

Proposals considered by the Board on 22 July 2021 for:
Lake McKinnon [altered from Lake Mackinnon]
McKinnon Pass [altered from Mackinnon Pass]



Summary

The proposal is to alter the recorded¹ place names, Lake Mackinnon to Lake McKinnon and Mackinnon Pass to McKinnon Pass.

Both features are in Fiordland National Park, which is a remote but significant recreational area. The pass is the high point on the Milford Track and is well known nationally and internationally.

The proposer has provided extensive evidence that the features were named for Quintin McPherson McKinnon (1851-1892), McKinnon is the correct spelling, and that he had a significant association with the area. Correcting the spelling would not impact emergency services as Mackinnon and McKinnon are pronounced the same.

Te Rūnunga o Ngāi Tahu's (TRONT) papatipu rūnanga agrees with the spelling alteration and has not advised of an original Māori name for the lake.

[Kā Huru Manu](#) records that Ōmanui is the original Māori name for the pass. The papatipu rūnanga's preference is to have Ōmanui, with the macron, as the first part

¹ A recorded place name is one that has appeared on at least two authoritative maps, charts or databases, which the NZGB has resolved to be: NZMS map, LINZ Archived Place Names Database, [Kā Huru Manu](#) and all hydrographic and bathymetric maps and charts published under a New Zealand hydrographic authority at the time of publication. It is not official.

of an official dual name. Expert orthographic advice is that the orthography is Omanui without the macron.

Applying an official dual name to the pass would recognise the equal historical significance of both parts of the name. Applying Omanui as the first part aligns with the Board's dual naming convention to recognise first discovery by Māori and retaining McKinnon as the second part recognises its long-term use on plans and maps (129 years). A function of the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008 is to collect and encourage the use of original Māori place names.

The option to reverse the dual name order of the pass, ie, McKinnon Pass / Omanui, has been considered. However, it is not likely that applying the English part of the name first would make it any easier to identify the pass in an emergency.

Secretariat recommendations

At its 22 July 2021 hui the Board resolved recommendations 1-3.

Recommendation 1 **Accept** the proposal to **alter** the recorded place name Lake Mackinnon to an official place name **Lake McKinnon**, based on:

- a principal function of the Board being to correct the spelling of geographic names,
- evidence that the feature was named for Quintin McPherson McKinnon (1851-1892), McKinnon is the correct spelling (despite his son allegedly saying otherwise) and he had a significant association with the area, and
- an alteration to the spelling not impacting on emergency services as the current and proposed names are pronounced the same.

Noting that TRONT's papatipu rūnanga agrees with the spelling alteration and has not advised of an original Māori name for the lake.

and

Notify as a proposal to alter for three months.

and

Recommendation 2 **Decline** the proposal to **alter** the recorded place name Mackinnon Pass to an official place name McKinnon Pass, based on the Board's function to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps, and the pass having the original Māori name, Omanui.

and

Recommendation 3 **Accept** a different proposal from the Board to **alter** the recorded place name Mackinnon Pass to the official dual name **Omanui / McKinnon Pass** based on:

- the Board's functions to investigate and determine the priority of the discovery of a geographic feature, and to collect and encourage the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps,
- evidence in Kā Huru Manu that Ōmanui is the original Māori name for the pass and TRONT's papatipu rūnanga's preference to have Ōmanui (with the macron) as the first part of the dual name,
- orthographic advice from a Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori licensed translator that the orthography is Omanui without the macron,
- applying a dual name recognising the equal historical significance of both parts of the name,
- applying the Māori name first recognising first discovery by Māori,
- evidence that the feature was named for Quintin McPherson McKinnon (1851-1892), McKinnon is the correct spelling (despite his son allegedly saying otherwise) and he had a significant association with the area,
- an alteration to the spelling from Mackinnon to McKinnon not impacting on emergency services as they are pronounced the same, and
- retaining the English part of the name making it easier to identify the pass in an emergency.

and

Notify as a proposal to alter for three months.

Secretariat assessment and advice

The proposal

The proposer is seeking to alter the spelling of Lake Mackinnon to Lake McKinnon and Mackinnon Pass to McKinnon Pass.

The proposer has provided:

- evidence that the features were named after surveyor, explorer and guide, Quintin McPherson McKinnon (1851-1892),
- extensive evidence of the spelling 'McKinnon' in histories of western Otago and Southland including reports published in newspapers in the 1880s and 1890s, and the Dunedin West electoral roll 1880-81,
- a copy of a Department of Lands and Survey file that records 'Quintin McKinnon's Widow',
- a marriage certificate and the birth certificates of two sons, which record 'Quintin McPherson McKinnon', and
- copies of letters dated 1891 and 1895 reporting stolen goods to the police written by and signed 'Quintin McKinnon'.

Names shown on maps and plans

The names of the lake and pass, variously spelled 'McKinnon', 'MacKinnon' and 'Mackinnon', have been in long term use on plans and maps (129 years).

Lake Mackinnon

Map/plan	Date	Name
The Lakes & Sounds of Western Otago	1892	L.M ^c KINNON
SO 5273	1927	L.M ^c KINNON
NZMS 15	1949	L.M ^c KINNON
NZMS 1, S130, 1 st 2 nd eds.	1974, 1987	Lake Mackinnon
NZMS 260, C42, 1 st edition	1997	Lake Mackinnon

Mackinnon Pass

The Lakes & Sounds of Western Otago	1892	MCKINNONS PASS
SO 6538	1911	MacKinnon's Pass
NZMS 15	1949	McKinnon Pass
SO 6371	1956	MacKinnon Pass
NZMS 1, S120 & S121, 1 st 2 nd eds.	1974, 1979	Mackinnon Pass
NZMS 260, D41, 1 st edition	1995	Mackinnon Pass

Location, geographic feature types and generic terms

Both features are within Fiordland National Park. Mackinnon Pass is the saddle at the 1069m high point (NZTopo50-CB08 861256) on the Milford Track (Te Anau to Milford Sound / Piopiotahi). Lake Mackinnon, which is centred at NZTopo50-CC07 585889 and covers ~1km², is between Lake Te Anau and Taitetimu / Caswell Sound.

Lake and Pass are appropriate generic terms for the features.

New Zealand Gazetteer, associated names and duplication

Lake Mackinnon and Mackinnon Pass are recorded names for the features. Mackinnon Peaks and Mackinnons Gardens, which are ~40km and ~48km south-southeast of Te Anau are also recorded names in the Gazetteer. There is

no record of who they are named for, so it is not known if they are associated, and they are not included in the proposal.

The Board's index cards record that the recorded names McKinnon Peak and McKinnon Stream in the Southern Alps / Kā Tiritiri o te Moana were named for AJ (Jock) McKinnon.

There is unlikely to be confusion for emergency services because of duplication as all of the names have been in long term use.

Mackinnon Glacier in Antarctica is named after a geologist, DI MacKinnon.

Research, history and references to the features

Several references provided by the proposer credit Quintin McKinnon as discovering or making the first crossing of the pass. However, Beattie records that a track from Te Anau to Milford Sound was known and used by Māori, and the pass was named Omanui².

[Kā Huru Manu](#) records [Ōmanui](#) as the original Māori name of the pass. Beattie (ibid.) records that Omanui could possibly mean 'great running' or 'a long period of idleness' but could also be that of a Māori explorer from centuries ago. Reed records that Omanui refers to the god Ruru who moved debris from the top of the mountain to clear a path³.

There is no original Māori name in Kā Huru Manu for the lake and TRONT has not advised an original Māori name.

Hall-Jones records that Quintin Mackinnon discovered and named Lake Mackinnon in 1887. Although he called it Lake McKinnon on his sketch map, a son stated that the correct spelling of the family's name is Mackinnon, which is now the accepted spelling.⁴ The Board's archives also record that in the early 1920s Mackinnon's son advised that his father spelled the name 'Mackinnon'.⁵

A cairn commemorating Mackinnon's crossing near the summit of the pass has the spelling 'MACKINNON'. Quintin Huts on the Milford Track and Saint Quintin Falls, which can be seen from the track, were also named for him.⁶

Consultation with iwi and others

TRONT's papatipu rūnanga has advised 'we are happy enough for these relatively minor changes go through. We'd like to suggest that Mackinnon Pass becomes 'Ōmanui / McKinnon Pass'.

The features are in Fiordland National Park so DOC⁷ has an interest in them being identified on its maps, information boards, etc. If the Board accepts the proposals DOC will be advised of them prior to public notification.

Advice on orthography⁸

A Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori licensed translator has advised 'I really don't think the O should take a macron. The word oma has the meanings: run, flee,

² Beattie, H. *The Maoris and Fiordland*. Dunedin: Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers Co. Ltd, 1949

³ Reed, AW & P Dowling. *Place Names of New Zealand*. Auckland: Raupo, 2010

⁴ Hall-Jones, J. *Fiordland Place-Names*. Te Anau: Real Journeys, 2003

⁵ New Zealand Geographic Board Correspondence. Vol. 28, page 269

⁶ Department of Conservation, [History of Mackinnon Pass Memorial](#). Accessed 27 May 2021

⁷ Department of Conservation

⁸ The conventions and rules of how to write a language

escape. Nui means large, many or great. The only suggestion I can come up with would be 'the great escape' or 'the great running', so Omanui (no macron). TRONT's papatipu rūnanga has indicated their preference for Ōmanui with the macron.

Relevant sections from the [NZGB Act 2008](#) and the [Standard for New Zealand place names](#)

Under sections 10(1)(c) and 11(1)(b) of the Act the Board has a responsibility to examine cases of doubtful spelling. The Board's functions include investigating and determining the priority of the discovery of geographic features and collecting and encouraging the use of original Māori names on official charts and maps (sections 11(1)(c)(d)(e) refer).

1.1 Acceptable names

- (a) Names that reflect New Zealand culture, society, exploration, events, tradition, and history. The NZGB encourages the restoration of original Māori place names.
- (b) The surname or traditional ancestral Māori name of a person who has been deceased for at least two years, was a notable leader, of good character, and/or contributed to, or had a strong association with the feature, place or area.
- (c) Names that recognise the priority of discovery of significant places, including those of Māori pre-European contact.

1.6 Altered names

Any alteration should balance the cultural and historical significance of the name against long-term use and the practical need for location identification.

The current recorded place names are well established, widely recognised, and have been in use for ~129 years. However, there is authoritative evidence of Mackinnon Pass having an original Māori name that has been in long term use by Ngāi Tahu. Altering Mackinnon Pass to include the original Māori name as part of a dual name would recognise first discovery, and support the desire of TRONT to have their names restored and made official. Applying dual names recognises the equal historical significance of both parts of the name.

Concerns or issues for emergency services

The features are in a remote but significant recreational area that is well known both nationally and internationally. Noting that the current and proposed English names are very similar and pronounced the same, retaining the English name in a dual name for the pass will make it easier to identify in an emergency.

Cost implications

If the proposals proceed there should be no concerns because of cost. Updates to signs, promotional material, maps, databases etc would be done over time during routine maintenance.

Media

There is likely to be media coverage if the Board accepts a proposal to dual name Mackinnon Pass. Therefore, the Board may consider a media release when it publicly notifies the proposal.

Supporting information

1. Proposal for Lake McKinnon and McKinnon Pass – 2021-05-17
2. Email from TRONT – consultation feedback – 2021-06-21
3. Email from Te Haumihiata Mason – orthographic advice – 2021-06-29