a visitor-safety perspective. Cell-phones can speed up emergency-service responses to vehicle accidents, or to other emergencies that could potentially occur in what is largely a rugged and remote area. While it is important to note that the lack of cell-phone coverage was not an issue that was specifically raised by visitors in the 2003 visitor survey, it *was* an item of concern for residents and local tourist operators alike, and was raised frequently in the Community Workshops.

Currently there is an initiative to provide wireless broad-band internet access to the southern portion (within the SDC area) of the Catlins. This will provide high-speed internet access to some of the region, and to tourism operators (and visitors) who are internet subscribers. However, because of the unique landscape, coverage will not be complete. At present there are no plans to introduce a similar system to the larger part of the Catlins. It should be noted that this system will not improve cell-phone coverage throughout the Catlins.

And while the provision of the cell-phone coverage to *all* of the Catlins is certainly desirable, from both tourism and community development perspectives, other strategies need to be put in place in the short-term. These include the provision of pre-visit information to tourists i.e. that they will not be able to use their cell-phones in the area, and thus need to plan accordingly. There is also a need to ensure that public telephones are adequate in terms of their location and notification – both by signage and in published material.

Recommendation 8.8.1

That advocacy of the benefits of enhanced cell-phone coverage throughout the entire Catlins region be undertaken to the relevant parties.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland, CDC

Priority: Medium priority

Recommendation 8.8.2

That short to medium term strategies be implemented to improve visitor-tourist operator communication. And that these include pre-visit information to visitors; enhancing the use of public telephones and free-phones for booking; and promoting the communication/booking role of information centres.

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland, CDC

Priority: Medium priority

8.9 Access

Despite limitations relating to road condition and provision of signage, generally the attractions of the Catlins are well serviced in terms of access. However, there are some sites for which there are physical or legal access issues.

In some cases, legal physical access is unavailable, despite the existence of legal access in the way of legal road or “Queens chain”. One example of this, raised within a Community Workshop, is the access to view sea lions at New Haven. To access the beach at this site, visitors are required to cross a tidal watercourse, which is not passable at high tide, except by way of a track and bridge provided by local landowners on private property. There are two issues at this site: the first is the lack of reliable physical access, with the consequence being that visitors are discouraged from accessing one of the key attractions in the Catlins if the tides are unfavourable; the second issue is that of landowner liability - for injuries that may happen to visitors whilst using the access route on private land.

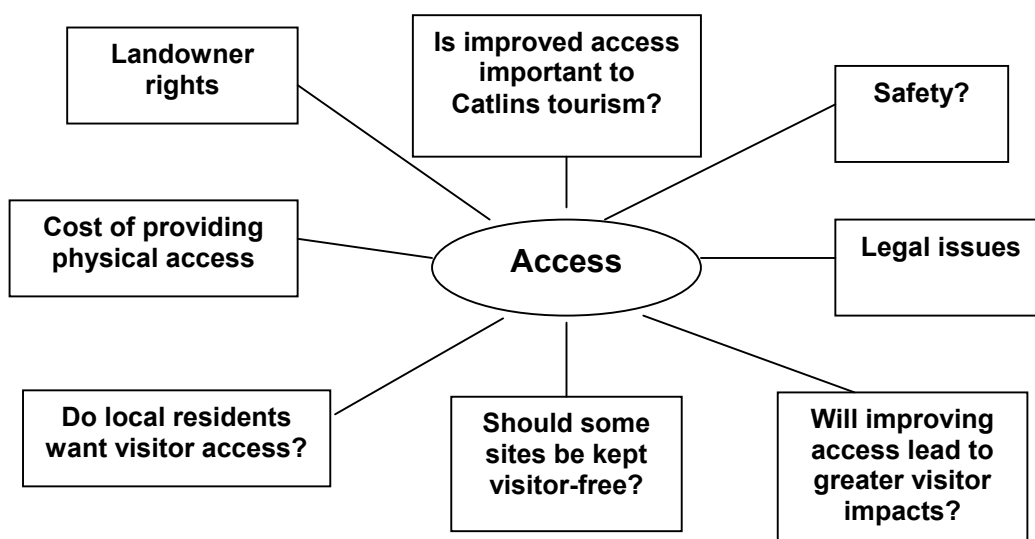


Fig 8.3 Access issues

In other areas, the simple lack of assured legal access is the issue. For example, the potential to improve legal access to some of the larger blocks of the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park was identified in consultation with key stakeholders and in the Community Workshops.

In all cases, however, the desire to enhance access must be considered in relation to local residents' desires and landowners' rights. Enhancing access must also be weighed against the potential visitor impacts to habitats and wildlife - especially to sites of ecological significance.

Recommendation 8.9

That the relevant authorities (e.g local authority, Department of Conservation) liaise with landowners, local residents and tourism operators over access issues for specific attractions, with a view to improving visitor access whilst meeting landowner and residents' needs, and maintaining attraction values.

Potential Implementing Partners: DOC, CDC, SDC, tourism operators, landowners

Priority: High priority

9. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Strategic Objective Nine: To match the visitor with the Catlins tourism product through appropriate marketing and promotion.

9.1 Positioning and Targeting

It should be noted from the outset that to provide a detailed analysis of the Catlins market position, with recommendations in terms of marketing and promotion is beyond the scope of this Strategy (and outside of the Contractor's brief). However, some general observations and recommendations can be made based on the research undertaken in preparation of this strategy document.

Key strengths of the Catlins include:

- Nature and wildlife and the competitive edge these offer over other New Zealand destinations
- Opportunity to further diversify the tourism product and experience to include culture and heritage
- Opportunity to highlight and promote the unique and special qualities of the Catlins together; e.g., unique geological formations, wildlife, natural environment, people and their stories
- Promotion of the region as a family destination within the domestic market

Other items that require attention include:

- The need for product and infrastructure to be developed either before or at the same time as the destination is being marketed and promoted. This will ensure that the destination can be sustainable in catering for increases in visitors as well as provide a satisfying experience by meeting expectations of visitors and locals.
- Need for the Catlins to be promoted as a 'single' destination, but where every business or activity is important and which adds value to the overall experience and appeal of the Catlins. They must all work together within a common vision for the area.
- Need for cooperation in marketing and promotion in neighbouring areas
- Selling the unique combination of qualities that the Catlins possess (e.g., petrified forest, landscape, wildlife, environment) that shifts thinking away from a 'travel through' region using the SSR to a 'destination region'
- Need to capture part of the expected rise in international visitors for the rest of Southland
- Creation of a logo/brand that represents ALL of the Catlins

The following recommendations are advanced to reflect the above ideas.

Recommendation 9.1.1

That the Catlins should maintain its key positioning around the themes of nature and wildlife, but should look to expand these to include culture and heritage, and promote that which sets the region apart and makes it unique from other areas in the South Island

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland Tourism, CDC

Priority: Medium Priority

Recommendation 9.1.2

That greater attention be given to the Catlins as a family destination for the domestic market, by advertising the range of options of accommodation available to families

Potential Implementing Partners: Tourism Catlins, Venture Southland Tourism

Priority: Medium Priority

9.2 Channels of Communication/Information

The Catlins is a relatively unknown destination to international visitors and is in the early stages of the tourism life cycle. This is starting to change with the rise of international visitors to the region in the past few years, and with a growing awareness of the Catlins, especially among a certain segment of the domestic market. To appeal to a broader market, or to appeal to the markets that the community has indicated that it wants to visit the Catlins, will require improvements to the current channels of communication: with other destination marketing organisations, with wholesalers and across the distribution chain, and with visitors.

The creation of Tourism Catlins, in collaboration with existing efforts from Venture Southland Tourism will enhance opportunities to further develop channels of communication. However it is important that industry and visitor awareness of the Catlins is monitored effectively.

Recommendation 9.2

That Tourism Catlins in co-operation with existing destination marketing organisations (and external researchers when necessary) develop a programme to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing programmes for the Catlins, and of destination awareness in general.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins and Venture Southland Tourism, external providers*

Priority: *Medium priority*

10. PROVIDING A QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Strategic Objective Ten: To assist Catlins tourism operators (and associated services) to achieve an outstanding level of service to their clients.

The Catlins offers visitors a high quality experience in terms of the natural habitats, wildlife and landscapes found within the area. However, as a destination, it competes with a number of other destinations that offer a similar nature-based product e.g. Stewart Island, Western Southland, Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula, Westland and Kaikoura. For example, the non-visitor perception study undertaken for the Strategy revealed that tourists rate the competing destination of Te Anau more highly for both nature and wildlife – supposedly the key strengths of the Catlins tourism product.

Catlins residents have identified that their product differs from that in other locations because of the genuine southern hospitality that they believe they offer. It is important, therefore, in order for the Catlins to stand out from the crowd in terms of the visitor experience that it can provide, that the visitor service component of the Catlins experience be of a standard that is on a par with the outstanding natural attractions. This is especially important if the Catlins is to target the higher spending segments of the domestic and international markets (a preference indicated by the community). And while these segments may be willing to spend more money at a destination, they are also more demanding in terms of service standards (Fig 10.1).

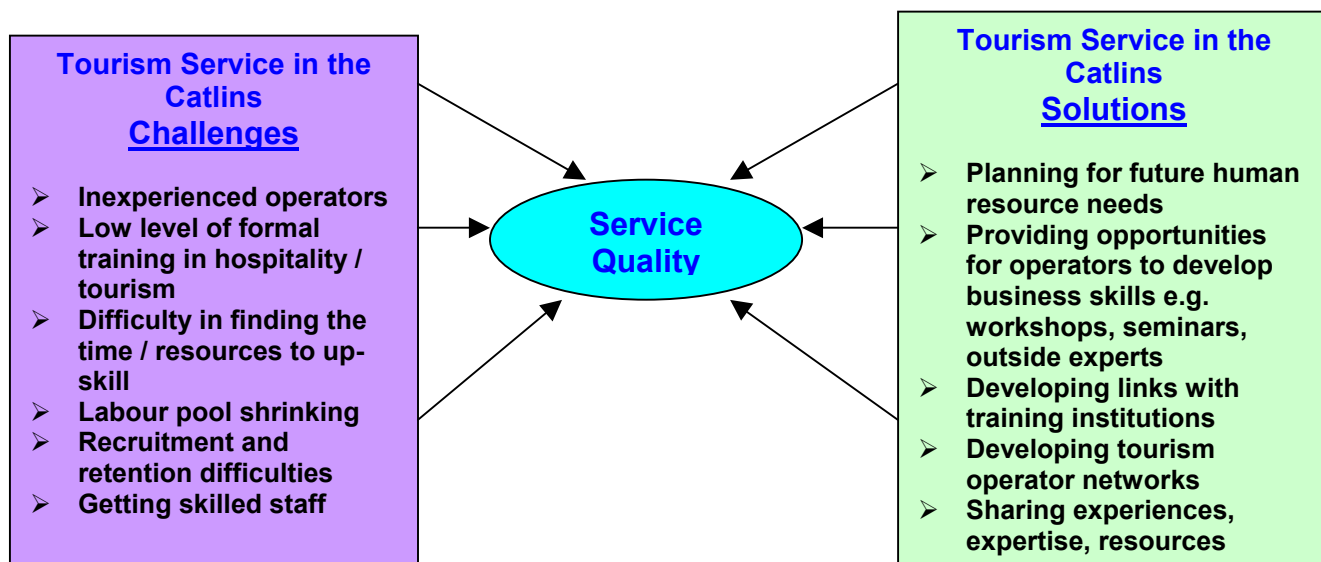


Fig 10.1 Tourism service in the Catlins: challenges and solutions

The Visitor Survey (2003) indicated that overall, visitors were satisfied with the level of customer service. Approximately 7% of visitors received only “average” service in the Catlins. Conversely, only 18% of visitors received “very good” service, indicating that there is still room for improvement. And, as noted above, as visitor numbers grow and visitor composition becomes more diverse, the Catlins tourism industry will be challenged to meet the growing customer service needs of visitors.

While the Catlins may have no issue with respect to offering the *sentiment* of southern hospitality, the professional and technical aspects of this service may pose challenges. This is partly because many tourism operators in the Catlins are relatively inexperienced, and may have little or no formal training in service provision or tourism business management skills. A similar challenge lies in the fact that a pool of qualified and suitable tourism service labour does not exist in the Catlins. Furthermore, with a net outward migration of people in the traditional age group that fulfil the tourism industry's needs, meeting the human resource needs of a rapidly growing industry may pose challenges. If visitor numbers do increase up to 300,000 per year over the next ten years, as some have predicted, and if a higher percentage of visitors chose to stay overnight, this will translate to roughly an increase in human resource requirements of 200-300 full time equivalent tourism workers.



Good service stems from running a good business, and while good business management or financial skills may not necessarily imply a high level of customer service, they do form the basis upon which a quality customer service may be built. Thus it is important that in order to foster a culture of exceptional service in the Catlins, the industry needs to focus not just on the development of service skills of frontline personnel, but also on the business and management skills of operators.

These skills can be fostered in a number of ways (Fig 10.1), but central to this is the development of tourism operator networks, that can provide a forum for the sharing of resources, support and experiences. Such networks also help create a “critical mass” of operators that can increase opportunities to attract and resource external sources of expertise. Networks do currently exist, but they are split between north and south and could be strengthened through further support from local authority providers (e.g. Venture Southland Tourism).

Recommendation 10.1

That a Catlins-wide tourism network be developed and maintained with a focus on developing business and service skills among tourism operators.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Tourism Catlins, CDC, Venture Southland
Tourism and local operators*
Priority: *Medium priority, ongoing*

Recommendation 10.2

That a consistent Catlins-wide programme of monitoring visitor service satisfaction be introduced to the Catlins. And that the results of this monitoring be used to identify customer service training needs for tourism operators.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Venture Southland Tourism, CDC, and
Tourism Catlins in co-operation with local operators*
Priority: *Medium priority, ongoing*

Recommendation 10.3

That future human resource requirements of the Catlins tourism industry be assessed, with a view to planning for these needs. This may include liaison with local and regional education/training providers over relevant programmes.

Potential Implementing Partners: *Venture Southland Tourism, CDC*
Priority: *Medium priority, ongoing*

APPENDIX 1: List of Recommendations – arranged in order of Strategic Objectives

Recommendations		Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
Strategic Objective 1: To provide for the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy through the development of an appropriate body (or bodies) with appropriate mandate, representation and funding.				
1.1.1	That a community body be created with the key task of overseeing the implementation of this Strategy. That this body be known provisionally as “Tourism Catlins”.	CTSWP, CDC, VS	High	
1.1.2	That Tourism Catlins have the following specific objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To overview the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy 2. To liaise with central, regional and local government service providers over specific projects outlined within the Catlins Tourism Strategy 3. To liaise and communicate with the Catlins community concerning Catlins Tourism Strategy issues 	T C	High	
1.1.3	That arrangements be made to establish Tourism Catlins, comprising 10 members as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Community representatives (to be elected from public meetings in the Catlins) 1 Ngai Tahu representative 1 Venture Southland representative 1 Clutha District Council representative 2 Department of Conservation representatives 	CTSWP, CDC, VS, Ngai Tahu, DOC	High	
1.1.4	That details for the ongoing structure and format of Tourism Catlins be determined by that organisation after its initial formation. Issues to address include: legal status; meeting schedule and format; lines of communication with key stakeholder organisations.	TC, CDC, VS	High	
1.2	That logistical support be provided for Tourism Catlins in order for that body to fulfil its objectives.	VS, CDC	High	
1.3	That this Strategy in all its recommendations give implicit recognition of the significance of the Catlins to Ngai Tahu, and that in recognition of this, that relevant runanga be incorporated into tourism management, development and decision-making processes in the Catlins in a meaningful way.	TC , VS, CDC, DOC, Ngai Tahu	High	
1.4.1	That progress in the implementation of the recommendations of this Strategy be reviewed not more than twelve months after the accepted final version of this Strategy becomes publicly notified, and every 12 months thereafter as necessary. And that this review be widely disseminated in the Catlins community and tourism industry.	TC	Medium	
1.4.2	That the need for renewal of this Strategy be assessed by Tourism Catlins within five years of the initial public notification of this document.	TC	Medium	

Recommendations		Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
Strategic Objective 2: To provide for the absolute protection of the natural and cultural resources that are integral to Catlins tourism from the negative physical impacts of tourism.				
2.2	That a “Catlins Care Code” be developed, and that this be consistently presented to visitors through the above media.	TC, VS, CDC, DOC	High	
2.2.1	That information about appropriate environmental behaviour (the Catlins Care Code) be included in all Catlins promotional material including websites	TC, CTO, LPG, DOC, VST, CDC, SSRT	High	
2.2.2	That Tourism Catlins and the Department of Conservation investigate opportunities to foster community stewardship in the Catlins by actively communicating with the community through media releases, public workshops and information sessions, training and education.	TC, DOC	Medium	
2.2.3a	That with a view to improving visitor management, interpretation be provided at all key visitor sites with significant conservation or heritage values.	TC, DOC, site owners/managers, VS, CDC	High	
2.2.3b	That a detailed Interpretation Plan be compiled to allow the identification and prioritisation of interpretation throughout the Catlins.	TC, DOC, CDC, SDC, site owners/managers	Medium	
2.2.4	That opportunities for visitors to contribute to funding of conservation management projects in the Catlins be maximised. And that this include the development of a Catlins Eco-pass or similar product.	TC, CTO, LPG	Medium	
2.2.5	That further opportunities be investigated for the provision of concession activities in the Catlins that would provide for revenue generation and enhanced visitor management and protection of conservation values.	TC, DOC, Ngai Tahu, VS, CDC	Low	
2.3	That Tourism Catlins play a role in statutory advocacy for the protection of conservation and heritage values through input to conservation planning and resource management processes where appropriate.	TC	Medium	
2.4.1	That Tourism Catlins facilitate the identification of a programme to monitor the environmental impact of tourism in the region. That this be a joint programme with resourcing based upon ownership or management responsibility of the sites/values to be monitored.	TC, DOC, VST, CDC, CTO, research providers	High	
2.4.2	That the programme (2.4.1) include a biennial “State of the Environment” reporting process based upon an environment and visitor-monitoring programme. And that this information be made widely available, as a key indicator of the sustainable tourism performance of the region.	TC, DOC, VST, CDC, CTO, research providers	High	
2.4.3	That Tourism Catlins identify research priorities for visitor impact management within the area, and promote these priorities to potential research providers.	TC, DOC, VST, CDC, CTO, research providers	Medium	
2.5.1	That Tourism Catlins work closely with the Department of Conservation to advocate tourism operator compliance with the concession/permit system.	TC, DOC, CTO	High	
2.5.2	That Tourism Catlins provide input to Department of Conservation concessions through the appropriate processes (i.e. Conservation Management Strategies; Conservation Management Plans; and publicly notified concession applications when relevant).	TC, DOC	Medium	
2.6.1	That tourism operators in the Catlins be provided with information on accreditation systems.	TC, VST, CDC, CTO	Low	
2.6.2	That the Catlins local authorities seek to improve overall destination environmental performance through investigation of the benefits of participation in programmes such as ‘Zero Waste by 2020’.	TC, SDC, CDC	Low	

	Recommendations	Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
2.7.1	That research into the impacts of freedom camping in the Catlins be undertaken.	TC, DOC, VST, SDC, CDC, research providers	Medium	
2.7.2a	That a consistent regulatory approach be adopted throughout the Catlins with respect to freedom camping. Such an approach would clearly identify freedom camping opportunities and restrictions to visitors and enforce existing bylaw/policy.	CDC, SDC, DOC	High	
2.7.2b	That education of the freedom camper about appropriate sites to camp, prohibited areas and environmental care be undertaken through a variety of media, including on site signage and the Catlins Care Code.	TC, VST, CDC, DOC, NZ Motor Caravans Assoc, Rental companies	High	
2.7.3	That Tourism Catlins, in co-operation with the Department of Conservation, local authorities and private landowners investigate the potential of developing a limited number of basic user-pays campsites, in order to reduce the amount of freedom camping in the region.	TC, DOC, SDC, CDC, Private Landowners	High	3.2.2
2.8	That the preparation of Conservation Management Plans for key parts of the Conservation Estate be encouraged. The top priorities shall be Nugget Point and the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park.	DOC	Medium	
2.9.1	That Tourism Catlins actively seek relationships with key organisations and individuals that hold important information on the natural, cultural and historic resources of the region. And that information on these sources be developed into a database that is readily accessible for tourism operators	TC, VST, CDC	Low	
2.10	That the Department of Conservation and relevant local authority liaise to give consideration to discouraging motorised access to beaches of high wildlife or recreational significance.	DOC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
Strategic Objective 3: To optimise the value of tourism for local residents, including social and economic benefits.				
3.1.1	That a tourism “community outreach” programme be developed, through which the community can learn about Catlins tourism industry news and participate in an informed manner in the tourism planning process. That the programme be facilitated through the use of appropriate media and forums (press, public meetings, displays, mail-outs).	TC, VST, CDC	Medium	
3.1.2	That the above “community outreach” programme provide information and guidance to the community regarding their potential participation and entrance into the local tourism industry. And that opportunities to participate in existing tourism business mentoring programmes be identified and promoted to the community.	TC, CTO, VST, CDC, NZ Tourism Industry Assn	Medium	
3.1.3	That the wider community be represented in the organisation of Tourism Catlins. And that additional opportunities be identified for interested community members to actively join the tourism planning and development process.	TC	High	
3.1.4	That an ongoing programme of monitoring Catlins residents’ satisfaction with tourism be established. And that this programme be identified within the Venture Southland Tourism Research Strategy.	VST, CDC	Medium	7.1
3.2a	That opportunities for the development of further high quality accommodation, food services, retail opportunities and commercial tourist activities be identified and promoted to the local community and investors.	TC, VST, CDC	Low	

	Recommendations	Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
3.2b	That a marketing strategy be developed for the Catlins that targets visitors who have a higher than average daily holiday expenditure. That this marketing strategy be developed in co-ordination with relevant destination organisations.	TC, VST, LPG	Low	
3.2.1	That the Catlins develop a programme of educational/interpretive evening events for the peak visitor period (January).	DOC, CTO, Local museums, Information Centre (CDC)	Medium	
3.2.2a	That opportunities to substitute freedom camping with the use of commercial accommodation facilities be encouraged through the use of marketing and promotion, and regulation where necessary.	VST, CDC, CTO, DOC	Medium	2.6.1, 2.6.2
3.2.2b	That opportunities to generate revenue from freedom campers be investigated, including the option of introducing a Catlins-wide freedom camping pass.	TC, DOC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
3.2.3	That opportunities for the development of tourism businesses be identified and promoted within the community and private sector .	DOC, VS, CDC	Low	2.1.5a,b
3.2.4a	That initial investigation and liaison be undertaken to gauge landowner/manager and local resident support for the development of coastal walks, from Papatowai to Curio Bay, and from Curio Bay to Fortrose.	TC, VS, CDC, Ngai Tahu, Landowners	Medium	
3.2.4b	That the opportunity to develop the original Catlins Coastal Walking Track proposal (Nugget Point to Papatowai) be revisited on a regular (preferably biennial) basis.	TC, Catlins Coast Track Charitable Trust, landowners	Medium	
Strategic Objective 4: To develop opportunities to enhance the existing visitor experience, in terms of attractions and activities				
4.1.1	That Venture Southland and Clutha District Council continue to support new business development in the Catlins area and that the North and South Catlins Promotion groups along with Tourism Catlins investigate ideas for new business initiatives and promote these to the wider community and private investors.	VS, CDC, LPG	High	
4.1.2	To identify opportunities to develop a formal Catlins rural-tourism network, whereby opportunities to participate in farming events are “scheduled”, priced and promoted to visitors.	TC, CTO, farmers	Low	
4.1.3	To identify opportunities to develop themes for self-guided “mini-heritage trails” in the Catlins, with initial themes to be investigated including: “Ghosts of the Past”; and “Shipwreck Coast”	TC	Low	
4.1.4	To identify opportunities to establish “attraction clusters” that offer visitors a mix of opportunities and experiences	TC	Low	
4.1.5	To identify opportunities to develop Maori tourism product in the Catlins. That this be driven by Ngai Tahu but in partnership with and help from Tourism Catlins, the local community and other tourism operators	TC, Ngai Tahu, CTO	Medium	
4.2.1	That existing tourism events be reviewed with the potential to expand them beyond their current focus	TC, VST, event organisers	Medium	
4.2.2	That new tourism events are explored in terms of their market potential and the local interest in provision of them	TC and other interested parties	Medium	

	Recommendations	Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
	Strategic Objective 5: To optimise information flow to visitors in the Catlins through the provision of appropriate signage, information, interpretation and associated services			
5.1.1	That the relevant authorities undertake to erect a 'Welcome to the Catlins' sign in the north, and that the existing sign in the south be upgraded.	TC, SDC, CDC, LPG	High	
5.1.2	That SDC and CDC and Transit New Zealand continue to develop appropriate signage and that this be monitored according to existing policy.	SDC, CDC, Transit NZ	Medium	
5.1.3	To explore options of using the SSR brand within the Catlins, creating synergy between signage within the Catlins and that used along the SSR	SDC, CDC, Transit NZ	Low	
5.2.1	That the existing information kiosk at Fortrose be upgraded and a new kiosk be developed at Telford	TC, CDC, SSRT	High	
5.2.2	That consistent branding be investigated and developed for the two existing heritage trails	TC, VS, CDC, SDC	Low	
5.2.3	To ensure that adequate financial resources are available to allow for ongoing functions of the existing visitor centre in Owaka and that the community group development of the visitor centre a Curio Bay be encouraged to become members of Visitor Information Southland	TC, South Catlins Enterprise Group, VS	High	
5.2.4	To develop a web page for Catlins Tourism that links to existing web pages of individual attractions and operators	TC, CDC, VST, LPG, CTO	Medium	
5.3.1	That encouragement should be given to those tourism operators who have insufficient information and interpretation at sites and develop both according to visitor needs.	TC, DOC, CDC, SDC, VS, CTO	Medium	
5.3.2	That key visitor information at popular sites with a high degree of vulnerability be provided in the languages of the main visitor markets, and that this should also apply to the Catlins Care Code.	DOC, CDC, SDC, CTO	Medium	
5.3.3	That more effort be made to convey Maori natural and cultural values and history in the information and interpretation at key sites.	TC, Ngai Tahu, CTO, DOC	High	
	Strategic Objective 6: To cater for the hospitality service needs of the Catlins tourist through provision of appropriate accommodation and food services			
6.1.1	That consideration be given to fostering the development of accommodation types suiting the top of the market, and those desiring premium service provision	TC, CTO	Low	
6.1.2	That information and research about visitors is made available to the public and industry, so that accommodation outlets and types meet the needs of visitors as well as the expected rise in visitor numbers.	TC, CTO	Medium	
6.1.3	That cribs/baches be investigated in relation to their economic benefit to communities, and also in terms of the potential to integrate them more usefully into the accommodation resource of the region.	TC, Crib/bach owners, VST, CDC	Low	
6.2.1	That consideration is given in where future eating and drinking establishments are positioned, encouraging locations close to the coast (where this meets landscape protection policies), or offering vistas.	CTO	Low	

Recommendations		Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
6.2.2	That eating and drinking establishments are encouraged to have regular business hours, or business hours that meet the needs of visitors	CTO	Medium	
6.2.3	That there is investigation into creating high quality souvenirs that depict the Catlins and that these be developed locally, and made available to visitors in a variety of locations	TC, CTO, retail operators	Medium	3.2.5
Strategic Objective 7: To learn more about the visitor and their relationship with the community and the environment in the Catlins.				
7.1.1	That a programme of ongoing research needs concerning the visitor and their relationship with the community and environment be identified.	TC, DOC, VST, research providers	Medium	
7.1.2.	That linkages be developed between the Catlins tourism industry and potential research providers, and that research opportunities/needs concerning the Catlins be promoted widely among the research community	TC, research providers	Medium	
7.2	That priority be given to improving the collection of data on visitor usage of various natural and built attractions in the Catlins.	TC, CDC, SDC, DOC, CTO	Medium	
Strategic Objective 8: To ensure that the infrastructural requirements of the Catlins tourism industry are addressed				
8.1.1	That public toilets be upgraded or new facilities be provided at key, high usage visitor sites, according to the schedule in Table 8.2.	CDC, DOC, Central government funding providers	High,	2.6.1
8.1.2	That a flexible approach to the funding of toilet provision and maintenance be adopted, including public-private partnerships, and user-pays.	CDC, DOC, Central government funding providers, private parties	High	
8.1.3	That the location of public toilets be adequately publicised through signage and published material. And that visitors be warned against indiscriminate toileting via signage and in published material, including the Catlins Care Code.	SDC, CDC, DOC, SSRT	High,	
8.2	That the relevant authorities investigate options to fund the upgrading of sewage systems at Curio Bay and Papatowai Camping Grounds to meet current and projected demand.	SDC, CDC, DOC, regional councils, camping ground lessees	Medium	
8.3.1	That the relevant authorities undertake a detailed investigation of the campervan waste disposal issue in the Catlins, addressing the extent of the campervan waste discharge problem, and the awareness, use and capacity of existing facilities.	SDC, CDC, DOC	Medium	
8.3.2	That signage and promotion of campervan dump-stations be enhanced, and that Catlins tourism authorities co-operate with relevant organisations (e.g. rental companies, New Zealand Motor Caravan Association) to promote environmentally friendly campervan practices in the region.	CDC, SDC, NZ Motor Caravans Assn, rental companies	Medium	
8.4.1	That avenues of communication be developed to encourage visitors to use existing waste management and recycling facilities.	CDC, SDC, DOC, VST, LPG	Medium	2.6.2
8.4.2	That the practice of “carry-in, carry-out” for solid waste continue to be advanced for the Catlins region and actively promoted to visitors through the Catlins Care Code and other appropriate means.	CDC, SDC, DOC, VST, LPG	Medium	

	Recommendations	Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
8.4.3	That in support of Recommendation 8.4.2, a limited number of waste management / recycling facilities be provided in central locations where they are currently lacking.	CDC, SDC, DOC	Medium	
8.5.1	That local authorities continue to collate information on tourist-related vehicle accidents, as well as traffic flows, throughout the Catlins, with a view to making recommendations on possible improvements. And that this information be communicated to community groups, including Tourism Catlins.	CDC, SDC	Low	
8.5.2	That priorities for road upgrading in the Catlins be assigned based on road usage, attraction visitor counts and motor vehicle accident data, with indicative priorities for upgrading being the Purakaunui Falls access and the Nuggets roads.	CDC, SDC	Low	
8.6	That the relevant local authorities maintain communications with local communities (where bus traffic has been identified as an issue) and bus tour operators with a view to meeting the safety and other needs of all interested parties.	SDC, CDC, bus tour operators	Medium	
8.7.1	That approaches to reduce tourist-related calls upon emergency services be investigated. That these include the provision of information to visitors on road safety, and other areas of concern (e.g. bush-craft, water-code).	CDC, SDC, DOC, emergency service providers	Low	
8.7.2	That the need for improved emergency services (fire service, ambulance and police) be assessed in relation to the increased numbers of visitors utilising the region and its roads.	SDC, CDC, DOC, emergency service providers	Medium	
8.8.1	That efforts be made to extend cell-phone coverage throughout the entire Catlins region.	TC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
8.8.2	That short to medium term strategies be implemented to improve visitor-tourist operator communication. And that these include pre-visit information to visitors; enhancing the use of public telephones and free-phones for booking; and promoting the communication/booking role of information centres.	TC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
8.9	That the relevant authorities (e.g local authority, Department of Conservation) liaise with landowners, local residents and tourism operators over access issues for specific attractions, with a view to improving visitor access whilst meeting landowner and residents' needs, and maintaining attraction values.	DOC, SDC, CDC, CTO, landowners	High	
<u>Strategic Objective 9: To match the visitor with the Catlins tourism product through appropriate marketing and promotion</u>				
9.1.1	That the Catlins should maintain its key positioning around the themes of nature and wildlife, but should look to expand these to include culture and heritage, and promote that which sets the region apart and makes it unique from other areas in the South Island	VST, CDC	Medium	
9.1.2	That greater attention be given to the Catlins as a family destination for the domestic market, by advertising the range of options of accommodation available to families	VST	Medium	

	Recommendations	Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
9.2	That Tourism Catlins in co-operation with existing destination marketing organisations (and external researchers when necessary) develop a programme to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing programmes for the Catlins, and of destination awareness in general.	VST	Medium	
Strategic Objective 10: To assist Catlins tourism operators (and associated services) to achieve an outstanding level of service to their clients			Medium	
10.1	That a Catlins-wide tourism network be developed and maintained with a focus on developing business and service skills among tourism operators.	TC, CTO, CDC, VST	Medium, Ongoing	
10.2	That a consistent Catlins-wide programme of monitoring visitor service satisfaction be introduced to the Catlins. And that the results of this monitoring be used to identify customer service training needs for tourism operators.	TC, CTO, VST, CDC	Medium, ongoing	
10.3	That future human resource requirements of the Catlins tourism industry be assessed, with a view to planning for these needs. This may include liaison with local and regional education/training providers over relevant programmes.	VST, CDC	Medium	

Abbreviations:

CTSWP = Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party
 CDC = Clutha District Council (includes Economic Development Board)
 CTO = Catlins Tourism Operators & Attraction Owners/Managers
 DOC = Department of Conservation
 LPG= Local promotion groups
 SDC = Southland District Council
 SSRT=Southern Scenic Route Trust
 VS = Venture Southland
 VST=Venture Southland Tourism

Priority:

High = Implementation essential: should be implemented by 2004/2005

Medium = Implementation highly desirable: should be implemented by 2006/2007

Low = Implementation will be useful: Implement progressively when resources available

List of Recommendations – arranged in order of Priority

	Recommendations	Potential Implementing Partners	Priority	See Also
1.1.1	That a community body be created with the key task of overseeing the implementation of this Strategy. That this body be known provisionally as “Tourism Catlins”.	CTSWP, CDC, VS	High	
1.1.2	That Tourism Catlins have the following specific objectives: 4. To overview the implementation of the Catlins Tourism Strategy 5. To liaise with central, regional and local government service providers over specific projects outlined within the Catlins Tourism Strategy 6. To liaise and communicate with the Catlins community concerning Catlins Tourism Strategy issues	T C	High	
1.1.3	That arrangements be made to establish Tourism Catlins, comprising 10 members as follows: 6 Community representatives (to be elected from public meetings in the Catlins) 1 Ngai Tahu representative 1 Venture Southland representative 1 Clutha District Council representative 2 Department of Conservation representatives	CTSWP, CDC, VS, Ngai Tahu, DOC	High	
1.1.4	That details for the ongoing structure and format of Tourism Catlins be determined by that organisation after its initial formation. Issues to address include: legal status; meeting schedule and format; lines of communication with key stakeholder organisations.	TC, CDC, VS	High	
1.2	That logistical support be provided for Tourism Catlins in order for that body to fulfil its objectives.	VS, CDC	High	
1.3	That this Strategy in all its recommendations give implicit recognition of the significance of the Catlins to Ngai Tahu, and that in recognition of this, that relevant runanga be incorporated into tourism management, development and decision-making processes in the Catlins in a meaningful way.	TC , VS, CDC, DOC, Ngai Tahu	High	
2.2	That a “Catlins Care Code” be developed, and that this be consistently presented to visitors through the above media.	TC, VS, CDC, DOC	High	
2.2.1	That information about appropriate environmental behaviour (the Catlins Care Code) be included in all Catlins promotional material including websites	TC, CTO, LPG, DOC, VST, CDC, SSRT	High	
2.2.3a	That with a view to improving visitor management, interpretation be provided at all key visitor sites with significant conservation or heritage values.	TC, DOC, site owners/managers, VS, CDC	High	
2.2.3b	That a detailed Interpretation Plan be compiled to allow the identification and prioritisation of interpretation throughout the Catlins.	TC, DOC, CDC, SDC, site owners/managers	Medium	

2.4.1	That Tourism Catlins facilitate the identification of a programme to monitor the environmental impact of tourism in the region. That this be a joint programme with resourcing based upon ownership or management responsibility of the sites/values to be monitored.	TC, DOC, VST, CDC, CTO, research providers	High	
2.4.2	That the programme (2.4.1) include a biennial “State of the Environment” reporting process based upon an environment and visitor-monitoring programme. And that this information be made widely available, as a key indicator of the sustainable tourism performance of the region.	TC, DOC, VST, CDC, CTO, research providers	High	
2.5.1	That Tourism Catlins work closely with the Department of Conservation to advocate tourism operator compliance with the concession/permit system.	TC, DOC, CTO	High	
2.7.2a	That a consistent regulatory approach be adopted throughout the Catlins with respect to freedom camping. Such an approach would clearly identify freedom camping opportunities and restrictions to visitors and enforce existing bylaw/policy.	CDC, SDC, DOC	High	
2.7.2b	That education of the freedom camper about appropriate sites to camp, prohibited areas and environmental care be undertaken through a variety of media, including on site signage and the Catlins Care Code.	TC, VST, CDC, DOC, NZ Motor Caravans Assoc, Rental companies	High	
2.7.3	That Tourism Catlins, in co-operation with the Department of Conservation, local authorities and private landowners investigate the potential of developing a limited number of basic user-pays campsites, in order to reduce the amount of freedom camping in the region.	TC, DOC, SDC, CDC, Private Landowners	High	3.2.2
3.1.3	That the wider community be represented in the organisation of Tourism Catlins. And that additional opportunities be identified for interested community members to actively join the tourism planning and development process.	TC	High	
4.1.1	That Venture Southland and Clutha District Council continue to support new business development in the Catlins area and that the North and South Catlins Promotion groups along with Tourism Catlins investigate ideas for new business initiatives and promote these to the wider community and private investors.	VS, CDC, LPG	High	
5.1.1	That the relevant authorities undertake to erect a ‘Welcome to the Catlins’ sign in the north, and that the existing sign in the south be upgraded.	TC, SDC, CDC, LPG	High	
5.2.1	That the existing information kiosk at Fortrose be upgraded and a new kiosk be developed at Telford	TC, CDC, SSRT	High	
5.2.3	To ensure that adequate financial resources are available to allow for ongoing functions of the existing visitor centre in Owaka and that the community group development of the visitor centre a Curio Bay be encouraged to become members of Visitor Information Southland	TC, South Catlins Enterprise Group, VS	High	
5.3.3	That more effort be made to convey Maori natural and cultural values and history in the information and interpretation at key sites.	TC, Ngai Tahu, CTO, DOC	High	
8.1.2	That a flexible approach to the funding of toilet provision and maintenance be adopted, including public-private partnerships, and user-pays.	CDC, DOC, Central government funding providers, private parties	High	
8.9	That the relevant authorities (e.g local authority, Department of Conservation) liaise with landowners, local residents and tourism operators over access issues for specific attractions, with a view to improving visitor access whilst meeting landowner and residents’ needs, and maintaining attraction values.	DOC, SDC, CDC, CTO, landowners	High	

8.1.1	That public toilets be upgraded or new facilities be provided at key, high usage visitor sites, according to the schedule in Table 8.2.	CDC, DOC, Central government funding providers	High	2.6.1
8.1.3	That the location of public toilets be adequately publicised through signage and published material. And that visitors be warned against indiscriminate toileting via signage and in published material, including the Catlins Care Code.	SDC, CDC, DOC, SSRT	High	
1.4.1	That progress in the implementation of the recommendations of this Strategy be reviewed not more than twelve months after the accepted final version of this Strategy becomes publicly notified, and every 12 months thereafter as necessary. And that this review be widely disseminated in the Catlins community and tourism industry.	TC	Medium	
1.4.2	That the need for renewal of this Strategy be assessed by Tourism Catlins within five years of the initial public notification of this document.	TC	Medium	
2.2.2	That Tourism Catlins and the Department of Conservation investigate opportunities to foster community stewardship in the Catlins by actively communicating with the community through media releases, public workshops and information sessions, training and education.	TC, DOC	Medium	
2.2.4	That opportunities for visitors to contribute to funding of conservation management projects in the Catlins be maximised. And that this include the development of a Catlins Eco-pass or similar product.	TC, CTO, LPG	Medium	
2.3	That Tourism Catlins play a role in statutory advocacy for the protection of conservation and heritage values through input to conservation planning and resource management processes where appropriate.	TC	Medium	
2.4.3	That Tourism Catlins identify research priorities for visitor impact management within the area, and promote these priorities to potential research providers.	TC, DOC, VST, CDC, CTO, research providers	Medium	
2.5.2	That Tourism Catlins provide input to Department of Conservation concessions through the appropriate processes (i.e. Conservation Management Strategies; Conservation Management Plans; and publicly notified concession applications when relevant).	TC, DOC	Medium	
2.7.1	That research into the impacts of freedom camping in the Catlins be undertaken.	TC, DOC, VST, SDC, CDC, research providers	Medium	
2.8	That the preparation of Conservation Management Plans for key parts of the Conservation Estate be encouraged. The top priorities shall be Nugget Point and the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park.	DOC	Medium	
2.10	That the Department of Conservation and relevant local authority liaise to give consideration to discouraging motorised access to beaches of high wildlife or recreational significance.	DOC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
3.1.1	That a tourism “community outreach” programme be developed, through which the community can learn about Catlins tourism industry news and participate in an informed manner in the tourism planning process. That the programme be facilitated through the use of appropriate media and forums (press, public meetings, displays, mail-outs).	TC, VST, CDC	Medium	
3.1.2	That the above “community outreach” programme provide information and guidance to the community regarding their potential participation and entrance into the local tourism industry. And that opportunities to participate in existing tourism business mentoring programmes be identified and promoted to the community.	TC, CTO, VST, CDC, NZ Tourism Industry Assn	Medium	
3.1.4	That an ongoing programme of monitoring Catlins residents’ satisfaction with tourism be established. And that this programme be identified within the Venture Southland Tourism Research Strategy.	VST, CDC	Medium	7.1

3.2.1	That the Catlins develop a programme of educational/interpretive evening events for the peak visitor period (January).	DOC, CTO, Local museums, Information Centre (CDC)	Medium	
3.2.2a	That opportunities to substitute freedom camping with the use of commercial accommodation facilities be encouraged through the use of marketing and promotion, and regulation where necessary.	VST, CDC, CTO, DOC	Medium	2.6.1, 2.6.2
3.2.2b	That opportunities to generate revenue from freedom campers be investigated, including the option of introducing a Catlins-wide freedom camping pass.	TC, DOC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
3.2.4a	That initial investigation and liaison be undertaken to gauge landowner/manager and local resident support for the development of coastal walks, from Papatowai to Curio Bay, and from Curio Bay to Fortrose.	TC, VS, CDC, Ngai Tahu, Landowners	Medium	
3.2.4b	That the opportunity to develop the original Catlins Coastal Walking Track proposal (Nugget Point to Papatowai) be revisited on a regular (preferably biennial) basis.	TC, Catlins Coast Track Charitable Trust, landowners	Medium	
4.1.5	To identify opportunities to develop Maori tourism product in the Catlins. That this be driven by Ngai Tahu but in partnership with and help from Tourism Catlins, the local community and other tourism operators	TC, Ngai Tahu, CTO	Medium	
4.2.1	That existing tourism events be reviewed with the potential to expand them beyond their current focus	TC, VST, event organisers	Medium	
4.2.2	That new tourism events are explored in terms of their market potential and the local interest in provision of them	TC and other interested parties	Medium	
5.1.2	That SDC and CDC and Transit New Zealand continue to develop appropriate signage and that this be monitored according to existing policy.	SDC, CDC, Transit NZ	Medium	
5.2.4	To develop a web page for Catlins Tourism that links to existing web pages of individual attractions and operators	TC, CDC, VST, LPG, CTO	Medium	
5.3.1	That encouragement should be given to those tourism operators who have insufficient information and interpretation at sites and develop both according to visitor needs.	TC, DOC, CDC, SDC, VS, CTO	Medium	
5.3.2	That key visitor information at popular sites with a high degree of vulnerability be provided in the languages of the main visitor markets, and that this should also apply to the Catlins Care Code.	DOC, CDC, SDC, CTO	Medium	
6.1.2	That information and research about visitors is made available to the public and industry, so that accommodation outlets and types meet the needs of visitors as well as the expected rise in visitor numbers.	TC, CTO	Medium	
6.2.2	That eating and drinking establishments are encouraged to have regular business hours, or business hours that meet the needs of visitors	CTO	Medium	
6.2.3	That there is investigation into creating high quality souvenirs that depict the Catlins and that these be developed locally, and made available to visitors in a variety of locations	TC, CTO, retail operators	Medium	3.2.5
7.1.1	That a programme of ongoing research needs concerning the visitor and their relationship with the community and environment be identified.	TC, DOC, VST, research providers	Medium	
7.1.2.	That linkages be developed between the Catlins tourism industry and potential research providers, and that research opportunities/needs concerning the Catlins be promoted widely among the research community	TC, research providers	Medium	

7.2	That priority be given to improving the collection of data on visitor usage of various natural and built attractions in the Catlins.	TC, CDC, SDC, DOC, CTO	Medium	
8.2	That the relevant authorities investigate options to fund the upgrading of sewage systems at Curio Bay and Papatowai Camping Grounds to meet current and projected demand.	SDC, CDC, DOC, regional councils, camping ground lessees	Medium	
8.3.1	That the relevant authorities undertake a detailed investigation of the campervan waste disposal issue in the Catlins, addressing the extent of the campervan waste discharge problem, and the awareness, use and capacity of existing facilities.	SDC, CDC, DOC	Medium	
8.3.2	That signage and promotion of campervan dump-stations be enhanced, and that Catlins tourism authorities co-operate with relevant organisations (e.g. rental companies, New Zealand Motor Caravan Association) to promote environmentally friendly campervan practices in the region.	CDC, SDC, NZ Motor Caravans Assn, rental companies	Medium	
8.4.1	That avenues of communication be developed to encourage visitors to use existing waste management and recycling facilities.	CDC, SDC, DOC, VST, LPG	Medium	2.6.2
8.4.2	That the practice of “carry-in, carry-out” for solid waste continue to be advanced for the Catlins region and actively promoted to visitors through the Catlins Care Code and other appropriate means.	CDC, SDC, DOC, VST, LPG	Medium	
8.4.3	That in support of Recommendation 8.4.2, a limited number of waste management / recycling facilities be provided in central locations where they are currently lacking.	CDC, SDC, DOC	Medium	
8.6	That the relevant local authorities maintain communications with local communities (where bus traffic has been identified as an issue) and bus tour operators with a view to meeting the safety and other needs of all interested parties.	SDC, CDC, bus tour operators	Medium	
8.7.2	That the need for improved emergency services (fire service, ambulance and police) be assessed in relation to the increased numbers of visitors utilising the region and its roads.	SDC, CDC, DOC, emergency service providers	Medium	
8.8.1	That efforts be made to extend cell-phone coverage throughout the entire Catlins region.	TC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
8.8.2	That short to medium term strategies be implemented to improve visitor-tourist operator communication. And that these include pre-visit information to visitors; enhancing the use of public telephones and free-phones for booking; and promoting the communication/booking role of information centres.	TC, SDC, CDC	Medium	
9.1.1	That the Catlins should maintain its key positioning around the themes of nature and wildlife, but should look to expand these to include culture and heritage, and promote that which sets the region apart and makes it unique from other areas in the South Island	VST, CDC	Medium	
9.1.2	That greater attention be given to the Catlins as a family destination for the domestic market, by advertising the range of options of accommodation available to families	VST	Medium	
9.2	That Tourism Catlins in co-operation with existing destination marketing organisations (and external researchers when necessary) develop a programme to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing programmes for the Catlins, and of destination awareness in general.	VST	Medium	

10.3	That future human resource requirements of the Catlins tourism industry be assessed, with a view to planning for these needs. This may include liaison with local and regional education/training providers over relevant programmes.	VST, CDC	Medium	
10.1	That a Catlins-wide tourism network be developed and maintained with a focus on developing business and service skills among tourism operators.	TC, CTO, CDC, VST	Medium	
2.2.5	That further opportunities be investigated for the provision of concession activities in the Catlins that would provide for revenue generation and enhanced visitor management and protection of conservation values.	TC, DOC, Ngai Tahu, VS, CDC	Low	
2.6.1	That tourism operators in the Catlins be provided with information on accreditation systems.	TC, VST, CDC, CTO	Low	
2.6.2	That the Catlins local authorities seek to improve overall destination environmental performance through investigation of the benefits of participation in programmes such as ‘Zero Waste by 2020’.	TC, SDC, CDC	Low	
2.9.1	That Tourism Catlins actively seek relationships with key organisations and individuals that hold important information on the natural, cultural and historic resources of the region. And that information on these sources be developed into a database that is readily accessible for tourism operators	TC, VST, CDC	Low	
3.2a	That opportunities for the development of further high quality accommodation, food services, retail opportunities and commercial tourist activities be identified and promoted to the local community and investors.	TC, VST, CDC	Low	
3.2b	That a marketing strategy be developed for the Catlins that targets visitors who have a higher than average daily holiday expenditure. That this marketing strategy be developed in co-ordination with relevant destination organisations.	TC, VST, LPG	Low	
3.2.3	That opportunities for the development of tourism businesses be identified and promoted within the community and private sector .	DOC, VS, CDC	Low	2.1.5a,b
4.1.2	To identify opportunities to develop a formal Catlins rural-tourism network, whereby opportunities to participate in farming events are “scheduled”, priced and promoted to visitors.	TC, CTO, farmers	Low	
4.1.3	To identify opportunities to develop themes for self-guided “mini-heritage trails” in the Catlins, with initial themes to be investigated including: “Ghosts of the Past”; and “Shipwreck Coast”	TC	Low	
4.1.4	To identify opportunities to establish “attraction clusters” that offer visitors a mix of opportunities and experiences	TC	Low	
5.1.3	To explore options of using the SSR brand within the Catlins, creating synergy between signage within the Catlins and that used along the SSR	SDC, CDC, Transit NZ	Low	
5.2.2	That consistent branding be investigated and developed for the two existing heritage trails	TC, VS, CDC, SDC	Low	
6.1.1	That consideration be given to fostering the development of accommodation types suiting the top of the market, and those desiring premium service provision	TC, CTO	Low	
6.1.3	That cribs/baches be investigated in relation to their economic benefit to communities, and also in terms of the potential to integrate them more usefully into the accommodation resource of the region.	TC, Crib/bach owners, VST, CDC	Low	

6.2.1	That consideration is given in where future eating and drinking establishments are positioned, encouraging locations close to the coast (where this meets landscape protection policies), or offering vistas.	CTO	Low	
8.5.1	That local authorities continue to collate information on tourist-related vehicle accidents, as well as traffic flows, throughout the Catlins, with a view to making recommendations on possible improvements. And that this information be communicated to community groups, including Tourism Catlins.	CDC, SDC	Low	
8.5.2	That priorities for road upgrading in the Catlins be assigned based on road usage, attraction visitor counts and motor vehicle accident data, with indicative priorities for upgrading being the Purakaunui Falls access and the Nuggets roads.	CDC, SDC	Low	
8.7.1	That approaches to reduce tourist-related calls upon emergency services be investigated. That these include the provision of information to visitors on road safety, and other areas of concern (e.g. bush-craft, water-code).	CDC, SDC, DOC, emergency service providers	Low	

Abbreviations:

CTSWP = Catlins Tourism Strategy Working Party
 CDC = Clutha District Council (includes Economic Development Board)
 CTO = Catlins Tourism Operators & Attraction Owners/Managers
 DOC = Department of Conservation
 LPG= Local promotion groups
 SDC = Southland District Council
 SSRT=Southern Scenic Route Trust
 VS = Venture Southland
 VST=Venture Southland Tourism

Priority:

High = Implementation essential: should be implemented by 2004/2005
 Medium = Implementation highly desirable: should be implemented by 2006/2007
 Low = Implementation will be useful: Implement progressively when resources available

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