

**REQUEST FOR SUGGESTIONS ON POSSIBLE FUTURE TRACK ADDITIONS
AT LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK AND BRISBANE FOREST PARK**

BACKGROUND

Queensland's capital has a smaller percentage of national park land nearby than any other state capital and resides in one of the major population growth centres of the country. The anticipated amount and variety of recreational pressure on these few national parks is expected to be unprecedented.

Government has responded partly to the looming problem of paucity of walking opportunities with its Great Walks initiative. Generally, bushwalkers have been underwhelmed by the results. The walks are described as mediocre and lacking circuits or loops requiring a long car shuffle or exchange of keys, or a repetitive walk.

Lack of detailed consultation with bushwalkers was identified as a possible cause for this poor situation regarding the Great Walks.

With the major world-wide economic downturn, tourism has suffered greatly. Even though tourism and national parks are seen by some as often being an uncomfortable mix, nature-based, small-scale tourism is often compatible and mutually beneficial to the spread and practice of the national parks ideal.

RESPONSE

Queensland Parks and Wildlife have heard these comments and responded positively.

Now, for bushwalkers to progress this matter we need, as will be apparent from the last CMG minutes,

1. suggestions for a possible future multi-use trail in Brisbane Forest Park and the D'Aguilar Range.
2. suggestions for utilizing the existing Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk as a backbone to which extensions or loop walk opportunities may be added.

INVITATION

Individual bushwalkers and bushwalking clubs are therefore invited to:

1. advance suggestions for a possible multi-use trail route in Brisbane Forest Park
2. propose extensions and or circuit / loop walks using the existing Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk as a component.

These suggestions may take advantage of other tracks or trails, known routes, or even entirely new route possibilities. All proposals must be on Public land. Private land is not open for consideration although notional suggestions may be put forward where there are no other options.

Your suggestions should contain a route description and a likely grade. Part of the BBW Club Inc. walk grading system, Appendix I, may be used for this later purpose to ensure uniformity. Use the

hardest part of the walk to determine the grade, bearing in mind that these walks are for a wide user group, not just “hard core” walkers. Class 1-4 terrain grading preferred.

Additional comments on features of interest, variety of rock, plant, animal, historic material, possible linkages with nearby tourism-related activities and cultural opportunities or sensitivities, where known, would be appreciated.

Optionally, you may add additional walk opportunities generated by your suggestion, if applicable. See the example for ways in which a suggestion may open up new walk possibilities at no extra cost.

Ron Farmer, Consultative Management Group delegate for BWQ, has been given the job, by the CMG, to collate the proposals and present a package of suggestions to QPW for further consideration.

A small team of EPA managers, rangers and representatives from BWQ will then evaluate and rank the proposals to create a “shortlist” for more detailed discussion and ordering.

All proposals should consider general criteria such as the following:

GENERAL CRITERIA:

Environmental opportunities and sensitivities / sustainability,
Safety aspects of the proposal,
Cultural matters,
Grade of the walk,
Interest of the walk,
Availability of water and appropriate campsites,
Transport possibilities to the end points of the walk,
Possible connections with existing nature-based tourism enterprises,
Likely cost of any construction and subsequent maintenance work. (Rather than give a dollar estimate just identify the type of construction work needed.)

Specific criteria applicable to the Invitation 1 and 2 are as follows:

INVITATION 1 - Multi-User Trail Route in Brisbane Forest Park:

- New track construction should only be pursued where no other options for connectivity exist on existing trails or where the proposed route warrants due to outstanding interest or preferred grade.
- Provide connection between Mt Coot-tha and Mt Mee, via the local communities of Mt Nebo; Mt Glorious and Mt Mee, in turn providing economic opportunities to these townships.
- Enable shared use with horse-riders and or cyclists, wherever possible utilizing existing management roads or firebreaks. Existing walking tracks should be used to provide options for solitary walking, or loops within the broader trail proposal.
- Single day to multi day options for all pursuits (walking, cycling and horse riding should be explored), preferably with circuit or loop options.
- Utilize existing storm shelters and bush campsites wherever possible.

INVITATION 2 - Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk extensions or circuit / loop options

- No trail options west of Echo Point in QLD or within NSW will be considered. This landscape is considered to be “wilderness zone” and highly sensitive.
- Connections between Springbrook and The Cougals or Tallebudgera Valley also will be favourably considered, particularly where existing trails and firebreaks provide connectivity and new track construction may be avoided.
- All new trail and campsite proposals within the parks of Lamington and Springbrook are likely to be subject to impact assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1998* requirements.

This is a rare opportunity for bushwalkers to make a direct contribution to a matter of immediate practical concern to them. Please be aware that these are suggestions only and that they will be used to help guide and influence further track investigations and assessment. The submission of these options or proposals does not guarantee that they will be built or considered a priority for funding.

An example only is given in Appendix II, as a guide only of a possible response.

All proposals for INVITATION 1 and 2 should be sent to Ron Farmer at ron.farmer@uqconnect.com. by the closing date of 25-Mar-2009

Yours in safe and enjoyable walking,

Ron Farmer (CMG delegate for BWQ)

Appendix I

ABBREVIATIONS & GRADING

DISTANCE

Short	—	Under 10 km per day
Medium	—	10 to 15 km per day
Long	—	15 to 20 km per day
Extra Long	—	Over 20 km per day

ACTIVITY

Day Walk; Through Walk; Easy Through Walk; Base Camp

TERRAIN GRADING — 1 to 9

- 1 Path with smooth surface and low gradient.
- 2 Well-formed path or graded track with some minor obstacles.
- 3 Graded track, with obstacles such as rock or root intrusions, fallen debris, or creek crossings.
- 4 Rough, unformed track or open terrain, with obstacles such as rock or root intrusions, fallen debris, or creek crossings.
- 5 Rough or rocky terrain that may require use of hands, and/or creek rock hopping that requires small to moderate steps. Fallen debris possible.
- 6 Steep, rough or rocky terrain requiring use of hands, and/or creek rock hopping requiring moderate to large steps or jumps. Fallen debris possible.
- 7 Climb or descend steep rock, using hand or foot holds. May be some exposure. Good upper body strength required.
- 8 Climb or descend near vertical rock with exposure, using widely spaced or small hand or foot holds. Climbing skill may be required. Good upper body strength required.
- 9 Sustained climbing or descent of vertical or near vertical rock with exposure, using widely spaced or small hand or foot holds. Advanced climbing skills may be required. Good upper body strength required.

FITNESS & ENDURANCE GRADING — A to E (*Note: Walking times do not include breaks.*)

- A Basic — Generally suitable for new bushwalkers. Up to four hours of walking and possibly minor hills. Slower pace with frequent breaks.
- B Easy — About five hours of walking and up to 300m of elevation gain/loss per day.
- C Moderate — About six hours of walking and up to 600m of elevation gain/loss per day. Agility required.
- D High — High fitness, endurance and agility required. Up to eight hours of walking and about 1000m of elevation gain/loss per day.
- E Challenging — Very high fitness, endurance and agility required. Up to or more than twelve hours of walking and greater than 1000m of elevation gain/loss per day.

Example — SDW-3B

Short Day Walk (SDW)
Graded track with obstacles (3)
Easy (B)

Appendix II

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE ONLY AND DOES NOT INDICATE ANY DECISION WHATSOEVER BEING TAKEN REGARDING THIS SUGGESTION

It is a submission which could apply to the enhancement of the Gold Coast Hinterland Great walk.

WALK DESCRIPTION:

From Binna Burra use the existing track system to Ships Stern. Descend to the Turtle Rock saddle off-track in the known way and then down to Nixon creek. Avoid lantana on the way. Return to Binna Burra on the Great Walk. This goes up through Rankin's old farm.

This could be a Day walk or a Through walk. Base Camp walking is possible also.

Private land can be avoided throughout the whole walk.

GRADES OF WALKS:

SDW 6C or MDW 6C if Dave's creek circuit is included

STW 6C or MTW 6C if Dave's creek circuit is included

SDW 4C or STW 4C if descent is taken from near the Lower Ballunji Falls turnoff

LTW 4C if a more extensive route is taken in the existing track system but avoiding the scramble down from Ships Stern

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Items of interest: The walk goes over Basalt lava flows from the Mt Warning eruption 20-22 million years ago and at lower altitude over the rhyolite and tuff from the Egg Rock eruption. Egg Rock, Turtle Rock, Caves and spectacular cliffs can be seen on the walk. Good views of Numinbah valley may also be enjoyed.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESENTATION:

World Heritage Listed rainforest and drier open eucalyptus forests with several other floral interests occur. Piccabeen palms, red cedars and flooded gums can be seen. In upper Nixon creek rainforest and box forests are the predominant vegetation assemblages.

There is a wide variety of animal life on view for the observant walker, especially in the Nixon creek valley. Many birds species are abundant.

Some environmental sensitivities exist regarding frog habitat in the upper reaches of the Lamington Park creeks. Many environmental presentation opportunities exist.

CULTURAL MATTERS:

There are several opportunities for interpretive material on Aboriginal land use. There appears to be no direct impingement on any aboriginal sacred area on the walk. Presentation opportunities exist regarding post-contact land use.

Logging grazing and Army survival training were all past activities in the Nixon creek valley.

CAMPsites AND AVAILABILITY OF WATER:

Water is available at Nixon creek and at some other creeks on the way, depending on the route taken.

A possible campsite for through walkers exists back from Ships Stern and many sites exist near Nixon creek.

With traditional care with ablutions there should be little problem with pollution. Large numbers of Army personnel have used the area in the past with little impact so occasional bushwalker use is not anticipated as a problem.

SAFETY:

The walk has few major safety hazards provided care is taken with basic navigation in the off-track section.

The walk is safe as measured against normal bushwalking activities and substantially avoids all major topographic obstacles. The only challenge is the scramble off Ships Stern.

Mobile telephone coverage is available for much of the upper altitude parts of the walk and the Correctional Centre is nearby with a land-line if a major incident occurred in the Nixon creek valley. In an emergency road access to Nixon creek is available from both ends of the walk.

TRANSPORT:

Transport is available to and from Binna Burra Lodge. Parking for vehicles is also available. Refreshments are available at Binna Burra and Numinbah valley for long distance walkers. Several small nature-based businesses exist in the area and may benefit from and promote this addition to the existing Great Walk in their own interests. The project could be completed promptly and inexpensively and would be expected to deliver many immediate recreational, commercial and parks engagement advantages.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

If a permanent campsite, similar to Woonoongoora, was established in the area of the Nixon creek and Egg Rock creek junction, several additional useful possibilities arise. This would be an ideal Base camp for several easy walks to Bohgaban Falls, Bell Bird and Rifle Bird tributaries or even to the commercial property Yowgurrabah via, say, Turtle Rock, provided prior permission had been obtained. For a longer stay starting and finishing at Binna Burra and using this campsite and Woonoongoora, a figure of eight type walk over three easy days or two long days could be obtained with only the small section from the proposed campsite to the Numinbah road being repeated.

More significantly, for long distance Great Walks users, this additional campsite would mean a better wilderness walk would be possible. Springbrook to Woonoongoora for one day, then to the proposed campsite for night two, then to Binna Burra, for night three via one of the above-mentioned routes, then on to O'Reilly's for night four. The walk back via the Middle traverse would be a fitting end stage for a five day walk of some variety and interest. Commercial Transport to and from Springbrook and Binna Burra would enable overseas visitors to get a really good look at the Gold Coast hinterland.

FUNDING:

No additional funding would be needed to facilitate this walk, aside possibly, from establishing a permanent campsite in the Nixon creek area if use became high or other opportunities were to be used. (See below.) Several easy routes from the saddle into Nixon creek and the need to avoid lantana make erosion from track formation unlikely, unless use became excessive. The walk is suitable for small parties. The land traversed would be classified most honestly as National Parks Recovery, given its former status.