

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : CASTLE HILL

Lease number : PC 028

Conservation Resources Report - Part 4

As part of the process of Tenure Review, advice on significant inherent values within the pastoral lease is provided by Department of Conservation officials in the form of a Conservation Resources Report. This report is the result of outdoor survey and inspection. It is a key piece of information for the development of a preliminary consultation document.

Note: Plans which form part of the Conservation Resources Report are published separately.

These documents are all released under the Official information Act 1982.

April

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there is legal public access. Flock Hill (on the adjoining Flock Hill Station), Gorge Hill and Prebble Hill are also favoured climbing areas, though attract less recreational use because access is not available as of right and physical access is not defined.

Skiing is an important recreational use of the range summits on the property. The most popular is downhill skiing (at Mt Cheeseman Skifield), though the Craigieburn Range and, to a lesser extent, the Torlesse Range are used for ski mountaineering.

The upper slopes of the ranges are popular for tramping, especially in summer. Access to the Craigieburn Range is normally via skifield roads (Mt Cheeseman and Porter Heights), though access via the leading spurs (notably via Dead Man Spur, Leith Hill and Long Spur) is also popular. Access to the Torlesse Range is normally from Porters Pass via Foggy Peak (public conservation land), though access via Mount Plenty is also popular.

The Waimakariri Basin is a popular destination for fishing, though it is unclear how much use is made of the rivers and streams within Castle Hill Pastoral Lease. Legal access to the major rivers is available via marginal strips.

Other parts of the property have great potential for walking, picnicking and nature study. However, there appears to be limited use of the property for these activities, largely because legal access is not available and there are few formed tracks.

Significant unsatisfied recreational opportunities identified during the preparation of this report include:

- Legal access to limestone areas for rock climbing, walking, picnicking and nature study.
- Additional car parking areas and rest areas along State Highway 73.
- Secure public access along the Mt Cheeseman Skifield road.
- Short walks in the vicinity of Castle Hill Village and State Highway 73, especially access to the Castle Hill limestone area from Castle Hill Village.
- Access to the upper slopes of the Craigieburn and Torlesse ranges via the prominent spurs within the property.
- Access to historic sites, such as the Porter River stock-bridge and to the route of the early pack track around Prebble Hill.
- Tramping access along the lower slopes of the Torlesse Range between the Porter River road bridge and Broken River Hut, and perhaps the Waimakariri Gorge beyond. (There is potential to develop a two to three-day tramping track around the northern and eastern flanks of the Torlesse Range, satisfying the demand for easy overnight tramping opportunities east of the main divide mountains).

PART 3 OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS AND PLANS

3.1 CONSULTATION

A preliminary meeting to discuss the review of Castle Hill Pastoral Lease tenure with groups and organisations was held in Christchurch on 25th September 2001. Groups represented at the meeting were: Federated Mountain Clubs, NZ Deer Stalkers Association, Peninsula Tramping Club, Canterbury/Aoraki Conservation Board, NZ Mountain Bike Association, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Canterbury University Tramping Club, Opus International Consultants, Mount Cheeseman Ski Club (Canterbury Winter Sports Club), Environment Canterbury, Friends of Lewis Pass, QEII Trust and the Pegasus Pig Hunting Club.

Comments contained in Departmental notes from this meeting are reproduced in Section 4.1.1, and have been incorporated into this report where appropriate.

3.2 REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS AND PLANS

Not applicable.

3.3 DISTRICT PLANS

The lease is in the Selwyn District. A proposed District Plan for Selwyn was notified in September 2001. The lease is within an Area of Outstanding Landscape and within a Forestry Exclusion Area. As such there are controls on forestry and limited controls on structures and earthworks. There are no vegetation clearance controls.

3.4 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Castle Hill Pastoral Lease is within the Waimakariri Unit of the Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy. Relevant objectives for this unit are listed as:

- To protect a representative range of indigenous biodiversity.
- To protect and enhance the viability of priority threatened species populations and their habitat(s).
- To assist public appreciation of natural and historic values, and foster appropriate facility development, adjacent to State Highway 73 between Porters and Arthur's passes.
- To protect the natural, historic and cultural values of the landforms and associated habitats of the Waimakariri Basin.

3.5 FRESHWATER FISHERIES PLANS

Not applicable.

PART 4 ATTACHMENTS

4.1 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1.1 Notes from NGO Meeting, Christchurch, 25th September 2001

Present: Federated Mountain Clubs, New Zealand Deer Stalkers Association, Peninsula Tramping Club, Canterbury Conservation Board, New Zealand Mountain Bike Association, Forest and Bird Society, Canterbury University Tramping Club, Opus Consultants, Mount Cheeseman Ski Club, Environment Canterbury, Friends of Lewis Pass, QEII, and Pegasus Pig Hunting Club.

- The property has very high conservation values. It was recommended that the total lease should be protected, perhaps apart from cultivated areas.
- Rock formations important.
- The eastern part fits within the Torlesse Range Proposed Conservation Area. This eastern part is important along with the area on the other side of the road which links together with the Craigieburn area.
- Cheeseman Ski Club, established since 1929 had quite a bit to say about access and their interest in the area, as a ski club going back to the 1930s. There were concerns about overstocking on the property and access. Forest Lodge: the question of public access from the main road to skifield lodges. They want more access to the Forest Lodge for summer use and for people staying out of season. They want to ensure future use of the ski field.
- Peninsula Tramping Club suggested that these access problems could be controlled by a locked gate but to maintain access for Club members for driving to the Ski Club. Could perhaps consider some better control by the Club rather than from the land owner. Also, they suggested that the high country land should be transferred to DOC.
- Canterbury University Tramping Club: This is probably one property that we most often access. State Highway 73 is the main point of access for this property. Numerous points that we can access along the road to get to Craigieburn. For example, Whitewater River to Mount Enys, centre of Leith Hill, Long Spur and up to Cloudsley, Hogs Back up to Mt Cheeseman that they regularly use. On the other side of the property are the faces of Prebble Hill, Broken River, Ghost Creek and Mt Plenty. They noted there were no problems with access during the winter months but you can't go through this area in the summer. Other than the winter months there are problems with access. Canterbury University Tramping Club also talked about the climbing on parts of the limestone formations that are not in the scenic reserve. These are numerous and there is quite a desire to use these areas. Access has been very difficult for some time to these areas.
- Brian Molloy from QEII also pointed out that rubbish and debris is left by climbers and that the limestone harbours a number of very important plants and that any use has to be compatible with the ongoing survival of these plants. This is an issue that needs to be carefully considered. Brian believes that it is particularly important to secure other areas of limestone that harbour rare plants.

- Brian Smith from the Banks Peninsula Tramping Club also mentioned again the Cheeseman Ski Field. If the Cheeseman road was improved and a key was made available to the gate then the area could be used in a similar way as already occurs with Broken River.

4.1.2 Scientific Names of Species Cited in the Text

Common Name..... Scientific name

(* = naturalised species)

blue tussock	<i>Poa colensoi</i>
bog pine.....	<i>Halocarpus bidwillii</i>
bracken.....	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>
bristle tussock.....	<i>Rytidosperma setifolium</i>
broadleaf.....	<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>
broad-leaved snow-tussock	<i>Chionochloa flavescens</i>
broom*	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
browntop*	<i>Agrostis tenuis</i>
bush lawyer	<i>Rubus cissoides</i>
.....	<i>Rubus schmidelioides</i>
Californian thistle*	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
catsear*	<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>
cotton daisy	<i>Celmisia spectabilis</i>
creeping pohuehue.....	<i>Muehlenbeckia axillaris</i>
dwarf broom	<i>Carmichaelia monroi</i>
fescue tussock.....	<i>Festuca</i> sp.
golden spaniard.....	<i>Aciphylla aurea</i>
gooseberry*	<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>
harebell.....	<i>Wahlenbergia albomarginata</i>
hemlock*	<i>Conium maculatum</i>
horehound*.....	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>
inaka.....	<i>Dracophyllum uniflorum</i>
kiokio	<i>Blechnum novae-zelandiae</i>
kohuhu	<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>
korokio.....	<i>Corokia cotoneaster</i>
kowhai.....	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
manuka.....	<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>
matagouri	<i>Discaria toumatou</i>
mingimingi	<i>Cyathodes juniperina</i>
mountain beech.....	<i>Nothofagus solandri</i> var. <i>cliffortioides</i>
mountain clubmoss	<i>Lycopodium fastigiatum</i>
mountain flax.....	<i>Phormium cookianum</i>
mountain ribbonwood	<i>Hoheria lyallii</i>
mountain totara.....	<i>Podocarpus hallii</i>
<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific name</u>
mountain wineberry	<i>Aristotelia fruticosa</i>
mouse-ear chickweed*	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>
mouse-ear hawkweed*	<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>
native broom.....	<i>Carmichaelia</i> sp.
native jasmine.....	<i>Parsonsia capsularis</i>
parsley piert*	<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>
patotara	<i>Leucopogon fraseri</i>

penwiper.....	<i>Notothlaspi rosulatum</i>
porcupine scrub.....	<i>Melicytus alpinus</i>
prickly shield fern.....	<i>Polystichum vestitum</i>
purging flax*.....	<i>Linum catharticum</i>
rautahi.....	<i>Carex coriacea</i>
red beech.....	<i>Nothofagus fusca</i>
red sedge.....	<i>Schoenus pauciflorus</i>
red tussock.....	<i>Chionochloa rubra</i>
red woodrush.....	<i>Luzula rufa</i>
scabweed.....	<i>Raoulia australis</i>
Scotch thistle*.....	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
scrub pohuehue.....	<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>
sheep's sorrel*.....	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>
silver tussock.....	<i>Poa cita</i>
slim snow-tussock.....	<i>Chionochloa macra</i>
snowberry.....	<i>Gaultheria depressa</i> var. <i>novae-zelandiae</i>
snow-patch grass.....	<i>Chionochloa oreophila</i>
snow totara.....	<i>Podocarpus nivalis</i>
soft rush*.....	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
stonecrop*.....	<i>Sedum acre</i>
sweet brier*.....	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>
sweet vernal*.....	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
tauhinu.....	<i>Ozothamnus leptophylla</i>
toetoe.....	<i>Cortaderia richardii</i>
tussock hawkweed*.....	<i>Hieracium lepidulum</i>
tutu.....	<i>Coriaria sarmentosa</i>
wall lettuce*.....	<i>Mycelis muralis</i>
weeping matipo.....	<i>Myrsine divaricata</i>
white clover*.....	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
white fuzzweed.....	<i>Vittadinia australis</i>
woolly moss.....	<i>Racomitrium lanuginosum</i>
woolly mullein*.....	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>
Yorkshire fog*.....	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

4.1.3 References Cited

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4.2 MAPS

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