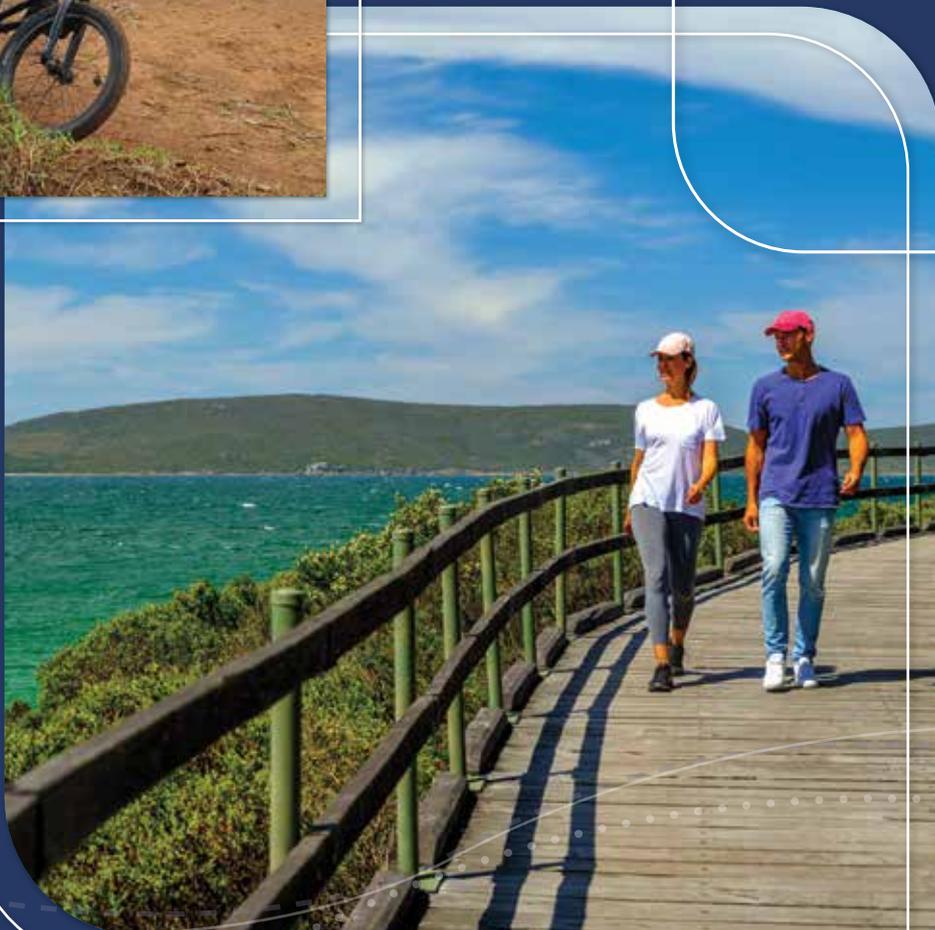


Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

2020-2029



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The trail projects identified in the RTMP are based on existing information available from local and state agencies, community organisations and not-for-profit groups. Estimates of infrastructure, timeframes and costs are indicative only. Projects may be subject to review and change to meet new circumstances. Projects identified in the RTMP should not be taken as a commitment by stakeholders to fund these projects. Unless otherwise indicated, public funding of projects is not confirmed.

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Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



FUNDING PARTNERS



Department of
Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



This document has been prepared by GSCORE on behalf of the following regional stakeholders - City of Albany, the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling; the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA); the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC); and the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

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We recognise and value the heritage, culture and spiritual connection of Noongar people with the lands and waterways on which outdoor recreation takes place.

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Published by:



22 Collie Street,
Albany WA 6330

08 9892 0113

info@gscore.com.au
www.gscore.com.au





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ACRONYMS

- ASW** - Australia's South West
- ASCTI** - Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated
- ATHRA** - Australian Trail Horse Riders Association
- ATHS** - City of Albany Trails Hub Strategy
- DMO** - Destination Marketing Organisation
- DOT** - Department of Transport
- DBCA** - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- DLGSC** - Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- GSCORE** - Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence
- GSDC** - Great Southern Development Commission
- GST** - Great Southern Treasures
- GSTRC** - Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit
- GSTRG** - Great Southern Trails Reference Group
- IMBA** - International Mountain Bicycling Association
- LGA** - Local Government Authority
- MCA** - Multi-criteria assessment tool
- MTB** - Mountain bike
- RTMP** - Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan
- SO1-SO5** - The Sea/Open Water Grading System NSW
- SWALSC** - South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council
- TDP** - Trails Development Process

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Southern Regional Trail Master Plan (RTMP) provides a coherent and clearly outlined program of trail infrastructure development across the Great Southern region over a ten-year period (2020-2029). It has been developed to guide decisions about the management of, and investment in, trails and provides a vision of what the trail network across the Great Southern will look like in the future.

This plan has been developed in partnership with all eleven local governments in the Great Southern region – Albany, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling and has involved consultation with the adjoining Shire of Manjimup. The plan has the support of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), and the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

The RTMP is identified as a priority project in both the Great Southern Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2019-2021, and the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan (2018). It supports the key objectives of the Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint to develop a state-wide network of sustainable trails, facilities and associated infrastructure; to raise the recreational and tourism profile of Western Australian trails; and to develop a diverse revenue stream to ensure economic sustainability.

This plan aims to establish the Great Southern as a World-Class Trails Destination.

To achieve this vision, trail development needs to focus on creating remarkable and accessible trail experiences, improving existing trails, building associated infrastructure, and developing a comprehensive marketing strategy.

To address the gaps in current trail supply, this plan identifies three trail development opportunities:

- (i) create new trail experiences;
- (ii) develop trail linkages; and
- (iii) enhance or upgrade existing trail networks.

VISION STATEMENT

By 2030, the Great Southern Region will provide a diverse range of quality trail experiences that showcase the region's unique landscapes, biodiversity, geology, Aboriginal culture and settler heritage.

The trail network will be built to a high standard and managed on a sustainable basis to enhance environmental and educational outcomes.

Trail experiences will be highly valued by local communities who regularly use them for recreation.

They will also attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors, leading to improved health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for the region's people and places.

Some of the trail proposals described in this plan are flagged as "Priority Trails". These trails or trail networks are integral to achieving the region's vision of becoming a world-class trails destination. They should be incorporated into local and state government planning documents as projects of regional importance that require prioritised funding. Other trail proposals included in this plan – including trail linkages and other trail enhancements – are important but are of lower priority. They provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans and implemented as and when funding is available.

The proposed priority trails were identified through a rigorous assessment process that involved extensive consultation with communities and stakeholder groups across the Great Southern. A multi-criteria assessment tool was used to identify which trail proposals should be prioritised for development (see Section 3). This plan recommends the construction of twelve new regional priority trails or trail networks; and enhancements to two existing nationally significant trails that require urgent maintenance. In combination with the proposed trail linkages and improvements, these new trails will provide a diverse range of iconic trail experiences for hiking, cycling and paddling.



The Priority Trail proposals are listed below according to the anticipated timeframe for construction and are sorted by activity type (hiking, cycling, and paddling). They are not ranked by order of priority. The timeframe for the delivery of these projects is based on a combination of factors, including the need to undertake detailed environmental and heritage assessments as well as additional community consultation, the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers, and the need to secure funding for construction.

! PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 SHORT 1-2 Years	Tower Hill MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Bald Head Walk Trail Albany Heritage Park Mounts Trail Corridor Link	

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 MEDIUM 3-5 Years	Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Hiking Trail Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Hiking Trail Albany Heritage Park Stage 2 Poikeclerup MTB Trails Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Porongurup MTB Trails Munda Bididi Trail Realignments	

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 LONG 6-10 Years	Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Grain Train Rail Trails Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	

TRAIL TYPE
 Hiking  Cycling/Mountain biking  Paddling

To achieve the vision outlined in this master plan, it is essential that an effective implementation strategy is adopted. Given the range of stakeholders involved in delivering the priority trail proposals, it is important that these roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and projects are delivered to a high standard. The following recommendations provide an implementation strategy to achieve the vision outlined in this master plan. The strategies are aligned with each of the agreed objectives (see Section 2) and have been prioritised over a five-year timeframe. Specific actions and agency responsibilities aligned with these strategies are included as Appendix 4.

- **1 Integrated Planning & Management**
Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.
- **2 Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network**
Develop, upgrade and maintain a network of high-quality trails and facilities that deliver outstanding experiences to a wide range of trail users and activity types.
- **3 Promote the Visitor Experience**
Encourage strong local community and visitor participation in recreational trail activities through effective promotion and marketing of the region's trails.
- **4 Community and Economic Development Opportunities**
Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

The Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan is the product of a strong partnership between local and state government, and reflects the aspirations of diverse trail user groups, community organisations and businesses. Progressively implementing these projects over the next decade will ensure that the Great Southern achieves its potential as a nationally recognised trail destination.



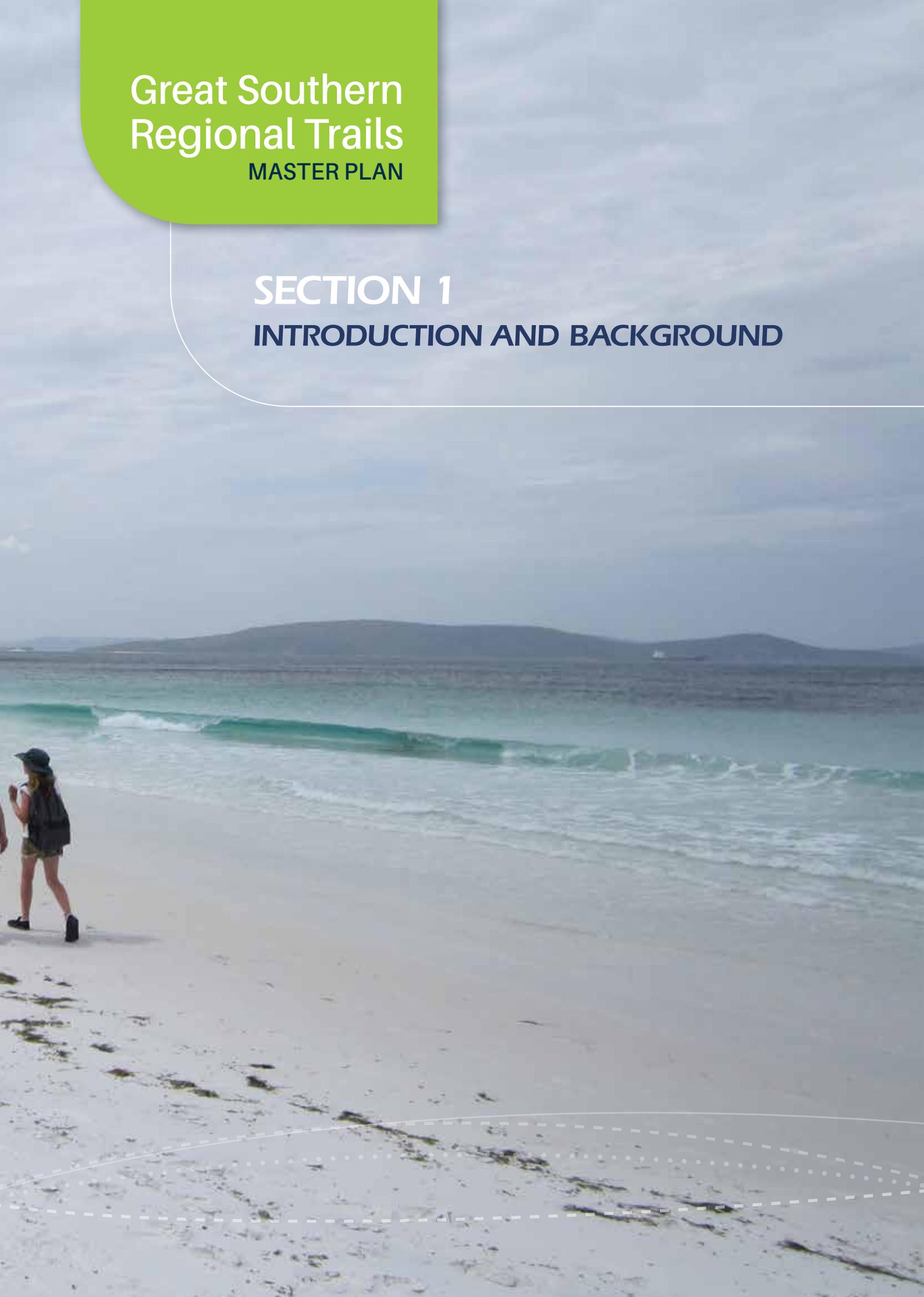


Photo credit: Camp Quaranup

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Trails are pathways or routes that are used for recreation, tourism and appreciation of natural and cultural values. Trails may be short or long; be part of a trail network or a single journey; be used for one activity or be shared by several different trail activities; be primarily used by local residents or form a visitor attraction; be purpose-built paths or routes designated by signage and information.

WHAT ARE TRAIL EXPERIENCES?

Active leisure trails may be terrestrial (e.g. hiking, walking, running, mountain biking, cycling, equestrian) or aquatic (e.g. paddling, snorkelling, diving). They can also involve the use of motorised transport where a vehicle is the primary means of experiencing the natural environment (e.g. trail bikes) or where it provides a means to access recreation sites (e.g. 4WD, on-road vehicles).

Many trail experiences include a focus on local culture, heritage, and produce (e.g. arts trails, food and wine trails). Trails may form part of a designated and sanctioned trail network or can be informal (and in some cases unsanctioned by land managers). They can be linear or looped and may be standalone or linked to trail centres and towns. Trails are categorised according to an agreed classification system and standard (i.e. grades). These standards are specific to each trail type (e.g. walking) and are not interchangeable (see Appendix 1).

WHY IS THE MASTER PLAN NEEDED?

The Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017–2021¹ is a high-level strategic planning document produced by the Western Australian state government to guide future investment and ensure planning consistency and sustainable trails development across the State¹. It recognises the role that trails play in encouraging participation in outdoor recreation and driving economic growth through nature-based and adventure tourism. The Blueprint recommends the development of regional trails master plans as critical planning tools for all tiers of government.

There has been relatively little local level planning to meet the growing demand from residents for the construction of trails and trail networks within the Great Southern. Except for the City of Albany, which is implementing its Trails Hub Strategy, none of the other local governments in the Great Southern have current local Trails Master Plans or equivalent documents. However, the need for trails master planning is listed as a priority in the Great Southern Regional Sport and Recreation Plan and is documented in several local government community or recreation plans.

While there are currently few formal trails plans in place, some local governments have trails committees or project groups. The City of Albany has a Trails Project Control Group overseeing the implementation of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy, as well as project-specific working groups for individual trails/reserves. The Shire of Jerramungup has a Bremer Bay Trails committee which has active aspirations for new projects that align with the RTMP. The Shire of Plantagenet recently formed a trails working group which has undertaken a review of its local trails master plan. It is recognised that seven of the region's eleven local government areas (LGAs) have population bases below 2000 residents and struggle to commit capital and human resource towards trail planning and development. It is anticipated that this master plan will prove to be a valuable resource to all local governments across the Great Southern region.

¹ Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017–2020, Department of Sport and Recreation, page 18.

HOW WAS THE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPED?

The Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) developed this plan in partnership with all regional stakeholders. In undertaking this work, GSCORE employed the Trail Development Process (TDP). The TDP was developed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) in partnership with international trail specialists, key stakeholders, and the trail community². This planning process provides guidelines to assist land managers, trail professionals and trail groups to develop and manage trails sustainably, and maximise environmental, social and economic benefits.

Integration of TDP guidelines into this plan and all future planning will ensure that trails are a recreational asset to the Great Southern community, not a liability. The guidelines are an important resource and tool for land managers, trail professionals and trail groups, providing guidance and a consistent development approach to trails across Western Australia.

The Trail Development Process involves eight stages (see Figure 1 below) and encompasses a constant evaluation, review and improvement process as trails are being developed, maintained, extended or renewed.

Figure 1: Trail Development Process

STAGE	OUTCOME	
1. Trail Proposal	A trail development proposal is either supported in principle by the land manager/owner, or not supported (due to environmental, social, cultural or other constraints). The purpose of a proposal could be to identify potential suitable areas for consideration.	DESKTOP
2. Framework	A project outline developed by the steering group (stakeholders), including: project objectives, project management model, stakeholders, roles, target market, requirements, execution, and ongoing management model.	
3. Site Assessment	Broad-scale study of the area and identification of opportunities, constraints and characteristics such as soil types, vegetation etc.	
4. Concept Planning	Identification of opportunities and conceptual trail plan, including broad trail corridors and infrastructure requirements.	
5. Corridor Evaluation	Detailed assessment of trail corridors for use in determining the final trail alignment.	FIELD
6. Detailed Design	Detailed trail design and alignments physically flagged in the field. Includes detail on the trail classifications, technical trail features, construction methods and specifications.	
7. Construction	Trail constructed in line with the Detailed Design.	
8. Management	Management plan implemented detailing maintenance and monitoring requirements.	

In developing the RTMP, GSCORE and associated consultants undertook an extensive community consultation process that involved landowners, land managers, local governments, the regional development commission, Aboriginal communities and individuals, tourism organisations, peak recreational bodies, user groups, and the broader community. The main data collection techniques were face-to-face workshops, meetings with stakeholder groups, and an online survey.

The consultation revealed widespread support from the public and local governments for trail development, see RTMP Background Report.³

Development of sustainable trails that are valued and supported by local government and local communities is imperative to the long-term success of the RTMP. With that aim in mind, the following planning principles were endorsed by the project partners.

² Trails Development Series: Part A – Trail Development Process: <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/management/trails>

³ Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) Background Report - June 2019 (hereafter RTMP Background Report)



PLANNING PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING



Attract visitors from outside the region



Nationally & regionally significant trails



Provide community and economic development for traditional custodians of the land



Build sustainable and safe trails

The project will adopt the sustainable trail design principles in the WA Trail Development Process



Work in partnership with Noongar communities to identify opportunities for training, employment, cultural interpretation and Noongar language or dual naming of trails



Cater to different user groups and abilities

Include a range of different trail activities, grades and styles.



Enable health and wellbeing benefits for local communities



Develop community-based easy grade trails



Disperse visitors across the region

Identify trail projects across the entire region



Showcase and protect our unique landscapes and biodiversity



Build experiences around our unique points of difference and provide interpretation and education

Build partnerships across LGA boundaries and with local communities



Identify projects that cross boundaries and engage communities



Keep visitors in the region for longer

Provide a coherent and exciting array of experiences



Collaborate not compete



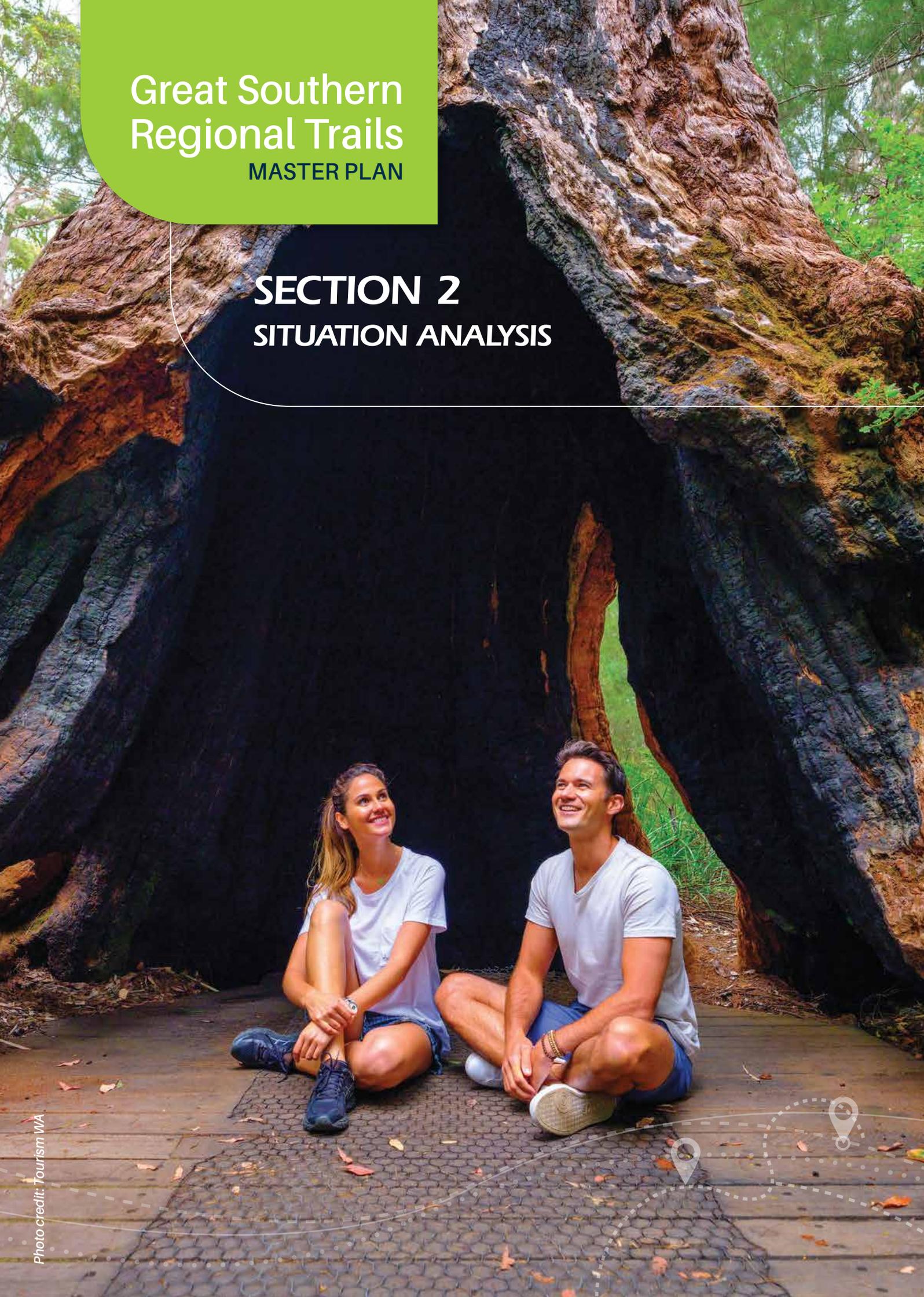
Put the user experience first

These principles have guided key decision-making for the plan.

Great Southern Regional Trails

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SECTION 2 SITUATION ANALYSIS



SITUATION ANALYSIS

Trail users are increasingly seeking authentic, exciting outdoor experiences. Successful trail destinations such as Tasmania and New Zealand attract visitors seeking adventure, wilderness, and experiences that provide a sense of discovery and personal achievement. Creating attractive experiences requires consideration of:

 Unique trail experiences matched to the region's landscapes	 Marketing and promotion - 'experience' packaging	 Capacity to host events
 High-quality, diverse, iconic, scenic trail experiences	 Revenue generation opportunities	 Partnerships and political support
 Accessibility, accommodation, attractions and activities		

Successful trail destinations contain a range of different landscapes, experiences, trail lengths, classifications and style (linear, loop) within an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks which provide the necessary services such as information, accommodation, infrastructure and complementary activities. They also provide opportunities for residents to recreate and enjoy improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

HOW WE COMPARE TO ESTABLISHED TRAIL DESTINATIONS

Australia has a diverse range of landscapes and trail opportunities are being developed in every State. The popularity of active leisure, individual fitness and outdoor recreation activities is increasing, and trail-based activities are recognised as central to tourism growth in many regions across the country.

Tasmania is the best-known trails destination within Australia, with five of the twelve 'Great Walks of Australia' located in that state. With the opening of the Three Capes Walk in 2015, the number of tourists visiting Tasmania for overnight bushwalks grew by almost 70%. The Cape to Cape Walk Track in Margaret River is the only Western Australian trail included as a Great Walk. In the Great Southern region, the section of the Bibbulmun Track from Walpole to Albany is often recognised as one of the best sections of this extensive internationally recognised trail. With improved marketing and increased support services, this section of the track has the potential to elevate the status of the Great Southern as a hiking destination.

Tasmania is also becoming recognised as an international mountain biking destination, with Blue Derby and Maydena being the most well-known

locations. More than 40,000 people visited Tasmania to participate in mountain biking and cycling in 2018/2019. **Closer to home**, established and emerging mountain biking facilities can be found in Margaret River, Perth Hills, Nannup, Pemberton, Dwellingup and Collie. Elevation is a key component of many popular mountain biking destinations, and the numerous mountains and hills of the Great Southern region provide an exceptional advantage when compared to other areas across Western Australia. The unique opportunity to establish mountain bike trails where elevation reaches between 240-300 metres in various locations, has the potential to reap a significant return on investment for the region.

The landscapes of the **Great Southern** region offer a range of marketable experiences, equal to, or exceeding those sought in other destinations across the country. The region is internationally recognised as a biodiversity hotspot famous for its unique and endemic species. The diversity of flora and fauna, rich cultural heritage, dramatic coastline and mountain ranges are major drawcards. Visitors to Western Australia are drawn to its natural beauty, with almost 90% of holiday makers experiencing 'amazing natural landscapes or national parks'⁴.

⁴ Understanding Repeat Visitation to Western Australia, Tourism Research Australia, March 2018.

ANALYSIS OF OUR CURRENT TRAIL OFFERING

An audit of existing and planned trails in each LGA across the region shows that the Great Southern region has many tracks and trails (Table 1). However, because most of these have been developed in isolation from each other, the region lacks a coherent trail offering. There is a high concentration of trails close to coastal areas, while inland areas, despite having natural attractions including parks and reserves, are very poorly served by trail infrastructure. Throughout the region there are many informal trails used primarily by residents.

Walking is relatively well catered for with a variety of grades available, although most-accessible trails suitable for the leisure market are concentrated in the Lower Great Southern. Several shires in the central and northern parts of the region have heritage trails and town walks, though most are not well marketed or known outside of the local area. There are very few looped trails, and most of these are short town walks.

There is a significant lack of sanctioned **mountain bike** trails and although there are a number of informal road cycling routes, there are very few recognised cycle trails. A lack of infrastructure and marketing limits use of the river systems, lakes, inlets and harbours for paddling. Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders, and there are only two designated bridle trails used almost exclusively by local riders.

In addition to significant gaps in trail supply, the region also lacks consistent **trail signage**. There is no comprehensive source of information about the region-wide trail offering, and there are few physical and/or promotional linkages between trails. There are a diversity of trail construction and maintenance standards, funding sources and governance arrangements, and there are currently no recognised trail towns (hubs), trail centres, or trail networks.

Analysis of current trail offerings has enabled better understanding of **current gaps** in trail provision, and opportunities for future trail development.⁵ In brief, while there are many trails throughout the region, there are significant gaps in the types of trails and trail experiences available. This includes a gap in trails which highlight Noongar heritage and culture. This could be addressed by engaging with the Noongar community to integrate culture and creative expression in each of the trail proposals.

The current trail supply is insufficient to meet the needs of both residents and visitors. Apart from the two iconic, long distance trails (Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Trail) there are few trail products that appeal to a broad market and attract mass visitation. This plan examines these gaps and identifies opportunities and priorities for development.

⁵ The RTMP Background Report provides an overview of the current trail networks in the region and an understanding of the social, health, economic, and environmental benefits of trails.

Table 1: Existing sanctioned trails in the Great Southern (as at 31 May 2019)

TRAIL TYPE	NUMBER OF TRAILS	TOTAL DISTANCE (KM)
Hike	91	194
Hike (long distance)	2	179
Mountain Bike (MTB)	1	1.3
Dual-use (hike and cycle)	18	103
Off road cycle touring	2	243
Paddle	10	81
Dive/snorkel	2	0.6
Equestrian/bridle	2	84
TOTAL TRAILS	128	886



Photo credit: Tourism WA

WHAT IS NEEDED TO ADDRESS THESE GAPS?

To create a nationally significant trail destination, development needs to focus on creating remarkable and accessible visitor experiences, improving trails, infrastructure and marketing. To address these gaps, this plan identifies three trail development opportunities:

- (i) create new trail experiences;
- (ii) develop trail linkages; and
- (iii) enhance or upgrade existing trail networks.

The aims, planning requirements and level of investment associated with each of these approaches are outlined in Table 2. These approaches inform the specific trail plans contained in Section 4.

The Great Southern region has the opportunity to maximise and market trail use, with the diversity of trail experiences and landscapes providing a compelling destination to visit.

With a focus on unique biodiversity and Aboriginal culture and heritage, visitors and locals will be enticed to explore the different values and experiences. It is expected that repeat visitation and length of stay will increase as a result.

Table 2: Approach to trail development: aims, planning and investment

APPROACH	AIM	PLANNING REQUIRED	INVESTMENT
CREATE new trail experiences	<p>Develop trails to meet unmet and emerging demand.</p> <p>Develop and market new trail experiences to suit target markets.</p>	<p>Integrate planning across multiple tenures, approvals from several land managers, detailed concept designs for development of different trails experiences, and services, branding and signage.</p> <p>Management and maintenance model is required at the planning stage.</p>	<p>High cost for planning, design and construction.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance costs should also be factored into initial planning.</p> <p>Need to leverage funding from all tiers of government.</p>
DEVELOP trail linkages	<p>Develop trails linkages to maximise use of existing trail networks.</p> <p>Extend trails to create links between existing routes and town centres.</p>	<p>Coordinated planning approach to develop and establish links with existing routes.</p> <p>May require new trail infrastructure such as new trails, signage, interpretation or mapping; or improvements to road connectivity.</p>	<p>Low cost where trails already exist. Relatively low cost for installation of new signage, mapping and interpretation.</p> <p>Higher costs associated with new trail construction and installation of other infrastructure.</p>
ENHANCE existing trails	<p>Enhance and/or upgrade existing designated trails and/or upgrade informal recreational trails to create new trail experiences and improve access for different user groups.</p>	<p>Enhance access by improving trail surface or assistance infrastructure (steps, handholds, etc.) where possible.</p> <p>Upgrade trail infrastructure and improve signage, interpretation and mapping.</p> <p>Close or rehabilitate unsanctioned/informal trails.</p>	

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SECTION 3 IDENTIFYING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



IDENTIFYING REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The goal of the RTMP is to establish an array of trail towns, trail centres, and trail networks that cater to different trail user groups. To achieve this vision, the plan draws on the trail model outlined in the Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint. A trail model defines how a trail or set of trails can be developed and applied to a population centre or an individual site. Trail models heavily influence all parts of trail planning, design, construction and management (see Appendix 2).

Successful and sustainable trails require a strategic planning approach that ensures appropriate trail models and trail types are developed in appropriate locations.

HOW WERE PRIORITY TRAIL PROJECTS IDENTIFIED?

The following trail prioritisation process was used to identify regional trail development opportunities within the Great Southern. The criteria used are described in Table 3. The following sections describe these criteria in further detail.

Table 3: Trail prioritisation process

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITISATION CRITERIA
1 Market Potential	Activity markets are categorised as high, medium or low potential. Factors assessed: size of current market (how many people currently visit); existing catchment (where do visitors come from); visitation trends (what will attract visitors now and into the future); and potential for market growth (will trail development attract new markets).
2 Destination Significance	Destination locations are categorised as having national, regional or local significance. Factors assessed include: connectivity (population demographics and proximity); scope (available land); character (setting and landscape appeal); profile (existing services); and desirability (user demand)
3 Destination Opportunity	Destination locations are identified as having excellent, good, average, or low opportunity based on the location's relative importance and uniqueness. Factors assessed include: tenure; access; value (landscape); quality (landscape); and diversity (trail type).
4 Destination Deliverability	Destination locations are identified as having long, medium or short-term deliverability. Factors assessed include: demand (established); supply (existing trails); stakeholders (existing); planning (level of support); and land use (existing).

1 MARKET POTENTIAL

Substantial investment in trails is occurring around the world and trails are being actively marketed to keep tourists longer in different destinations. Trails tourism has many benefits – it increases length of stay by low-impact visitors, can promote repeat visitation, and drives tourism dollars to local businesses.⁶ In general, trail walkers and hikers are the largest trails market world-wide. However, due to longer average time staying at a location (3-5 days) and often higher than average daily spend on food and accommodation,⁷ mountain bikers are now considered a more lucrative tourism market.

Two distinct visitor markets have traditionally been identified within trail tourism segmentation:

- **Destination Trail Users:** Experienced trails users who regularly travel with trails as a primary motivator. They have likely visited other Australian or international trails destinations. They seek high quality trails with good supporting infrastructure in scenic/natural locations.
- **Trail Users While on Holiday:** Typically less experienced trail users whose primary motivator for travel is not trails. While they view trail use as a secondary motivation for their visit they will participate in trail activities and will likely hire or require equipment. They may place less emphasis on the trail and more on accessibility of the facility, the setting and nearby attractions and amenities.

This master plan further differentiates market segments as:

- **Leisure Trail Users:** typically, holiday makers who seek out accessible trails for use with family and friends. Time spent on trails is often short to half-day in duration.
- **Active Trail Users:** outdoor enthusiasts who will plan their visit to include use of trails. Time spent on trails is often half to full day or overnight stay.
- **Adventure Trail Users:** dedicated trail users who will seek out challenging trails or unique and extended experiences. Time spent on trails is often overnight and multi-day.

⁶20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in 2018 (p.26): <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/2018-trends-report-continued-growth-innovative-marketing-technology>

⁷Economic Impacts of Mountain Biking Tourism – 2016 Update: <https://www.pinkbike.com/news/economic-impacts-of-mountain-bike-tourism-2016-update.html>



Table 4 provides an overview of the characteristics of these market segments. It is important to note that the type of experience sought by different groups, such as young people, families and seniors, is often self-determined according to ability and appetite for adventure, rather than by age or other demographic factors. It would be remiss to expect that older people or family groups will only seek leisure experiences, when those with skills and knowledge may well seek adventure experiences. Recent industry analysis is predicting increasing interest in adventure-based and trails tourism across all market segments⁸. This master plan identifies current market gaps and opportunities to cater for these diverse markets.

Table 4: Trails market segmentation

 <p>LEISURE</p>	<p>GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Typically holiday makers who seek out accessible trails for use with family and friends. Time spent on trails is often short to half-day in duration.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Tourist, family, friends</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: Well-marked trails to suit range of abilities. Easy access trails linked to town site and/or accommodation camping, and day use sites in natural areas.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: LOW-MEDIUM - Limited experience seeking accessible, achievable trails</p> <p>VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH</p>
 <p>ACTIVE</p>	<p>GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Outdoor enthusiasts who will plan their visit to include use of trails. Time spent on trails is often half- to full day or overnight stay.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Competent outdoor enthusiasts seeking challenge, skill development</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: Well designed and marked trails with associated facilities such as equipment hire/repair, safe parking, nearby access to accommodation, food and beverage facilities.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: MEDIUM-HIGH - Experienced seeking opportunity for skill development and socialisation</p> <p>VISITOR NUMBERS: HIGH-MEDIUM</p>
 <p>ADVENTURE</p>	<p>GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Dedicated trail walkers, riders or paddlers who will seek out challenging trails or unique experiences. Time spent on trails is often overnight and multi-day.</p> <p>VISITOR TYPE: Experienced and willing to travel for iconic experience.</p> <p>EXPECTED ACTIVITY OPTIONS & FACILITIES: More remote experiences with limited facilities.</p> <p>SKILL REQUIRED: HIGH - Very experienced seeking high-level challenge and adventure</p> <p>Visitor Numbers: LOW</p>

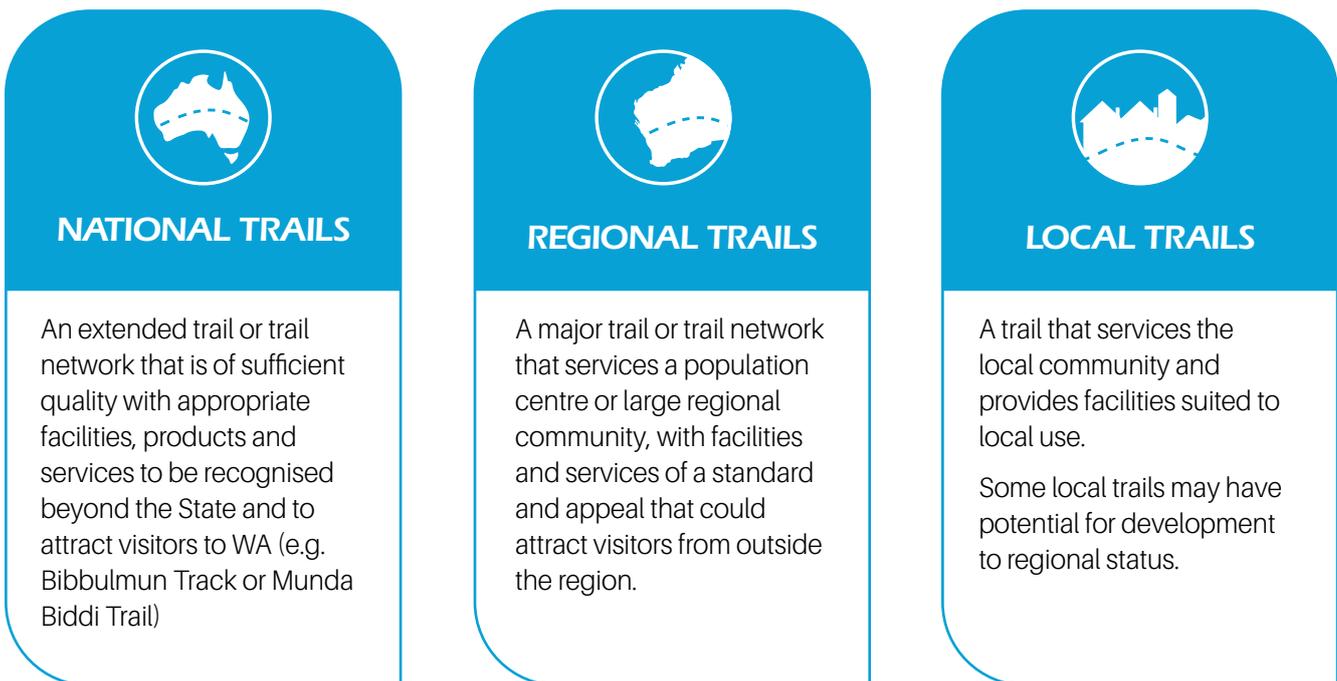
⁸20 Adventure Travel Trends to Watch in 2018 (p.26): <https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/2018-trends-report-continued-growth-innovative-marketing-technology>

2

DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE

Regional master planning typically identifies the significance of different destinations, defined by desired recreation and tourism outcomes and the opportunity for different scales of infrastructure and other associated development in a particular location. Destination significance is categorised as being nationally, regionally or locally significant, and relates to the willingness of visitors to travel from other parts of the country, from within the region, or from within local areas to use trails (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Trail hierarchies



The RTMP focuses on nationally and regionally significant trails that have the potential to attract intrastate, interstate and international visitors to our region. These trails will be complemented by an array of locally significant trail-based experiences and services across the region that will encourage visitors to remain in the region for longer. The activity plans for trails development (see Section 4) identify the destination significance of each location where high quality, sustainable and accessible trails could be developed, including locations capable of hosting state, national and international events.

3

DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY

Destination opportunity refers to a location's relative importance and uniqueness, as well as potential land availability, landform character and topography, accessibility, and trail diversity. Trail projects that highlight a region's distinctive biodiversity, heritage, culture and landscape score higher on this measure. Locations that are serviced by major transport routes, with a good mix of tourism products and services, including accommodation, attractions, and activities, and are supported by marketing and promotion activities, have greater opportunity than those where the existing tourism market is small or under-developed. Opportunity also takes into consideration the amount of land available, existing tenure arrangements, and the geo-physical advantages of different locations (i.e. the most suitable soil types for trail construction).



4 DESTINATION DELIVERABILITY

Deliverability refers to the timeframe within which proposed trail projects can be achieved. The deliverability was determined through assessing established demand, existing trail and infrastructure supply, landholder and stakeholder objectives, planning constraints and sensitivities, and existing land use. Projects with high deliverability can potentially be achieved within a short timeframe, whereas those that face a range of constraints or challenges, have long-term deliverability.

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A multi-criteria assessment (MCA) tool that uses the criteria outlined above was developed to assess trail opportunities across the Great Southern. The MCA was applied to all trail ideas collected through the community consultation process. The current status of each trail activity type is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Activity type, market potential, destination significance, opportunity and deliverability

ACTIVITY TYPE	MARKET POTENTIAL	CURRENT DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE	POTENTIAL DESTINATION SIGNIFICANCE	DESTINATION OPPORTUNITY	DESTINATION DELIVERABILITY
 Bushwalking	High	National	National	Excellent	Short
 Trail Running	Medium	Regional	National	Good	Short
 Mountain biking	High	Local	Regional	Good	Med-long
 Cycle touring	Medium	Local	Regional	Excellent	Med-long
 Paddling	Medium	Local	Regional	Good	Short
 Snorkelling	Medium	Local	Local	Average	Short
 Adventure trail bike touring	High	None	Regional	Good	Med
 Trail bike riding	Low	Local	Local	Average	Long
 Equestrian	Low	Local	Local	Average	Long

The RTMP recommends trail development projects that address the following activity types: hiking, mountain biking, cycle touring, paddling and snorkelling. Trail proposals for each activity are outlined in Section 4.

This prioritisation process suggested that there is limited opportunity to develop regionally significant equestrian trails and trail bike trails in the Great Southern at this time. The feasibility of future development for these activities should continue to be investigated. A rationale for this recommendation is contained in Section 4.

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 4 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

This section outlines key recommendations to develop a range of locally and regionally significant trail experiences suited to a diversity of trail users, types and experiences, and includes future planning for relevant trail towns, trail networks and visitor services across the Great Southern. In line with the objectives of the RTMP, **trail plans have been developed for hiking, mountain biking and cycle touring, and paddling.** These plans include discussion of existing supply and suitability for different market segments; market demand; development opportunities and constraints; and deliverability of the proposed projects.

Each activity area includes at least one regional priority trail or trail network.

Trail development proposals are grouped into three categories:

- Create new trail experiences
- Develop trail linkages
- Enhance existing trails

Following the rationale and using the assessment criteria outlined in previous sections, priority locations and projects were identified across the Great Southern region. Fourteen regional priority trails are proposed (see Figure 3). They are listed according to the anticipated timeframe for construction and are sorted by activity type (hiking, cycling, and paddling). They are not ranked by order of priority.

Figure 3: Proposed Regional Priority Trails

! PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAILS

TIMEFRAME	PROPOSED PRIORITY TRAIL OR TRAIL NETWORK	TRAIL TYPE
 SHORT 1-2 Years	Tower Hill MTB Trails Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Bald Head Walk Trail Albany Heritage Park Mounts Trail Corridor Link	
 MEDIUM 3-5 Years	Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Hiking Trail Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Hiking Trail Albany Heritage Park Stage 2 Poikeclerup MTB Trails Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Porongurup MTB Trails Munda Bididi Trail Realignments	
 LONG 6-10 Years	Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Grain Train Rail Trails Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	

The majority of the proposed regional priority trails are new trails or trail networks (see Map 1). Developing these priority trails is integral to achieving the region's vision of becoming a world-class trails destination. They provide a diverse range of iconic trail experiences for hiking, cycling and paddling. Progressively implementing these projects over the next decade will ensure that the Great Southern achieves its potential as a nationally recognised trail destination.

Other trail proposals included in this plan - including trail linkages and trail enhancements - are important but are of lower priority. They provide 'value-added' trail experiences for residents and visitors and should be incorporated into local trail plans and implemented when funding is available.

The timeframe for the delivery of the proposed trails is based on a combination of factors, including land manager and broad community support, the need to secure funding for construction, the need to undertake detailed environmental and heritage assessments as well as additional community consultation, and the need for complex land tenure negotiations with land owners and managers.

The deliverability timelines relate to when it could be expected all trail site assessment, planning and design would be complete, and a trail project would be 'shovel-ready' for construction as per Stage 7 of the Trail Development Process (refer to Figure 1):

 Short (S) = 1-2 years
(construction commences 2020-2021)

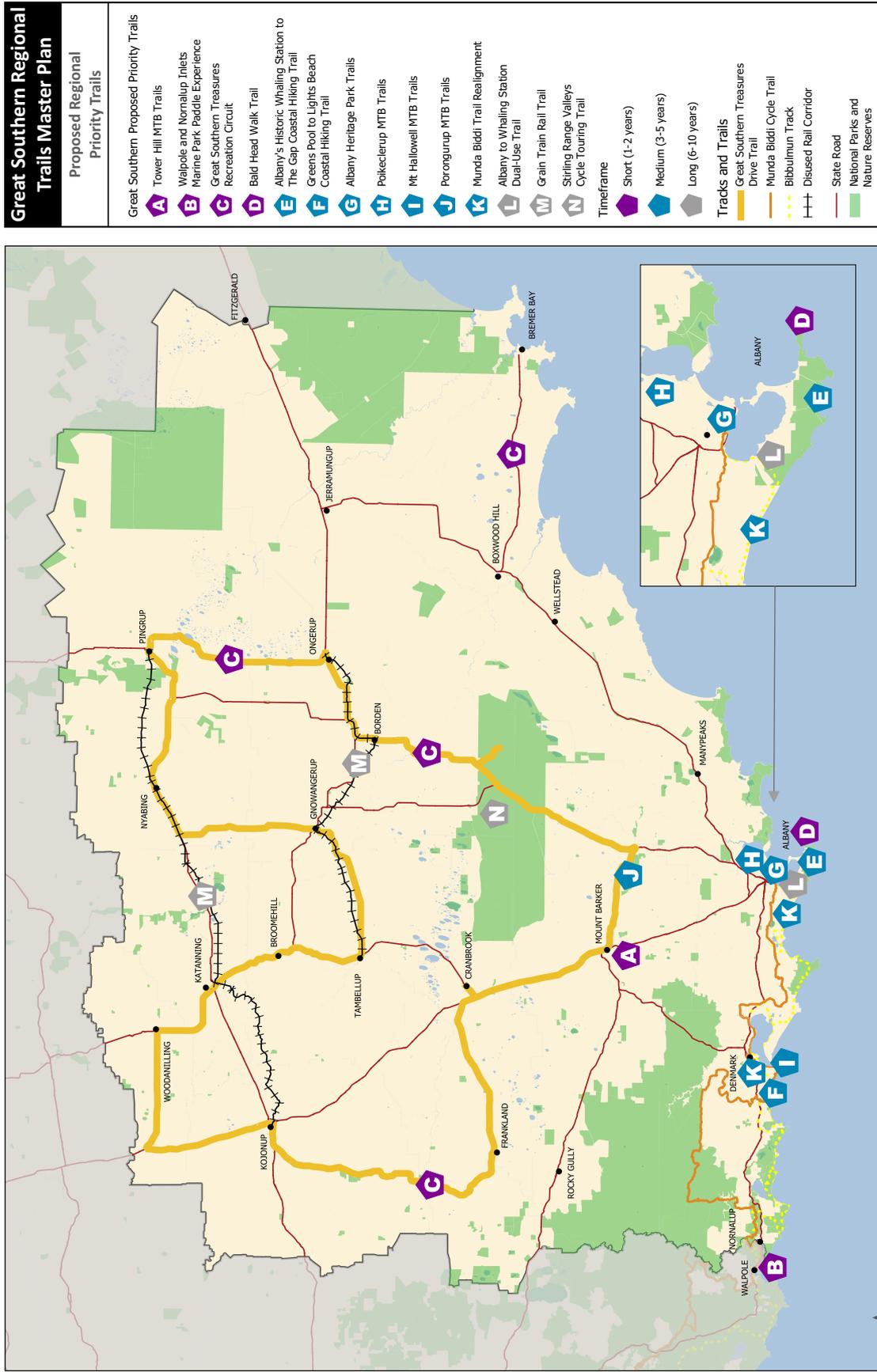
 Medium (M) = 3-5 years
(construction commences 2022-2025)

 Long (L) = 6-10 years
(construction commences 2026-2029)



Photo credit: David Bomba

Map 1: Proposed regional priority trails.



Map production 24/03/2020
GS SCORE
 Map design and data
 G.S. CENTRE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION EXCELLENCE

HIKING TRAILS

The Great Southern region has limited existing recognition as a hiking trail destination, but it is known for some of the best day walks in the State including Bluff Knoll in Stirling Range National Park, Bald Head in Torndirrup National Park and the Castle Rock/Granite Skywalk in Porongurup National Park. Adventure trail users rate the Walpole to Albany sections of the Bibbulmun Track and the Ridge Walk in the Stirling Range as some of the best hiking in the State. These trails are complemented by many locally significant walking trails. A full trails inventory is not included here for brevity, but a summary is contained in the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan Background Report 2019.⁵

The Great Southern region has the opportunity to become Western Australia's premier hiking destination, offering an array of walking and trail running experiences in diverse landscapes.

Short half day walks are the most popular length of hiking trail, particularly within the leisure market, however longer day and multiday walks provide options for trail users to extend their visit or tailor their experience according to their own preferences. New and emerging trail activities, particularly trail running and trail running events, provide opportunities to expand the existing hiking market. Trail runners use established hiking trails, with mountain biking trails often being used for organised events.

Table 6 outlines the current state of the regional hiking offering and the proposed strategy to enhance existing trail experiences.

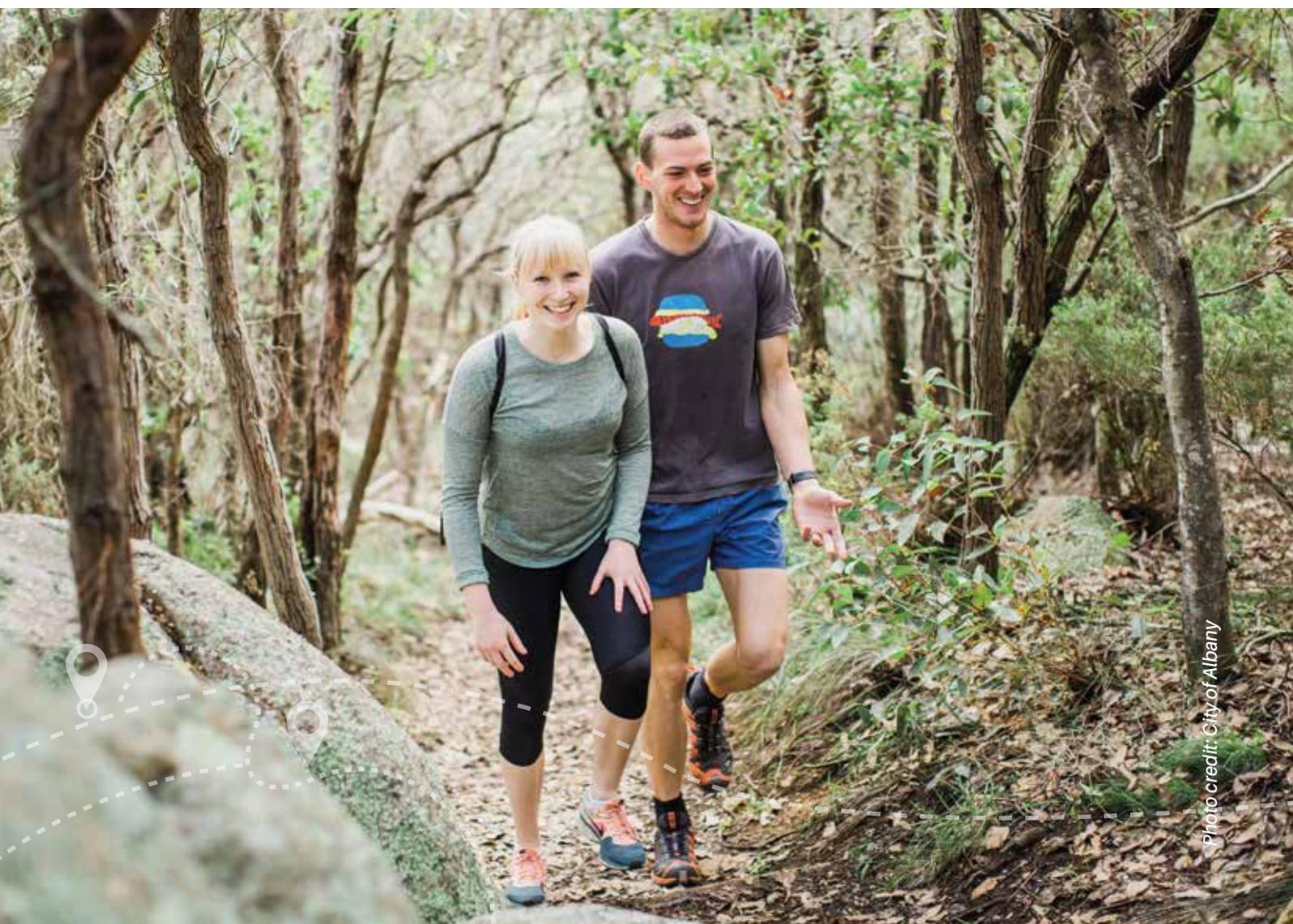


Table 6: Current status of hiking trails and proposed strategies to address gaps

FOCUS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STRATEGY
Trail significance	The Bibbulmun Track is a nationally significant trail. There are 15 regionally significant hiking trails spread across the Great Southern.	Market and promote the region's existing trail network.
Destination significance	Albany and Denmark have sufficient supply of quality trails and supporting facilities to become trail towns. Porongurup and the Stirling Range have sufficient supply of quality hiking trails and supporting facilities to become trail centres.	Work with local governments, land managers and businesses to achieve trail town/trail centre status.
Facilities	Albany and Denmark are established tourism destinations with a diverse offering of attractions and experiences. Porongurup/Mount Barker has a small tourism offering.	Build tourism capacity within the Shires of Plantagenet, Gnowangerup and Cranbrook.
Market	Bushwalking is undertaken by over half of international visitors and approximately 1 in every 5 intrastate and interstate visitors to the Great Southern region.	Integrate hiking and trail running experiences into destination marketing campaigns.
Participation	While the adventure market is well catered for, there are fewer trails suited to the leisure and active markets.	New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of the leisure and active markets.
Uniqueness of experience	Hiking trails showcase the region's unique geology and biodiversity, including a good spread of trails in coastal, forest and mountain landscapes. However, there are few opportunities for leisure hikers to experience coastal or mountain environments.	New trail development for the leisure market in coastal and mountain areas.
Trail type	There are few looped hiking trails, or short (half-day) trails. There is no medium length, or multi-day trail experience with high-end lodge accommodation.	Create loops of different lengths. Re-brand and package sections of the Bibbulmun Track to make it more marketable as a 3-5 day experience.
Quality	Trail quality varies, with some significant erosion and maintenance issues on iconic trails.	Prioritise maintenance and improvements to iconic trails.
Location	With the exception of the Stirling Range National Park, all trail networks are within 20km of a city or town centre.	Improve signage and maps to encourage regional dispersal. Seal the access road to Point Ann to improve accessibility of the iconic multi-day Mamang Trail.
Useability	Signage, maps, trail information and trail interpretation are generally poor to average.	Develop a regional trail signage and wayfinding strategy, and interpretation strategy. Prioritise improvements to trailhead facilities, including the Bibbulmun Track southern terminus.

PROPOSED HIKING TRAILS

As there are already many established, well-recognised hiking trails in the Great Southern, **this plan focuses on enhancement of hiking trail experiences, rather than the creation of many new trails** (see Table 6). Concepts from existing plans and strategies such as the Albany Trails Hub Strategy, and the Kinjarling Trail Stories and Strategic Plan should be considered where possible. The region has the opportunity to become Western Australia’s premier hiking destination, offering an array of walking and trail running experiences in diverse landscapes. This vision can be achieved in the medium-term by:

- Better promoting the region’s current hiking offering;
- Improving existing trails; and
- Filling key gaps in the supply of hiking trails suited to the leisure and active markets.

The projects outlined in Table 7 include opportunities to create new trail experiences, develop trail linkages, and enhance existing trails. See Map 2 for trail locations.

KEY

LEAD ORGANISATION		
DBCA – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions		
ALB – City of Albany	GNOW – Shire of Gnowangerup	KOJ – Shire of Kojonup
BT – Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	JERR – Shire of Jerramungup	PLAN – Shire of Plantagenet
CRAN – Shire of Cranbrook	KATT – Shire of Katanning	WOOD – Shire of Woodanilling
DEN – Shire of Denmark	KENT – Shire of Kent	

TIMEFRAME		
 Short (1-2 years)	 Medium (3-5 years)	 Long (6-10 years)

SIGNIFICANCE		
 Local	 Regional	 National

MARKET SEGMENT		
 Leisure	 Active	 Adventure



Table 7: Proposed hiking trails

 Priority Regional Trails		PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail William Bay National Park	DBCA				<p>Creation of new trail within William Bay National Park that would link Greens Pool with Madfish Bay, Waterfall Beach and Lights Beach. Construction of this new trail would create the opportunity for a trail loop (with potential overnight at Tower Hill Hut) using the Bibbulmun Track from Lights Beach via Lake Williams and Tower Hill. Approx. 6km Grade 2-3.</p>
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to The Gap Coastal Trail Torndirrup National Park	DBCA				<p>Creation of new trail within Torndirrup National Park, following the coastline from The Gap lighthouse, to the Blowholes, to Jimmy Newells Harbour, Torndirrup Beach, Stony Hill to the Bald Head trail head and the Albany's Historic Whaling Station. This trail alignment could allow for a series of short loops at each attraction site, a return loop inland to the Whaling Station, and a dual-use trail link to Frenchman's Bay Road. Approx. 10km Grade 3-4.</p>
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail Stirling Range National Park	DBCA				<p>Creation of a new trail loop that showcases the Stirling Range peaks and mountain vistas from the valley floor. Approx 3km Grade 2.</p>
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES					
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Denmark	DEN				<p>The Wilderness Ocean Walk (WOW) Trail is a dual-use trail connecting the Denmark Windfarm to Lights Beach. It is used as part of the Munda Biddi Trail. Walkers and cyclists use a gravel service road to access the WOW Trail from the Ocean Beach end. Trailhead signage and a purpose built dual-use trail would improve the overall experience for all trail users. Construction of this link would enable a new hiking trail loop using the existing dual-use path from Ocean Beach to the Bibbulmun Track/ Sheila Hill Trail over Mt Hallowell and back to Lights Beach (start of the WOW Trail). [This trail is also referenced in the Cycling Plan]</p>
Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite to Nullaki Peninsula) Denmark	DBCA DEN				<p>The Bibbulmun Track is cut off between Denmark and the Nullaki Peninsula, requiring walkers to use vehicle transport (approximately 40 minutes) to the trail head. As a nationally significant trail, consideration should be given to finding a suitable trail alignment to link the two sites.</p>
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
 Albany Heritage Park - Mounts Granite Trail Albany	ALB				<p>An extension of the popular Granite Trail this new trail will accommodate hikers only, taking them from the CBD to Padre White Lookout, to Mt Adelaide and down to Middleton Beach. The corridor and trail alignment for the Link was identified in both the Albany Trails Hub Strategy and the Albany Heritage Park Trails Concept Plan. 5km Grade 3.</p>
 Albany Heritage Park - Stage 2 Albany	ALB				<p>The City of Albany Trail Hub Strategy identifies trail improvements, including upgrades to trail surface, rectifying erosion issues, and improved signage and trail heads, for hiking and dual-use trails within the Albany Heritage Park precinct.</p>

Table 7: Proposed hiking trails cont.

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS CONT.				
 Bald Head Walk Torndirrup National Park	DBCA			
The Bald Head Walk is regarded as one of the best hikes in the South West. The trail climbs and descends along the narrow ridge line of the Flinders Peninsula, a granite formation that juts out from the landscape into the vastness of the Southern Ocean. The trail is currently in poor condition in some sections.				
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk Torndirrup National Park	DBCA			
Upgrade of the Isthmus Hill lookout will provide a short walk option which takes in some of the spectacular views of the Bald Head Walk.				
Mt Hallowell Lookout Denmark	DEN			
This trail follows a stretch of the Bibbulmun Track and takes hikers via Monkey Rock to the summit of Mt Hallowell. Need to upgrade trail head information and improve signage to the lookout at the top of Mt Hallowell.				
STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK TRAILS	DBCA			
Mt Hassell, Mt Magog, Talyuberlup Peak, Mt Toolbrunup, Mt Trio Assess maintenance requirements and opportunities to enhance existing trails				
PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK TRAIL NETWORK	DBCA			
Bolganup Trail, Castle Rock Loop, Devil's Slide, Nancy's Peak Assess maintenance requirements and opportunities to enhance existing trails				





Photo credit: Travis Deane

MOUNTAIN BIKING AND CYCLE TOURING TRAILS

The Great Southern region has limited existing recognition as a cycling destination. The following proposed projects have the potential to attract intra-state and interstate visitors and cater to the needs of residents seeking a diverse range of cycling experiences. The plan focuses on three types of cycling trails:

- **Mountain bike trails** – single track (i.e. dedicated) trails for Downhill (DH) and/or Cross-country (XC) styles of mountain bike riding (see Appendix 1 for a description of MTB trail types).
- **Dual-use trails** – shared use trails for exercise and leisure by walkers and cyclists.
- **Off road cycle touring trails** – long distance trails that incorporate overnight camping or accommodation with a focus on connecting riders with existing towns or points of interest.

The diversity of the experiences and landscapes described in this plan will create a compelling destination to visit. Realising the potential of the proposed priority projects will see the benefits of trails grow for both visitors and locals.

The plan recommends:

- Creating accessible cycling experiences for all markets from leisure to adventure (see Table 8)
- Establishing Albany, Denmark and Mount Barker as accredited trail towns
- Creating areas for cycle skills development, such as the Pump Track in the Albany Youth Precinct. Pump tracks and skills development trails play an important in developing rider skill and should also be considered in other local government areas, with Denmark and Mount Barker priority locations.

To achieve outcomes that benefit the whole community, cycling trail development will require **extensive planning, community engagement and support**. The proposed trails and trail networks outlined in this plan will require detailed site assessments and concept planning before they can progress. This includes ongoing stakeholder engagement across the community.



Table 8: Current status of cycling trails and proposed strategies to address gaps

FOCUS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STRATEGY
Trail significance	The Munda Biddi Trail is a nationally significant trail.	Improve and maintain the Munda Biddi Trail to attract interstate and international visitors.
Destination significance	There is a small supply of locally significant dual-use cycling trails. There is approximately 1km of sanctioned MBT trail, and four locally significant dual-use cycle trails.	Increase the trail supply to achieve regional status as a mountain biking and cycling destination.
Facilities	Albany and Denmark are established tourism destinations with a diverse offering of attractions and experiences. Porongurup/Mount Barker has a small tourism offering.	Build capacity and capability amongst existing businesses to take advantage of trail-based tourism opportunities.
Market	Cycling is undertaken by approximately 1 in 6 international visitors, and 1 in every 10-day trippers	Promote opportunities for cycling in destination marketing campaigns.
Participation	There are few trails suited to MBT users across the leisure, active and adventure markets.	New trail development priorities should focus on the needs of all MTB trail user groups and accommodate riders of various abilities.
Uniqueness of experience	The Munda Biddi Trail and two rail trails showcase coastal and forest landscapes. However, there are few opportunities to experience different types of cycling in elevated environments.	New trail development should prioritise elevated landscapes and other landscapes which are unique to the Great Southern. Detailed consultation with the Aboriginal community is required..
Trail type	There are few looped cycling trails, or short (half-day) trails. Apart from one short trail in Albany, there are no purpose-built trails for mountain biking	Create MTB trails of various lengths and grades. Develop a short touring route (2-3 days).
Quality	Trail quality varies, with sections of the Munda Biddi Trail on existing road systems.	Prioritise re-alignments for iconic trails.
Location	All dual-use trails are within 20km of a city or town centre.	Improve signage and maps to encourage use of trails across the region.
Useability	Signage, maps, trail information and trail interpretation are generally poor to average.	Develop a regional trail signage and wayfinding strategy, and interpretation strategy. Prioritise improvements to trailhead facilities.



PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS

Recreational participation in mountain biking is rapidly increasing in Western Australia. In the Great Southern, demand for purpose-built MTB trails is high and there is an urgent need to address the gap in trail supply (see RTMP Background Report; Albany Trail Hub Strategy). Meeting this demand will achieve significant health, wellbeing and liveability benefits for the region's residents, and will help to address the environmental impact of unsanctioned trail construction. Proposed trails will be designed in a manner which protects important biodiversity and cultural heritage values.

Given the strong interest in mountain biking globally, creating purpose-built high quality single track MTB trails in the Great Southern will also value-add to the region's existing trail tourism offering. The region offers the variety of landscapes and experiences required to attract interstate visitors, and the opportunities are of comparable scale to other successful MTB destinations. However, due to a range of accessibility, environmental, cultural and social constraints, the opportunity for large scale development is limited. There is excellent potential for a diverse range of locally or regionally significant trail experiences which together will create a compelling mountain bike region and will provide for the community and drive intrastate visitation.

This plan therefore recommends that five MTB trail networks, which on their own are either locally or regionally significant, be developed and promoted to residents and visitors as a 'whole-of region' MTB offering. Successful mountain biking destinations offer experiences with diversity, uniqueness, quality, accessibility and community. For this reason, trail development should focus on creating remarkable and accessible visitor experiences, diverse trail styles, quality infrastructure and connections across a number of regionally significant locations. The five proposed sites will offer different riding experiences, landscapes, and points of difference.

Albany Heritage Park Trail Network – This vital trail network will connect the Albany CBD with Middleton Beach via beginner and intermediate high-quality trails. The locally significant trail network will engage visitors with scenic riding including coastal views and provide the community with an excellent recreation resource. The trails will focus on descending cross-country trails, with a combination of flow and technical elements, with all descents serviced by an independent climb.

Case study

A whole-of-region approach to MTB destination development has been successfully implemented in Scotland with the world renowned '7 Stanes' which links seven unique MTB locations under the one marketing banner. Each location offers a different experience, length of trail and grade. The distances between each site vary from 30-150km and is not a barrier for users. The 7 Stanes (or stones) are represented by a unique stone sculpture that reflects the culture and heritage of each specific site and provides a common theme connecting the sites together.

Mt Hallowell Descending Trail Network – Located close to Denmark town site and in an existing high visitation area, the network will cater for all users from beginner to advanced through a small, locally significant trail network of descending cross-country trails providing a range of flow and technical trails in a forest setting. The core conservation zone at Mt Hallowell will be excluded from trail proposals.

Porongurup Adventure Trail – The iconic views across the region from the Potato Patch provide the perfect landscape for an immersive and contemplative trail experience unlike anything else in WA. While there is potential to develop a regionally significant trail centre, environmental, social and heritage constraints dictate that a smaller, local-scale adventure trail on an already disturbed landscape would be more appropriate.

Poikeclerup Gravity Park – Poikeclerup (off Nanarup Road), presents an ideal opportunity to create a local community-focused gravity park within an already impacted landscape. There is potential to develop a range of gravity focused downhill and freeride trails with constructed features to service the existing community demand.

Tower Hill Community Trail Networks – An opportunity for a locally significant descending focused trail network for the local community, which will also drive visitation to the area. The proximity of the trail network to Mount Barker town site combined with views across to the Porongurups will provide excellent trail opportunities.

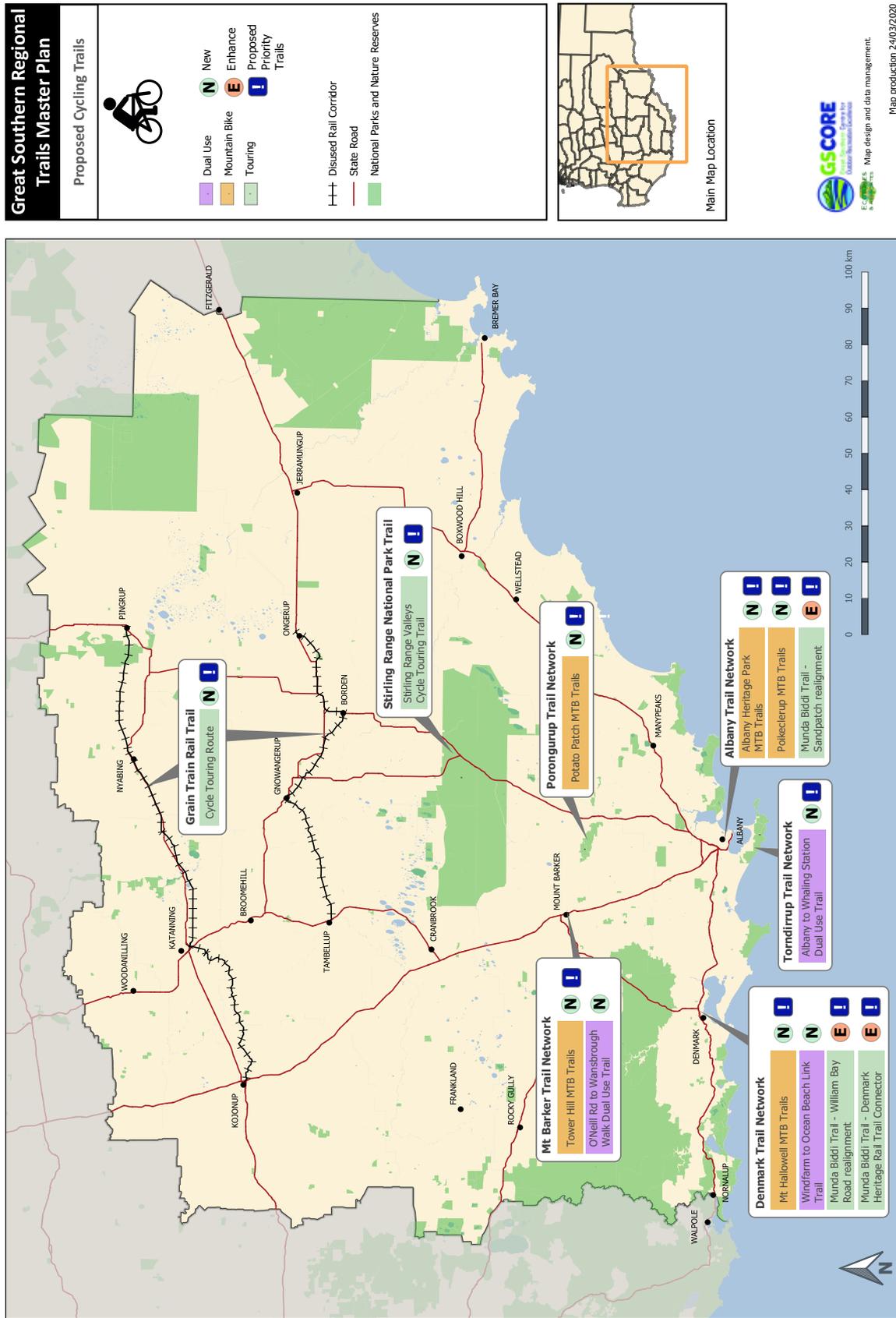
It is important to stress, that the proposed trail networks outlined above and described in further detail in Table 9 will all require extensive site assessment to determine the length and location of potential trail corridors. Development will need to be staged over time to ensure that extensive community consultation and robust planning occurs.



Table 9: Proposed Mountain Bike Trails

 Priority Regional Trails		PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
 Albany Heritage Park - Mounts Link Trail Albany	ALB				<p>A single use descending mountain bike trail from Padre White Lookout back to the CBD and descending from Padre White Lookout to Middleton Beach. The corridor and trail alignment for the Link was identified in both the Albany Trails Hub Strategy and the Albany Heritage Park Trails Concept Plan. 4.5km Green-Blue</p>
 Tower Hill MTB Trails Mount Barker	PLAN				<p>Small scale MTB network to service the local Mount Barker community and to provide additional experiences for visitors to the region, the network will also include a disability access walk trail at the top of Tower Hill. The network is ideally located close to the township and offers magnificent views, excellent terrain and sufficient elevation to make it a fun and challenging local trail network. Trails should be descending cross country focused with multiple descent opportunities across the site.</p>
 Porongurup MTB Trails Porongurup National Park	DBCA				<p>There is potential for MTB trails at the Potato Patch which is an elevated and modified landscape. Looped networks featuring cross country trails with a variety of classifications. Any trails within native vegetation would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.</p>
 Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Denmark	DEN				<p>MTB trail network to suit beginner to advanced riders with a focus on enthusiasts but including technical and descending focused trails. Trails would need to be developed to have minimal impact and appropriate trail development process followed in order to determine flora, fauna and heritage constraints and the most appropriate trail alignments.</p>
 Albany Heritage Park Stage 2 Albany	ALB				<p>A network of MTB trails on Mt Clarence, with Middleton Link enabling access to Middleton Beach from the Albany CBD. A concept plan for the precinct was developed in 2016 and detailed design has begun on sections of the network. This project is contained within the Albany Heritage Park Trails Network Concept Plan 2016.</p>
 Poikeclerup MTB Trails Nanarup	ALB				<p>Existing unsanctioned gravity trails within and adjacent to a former gravel pit site, steep good terrain towards the top and good views, rock features, bushland in the lower reaches. High potential to provide more gravity trails and a few XC trails. Potential for more advanced Black and Double Black trails to allow for rider progression recognising that the Albany Heritage Park is not suitable for that level of trail. No current infrastructure other than an informal carpark.</p>

Map 3: Proposed Cycling Trails by location and type





PROPOSED DUAL-USE TRAIL PROJECTS

Dual-use trails which combine walking and cycling in a safe manner, provide important leisure experiences for residents and visitors. They can also be important transport connectors between residential areas, commercial centres and visitor attractions. For this reason, they are an important element of the Western Australian government's Regional 2050 Cycling Strategy for the Great Southern. This strategy will guide the delivery of a safe, comfortable and integrated cycling network in the region and outlines how different towns can realise their cycling potential, leading to a healthier, happier and more engaged community. **This plan proposes an extension to the existing dual-use trail that links the Albany CBD to Little Grove, and a new dual-use trail connecting Mount Barker townsite to the Porongurup National Park** (see Table 10).

PROPOSED OFF ROAD CYCLE TOURING AND RAIL TRAILS

Off Road Cycle touring – also known as bike touring or bike-packing – is a form of riding that typically involves overnight stays at different locations or a long single-day bike ride. Cycle touring includes inn-to-inn riding where food and clothing is carried by a vehicle that meets the rider along the route; or a solo or group adventure where all clothing, equipment, food and tools are carried on the bicycle.

The Munda Biddi Trail is an example of a cycle touring route suited to the active and adventure markets. At 1000kms in length, it can be undertaken as a long-distance, remote camping experience; or in short day or overnight sections.

This plan identifies a unique cycle touring option through the valleys of the Stirling Range

The scenery, vistas and unique vegetation offer significant appeal to leisure riders seeking day or overnight experiences. It would be unique within WA and will attract the intrastate touring market with strong potential to attract interstate and international visitors.

Extensive site assessment will need to occur to identify a potential route. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the existing supply of accommodation and camping within and surrounding the National Park to develop overnight packaged holiday experiences.

Rail trails - many cycle touring routes utilise rail trails which closely follow a former railway line or run beside an active railway for most of its length. What sets rail trails apart from other trails is that they are gently graded, and interpretation can provide information about historical use. Rail trails are suitable for walking, and depending on the surface, can also be used by mountain bikes, hybrid bikes, strollers and wheel chairs, and even four wheel 'gophers'. Some trails allow use by horse riders.

In the Great Southern, sections of the former Albany to Nornalup railway line are managed as rail trails.

This plan recommends improvements to sections of these trails. Longer-term, consideration may be given to the development of the remaining sections of the original rail corridor, resulting in a rail trail of approximately 100km.

This plan identifies an important opportunity to develop two inactive east-west rail lines in the north of the region - Kojonup-Katanning-Pingrup, and Tambellup-Gnowangerup-Ongerup lines – as well as a potential trail along the active north-south line. These **"Grain Train Rail Trails"** would require support from all local governments in order to enter into negotiations with the current land owners (Public Transport Authority) and lessee (Arc Infrastructure).

Table 10: Proposed off cycle touring and dual-use trails

		PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
 Priority Regional Trails					
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
O'Neill Road to Wansbrough Walk Dual-use Trail Mount Barker		PLAN			
Multi-use trail linking Mount Barker with the Porongurup National Park. This trail would link proposed trails in the Shire of Plantagenet Local Trails Plan with walking and cycling opportunities on the south side of Porongurup National Park. 25km Grade 2					
 Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail Albany		ALB			
Creation of a new shared use trail to connect Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the the existing dual-use trail from Albany CBD to Little Grove. The Kinjarling Trail Stories and Strategic Plan should be revisited to incorporate key ideas. There is an opportunity to create a spur off this trail to The Gap recreation site, and potentially along Vancouver Peninsula, and to incorporate enhancements to the Frenchman Bay Heritage Trail. Approx. 17 km Grade 2.					
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park		DBCA			
Touring trail through the foothills of the range. This proposed trail would offer a good introductory trail for distance touring, while catering for enthusiasts who may undertake the trail in a single day. The trail would focus on landscape, rather than technical trail features. This product would capture a different market to those undertaking the Munda Biddi.					
 Grain Train Rail Trail Kojonup, Katanning, Nyabing, Pingrup, Tambellup, Gnowangerup, Ongerup		GSCORE			
Disused rail corridors in the hinterland provide an opportunity for dual-use recreation activities. The disused east-west rail corridors between Kojonup-Katanning-Pingrup (157km) and Tambellup-Gnowangerup-Ongerup (94km) can be developed to provide dual-use opportunities for walking and easy grade mountain biking. It is proposed that these trails could be developed as part of a new cycle touring trail and marketed as the "Grain Train Rail Trail".					
DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES					
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link Denmark		DEN			
Extend existing Denmark trail network beyond Ocean Beach to Denmark Wind Farm to create dual-use link to WOW Trail. This would create a day loop suitable for beginner and experienced riders using the Denmark Heritage Rail Trail, Munda Biddi Trail, WOW Trail and Ocean Beach dual-use trail. [This trail is also referenced in the Hiking Plan]					
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Southern Trailhead Terminus Albany		ALB			
Realign the current terminus for both trails to the Albany City Centre library and interpretive site.					
 Munda Biddi Trail - Sandpatch Albany		DBCA ALB			
Realign section of Munda Biddi Trail east of Elleker via Sandpatch to avoid Lower Denmark Rd, improve safety and enhance user experience.					
 Munda Biddi Trail - William Bay Road William Bay National Park		DBCA DEN			
Realign Munda Biddi Trail off William Bay Road to improve safety and enhance user experience.					
 Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail connector Denmark		DBCA DEN			
Realign section of Munda Biddi Trail and Denmark Heritage Trail at South Coast Hwy/McLeod Rd junction and reduce road crossing to one point only, to improve safety and enhance user experience.					





PADDLING TRAILS

A successful paddle trail destination provides a range of experiences that cater to different abilities, with trails of varying distance and degree of challenge. Paddlers seek out areas of exceptional natural beauty, where local flora, fauna, and geological features add to the interest. Some paddlers cherish a tranquil, nature-based experience in wilderness or remote locations; whereas other seek the challenge of white-water and rapids.

There are currently no formal paddling trails in the Great Southern region. However, many of the river systems – Denmark, Frankland, Kalgan and inlets, are currently used by paddlers (canoe, kayak and stand up paddle board). While there is no available market research on demand for paddle trails in the Great Southern region, anecdotal evidence of the number of vehicles transporting canoes and kayaks suggests paddling is a popular activity. Seasonal canoe hire businesses in Albany, Denmark, and Nornalup report existing demand for paddling experiences, with half-day experiences being most popular.



PROPOSED REGIONAL PADDLING TRAIL PROJECT

This plan proposes a network of paddling trails in the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park. This trail experience would provide a network of 55km of flat-water paddle trails which are mostly suitable for Grade 1 (easy) with conditions at certain times requiring a Grade 2 (moderate) experience level.

The scenic quality, biodiversity and heritage value of the area, and variety of trails would attract paddlers from within the region and further afield. The rivers and inlets provide a true nature-based experience, being a haven for water birds, other wildlife, and quiet observation.

Adequate planning and support facilities are central to the destination offering. Paddlers need easy access to launching points, parking, interpretive signage and information, and on-site infrastructure including picnic tables, seating, toilet facilities and water supply.

The Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience will be complemented by an array of locally significant paddle trails throughout the Great Southern, including riverine and estuary paddling trails and inland lake paddling experiences. These local experiences will provide a 'value-add' experience to all visitors to the region.

Table 11: Proposed paddling trails

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">  Priority Regional Trails </div>				
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">  Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience </div>				
<p>Advanced and enthusiastic paddlers have an opportunity to complete all of the paddle trails of the Marine Park, providing close to 55km different of Grade 1 and 2 experiences.</p>				
Walpole River	DBCA			
<p>This trail travels across the Walpole Inlet to the sheltered Walpole River, providing an easy paddle along the river. The river is fringed by coastal vegetation and low forest, in a peaceful setting. 5km return trail across the Walpole Inlet providing an easy Grade 1 paddle along Walpole River.</p>				
Deep River	DBCA		 	
<p>This trail travels across the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets to the sheltered Deep River. The trail offers a scenic paddle along the river, fringed by coastal vegetation in the lower reaches, changing to tall ancient karri forest. Terrestrial and aquatic wildlife encounters are possible. Grade 1 or 2, with a potential 21 km return. There are options for shorter trips along the way.</p>				
Nornalup to Walpole	DBCA			
<p>A scenic half to full day paddle from either Walpole or Nornalup, with dense vegetation, vistas, and the chance of wildlife encounters. This trail is Grade 1 and Grade 2 along the lower reaches of the Frankland and into the Nornalup inlet due to variable weather conditions of the inlet.</p>				
Rest Point to Circus Beach (+ hike)	DBCA			
<p>Travel across the Walpole and Nornalup inlets to the mouth of the Deep River, continue past Newdegate Island to Sealers Cove before disembarking for a hike across to historic Circus Beach. Trail involves an 11km return, Grade 2 paddle, and 2.6km return easy hike.</p>				

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES (CONT.)				

Nornalup Inlet circuit	DBCA			
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This trail circuits the Nornalup Inlet taking in scenic points and features of the landscape, passing Deep River, Sealers Cove, Newdegate Island, and traversing the river mouth. Grade 2, 15km loop trail.

Frankland River Overnight Paddle (+ camp) Walpole Wilderness	DBCA		 	
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Frankland River Day Paddle - Nornalup to Monastery Landing trail on the Frankland River.
The Frankland River, Nornalup to Monastery Landing trail has potential to provide a paddle through spectacular forest scenery and could offer an overnight bush camping experience. Alternatively, the trail allows for a nature based half or full day paddle. Grade 1, 10.4km return.

DEVELOP TRAIL LINKAGES				
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Monastery Landing to Bibbulmun Track Walpole Wilderness	DBCA			
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After paddling from Nornalup to Monastery Landing, trail users complete a short walk along the existing access road to join the Bibbulmun Track and hike in to the Frankland River hut. Total walking distance is less than 3km. Alternatively, a new low impact camp site could be developed close to the riverbank, without public road access to maximise the experience.

LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT 'VALUE-ADD' EXPERIENCES				
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Kalgan River Paddle Trail	ALB			
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This canoe trail along the lower Kalgan River takes advantage of a particularly scenic part of the river system between the southern entry/egress at Albany Rowing Club, and the northern entry/egress from the informal launch near Upper Kalgan Bridge. Identified as a priority in the Albany Trails Hub Strategy 2015-2025. 20km return Grade 1

Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit - paddle trails	GSCORE in partnership with LGAs			
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These trails give opportunities for easy grade paddles at several inland lakes. They provide a different context and environment to river and estuarine paddling. The lakes at Poorrarecup, Nunijup and Ewlyamartup offer regular paddling opportunities, while Lake Queerearrup is less reliable, being more ephemeral. (see Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit Plan).

Wilson Inlet Paddle Trail	DEN			
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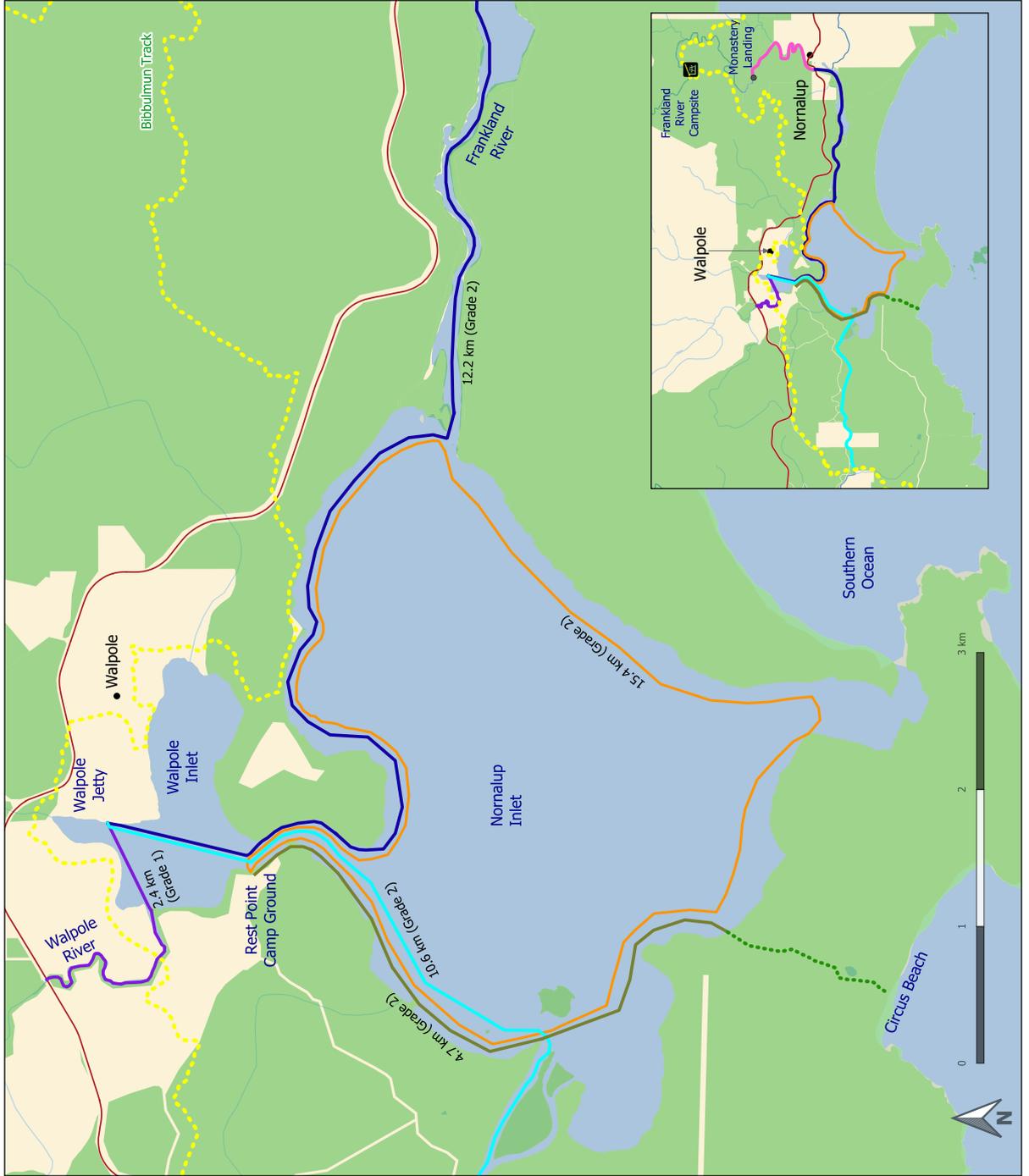
A challenging paddle depending on wind conditions, suitable for or Grade 2 and 3 with considerable experience. There are many routes which could be chosen, short return routes along the shoreline or longer routes around the inlet which require a full day's paddle. There are various access and launch points, but currently no recognised trail signage.

Bremer River Paddle Trail	JERR			
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This trail presents a unique paddling opportunity within the Fitzgerald River National Park, which is accessible from Bremer Bay. Existing facilities at Bennett St would make this a nature based 4km Grade 1 return paddle.



Map 4: Proposed paddling trail network in Walpole and Normalup Inlets Marine Park



Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan

Walpole and Normalup Inlets Marine Park - Proposed Paddling Trails

- Norralup to Walpole Jetty (12.2km, Grade 2)
- Walpole Jetty to Walpole River (2.4km, Grade 1)
- Walpole Jetty to Deep River (10.6km, Grade 2)
- Rest Point to Circus Beach (4.7km, Grade 2)
- Normalup Inlet Circuit (15.4km, Grade 2)
- Norralup to Monastery Landing (5.2km, Grade 1)

Existing Walk Trails

- - - Bibbulmun Track
- - - Circus Beach Walk Trail

- State Road
- National Parks and Nature Reserves

Main Map Location



Photo credit: Tourism WA

SNORKEL TRAILS

The Great Southern region is not recognised as a snorkel trail destination and there are no reliable estimates on snorkelling as a visitor recreational activity in the region. Even so, there are established trails at Whaling Cove in Albany and Little Harbour in Bremer Bay. Apart from these locations, the region has several sheltered bays, with easy access, shallow waters and good visibility that can provide enjoyable experiences for beginner to more advanced snorkelers. Development of new snorkelling experiences at Greens Pool in William Bay National Park will enhance visitation at this popular swimming and outdoor recreation site.

It is envisaged that all these trails will remain locally significant (see Table 12). However, improvements to the existing snorkelling trails, and the development of new snorkel trails in Greens Pool, will provide a value-add experience for visitors who are already in the region. The role of these local snorkel trails is thus to enhance the overall trail offering of the destination.

Table 12: Proposed snorkelling trail projects

	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES				
Greens Pool William Bay National Park	DBCA	L		
Greens Pool has the potential to develop into a significant snorkelling destination. The beach is sheltered by large natural granite boulders making it an ideal spot for snorkelling activities. Four snorkel trails, ranging from easy to advanced, with a total distance of 990 metres, are proposed within Greens Pool				
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS				
Whaling Cove Albany	City of Albany	L		
Whaling Cove is an existing 400 metre snorkelling trail located on a peninsula close to the Point Possession Heritage Trail. An underwater plinth has been constructed to inform snorkelers about the marine environment. Entry signage upgrade and maintenance to the underwater plinths required.				
Little Boat Harbour Bremer Bay	Shire of Jerramungup	L		
The 260 metre Little Boat Harbour snorkel trail is used as a local diving and snorkelling site. There is opportunity to enhance the overall snorkelling experience by improving existing parking and toilet facilities and availability of trail information (signage).				





THE GREAT SOUTHERN TREASURES RECREATION CIRCUIT

There are numerous examples within Australia and internationally where small regional and rural communities have benefited from economic development associated with trails. To be successful, however, trail destinations need to showcase distinctive natural or cultural landscapes and/or enable users to interact with local people and cultures.

An assessment of the Upper Great Southern region's potential for trail-based tourism determined that it lacks a single location for a regionally significant trail project. However, there is an opportunity to develop a network of locally significant trails which, when promoted collectively, have the potential to achieve regional significance. The aim is to **create a circuit of recreation 'nodes' with each node providing one or more trail experiences** (e.g. walking trail, cycle trail, paddle trail).

Combined with other tourism assets (e.g. accommodation, attractions, services), these recreation nodes will enhance the tourism offering of each town. The **Great Southern Treasures Drive Trail** provides the route (or circuit) connecting these nodes. The advantage of using the existing drive trail is that it already connects most towns and recreation sites in the region and has a brand and marketing presence.

The Drive Trail (*previously branded as "Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern"*) encompasses eight local government areas – Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling. The Drive Trail links each of the shires using a recommended route and a list of things to see and do. It has the status of a touring route rather than a thematic trail – there is no interpretation linking sites or locations or a thematic framework that encourages visitors to explore based on a topic or interest area.

The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit builds on this existing drive trail to provide new opportunities within the region (see Table 13). This can link to existing trails in the Shire of Jerramungup and new ideas such as the 'Horse Power Highway' in the Shire of Gnowangerup. The existing Drive Trail invites visitors to experience the cultural, heritage and biodiversity of the region. The proposed Recreation Circuit will add value to the existing drive trail by creating a series of 'outdoor recreation nodes' (see Map 4).

Creation of a new drive itinerary and integration of a network of walking, cycling, and paddling trails (or nodes) will provide residents and visitors with a diverse array of active leisure opportunities that showcase the region's unique inland landscapes, heritage and culture, and encourage participation in outdoor recreation. The trail focused on two key markets:

(i) Day trippers – the proposed trail will provide residents with enhanced active leisure experiences within a relatively short driving distance. Given the small resident population and ratepayer base of each rural community, it is not feasible to develop multiple trails for different activities in each location. By spreading these out within a 60km radius of each townsite, a diverse array of activities can be catered for, while at the same time, spreading the financial cost of construction and maintenance amongst neighbouring local government areas.

(ii) Over 55s Empty Nesters – intrastate and interstate retired or semi-retired, travellers. They spend a greater number of nights per annum driving and staying within rural areas as compared to other travellers. A significant proportion participate in active leisure pursuits such as walking, cycling and paddling. Providing these opportunities (along with low-cost camping and other amenities) will encourage longer stays. The goal is to get these visitors to increase their length of stay in the region and visit as many locations as possible.

The Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit is a descriptive title used for planning purposes only. A compelling trail name will need to be chosen that can be used in branding and marketing of the trail.

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
CREATE NEW TRAIL EXPERIENCES					
Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk Bremer Bay	H	Jerramungup	L		S
Extending the current path will showcase Bremer Bay, and provide opportunity for whale watching, access to John Cove and fishing spots, terminating at Rock Cairn, a great lookout with its own history.					
Pingrup Grain Silos walk Pingrup	H	Kent	L		S
Develop a short walk trail from the caravan park to the grain silos as part of the Silo (art) trail					
Tower Hill Mount Barker	H C	Plantagenet	L		S
Rising to 147 meters above sea level, Tower Hill has a stunning lookout with sweeping views. This location is ideally suited for recreation activities, including development of hiking, and mountain biking trails, less than 3km from town.					
Pink Lake Cranbrook	H	Cranbrook	L		M
This 'Pink Lake' is receiving high visitation from passers-by, but there is no designated viewing point or parking bay. A vehicle parking bay, interpretive signage, and or, walk trail should be investigated.					
Bremer River paddle Bremer Bay	P	Jerramungup	L		M
A paddle trail in the lower reaches of the Bremer River, travelling north from Bennett St jetty for approximately 4km return. A scenic paddle with the Fitzgerald River National Park on the western shoreline.					

KEY



Hiking



Cycling/Mountain biking



Paddling



Snorkelling



Leisure



Active



Adventure

Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit cont.

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Boot Rock Reserve Broomehill		Broomehill-Tambellup			
Signage and interpretation to rationalise existing use of bush tracks and trails. Potential to recognise three trails which can be dedicated to dual-use, hiking and cycling.					
Kojonup Heritage Walk Kojonup		Kojonup			
Visitors to the town can tour historically significant sites, such as the Kojonup Spring, Elverd Cottage, The Flora & Fauna Sanctuary or the Noongar Sharpening Rock. Signage upgrade is required.					
Mondurup Reserve Mount Barker		Plantagenet			
Signage and interpretation infrastructure is required at this site to rationalise the various informal and formal walk tracks through this important flora reserve.					
Tambellup Heritage Trail Tambellup		Broomehill-Tambellup			
Three short walking loops require improved signage and trail infrastructure.					
Sukey Hill lookout Cranbrook	 Viewpoint	Cranbrook			
Short walk including a new lookout with sweeping views and potential link to Motocross circuit.					
Frankland River Wildflower walk Frankland		Cranbrook			
Local flora walk trail 0.4km. Improve walk trails and signage.					
Salt River Rd Wildflower walk Cranbrook		Cranbrook			
Flora reserve, 1.8km circuit walk, picnic area. Improve trails and signage.					
Lake Poorrarecup Cranbrook	 	Cranbrook			
Lake Poorrarecup is the largest lake in the Shire of Cranbrook and is popular for swimming and skiing during the summer months. Changerooms, toilets, and camping are on site. A Grade 1 paddle trail would add to the visitor experience.					
Lake Nunijup Cranbrook	 	Cranbrook			
Lake Nunijup is used for walking, swimming and has BBQ facilities. A short paddle trail could be developed around the edge of the Lake.					
Gnowangerup Heritage Walk Gnowangerup		Gnowangerup			
A 2km walk trail which explores highlights of Gnowangerup's history through its heritage buildings. There are five interpretive signs, and further development could expand the Aboriginal story of the area.					



Table 13: Proposed trails included in the Great Southern Treasure Recreation Circuit cont.

	TRAIL TYPE	PROJECT LEAD	SIGNIFICANCE	MARKET SEGMENT	TIME FRAME
ENHANCE EXISTING TRAILS					
Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre Ongerup	H	Gnowangerup	L		
Existing walk trail requires maintenance and improved signage, could link with a walk to Ongerup townsite.					
Native Snail Trail Bremer Bay	H C	Jerramungup	L		
Dual-use 3.4km linear trail linking Bremer Bay townsite with Bremer Beaches Caravan Park, via native bushland and interpretive stations. Additional trailhead required.					
Town Heritage Walk Jerramungup	H	Jerramungup	L		
1km walk trail, extend and make suitable for all users, families and elderly.					
Lake Ewlyamartup Katanning	H P	Katanning	L		
100 ha recreation site popular with water skiers, paddlers, swimmers, and has 95 species of birds. A designated paddling trail with interpretation is recommended.					
Police Pools / Twonkwillingup Katanning	H	Katanning	L		
Reserve used for informal recreation, walking and swimming, Aboriginal heritage values. Upgrade existing loop trail.					
Town Walk Trails Katanning	H	Katanning	L		
3 short town walks, local history. Improve trails and signage.					
Farrar Reserve Kojonup	H C	Kojonup	L		
Farrar Nature Reserve supports a variation of flora and fauna due to the diversity of soils and profile. The Old Railway Dam is home to numerous water birds, frogs and the long-necked tortoise. Designated walk tracks and a cycle way would add to the visitor experience.					
Myrtle Benn Reserve Kojonup	H C	Kojonup	L		
1.5 km walk trails, flora reserve close to town. Improve trails and signage.					
Kendenup Nature Trail Kendenup	H	Plantagenet	L		
A short local trail in and around the Kendenup townsite, which can be developed to include local heritage and nature. Requires signage.					
Lake Queerearrup Woodanilling	H P	Woodanilling	L		
This large lake is used for recreational and leisure activities including water skiing, swimming and picnicking. The lake has a surface area of approximately 430 ha and often has a pink tinge. The lake could develop an interpretive paddling trail, understanding the seasonal nature of the lake.					
Woodanilling Heritage walk Woodanilling	H	Woodanilling	L		
There is an opportunity to extend the 970m Heritage Walk to include further interpretive points of interest, and to link with the Prime Minister's Walk.					

Map 5: Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit

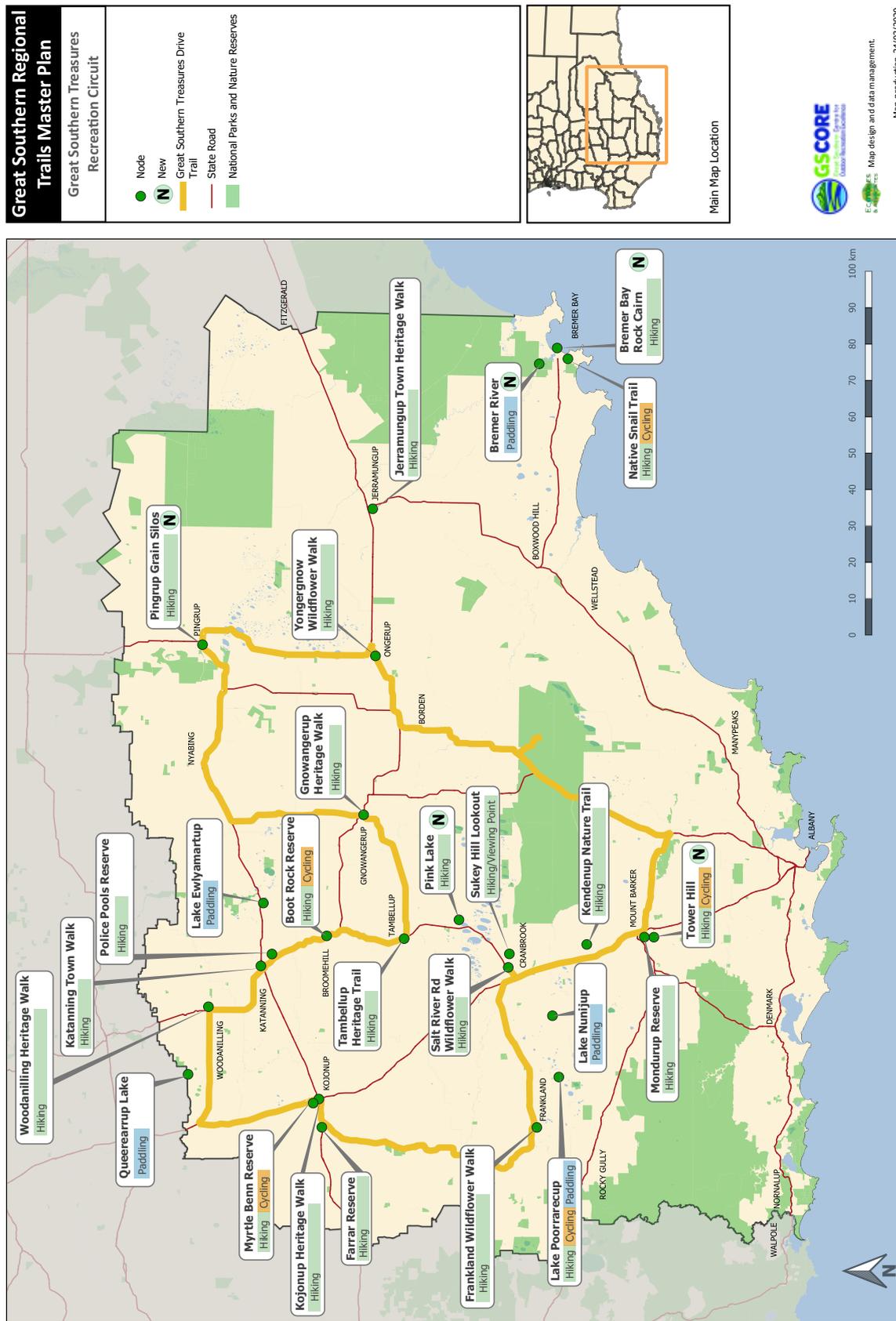






Photo credit: Lex Porebski

TRAIL BIKE TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Except for motocross facilities, there are no designated areas specifically for trail bike riders in the Great Southern. An examination of opportunities for trail bike riding has identified three potential target markets and associated trail experiences (see Table 14).

The Great Southern region has the route inventory, quality and diversity of landscapes and experiences with aligned services to provide nationally and regionally significant adventure bike routes. This rider group is deemed to be most attractive by local government and land managers with immediate economic benefits evident, minor investment required, no legal impacts, few constraints and the least user group and community conflicts. Mapped and marketed **Great Southern Adventure Bike Experiences** would provide a significant point of difference for the region.

Development of legal, off-road trail bike trails may prove difficult to achieve as the region lacks enough trail to meet demand. Land managers are currently reluctant to open additional trail supply. An extensive planning exercise to identify appropriate sites would be required before the region could be marketed as a trail bike destination. The best initial opportunity for development of trail bike trails would be to extend the Adventure Bike map and routes, through identification of trail loops and segments that can be added to the overall network for use by licensed riders on road-registered vehicles.

Table 14: Trail bike trail feasibility

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FEASIBILITY
Adventure Bike Routes	Full or multi-day rides (250-300km per day); combination of sealed and unsealed roads; with strong focus on experience (accommodation, meals, fuel stops, attractions)	There is strong opportunity to focus on route mapping and ride experience, and then market routes and itineraries in a similar way to drive trails. Achievable in the short term.
Trail Riding	Would require development and/or identification of 80-150km of off-road trails or tracks, with technical challenge being important	Currently there is lack of sufficient inventory of legal trail networks to meet the needs of off-road trail bike riders. Future development will require substantial long-term planning
Families and Juniors	Fit for purpose locations to suit family groups and juniors would need to provide a safe environment with trails and facilities that cater to different abilities and ages	There is potential to work with LGAs to identify suitable locations (public or private land) for future development, and provide advice and information



Photo credit: Tourism WA





REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILS FEASIBILITY STUDY

Currently there are few equestrian opportunities formally provided in the Great Southern Region apart from the Stidwell Bridle Trail complex (33km network) near Albany and sections of rail trail on the original Elleker to Nornalup rail line. The Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail is a multiple use trail used by horse riders. Formal beach access is provided at Peaceful Bay, Boat Harbour, Parry Beach and a part of Middleton Beach.

There is strong demand for local bridle trails and these should be formalised and improved with land manager support. Within the City of Albany the Sandpatch and Stidwell bridle trails are well used by riders and require improved signage and designation as single use.

Ongoing discussion with DBCA as land manager is improving access to Gull Rock National Park.

No trails of regional significance are proposed for the following reasons:

- Land managers are unwilling to support long-distance trails (e.g. former stock routes) through protected areas. There are a number of historical stock routes, including Forest Hill, Camballup and Moriarty stock routes, in the region. Sections of these stock routes pass through the Walpole Wilderness Area. Although there is strong local interest in and in some cases Shire support for opening up these routes as bridle trails, there is currently no support from the land manager. This plan recommends, however, that these routes become designated as Heritage Trails in recognition of their historical value.
- There is little information available regarding equestrian trail use levels or economic impact and it is difficult to determine whether regional equestrian trails will provide a return on investment.
- Equestrian trails have recently been developed in the adjacent South West region, Warren Blackwood Stock Route. And monitoring of these trails by the land manager and will inform the feasibility of additional regional trails in the next few years.

Table 15 provides a summary of equestrian trail opportunities in the region.

Table 15: Equestrian trail feasibility

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FEASIBILITY
Local	Short distance localised trails close to townsites or settlements, with easy access. Focus on providing single use equestrian trails (e.g. areas within Sandpatch and Gull Rock National Park). Consultation and previous work has identified desire for local bridle trails in state forest (e.g. Denmark, Mount Barker area), beach access (e.g. Cheynes Beach, Shoal Bay), and close to townsites with existing facilities (e.g. Albany, Mount Barker and Woodanilling).	Local users to liaise with land managers for improved access, designation of trails and improved signage. These trails would be well supported and used by the community.
Long Distance Trails	Long distance trails within the Great Southern or linked to trails in adjacent regions. Would require the development of 60km plus trails to be regionally significant in attracting visitors.	Liaison with different land managers is required and consideration of relevant planning and policy documents including DBCA Management Plans, and DWER public drinking water source areas. Remoteness, accessibility and lack of supporting infrastructure are challenges. There is little information on trail user demand for long distance trails meaning the scale of development would need to be rationalised to provide value for money.
Stock Routes or Heritage Trails	Long distance historic stock routes up to 80-100km such as the Forest Hill, Moriarty and Camballup routes. There has been interest in developing these routes as multi-use trails for many years. There is some provision for stock route in the Walpole Wilderness Area and adjacent reserves Management Plan, (WWAMP) though not through the core wilderness area.	Liaison with different land managers is required. There is strong local interest in re-opening historic stock routes for equestrian trails by residents, but the visitor market is unknown. The Shire of Plantagenet is continuing to investigate the status of historic stock routes with a view to building on their recognition as Heritage Trails. The Shire has an active trails working group interested in equestrian trail development.
Rail Trails	Consultation with user groups has confirmed that the safe, vehicle free environment provided by disused rail corridors is attractive for equestrians. Medium to longer distance trails, 10-55km single direction, with potential for overnight stays.	Existing sections of the Denmark to Nornalup rail trail and the Torbay to Elleker rail trail are being used by equestrians. Designation of new rail trails requires a high level of community and local government support to present a strong rationale for development. As land managers the Public Transport Authority and Arc Infrastructure are generally opposed to leasing of rail corridors for recreation activities.

Great Southern Regional Trails

MASTER PLAN

SECTION 5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide an implementation strategy to achieve the vision outlined in this master plan. The strategies are aligned with each of the agreed objectives (see Section 2) and have been prioritised over a five-year timeframe. Specific actions and agency responsibilities aligned with these strategies are included as Appendix 4.

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
1.1	All LGAs, DBCA, DLGSC, and GSDC endorse the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) as the overarching guide to the planning, development and management of regional trail priorities over the next 10 years	High	Within 1 year
1.2	Stakeholder Reference Group endorse the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy	High	Within 1 year
1.3	Link identified regional priority trails to local and state government strategic plans	Medium - High	1-2 years

2



Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network

Develop, upgrade and maintain a network of high-quality trails and facilities that deliver outstanding experiences to a wide range of trail users and activity types.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
2.1	Trail development undertaken as per the schedule outlined in each Action Plan	High	1-5 years
2.2	All land managers adopt best practice guidelines in development and management of regional priority trails including protection of biodiverse and culturally sensitive areas and values.	Medium - High	1-5 years



Photo credit: Kelly Waterhouse

3



Promote the Visitor Experience

Encourage strong local community and visitor participation in recreational trail activities through effective promotion and marketing of the region’s trails.

NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
3.1	Prepare and implement a Regional Trails Marketing strategy that includes biodiversity, Aboriginal and settler culture and heritage	High	Within 1 year
3.2	Prepare and implement a thematic interpretation strategy for all nationally and regionally significant trails and trail networks	Medium	2-3 years

4



Community and Economic Development Opportunities

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

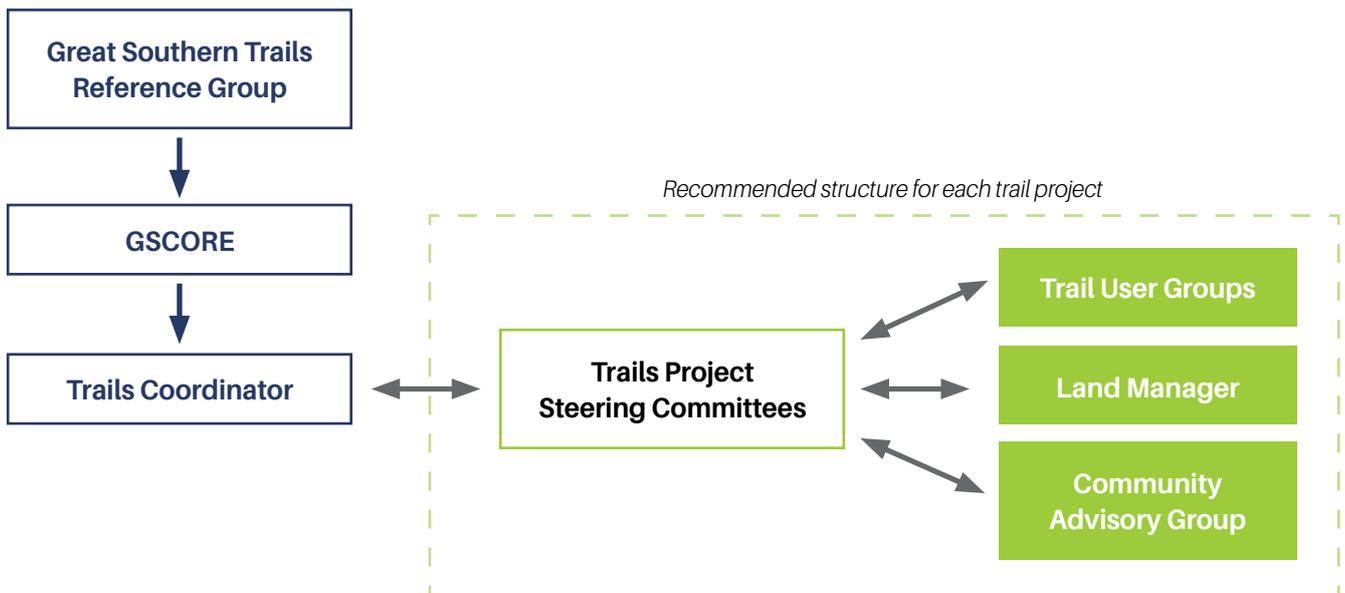
NO.	STRATEGY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
4.1	Economic benefits - Encourage and support new trail business opportunities and identified gaps in service provision	Medium	1-5 years
4.2	Liveability benefits - Ensure that regional priority trail developments cater for and encourage active transport	Medium	1-5 years
4.3	Health - Actively promote the health and wellbeing benefits of active leisure activities	Medium	3-5 years
4.4	Culture - Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects	High	1-2 years
4.5	Environmental - Adopt and promote the Trail Development Series as best practice for trail planning, construction and maintenance	High	Within 1 year



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

To achieve the vision outlined in this master plan, it is essential that an effective and efficient governance and management structure is established. Given the range of stakeholders involved in delivering the master plan, it is important to have broad representation and a willingness by all parties to accept some level of responsibility. To ensure that these roles and responsibilities are understood and carried out to a high standard, the following governance hierarchy should be adopted (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Governance Structure



A Great Southern Trails Reference Group (GSTRG) should be formed and given responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the master plan. The GSTRG should include a representative from each local government, DBCA, DLGSC, GSDC, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar Working Party. The GSTRG will be responsible for overseeing strategic trails development and management. The group should meet quarterly to coordinate project priorities.

The RTMP Stakeholder Reference Group has recommended that the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE) should be contracted as the overall Project Manager for the implementation of the master plan for projects where there is little or no existing capacity. This would be subject to performance against indicators developed by the GSTRG. GSCORE will be responsible for providing governance and secretariat support to the GSTRG, grant writing, project management, marketing coordination, training and capacity building, and trail monitoring (see Figure 5). This approach has been

endorsed by local government stakeholders and the Project Management Executive Group.

GSCORE will employ a Trails Coordinator responsible for overseeing the implementation of each trail project. The Trails Coordinator will liaise with a Trail Project Steering Committee responsible for each trail project. These committees may be existing (e.g. Albany Trails Hub Strategy Project Control Group) or may be formed specifically for each project.

It is recommended that for each trail project, a community advisory group is established and include representation from organisations that have a vested interest in each specific trail or trail network. This could include destination marketing organisations, chambers of commerce, arts and cultural groups, and natural resource management groups. The reference group would provide input and advice on trail development and management. In addition to the community advisory group, the Steering Committee should also liaise with key trail user organisations and clubs relevant to the specific trail activity (e.g. MTB club or bushwalking club).

Figure 5:

GSCORE'S RESPONSIBILITIES



PROJECT GOVERNANCE

- Establish governance framework
- Monitor implementation through action plans

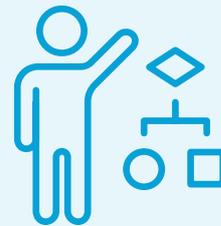


GRANT WRITING

- Identify funding sources and prepare applications on behalf of stakeholders

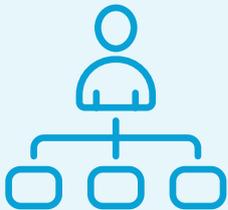
MARKETING COORDINATION

- Implement marketing strategy
- Implement signage plan
- Maintain Trails WA database



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Develop project scoping documents, consultant briefs, business plans
- Develop and execute stakeholder engagement plans
- Undertake community consultation



TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Develop and deliver training for land managers and trail managers
- Implement business capacity building program



TRAIL MONITORING

- Priority trail maintenance audit
- Develop maintenance schedules
- Implement monitoring programs

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

For the Great Southern to become a recognised and desirable trail destination, it is imperative that models are established for ongoing sustainable trail management, maintenance and development. A variety of development and management models need to be considered and should form part of the concept planning phase of all trail development projects. These models include:

- **Public management** – A government agency (e.g. a local shire or DBCA) has sole management responsibility of the trail facility. Commercial and event operators may contribute financially to the management of trails.
- **Volunteering agreements** - An agreement is developed following discussion between a land manager and trail user group/club about options for volunteer maintenance of trails.
- **Partnerships** - Multiple stakeholders share management responsibility of the trail facility. Partners could include non-government incorporated agencies, government bodies, Aboriginal Corporations, Aboriginal Ranger Programs, commercial entities, foundations or trusts, and volunteer groups.
- **Private management** - The development of trail networks will encourage visitation and expenditure, resulting in a tangible economic impact for the surrounding communities and the region. This may in turn provide opportunities to establish and grow businesses that complement trail activities and encourage public and private investment in future trail developments.

The successful delivery and ongoing management of trail projects will also depend on the active engagement and participation of local trail user groups and peak bodies (e.g. Trails WA, HikeWest, Westcycle, and Paddling WA), Aboriginal communities, land management groups, and communities and the WA Trails Reference Group which advises on implementation of State trail strategies and monitors progress and proposed actions and outcomes reporting back to government and industry.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and promotion of the Great Southern trail offering will be essential to increase participation and encourage visitation. Currently, the promotion of trails in the Great Southern is ad-hoc and does not form a key part of the promotional activities of the region's destination marketing organisations (DMOs) – Australia's South West (ASW), Amazing South Coast Tourism Incorporated (ASCTI) and Great Southern Treasures.

DMOs lack up-to-date information on trails, including maps, and have few good quality digital marketing assets for the region's existing trails. To better market and promote Great Southern trails, these organisations require images and content that can be used in local signage, websites, social media, and printed material such as visitor guides.

There also needs to be closer alignment between the marketing campaigns of these regional organisations and other groups responsible for marketing trails, including the Bibbulmun Track Foundation, the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation, Tourism WA, and Trails WA.

This plan recommends the development and implementation of a **Great Southern Regional Trails Marketing Strategy**. This document will establish a coordinated approach to branding and promotion of trails in the region, and make recommendations on consistent signage, wayfinding, and interpretation. The Marketing Strategy should be developed in 2020, so that all marketing organisations can begin to actively promote the region's existing trail offering. Harnessing the power of word-of-mouth marketing will enable the region to build a strong brand and generate anticipation amongst trail users and other visitors during the trail construction phase.

The plan recommends a focus on unique points of difference from other regions including unique biodiversity and geology, and Aboriginal culture.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: TRAIL TYPES AND GRADES

HIKING Walking Track Classifications



GRADE 1

Provide an opportunity for most visitors, with no previous experience, including those with reduced mobility, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have abundant opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.



GRADE 2

Provide an opportunity for many visitors, with no previous experience, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have many opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.



GRADE 3

Provide an opportunity for visitors, with a moderate level of fitness and a small degree of skill and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Provision of interpretive information is not common, but many opportunities will be available to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment of the track. A map is generally not required and directional markers and management signs may be present. Users are responsible for their own safety that could be affected by adverse weather conditions such as storms or extreme heat.



GRADE 4

Provide an opportunity for many visitors, with a higher level of fitness and specialised skills and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Only management and directional signs may be present. There will be many opportunities to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment. Maps and navigational aids may be required, and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.



GRADE 5

Provide an opportunity for visitors with high levels of fitness and advanced specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to find their way along often indistinct tracks in remoter natural areas. Only minimal management signage may be present. Maps and navigational aids will generally be required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.

GRADE 6

Provide an opportunity for highly experienced walkers with high levels of fitness and specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to navigate through remote, challenging natural and wilderness areas - there is no physical track. Maps and navigational aids are always required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain Bike Trail Type

Trail type defines the style of trail and its typical attributes. Different trail types suit different styles of riding and typically each trail type will have a specific kind of mountain bike designed to suit. Different cohorts use different types of trails and all trail types can have varying classifications.

TYPES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS	
Cross Country (XC)	<p>Primarily single-track orientated with a combination of climbing and descending trails and natural trail features of varying technicality.</p> <p>Cross Country trails appeal to the majority market and can cater for timed competitive events.</p> <p>Typically, bikes are lightweight with shorter travel dual suspension or no rear suspension.</p>
All Mountain (AM)	<p>Similar to Cross Country and primarily single-trail orientated, with greater emphasis on technical descents, with non-technical climbs.</p> <p>All Mountain trails can cater for timed Enduro competitive events. Bikes are typically light-medium weight with medium-travel dual suspension.</p>
Downhill (DH)	<p>Purely descent only trails with emphasis on speed and technical challenge. These trails can cater for timed Downhill competitive racing.</p> <p>Downhill trails appeal to the more experienced market and typically require uplift to the trailhead via chairlift or vehicle shuttle.</p> <p>Bikes are designed for descending and are typically long-travel dual suspension and built for strength over weight.</p>
Freeride (FR)	<p>Typically, descent focused trails with emphasis solely on technical challenge.</p> <p>Trails feature both built and natural terrain technical features with a focus on drops and jumps.</p> <p>Appeals to the more experienced market and caters for competitions judging manoeuvres and skills only. Bikes are typically medium to long-travel dual suspension and are built for strength.</p>
Park (PK)	<p>Built feature environment with emphasis on manoeuvres, skills and progression.</p> <p>Appeals to wide market including youth and can cater for competitions judging aerial manoeuvres. Can include Jump and Pump Tracks and Skills Park.</p> <p>Typically, dirt surfaced but can include hardened surfaces. Bikes are typically built for strength, with short travel suspension.</p>
Touring (TR)	<p>Typically, long distance riding on reasonably uniform surface conditions and lower grades.</p> <p>Touring trails are dual direction linear trails or long distance circuits with a focus on reaching a destination. Touring trails can include rail trails, access/fire roads and single track. While there is a limited market for long distance mountain biking, touring trails can be ridden in sections making them accessible to all.</p> <p>If carrying panniers bikes are usually robust with limited suspension, however, for short sections or day trips most mountain bikes are suitable.</p>



Mountain Bike Trail Classification

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) trail difficulty rating system has been adopted worldwide and forms the basis of the Mountain Bike Trail Classification used in the Western Australian Mountain Bike Management Guidelines. The system classifies trails from Easiest through to Extreme, relative to the physical attributes of the trail, such as its width, gradient, surface type, technical trail features and obstacles.



EASIEST

This symbol indicates typically wide trail with smooth terrain and low gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times but free from unavoidable obstacles.

Recommended for novice riders.



EASY

This symbol indicates typically flowing open trails on firm terrain with gentle gradients. Surface may be uneven, loose or muddy at times. Riders may encounter small rollable obstacles and technical trail features.

Recommended for beginner mountain bikers.



**MORE
DIFFICULT**

This symbol indicates typically narrow trail with loose, soft, rocky or slippery sections and hills with short steep sections. Riders will encounter obstacles and technical trail features.

Recommended for intermediate riders with some technical mountain biking experience.



**VERY
DIFFICULT**

This symbol indicates trail with variable surfaces and/or steep gradients. Riders will encounter large obstacles and technical trail features.

Recommended for experienced riders with good technical skill levels.



**EXTREMELY
DIFFICULT**

This symbol indicates the trail may contain highly variable surfaces, very challenging terrain and/or very steep sections. Riders will encounter committing and unavoidable obstacles and technical trail features that may not be rollable.

Recommended for very experienced riders with high level technical skill.

EQUESTRIAN/HORSE RIDING TRAILS

Horse Riding Trail Classification

The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA) classifies trails from Easy through to Difficult, relative to physical attributes of the trail, such as its width, gradient and surface type.



EASY

Most suitable for novices, social groups and others seeking a relatively short distance trail requiring a basic level of skill and horse and rider fitness.

Most likely to be firebreaks or wide single tracks (bridle paths) with a gentle grade (not exceeding 10%) and a relatively obstacle free, hardened natural surface.

Likely to be shared-use and frequent encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers and runners can be expected.



MODERATE

Most suitable for individuals and smaller social groups seeking a short to medium distance trail requiring a moderate level of skill and fitness.

Most likely to be a combination single trail and/or firebreaks with obstacles, variable surfaces, and a moderate slope.

Likely to be shared-use so encounters with other users including cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders should be expected.



DIFFICULT

Suitable for individuals and small social groups seeking a very challenging trail requiring a high level of skill, fitness, and basic navigation skills.

Most likely to consist of challenging single trail and/or firebreaks with many obstacles, variable surface, and steep sections.

Some trail routes may not be marked at all.

May possibly be shared-use so encounters with other users possibly including cyclists, walkers, vehicles and other stock should be expected, however, many of these trails may be located in remote areas and encounters with others is expected to be minimal.



PADDLING

Trails proposed in the Regional Trails Master Plan adopt the International River Grading System, as none of the trails are on open ocean. There is no universally accepted grading system for the sea, estuaries and large areas of open water. The current grading system SO1-SO5 has been developed by Paddle NSW qualified Sea Instructors to assist in describing all waterways.

The International River Grading System⁸ uses six levels each referred to as "Grade" or "Class" followed by a number. The grade of a river may change with the level of flow.

- **Grade 1 Easy** (slow to medium flow, relatively few obstacles, easy path to follow)
- **Grade 2 Moderate** (regular waves / medium rapids which are manageable with basic strokes)
- **Grade 3 Difficult** (rapids/ high waves, manoeuvring around obstacles is required).
- **Grade 4 Difficult rapids** (have high, powerful, irregular waves, broken water, often boiling eddies, ledges, drops and dangerous exposed rocks. The passage often difficult to recognize and precise sequential manoeuvring is required).
- **Grade 5 Very powerful rapids** (very confused and broken water, massive waves, large drops, violent and fast currents, abrupt turns, difficult powerful stopper hydraulics. Numerous obstacles in the main current, including dangerous, possibly life-threatening hazards).
- **Grade 6 Extremely dangerous** - classified as unraftable. (Very confused, very violent, exploding and folding water so difficult that controlled navigation by raft is virtually impossible).

SNORKELLING

Trails WA classifies snorkel uses three classifications of snorkel trails:

- **Easy** – suitable for beginners
- **Moderate** – suitable for those with some experience
- **Difficult** – considerable experience required, open water conditions, waves

⁸ Paddle WA. Grading System. <http://www.waterwaysguide.org.au/GradingSystem>

APPENDIX 2: TRAIL TOWNS AND TRAIL NETWORKS

1

TRAIL NETWORK

A collection of linked trails, often of same type, typically accessed via a trailhead. Eg. Pemberton, Porongurup National Park, Bremer Bay.

2

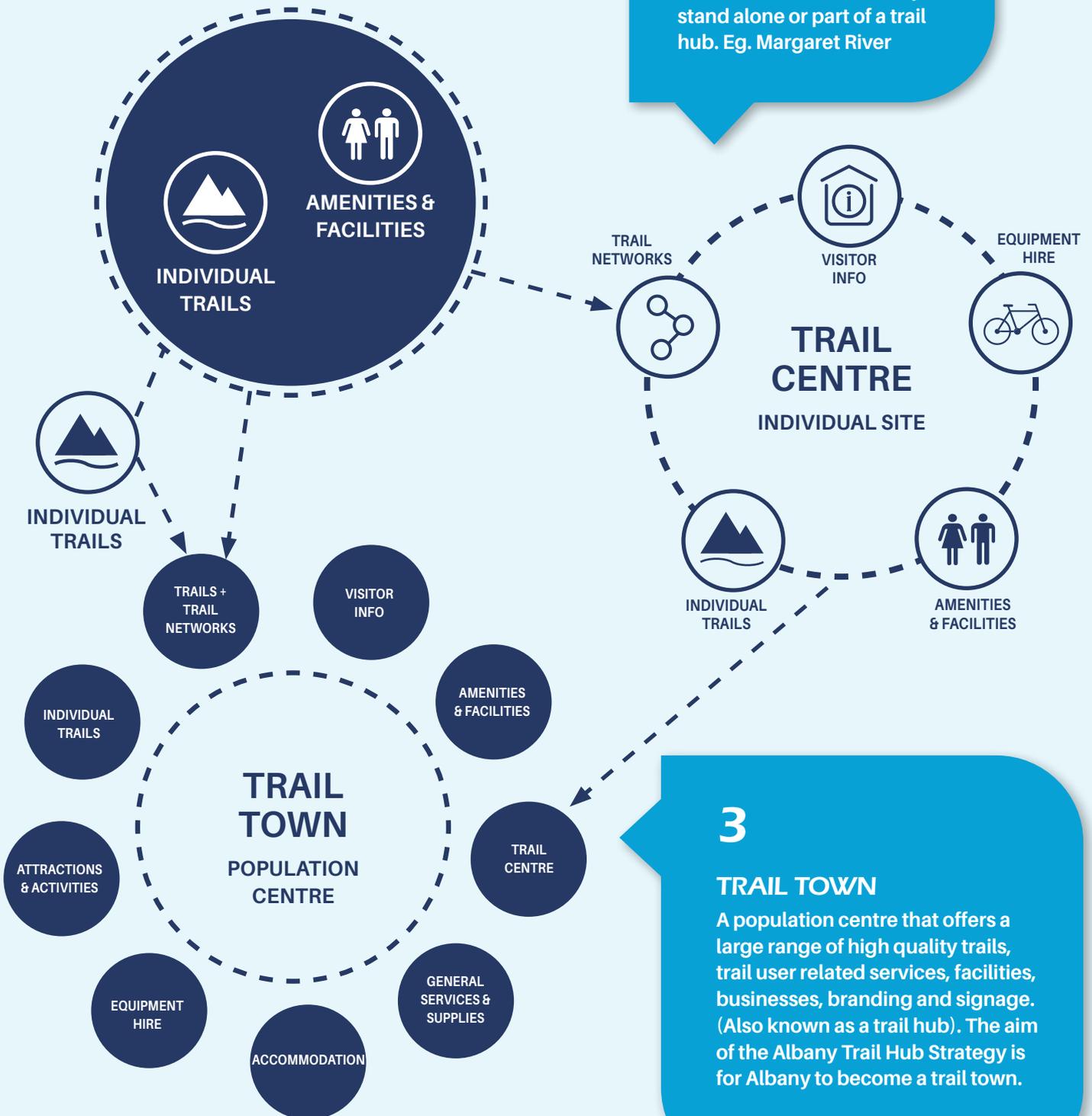
TRAIL CENTRE

A managed trail or trail network supported by dedicated on site trail related services and facilities. May be stand alone or part of a trail hub. Eg. Margaret River

3

TRAIL TOWN

A population centre that offers a large range of high quality trails, trail user related services, facilities, businesses, branding and signage. (Also known as a trail hub). The aim of the Albany Trail Hub Strategy is for Albany to become a trail town.



APPENDIX 3: TRAIL USERS

Visitation to the Great Southern is currently dominated by intrastate trips (refer to Table 16) with having a holiday being the main purpose for visiting by both domestic and international tourists.

Table 16: Purpose of visit to Great Southern Region 2016-2017

Estimated Visitors to Great Southern region	Period - YE Dec 2016-2018								
	Average Annual Visitors	Holiday		Visiting friends and relatives		Business		Other	
Domestic	586,000	317,700	49%	189,700	30%	115,700	18%	25,700	4%
International	58,500	51,000	87%	6,200	11%	900	2%	1,600	3%
Total Overnight	701,833								
Intrastate Daytrips	773,000	401,000	52%	118,300	15%	91,000	12%	162,700	21%

Visiting national parks and bushwalking (hiking) are activities undertaken by a majority of international visitors (71% and 52% respectively), and by approximately 1 in every 5 intrastate and interstate visitors to the Great Southern the region. Cycling is undertaken by approximately 1 in every 6 international visitors, and by 1 in every 10 day trippers.

Table 17: Average annual visitors, visit national parks and participate in bushwalking (hiking), and cycling

Estimated Visitors to Great Southern region	Period - YE Dec 2016-2018						
	Average Annual Visitors	# visit national parks	% of visitors	# participate in bushwalking	% of visitors	# participate in cycling	% of visitors
Intrastate	586,000	488,000	17	154,300	24	20,000	3
Interstate	57,333						
International	58,500	126,900*	71	30,700*	52	9,600	16
Total Overnight	701,833						
Intrastate Daytrips	773,000	243,700	7	83,300	11	70,300	9

*Activity participation is captured at a total trip level (not destination specific) for international visitors; therefore International visitors may have undertaken activity elsewhere in Australia.

Source: Tourism Research Australia, International and National Visitor Survey.



Photo credit: South Coast NRM

APPENDIX 4: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE AGREED OBJECTIVES

1



Integrated Planning & Management

Adopt a strategic and coordinated approach to trail planning, management and maintenance through key stakeholder collaboration and prioritised and targeted investment.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
1.1	All LGAs, DBCA, DLGSC, and GSDC endorse the Great Southern Regional Trails Master Plan (RTMP) as the overarching guide to the planning, development and management of regional trail priorities over the next 10 years	RTMP received and endorsed by all Great Southern LGAs and State government agencies	High	Immediate	Lead: LGAs DBCA, DLGSC
1.2	Adopt the RTMP Governance Framework and Implementation Strategy	Allocate adequate resources to ensure GSRTMP is implemented	High	Immediate	Lead: LGAs DBCA, DLGSC
		Form a Regional Trails Reference Group to oversee the Implementation Strategy	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Participating LGAs and other stakeholders
		Establish a mechanism for the Regional Trails Reference Group to communicate efficiently with the WA Trails Reference Group	High	Immediate	Lead: DLGSC Support: GSCORE
		Review the RTMP within 5 years of its release to ensure its ongoing relevance and to examine its implementation	Med	5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
1.3	Link identified regional priority trails to local government strategic plans	Develop local trail plans	Med	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
		Ensure regional priority trails are included in local government planning documents (including asset management, community development and financial plans)	High	1 -2 years	Lead: LGAs

2



Sustainable & Accessible Trail Network

Develop, upgrade and maintain a network of high-quality trails and facilities that deliver outstanding experiences to a wide range of trail users and activity types.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1	Trail development undertaken as per the schedule outlined in each Activity Plan	Develop concept plans and business cases for all regional priority trails in line with the timeframes identified in activity-specific trail plans	High	1 - 5 years	Lead: Land managers Support: GSCORE
		Secure funding commitments from all partners and leverage additional resources through State and Federal Government grants	High	1 - 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, GSDC, RDA
		Prepare and implement a priority trailhead and wayfinding strategy as identified within specific trail plans	Med	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers
		Ensure all trail planning is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines contained in the WA Trail Development Series	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: Land managers Support: GSCORE
2.2	All land managers adopt best practice guidelines in development and management of regional priority trails including protection of biodiverse and culturally sensitive areas and values.	Facilitate the sharing of knowledge related to trail planning, construction and management between all land managers, local government authorities, clubs, key user groups, and community organisations	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: DLGSC, DBCA
		Collaborate with land managers, scientific institutions and community organisations to monitor ongoing usage and impacts of individual trails to improve management practices over the long-term	Med	1 - 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers
		Develop and implement a trail-building training program for land managers, community groups and contractors to improve sustainability outcomes for all trails	Med	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers



3



Promote the Visitor Experience

Encourage strong local community and visitor participation in recreational trail activities through effective promotion and marketing of the region's trails.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1	Prepare and implement a Regional Trails Marketing Strategy	Develop brand position statement for Great Southern Regional Trails	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs)
		Prepare and implement a marketing and promotions plan	High	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Develop trail maps	High	1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Develop signage and style guide	High	1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, LGAs
		Implement a Noongar naming strategy for new trails and dual-naming strategy for existing trails	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Wagyl Kaip, SWALSC
		Produce digital assets for all regional priority trails	High	1 - 2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs
3.2	Prepare and implement a thematic interpretation strategy that includes biodiversity, Aboriginal and settler cultural heritage, for all nationally and regional significant trails and trail networks.	Provide guidance in the creation of unique and memorable visitor experiences, provide a point of difference, and aid in raising the profile of regional trails	Medium	2 - 3 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, traditional custodians, DMOs

4



Community and Economic Development Opportunities

Capitalise on the opportunities presented by a well-designed trails network for health, environmental, cultural, economic and liveability benefits.

NO.	STRATEGY	INITIATIVES	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1	Economic benefits - Encourage and support new trail business opportunities and identified gaps in service provision	Expand the Tourism Experience Accelerator Program (TEAP) across the entire region	Med	Immediate	Lead: GSCORE Support: DMOs, industry groups
		Support key regional towns to obtain trail town accreditation	Med	2 - 5 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs
4.2	Liveability benefits - Ensure that regional priority trail developments cater for and encourage active transport	Adopt the Regional Cycling Strategy 2050 for the Great Southern	Med	2-5 years	Lead: Department of Transport (DoT) Support: LGAs, DLGSC
4.3	Health - Actively promote the health and wellbeing benefits of active leisure activities	Implement and promote outdoor recreation education and participation programs. Ensure access for all is incorporated with provision of facilities	Med	3-5 years	Lead: DLGSC Support: LGAs, GSCORE, Department of Health
4.4	Culture - Support a Noongar naming or dual-naming strategy and interpretation plan for all nationally and regionally significant trail projects	Ensure that representatives from SWALSC and/or Wagyl Kaip sits on the Great Southern Trails Reference Group	High	1-2 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: SWALSC
		Ensure that Aboriginal community engagement plans are developed for all trail projects	High	2-3 years	Lead: GSCORE Support: Land managers, SWALSC
4.5	Environmental - Adopt and promote the Trail Development Series as best practice for trail planning, construction and maintenance	Establish a trail building network that includes land manager and trail managers. Use the network to promote the TDP	High	Within 1 year	Lead: GSCORE Support: LGAs, DBCA



APPENDIX 5: STAKEHOLDER ACTION PLANS

This appendix provides an action plan for each local government stakeholder. Trail proposals are sorted by priority and timeframe. A separate table has been created for all projects on DBCA estate. These action plans outline the next steps required to progress each trail proposal.

KEY

TRAIL TYPE

H Hiking **C** Cycling/Mountain biking **P** Paddling **S** Snorkelling

TIMEFRAME

S Short (1-2 years) **M** Medium (3-5 years) **L** Long (6-10 years)

LEAD ORGANISATION

DBCA - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions		
ALB - City of Albany	GNOW - Shire of Gnowangerup	KOJ - Shire of Kojonup
BT - Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup	JERR - Shire of Jerramungup	MANJ - Shire of Manjimup
CRAN - Shire of Cranbrook	KATT - Shire of Katanning	PLAN - Shire of Plantagenet
DEN - Shire of Denmark	KENT - Shire of Kent	WOOD - Shire of Woodanilling

CITY OF ALBANY

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Albany Heritage Park, Mounts Trail Corridor Link	 		ALB	Detailed design and construction. Extend the Granite Trail (hiking) and the Mounts Link Trail (MTB) as per Concept Plan.
 Bald Head Walk			DBCA	Support DBCA to secure funding for required upgrades
 Munda Biddi Trail - Sandpatch			ALB	Secure funding to implement trail realignment
 Albany Heritage Park - Stage 2	 		ALB	Consultation, concept planning, secure funding.
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail			DBCA	Support DBCA to develop Concept Plan
 Poikeclerup MTB Trails			ALB	Site assessment, Concept Plan
 Albany to Whaling Station Dual-use Trail	 		ALB	Site Assessment
Bibbulmun Track and Munda Biddi Southern Terminus Trailhead	 		ALB	Collaborate with DBCA to relocate the existing Southern Terminus for both trails to the Albany town square/visitor centre.
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk			DBCA	Provide input to DBCA on site assessment
Whaling Cove			ALB	Identify management group to maintain underwater plinths and signage
Kalgan River			ALB	Waymarking, interpretation

SHIRE OF BROOMEHILL-TAMBELLUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED	
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations	
GSTRC	Boot Rock Reserve	C H	S	BT	Trailhead, waymarking
	Tambellup Heritage Trail	H	S	BT	Trailhead, waymarking, new interpretive panels
 Grain Train Rail Trail	H C	L	GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA	

SHIRE OF CRANBROOK

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED	
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations	
GSTRC	Pink Lake Cranbrook	H	M	CRAN	Trailhead, car parking
	Sukey Hill Lookout	H	M	CRAN	Site assessment for waymarking, construction
	Frankland River Wildflower walk	H	M	CRAN	Trail maintenance
	Salt River Rd Wildflower walk	H	M	CRAN	Trail maintenance
	Lake Poorrarecup	H P	M	CRAN	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
	Lake Nunijup	H P	M	CRAN	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail Stirling Range National Park	C	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.	

SHIRE OF DENMARK

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD ORG	ACTION REQUIRED
Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience	P	S	DBCA	Work with DBCA on consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail	H	M	DBCA	Support DBCA to implement Recreation Management Plan
Mt Hallowell MTB Trails Shire of Denmark	C	M	DEN	Assist GSCORE with community consultation
Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark-Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail connector	C	M	DEN	Consultation and site assessment
Munda Biddi Trail -William Bay Road	C	M	DBCA	Assist DBCA to secure funding to Implement trail realignment
Windfarm to Ocean Beach Link	H C	S	DEN	Site assessment and trail design
Mt Hallowell Lookout	H	S	DEN	Waymarking
Greens Pool - snorkel	S	S	DBCA	Work with DBCA to implement snorkel trail signage
Bibbulmun Track (Denmark townsite-Nullaki)	H	L	DEN	Site assessment
Wilson Inlet	P	L	DEN	Waymarking

SHIRE OF GNOWANGERUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC Gnowangerup Heritage Walk	H	M	GNOW	Additional interpretive information
GSTRC Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre	H	M	GNOW	Improve signage, and waymarking
Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	C	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.
Grain Train Rail Trail	H C	L	GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail	H	L	DBCA	DBCA consultation and site assessment



SHIRE OF JERRAMUNGUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED	
! Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.	
GSTRC	Paper Barks to Rock Cairn walk	H	S	JERR	Secure funding for construction (detailed design is complete)
	Bremer River paddle	P	M	DBCA	Collaborate with GSCORE, LGA, Site assessment
	Jerramungup Town Heritage Walk	H	M	JERR	Make trail suitable for all users, surfacing
	Native Snail Trail	H C	M	JERR	Trail maintenance
	Little Boat Harbour - snorkel	S	M	JERR	Identify management group to maintain plinth and signage

SHIRE OF KATANNING

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED	
! Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.	
GSTRC	Police Pools, Twonkwillingup	H	M	KATT	Trail proposal, site assessment.
	Katanning Town Walk Trails	H	M	KATT	Improve signage, and waymarking
	Lake Ewlyamartup	H P	M	KATT	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking
! Grain Train Rail Trail	H C	L	GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA	

SHIRE OF KENT

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	  		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures collaborate to develop a marketing strategy, in cooperation with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC Pingrup Grain Silos Walk			KENT	Develop new walk trail with waymarking
 Grain Train Rail Trail	 		GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA

SHIRE OF KOJONUP

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	  		GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.
GSTRC	Kojonup Heritage Walk			KOJ Improve signage, and waymarking
	Farrar Reserve	 		KOJ Install signage, and waymarking
	Myrtle Benn Reserve	 		KOJ Promotion, marketing
 Grain Train Rail Trail	 		GSCORE	LGAs collaborate to develop a business case and gain political support required to approach PTA



SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET

 Priority Regional Trails

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED	
 Tower Hill Trails	H C	S	PLAN	Community consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan	
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.	
GSTRC	Mondurup Reserve	H	S	PLAN	Trailhead, waymarking
	Kendenup Nature Trail	H	M	PLAN	Trailhead, waymarking
 Porongurup MTB Trails	C	M	DBCA	Assist DBCA with community consultation	
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail	C	L	DBCA	DBCA confirm alignment with district priorities. Monitor progress.	
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail	H	L	DBCA	DBCA consultation and site assessment	

SHIRE OF WOODANILLING

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED	
 Great Southern Treasures Recreation Circuit	H C P	S	GSCORE	LGAs and Great Southern Treasures develop a marketing strategy, in collaboration with regional destination marketing organisations.	
GSTRC	Woodanilling Heritage Walk	H	M	WOOD	Extend trail with new interpretive panels
	Lake Queerearrup	H P	M	WOOD	Site assessment (paddling), waymarking

DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL TYPE	TIME FRAME	LEAD	ACTION REQUIRED
 Bald Head Walk			DBCA	Secure funding for required upgrades
 Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Paddle Experience			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Greens Pool to Lights Beach Coastal Trail			DBCA	Implement Recreation Management Plan
 Albany's Historic Whaling Station to the Gap Coastal Trail			DBCA	Develop Concept Plan
 Porongurup MTB Trails			DBCA	Consultation, site assessment, Concept Plan
 Munda Biddi Trail - Denmark - Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail connector			DEN	Consultation and site assessment
 Munda Biddi Trail - William Bay Road			DBCA	Seek funding to Implement trail realignment
 Stirling Range Valleys Cycle Touring Trail			DBCA	Confirm alignment with district priorities
Greens Pool - snorkel			DBCA	Implement infrastructure upgrades to include land-based snorkel trail signage during 2019/20
Isthmus Hill Lookout Walk			DBCA	Site assessment
Mamang Trail			DBCA	Investigate funding to seal the road access to Point Ann to improve access to trailhead.
Bremer River paddle			DBCA	Collaborate with GSCORE, LGA, Site assessment
STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK TRAILS				
Bluff Knoll			DBCA	Assess trail maintenance requirements and implement measures.
Stirling Range Ridge Walk			DBCA	Trail is to remain as a challenging Class 6, unmarked ridge walk. Education and information to be provided
Mt Hassell, Mt Magog, Talyuberlup Peak, Mt Toolbrunup, Mt Trio			DBCA	Assess trail maintenance requirements and implement measures.
Stirling Range Lowlands Trail			DBCA	Consultation and site assessment
PORONGURUP NATIONAL PARK TRAIL NETWORK				
Castle Rock Loop Bolganup Heritage Trail Devil's Slide Nancy's Peak			DBCA	Assess maintenance requirements and opportunities to enhance existing trails





22 Collie Street,
Albany WA 6330



9892 0113



trails@gscore.com.au
www.gscore.com.au