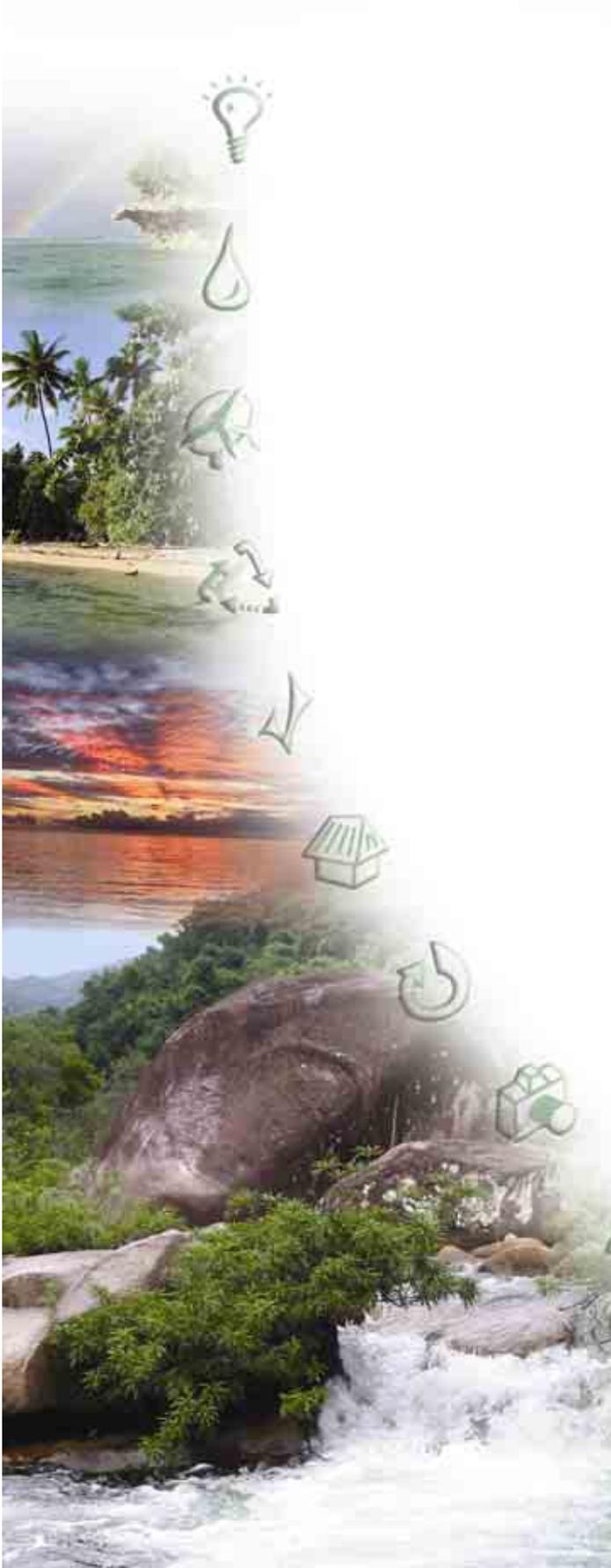




EcoSustainAbility



Black Cat Track



Tourism Development Plan

Draft for Review
Version 1.0





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South of Godogusal

Introduction

The Track

The Black Cat Track runs between Salamaua and Wau in the Morobe Province. It is a forgotten World War Two trail that passes through very difficult and hazardous terrain. It includes dangerous river crossings, swamps, cliffs, trees that are fallen, moss covered rocks and dangerous ledges. This makes the Black Cat one of the toughest tracks in PNG and in the world.

Australian Diggers have often been heard describing the Black Cat Trail as the hardest slog they'd ever done. In fact the Black Cat Trail rates harder than the Kokoda Track. Evidence of the ferocious fighting with the Japanese is evident everywhere. The trail is littered with live bombs, ammunition and other war junk, including boots and even plane wrecks. There are also Japanese tunnels and anti aircraft guns.

Many soldiers and local carriers lost their lives on this treacherous path in 1942 and 1943. Today the trail is peaceful, tranquil and much less travelled, but the locals are still as hospitable and supportive as they were in 1942. As such the Track provides a genuine cultural experience.

The Black Cat is recommended only for the very fit and experienced trekkers.

Draft Tourism Development Plan

This document is a draft Tourism Development Plan for the Black Cat Track. It is a draft for review by the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority and key stakeholders.

The plan has been prepared in collaboration with the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority, and in particular with Henni Dembis and Jerry Agus.

Approach of this Plan

The overall approach of this Plan is to provide a framework and direction for the management of the Trek. The focus is on the sustainable management of the tourism activity in the area, ensuring a benefit to the local community and providing a quality and safe tourism product.

Scope of the Plan

The Plan has been prepared following the following actions,

- Initial start up meeting in Moresby with PNGTPA.
- Review of available information, collation of maps, images etc.
- Interviews and discussion with key stakeholders (e.g Morobe Tourism Authority, Tour Operators and members of some of the villages along the trail, local villagers/landowners, porters/guides).
- Site visit to the start and completion of the track (NOTE: Wau not yet visited for this version).



Godogusal

- Development of snapshot of the tourism product and current issues.
- Preparation of proposed management strategies.
- Preparation of implementation plan and budget.

Key Outcomes

The key outcomes of the process to prepare the Plan has been to:

- Product snapshot of the tourism product;
- Snapshot of supporting facilities and infrastructure;
- Develop strategies/plan to develop the tourism product;
- Develop indicative budgets and project implementation schedules;
- Identification of key stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

This Plan has been prepared in close collaboration between the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority and EcoSustainAbility. We would like to thank Pam Christie, Tim Vincent and staff of Morobe Tourism Bureau for their help.

Spelling

Spelling of names has been on the basis of advice from TPA or the topographic map. It is noted that there are alternate spellings of some place names.

Product Snapshot

This Plan includes a snapshot review of the tourism product which describes the product, the condition of infrastructure and the tourism linkages. It is preliminary and can be updated when further information is available.

Stakeholders

Development of the Plan involved meeting with key stakeholders and obtaining information about the trek and the tourism product. Further the Plan is based on an understanding of stakeholders aspirations, interests and concerns.

NOTE: Owing to a landslide on Lae to Wau road on the day a meeting in Wau had been arranged, no consultation with Wau based stakeholders has been undertaken.

Draft Only

The version is a draft for comment by PNG TPA and key stakeholders. It has been prepared for discussion purposes and is not Government Policy.



Near the trailhead at Biaweng.

The Track

Current Situation

Currently the track is used by local villagers to move through the area. There are other adjoining and offshoot tracks which are known by the local community. The track is not managed specifically for tourism at this stage, although with increasing interest the local level council has provided some funds for maintenance and the Tourism Promotion Authority has undertaken training.

The location of the track is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Location of Black Cat Track



Route Description

The Black Cat Track runs from the Wau area to Salamaua on the coast it is about 61km long and climbs from just over 1000m at Biaweng to 2080 m over the Kuper Range then descending along the Buisaval River Valley before climbing around Mount Tambo then descending to the Francisco River and following this to Salamaua on the coast.

Figure 2 shows a map of the track. Note that this map is approximate only and is based on anecdotal evidence of the route and not a specific accurate survey of the track location. The map should not be used for navigation. Figure 3 shows the traverse (the climbs and descents along the track).



Figure 2: Black Cat Route

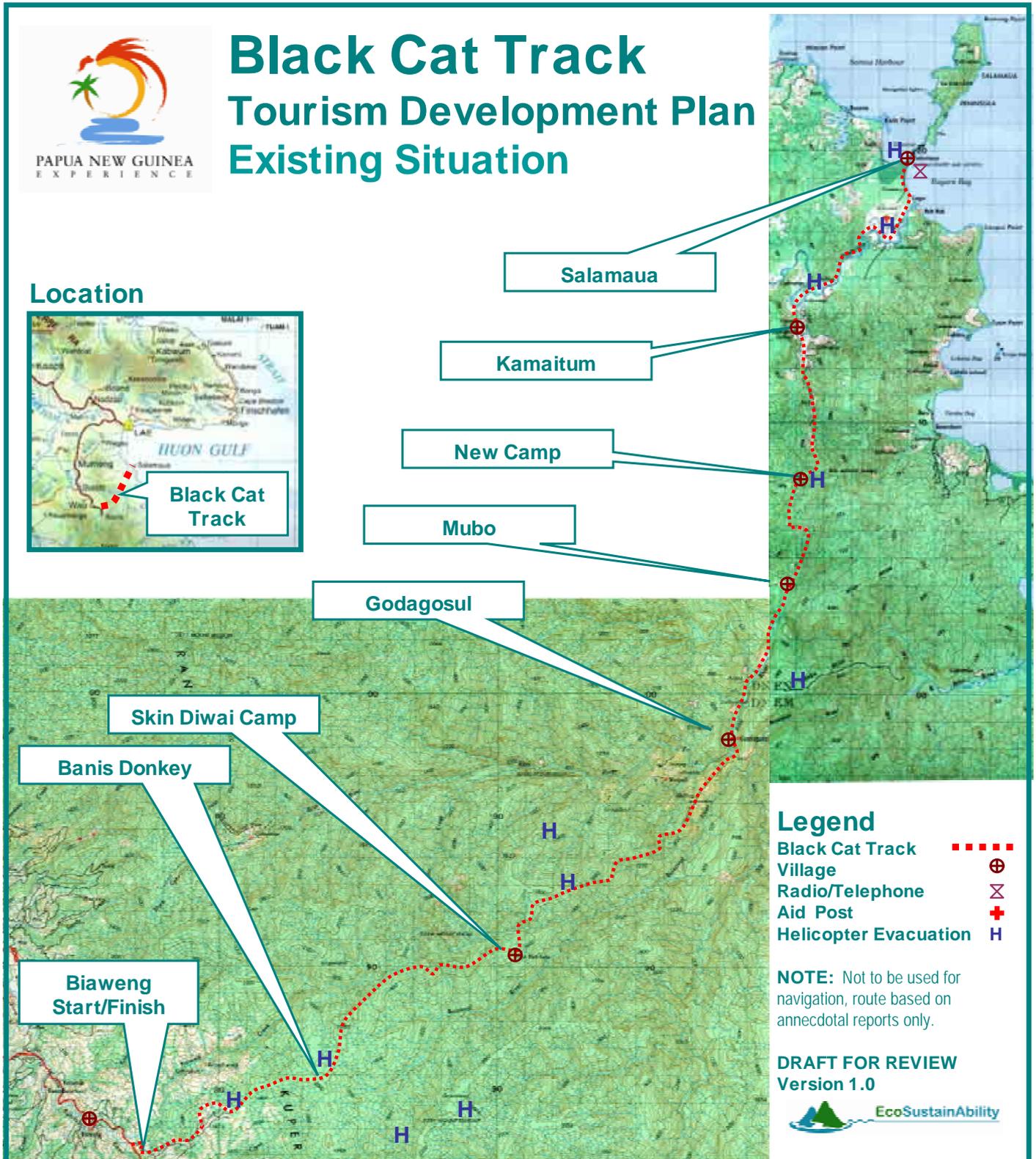
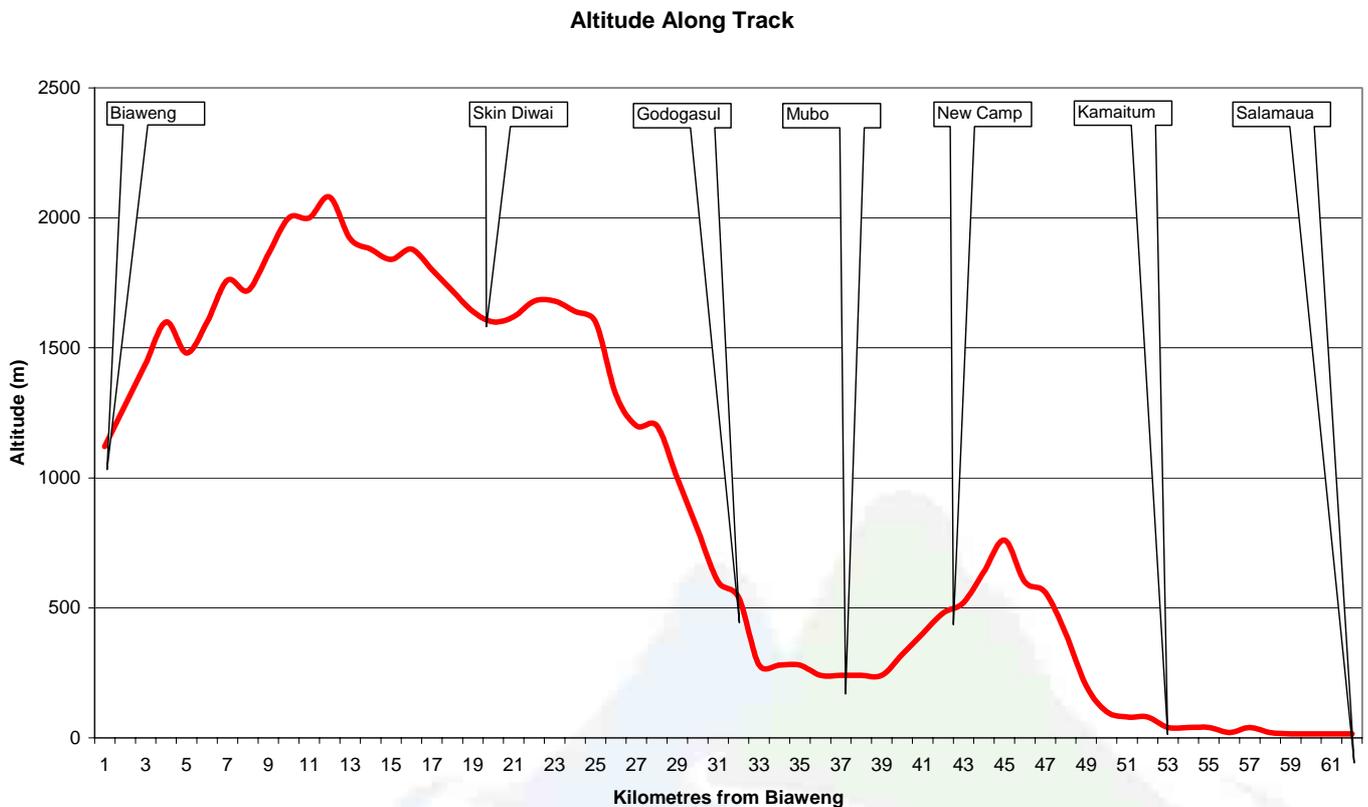




Figure 3: Cross Section Traverse of Track



Stages

The track is usually undertaken as a four or five day trek, with the key stages:

- Biaweng to Skin Diwai 18 km
- Skin Diwai to Godogasul 14 km
- Godogasul to Mubo 5 km
- Mubo to New Camp 6 km
- New Camp to Kamaitum 8 km
- Kamaitum to Salamaua 10 km

As a five day trek the days are:

- Day One: Biaweng to Skin Diwai
- Day Two: Skin Diwai to Godogasul
- Day Three: Godogasul to New Camp
- Day Four: New Camp to Kamaitum
- Day Five: Kamaitum to Salamaua

The trek has been undertaken as a two day trip.



Buisava River Crossing

The Ultimate Adventure

One internet chat site posting (by an Australian, "Wamena") says:

"If you've walked Kokoda Trail, move up a notch and have a go at Black Cat. What a great experience. The walk is not as long as Kokoda and not as busy as Kokoda. The walk is also a lot more accessible than Kokoda. All plane trips are commercial runs, no charters. Kokoda is well described by Kienzle as "being loved to death". The last time I walked Kokoda, I stopped for a breather on a ridge and within 40 minutes there were 96 expats (plus guides) sharing the same ridge. On the Black Cat, I was the only person walking besides the occasional local. I was told that the last group went through some 3 months ahead of me."

"Oh! It is also a lot harder than Kokoda."

Skin Diwai Route

It is important to note that there were various routes used to get to the Wau Goldfields from Salamaua, the name of the Track "Black Cat" follows the route from Salamaua to Godogasul and then goes in a more westerly direction toward Waipali Village and then over to Black Cat. The route described in this Plan is the Skin Diwai Black Cat Route (using the Buisaval Track as described below in the World War Two history) and not the Black Cat route proper.

The track via Black Cat is very rough and difficult, tour operators do not propose to use it. As such it is understood that it is not proposed use the Black Cat route proper. Having said that in terms of the historical authenticity of the track presently used, this had an important part in the war history and the vast majority of it was also used in the gold rush times.

Wau-Salamaua vs. Salamaua to Wau

The direction of the route is presently mostly from Wau to Salamaua, although some adventurers have gone "uphill". Of course both directions have substantial climbs, however the there is a net downhill from Wau to Salamaua. Using the approximate route as per Figure 1 and the traverse as per Figure 2 analysis at a coarse scale shows the total climbs for each direction (note this is at a scale of 1:100,000 and most certainly does not include all the small up and downs of the track on microtopography, the total metres walked uphill will be substantially more!):

- Wau to Salamaua net climbing 1560 m
- Salamaua to Wau net climbing 2520 m

Route Description

The following sections sets out a route description which has been compiled from a number of sources. As such it is anecdotal only and needs confirmation.



North of Godogasul

Day One – Biaweng to Skin Diwai

Approximate Distance 18 km

Net Climbing: 960 m

About 12 hours walking

The first day is the longest. The walk starts at Biaweng an hours drive from Wau. Walking must commence near dawn. Initially the track climbs through Kunai Grass toward the rainforested hills, once under the rainforest canopy the terrain is easier with the track emerging into a clearing at Banis Donkey. The track then continues along the contours of the hills in steep sidelong country. There is a final climb up to Skin Diwai village (??).

The walk takes a full day and some reports suggest walkers may not arrive in Skin Diwai until the early evening.

Day Two – Skin Diwai to Godogasul

Approximate Distance 14 km

Net Climbing: 80 m

About 10 hours walking

Skin Diwai was an American supply area during the Second World War. Trekkers have the opportunity to view the munitions pits and other wartime relics. There is also a crashed American cargo plane nearby.

The track from Skin Diwai to Godogasul is challenging and a long day for trekkers. Whilst the route does not involve climbing any ranges, it contours along the Buisaval Valley with many short climbs. The track is difficult owing to the side slope and the many trees down over the track. Trekking tour companies use ropes to traverse a number of narrow river gorges. There are places where the track is quite treacherous with steep drop offs.

Traversing the rainforest valley, the scenery is spectacular and there is much wildlife to be seen.

Day Three – Godogasul to New Camp

Approximate Distance 11 km

Net Climbing: 400 m

About 7 hours walking

Initially the route goes down to the Bitoi River, then takes trekkers along the river with many river crossings.

The track goes through Mubo Village. Mubo is a substantial village with a school and health centre. There are many World War Two artefacts lying around the perimeter and swimming area on the river near the village.

After Mubo the track follows the Bitoi River with may crossing of the river, most of the track is walking on the river stones. Just before New Camp the track leaves the river and climbs up to the village.

Day Four – New Camp to Salamaua

Approximate Distance 18 km

Net Climbing: 80 m

About 7 hours walking



Guides are necessary at this stage.

The first section is down a steep razor back ridge to Buiayau Creek. There are numerous bomb craters along the route. Once the track joins Buiayau Creek there is about an hours walk to the Francisco River.

Once at the Francisco River the walk is along the river bank to its mouth and then a short walk up the beach to Salamaua.

History of the Black Cat Track

Pioneers – Gold Fever

The Black Cat track is located between Salamaua and Wau. It was established in the late 1920's as the route from the then capital of Morobe Province, Salamaua to the new goldfield at Wau. In 1931 there were 618 Europeans in Wau and apart from some air travel most walked to the goldfields via a land route, mostly along the Black Cat Track. In those days there were about 70 residents of Salamaua, so the economic importance of Wau can be seen for the times.

Bill Anderson was passed over by the Miners Association to lead an expedition into the Ramu area in search of the source of Gold... he undertook another trip and in August 1930, Bill discovered the Black Cat field.

The development of the Wau goldfield was a major feat of engineering and aeronautics. The large dredges were built in Lae, then dismantled and flown by Junkers cargo planes up to Wau, then reassembled. Meanwhile, hundreds of other prospectors worked other areas in the Wau region including Black Cat and the Bitoi river area.

However the gold rush did not last long, by 1935 there were only sixteen miners undertaking gold mining by hydraulic and ground sluicing. The results were described as disappointing. In 1937 the Mining Warden said "*access to this locality cannot be described as being otherwise than abominable... mules often sustain broken legs carrying in supplies*".

World War Two

Not long after the gold had almost faded the region had another role... stopping the Japanese advance south.

Whilst the Kokoda Track is the greatly celebrated World War Two battlefield the Black Cat area saw major action and was critical to the allies winning in this theatre of the Pacific War. With the Japanese established on the northern coast of New Guinea, there was a small group of Australian soldiers located in Salamaua, the main battle headquarters was set up in Wau. These soldiers had virtually no defences, but were regularly bombed and strafed by Japanese warplanes, until in March 1942 the Japanese landed at Salamaua. Once the Japanese occupied Salamaua a small group of Australian soldiers stayed behind to watch and report on activities.

The Salamaua detachment escaped back to headquarters in Wau via the Black Cat and Skin Diwai tracks. Initially a force was retained in Mubo but this too pulled back as (incorrect) advice was received that the Japanese were about to come inland. Headquarters was move from Wau to a remoter area (Watut) and all heavy machinery, the power station and large vehicles were destroyed lest they fall into the hands of the enemy.

After this initial withdrawal, a small force was sent back (along the track) to Mubo, however on 18 march, ten days after landing at Salamaua, the Japanese raided Mubo and destroyed supplies at Kamaitum.



It is important to note that many local men of the region were members of the indigenous NGVR force, there is ample evidence and compliments by the Australian and American forces that without the support of the NGVR the war may have taken a different course.

After the fall of Guadalcanal to the allies in 1942, and then end of the push to Port Moresby via the Kokoda Track, the Japanese sought to take over Wau and its strategic airstrip which would put their bombers in range of Port Moresby. By this stage the Japanese had withdrawn from Gona and Buna in Papua.

Bob Sinclair, in his book the Golden Gateway describes the events:

"There were two main tracks over the mountains to the Wau valley: the Black Cat route and the Buisaval track, coming in via Crystal Creek. These were of course well known to the men of the 2/5th and 2/7th independent companies. But there was another track that they did not know of, which ran between the two main tracks: from House Copper to Wandumi, on the edge of the Wau Valley. This was an old German survey track, cut twenty five years earlier, long forgotten and overgrown. How the Japanese discovered this track has never been explained."

By January 1943 there were Kanga Force patrols at Skin Diwai, Ballams Camp, Time and Black Cat mine with a strong force in Waipali (near Godogasul). Given the threat to Wau, soldiers and engineers were flown into Wau for its defence.

The Japanese outsmarted the defenders by sending token forces along the Black Cat and Buisaval Tracks to deceive Kanga Force whilst the 2-3000 Japanese Soldiers used the Wandumi track. The local force struggled to defend Wau with their efforts scattered to the decoy forces and the main Japanese attacking force. Only a last minute arrival of 800 American troops by air into Wau saved the town.

By this stage (29 January 1943) the Japanese still outnumbered the allies and had fewer casualties. The real saviour of the battle was the Japanese decision to send the attacking force with only two weeks supplies, and given this and heavy aerial attack by British fighters and bombers the Japanese lost the offensive. However there was no surrender and they fought constantly in coming weeks and it was not until the end of February that they had withdrawn to Mubo.



View towards Wau

The Tourism Product

The Tourism Product

Current Tourism Use

The Black Cat Track has relatively recently been “rediscovered” by adventurers and tour operators. The first commercial tour was in 2005.

However it must be recognised that the track has had ongoing use by local communities and it is the main link to the coast for the communities of Skin Diwai, Waipali, Godogasul and Mubo.

In recent years a number of organised tours have used the track. Mainly pioneered by Pam Christie (PNG Trekking Adventures) who has used the track for 8 trips in recent years, with an average group size of 6.

Other firms market the track, however it is unknown whether other tour operators have actually run tours. It is understood that Tropic Tours is also interested in undertaking treks although it is unknown if they have conducted any.

There was one recent event where a security scare stopped a tour operator from conducting the tour. The issue was that one village was unhappy for the group to pass. However this appears to be based on miscommunication between a village and a particular company.

Tim Vincent of Vincent Enterprises does not actually conduct tours but does provide the logistical support for tours. Vincent Enterprises is considering establishing a tour operator business.

Recently the BBC natural history Unit filmed along the track.

The Track has users that traverse from Wau to Salamaua and also up from Salamaua. One of the trained and more experienced guides, Lionel, from Salamaua reports being involved in 13 trips in recent years, five with groups and eight trips with a couple or single trekkers (independent adventurers).

On the basis of available information it is considered that there may have been around 50 users of the track per year over the last two years. This however is an estimate.

It is understood that the first commercial tour was in 2003.

Adventurers Use

The track has also been used by independent adventurers in recent years, one going on to the south to the Bulldog Track (a World War Two attempt to build a road from Wau to the Papuan coast). Recent extreme marathon enthusiasts ran the track in two days.

Transport Linkages

Access to the track is via Wau and Salamaua. The transport linkage to Wau can be made by either air (charter) or road from Lae. PNG Trekking Adventures considers it not viable to use air charter into Wau (from Port Moresby) unless there is a group of 9 or so. So trekkers fly into Lae (Airlines of PNG or Air Nuigini) then travel by road to Wau.



Following Creek to New Camp

Road

Road access to Wau from Lae is reasonably good, being sealed as far as Bulolo and then the road is less well formed and maintained. The road to Wau is subject to landslides and there may be occasional time when this transport link cannot be used (although this would not be often).

Sea

Sea transport is required to/from Salamaua. This can be achieved by local small open outboard powered long boat with regular ferry services (ad hoc timing, depending upon demand) or as a special charter. The tour companies also have chartered larger motor launches out of Lae.

Air

Lae provides a regional air transport linkage. Wau has a good small aircraft airfield and charter flights can be used.

Facilities

Wau

There is no established commercial accommodation in Wau. Vincent Enterprises provides logistical support and for some tours has provided a site for camping.

Kaisenik

The village at the head of the track, with a population of about three hundred.

Biaweng

A village just before the commencement of the track with a population of about 500. Members of the village have plans to construct a guest house for trekkers.

Skin Diwai

Skin Diwai is a small village with a population of 5-10. It has a guest house which can accommodate about ten people comfortably and up to 15. Current price is K20 per guest per night.

Godogasul

Godogasul is a village with about 150 residents. There is no guest house, to date trekkers homestay within the village. There is a shower twenty minutes walk away.

Mubo

Mubo is a village with a population of around 200. There is a school and a small aid post at Mubo. Mubo had a two way radio some years ago however it has not had a functioning radio for some years. It is understood that the Aid post has no community health worker and as such does not actually provide a health service.

Mubo is not often a location for an overnight stay, here is no guest house, to date trekkers that do overnight at Mubo homestay within the village.

Kamaitum

Kamaitum has a population of 200. It does not have a guest house yet.

New Camp

The village of New Camp has a population of about 50. It has a modest guest house. There is a shower 10-15 minutes walk away.



Salamaua

There is a local government owned guest house Haus Kibing in Salamaua with 32 beds comprising 6 bungalows (12 rooms) and some other rooms in the main facility. This guesthouse is a small cabin style guesthouse with common facilities. There is no restaurant and as such guests must be able to cater for themselves. The guest house was under some maintenance when inspected in mid 2007. It is quite rundown and would need major refurbishment to be a used by tour operators for the Black Cat Track.

There are 14 private houses in Salamaua, one of which h is occasionally used by one tour operator as a facility for the end of the trek.

Guest Houses

As per above there are guest houses at:

- Wau?
- Kasienik?
- Biaweng?
- Skin Diwai
- Godogasul (by Homestay)
- New Camp
- Salamaua

The current quality of the guest houses is relatively spartan, many do not have mattresses or beds and the guest houses themselves are simple buildings. Whilst some provide meals, they often do not have crockery and cutlery to serve it. The simple nature of the facilities and services provided by the guest houses limits the financial return for the owners.

PNG TPA has suggested that guest houses have mattresses, a simple but clean set of cutlery and crockery and provide a minimum standard.

The services expected of guest houses varies, in some cases they are used for a communal area for the evening meal, with trekkers sleeping in tents, in other cases the guests sleep in the guest house (usually with their own camping style mattress and bedding). As weather, injury or other delay could cause a trekking party to not reach one of the villages with a guest house by nightfall the tour operators take tents, cooking and sleeping equipment. As such the need for high service level guest houses needs to be determined.

Tour Services

Tour Companies

There are a few tour companies known to have an interest in the Track:

- PNG trekking Adventures, Pamela Christie, essentially the commercial pioneer of the Track.
- Tropic Tours (use of the track unknown).

Vincent Enterprises

Vincent enterprises has provided logistical support to the Track and also has been involved in the establishment of the Track's Association.



Looking Down to Kaimutum

Guides

There are a number of guides from various villages. Some village members act as Guides from their village to the next for trekkers along the walk, whilst others aspire to being overall guides taking parties through the whole Track. The more organised tours tend to have one head guide, personal porters/guides for each trekker and also food/equipment porters.

In January 2006 the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority ran tour guiding and guest house development training with 44 participants attending a one day training course on Tour Guiding and 31 attending the Guest House Development Training. There were participants from Biaweng, Skin Diwai, Godogasul, Mubo, Bitoi, Wapali, Kamaitum, New Campo, and Salamaua.

Products and Services

Capacity versus Demand

At present there is a mis-match between the capacity to provide products and services to support the development of the Black Cat Track and the potential demand. The number and quality of guest houses along the Track can be expanded, there are no good quality guest houses at the trail heads.

The trail itself needs improving and in some places to be made safer to match the expectations of adventure tourists who want an adventurous but not perilous (overly dangerous) experience.

The guides have a minimum of experience and training and the type of trekkers the Black cat could attract will have experience on other such treks and have high expectations as to the experience and skills of guides.

The community's capacity is limited as most villages have little knowledge or experience with tourism, this can lead to unrealised expectations.

The Experience

The Black Cat Track offers a unique experience, at this stage it is not crowded and is very much a wilderness jungle walk. The combination of the scenery, wildlife, forest, living culture and the historical (gold rush and World War Two) heritage is unique.

World War Two

There are a lot of war relics along the track. Munitions pits, guns clothing, plane wrecks and bomb craters can be seen along the track.

Scenery

The track offers spectacular scenery with waterfalls, the forest the mountains, ridges, rivers and the coastline. There are views of the Salamaua Peninsula and the Huon Gulf.

Wildlife

The wildlife along the track are quite spectacular with birds of paradise, black and white cockatoos, hornbills as well as butterflies, cassowaries, tree kangaroos, cuscus.



Ridge down from Mt Tambo

Adventurous Trekking

The Black Cat can fill a very important niche and offer a managed, but very adventurous trekking experience. Given people who have done both the Kokoda and Black Cat tracks say the Black Cat is much harder, the Black Cat can be marketed as the ultimate tropical jungle trekking adventure.

National Tourism Planning Context

National Tourism Vision and Principles

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Sector Masterplan sets out a vision for tourism to be "a growing and sustainable industry which:

- *Is recognised globally as a destination which offers a range of unique niche adventure tourism experiences;*
- *Generates significant investment and employment through profitable business opportunities;*
- *Celebrates, protects and enhances our unique cultural heritage and natural environment by showcasing these attributes;*
- *Provides visitors with an enjoyable, distinct and memorable experience;*
- *Demonstrates partnership collaboration across all stakeholders;*
- *Provides a broad distribution of benefits across PNG and imposes the lifestyles of rural and urban communities."*

Further the Masterplan establishes some planning principles, which include a market driven approach, sustainable and responsible tourism, retention and equitable distribution of benefits from tourism, tourism which supports and engages the community and a partnership approach by all stakeholders.

Clearly the development of the Black Cat Track has the potential to contribute to the vision and can be developed to meet the planning principles.

Trekking and climbing is listed as a key product segment as is WW11 history, culture, birdwatching and flora and fauna (as relevant to Black Cat Track). As such the Black Cat Track is a product which is one of the key product segments and meets the aspects of five out of the ten key product segments.

Morobe Province is not one of the four Model provinces established by the tourism masterplan, however the plan has a major emphasis on community based tourism,

National Tourism Snapshot

In 2005 PNG received 18,000 holiday travellers, Australians represent 40 percent of the tourist (holiday) visitors, with Japan at 24% and USA at 15%. In 2005 there were 2,850 rooms available in PNG.

There are 13 travel agents and 25 tour operators.

Provincial Management

The track is entirely within the Morobe province and has limited support from Morobe Provincial Administration. The western portion of the track lies in Wau-Bulolo district and the northern portion lies in the Huon district. The Bulolo district has allocated K3000 to the track for maintenance in 2007 and in 2006 Huon district allocated K8000 (allocated via Morobe Tourism Bureau??).



Product Positioning

Extreme Adventure

The Black Cat Track would appear to be an ideal product for development efforts for PNG. It meets the key market focii of adventure, culture, World War Two and Wildlife.

It is for the most adventurous and fittest and as such the trek provides an opportunity to further promote PNG as the ultimate in extreme adventure.

Whilst there are security concerns which may affect more timid tourists from visiting PNG overall, the type of fit trekker who can use the Black Cat Track is likely to be a more adventurous and travel to remote countries/locations. They are less likely to be put off by the difficult travel logistics and any security concerns as they seek remote, exotic extreme experiences. As such these trekkers provide an ideal market for PNG.

Adventure Package

It is important to note that with three key trekking products, Kokoda, Black Cat and Mount Wilhelm, PNG offers a good range of suitable experiences. It is suggested that the Mt Wilhelm and Black Cat products could be marketed together as they essentially offer complimentary products with a similar need for a high level of fitness.

Wildlife

There may be an opportunity to further develop the wildlife/birdwatching focus for the Track. In the first instance this is needed as a key element in attracting general trekkers. However if there are good numbers of a range of icon wildlife species (birds and other fauna) the Track may be able to be promoted as a specialist wildlife experience.

Overall Analysis of the Opportunity

The Black Cat Track has the potential to be developed as a well managed, world class trekking experience. Marketing will need to ensure the product is described so that the extreme adventure nature of the trek and the high level of fitness is understood.



New Camp

Aspirations and Concerns of Stakeholders

Consultation

The process to develop the Plan has involved some consultation, including a meeting at Morobe Tourism Bureau, interviews with tourism operators and an informal meeting at Salamaua.

NOTE: A meeting planned for Wau did not eventuate and it is considered important to consult stakeholders from Wau, Kaisenik and Biaweng prior to finalising the Plan.

The Morobe Tourism Bureau meeting had a small group including participants from the track. Participants included Henni Dembis (PNG TPA), Rossetta Gonera (Morobe Tourism Bureau), Joe Kewere (Morobe Provincial Government), Morris Piris (Kamaitum), Tim Eimbas (Kumaitum) and Ben Eimbas (Salamaua).

A meeting was held with the Village Development Trust with Mr Maiire Winny and Bing Siga. This group has a focus on community development and conservation. They have had some success with the establishment of the Kamaiali Wildlife Area. With funding from donors including the World Bank, a lodge has been established on the coast to the South of Salamaua. The Village Development Trust may have an interest in working with the establishment of a conservation regime supported by tourism in the area of the Black Cat Track.

A meeting focussing on Ecotourism in the Black Cat Track was well attended with the District Administrator (Tony Asg???) and the Business Development Officer, William), Bris Kanda (Tony Coalega). Bris Kanda do not have any current plans for the Black Cat, however a potential role could be to help communities develop and manage guest houses. In 2006 the Huon District put in K 8000 toward the Black Cat Track (what the budget has been spent on is unknown).

The Black Cat Association has been established and one representative has provided the minutes of one major meeting held.

On the basis of the consultation undertaken to date, the following aspirations and concerns of stakeholders have been identified:

- The Guest House at Salamaua is concerned that trekking companies use private houses in Salamaua not the guest house.
- RSL Australia and the PNG Volunteer Rifle Association may have some interest in the development of the track.
- Both Bulolo and Huon Districts support the development of the track.
- Morobe Tourism Bureau has provided support for the development of the track and will continue to provide support for its development and marketing.
- The Bulldog Track may also attract interest.
- The communities along the track realise the potential financial benefits and they also recognise the need for strong community policing to ensure security for trekkers.



- The Association recognises that a management systems needs to be in place to provide a good tourism product.
- Stakeholders involved in the association understand that a limit may need to be placed on the number of trekkers to ensure impacts on the communities are positive and don't affect the communities.
- The Association recognises that the current "capacity" would be 20 persons per day along the track (and in each village).
- The track is overgrown in many places and needs clearing. The Association has been clearing the track with some money from MTB.
- There are ward councillors in the villages Mubo, Skin Diwai, Godogasul, Kamaitum and Salamaua. The Association has been attempting to contact them and involve them in development of the track.
- Signage has been developed and provided by the PNG TPA, it has not yet been installed.
- It is recognised that radios are needed along the route for safety and coordination of management.
- Further training of guides is required in first aid, guiding etc.
- Landowners and villages have expectations of good financial rewards and there may be some frustration that they have not received much to date. Some landowners have aspirations for royalties, whereas this is difficult to provide from trekking, whereas income can be gained by providing services etc.
- The Association considers that there needs to be a series of awareness meetings.
- There is the need to balance the aspirations and financial returns between community benefits (e.g. community guest houses and individual benefits (e.g. the recent money for track clearing).
- There is an interest in the track from stakeholders in Wau, local community members and government bodies.
- The Association has set the following short term goals:
 - Ongoing track clearing;
 - Awareness in villages;
 - Guide training and a management system;
 - Equitable dispersion of projects along the route;
 - Develop local coordinators for the track using Local Level Government and ward officers.
 - Develop a communication system;
 - Identify military heritage and cultural areas of interest.
 - Encourage communities to provide cultural activities for guests.
 - Accurate mapping of the track is required.



Climbing up ridge

Development Vision and Principles

Black Cat Vision

The overall vision is:

To develop the Black Cat Track to be a thriving, sustainable safe trekking experience, which presents the historical heritage, local culture and natural heritage and is managed to support the local communities' development.

In summary, the vision is to manage the Black Cat track for the local communities' benefit.

The vision can be further outlined in terms of the numbers of trekkers which can support the community and a rate of growth which grows with the ability to manage the Track and provide level of service:

- 500 trekkers annually by 2010
- 1000 trekkers annually by 2015

Principles

The Plan adopts to following key principles:

- **Safety:** That safety of guests and guides is paramount, recognising the rugged adventure style of the product.
- **Sustainability:** That the ecological sustainability of the tourism activity along the track and associated experiences is fundamental.
- **Community Benefit:** That the benefit to the local communities' is maximised.
- **Business Security:** Those existing businesses which have pioneered the route should be provided ongoing security, whilst providing opportunities for new businesses where there is an opportunity for sustainable growth and/or a need for investment.
- **World Class:** That the tourism experience offered should strive to be of a world class standard, befitting the uniqueness of the tourism product.
- **Linkages:** That the management of the development should reinforce linkages of tourism products (e.g guides, accommodation, transport) and linkages with the local communities.



Bitoi River

Management Strategies

Introduction

This section sets out the main strategies for managing and developing the Black Cat Track. Where there is background information, this is set out in plain text, the actual strategies and actions are shown in italics.

The following strategies are not set out in any priority, the Acton Plan sets out the immediate priorities.

Track Establishment and Maintenance

Determining the Route

The route is largely set by history although in a more strict sense there may be places where it would be sensible to consider minor realignment of the route.

Undertake a review of the current route and determine where if any areas should be relocated. Plan the relocations and include these in the initial track clearing program or in later upgrading/maintenance programs.

Some stakeholders have commented that the route should use the old Black Cat route from Skin Diwai to Wau via Black Cat not Banis Donkey. Pam Christie has reviewed this route and suggests that it is not suitable for trekking. The route presently used has as much historical significance and appears to be the most practical.

Formally confirm that the present route is the route of the Track to be developed and confirm its name (Black Cat Track).

Clearing the Route

The Bulolo Provincial Administrator has allocated K3000 for clearing logs etc. along the track. It is unknown how or whether this money has been spent on the track. The Administrator has advised that a further K3000 will be available in 2008.

Track Direction

Some have undertaken the trek from the coast to Wau, but all the known tour commercial tours have been from Wau to Salamaua.

There are many reasons to establish the route in one direction, the main one being once numbers of trekkers grow it allows groups to "pulse" though the route without intercrop encounters which reduce the wilderness feel of the experience.

From a commercial sense, the tourism product appears to work much better if the route is from Wau to Salamaua. Whilst not the only consideration, the "downhill" nature of this direction makes it easier to market.

Adopt the Wau to Salamaua direction as the "official" track direction. This is not to stop any party going the other way, but rather set up the systems and route for Wau-Salamaua.



NOTE: See equitable allocation of guides re direction not favouring Wau based guides.

Mapping the Route

This Plan has an indicative route based on anecdotal evidence only.

The track should be mapped using GPS points collected along the route.

Signage

PNG Tourism Promotion Authority has developed a series of signs on colour bond sheet to be located along the route.

Install the signs that have been prepared.

Consider a suitable signage strategy, initially place large informative signs at the entry/departure of the track which set out the management arrangements, fees to the Association etc.

Back Cat Track Association

Need for Coordinated Management

With the many villages involved, with local, provincial and national level government agencies involvement, with various tour operators, with competing guides and with other key stakeholders, there is a clear need for coordinated management. Whilst the management model has not been evaluated in great detail it would appear to be reasonable to work with the fledgling association which is being formed and use this as a mechanism for local empowerment in management of the track with key stakeholder involvement.

The need for an independent Statutory Body like the Kokoda Authority is not clear. It would appear that an incorporated association with the key villages etc. as members can achieve the required outcomes without the need for legislation.

Formally adopt the Black Cat Track Association as the coordinating and management body for the track. PNG TPA and Morobe Tourism Board to evaluate the Association's effectiveness after twelve months and then every two years and if statutory power is required to considered promoting the required legislation.

Membership of Association

The Association should be established with a membership based on:

- Full Members (full voting rights and equity in Association):
 - Each village along the route;
 - Morobe Tourism Board;
 - Morobe Provincial Administration;
 - Huon District Administration;
 - Bulolo District Administration;
 - PNG Tourism Promotion Authority;
 - Other NGO members the above full members invite to join.
- Business Partner members (voting rights but no equity):
 - Vincent Enterprises (as the prime supporter);
 - PNG Trekking (as the founding tour operator);
 - Other tour and trekking organisations; and
 - Accredited partner guesthouses.
- Associate Membership:
 - Accredited guides;
 - Trainee guides and porters
- Sponsor/Supporter



The distinction between Full and Business partner members is that full members may vote to allow an organisation to join as a member (in other words the local villages and government agencies control who is a member). Business partner members are by invitation of the full membership. It is intended that the businesses which create the Black Cat product are all members but as the way of things go, this is likely to grow and change as the tourism product becomes a success. Guesthouses can become partner members and as such would be part of the Association's coordinated booking and product delivery system.

Guides themselves become associate members once they are accredited. It is hoped to encourage some sponsors in the future and they should be recognised as a sponsorship category.

The Association should be established with membership categories including full member, business partner, and associate and sponsor categories.

Role and Responsibilities of Association

The Association should have the following roles and responsibilities:

- *Track clearing, maintenance, repair, upgrade, signage and in future, installation of bridges and safety ropes.*
- *Coordinating installation of radios then maintaining them.*
- *Coordinating guide training (provided by PNG TOPA and others).*
- *Accrediting Guides.*
- *Setting guesthouse standards and accrediting guest houses.*
- *Taking bookings from tour groups and private adventurers, then advising guesthouses and guides of the booking.*
- *Identifying mechanisms to benefit local communities and as soon as funds permit to provide tangible benefits to local communities.*
- *Undertaking an annual risk assessment of the track to confirm its suitability for tourism use.*
- *Coordinating a security response with local level policing and other agencies to ensure free and unhindered passage by tourists.*
- *Liaising with PNG TPA and MTB regarding the promotion and marketing of the track.*

Evacuation/Search and Rescue Contingency

The Association should establish the viability of evacuation points and establish and maintain clearings in at least six to eight evacuation points spaced along the track.

In the medium term a formal search and rescue plan should be developed utilising the radio communications along the route to quickly mobilise locals in an organised way and then escalate the response to other agencies. All villages should be advised of the Plan and indicate agreement to their role should it be needed.

Communication

Currently tour operators take a satellite phone with them on the track for use in emergencies.

The use of a satellite phone, supported by a handheld GPS to confirm actual location should be mandatory for all groups using the track.

It is proposed to install VHF(UHF?) radios in each village for coordination and communication along the track.



Lead guides in a group should also carry a mobile VHF radio such that they can communicate with each village. However it must be recognised that in many places along the track, the terrain is likely to limit the ability of handheld VHF radios to reach even the next village

The locations where satellite phone and or VHF radio reception is possible should be marked on the route. Further the locations where GPS position fixing is possible should be determined.

It should be noted that steep valleys and thick rainforest canopy cover can stop both satellite phone reception and recording GPS positions.

Ongoing Funding and User Pays

It is intended that the management of the track be funded by user pays. Some initial capital will be required to establish the product (hopefully in the form of a grant/sponsorship) then the ongoing management should be able to be self funding.

NOTE: There are many factors which could affect the success of the tourism product and this Plan should not be considered a feasibility study which confirms financial viability of any course of action.

It is suggested that a track charge be set for all trekkers (private adventurers and tours groups).

A track use fee of K100 should be charged to each trekker, payable at the commencement of the track and to the Association. In the interim this can be collected by Vincent Enterprises with full and open accounting, until other arrangements (such as a full or part time coordinator) can be made.

Community Involvement

Consultation

The success of coordinated management will be full and open communication and consultation with stakeholders. Whilst the formation of the Association is critical to this there is a need for wider consultation over the establishment and adoption of this Plan and then over its implementation. Local councillors and ward officers in villages, village members, guides, porters, tour operators, transport operators, government agencies and NGO's all needed to be involved and consulted.

The Association develop a full consultation list and identify mechanisms to ensure that all key stakeholders have a role in finalising and adopting this Plan and then implementing the development of the Black Cat Track.

Stakeholder Liaison

Once the Plan is adopted there needs to be a wider stakeholder liaison process than just the Board of Management (committee) of the Association.

The Association have a stakeholder liaison process where all stakeholders are personally involved in liaison at least every year (preferably more often).

Self Determination

Whilst the Association has a role in coordinating the overall management of the Track, it should not take over local community self determination for their own involvement in the Tracks' management. As an example, the individual management arrangements for a guest house (privately owned or village owned) can be determined by the village itself. The selection of porters and how often an individual works can be the discretion of the community and individual.



The Management of the Track should encourage self determination by local communities.

Landholder Benefit

Landholders, with long held traditional use rights and ownership may expect some return from the commercial activity of trekking occurring on their land. In the case of the Black Cat Track it is suggested that a royalty payment per se may not be appropriate to landholders, but as all are involved in one of the villages to ensure there are benefits to the landholders via their local village.

Minimising Disaffected Communities

Some communities who are adjacent to the track (including those along the Skin Diwai – Black Cat – Wau route could become disaffected owing to a perceived lack of benefit from the use of the track by tourists.

The Kaisenik and Biaweng communities may be disaffected if trekkers all stay in Wau then pass through the communities before starting the track. Similarly the Salamaua community and the guesthouse see little real benefit as the trekkers have completed their ordeal and are already contemplating cold drinks showers and fine dining in Lae.

Develop mechanisms to ensure benefits to all communities. These may include using some of the people from nearby villages (e.g. the Black Cat area for track clearing/upgrading and as porters once demand increases.

Village Benefits

Once a critical mass of annual trekkers is paying the track fee to the Association, providing tangible community benefits should be a priority. This should be seen as core role of the Association and for the collection of Track fees.

Potential benefits could include help to schools, aid posts, providing micro-business loans for the establishment of enterprises to support the track (e.g small loans to a village guesthouse for a micro-hydro electricity generator, a loan to a group of village women to establish uniforms and simple lighting to allow an evening dance show for trekkers in a village etc.). One initial priority could be the reestablishment of the aid post at Mubo, the building exists and if it were restaffed and equipped could provide an important role in the life of the local communities as well as provide first aid for trekkers. This sort of project may not be able to be entirely funded by the Association through allocation of a proportion of the Track Fee, but some contribution toward it could encourage Provincial level support.

Product Development

Guides

A fundamental decision needs to be made in the development of a trekking tourism product such as the Black Cat Track, is it to be undertaken with a guide or eventually developed such that the trek can be undertaken going along the foot path from village to village with a map.

The Black Cat Track is rugged and dangerous and the track should only be undertaken by groups with a guide, preferably one guide per trekker.

There has been some discussion of guides going from village to the next village then handing over to a guide from that village to take the group on their way the next day. Unfortunately this model does not reflect the tourism product demand, the rapport the trekker develops with their guide is a vital part of the tourism experience and changing guides daily destroys the opportunity for this.



It is recommended that guides stay with the group/trekker for the duration of the trek.

Guide Training

Guides have received some training from the PNG TPA in basic guiding skills. Current priorities for guide training include first aid, hospitality and more advanced guiding skills. It is important to recognise that there are only opportunities for a limited number of guides until numbers of trekkers grow substantially and as such it is best to work with the current trained/experienced guides and up skill them rather than train more potential guides.

PNG TPA and the Association to facilitate additional training of the current guides.

Guide Accreditation

It is suggested that guides be formally accredited by the Association, with those who have experience and the recent training being the first batch of accredited guides (perhaps after receiving the first aid training and any additional competencies (such as English language skills) assessed).

The Association to develop its set of agreed criteria (experience on the track, past training, first aid, English skills etc.) and adopt these for the initial accreditation of a limited number of guides.

NOTE: In future once the track become more developed and used, guide training in World War Two history and on the woldlfie etc. will become desirable and once this happens, these criteria should be added to the accreditation requirements.

The Association should evaluate the number of accredited guides as number grow and at least six monthly confirm if more accredited guides are required to accommodate growth or replace exiting guides (owing to lack of interest, retirement etc.).

The guide accreditation system should be based on the criteria above and on the adoption of a code of ethics, this code should address:

- *Personal behaviour with tourists;*
- *Keeping with the tourist on the track and looking after their health and safety;*
- *Explanation of culture, WWII and wildlife;*
- *Ethics in relation to charges, tips etc.*
- *Etc.*

Guide ID

Accredited guides should be issued with a laminated Identity card with their photograph so that tour company leaders and tourists can ensure they are going on the Track with accredited guides.

A system for certification of trainee guides can be implemented in future years such that there is a steady and growing supply of guides. It is suggested that trainee guides should undertake a number of treks with tour groups as assistant or trainee guides, and then get their formal guide/first aid training before becoming an accredited guide. Once the trainee system is established, it is suggested that any tour groups with more than ten in their group also pay for a trainee guide.

To avoid any doubt the focus for the next twelve months to two years is to up skill existing trained/experienced guides and get them performing well, and then develop a trainee process.



Guide Coordination

Once there is a limited number of trained guides accredited the Association should have a role in allocating trips so all guides get a reasonable number of the available trips. This is not to say that one tour company may not develop a trust and relationship with one tour guide and request that guide.

Payment for guides should at this stage be direct by the tour company/trekkers, the Association only to undertake the booking service.

Porters

Porters can be used by tour groups to carry communal gear (tents cooking utensils food etc.) and also to carry each trekkers personal backpack. The number of porters required depends upon the preferences of the tour company and the trekker. Unlike guides porters do not need specific training and as such can be picked up along the way. Whereas guides need to stay with the group for the duration of the trek to provide a rapport with guests, the inclusion of new porters each day who the trekker met at the village the night before adds to the experience of meeting local people.

It is suggested that trekkers and tour companies be encouraged to engage porters each day in each village.

Accommodation and Facilities

Guest houses [provide accommodation along the route. However at present there are no viable guest houses at each end of the Track.

There is a demand for a guest house in Wau, Biaweng or Kaisenik to provide accommodation for trekkers the night before they start the trek.

There is a need to substantially upgrade the guesthouse in Salamaua in order for it to provide the standard of accommodation required by tourists at the end of the four day trek. The guest house needs good flush toilets, hot clean showers and cabins which are mosquito proof and have reasonable bedding. The guest house should ideally provide fresh, western style or hearth local food.

There is a need to establish standards for the guest houses along the track, ideally they should provide a similar standard of accommodation so tour companies can market the product offering a particular standard.

Guest houses could offer meals however there needs to be liaison with the tour companies using the track to ensure there is demand for meals to be provided (as some tour companies may wish to provide all meals to their guests as guest have dietary requirements or the companies marketing has offered particular standard of meals.

Transport Linkages

At present tour companies make private charter arrangements to transfer guest by road from Lae to Wau or by plane from Port Moresby to Wau. Similarly to date PNG Trekking has chartered a boat from Salamaua to Lae and other trekkers have used local long boats.

The Association to monitor the efficiency and reliability of transport arrangements and as the use of the track grows to identify any opportunities for regular or more efficient transport arrangements at each end of the Track.



Support for Independent Adventurers

Whilst the core tourism growth is likely to be from trekkers coming in groups facilitated by tour companies, as the Track becomes more widely known there is likely to be increasing demand from independent users. Adventurous backpackers and other adventure travellers could eventually form a substantial proportion of the users of the Track.

The Association to focus initially of reliable delivery of the product to the pioneering tour company(ies) over the next years or so, then develop strategies and approaches for independent users.

Booking for Tour Operators

As discussed above the Association should become the track's booking organisation. At present there are so few treks this has been a matter of ensuring logistics will happen, rather than arriving at a village which is already occupied, or finding all available guide left with a group yesterday. However as growth happens the booking system and coordination of dates will become vital to ensure all groups get a reliable quality product.

Booking fees need to be charged for any booking system to have any validity (otherwise tour company will book and alienate dates which will then be unavailable for others, but not get used).

The Association to institute a K300 non-refundable booking fee to hold a departure date available for three months out from the date. This is non refundable, a K100 non refundable booking fee should apply for a date within the next month.

NOTE: the booking fee is not included in the Track Fees and is to cover the direct communication and organisation cost incurred by the Association for making arrangements for each group.

Security

There have not been any known major security incidents a along the track. However there is the potential for them should some elements of communities become disgruntled or have criminal intentions.

Develop a community policing approach and ensure local constables are appointed in each village along the track.

NOTE: This is not budgeted for in the chapter below, but could be a necessity to support from the Track Fee.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development Approach

There is an opportunity to ensure that the ongoing development of the Track and growth of its use is ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable.

The prime aim should be to achieve development of the Black Track in a sustainable manner.

Maximising Community Benefits

The community benefit needs to be equitable between communities along the Track and within communities. That is not say those that work harder (guides, porters, guesthouse operators should not have a greater share of the rewards, but there must be a strong net benefit to the local community.



Minimising Cultural and Social Impacts

Whilst there needs to be a positive benefit to the local community, there is also the potential for social and cultural impacts. This can be as simple as a group disrupting normal evening activities in the village which does not affect the village too negatively if it happens once or twice a month but once it is twice a week becomes an impact, which for some in the community could have a seriously negative effect on their desired lifestyle.

A benefit can be "cultural renewal" where a community actively presents its indigenous culture to tourists is encourage community members, the younger generation to learn their culture and present it for tourist. Where this is done in an authentic way is can contribute to cultural renewal however there have been instances where the presentation of culture becomes homogenised or in some way made not authentic to suit tourists taste and then cultural renewal becomes a dilution of authentic culture.

The Association to raise social and cultural issues in its consultation and liaison with local communities and if required develop strategies to ensure social and cultural impacts are minimised.

Minimising Ecological Impacts

The development of the Black Cat Track in a relatively pristine area has the potential to cause direct ecological impacts. The two critical issues will be the track itself, which as numbers grow could erode and cause other impacts. The second is disposal of human waste, when numbers are low this is not an issue and would be within the assimilative capacity of the forest environment (provided usually best practice for free disposal of faeces, buried away from watercourses etc.) are used. However as numbers increase this would become an issue.

It is suggested that the track be closely monitored, and once numbers start to exceed 250-300 trekkers per year that a review (a simple environmental audit) be undertaken to identify areas where track works are required to ameliorate impacts.

It is suggested that all guest houses have pit toilets as soon as possible and that once numbers exceed 500 trekkers per year that all guest houses should have composting or simple treatment systems so that pathogens and nutrients from waste are not released to the local environment.

Biodiversity Conservation

One of the key attractions of the track is its pristine forest and intact biodiversity. Impacts on biodiversity can be major in tourist trekking areas (e.g. in the Himalayas where tourist activity increased demand for firewood and exacerbated deforestation).

The conservation status of the area is unknown and there may or may not be wildlife of high conservation value present (rare or threatened). One stakeholder has expressed the view that the areas should have some form of protected Area Status, however there is no known program for this to occur.

The use of wildlife as a food source or for making artefacts etc. can be at a sustainable level for the community but when tourists buy the items, this can lead to unsustainable harvesting from the wildlife population. An example may be Cassowary eggs, eaten occasionally by locals but could cause loss of recruitments if many trekkers were fed the delicacy.

As growth of the use of the Track grows, review issues of the sustainable use of wildlife or other effects.



Marketing and Promotion

The marketing of the Black Cat Track will be jointly achieved by PNG Tourism Promotion Authority and Morobe Tourism Board at the destination level and by individual tourism operators at the product level.

There would appear to be strong support for marketing the Black cat Track by MTB and PNG TPA. Tour operators are marketing the Track however it has yet to be really promoted as a thriving product with regular trips by many operators.

At this point it is probably best to use editorial marketing through familiarisations and providing stories of the Trek to key travel and general media. Once the product becomes a reliable quality experience PNG TPA will probably be able to add the Track to its suit of adventure experiences offered in PNG.

Undertake familiarisations and promote the Track through travel and general media.





Budget



Guides provide an important safety role.

Capital Expenditure Required

The section following sets out the potential income and expenditure for the Track Association, and potential income for porters and guides. On the basis of the budget set out in the following section the track management is potentially self funding once 500 or so trekkers undertake the route.

However for this to happen a reliable, safe and quality tourism product must be offered, to gain word of mouth and to ensure that expectations raised by marketing the track are met.

To achieve this modest capital investment is required. The key priorities are:

Radio Communications

Radio communication (at each village Biaweng, Skin Diwai, Mubo, Godogasul, New Camp, Kamaitum and Salamaua).

The priority is probably for 6 evenly spaced radios with the seventh at Mubo.

The cost is likely to be K25,000.

Immediate Track Clearing

There needs to be an initial track clearing program, further work can be undertaken once trekker numbers grow and the Track Fee can pay for maintenance.

It is suggested that K10,000 is required for an adequate track clearing program.



Table 1: Potential Association Budget

ANNUAL INCOME					
Number of Trekkers	100	200	500	1000	1500
Income from Trekkers	10,000	20,000	50,000	100,000	150,000
Accreditation fees - Guesthouses (K1 per night per guest)	500	1,000	2,500	5,000	7,500
Accreditation fees - Guides (K1 per guest)	100	200	500	1,000	1,500
	<i>10,600</i>	<i>21,200</i>	<i>53,000</i>	<i>106,000</i>	<i>159,000</i>
ANNUAL EXPENSES					
Meetings and communications	1,000	2,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Legal expenses	500	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Accounting/Audit	500	500	1,000	2,000	3,000
Bank fees	200	200	200	200	200
Track Management - Clearing	2,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Track Management - Signs	500	500	500	500	500
Track Management - Maintaining Radios	1,000	2,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Track Management - Bridges/Fixed Ropes	0	1,500	2,000	5,000	7,500
Track Management - Evacuation/First Aid	0	0	3,000	5,000	5,000
Track Management - Construction	0	0	5,000	25,000	40,000
Product Development - Guide Training	500	500	1,000	5,000	15,000
Product Development - Guide Accreditation	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Product Development - Guesthouse					
Training and Management Support	500	1,000	2,000	1,000	1,000
Product Development - Guesthouse Accreditation	1,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Product Development - Coordinator	900	2,500	15,000	20,000	40,000
Marketing and Promotion- Map/Brochure	500	1,000	1,500	2,000	3,000
Community Support - Community Projects	500	2,500	3,800	22,300	25,800
	<i>10,600</i>	<i>21,200</i>	<i>53,000</i>	<i>106,000</i>	<i>159,000</i>

Indicative Budget for Black Cat Association

The table above outlines a potential budget for the Black Cat Association, it sets out potential core income and expenditure items for various levels of use of the track. It is important to note that this budget is not in any way based on a feasibility assessment and is only notional.

Income

The budget is based on the following:

- Each trekker (private or with a tour guide) pays K100 to the Association.
- Each Guesthouse contributes an accreditation (and booking) fee to the Association of K1 per guest night.
- Each Guide contributes an accreditation (and booking) fee to the Association of K1 per trip.



NOTE: The budgets for trekker numbers up to 500 are considered reasonable, however, once trekker number grow beyond 500 per year there is likely to be a need for major construction and upgrading of the track, whether this can be funded from the annual income or would need a grant or loan cannot be determined at this stage.

Not included in the above budget, but it is suggested that as number grow booking dates and holding them will become an issue, as such at some point a booking fee will need to be charged to tour companies.

Corporate Governance of Association

It is assumed that the association will be managed by volunteers on behalf of the members. Once the numbers grow a full time paid coordinator will be required and has been included in the budget. Once numbers grow to around 200 the budget includes some expense to contribute to a part time coordinator.

A modest amount has been included for communications, legal, accounting and in the early years the Association will rely heavily on support in kind from organisations such as Morobe Tourism Bureau.

Track Management

The initial clearance of the track and then its ongoing upkeep will be the highest priority. As numbers grow the installation of some fixed rope safety lines and bridges will be able to be achieved. Once number row beyond 500 the track is likely to need major upgrade in places as the impact of all the foot traffic of trekkers, guides, porters and village folk is likely to result in compaction and erosion in areas. Given this, substantial budget has been allocated for construction should use numbers grow in the medium term.

It is suggested that when budget allows some first aid kits and stretchers be located on the track and that helicopter pads be

Product Development

The main product development aspect budgeted for is guide training and accreditation and guesthouse accreditation. It is assumed that PNG TPA and Morobe Tourism Bureau will continue to provide support and undertake the training. The costs budgeted for are association expenses, travel of members, promoting the training, printing accreditation labels etc.

There is a modest budget suggested for ongoing guesthouse management support for some business and hospitality guidance to the guest houses.

Marketing and Promotion

It is suggested that the Association's core role is management of the track and coordination of delivery of the tourism product, not marketing and promotion. The Morobe Tourism Bureau and PNG Tourism Promotion Authority should have the prime responsibility for marketing and promotion.

As such the potential budget includes a minimum budget for marketing.

Community Support

Given that the aim of the track is to support the local community it is vital that the local communities at the beginning, end and along the track see tangible community benefits as well as the financial benefits to individuals working as guides, porters and in guesthouses (as community staff for community owned guesthouses or in privately owned guesthouses).



As such the budget provides for community support projects to be funded. In the initial growth of use of the track the ability for the meagre funding to extend to community support will be limited, however once growth in trekkers occurs there will be increasing opportunity.





Table 2: Potential Guesthouse Income

ANNUAL INCOME					
Number of Trekkers	100	200	500	1,000	1,500
Average Group Size	5	5	10	10	15
Groups per year	20	40	50	100	100
Total guest nights	500	1,000	2,500	5,000	7,500
Nights per year with Guests	20	40	50	100	100+
Income per guest house (5 guest houses)	2,000	4,000	10,000	20,000	30,000
Required Guesthouse capacity	10	10	15	15	20+

Guesthouses

There are guest houses at Wau/Kaisenik/Biaweng?, Skin Diwai, Godogasul (by Homestay), New Camp and Salamaua.

If the track continues as a four day trek the product will in the short to medium term support up to five guest houses (track start, 3 nights and track end).

At present the budget provides for a network of single guesthouses in each location, as numbers grow capacity may be increased with additional guests. This budget shows accommodation only and not meals etc.

Based on K20 per night the income is shown above. There may be opportunities to charge more than K20 for the existing products although this is doubtful. Where an increase in revenue for guest houses is possible is if they provide slightly greater services, mosquito screen rooms, mattresses, pit toilet (or better) shower, food (local meals or even simple western food) and events (cultural presentations etc.). It is possible for a simple but well appointed guest house to achieve a yield per guest of K50-100 if the quality and services are provided.

As can be seen numbers of less than 100 trekkers per year will see a very poor return for the guesthouses, however once numbers reach 500 per year the guest houses are becoming a viable business (with even greater returns if the guest houses are improved), other services such as meals offered etc.



Table 3: Potential Guide Porter Income

INCOME					
Number of Trekkers	100	200	500	1000	1500
Average Group Size	5	5	10	10	15
Groups per year	20	40	50	100	100
Guide Days	500	1000	2500	5000	7500
Guides Needed (@100 days per year)	5	10	25	50	75
Income per guide (K30 per day, 5 days)	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Porter Days (4 porter days per trekker)	400	800	2000	4000	7500
Porters needed from each "village" (4 villages)	5	10	25	50	75
Total porters needed	20	40	100	200	300
Income per porter (K20 per day)	400	800	1000	2000	2500

Guides and Porters

At this stage it would appear that the market price for a guide is around K20 per day and for a porter slightly less. The above budget provides a potential return which assumes that each Guide (head guide or personal guide) receives K150 for the whole four day trek; this includes an allowance for travel to/from the start/finish. It is assumed that guides will accompany the whole party for the whole trek.

Further it is assumed that porters will be engaged for one day from the village start in the morning and they continue all day to the next nights stop (village) (returning in their own time the next day).

As such, there will be jobs for a group from each village every time trekkers pass through each village.

On the basis of the above budget with 100 trekkers annually there are "jobs" for 5 guides working 100 days per year which rises to 25 guides once there are 500 trekkers per year.

On the basis of the above budget, with 100 trekkers annually there are will be work for five porters from each village for a day each time a group passes though (about 20 times for 100 trekkers annually, increasing to 50 times per year once there are 500 trekkers. For the porters this is a modest income.

NOTE: The above is preliminary only and relies on arrangements made to date for commercial tours; there may also be private adventurers who wish for different arrangements.



Implementation Plan

Finalisation of Draft Plan

Additional Consultation

There is a need for additional consultation with the current members of the Association and other key stakeholders. In particular a workshop with stakeholders in the Wau area is required as it was unable to be held during the initial site visit.

Priority Actions

The key priority actions are:

- Clearing and maintenance of the track;
- First aid training of guides;
- Installation of radios;
- Formal establishment of the Association;
- Association commence charging the Track Fee and coordinating bookings;
- Accreditation of guides;



Appendix 1: Evacuation Points

Potential Evacuation Points

	GRID REF	LAT/LONG	SITE TYPE	DESCRIPTION
1	6870 8781	07° 20'51S 146° 42'59E	Airstrip Grass	Wau Airstrip.
2	7702 8399	07° 22'56S 146° 47'30E	WHS/HLS/Road extraction	Trail Head.
3	8054 8478	07° 22'30S 146° 49'25E	HLS/WHS	Clear grass ridgeline before jungle.
4	8360 8639	07° 21'38S 146° 51'05E	WHS on ridge.	Camp 1. Needs some clearance.
5	8478 8766	07° 18'32S 146° 56'12E	WHS	Small WHS in agricultural clearing.
4	9053 9063	07° 19'17S 146° 54'57E	HLS	Skindiwai Village. Clearing on hillside.
5	9302 9210	07° 20'56S 146° 51'43E	WHS	Tight winch hole on trail. Needs clearing.
7	9506 9193	07° 17'47S 146° 57'19E	WHS	Needs clearance. In tight river valley.
8	9971 0144	07° 13'28S 146° 59'51E	HLS	Mubo Football Pitch in village. Clear.
10	0123 0807	07° 06'20S 147° 00'48E	WHS/HLS	Niu Camp. Clear with buildings in clearing.
11	0147 1458	07° 07'10S 147° 00'55E	WHS/HLS/Boat Extraction	Rocky. In dry river bed. Near Komiatung Village.
12	0438 1712	07° 04'57S 147° 02'22E	Boat Extraction	Campsite.
13	0519 1989	07° 03'27S 147° 02'49E	Boat Extraction	Beach at Salamaua



Appendix 2: Current Marketing

Introduction

The following are extracts from various websites and show how the track experience is described.

Papua New Guinea Trekking Adventures

"BLACK CAT TRACK/SKINDIWAI"

TREKKING FROM WAU TO SALAMAUA, MOROBE PROVINCE

This track is not for the faint hearted, nor for the inexperienced bush walker. For those of you who have done the Kokoda Trail it makes that trek seem like a stroll in the park. The track is still in a very raw state. It is leech and snake-infested jungle, moss covered rocks and fallen tree stumps, precarious cliff crossings and potentially dangerous river crossings. This makes the Black Cat arguably one of the toughest treks in Papua New Guinea. Some Australian soldiers have described the Black Cat as the hardest walk they've ever done. The Lonely Planet guidebook quotes a local expatriate, as saying the Black Cat is "suitable only for masochists and Israeli Paras"

There is so much WWII history attached to the "Black Cat". Some of the bloodiest battles were fought here. 63 years ago in 1942 Salamaua was recaptured from the Japanese. We saw many war relics. Munitions pits, guns, clothing, a cargo plane wreck and huge bomb craters now full of water. The villagers went out and collected guns and live mortars for us to look at. They were everywhere and easily accessed. This is a 4-5 day trek starting at the small hamlet of Wau. We meander our way round steep ridges and overnight in extremely isolated villages. The track will throw everything at you from torrential rain to the blazing sun. But for all the punishment our bodies endure we are rewarded with some of the most awesome and exciting terrain that you will ever trek through. The animals and birds of the jungle are prolific, magnificent flora and fauna. You will see Birds of Paradise bathing in rivers. You may have to negotiate round huge mounds of leaves where a Niugini Fowl may have decided to build its nest right in the middle of the track. The Flame of the Forest tree may be in full bloom. What a beautiful sight that is, seeing streaks of red splashed through the jungle. Wild orchids are everywhere and butterflies flit around your hat as you walk.

Best of all on this track though are the people. The villages we stay in very seldom get to see westerners. The first time we did this trek, the current generation of woman and children in one particular village had never seen a white woman. The children were absolutely terrified of my red hair as they thought my head was on fire. It took some encouraging to get them to come back and visit me. We cannot speak the language but the hand of friendship is the same all over the world. These people have nothing and will give you everything. It is gruelling 8-9 hour days but well worth the effort when you were greeted with such kindness and hospitality at the end of it. On the last day after a 5 hour leisurely walk down to the San Francisco River we organize the village on the river to build us rafts which we then use to float out to Salamaua. This takes about 4 hours. The bird life along the river is prolific.

Salamaua has to be one of the best kept secrets in this world and one of the most idyllic places you will ever go to. I will say no more, except it is a great way to end a hard 4 day trek through the jungle. There is so much more I could say about this trek but feel that some secrets should be kept for people to experience for themselves. If you have a sense of adventure running through your veins give this a go. For those of you who just want to step out of the box and have a have a go experience of a lifetime."



Kokoda Trekking

“Skindiwai/Black Cat Itinerary

DAY 1 - Port Moresby to Wau

We either take an early morning charter flight from Port Moresby to Wau or for less cost the group can travel to Lae on Air Niugini and take ground transport to Wau. On arrival in Wau we are met by Tim Vincent and transported to our accommodation. Tim and Danielle open their home and spectacular gardens to visitors. Depending on the size of the group we may be sleeping in the house or pitching our tents on their front lawn.

If time permits we will walk to the Grey Ghost an American B17 Bomber, which crashed during WW11 in the hills about 1? hour walk from Wau. This plane is in excellent condition and well worth taking the time to go and have a look at.

DAY 2 – Wau to Skindiwai

It is essential that we get an early start today. Tim will transport us to the start of the track, which is approximately a 1? drive. For the first 2? hours we trek through Kunai grass. It is a steady incline all the way to the rain forest canopy. It is an easy walk under the canopy to our first break at a clearing called Bannis Donkey. This terrain carries on for the first half of the day. We then start to walk along the contours of the hills, although still flat it is quite hard going due to the angle of the track. At around 4 pm we start climbing steadily up to Skindiwai Village. It starts to get dark by 6 pm and we would normally expect rain at this time of day. Groups can expect to be arriving at Skindiwai around 7 - 7:30pm.

We pitch our tents while the boys boil water for our dinner and there is a small bamboo water outlet to have a wash. The group is normally very tired and in bed as soon as dinner has been eaten. This village is extremely small, and not often occupied as the people go out panning for gold. They are in the process of building a guesthouse which when finished is going to have an amazing view down the valley.

DAY 3 – Skindwai Village to Gaudagasul Village

We must leave early again as it is another long day to the next village of Gaudagasul. Before starting out we take time to view the munitions pits and live ammunition lying around from WW11. Skindiwai Village had been a supply HQ during the war, if time permits we will go and look at the American cargo plane wreck that crashed after dropping off supplies to the camp. This is a beautiful trek today and should see lots of interesting flora and fauna.

The track is a lot harder than yesterday. It is up and down with many exposed roots and logs across the track. We follow the contour of the hills all day. This is extremely hard as again walking on the angle. There are no flat areas to get any relief. Trekkers have to take extreme care in places, as there are sharp drops off the track. Extremely dangerous if one was to slip. It is normal for us to use ropes to cross a number of narrow river gorges. Apart from it being a hard day physically the scenery today is spectacular.

There is a steep ? hour climb up into the village and we would normally arrive at Gaudagasul around 4:30 pm. This is a lovely little village where the people are extremely hospitable. I must mention that the shower (bamboo pipe) is a good 20 minutes walk away from the village. Just what you don't need after a very hard days trek.

DAY 4 - Gaudagasul Village to Niu Camp

Again we would expect it to rain during the night and again we should be on the track early. There is a 1 hour to walk down a steep hill to the Betoie River. We cross this river many, many times. It can be very swift and deep in places and would be extremely dangerous during the rainy season.

Our next stop is Mubo Village. Here we are able to swim in the river, which is about 10 minutes from the actual village. Mubo is a substantial village with a school and health center. A very pretty village, with heaps of WW11 artifacts lying around the perimeter.

We spend the next 2 hours crossing riverbeds. It is quite hard going walking on the river stones. But a nice change from trekking through jungle. We have lunch by the river where we are able to spread out for a change and go for a swim. It is very pleasant. Plus we normally have lots of villagers (and dogs) walking with us.

After lunch we walk along the riverbed for another hour before starting a steep 15 minute ascent into Nui Camp Village. This village is normally deserted, all the same it is a lovely camp spot. From here we can see the lights of Lae. Again access to water and a shower is a good 15-20 minutes walk away.



DAY 5 – Nui Camp to Salamaua

Should be up and walking by 7 pm. Takes approximately three hours to walk down to Buiayau Creek. Most of the time we are walking through Kunai grass, so very exposed to the sun. Also very steep in places, walking across razor back ridges.

We zig zag through numerous bomb craters, which are now filled up with water. Arriving at Buiayau Creek where we trek for about an hour before it joins up to the Francisco River. From here we have to scramble around rock above the river for 15 minutes or so before coming out on the track beside the river. It is mangrove swamp so very muddy and certainly would not like to do this in the rain.

We trek for another 1? hours before having to cross the river stopping for lunch on the Salamaua side. Even though this river is wide and appears to be slow flowing it is a deep crossing and quite swift. Not to be attempted in heavy rains.

Takes another ? hour to trek to Salamaua through knee deep rancid mud in places. Not the most pleasant ? hour spent on the track. You may chose to float down the river, a much better option if you can swim. It is normally very shallow most of the way to the ocean outlet.

Salamaua is one of the most beautiful places in Papua New Guinea and is such a pleasure to finish a very tough trek here. From the Francisco outlet it takes an hour of very pleasant walking along the beach to the more populated area of Salamaua. Here, we are met by Karen Quin a long time Lae resident and her hospitality is next to none. She makes her home here at Salamaua available to us to shower and clean up, has refreshments on hand and will cook us a superb seafood dinner. Karen will also take us for a walk up the isthmus where we are able to view the Japanese anti aircraft guns. Karen is extremely informative regarding the history of Salamaua.

It is also today we say goodbye to our guides and porters.

DAY 6 – Salamaua to Lae to Port Moresby

We departed Salamaua after a leisurely breakfast for Lae. Stopping for the group to have a snorkel on the way. It takes about 2 ? hours to get to Lae, time permitting we visit the War Cemetery and Botanical Garden.

Over View

We travel through 3 eco micro systems, we may not see a lot of wild life as most hang out up in the canopy as is common here in Papua New Guinea although the flora is breathtakingly beautiful in places.

This trek is not for the inexperience trekker. People must be at least of ? marathon fitness and be of very good health.

2007 Dates - Skindiwai/Black Cat Track

We only have a small window of opportunity to do this trek due to weather conditions.

- *March - Monday 12th – Saturday 17th*
- *April - Monday 16th – Saturday 21st*
- *September - Monday 24th – Saturday 29th - 1 trekker booked*
- *October - Monday 22nd – Saturday 27th - 4 trekkers booked*
- *November - Monday 12th – Saturday 17th - 1 trekker booked*

Air Charter - POM-WAU

- *8 trekkers A\$2600.00*
- *7 trekkers A\$2825.00*
- *6 trekkers A\$2940.00*
- *5 trekkers A\$3320.00*
- *4 trekkers A\$3815.00*
- *3 trekkers A\$4715.00*



Ground Transport - Fly to Lae then drive to Wau - POM -Lae – Wau

- 8 trekkers A\$2465.00
- 7 trekkers A\$2640.00
- 6 trekkers A\$2660.00
- 5 trekkers A\$2935.00
- 4 trekkers A\$3290.00
- 3 trekkers A\$3980.00"

Wanemya

Black Cat Track

Black Cat Track is a walking track in Papua New Guinea. It is a difficult walk, arguably the most challenging walk in the tropics. The track runs from Kaisenik, which is near Wau in [Morobe Province](#) down to Salamaua on the coast south of Lae. The trail was used by prospectors in the early part of the 1900's to access the rich goldfields in the Bololo area.

In the Second World War, the Japanese captured Salamaua and attempted to cross the trail to Wau and then on to Port Moresby. The trail would have been a nightmare for any troops heavily laden with weapons and equipment whilst struggling to survive.

I found out about the trail when reading of the early settlement of expatriate settlers and miners in the Morobe Province. I soon became fascinated by the reported difficulty of the trek and its rich history. Having completed Kokoda, the Black Cat seemed like a logical progression. Oh, to regain that innocence!

The famous trail in PNG is The Kokoda Trail. Kokoda is only about 300km from Black Cat. Kokoda has a dry season (June/July). I mistakenly decided to walk Black Cat basing my decision on what I knew about Kokoda, including the periods of wet and dry. Black Cat has a wet season over those same months. This wasn't one of my better ideas.

For someone interested in [relics of the war](#) there are plenty to be seen. The decision has to be made to take one's time and check out the relics and the history or to attack the walk. I had limited time and took on Black Cat as a walk rather than the tour.

The logistics of my walking Black Cat were formidable. I had no knowledge of the area, the people, the terrain and worst of all the PNG National elections were in mid stride. Part of the reason for my writing this brief story is to pass on the knowledge that I gained and to make it easier for the next person to walk that beautiful part of PNG.

I arrived in Wau with the help of a friend from Lae who organised a lift for me, this was a lot safer than going by PMV (public transport vehicle). I had made the decision to carry two backpacks and possibly/hopefully hire a guide along the way. I departed Wau and eventually ended up in Kaisenik I do not recommend that anyone else walk this road as there were bush knife attacks robberies of local people by rascals (thugs) the previous day.

I must make the point that when you arrive at Kaisenik there are no security issues. The people look after your safety, this part of Morobe Province is perfectly OK. The safety issue is within the immediate area around Wau. A number of unemployed youths have drifted in from other places and resort to crime to survive. Black Cat Trail is safe from raskol problems.

Along the way I met some people walking toward Wau who all gave me the good advice nt to walk the road alone. During my frequent stops to chat with passing local walkers I sought out the name of the Kaisenik Village Councillor and was armed with his details prior to my arriving in his village.

On my arrival in Kaisenik (altitude 1005m). I asked to speak with Nalu the village councillor, but he was up the mountain tending his coffee gardens. The villagers offered me somewhere to rest and a cool drink whilst I waited for the Councillor's arrival.

Contact [me](#) by email and I'll provide the details of how to get from Nadzab or Lae to Kaisenik with safety. A coffee buyer travels that road several times a week and stops at Kaisenik. Toby can assist with a lift on his Toyota Landcruiser and would charge only a moderate fee for the service.



As is the way in PNG, whilst waiting for the councillor, I started talking to a school teacher, Marilyn Goroi, and discovered that her husband Richard used work at the same exploration site as I had done in 1994. Once that common ground was discovered the ice was broken and the typical PNG friendliness became manifest. Shortly thereafter, a long lost friend, Meyer, came bursting around the corner and gave me the great highlander hug of friendship. Meyer also used work at Frieda River in the 90s. I now had wontoks and eager support. The impossible was now possible.

Nalu arrived and formally welcomed me to Kaisenik and he agreed that he would organise a couple of guides for the walk down to the coast. In the meantime I was made feel like a guest of honour with stories and good food. The women provided a truly wonderful feast that was far beyond what I could possibly eat. It is so difficult to accept gifts from these people as they have so little and so freely give.

During the evening the village spokesman, Kondoros, organised a meeting. The village had been previously speaking about getting organised to provide a quality walk experience for tourists and they wanted to discuss their thoughts to someone from outside their own culture. The people wanted to hear what an expatriate expected from the walk, they wanted to develop the walk and to keep the benefits in the village not allowing a "tour company" to exploit what they own. I answered their questions and promised to provide feedback when I had completed the walk and had some opinions of the place.

Their desire is to have the trekkers arrive at Kaisenik, sleep the night in a village guest house, hire guides and porters from the local area and buy provisions from Kaisenik's local stores. These concepts all seemed like fairly simple, logical and worthy expectations.

Kondoros gave me his room for the night, this was another unexpected and gracious gift that I wanted to refuse but felt obliged to accept. The kindness was astounding! His wonderful description of the impending walk was "tough, but rewarding".

Day 1:

As agreed in the very early AM I made ready for the walk. Nalu had organised Mercer and Emmanuel to assist me on the trek. We departed Kaisenik across a steel suspension bridge. The bridge was constructed during WWII of 1" diameter steel cables and Marsden Matting (steel aircraft landing mat). We (my two guides, myself, and a large group of people coming along to say farewell) headed off to the start of the trail some 80 minutes up a good road. The villages along the way are neat and well ordered, of note is a large grave yard that follows the European tradition of constructed graves all neatly arranged with inscriptions and displays of importance.

After we turned off the road and said our goodbyes we started our climb to Balam at 1663m. The track is rough and overgrown and winds through [Kunai Grass](#). There is no drinking water along the trek up to Balam. Whatever water you need for the morning's walk you should carry from Kaisenik.

During the later part of the ascent you'll have a good view of a crashed American bomber away to the left of your track. The views from this path are stupendous. From Balam you eventually leave the Kunai Grass and enter rainforest. After about an hour and a half you'll come to a clearing called Banis Donkey (Donkey Fence) at 1946m. This was apparently a staging camp where donkeys were held for transporting goods and the wounded from the battle front during the period of war in this area. (Ref: Mercer from Kaisenik).

This part of the walk should take about 3-4 hours. It is difficult and relentless. Familiarise your self with the PNG concept of distance early in your walk. We Europeans like to get information "how much, how far, what time" and so on. We like that information to be exact. Now, the PNG person's idea of distance and time differs slightly from our expectations. A short way is klostu klostu (very close), klostu (close), liklik moa (not far), longwe longwe (some distance), longwe lik lik (not too far.), longwe tumas (a considerable distance), longwe pinis (too far.) and so on. It is totally demoralising when you are facing your brick wall and are advised that the next village is klostu klostu (very close), some three torturous hours later it is cheerfully still klostu klostu (very close). I recall looking at Mercer with murder in my heart when he mentioned "klostu klostu", he replied that he wouldn't answer anymore questions about distance and I agreed not to ask.

I damaged my knee in a fall on the ascent to Balam and started to travel on the power of a constant supply of anti-inflammatory tablets and a double knee guard. The walking times I give are a bit exaggerated because of my having to drag a leg to Salamaua.



It is important to keep up the momentum of the walk from Banis Donkey as the first stop-over at Skindiwai will not be reached until about 1800 hours. The track winds through increasingly deeper forest and could best be described as "a low environmental impact trail". Most of the track is a narrow path worn down only by footsteps and landslides. It is an arduous track with a lot of the path being across the edge of the mountain ridges, many creek crossings, a narrow footprint and a steep fall to the river below.

The afternoon is spent on this ascending, descending, meandering track that winds slowly across the ridge face. Naturally, being totally exhausted by the demanding pace set by Mercer and by the tenacity required to remain vertical it is a blow at the day's end to see the path to Skindiwai wind up the mountain and into the mist. Your last effort for the day requires all the hidden reserves that a couple hours before you had burnt and surrendered.

Skindiwai is located at 1668m altitude, it is a hamlet with a good guest house at K20 per head per night. To me, when I stumbled out of the cloud and drizzle, the place resembled the Airways Hotel in Port Moresby. Skindiwai Guest House has a cooking house, good water about 2 minutes from the guest house, a good drop hole and friendly people. The water is clean and cold and a private shower has been constructed in the creek bed. The Councillor's name is Lason. Skindiwai would be a great place to stop and savour the true remote village life of PNG. I asked Lason if he would like people to stop for a few nights, he agreed that that would be a good idea. So if you want a complete escape from reality Lason will bring you down to earth in a couple of days. No mosquitos at Skindiwai, as reported by Lason.

Day 2:

After a good nights sleep we departed Skindiwai early AM heading for Godogusal. The walk is a repeat of yesterday but with the addition of leeches and a more pernicious track. The track winds through the deep jungle, across the face of mountain ranges, through countless streams and across some fascinating log crossings. The log crossings are large trees that have been fallen across ravines, the tree is used as a bridge. Being in a cold and wet environment a healthy crop of moss is growing on the logs and this green carpet makes the whole concept of walking across the log impossible to the defeated expatriate. The ease at which my guides Mercer and Emmanuel stride across these logs accentuates my clumsiness and starts me wondering about the effortless grace the guys have when walking through impossible conditions.

Did I mention the leeches? As Emmanuel said, when I pointed to the array of strings hanging off his ankles and bare feet, "they won't kill me" and proceeded to scrape the squirming bloody leeches off his feet and legs with a bush knife. There was not that much we could do to stop the leeches as the rain pelted down for the second successive day, insecticide washed off in the streams and under the deluge of rain. The track between Skindiwai and Godogusal is in very poor condition and is a challenge. There were many land slips and some hairy climbs across rock faces. The scenery was obscured by rain cloud and the impenetrable jungle. At this stage it was all about my concentrating on my next shaking, hesitant step and trying to last the distance whilst hoping Godogusal was less than "klostu klostu".

At about 1530 hours the track across the ranges ends and brakes away up the mountain toward Godogusal. There is a steep climb for a couple of hours until Godogusal is reached at 874m. The village has an impressive Guest House with several guest rooms. There is a good drop hole and a good cooking facility. The only shortage is water which is some 20 minutes down the hill. As it was raining we opted to gather water from the roof. If you walk the track in the dry fill your water containers from the small streams on the way up the hill to Godogusal. Gwyto is the owner of the guest house and has presented a quality place to stay. Gwyto was carving the Guest House Plaque when we entered the village, the timber plaque will probably be hanging with pride over the entrance when you visit.

As you enter the village from the Skindiwai end you come to the Guest House first. The remainder of the village is about 5 minutes along the ridge. When you depart the guest house you'll have to walk through the village to start on the track to Godogusal.

Day 3:

Again we departed early AM heading toward Mubo from Godogusal. We descended down to the Bitoi River. The track is slippery (it was raining again) and steep. It was a pleasant walk of about 80 minutes. Arriving at the Bitoi River we started to walk along the river bed, occasionally using the banks as a smoother alternative to the rocky river bed. Mubo is about 3.5 km along the river, you'll have to cross the river many times during this walk. On our arrival, the Mubo people turned out in force to welcome us and served food as a welcome gesture. Adam, the village magistrate, told me some stories of the war and showed me where the Americans were camped on a plateau above Mubo. Once again the people were exceptionally kind, the children were totally inquisitive and not afraid to ask questions. Mubi is low lying and vastly different from the cool mountains.



On departing Mubo we headed toward Niukamp. This section of the walk proved to be taxing, crisscrossing a river bed and up and down forested hills. There is some wonderful scenery and picturesque glades within the forest. But with the constant rains we were concerned about the possibility of flash flooding so we hastened across this part of the track arriving at Niukamp at about 1500 hours. Niukamp is a hamlet of two buildings and a collapsed roof structure, Niucamp perches on a ridge looking toward the ocean. Niukamp is run down, has no water and has all but been abandoned. There is a family living at Niukamp, they were courteous and offered buai to Mercer and Emmanuel as is the custom. After some discussion we made the decision to carry on to Kumitan, a couple of the Kumitan people were heading in that same direction, they came with us for the walk and to swap stories.

The walk from Niukamp to Kumitan is about 6km along a road that was constructed during WWII by the Americans. The track was greasy and difficult to walk, when you did start to slide you usually took one or two of the other walkers on the journey. But, in the dry it would be a pleasant and easy journey. The rain continued. There were some tremendous views out toward the ocean from the track down to Kumitan, have your camera ready.

On arriving at Kumitan we discovered the Sabbath was upon us and the Guest House owner is an SDA. Our option was to wait until the end of the Sabbath or find another place to stay. So, we opted to stay with the village big man, Stephen. Stephen and his family made us very welcome and provided a room for the three of us. Out, in a timber lean-to, in front of Stephen's house, there is a [Japanese Type 92 Heavy Machine Gun](#), a woodpecker. An unusual and interesting gnome to have in your garden. The cost for a place to sleep was K20 per head per night. Stephen also runs a small trade store selling the basics of rice, noodles, tinned protein, sugar, coffee and so on.

Emmanuel and Mercer enjoyed a night of swapping stories and "kaikai buai". I collapsed and slept.

Day 4:

The village big man, Stephen, arranged for his wontok Sakaili to run us down the Francisco River to the coast near Salamaua in his dugout. The large dugout canoe is unique to this area, normally such a canoe would be found in the Sepik River or the Fly River, but I wasn't about to refuse to use it because it looked out of place. The people from the coast normally use small sailing canoes with outriggers. The hire of the canoe was K150 but was well worth the cost to me as my leg had all but quit by this time. On leaving Stephen's house we walked about 40 minutes down to the Francisco River from Kumitan Village to where the canoe was stored in the pitpit.

Gliding downstream with the current was very peaceful. The quiet of the canoe's progress enabled us to come close to the bird life on the river. The trip was simple heading downstream to the coast but on arrival at the coast Sakaili was going to have to pole the dugout back up the 6 km to Kumitan, poling would take him about 10 hours effort. He didn't have an outboard motor to make the return trip easier. Another option to get down river is to ask the guys from Kumitan to build a raft and to raft down to Salamaua. After the trip the raft is abandoned at Salamaua and the guys walk back home. The walk is through the pitpit on the river bank and can be used instead of the soft option of canoeing down the Francisco, but why would you walk through the pitpit?

Emmanuel, being a highlander, had never been in a dugout before and was suitably frightened and impressed. Mercer took it in his stride as he had been all over PNG in exploration camps. Dugouts were part and parcel of Mercers's time on the Sepik.

On arriving at Salamaua we walked for about 30 minutes from the point at Franscisco River NE toward Salamaua, the houses are located in a long line, behind a sand ridge off the beach. Graves are built behind this ridge also. The graves are well constructed and lovingly maintained. When we arrived at Salamaua proper, Sakaili took over control of our small group, sat us down, organised a Coke for all and told us to wait, he went and found a boat to Lae for us. Again the hospitality and concern of the PNG people was exceptional. By this time it was Sunday and normally there wouldn't be boats running, we got lucky in having Sakaili looking after us.

The passage from Salamaua to Lae cost was K30 per head and took about 80 minutes. Sakali mothered us until we were settled in the boat and he stood in the surf until we vanished below the horizon. The weather deteriorated from wet to exceedingly wet, the rain poured down for the entire trip. Do not get dropped at Voca Point, it is unsafe. We were dropped off at the Lae Yacht Club where we had access to a phone and quickly organised to be dropped off at accommodation with glorious hot showers and flushing toilets."



Appendix 3

Minutes of Track Association



MINUTES OF BLACK CAT TRACK MEETING

(Black Cat Track Development)

Thursday 22nd March 2007

Morobe Tourism Bureau Office

Meeting # 1/07

1. **PRESENT**
- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Heni Dembis | PNG TPA Representative - former MTB Field Officer |
| Ben Amos | Guide Representative - Salamaua |
| Charlie Kokoba | Salamaua LLG - Dept Agric & L'stock |
| Aaron Ambang | District Officer for Huon Gulf LLG - |
| Joe Kewere | MPG Tourism Officer |
| Tim Vincent | Vincent Enterprises Wau - current point of contact |
| Sylvia Seeto | MTB Tourism Development (TDM) Manager |
| Waive Geneke | M. Prov. District Education Planner |
| Ann Geriga | Literacy Div of ... |
| Rachel Meling | MPG Training Trainee |
| Roseta Genora | Visitors Information Officer |
| Priscilla Kusak | MTB Office Assistant |

APOLOGIES Tony Ase District Administrator - Wau Bulolo District

2. **MEETING OPENED - 10.40a.m.**

Heni Dembis opened meeting and welcomed all present.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolution 1:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd September 2006 was passed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Moved: 1st: Sylvia Seeto 2nd: Tim Vincent All in favour

4. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Correspondence received regarding previous meeting re Black Cat Interim Meeting; will be discussed in correspondence.

5. **DEVELOPMENT INTEREST UPDATE**

- Letter from RSL Australia denoting interest in BCT Development. Apart from Kokoda Trail there is no other trek of similar interest to Australian market trekkers. TPA will liaise with RSL Aust & PNG Volunteer Rifle Assoc. to seek what assistance they will provide re development of Black Cat. Their request is for GPS plotting coordinates.
- Letter from DA, Huon District interest to contribute to development of the BCT; has since left his post for another province.
- TPA has earmarked priority to project development of Black Cat for 2007; initial interest was from Heni's 2004-5 situational report while working for MTB.
- MTB to get quotes from Theodist Stationery for a GPS as part of MTB equipment for field work. GPS Coordinates must take into account elevations, and distances from one stop to the next through rainforest jungle. Joe Kewere stated there is a Mapping Company that does mapping located in Lae. JK to find out more.
- Statistics for Kokoda trekking reached over 4000 in 2006. Brought in around K1 million for the KTA.
- Tim Vincent highlighted Bulldog Track will be another track of interest to overseas market that runs from Menyamy to Port Moresby. Upon development of Black Cat, this may happen in unison with Bulldog Track. The only adverse part of track runs through Harmony Gold Mine and currently is fenced off from thoroughfare.

- In comparison to Bulldog, Black Cat has more to offer i.e. wildlife, war relics, and arduous per difficulty scale. Spin-offs for the community on the Black Cat Track will follow upon more tourism visits. Some of these are water supply, schools, and aid posts.
- Kokoda Track - Rotary Club is building infrastructures while KTA is maintaining these projects. These may also involve AUSAID funding as well.
- Assistance up till now for Black Cat has been MTB, DA's interest although not committed as yet, as well as Tim Vincent. There has been no other assistance from any other organisations other than TPA for 2007. Interest about the development has only been the people who live on the Track.
- For the local Black Cat Track communities, they are most aware of the financial prospects from tourism development and are already keen with their community policing to ensure parties will not take advantage of this unique product and place.
- Sylvia Seeto believes that due to remoteness of Black Cat there will not be too many problems until the tourism business grows in greater numbers. However, at the onset of development it is not conducive to encourage 1000-4000 people visit Black Cat in a year like Kokoda until a proper system, disciplines and procedures has been established.
- With the large numbers the sustainability of the eco-system of the area must be maintained. And the only way this is possible is to limit the numbers per year. Due to the area spanning across two different Districts the LLGs that control these villages may conflict with the current lifestyle of the local communities. To ensure a sustainable product, limits & disciplines of the development must be maintained from the onset.
- Currently the numbers that stay in a villager along the Kokoda can grow to 200 in any one night- with the remoteness of Black Cat villages this will be impossible to maintain.
- Tim Vincent stated that presently a maximum of 20 can be accommodated, although 6-8 are better managed - an issue that must be addressed with villages when the next forum is held. The accommodation of guest at these stopovers will have to be well-organised by villagers to ensure the value of the cost of the visit.
- For each trekker, a porter is assigned as well as a guide. Therefore a case of an extra 2 persons will be caretaker of one trekker.
- Wau Bulolo with its historical significance can also be a spin-off feature to promote with Black Cat. However, with the Black Cat product already there without extra infrastructure to be built as in Wau-Bulolo, it is simpler to market Black Cat on its own in the interim.

6. FUNDING ISSUE:

- Bulolo DA has written to Black Cat Interim Committee, c.c. to Heni Dembis, that he will commit K3000 for development funding. This can be for clearing of the Track or for other fundamental issues toward its development.
- A Bank Account will have to be established for Black Cat Development upon monies received from other sources, other than MPA MTB grants, i.e. District Administrators. These monies will not be released until the previous money allocated is receipted with a reconciliation of its expenditure for Black Cat.

Action : Bank Account to be opened for Black Cat Development

- Currently Tim Vincent has been allocated K800 from MTB for the initial clearing of Black Cat. These funds were to be distributed evenly amongst four areas where the thickest undergrowth is, to which upon clearing will be paid K200 for each section. Names of workers as well as team leaders will have to be noted on the payment schedule so accountability is established.
- Current process for clearing is, team coordinator secures the Clearing Form from Tim and advises what work they will be doing at particular sections of the track. Names of these coordinators have already been secured by Tim with signatures for confirmation. A copy of these persons to be sent to MTB for our database records. Photos for these people will have to be secured for ID cards that MTB will support.
- Tim has given each of the 4 groups K100 to start off and upon completion will receive the next K100. Village Councillors must authorise on that form for accountability that the job has been done.

- Current ongoing Situational Report of the Track will have to be given several times a year for update towards ongoing development support.
- Ward Councillors & Officers names will also be listed with signatures for cross-checks. Mubo, Skin Diwai, Godugosul - has one Councillor; Kamiatam - one Councillor; Salamaua - one Councillor. Names of these councillors to be submitted to Sylvia as soon as possible for set-up of database for all interested parties. Tim Vincent also wants a copy of this database. There are approximately 800 of these personnel.
- The Huon District area from Salamaua to Skin Diwai is expansive; from Skin Diwai to Mubo, Biaweng to Wau is less however, terrain is challenging.
- MTB will support Tim's progress with blank DVD-RWs for this database to be swapped each visit.

Action : TDM to give Tim Vincent blank CD-RW for database backups

- TPA's initial support will be signage along the track; another training session for porters & guides will be held in the future.
- Heni enquired on Bris Kanda's involvement with Huon District and if there is progress with the communication support i.e. VHF radios. One of the major issues for trekkers is communication for security and safety (accident) reasons. Currently, the two way radio system facility is available but Huon District Administration has not met the monitoring costs for several years. Sylvia will check with Bris Kanda - Alan McLay re communication progress.

Action : TDM to write to Bris Kanda re progress of radio communication in Huon District

- Re training of guides, ideas and procedures to be sought from current guides re expectations required for the environment, topography, and tough terrain. These can be drafted & formulated for training procedures towards accreditation. These procedures can be fine-tuned with TPA's training process for a best-fit program for Black Cat. These can also be standardised with Kokoda training in mind.
- Per previous MTB Interim Black Cat meeting, it was discussed that TPA, Heni Dembis return for another training session; a set criteria for guides & porters to particular age and fitness. Other age groups and gender can be involved in the village set-up for village cleanliness, accommodation, and catering. Heni to liaise with a trainer re package.

Action : TPA Heni Dembis to coordinate with Trainer re program to fit Black Cat Program

- Heni asked where MPG stands with their involvement of Black Cat Development. Currently MPG Tourism Office & MTB are liaising together re development & communication.

7. LANDOWNER & VILLAGE PARTICIPATION

- Landowners & villages need to participate to bring tourism development progress to fruition; in terms of clearing & maintenance of stopovers. Landowners need to be advised that the tourism dollar will not be bountiful immediately; it comes in dribs & drabs in the interim. The development of this track will have eventual benefit to the younger generation once the product has been development is a stabilised way to market and manage. This will take time.
- There is no such thing as royalties like mining as some landowners perceived in the past with Heni while with MTB. The only way the income is earned is through direct involvement with the development & marketing.
- Awareness meetings of this pertinent issue must be ongoing; with any other issues of discontent or conflict to be addressed at each meeting. There is no perfect program - there will be errors which must be minimised through compromising communication & dialogue by all parties.
- It must also be insisted that the benefit of the development of the Track is for the whole community not a handful of people. The service benefits will be forthcoming once the tourist numbers begin increasing. Community schools will be established with people returning to their villages to benefit from the spin-offs.
- With so little income being generated in the region, the small MTB track clearing investment of K800 has been a sore point for many who are attempting to gain a larger share of the K800. This has been causing dissention amongst some. Tim Vincent stated that it is being controlled at the moment. However, with the number being so large to

co-ordinate this may be a situational problem in the future unless there is ongoing progress with the Track development that will bring monetary gain to villages.

- For each village there may be a community guesthouse for trekkers; however, community guesthouses do not work well amongst smaller communities. However, villages must take ownership of this matter.
- Sylvia Seeto at previous meeting has insisted that an Authoritative body, such as KTA, be involved in the management of the funds or there will be outright disputes about the finances if more individuals benefit rather than communities. These issues MUST be addressed before further development can proceed.
- Heni Dembis stated that currently National Government has already given K1 million to the development of guesthouses along the Kokoda Track. This was a one-off funding that was a special arrangement with the Australian Govt. National Cultural Commission (NCC) is in charge of the organisation of the campsites and water supply in the villages. Contact is Michael Epeko. AUSAID funded through Rotary Club the Usurava & Kokoda Memorial Hospitals. TDM asked Heni which Rotary Club is involved - PNG or Australian.

Action : *Heni Dembis to find out which Rotary Club is involved with the Kokoda Track program as well as the NCC Michael Epeko's guesthouse program*

8. REPORTS:

Black Cat Track Committee - Wau Base: Tim Vincent

- Current Status:
 1. Currently the trekkers are coming in by small groups. These visits are impromptu and not very organised by trekkers.
 2. Most of the trekking support is coming from PNG Trekkers who has been the only company that has been promoting Black Cat for a number of years.
 3. Local attitudes have been very positive; the little clearance funding from MTB has encouraged local interest re Black Cat development.
 4. At each Wau meeting, there is diversity of more new groups present, including local government bodies so the interest is growing.
- Short term goals:
 1. Recent clearing of the Track is very basic - mostly for defining the Track. Continuation of Track clearing is paramount for safety purposes without denigrating the toughness of the track.
 2. Improved awareness of all villages to receive the same standard information for all interested parties;
 3. Additional training has begun for porters & guides; there has only been 7 candidates who now seem to assume they 'own' the track including collection of funds etc. As more candidates join the guides & porters team, these 7 will have to accept these inclusions.
 4. Heni stated that he will return for this purpose for final accreditation of these candidates; He will ensure he tracks the whole route for this purpose. MB will support the ID process of these candidates.
 5. Equitable dispersion of projects: with the small amount of funds received this is shared as much as possible with villages along the track.
 6. Develop 'sectors' & local coordinators: using local established & functioning authorities i.e. LLGs & ward officers is acceptable;
 7. Track Maintenance & reporting procedures are already underway on the Track.
- Immediate Challenges:
 1. Communication is still poor; safety infrastructures must be created i.e. clearing for a helipad - this is to be included in a list of to-do things every month.

2. Boundaries & sharing of work: Tim is constantly being reminded of boundaries encroachment where clearing related issues occur. Due the large area the Track encompasses, this will always be an issue, however over time this will settle once all parties are familiar with the set boundaries.
 3. With clearing, the rainforest areas between Sikindi & Gorugosul are the most treacherous with difficult terrain; while the other end is basically river flats.
 4. The long term plan per TPA is for a scoping study for the Track, so a consistent work plan can be established re development maintenance for the future. With the GPS plotting done soon, this should alleviate some of the fundamental uncertainties i.e. bomb holes etc., along the track.
 5. Joe Kewere suggested that for those along the Track, rather than give them just money, to provide tools as part of the maintenance exercise; all in favour.
- General Support requirements:
 1. Advertising & Marketing - MTB will upgrade website to include Black Cat Development latest info.
 2. Dissemination of Current Info - Tim has cost rates e.g. accommodation, for Wau end of the Track; however does not have rates for Salamaua end; currently these cost rates have not been drafted into set standards & procedures.
 3. Co-operation with Tour operators: These costs need to be collated and set as packaged tours for wholesalers; which will include website maintenance as an ongoing project.
 4. Alternate routes development:
 - Current most common 'Black Cat' route is actually called Skin Diwai (War Track) which starts at Biaweng.
 - There is another called Busuval (Mission track);
 - The original Black Cat Track is the gold mining track which dates back to 1930s, between Mubo, Wandumie to Wau.
 - Another is German survey track which Japanese used during WWII
 5. Identify & develop historical & cultural areas of interest: some trekkers are willing to add another day to their tour for particular interest e.g. military - bombers etc. or cultural historical sites.
 6. Local Activities - Singsings: and mumus are always an interest by trekkers
 7. Accurate detail mapping: will be underway with GPS equipment during BBC Crew visit.
 8. Formal Association to establish: Joe Kewere to follow up ASAP with no assumption that it is already established.
 - Special Points:
 1. BBC to film survival style show April/May: as advised in previous minutes.
 2. PNGVR

Sylvia Seeto stated that these discussion points as tabled in Tim Vincent's report will be included as part of procedures for Black Cat Development. These points will be divided accordingly for follow-up by various nominated parties.

9. LOCAL LEVEL GOVT CONTACTS:

- a. Contact names of Ward Councillors and their status to be given to TDM (Sylvia Seeto) for database.
- b. Concern by TDM re Black Cat Track Association formation and the length of time already taken to establish (since Sept 2006).

- c. Authority required for the purpose of monitoring the Black Cat Association will be expected by LLG Ward Councillors following the format of Kokoda Trail Authority.

10. CONCLUSION:

- a. The issue of a community guesthouse was brought up and for Community Development Officer to conduct short courses for community. Heni advised that it is important for the community to be responsible collectively so everyone can benefit. If at any time there is an adverse situation along the track this will spoil the reputation of the Track, not just one village but all villages as a whole, and indeed Morobe Province as well.
- b. TDM stated that's why it is essential to have an Authoritative Body to monitor and mediate procedures & policies once it is all set up. Without such a Body there will be ensuing conflict and disharmony especially when it comes to apportionment of income generated by the product. Unless the MPG becomes more involved the way forward may be somewhat hindered. This role is not a Morobe Tourism Bureau or TPA function and either organisation will not be adopted as mediator for the Black Cat Association. MTB & TPA are only assisting in development, promo & marketing of the product.
- c. This Authority will be present to safeguard everyone's interest along the Track to be mediator in disputes, keep or stop the money flow, etc. While the Association may well be divided even by its District interests left alone village interests.
- d. Currently, Tim Vincent is the go-between for all parties. If villagers, ward councillors, tour operators, and/or trekkers complain Tim has to mediate. Tim is not the designated Authority although he has had to assume this position. Therefore it is unfair for him to have to wear all these responsibilities. Even MTB & TPA rely on him heavily to organise the support etc. We as outside parties must ensure we work with Tim for whatever he requires to assist him at every avenue as he is the person we are relying on. Admittedly he is benefiting monetarily to some degree, but the development process is the making while the foundation of this Black Cat product grows.
- e. Regarding funds & income: Tim will supply MTB, Progress reports of the money used for development. TPA, District Administrations, MTB, & MPG, will initially financially support the Development Project to get it to a stage where income generation starts to flow evenly down to the landowners & village residents.
- f. Where these development funds can be monitored: MTB will open a Black Cat Development Account for all monies to be banked. Work Progress Reports will have to be submitted before the next lot of funds will be given for more work done. A financial report will be made available at each meeting for accountability.

11. WARD COUNCILLOR FOR SALAMAUA LLG:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| a. Salamaua Ward | Ward 11 | W/Councillor Julius |
| b. Kamiatum Ward | Ward 5 | W/Cnclr Moroi Gwaisuek |
| c. Mubo/Gogugosuk/Skin Diwai Ward | Ward 6 | W/Cnclr Watam Duali |

There being no further business, Heni Dembis thanked everyone for their attendance.

9. CLOSE OF MEETING 11.55 am