

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: MT ALEXANDER

Lease number: PO 284

Public Submissions - Part 4

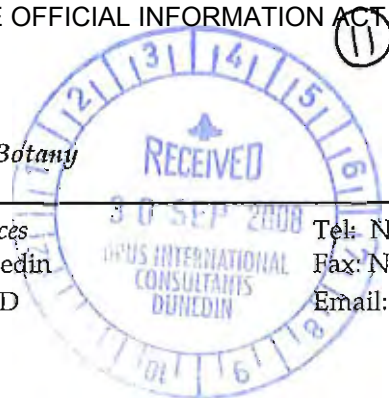
These submissions were received as a result of the public advertising of the Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review.

July 09



Department of Botany

Division of Sciences
PO Box 56, Dunedin
NEW ZEALAND



University of Otago
Te Whare Wananga o Otago

Tel: National 03 479 7573 International 64 3 479 7573
Fax: National 03 479 7583 International 64 3 479 7583
Email: amark@otago.ac.nz

September 28, 2008.

The Commissioner of Crown lands,
c/o Opus International Consultants,
Private Bag 1913,
DUNEDIN.

SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED TENURE REVIEW: MT ALEXANDER PASTORAL LEASE

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me a copy of this proposal for the tenure review of the Mt Alexander Pastoral Lease (4702 ha). I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this proposal based on my knowledge of the vegetation of the general area gained over many years of involvement with plant ecological research and also the co-supervision of the PNA survey of the Dansey Ecological District by Joy Comrie in 1989-90. I have revisited the Dansey Pass area subsequently on several occasions, including recently, since the release of the preliminary proposal by OPUS.

This preliminary proposal for tenure review achieves a considerable area advantage for the free-holding option in relation to the area proposed for transfer to full Crown ownership and control. Some 60% (2803 ha) of the leasehold is proposed for disposal as freehold to the present lessees, with certain easements recommended, while only about 40% (or 1899 ha) of the property is proposed for transfer to full Crown ownership and control, in two blocks: CA1 and CA2.

Discussion of detailed aspects of the proposal:

Proposed Conservation Area CA1 of 1789 ha, being the back (and higher altitude) block of the property, contains all of the area of the Dansey RAP 10: Nobbler within this property and contains some important intrinsic values, particularly regionally representative gradients in snow tussock grassland communities from slim snow tussock (*Chionochloa macra*) grassland on the upper slopes, above about 1200m, to the summit of Mt Nobbler (1550 m), through narrow-leaved snow tussock (*C. rigida*) grassland towards the lower boundary of the block, and localised permanently wet areas dominated by copper tussock (*C. rubra* ssp. *cuprea*). Good quality narrow-leaved snow tussock grassland also extends to lower altitude from the lower southern boundary of the CA1 block, to the south of the track shown running SE from near the lower centre of the CA1 block, across to the trig point 1150 m on the spur above and NW of the North Branch Maerewhenua River. This extension (see map attached) is strongly recommended to the CA1 block, which would also provide for an important ecological corridor, connecting with an extended CA2 area, discussed below.

The proposed Conservation Area CA2, of about 110 ha, is an ecologically and biologically very important remnant area of mixed broadleaved forest – shrubland with localised tussockland, which was identified and described in Comrie's PNA report as Dansey RAP 8: Maerewhenua. A recent visit to the property confirmed the conservation values of the remnant forest stands here, which contain an impressive mix of species, including many very large and also regenerating juvenile lancewoods (*Pseudopanax crassifolius*), the likes of which are quite exceptional in this Dansey Ecological District. These remnant stands also extend across on to the opposite (NW) aspect slopes where they have recently been covenanted (CC2 on the Ben Ledi tenure review), but unfortunately not fenced. A single large totara tree, the only one seen in my recent visit to the catchment (and not listed

in Comrie's report), occurs close to the stream bed, opposite the lower end of the area demarcated as CA2. The ecologically valuable woody communities actually extend further up the catchment, upslope beyond the NW limit of the proposed CA2 area and, indeed to the point where this conservation area (CA2) should be extended upslope to where the property's south-western boundary swings to the NW and meets the southern corner of the CA1 block. These proposed extensions to the CA1 (downslope) and CA2 (upslope) areas (see attached map) would obviate the need for the section of proposed new fence A-B but would involve a new fence along the ridge (an extension of the existing D-A fence) to the 1150 m trig and beyond here, trending NW, to meet the ridge-line track up to the lower boundary of the proposed CA1 area (see attached map). No fence is being proposed on the SW margin of CA2 (down North Branch Maerewhenua River) but, longer term, a fence on the upslope margin of the Ben Ledi Covenant (CC2) would be highly desirable to enclose (and adequately protect from grazing animals) this valuable woodland community on both sides of the river bed. Also, the public (and conservation management purposes) access provided to the CA2 area via the easement d-e, would also provide the only public access to the adjoining covenant on the true right side of the river here.

There are also at least two impressive forest stands alongside the Dansey Pass Road, in the bed of the main section of the Maerewhenua River between the Mt Alexander homestead and Dansey Pass, which are worthy of protecting, at least with a no-clearing/no-burning covenant. Invasion by exotic conifers is variable but in the two largest stands it is negligible and a condition of the covenant protecting them should also involve protection against such invasion.

The proposed extension to each of the conservation areas, involving perhaps 350 ha, would provide extremely valuable connectivity and continuity between these two proposed conservation areas, combining them as one single larger, conservation area of some 2250 ha or about 47% of the total area of the property. Such an addition would achieve a much more acceptable reserve design for long-term security of the biota in each of the proposed conservation areas against the uncertain effects of predicted climate change. This modification to the proposal would be of such importance that I would reluctantly accept the proposed grazing and associated easement (b-c) concessions of 10 (but not the 15 as proposed) years, as outlined and detailed in the OPUS report. Otherwise (i.e., if these recommended extensions of the conservation areas and covenants are rejected), I would strongly recommend these two concessions be limited to a maximum of five (5) years, with stocking, conditions to protect the environment (Licence conditions 10.0), and monitoring as outlined in the report.

I note, however, that Appendix 3, S 16.0 'Environmental monitoring', gives no details as to the type and intensity of monitoring proposed for the 'Concession activity on the land'. I would recommend a representative set of permanently marked photographic points and associated descriptions, as were established in Mt Aspiring National Park in the late 1960s and, more recently, on Mid Dome, northern Southland, to monitor wilding pine control operations (see attached Appendix).

One further recommendation is that a no-burning covenant be established across a c. 1.5 km corridor parallel with the legal road and public access from Dansey Pass to the lower (NE) boundary of the proposed conservation area CA1 and extend south-westward below the fenceline boundary of the CA1 area, taking in the upper parts of the blocks from Airstrip Block across to the Middle Block (see attached map) which still retain a dominant snow tussock cover. The purpose of this no-burning covenant would be to retain the high landscape and conservation values of the natural snow tussock cover, which otherwise could be threatened and lost through more intensive use, as has occurred at lower altitudes on this property.

Also, the public access from Dansey Pass (easement a-b on the map) over proposed freehold land, as stated on the proposal, is partly located outside the Mt Alexander lease and is not totally aligned with the legal road. As part of this tenure review it is strongly recommended that the present roadway is surveyed and formalised as the legal road, as was done with the Makarora Station review to allow the legal road to the north of Boundary Creek to match the formed road, to the satisfaction of the local authority (Queenstown-Lakes District Council).

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this provisional proposal and I trust my submission will be seriously considered.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. Map.

Alan F. Mark FRSNZ,
Emeritus Professor.



Appendix

Procedure used for establishing permanent photo-points on Mid Dome. April, 2008.

A procedure standardized for the establishment of permanent photo-points for long-term vegetation monitoring, including spatial analysis of images to quantitatively assess spatio-temporal changes in plant communities Michel et al. 2008), was used at Mid Dome.

The party consisted of Lynne Huggins of DoC and Alan Mark, Pascale Michel and Stefan Porter of Otago University's Botany Department. Materials were on hand to establish 20 sites but, in the time available, 15 were selected to best represent areas on the Conservation land. Clear anti-cyclonic weather was forecast but, in the event, the first day (April 8) was overcast and partly foggy but the fog did not intrude unduly. Ten sites (#s 1-10) along the Jollies Pass – Cupola 4WD road were selected as detailed on the record sheets. The following day was perfect and an additional five sites (#s 11-15) were established along the Nokomai – Mid Dome summit road. In addition to assessing animal faeces, as described below, seeding *Pinus contorta* were also included in the plot counts.

Sites were selected which provided a nearby field of view, preferably with the main field sloping uphill to provide an adequate view to record any changes in vegetation composition and/or height. The more distant landscape was included, where possible, to provide a wider perspective or to record some specific features, particularly areas that had been partly cleared of wildings. Sites were permanently marked with a warratah, painted orange, with an Al label attached with wire, and inscribed with: "Mid Dome Perm. Photo Point No 'X'; Do not disturb". The GPS position of the site was recorded. Up to three (five at Site # 15) permanent reference stakes (warratahs painted orange and with Al labels inscribed with: "Do not disturb") were placed within the field of view at a measured angle and distance from the site stake to provide the necessary references for future spatial analysis, if desired (see Michel et al. 2008). Prominent and readily identified landscape features substituted for one or more of these stakes at some sites, as noted on the record sheet.

The camera position was marked with a short round rod ~1.5m from the site stake (its distance and direction noted on the pro-forma record sheet. A metre stake graduated into black and white decimeter sections was placed a set distance (usually 10 m) from the camera position peg (measured with a tape) in a location where future changes in vegetation height are most likely to be seen. A small blackboard with details of general location, site number and date entered in chalk, was clamped to a stake and located to one edge of the midfield, so as to be visible but not unduly obstructive. Additional images were taken at some sites to record particular situations, local or distant, with each image separately identified with the image number, on the blackboard and recorded, including the compass direction (°M) of the field centre.

A comprehensive list of plant species, with estimated percentage cover was made of the study site, defined as a circular area of ~10 m radius centered on the graduated metre stake. This information was recorded, together with the other details of the site, on a blank pro forma sheet. Faecal counts, using a method adapted by Geoff Rogers, described below, together with a record of any *P. contorta* regeneration were recorded separately and copied to a new electronic copy of data sheet following completion of the field exercise.

Background. The faecal count method was adapted from that used to monitor changes in the relative abundance of deer (Forsyth 2005) and tahr (Anon. 2002). The principal objective was to maximise the number of sample plots within a 15–20 minute timeframe at each sample site. Long, single-line transects were impractical because of the generally steep terrain interspersed with bluffs, and the relatively high turnover in plant communities within the subalpine and alpine zones. The spatial arrangement of the running-line transects was designed to prevent the sampler obstructing the photographic field of view.

Design

- 1 Four transects of approximately 30 m length radiated out from a common origin-point 2 m behind the permanent photo-point marker peg (Fig. A).
- 2 Ten pellet-count plots of 1m² (56 cm radius) are established along each of the four transects at approximately 3 m intervals. The sampler use a compass bearing for direction along the transect and the 3 m intervals are stepped out.
- 3 Where barriers such as bluffs or tarns are encountered along the transects, two 90° offset angles in the transect are used to bypass the obstacle (Fig. B).
- 4 Two 112 cm long poles arranged at right-angles about their centres on the plot centre point as delineated by the tip of the sampler's boot are used to guide the estimated circumference of each sample plot.
- 5 The number of intact pellets within each circular plot are counted and recorded. Pellet groups are dismembered and pellets counted individually.
- 6 Intact pellets only are counted (Forsyth 2005).
- 7 Pellets are counted and separated if possible, by species, and also as to 'recent' or 'old'.

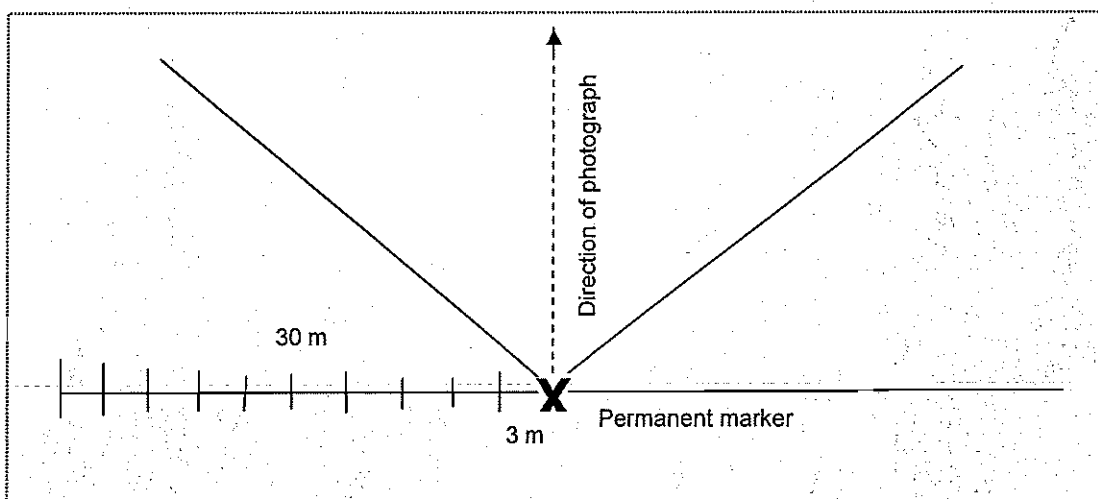


Fig. A. Layout of pellet count plots at 3 m intervals along each of four 30 m transects originating 2 m behind the permanent peg marking each vegetation monitoring plot.

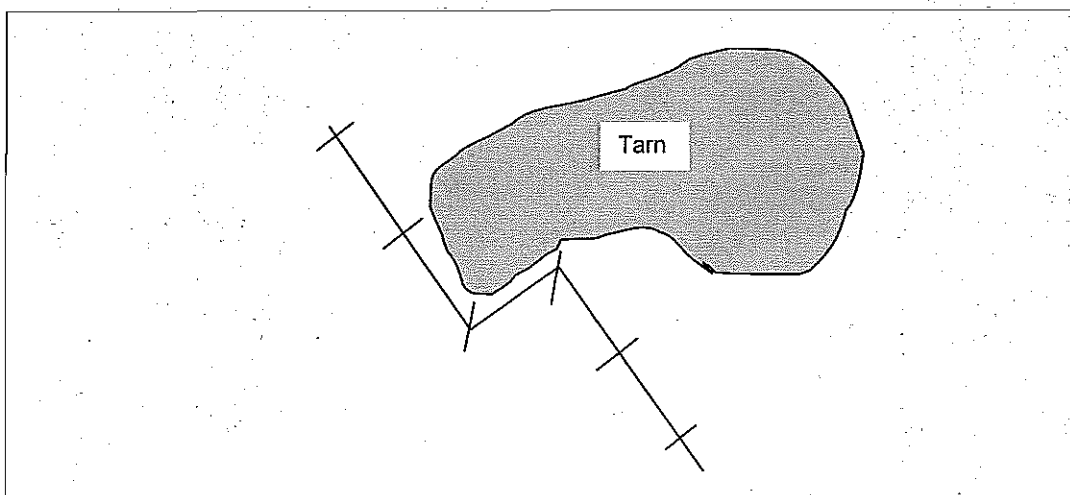


Fig. B. Barriers such as bluffs, tarns, and/or streams are circumvented by either adding or subtracting 90° from the compass bearing and continuing the pellet count plots along the offset transect.

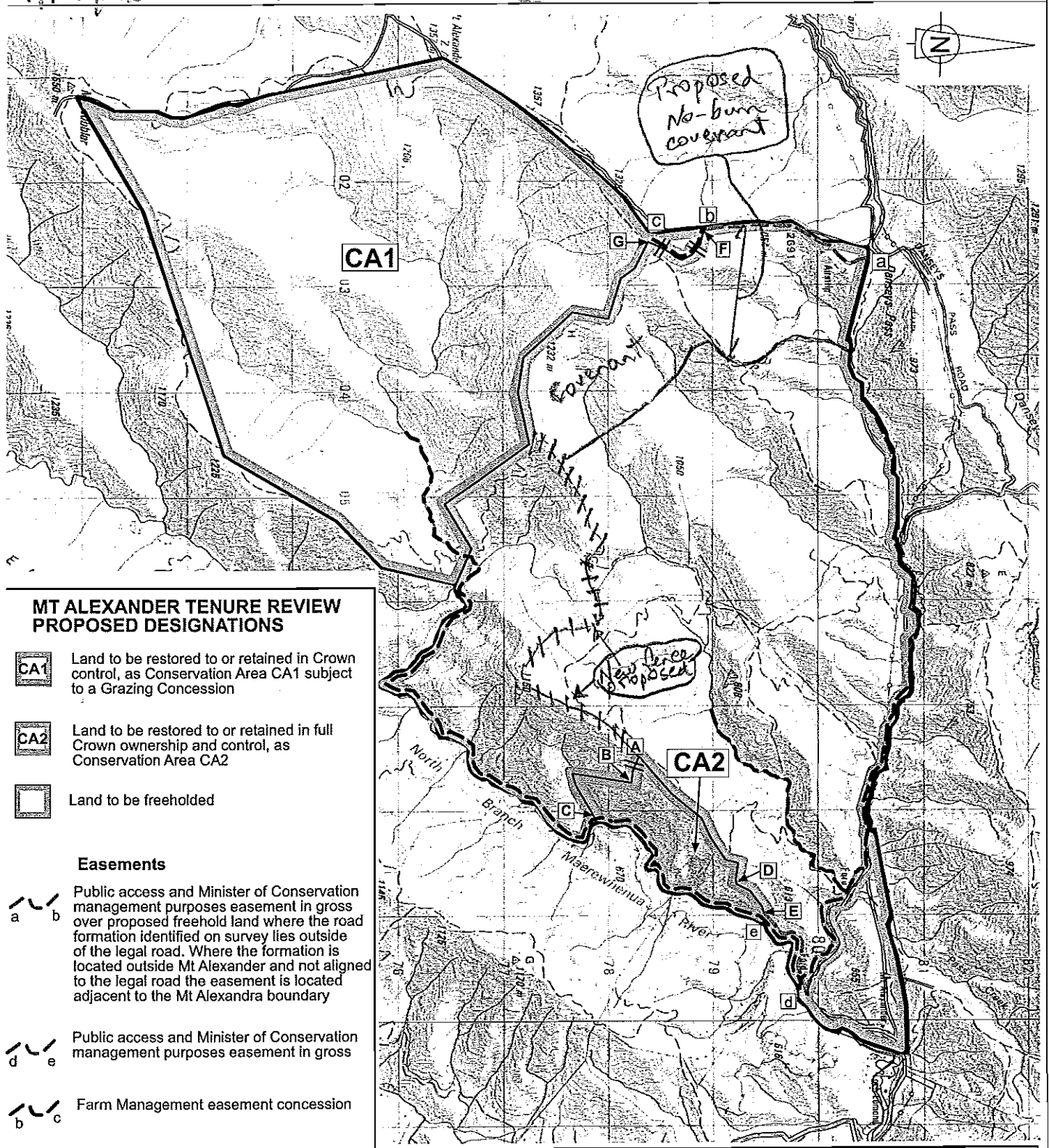
Recording of faecal and pine seedling counts, within the 4 transects and 10 quadrats in each. Transects were in no particular order (an oversight) except that Ts 1 & 2 were at right angles to the plot orientation. The 1 sq m circular plots were sample in order from the centre, outwards and the 3m between plots within a transect was paced:
Transects 1 to 4 (T1 – T4); Plots 1 – 10 (-1 to -10); Hare (H); Deer (D); Possom (Po); Pig (P); Faeces old (o) or fresh (f); and Pine seedlings (S).

Resurveys, at appropriate intervals (probably ~5yr), should follow the earlier procedure precisely. The GPS record should simplify site relocation and, even if one or more of the tall marker stakes are missing, the small camera-location peg may be adequate, assisted perhaps by topographic features recorded on the image(s). Photocopies of the previous data sheets for each site should be used to update the vegetation and other site information, as well as provide the several essential site details. Electronic copies of the previous data sheets for each site can be updated with the new records and carefully archived, together with the accompanying image(s), both as hard copy and electronically, as necessary.

Additional reference

- Mark, A.F. 2007. Report on sixth resurvey and 37 years of monitoring permanent photo points in Mt Aspiring National park. Unpublished report to Otago Conservancy, Department of Conservation. Botany Department, University of Otago. June 2007. 19 pp.
- Michel, P., Mathieu, R., Mark, A.F. 2008. Applying spatial analysis methods to terrestrial photo-point images for the mapping of spatio-temporal changes in plant communities. Unpublished report, Botany Department, University of Otago. 25 pp.

AFMak. See Proposal: New fence (---) and no-burn covenant



MT ALEXANDER TENURE REVIEW PROPOSED DESIGNATIONS

- CA1** Land to be restored to or retained in Crown control, as Conservation Area CA1 subject to a Grazing Concession
- CA2** Land to be restored to or retained in full Crown ownership and control, as Conservation Area CA2
- Land to be freeholded

Easements

- a b** Public access and Minister of Conservation management purposes easement in gross over proposed freehold land where the road formation identified on survey lies outside of the legal road. Where the formation is located outside Mt Alexander and not aligned to the legal road the easement is located adjacent to the Mt Alexander boundary
- d e** Public access and Minister of Conservation management purposes easement in gross
- b c** Farm Management easement concession
- —** New fence line A-B, F-G
- —** Unfenced boundary B C, D-E
- — — —** Part IVA Conservation Act 1987 Marginal Strips established by Licenced Cadastral Surveyor

The beds of all rivers and streams adjoining marginal strips shall remain owned by the Crown pursuant to s24(F) Conservation Act 1987.

Land being disposed of as freehold will be subject to Part IVA of the Conservation Act 1987. Part IVA applies to the entire length of rivers and streams within the boundaries, or adjoining the land to be disposed of.

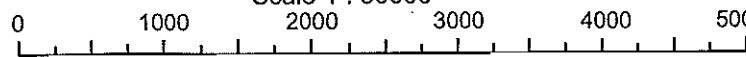
Marginal Strip Subject to Sec 24 (9) Conservation Act 1987 — — — —

The boundaries shown on this plan are indicative and are for illustrative and discussion purposes only. No guarantee of accuracy can be given until the survey data supporting the boundary positions is researched thoroughly when the survey prescription is prepared.

Version	1	2	3	4	5
Otago Land District	Sheet 1 of 1				
NZMS 260 I.41	Date 19/3/2001				



Mt Alexander
Scale 1 : 50000



Graphics by : TL Survey Services Ltd DUNEDIN

Dave Payton

From: Mark Clark [mclark@doc.govt.nz]
Sent: Tuesday, 30 September 2008 11:35
To: dave.payton@opus.co.nz
Subject: Submission on Mt Alexander tenure review
Attachments: DOCDM-353578 bd tenure review submission - Mt Alexander.doc

Attention: David Payton

Attached (to meet the submission deadline) is the Otago Conservation Board submission on the Mt Alexander tenure review. I've posted a hard copy of it to you.

<<DOCDM-353578 bd tenure review submission - Mt Alexander.doc>>
Regards

Mark A Clark
Community Relations Officer
(Otago Consvtn. Board Support/Concessions)
Dept. of Conservation, Box 5244, DUNEDIN 9058
mclark@doc.govt.nz (03) 474 6936 VPN 5636

Attention:
This e-mail (and attachments) is confidential and may be legally privileged.



OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD

Our ref: SBC-08-34

30 September 2008

Commissioner of Crown Lands
c/- Opus International Consultants Ltd
Private Bag 1913
DUNEDIN 9054



Attention: David Payton

Dear Sir

SUBMISSION ON TENURE REVIEW OF THE MT ALEXANDER PASTORAL LEASE

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preliminary proposal for the tenure review of the Mt Alexander Pastoral Lease Po087.

In principle, the board supports the following aspects of the proposal:-

- The designation of approximately 1789 hectares to be restored to Crown control as a conservation area shown as CA1 on the proposed designations plan (Appendix 2);
- The granting of a grazing concession over the conservation area shown as CA1 to the holder of the proposed freehold land;
- The granting of the proposed easements for public access, conservation management and farm management;
- The designation of approximately 110 hectares to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as a conservation area shown as CA2 on the proposed designations plan (Appendix 2);
- The disposal of approximately 2,083 hectares by freehold to N.T & M.A Hore, subject to protective mechanisms (including the suggestions given below).

The board has some concerns with parts of the proposal and believes modifications could be made that would improve public access and give greater landscape and ecological protection to areas which qualify as outstanding natural landscape.

The tussock grasslands adjoining the Danseys Pass route between North and Central Otago are now far superior to the tussock grasslands landscape at the Lindis Pass, so they deserve the highest protection possible. Unfortunately however, parts of Mt Alexander have been modified by heavy grazing and vegetation burning, which have had a significant impact on the landscape values and the ecological footprint.

The board requests the following specific amendments to the proposal:-

1. That a covenant be applied to exclude vegetation burning and the establishment of exotic forestry on the freehold portion of land visible from the summit of the Danseys Pass Road and the public access easement (a-c) looking north and east.
2. That the area of CA1 be increased at its northeastern boundary to include part of an existing farm track (shown going roughly west to east on either side of map lines 77 and 05 on the proposed designations map) currently shown to be freeholded.

This would allow a tramping and mountain biking trail circuit beginning at position 'b' to be undertaken in conjunction with conservation land ex-Ben Ledi, and possibly part of Shortlands Station when it has undergone tenure review. This trail generally follows the perimeter of CA1.

3. That area CA2 be increased in size to include that area of land between CA2 and CA1, being the area to the east of the ridge down to the streambed of the Macrewhenua river. At the very least, practical public access should be provided between CA1 and CA2.

The area of land to be included does not appear to have significant pastoral value, yet the area of remnant broadleaf forest in the lower gully nearest position 'E', as well as being rare in this part of the ecological district, is of outstanding quality and deserves greater protection. Such protection would be provided by excluding grazing on the eastern slopes between CA1 and CA2 and allowing a large area to regenerate over time.

In addition to these measures, the unfenced boundaries identified as B-C and D-E should be permanently fenced, because grazing is apparent at the fringes of the northern end of CA2. While this fencing might currently seem to be unnecessary, a future change to the stocking of deer or goats would allow these animals to gain access to CA2 and prevent the regeneration of broadleaf forest. The absence of exotic vegetation such as gorse and broom in this area is another factor which enhances its value for conservation.

4. The board generally does not support 15 year grazing concessions, as 5 years has been the norm in respect of similar tenure review agreements. However, the board would support a 15 year grazing concession if:
 - the compromises relating to additional public access and protection suggested in points 2 and 3 above were accepted;
 - the concession was subject to regular monitoring of the extent of the grazing, stocking rates, impacts etc.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on this proposal and we are willing to elaborate on any of the issues we have raised.

Yours faithfully



Hoani Langsbury
Chairperson

Mark Clark

From: Mark Clark
Sent: Tuesday, 30 September 2008 11:35 a.m.
To: 'dave.payton@opus.co.nz'
Subject: Submission on Mt Alexander tenure review

Attachments: DOCDM-353578 bd tenure review submission - Mt Alexander.doc

Attention: David Payton

Attached (to meet the submission deadline) is the Otago Conservation Board submission on the Mt Alexander tenure review. I've posted a hard copy of it to you.



DOCDM-3
bd tenure re

Regards

Mark A Clark
Community Relations Officer
(Otago Conservn. Board Support/Concessions)
Dept. of Conservation, Box 5244, DUNEDIN 9058
mclark@doc.govt.nz (03) 474 6936 VPN 5636

13

Southern Office
Forest and Bird
Box 6230
Dunedin
0064 3 477 9677 ph
s.maturin@forestandbird.org.nz



29 September 2008

The Commissioner of Crown Lands
C/O Opus International Consultants Ltd
Private Bag 1913
DUNEDIN Dave.payton@opus.co.nz

Dear Sir

Po 087 Mt Alexander - Tenure Review, Preliminary Proposal.

Dear Sir

This submission is presented on behalf of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

1.0 Introduction

This proposal protects some important high country landscapes and indigenous biodiversity, and will provide valuable new recreational opportunities, for the growing tourism in the Waitaki valley. However it also proposes to freeholds significant areas of landscape and biodiversity significant inherent values, (sivs), and is inconsistent with the Crown Pastoral Lands Act.

Forest and Bird considers there are significant areas of high sivs that meet high country objectives, and national priorities for protection and warrant protection under the CPLA. A reassessment of the proposal is required.

The Conservation Resources Report which forms the basis of this proposal was completed in 2001 and has not been updated to incorporate the new high country objectives, and national priorities, nor has it included a LENZ analysis of threatened environments.

2.0 Land to be restored to Crown Control

2.1 Proposed CA1

The Society supports restoration of CA1 to crown ownership and control as a conservation area for the reasons outlined in the Preliminary Proposal and the Conservation Resources report and the proposal document.

2.1.1 Grazing concession

A 15 year grazing concession is not consistent with protecting the significant inherent values of the tussock grassland ecosystems of CA1. The Conservation Act 1987 defines

“‘protection’ in relation to a resource, means its maintenance, so far as is practicable in its current state; but includes-

- (a) Its restoration to some former state; and
- (b) Its augmentation, enhancement, or expansion.”

A further 15 years grazing is likely to inhibit the restoration, augmentation and enhancement of the proposed CA1. Ewans¹ study of the effects of removing grazing from native grasslands concluded that removal of grazing has generally been considered beneficial to the indigenous components of native grasslands, although the results are variable and need to be considered in context. Grazing selectively reduces biodiversity by reducing plant communities to a subset of grazing resistant plants and makes the ecosystem more vulnerable to weed invasion. Lee et al² in a study of tussock regeneration found that grazing affected regeneration by reducing the overall recruitment of tussock seedlings, reduced the proportion of seedlings in the smallest size class, and reduced mean seedling height: Regeneration of *Chionochloa rigida ssp rigida* was successful in the absence of fire and at low grazing intensity of probably, 0.2 su/ha⁻¹/yr⁻¹. These authors also noted that as regeneration of *C rigida* is almost certainly intermittent due to mast seeding, grazing in the year following a mast seeding needs to be carefully controlled.

The concession provides for more than 0.1 su/ha and may not ensure adequate protection of the sivs in CA 1.

The special condition 1 in Schedule 2 is unenforceable, unless the impact is unarguable and blatant. How is the concessionaire to know if grazing is having an adverse impact? Arguably any grazing will have an adverse effect. The level of adverse effect should be set, so that this condition is enforceable, if necessary.

The Grantor carries out the monitoring. To ensure protection of the sivs the concession must enable the Grantor to alter as well as suspend or terminate the grazing activity, should the activity result in failure to maintain the current state, and provide for some enhancement (e.g., tussock stature, regeneration, species abundance, reduction in weeds) from the current state, as determined by baseline monitoring at the outset of the concession.

It is not clear how the Grantor can alter the stocking rates, or control time of grazing if necessary should adverse effects arise.

Forest and Bird Submission

The proposed grazing concession does not meet the requirements of the CPLA as it is unlikely to enable the protection of sivs in CA1.

2.2 Proposed CA 2

¹ Ewans, Richard, 2004. Effects of removing grazing from native grasslands in the eastern South Island of New Zealand: a literature review. Department of Conservation.

² Lee, W.G.; Fenner, M; Duncan, R.P. 1993. Pattern of natural regeneration of narrow-leaved snow tussock *Chionochloa rigida ssp.rigida* in Central Otago, New Zealand. *NZ Journal Botany* 31:117-125

The Society supports restoration to full Crown ownership and control of CA2, provided it is fully fenced and stock proof, and is extended as described below.

3.0 Land with high significant inherent values to be disposed of by freehold

3.1 Dark Faces of the North Branch of the Marewhenua River

The proposed freeholding of the dark faces of the North Branch of the Marewhenua River above proposed CA2 is inconsistent with the CPLA as it has high significant inherent values, worthy of protection.

The Society concurs with the Conservation Resources Report which describes the entire dark faces of the North Branch of the Marewhenua River (Rough Faces Block) as significant for its landscape values. This area has high qualities of coherence, pleasantness and intactness. The Landscape Assessment by Alan Petrie, March 2001 stated that the entire Rough Faces “should be considered for protection in its entirety with RAP 8 acting as a core area but the whole gorge has a strong sense of place and a high aesthetic appeal due to the rugged nature of the terrain, the wild and scenic qualities of the river.”

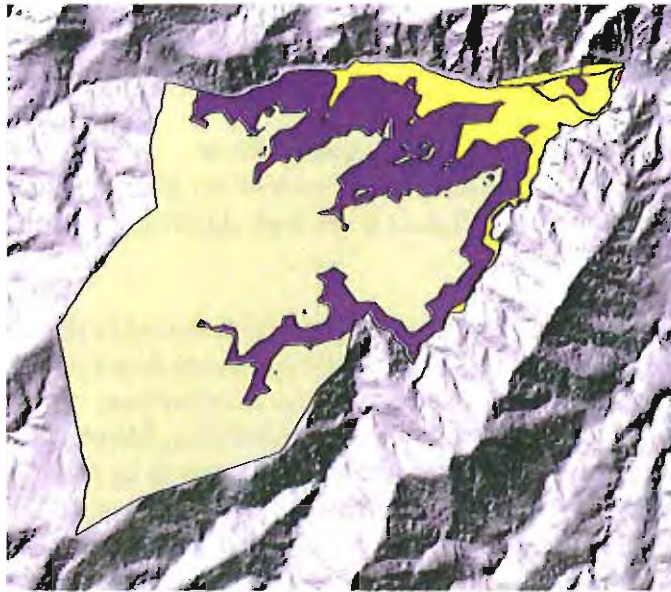
The margins of the river retain high natural character which should be accorded the highest significance.



Dark faces of Maerewhenua Spur proposed for freeholding. These steep faces are predominantly indigenous, with dramatic geology and warrant protection. The contrast with freehold Ben Ledi over the River is dramatic, where all but the steepest areas has been significantly modified.

Mt Alexander LENZ threat map

Mt Alexander



- Mtalexander.shp
- Acutely Threatened
 - Chronically Threaten
 - At Risk
 - Critically Underprot
 - Underprotected
 - Less reduced and better protected

Beyond the proposed CA 2 the dark faces of Maerewhenua Spur are predominantly an intact snow tussock grassland with striking razor back spurs, with dracophylum and hebe shrubs, flax, spaniard, and a diverse ground cover indigenous species including ferns, and *celmisia viscosa*. They have a high degree of representativeness and naturalness and are integral to the gorge landscape. These shrublands and tussock grasslands occur in a critically under protected environment which is a national priority to protect.



Dark faces of Maerewhenua Spur proposed for freeholding

Forest and Bird Submission

The proposed CA 2 does not adequately protect the biodiversity, landscape and recreation sivs of the Rough Face Block, and is contrary to the CPLA. The Society considers the entire shady faces of the Maerewhenua Spur have high landscape and

biodiversity sivs that warrant protection by restoration to full crown ownership and control.

3.2 The Upper Basins

The upper Basins – in Top Pass and Middle Block, roughly above the 1000m contour line are predominantly indigenous tussock grasslands, with occasional stock camps. Part of This landscape provides a sense of distance and spaciousness which adds to the value of CA1 and is an important inherent value, as noted in Petrie’s Landscape Assessment.

Area proposed for freeholding



Upper Basins from spot height 1150



Detail Upper Basins from spot height 1150– Repeater Station top left

The upper basins have an appearance of a coherent tall and short tussock grassland, and contribute to the overall high country scenery of tall tussock foregrounds leading to high mountains. This landscape has high natural character and warrants a protective mechanism to maintain the current values. The Conservation resources Report details an area of high ecological value in the Upper Middle block. Part of this area is mapped as a critically under-protected ecosystem on the LENZ Threat Map.

Forest and Bird Submission

The proposal to freehold the upper basins of Top Pass and Middle block, which have high landscape and biodiversity values with no protective mechanism is inconsistent with the Objects of the CPLA.

The Society submits that this area warrants a covenant which prohibits burning, clearing, spraying, tracking, sub divisional fencing, exotic tree planting, structures, and requires removal of any wilding trees.

3.3 Danseys Pass views – Airstrip and Upper Brians

Tall tussock grassland abuts the Danseys Pass Road at the pass and dominates the views south from Danseys Pass up toward Mt Alexander and Mt Nobbler. Although modified, this is an iconic pass landscape, and is now arguably more natural in character than the more famous Lindis Pass. It has high scenic values and high qualities of coherence, pleasantness and intactness. It is a well recognised landscape and is enjoyed by an increasing number of visitors, some of whom base themselves nearby at the Danseys Pass Holiday Park.

Danseys Pass Holiday Park is experiencing considerable growth. In 1998, 1000 bed nights were recorded at the park. In 2004 Danseys Pass Holiday Park experienced 2000 visitors with an average stay of 3.4 nights which equates to 6800 bed nights. In 2001, there was believed to be 50,000 vehicles using Danseys Pass.³

Danseys Pass Holiday Park also has many visits from school and field trips. Tourism activities in the Waitaki area rely on natural experiences and scenic values.⁴

Grazing appears to be reducing the vigor and stature of the tussocks, and continued grazing is likely to deplete this landscape. The high landscape values warrant restoration to full crown control and management, where conservation emphasis will be on maintaining and restoring this tussock grassland ecosystem.



Forest and Bird Submission

³ Waitaki Catchment Recreation and Tourism Activities - Written Report: Collation, synthesis and presentation of existing studies <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/water/recreation-tourism-written-report-dec04/html/index.html>

⁴ Waitaki Catchment Recreation and Tourism Activities - Written Report: Collation, synthesis and presentation of existing studies <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/water/recreation-tourism-written-report-dec04/html/index.html>

This proposal freeholds the Danseys Pass tussock grassland corridor which has high landscape sivs and is inconsistent with the Objects of the CPLA.

The Society submits that the tussock grasslands as viewed from the Danseys Pass Road and shown above, be fully protected either as a scenic reserve, or conservation area with grazing removed to ensure the grassland naturally regenerates, gains in stature, and becomes a less modified ecosystem for future generations to enjoy. This will necessitate an easement over the road to the airstrip and along the airstrip.

3.4 Danseys Pass Road Scenic Corridor

The CRR describes the landscape corridor along the Danseys Pass road as of regional significance, due to its rugged landform rather than the vegetation. Our inspection revealed areas where there are significant patches of lowland shrubs, with mature broadleaf, kowhai, pittosporum and cabbage trees, and a mixed shrubland of coprosma, matagouri, native broom, and other shrub species, with high biodiversity values, that occur in an area mapped as a chronically threatened environment, which is national priority to protect.



Typical road side shrublands



Shrublands extend up to the gorge skyline in places

Forest and Bird Submission

This proposal freeholds a scenic roadside corridor with lowland shrublands and short tussocks in an area mapped as chronically threatened, and is inconsistent with the CPLA.

Forest and Bird submits that the indigenous vegetation within this area be protected via a covenant which prohibits burning, clearing, and spraying

3.5 Other Shrubland Remnants

There are significant indigenous shrublands, including mature broadleaf and kowhai trees on most shady faces, particularly in the lowland Hogget and Bull Blocks. These occur on chronically threatened and critically under-protected environments which are national

priority to protect. A falcon was encountered on our inspection in the Bull Block shrubland, and may have been nesting. Falcon are nationally endangered.

Forest and Bird Submission

This proposal freeholds areas of lowland forest and shrublands in chronically threatened, and critically under protected environments and is inconsistent with the CPLA.

Forest and Bird submits that the indigenous vegetation within these areas be protected via a covenant which prohibits burning, clearing, and spraying.

4.0 Access Matters and Recreational Opportunities

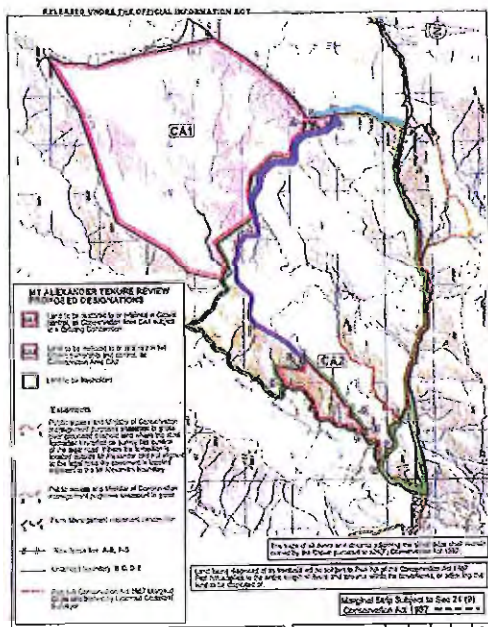
This area offers a wide range of recreational activities in an area that is receiving increased tourism and demand for out door activities.

Visitors using Danseys Pass Holiday Park are interested in experiencing activities such as gold panning, walking, trekking, mountain biking, horse riding, forest and bird and back to basics 'kiwi camping' and are not sedentary holiday makers who just want to relax, according to the manager of the Park as reported in foot note 4.

4.1 Access to and through CA2 to CA1

There is potential for an easy day round trip, with drop offs either at the Danseys Pass end or at d. The proposal does not secure this access.

To secure this access and provide for enjoyment of proposed CA2 and CA1 either CA1 and CA2 need to be joined and extended, or easements need to be created to enable access and enjoyment of CA2 from the spur between d-E-A and up to and through CA1. The views from this ridge are stunning. This is the natural route to the tops, as the gorge is rugged and difficult. This route is marked in blue below.



View along the boundary of CA1 past H showing where track (marked in pink) appears to be outside the proposed CA1

Public access to CA1 from Danseys Pass needs to be secure. This can be achieved either by restoring this area to full crown control or by deeming the formed track to be the legal road, as we understand can occur as described by Dave Payton File Note 23 June 2006 file CON/50000/16/12549/A-ZNO.

Similarly secure public access is also needed along the formed track over Mt Alexander to Mt Nobbler, and should be secured by deeming the track to be the legal road.

Forest and Bird Submits

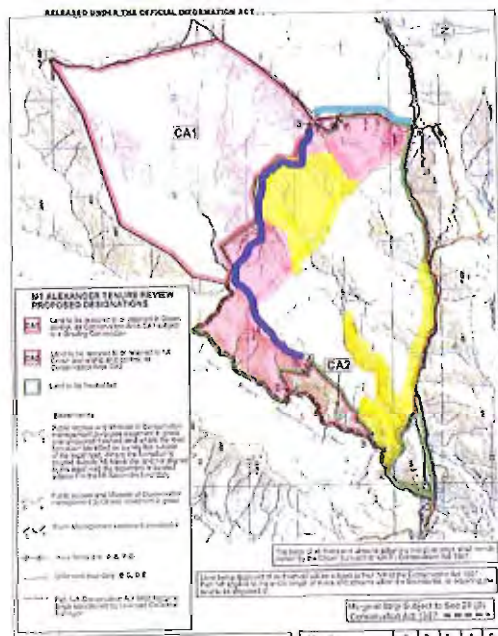
This proposal fails to satisfy the CPLA and the Governments Objectives for secure public access and enjoyment of the conservation land.

The Society submits that the routes marked on the above map must be secured prior to finalizing the Substantive Proposal.

5.0 Summary of Recommendations

Forest and Bird submits that this proposal as it stands is not demonstrably in the public interest and needs to be reassessed so that it protects areas with high biodiversity and landscape sivs on threatened and under protected environments. The proposal also fails to satisfy the CPLA requirements of securing public access to and enjoyment of reviewable land.

To ensure that this proposal better complies with the CPLA Forest and Bird recommends that the areas marked in pink below be returned to full crown control either as conservation areas, or as in the case of the tussock grassland at the pass, scenic reserve, and the indigenous vegetation in the areas marked yellow be protected via covenants. These areas are approximate only.



Secure access is needed via easements over the dark blue line and legal road along the existing formation along the teal line.

With regard to the proposed 15 year grazing concession, Forest and Bird contends that this will not facilitate protection of the proposed CA and should be reduced to a maximum of 5 years. However in order to facilitate an outcome that better fulfils Governments HC Objectives and national priorities and the CPLA, Forest and Bird would reluctantly support a 15 year concession provided the above submissions are accepted and implemented.

Forest and Bird appreciates the opportunity to inspect and make a submission on the proposal, and would welcome further discussion that might facilitate an improved outcome.

Yours sincerely

Sue Maturin
 Otago Southland Field Officer
 Forest and Bird