

18TH December 2020



NEW SECTION OF ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL OPENS IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

Santa made a surprise appearance at the Press Day of the Sailors Cutting to Lake Benmore section of the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail just ahead of the Christmas holidays.

The Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee, elected officials, and official trail partners celebrated the opening of the new off-road section today. They gathered at Sailors Cutting campground to watch mayor of Waitaki, Gary Kircher, mayor of Mackenzie, Graham Smith, and Chair of the Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee, Sally Jones officially cut the ribbon. Following this, over 150 cyclists took to the trail for the first time.

Sally Jones acknowledged all those who contributed to this section build and the significance of getting the trail off State Highway 83 to deliver a safer ride for all to enjoy.

Gary Kircher praised the co-operation involved in the creation of this off-road section, “It’s a real testament to ongoing inspiration and aspiration that this trail has got to where it is.”

Graham Smith felt the success of the track was, “a credit to all those involved in building it.” Chiefly built by M3 Contracting and finished with barriers and bridges by Recreation Construction, the new section took five months to build and cost \$1.2 million, the primary funding coming from MBIE, which was matched by other contributors.

Kaiwhakahaere of Moeraki Justin Tipa sent blessings from the local iwi and shared the historical importance of the valley as a traditional food gathering site.

The section is mostly Grade 2 (easy), with some narrower and steeper 5 Grade 3 parts. Starting at the Sailors Cutting car park on the shores of Lake Benmore, the 16km section combines purpose-built gravel cycle trail with DOC’s Benmore Peninsula and finishes at the car park above Benmore Dam. The section weaves through the high country of the Waitaki Lakes District following the Ahuriri arm of Lake Benmore with deep clear waters and golden tussock providing stunning backdrops.

Enjoying the preview of the trail, Lyn Menzies loved getting to see a different part of Lake Benmore you can’t see from the road, “I loved seeing all the little islands in the lake...It’s going to be an absolute must-do for sure, not just in New Zealand, it’s a world class bike ride.”

Santa also enjoyed his time on the trail noting, “At the Benmore Peninsula Saddle, I could see all the chimney tops and work out which ones were the easiest to get into.”

ENDS

For more information, see <https://www.alps2ocean.com/>

ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL KEY FACTS

- Situated in the South Island of New Zealand is the Alps2Ocean Cycle Trail, the jewel in the crown of the 22 Great Rides, the longest in New Zealand spanning 315km from the Mackenzie District, which is recognised as a Dark Sky Reserve, to the Waitaki District, an aspiring UNESCO Geopark.
- An alternative route begins in the Lake Tekapo township and connects with the trail at Tekapo B power station.
- Initial construction of the trail began back in 2015.
- The significant economic, recreational and community-building benefits can be seen throughout Kurow, Ōtemātātā, Enfield and other towns the trail passes through with increased business development and investment a direct result of tourist flow.
- The trail is administered by the Alps 2 Ocean joint committee: a partnership of the Waitaki District Council and the Mackenzie District Council.

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