



PHOTO CREDIT: Riley Chapman

## fiordland trails trust

### Winter 2025 Newsletter

Kia ora and welcome to the Fiordland Trails Trust winter newsletter. Here we keep you updated with our trail progression, events and other interesting information about our growing network of multi-use trails.

A huge thank you to our wonderful community, supporters, volunteers, sponsors and funders for all that you have done and continue to do to make these trails exceptional!

## Update from the Chair: Our patience and perseverance persists

The extension of our trail network towards Te Anau Downs has not gone as quickly or as smoothly as we had hoped. Delays due to Wildlife Permit requirements, initially set by the Department of Conservation (DOC) resulted in delays and additional costs as we observed the lizard management protocols. But hey – we now have the green light to proceed with trail construction, and with the additional width to pinch points to enable the construction of a safe, two-way trail.

So, Sinclair Road – here we come! The intention is to have the new section from Patience Bay available for public use by Christmas. We also have sufficient funds to proceed with another 1.8km along the lakeside terraces to Landing 2 – that work will commence in the new year.

Usage of Leg 2, from the Upukerora Bridge to the beach at Patience Bay opened last August and is proving extremely popular for cyclists and walkers, averaging over 1500 users per month. Leg 2 has been the most technically challenging so far and we are thrilled with the outcome and positive feedback from the community.

It is great to see the dog walkers taking good care of doggy doo-doo's, as we have asked – please keep up the good work!

Our work to make the Lake2Lake Trail an entirely off-road experience continues. Resource consent for Leg 5 has been lodged with Southland District Council and Environment Southland and the process to achieve affected parties' approval has commenced. We hope to have a consent in place this year, and will then get into serious fundraising mode to enable construction in the foreseeable future.

Regular trail users will have noticed our recent safety improvement efforts, with minor widening and a vegetation tidy up to Barrows Narrows, the 800m section between Queens Reach and SH95, and the sweetening of two switchbacks that have been the scene of reported accidents.

So, trail users – get out there over winter and enjoy what we have in place! Both trails offer different experiences and have magnificent vistas of the lake, river and mountain environment.

A huge shoutout to FTT's incredible group of volunteer Trustees. The energy and passion they have for managing, maintaining and extending our trail network is incredible and they dedicate thousands of volunteer hours each year for the betterment of our community.

Enjoy what is out there!

David Boniface, FTT Chair.

# Trail numbers are booming!

2025 counts for to the end of May (including the new counting station on the Patience Bay section) reflect impressive numbers – we are at 60% of last year’s numbers already.

	Lake2Lake -----					Upuk Loop -----	
	Leg 1 (Bird park)	Leg 2 (Tui Bay)	Leg 3 (Yerex Reach)	Leg 4 (Rainbow Reach Rd)	Leg 6 (Manapouri)	Leg 1 (Lakefront)	Leg 2 (Upuk Bridge)
2024 (total)	66450	51970	17845	16490	10455	21478	N/A
2025 (to 31 May)	34683	24571	12122	9120	8774	17230	4848

## Jobs for Nature project wraps up

Our Jobs for Nature project – Bringing the Park to the People – may have ended, but the benefits to our local environment will endure for generations to come thanks to the hard work of many people.

The project, funded through Mahi Mō Te Taiao, Jobs for Nature, commenced in 2021 and included weed and predator control, planting to restore biodiversity, the creation of community signage, trail enhancement and 6km of trail extension.

The outcomes of the project were significant.

Not only did it create a number of employment opportunities, but all project funding was spent within the local community, supporting businesses and suppliers.

The community positively engaged with the initiative – it was formally recognised with an Environment Southland Award in 2023 – and previously degraded areas along the Lake2Lake Trail were transformed into attractive, park-like spaces.



Tony Ciaffoni – Fiordland Trails Trust Project Manager has been presented with a large canvas photo for his Mahi and in appreciation for the Jobs for Nature project 2021 – 2024

### Other impacts included

- habitat restoration to the Upukerora River Delta
- 150 traps placed
- biodiversity protection
- close to 20,000 native plants planted
- an additional 4km of trail construction from the Upukerora River mouth to Patience Bay

This project has been immensely positive and we cannot give enough thanks to the many people that have been involved. A special thank you goes to our project manager Tony Ciaffoni, whose hard work and dedication enabled the vast majority of these positive and lasting impacts.

For the Trust, this has been a wonderful example of recreation and conservation working together for some outstanding benefits. These impacts will be long lasting – just look at the Upukerora River Delta! – and we are thrilled with the outcome and the legacy it leaves.

A full report and summary of the project will be available soon.



# Fundraising initiatives

## FTT Duck Derby

On Saturday 8th February 2025, we held the inaugural FTT Duck Derby at the Upukerora Trail Bridge.

A huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who came along, everyone who purchased tickets or won auctions, the amazing businesses who supported with auction prizes, and everyone who supported this event!

It was a fun family day out and a successful fundraiser for the Fiordland Trails Trust.



## Hydro Half Marathon, Te Anau Mitre 10 10km & GWD Kids 2km Fun Run Saturday 2 August 2025

Our 2025 event is shaping up to be our biggest year yet with over 300 entries for both the Hydro Half and Mitre 10 Te Anau 10km races.

The courses are set and are exactly the same as last year, so let's start smashing some records!

	Male	Female
Hydro Half	1:15.58	1:29.22
Mitre 10 Te Anau 10km	36.42	40:13

We have put on an extra bus which will mean an earlier start, but we have you covered with a coffee cart at the Hydro start and an extra marquee to keep you warm!

This year we are proud to introduce Photos4Sale: Pay What You Want (trust-based, customer-set pricing) for our event. You decide what your event photos are worth to you!

A huge shout out to the following for making this event come alive, our sponsors: Meridian Energy, Mitre 10 & GWD Motor Group, as well as our fabulous volunteers. We truly couldn't do it without you. On that note, we are always keen to hear from you if you would like to volunteer - please email [admin@fiordlandtrails.nz](mailto:admin@fiordlandtrails.nz).

In addition, with the additional people in town this brings in an additional consumer spending to local business and services - a win win for everyone!





# Future, funding and supporting the trails

This year has been increasingly difficult securing funding to grow our trail network, and we are finding ourselves geographically isolated from many of the major funding sources.

The future development of trail growth towards Te Anau Downs as well as the 5km off road section to complete the Lake2Lake Trail continues to be our main focus and the cost projection is \$1.5m.

We understand that not everyone is in a position to give, but if you are, would you consider making a donation for the future of these trails? Whether it's large, petite, or somewhere in between it all helps!

**[Click here](#) to view various ways to support – thank you!**

Alternatively, speak to one of our team if you would like to purchase a chair/bench along the trail, sponsor a bridge, or leave a bequest.

The dedication of volunteers, and local support and funding made these trails possible. The vision is to grow the trails and make this a world class great ride, but we need your help so that we can maintain our current pathways, create new trails, care for native flora and fauna to make this truly special.



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