

Dugald Ley

Appendix 1

From: D Hull [dhull@es.co.nz]  
Sent: Thursday, 5 July 2012 12:43 p.m.  
To: Dugald Ley  
Subject: ~~RE: DOC / OGRIT Letter of Agreement~~

Hi Dugald

When the trail was first developed there were but a few commercial operators along the Rail Trail. With time and the increased popularity more businesses have developed and with that their own ' distinctive' style of signs began appearing. At first we asked them to limit their signs and to keep them as environmentally sensitive as possible. - That was a waste of time as they paid no attention to that request and even more signs appeared. DOC and The Trust then brought out a requirement to limit signs and provide a more professional standard and remove them from the actual trail corridor.

That got us on TV 1 and beyond!! Some were SO incensed they got up petitions and several letters to the Trust telling us what they thought of us!

To resolve the issue - and it is an important consideration as the visual integrity of the trail was being spoilt - a representative of the Operators Group, Council policy department , DOC and the Trust put their heads together and worked out a way forward. The result was that at a point where the trail passes by/through each community a large 'directional notice board' was erected showing all the businesses/ accommodation within about a 2km radius with a - you are here - point of reference. They were professionally designed and produced with the contributing businesses paying the cost. The agreement also covered future maintenance and changes required. It was led by the Operators Group and received almost immediate buy-in. There are always some who prefer to buck the system but now the pressure is from fellow operators rather than DOC or the Trust.

For accommodation places and other services beyond the 2km radius (I think that was the distance - would have to get the agreement to check) a finger board sign was allowed at the side of the trail as an indicator only and with the name of the accommodation/service and distance but no promotional material added.

Interestingly the board design finally chosen followed the one that had been recently installed in the Middlemarch area prior to the meeting to resolve this. They, as a small community had taken the initiative to erect something at the start of the Trail.

Best to deal with this at the very beginning as it really is hard work to change individual thinking and assumed 'rights'.

The Business people may be delighted to see their business promoted on twitter and all the other social media sites. We prefer photographs to reflect the beautiful landscape sans signs.

I could track down the agreement if you wish - not too much of an effort required.

As for getting money out of businesses benefitting from the Rail Trail - that is a story on its own but the short answer is NO. They pay only for the ads they place on our website and in our leaflet and I see that as a straight commercial decision for them to gain exposure. That it happens to go to a Trust that puts all it receives back into the trail cannot be interpreted as giving money to support the Trail. The do not pay a % of their income/sales towards the trail and in fact have asked the Trust to use the funds we have to market the trail for them.

We do have very wide and effective exposure nationally and internationally through our website, we feature frequently in magazines and articles, again nationally and

internationally and assist overseas writers and photographers by personally corresponding or meeting and assisting them in their endeavours.  
Tourism Central Otago with whom we work closely are very proactive with Cycling in the region and specifically The Otago Central Rail Trail.

It is difficult to charge entry to the Rail Trail as there are far too many points of entry to have any 'control' at all.

Because we started using parts of the trail in 1994-5 with, as I said, only a few businesses operating, and with no expectation at that stage that it would develop to the degree that it has nothing was put in place to ask for an Annual Rail Trail Maintenance allocation. Too late now as they have given us a clear message that they see no requirement to pay and actually expect the Trust to pay to promote and market the trail in such a way as to benefit the business sector.

If you have the opportunity to put something in place I would recommend you do so at the earliest. The time is coming when we will have greater difficulty to be regarded favourably by Funding Trusts and other associated groups. We have received generous support from them in the past and understandable others have genuine need for financial assistance. We have been extremely lucky to have received over \$250,000 from an estate.

Our Passport sales go back into the Trail with the businesses receiving \$2 of the \$10 sale for selling for the Trust. A very few give all of the \$10 sale price back to the Trust as a 'donation' to the Trust and that is appreciated. But that is done by no more than 4-5 businesses.

We have paid over \$100,000 in the past 12 months for surface upgrades with more expected to be spent in the next 12 months.  
If we - The Trust and Doc - don't look after the asset the business people will not have something to sell.

I hope this has help a little but feel free to come back for more information if required.

All the best

Daphne

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