



BACKCOUNTRY TRUST

Supporting Aotearoa's Backcountry Heritage

Backcountry Trust Guidelines for Applicants

General Requirements

- The primary purpose of the Trust is the maintenance of existing huts and tracks that would not otherwise be undertaken by the Department of Conservation (DOC). In special cases we have contributed to the construction of new huts and tracks where there is agreement between the community and DOC that this is a logical extension of the hut and track network.
- Your project will be volunteer-led and located on public conservation land administered by DOC.
- The facilities you are working on will be accessible to the general public, ie. not of a private commercial nature.
- Your project will be consistent with the relevant Conservation Management Strategy and/or any National Park Management Plan.
- And your project will be approved by your local DOC Operations Manager. Talk to us if you need any tips and guidelines for developing a successful partnership with DOC.

Applying

Funds are generally provided for these broad categories to support volunteer work:

- Materials, eg. roofing, timber, fastenings, track retaining materials, bridging, concrete, geo-matting, gravel. Note that DOC has national partnerships with suppliers such as Dulux Paints, who may be willing to assist with supply of selected materials.
- Contractors, where specialist qualifications or experience are required to undertake a task, eg. digger and skilled operator for track construction; weed spraying or line trimming tracks.
- Helicopter transport for volunteers and/or materials - usually fly in; walk out.
- Volunteer direct expenses such as food and transport - see guidelines below.
- Tools, eg. hand saws, loppers, grubbers, hammers, spades, rakes, grubbers, wheelbarrows etc.
- Equipment hire, eg. compactors, power barrows etc.
- Safety equipment, eg. eye protection, gloves, ear protection.
- Hire of Emergency Communication devices such as Mountain Radio and/or InReach (usually required in your Health & Safety plan).
- Trail signs, map boards and/or mapping projects.
- Costs associated with applying for resource or building consents.

Quotes

- At least two quotes are required for any proposed purchase over \$1,000. On hut projects, this generally crops up for helicopter transport. We advise selecting the quote best suited to the job, not necessarily the cheapest.
- You may have contacts who can provide 'mates rates'. That helps everyone, but please disclose as a conflict of interest.
- We may request additional quotes or peer review existing quotes before funding is confirmed.

We are unable to fund:

- Reconnaissance or planning.
- Overheads, eg. web hosting, electricity, PO Box fees etc.
- Retrospective applications.
- Alcohol.
- Other conservation work such as pest control - although as an associated activity this will add weight to your application
- The use of hazardous power tools is discouraged for Health and Safety reasons. The purchase of chainsaws, skill saws, nail guns or ATVs is not supported.
- Fire permits for replacing open fires. If an open fire in a hut is to be upgraded to a wood burner by agreement with the department, then the cost of the permit falls to DOC.

Volunteer Reimbursement

- Expected 'volunteer expense' costs must be budgeted for in the original application.
- In general, no volunteer will be paid a per day or per hour rate for their work.
- Private vehicle use to and from a project may be claimed at 50¢/km.
- \$10 per night per volunteer can be claimed for extra food when staying overnight.
- A professional tradesperson working as a volunteer can claim up to \$50 per day to cover the wear and tear on their power tools.
- The BCT is not an insurance agency. However, if a volunteer loses a personally owned hand or power tool, the BCT may at its discretion, pay for part or all of its replacement. The maximum payment for any single tool is \$250.
- The BCT may at its discretion, reimburse the cost of a basic first aid course and certificate for any one member of the project team..

Criteria

The Board looks at the following criteria when evaluating each application.

- A clear and achievable outcome such as: "Maintain X hut by carrying out Y repairs and also maintaining Z access track" or "Clear A to B track, improve drainage, install water control and sustainability measures such as grade-reversals and outflow, repair benching, apply surface material enhance and reinstate trackside flora".
- Significant volunteer participation counts favourably.
- It is advantageous if you have raised money from other sources, or have sourced discounted materials or services from a local 'sponsor'.
- Experience in the type of work you're proposing is clearly useful. Supporting your application with photos of previous work and any relevant experience/qualifications of your team is always helpful.
- If you're new to all this then talk to us so we can suggest some appropriate mentoring to harness your enthusiasm.
- Applications demonstrating wider community benefits (eg. rubbish clean up, native tree planting etc.) and broad community support will be viewed favourably.
- If applying for Mtb and multi-use tracks, priority will be given to tracks that are accessible to the public without having to join a club or meet other conditions of access.

- Often DOC will be working the same area as a volunteer project. Coordinating with DOC, or any other volunteer groups, to allow back load and combined drop offs dramatically reduces transport costs.

Complying

DOC Scope of Works Agreement

- All project applications require explicit written permission from DOC. Typically for one-off projects this is a letter or email from the local Operations or Area Manager outlining and approving the scope of works to be undertaken.
- You may also have an enduring Management Agreement with DOC, if so, then please also include that with your application.
- If your project is a hut, then please include a copy of the most recent DOC Inspection Report (if available).
- Photos to help describe the location and scope of your project are useful for assessing your application and for reporting/publishing on our web site.

Health and Safety

- You'll need a signed Health and Safety Plan. You can use our [template](#).
- Your Health and Safety Plan needs to be approved by DOC. They have a form for that. [Download it here](#) if required.

Hut and Track Standards

All hut and track work must meet the relevant NZ or DOC backcountry standards.

- [DOC Hut Service Standards](#)
- [SNZ Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures Handbook](#)
- [Track Maintenance Guide](#)

Conditions

The applicant will:

- Meet any and all conditions and/or deadlines agreed to with the Trust.
- Start and complete the project within the agreed time. You may negotiate an extension if confronted with reasonable delays such as adverse weather.
- Claim no more than the total sum granted, for the approved items and activities. If your project is heading over budget contact the manager at the BCT to discuss whether you are eligible for a top up to the Grant.
- Provide a short report using our [template](#) to help the BCT meet its reporting requirements to DOC. This will include for example, the number of volunteers, volunteer hours, number of organisations involved, kilometres of track maintained and level of other funding obtained.
- Provide before and after photos of the hut or track, and of your crew. These may be freely used by the Trust for publicity.
- Agree that work is carried out to Department of Conservation standards appropriate to the backcountry zone the facility is in.

Claiming

- Issue an itemised invoice to the BCT for the work and materials approved. If your organisation is GST registered then the invoice must include your GST number.

- if you are an individual then use the [BCT Claim Form](#) AND include GST Invoice/Receipts for all purchases.
- The BCT will, and often does, pay suppliers directly for large ticket items such as helicopter travel.