

**Backcountry Trust**

**Guidelines for Applicants**

**Background to the Trust**

The Backcountry Trust was formed in late 2017 to continue the work of the Outdoor Recreation Consortium. The Consortium was formed in 2014 as a partnership between Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC), the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) and Trail Fund NZ (Trail Fund).

From 2014-2017, the Consortium was successful in obtaining $1.6 million in funding through the Department of Conservation’s Community Conservation Partnership (later the Community Partnership and, allocated over $1.2 million to community groups for over 300 maintenance, enhancement and construction projects. Additional funding of $800,000 has been secured for 2018-2019.

The Backcountry Trust (BCT) is a charitable organisation that will continue and develop the work begun by the Consortium.

The Trustees are Craig Benbow (Chairperson), Geoff Spearpoint (Vice-Chairperson), Nessa Lynch, Peter Wilson, Guy Wynn-Williams and Dave Keen.

**The objects and vision of the Trust**

The objects of the Trust are to:

* Support the maintenance of publicly accessible, non-commercial, backcountry huts, tracks, mountain bike tracks and other outdoor recreation facilities in the natural environments of Aotearoa / New Zealand for the benefit of the wider community.
* Consider, and where the Board deems appropriate, support the construction of publicly accessible, non-commercial, backcountry huts, tracks, mountain bike tracks and other outdoor recreation facilities in the natural environments of Aotearoa / New Zealand for the benefit of the wider community.

The Trust’s vision is that:

·   All publicly accessible backcountry huts and tracks are maintained by either Department staff or volunteers.

· Opportunities for repurposing old tracks and building new recreational facilities by volunteers are supported as appropriate.

· The Trust encourages volunteering with its many benefits for both volunteers and the wider community of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Stronger relationships between local communities and the Department are fostered, and more people recreate in the natural landscapes of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

**A Guide to Applicants**

Your project is a volunteer effort and requires approval from the local DOC Manager.  While we expect most projects will gain significant support and assistance from local DOC staff and other volunteers, it may become necessary to seek additional assistance or advice.  Under those circumstances the BCT Manager is available to assist you.

If you are ready to apply, please ensure that you read these guidelines carefully in conjunction with the application form. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted.

1. **The Essentials**

These are conditions which you must fulfill before we can consider your application.

* Your project must be volunteer-led,
* Your project must be located on Department of Conservation-administered public conservation land,
* You must have a management agreement in place with the Department of Conservation, or have an alternative agreement negotiated with the Department of Conservation,
* Your project must be consistent with the provisions of the relevant Conservation Management Strategy or any National Park Management Plan.
* Your project must be “publicly accessible”. Facilities that are operated on a commercial basis are not included in this definition and will not be eligible for funding or support.
* The primary purpose of the funding is the maintenance of existing huts and tracks that would not otherwise be undertaken by DOC. Priority will generally be given to these projects.

1. **What can I apply for?**

The main categories for which funding IS available are detailed below, though as our objective is to empower volunteers, we would be happy to discuss any proposals falling outside these guidelines.

• **Helicopter transport** of volunteers and materials: especially using a fly-in, walk out model.

• **Materials**: materials required for hut/track maintenance.

• **Contractors**: where specialist qualifications are required to undertake a task, contractors may be funded.

• **Volunteer Direct Expenses**: Costs associated with supporting volunteers such as food and transport (e.g. petrol for private vehicles). Costs must be actual and reasonable (see policy at the end of this document)

• **Tools** e.g. hand saws, loppers, grubbers, and hammers.

• **Safety equipment** e.g. eye protection, gloves, ear protection, etc.

Note: You must include two current quotes for any proposed purchase or service over $500. You may very well have contacts which can provide cheaper ‘mates rates’, but please ensure we are aware of any possible conflict of interest. We reserve the right to request additional quotes or peer review quotes before funding is confirmed.

Exclusions - these are items we are unable to fund:

• Alcohol.

• Overheads (e.g. web site hosting, electricity, PO Box fees etc.).

• Retrospective applications.

• Other conservation activities such as pest control.

1. **The Criteria**

These are what the decision-makers will be looking for in an application:

* A clear and achievable outcome such as: maintain X hut by carrying out Y repairs and also maintaining Z access track.
* It would be advantageous if you have managed to raise some money for your project from other sources, or were able to source discounted materials or services.
* It would be advantageous if you or some of your group have some experience in carrying out similar projects successfully. Alternately, you should seek assistance and advice from a mentor with experience, volunteers who have completed similar work or DOC field staff.  You could include photos of your work, or explain the experience your group members have or training you have received by experienced volunteers and practitioners.
* Often DOC operations are being completed in areas adjacent to projects, and we encourage you to ensure any possible opportunity to utilise "back loading" or "drop off's" is sought from local DOC staff and endeavour to cooperate in any way that will facilitate these efficiencies.
* Applications that can demonstrate significant volunteer participation and support will be viewed favourably.

1. **The Conditions**

These are the things you will need to do if you are successful in your application:

* Spend the money to complete the project within the agreed time frame. The applicant must contact us if there are reasonable delays due to matters such as difficulty of access, weather conditions etc.
* Invoice the BCT for only the amount you have been approved for. Exceptional circumstances will be considered, but where it is foreseen that overspending could occur it is the applicant’s responsibility to communicate with the BCT Manager and gain approval for exceeding budget prior to undertaking the project.
* Provide a short report, including before and after photos of your work party and your work.
* Provide brief information to enable the BCT  to meet reporting requirements, such as number of volunteers, volunteer hours, number of organisations involved, number of huts maintained, kilometres of track maintained and level of other funding obtained.
* Agree that the work will be carried out to Department of Conservation standards and in
* Be available to participate in publicity (we might want to do an interview, a feature or use your photos/report online or in print to promote the work of the BCT.

**Reimbursement to Volunteers Policy**

* 1. In general, no volunteer on a project will be paid a per day / per hour rate for their work.
  2. Expected costs must be budged for in the original application.
  3. A volunteer who uses their own vehicle to travel to and from a project may claim 50c / km.
  4. A volunteer may claim up to $10 per night for extra food costs where an overnight stay is required.
  5. The BCT will, at its discretion, reimburse the cost of a basic first aid course and certificate for one member in any project.

**Further Enquiries**

We welcome enquiries - please contact manager@backcountrytrust.org.nz