

Deepwater Basin Engagement Session 3 May 2023

Milford Opportunities Hub – Te Anau

Attendees

Organisation Represented
Landowner
CRA8
Fiordland Recreation and Conservation Trust
Fish and Game Southland
Fiordland Discovery
Fiordland Outdoors
Fiordland Lobster Company
Fiordland Marine Guardians
Southland Conservation Board
Cruise Milford
Wild Fiordland
Descend Dive
Milford Opportunities Project (Lead - Heritage and Partnerships)
Milford Opportunities Project (Lead - Comms and Engagement)
Milford Opportunities Project (Lead - Infrastructure)



Introduction

Purpose /structure

Welcome and safety briefing

- Introductions
- Setting out ground rules and purpose for the meeting, including MS Teams etiquette to ensure all those attending could be heard (online or in person).
- Purpose was to test the feasibility of the masterplan not relitigate it.
- Project team wanted to learn two things from this meeting:
 - What you think of the proposals in the masterplan as it relates to Deepwater Basin
 - What are some of the good things, some of the not so good things, and some impacts and alternative options.

Invited attendees to raise area interests to discuss, including:

- Recreational boat ramp and trailer parking,
- Dedicated sea kayak area,
- Car parking and bus layover areas,
- Commercial marina and visitor viewing area and food carts.

Background

- Stage one was focussed on collecting the data.
- Stage two gave us the concept. The masterplan concept was approved by Cabinet which enabled us to start with stage three, feasibility testing the concepts in the masterplan.
- Stage three is not a rubber-stamping exercise. Feasibility testing is determining the practicality, commercial viability etc.
- The project must pay for itself, so it must stack up in a commercial, world heritage, national park sense etc. That is the balance that we are testing.
- Following stage two, it went quiet for a while. Part of today is for you to meet the team, Courtney Hart and Tom Hopkins are here from the infrastructure team.
- Stage three is different, most of the team and the Milford Opportunities Board are different, we are linking back to work that came out of stage two, i.e., addressing the conflicts for space between recreational fishing and commercial fishing. Keeping commercial operators and visitors separate, and looking at how the plan provides for integration between activities.
- Looking at opportunities to create different activities, i.e. fishing boats being offloaded.
- Today is largely about having those discussions, acknowledging what we have heard and incorporate new information.
- The boat ramp and upgrading of the existing one, that is staying out to the side of Milford Opportunities, so we don't hold up progress. We don't want some of the decisions waiting on



Milford Opportunities work. We have no part in it until Cabinet knows what feasibility testing has come back with.

- Still discussion to have around concepts in the masterplan, different conflicts; parking/permit system; infrastructure; sewage, the White House and facilities etc.
- We want to hear any questions that you may have, make sure that we are aware of these for the tender scopes.
- Tender scopes will be going to market on a range of things, transport, energy systems, park and ride, engineering, architecture, environmental assessments.
- How this all works between commercial and recreation operators (visitors out to boats, kayaks)

Deepwater Basin Node

- Recreational boat ramp and trailer parking:
- Dedicated sea kayak area:
- Car parking and bus layover areas:
- Commercial marina and visitor viewing area and food carts:

Feedback

- Over the years, the place has become more congested. Commercial and recreational activity going on.
- Blue skies, try and separate areas. Ideally having marina on the spit, dredged out, separate recreational area including parking.
- On some of the busy days, nightmare for everyone. Not a good look, people must wonder what is going on here. Boats reversing, forklifts are all working. Not a good mix, should be separated out. Solve a lot of the problems.
- During a busy summer, up to 100 boat trailers, parking is an issue. Congestion. Only worked because people are tolerant.
- That area where the spit sticks out is sheltered from wind. Put a marina on the spit on the other side, creates no conflict.
- Parking area would solve a whole lot of issues.
- Health and safety concerns, something will happen, and someone will be held accountable.
- The back channel should be dredged out, that whole area could be developed into a separate recreational area where there's no conflict with the commercial operator, and it could also include parking.
- Separation is the way to go, it needs to be sorted out before someone is injured



- The health and safety liability is untenable. The Fiordland Lobster Board is adamant that Health and Safety will take priority and that it cannot continue the way it is.
- (Fiordland Lobster Company have been approached by DOC to have their area fenced off due to issues with tourists. Working with DOC on this, and it will likely be locked.)
- Public going in there moving road cones so they can move through. Left like it is, incident(s) will happen that we are responsible for.
- Buses going there so people can watch sharks feeding on offal, we are concerned the weight of these heavy buses exceeds the allowed wharf loading.
- Fiordland Lobster point of view, we can't have people in that area. The liability risk is high, we can't sit back and wait for an incident to happen.
- From a Fiordland Marine Guardian (FMG) perspective, recognise the need for better facilities. This has been going on for so long.
- Commercial operators need to come up with a solution, as currently it is not great photos of people and parking in places where there's no room becoming unsafe.
- Whatever happens in the next 12 months, needs to be both practical and to relieve pressure, recreational boats, liability.
- Can't sit back and ignore it, we need concrete steps.
- Next summer there will be more pressure with Blue Fin tuna more boats and trailers. Cannot be open ended.
- How is Milford Sound going to be protected so visitors have the best experience? The limited area available cannot accommodate everyone / type of user coming through the tunnel.
- If we take a step back in history, the fishing vessels were moved out of Freshwater into Deepwater, there were/are conditions attached to that deal. That agreement/understanding needs to be recognised now.
- Development is growing into the fishing space.
- Almost all ports are secured, you can't enter ports without a swipe card.
- I think there's a Gazette notice covering Deepwater Basin, I think that that agreement or understanding that needs to be recognized now because it's appearing as though development is crowding in on top of the fishing fleet.
- For our tourist activity vessel, we don't have access to Freshwater Basin. We use the fishing vessel wharf, have fuel access there. From a recreational perspective, that needs to be thought about. How can vessels refuel if not coming through tunnel.
- Wharf is leased off DOC, the legislation needs to be looked at, managed. This is critical.
- The use of Deepwater Basin for refuelling access needs to continue.
- Fish species are going to change so that will mean that the future will change also.
- A marine reserve is required, boats are getting bigger and staying out for longer.



- No intention to stop fuelling vessels coming into Deepwater to refuel.
- No port that you can go to in NZ that you don't have a swipe card.
- There is a great working relationship between the commercial/recreational operators, and we need to be careful to protect and manage that relationship.
- Blue skies approach, commercial infrastructure, the wharf, and Fiordland Lobster buildings, essentially fixtures that aren't going to move.
- Accepting current infrastructure, what can be added / opportunity we have to make it look better as an operating model.
- Accept that there is immovable infrastructure.
- How to use the space most effectively.
- Fiordland Lobster not going to move, accept and consider what can be done to improve efficiency.
- The access of vehicles into the space, there is an opportunity to make the kayaking look nicer and seem much higher end
- Work around that and work with it.
- There are opportunities with operators, another revenue stream, or does Health and Safety trump everything?
- Masterplan absolutely recognises the working port
- Separate the two areas.
- Remove the conflict, there was no thought for recreational fishing under the previous Minister.
- We were engaged by DOC to draw plans that went with concessions. Around the time of the 'Deepwater Basin land grab'
- DOC got everyone in the room for a coordinated approach.
- Space was snapped up quickly.
- Concept plan, completed for DOC, drawings, separate areas for commercial and recreational.
- Trojan holdings were going to put in infrastructure for the walkers.
- DOC almost put-up new toilet facilities.
- Taking land out of the national park? That needs to be looked at. Where is land, and water. A lot of areas that need to be formalised. In a nutshell, easier to reclaim land than take land out of the park.
- Environment Southland has minimum floor level. Environment Southland should have a big part to play.
- The key thing is parking



- We have vessels that moor in Deepwater, mixed usage is not a negative for business.
- Kayaks in Deepwater can cause issues for us.
- Smell of sewage floating across, the lights at night need to be more subdued.
- Staff go across in tenders and that feels a bit dangerous, boats in lots of direction, cars, and boats. Limit out liability for risk.
- Mixed use guests seem to like it.
- Issues own staff feel it can be a little unsafe.
- Issues smell of sewage at times
- We work alongside everyone.
- We have no confrontation using ramps and facilities.
- There are definitely peak times and agree that there is lots of congestion.
- It doesn't boil over.
- Good for our operation.
- Needs a good tidy up.
- The masterplan will do that, and it will be great.
- Bus parking is adding to the congestion by bringing them in there.
- E-technology for boats, facilities not there in Deepwater yet.
- Future proof it for E-gen vessels.
- From a recreational diving operators' point of view, more than just a couple of operators in there.
- We get on very well.
- There is pressure on commercial boats, this has serious consequences for our operation.
- Separation supported.
- Upgraded boat ramp, the boat ramp is dangerous for our double axel trailer.
- Primarily focussed on eco-tourism, values and intent of ecotourism.
- Access is dangerous with current wharf. Currently we have to unload our staff members to wharf to comply with our consent.
- Needs a commercial place to offload passengers.
- Value of the infrastructure, i.e., toilets. Experience that we want to provide.
- Create stress free environment for operators and great experience for the visitors.
- Masterplan talks about options, to get an allocation of space. What do you think about that. Have you thought about what you'd like to see?
- A good local coach transfer system in place.
- Boat trailers and accommodation on limited bit of land. People would be happy to park at little Tahiti if they knew they could get back.



- Bus parking at Little Tahiti canned by DOC.
- Flooded, and gravel was needed. Couldn't get a 4wd through it, let alone park in it.
- What is a fair amount of time to leave a trailer before you would have to take back out of park?
- Chain and locked gate system.
- Fair for one fair for all.
- Boat trailers are the primary issue. Taking up prime land doesn't' work for me.
- We need to be fluid and think long term.
- When we need a change, we need to be fluid. Lots of boats coming through. Different recreational users.
- Fiordland Outdoors opened access to runners.
- Make changes to safety, safe areas for boats. It is hideous at the boat ramp, recreational fisher people, runners.
- You need to change stuff without the rubbish/bureaucracy.
- Boat trailers up the way (e.g., Little Tahiti). How do you get back? Continuous shuttle system?
- May create more congestion. Parking is issue, an area should not be in that congested area. The bushed area, if that was designated area, makes more sense.
- Not sure shuttle would work. Parking is a major point, would have to be an area in relative proximity for it to work.
- Current state, trailers and vehicles are parking together. Trailers could be parked elsewhere. Parking in an organised way. It is a little bit of toing and froing. Remove the trailers, remove the problem from the equation.
- This discussion will form part of the thinking, numbers, peaks, flexibility.
- What is the feeling about trying to accommodate the max amount?
- What is a reasonable number?
- Do you think we need to balance knocking down more trees to make space with limiting the total number of boat trailer parks, develop another area, or do we keep chasing the number.
- Downer would have the numbers going through the tunnel. Get peaks and troughs.
- Fish species will change resulting in bigger vessels.
- Boats are away for longer.
- Before Blue Fin tuna arrived, 30 boats, that could increase to 250 in coming years. Examples of people driving long distances to go fishing.
- The idea about limiting numbers, so if you are chasing FIT, chasing ever increasing number of people using it.



- What is a reasonable number of vessels? Is it more than can currently be fitted at site?
- What is the feeling from people?
- Talking to recreation users, have to have a permit to go in there. 80 permits say, recreational users believe that they should always have access to NZ waters.
- Don't like to have limitations, last minute decision to go fishing.
- Getting a permit at late notice would create a few issues.
- Type of fishing is changing; boats are getting bigger. There must be a solution along the line.
- We need to look 10 15 years ahead. What is good management?
- A wider understanding over the future fishery. Heavier restrictions on fishing to ensure it's there long-term.
- Why would anyone drag their boat up there if they can't have reasonable amount of fishing.
- Needs to be a wider consideration and long term look at how vulnerable is the fishery.
- With an FMG hat on, constrained areas of usable space. No matter what the industry. Recreational use in Milford Sound, that is why are we siting here today, what kicked off this review was the excessive numbers going into Milford pre Covid. We need to be thinking 20, 30, 50 years' time rather than just focusing on what are the issues right now.
- Milford Sound is the gateway to the rest of the Sounds. It is the best experience for the
 domestic / international tourist, the rec fisher etc. There must be some room for everyone that
 comes through the tunnel. Can put more vehicles, not trailers. Make more efficient use of
 space.
- The 'voice of the place' might say that a 5-metre Ute towing a 9-metre boat is a large footprint with a large impact, whereas, if you go in there barefoot, you have a small footprint and a correspondingly small impact, so go for your life.
- I can't talk for Ngai Tahu, but I do know that their view is about balance. I don't know what their final 'line in the sand' might be, but I do ask the question: What is too much for the place?
- This project is about the place. Peter's point is a good one ... what is the point of having recreational fishery access if there is no fishery!
- Agree, what can the fishery sustain.
- The experience that people are after at Milford Sound is not just about the fish. It is about the remoteness of the place.
- 300 boats take away that remoteness away from that experience.
- We have an example of restrictions, look what we have done with Wapiti. People are willing to wait their turn to have the experience.
- We need to be thinking fluidity, if one user group numbers drop, increase another, what is sustainable for each group.



- What is best for Deepwater Basin?
- What other businesses want to establish themselves in the area.
- How are any new businesses going to be accommodated. Only a certain amount of land. Do we need to think about allocating that now for the future.
- We also need to consider how that land use may change over time.
- The idea of looking out and ahead, not fixing one thing now. What is the vision for the place in 50yrs, 100yrs. We are feasibility testing if the principles in the masterplan are sustainable for future.
- Things will change, whether that's vehicles or people's attitudes. No one has a crystal ball.
- Are the principles good? Is there are good mix of recreation and commercial?
- How do we get that balance?
- Building infrastructure to tidy the place. How do we do it today, more so. But giving us options down the tracks.
- How you undertake your development? Principle of charging international visits, using some of that fee to revest in capital in the place, funding conservation efforts. Part of that revenue to give to DOC to do extra stuff.
- What / how benefits?
- Considering when the road is shut rockfalls.
- Where do the revenue streams go if road shuts, or if the airport is shut?
- The Alpine Fault. We need to have think about what happens if there is an EQ, a landslide generated tsunami, the 2020 flooding. We don't have the answer to that.
- What we are looking at is the risk profile. What is the likelihood, material impact if rockfall closes the road. In a commercial model risk plays a huge part. If risk of permanent road closure is high, then that would have to be part of the risk profile on the table.
- Broader than land-based conservation funding. Navigational aids from the cruise ship levy paid to Environment Southland, radio repeaters, community stuff, social licence. Some of that revenue to support the communities.
- There are benefits to having visitors, there are also issues. Use that revenue to continue to benefit the wider community not just going to commercial operators.
- Diving in the marine reserve, we have seen a slow gradual decrease in marine life. It is more protected in the southern side. Dropping cray pots in areas. Need better marine protection. Coral spots should have more consideration and protection.
- The bottle nose dolphin residents, effect on their food source. That needs to be a consideration historical hunting grounds incredible intelligent beings that we share the fiord with.



- From FMG perspective, the original strategy out, it was written into Fiordland Marine Management Act. Potting in Milford dates back into the 50's.
- I'm not advocating that we should have potting through the area. Find the right balance.
- Amenity and values need to be considered, launching people into this stunning landscape when there are signs that say sewage discharge? Is that what we want to portray the value of the place.
- We need that info for health and safety, but how we go about doing that in this special place.
- Don't do this, don't do that. Changing the narrative, this is a special place and a word class experience.
- Using my commercial sea kayaking background, a cross over with zoning, with respect to use.
 Back water space is cool for sea kayakers, commercial perspective would be reduced days, it is really exposed in that space. Not that you send people out in those conditions, the day breeze makes it quite difficult.
- Vision aspect, land water interface, don't stuff that look up. The more we do about Deepwater Basin, we don't want to stuff it up. Estuarine area has much work done; baseline data been done.
- Baseline info we want to have done first.
- The tenders incorporate baseline of all the sites. What is there that we need to be aware of at all the sites.
- 100-year time frame don't keep changing baseline. Stick with it.
- There are some issues, in some cases long standing issues, challenges to resolve.
- Discussion is helpful.
- In relation to the commercial issue raised re future industries / businesses any thoughts on who that might be?
- Not any ideas, trying to allocate all the finite space, projecting to the future, changing industries and how to accommodate.
- No idea on what those business might be.
- Businesses that have developed in Deepwater Basin in last 10 years.
- Potential for underwater, water activity hub, get a cray fish, food carts.
- Plenty of kayakers, divers etc that do not go to the village, capturing those people. Foodie orientated area.
- Splitting everyone off.



- World class.
- Jetties for recreational fishing.
- No point replacing same with same, has to go forward.
- Wipe the rules and start fresh.
- Easier to reclaim land than take the land from the park.
- Gravel will be required as the level is a lot higher than current.
- Key constraint is parking
- Environmental Southland interface between agencies Is critical and how this is managed in the future.
- Re the management of place, we received a lot of feedback on that in stage 2.
- Boat trailer issue is the big one. Increased use has shown that we need to be fluid.
- Milford needs to be removed from bureaucracy to be fluid and react to the problems that are creeping up.
- Different recreational users
- The Government has to make some big decisions with the information that Milford Opportunities provides, with a recommendation from the Board. The Government of the day has to make a decision on which way to go.
- We are considering what could be put in place, to make the place work better, it is ultimately up to the Government however whether they like that idea or not.
- Very good to have conversations about these issues, what we hadn't heard in stage 2.
- Are there any broader issues. Let us know we have been thinking about?
- Will there be an onus on owners to improve? Any changes of our own volition?
- What the village will look like, what could be developed in terms of a hub facility without spreading out anywhere, any pressure on what those buildings are going to look like, how commercially viable is it, are the concepts in the masterplan feasible?
- How that plays out, whether it is a public / private model (THC), or different management framework may all be in the mix.
- That's the kind of stuff that we will be working through.
- White House building, not an ideal situation from the Fiordland Lobster Company point of view. There has to be a better facility here somewhere, for people who need those facilities. White house has been an issue for some time.



- I don't know how people use those facilities. Needs a building that is multi-purpose and designed in that way.
- Your feedback and thoughts are hugely important to us.
- There may be merit in getting together to thrash out some problems and have a collective voice.
- You are welcome to use this space, we will make that as easy as we possibly can.
- We are so committed to getting this engagement right the door is wide open.
- We are looking to Milford Opportunities to help solve some of the problems, headaches.
- The three organisations that have a toe in the water in Milford, we can't get any traction, we are hamstrung.
- At the moment we are having a number of general conversations but what we would like to do as we get further along is to talk about specifics when we have something to test your thinking on.
- Clarification with a few references made to previous development plans.
- The most recent iteration?
- Geotech plan.
- More inhouse with DOC.
- Crisis meeting with stakeholders.
- We are hearing the issues you have raised, trying to think about what has been traversed in past, how close they came to a solution.
- Was the previous work useful?
- It had great elements, shared use facilities.
- Nice elements, where things were positioned.
- Ngai Tahu, they were displaced. But they are very hospitable and welcoming, and they want to share but they also want balance.
- This is a project about the place as much as it is about the people
- We heard from the Fiordland Business Association, about not redoing stuff that has been done before.
- If it worked, it would be good to know about it.

Wrap Up



- Good session, opportunity to sit down and talk.
- There are constraints and required upgrades etc, they need to be resolved. White house classic example.
- Whatever is done in there, built to high spec to withstand that environment.
- Be interested where it goes from here, what is taken on board.
- The 'how' to integrate peoples' thoughts.
- Good session super helpful hearing different perspective.
- Please sign up to the newsletter to keep across updates, planned engagements and other feedback.
- This feedback will the sent to you to ensure that it is accurate before it is published on the website.

Themes

- Separation between commercial and recreational operators
- Health and Safety and risk of liability, something needs to be done now.
- Have good local transfer system.
- Boat trailers are an issue, need long term plans not short sighted.
- Need to be flexible to cater for the busiest days in peak season to middle of winter in the off season
- Sustainable / greater protection of fishery. Let's get the balance right.
- New infrastructure needs to be world-class, high quality, designed to last and be robust against the elements.