



## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name : Braeside**

**Lease number : PO 181**

### **Conservation resources report**

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.

The report attached is released under the Official Information Act 1982.

**Copied November 2002**

## BRAESIDE : TENURE REVIEW PROPOSAL

### INTRODUCTION

Braeside Pastoral Lease (12,354 ha) lies between the recently acquired stewardship land of Two Mile to the north, and Mount Ida stewardship land to the south, on the Hawkdun Range. This property is the last significant pastoral lease on the Hawkdun Range under review in Otago and will provide the remaining nucleus for a conservation park proposal on the Hawkduns. Braeside also provides the easiest access on to the Hawkduns from the Home Hills Road running off State Highway 85.

Braeside is a mix of flat to rolling country (4839 ha), 600-900 m asl, adjacent to the Home Hills Road and the balance (7520 ha) comprises the Hawkdun Range itself rising from 750 m to 1674 m.

### ECOLOGICAL VALUES

In 1992 a full PNAP study was carried out over the Hawkdun Ecological District. This survey included the Hawkdun Range part of Braeside. Subsequent work for the Maniototo PNAP report and field inspections for tenure review have not revealed any values of significance on the lower country of Braeside.

#### Hawkdun PNAP Survey Recommendations

This report highlighted one RAP on Braeside; this was:

#### Clear Stream : RAP 9

This RAP is located in the remote north-east corner of the property in the Otematata Catchment. Approximately 500 ha of the RAP is located on Braeside with an altitude range of between 880-1525 m. This RAP contains a sequence of vegetation that is not found elsewhere in the Hawkduns. This sequence ranges from the spur crests containing both *Chionochloa rigida* and *C. macra* tussock grasslands, through to lower hill slopes of predominantly *C. rigida* along with short tussock of *Festuca matthewsii* and *Poa colensoi*. The lower slopes have patches of subalpine scrub, *Meliccytus alpinus* and scattered *Carmichaella petriei*, standing out amongst the tussock grassland.

Alongside the stream and in amongst the bluffs the mixed shrubland increases in diversity and abundance. The dominant species are *Olearia odorata*, *Discaria toumatou* and *Coprosma* spp. with *Aristolotta fruticosa*, *Hebe rakatenensis* and *Corallospartium* and *Dracophyllum longifolium* being the minor components. The latter species was the only record in the Hawkdun Ecological District.

The bluffs supported a variety of plants, the most prominent being *Helichrysum selago*, *Gaultheria crassa*, *Anisotome aromatica* and a bluff *Rytidosperma*. Because of its locality and steepness of the terrain, these shrublands and the surrounding vegetation have largely escaped the adverse effects of burning and grazing, thus preserving a diversity and abundance of species not found elsewhere.

#### Balance of Property

##### 1 Hawkdun Range

The Hawkduns has three principal land systems and associated plant communities. These are:

- a Western scarp face of the Hawkdun Range overlooks the Manuherikia Valley and is a relatively steep facing front face with short steepish spurs running from the valley 750 m to the summit of the Hawkdun Range 1600 m. The lower scarp slopes around the streams have

a diverse shrubland community of *Discarla toumatou*, *Coprosma intertexta* and *Cassinia leptophylla* along with *Chionochloa rigida*. The lower scarp slopes have small wetlands of *Pernettya nana*, *Carex* spp. along with short tussock grasslands of *Festuca novaezelandiae* and *Poa cita*. The western scarp varies according to its aspect and topography, but is generally well covered in good *C. rigida* and a range of inter-tussock species, mainly *Gaultheria depressa*, *Dracophyllum prunum* and *Celmisia* spp. The lower scarp slopes have scattered *Corallospartium* plants overtopping the tussocks.

At a higher altitude, boulder fields and screes extend from the summit crest down into the tussock grasslands. At these altitudes, *C. macra* becomes increasingly dominant towards the summit crest.

- b Summit Crest: This system varies along the range and is broadly defined by aspect and slope. Most of the crest is with vegetation islands dominated by *Kelleria villosa*. The crest is patterned boulderfield/fellfield that is very exposed to all prevailing weather. Cushionfields of *Raoullia hectorii*, *Phyllachne colensoi* and *Poa colensoi* form small patches of vegetation within the boulderfields. In some localities very even swards of *C. macra* form extensive islands of high altitude tussock grasslands.
- c Eastern slopes: Four major ridges run from the summit crest of the Hawkduns in a northeast direction to the boundary of the property which is defined by tributaries of the Clear Stream. The upper slopes are a mosaic of *C. macra* and boulderfields which give way to extensive *C. rigida* tussock grasslands at lower altitudes. The ridge crests have extensive pavement surfaces of *Raoullia*, *Poa* and *Celmisia* surround by tall tussock grasslands. The small streams have well vegetated terrace margins of tall tussock. Shrubland communities occur in their lower reaches largely within the RAP already described. Hawkweed, along with a variety of pasture grasses, is also a component of these communities, but not as extensive mats.

## 2 Home Hills

This area is largely the flats of Braeside near the Home Hills road, approximately 2500 ha, along with a small block in the Idaburn Hills which has been largely OSTD and 1500 ha of the northeast slopes of the Home Hills themselves, part of which has also been topdressed. These flats still contain a mosaic of native plants interspersed amongst the pasture grasses, but largely the area is highly modified with the inter-tussock species having been replaced with pasture grasses.

## FAUNA

### Entomological Values

This information is taken from Patrick (1994) - a survey report covering the Hawkdun Ecological District.

Three key areas or vegetation types for native insects are found on this property:

#### 1 Shrublands

These are found at the base of the Hawkdun Range on both sides of the range. They are locally dense in gorges surrounding streams and support a large insect fauna. The *Olearia odorata* shrublands, east of the summit are particularly significant as they are host to a large number of insects (moths, wasps, beetles, bugs) that are confined to Central Otago/North Otago. The presence of *Coprosma intertexta*, other *Coprosma* species and *Meliccytus alpinus*, etc, is also significant for the shrublands west of the summit at the base. They also have a distinctive insect fauna associated with them.

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### Grasslands

Snow tussock grasslands clothe the range on both sides from the base to near the tops. A rich insect fauna inhabits the various altitudinal zones.

Apart from the grassland species present, the various shrubs (*Cassinia*, *Carmichaella*, etc) and herbs (*Anisotome*, *Acliphyllo*, *Celmisia*, *Gaultheria*, etc) are important hosts to various insect species. Many of the native invertebrates are diurnal, large bodied and brightly coloured characteristic of alpine areas.

Most of the species of insect present are widespread alpine species, but a few are restricted to the general area of the Hawkdun Range, eg, moth *Gelophoula* n.sp. Wetlands within the grassland habitat are present at the base of the western side of the range and are a significant addition to the communities. They have a very distinctive insect fauna, particularly diurnal moths, eg, *Eurythecta leucothrinca*, some of which emerge only in late autumn. The giant dragonfly *Uropetala chiltoni* breeds in wetlands from 700-1000 m here.

High alpine wetlands that form the headwaters of streams on the summit are small but important and are inhabited by some special stoneflies and caddis species, eg, *Zelandobius childi* and *Spantocercoides howesi* (stoneflies) and *Psilochorema chetrodes* and *Zelolessica cheira* (caddis).

### 3 High Alpine Fellfield

The high alpine zone of the Hawkdun Range has rich and distinctive array of insect species. Some widespread in Otago, others confined to North Otago mountains. Typically the fauna is large, dark coloured and diurnal.

Some species of note:

<i>Maoricicada phaeoptera</i>	(black cicada)
<i>Lyperobius</i> n.sp.	(giant weevil)
<i>Notoreas</i> n.sp.	(moth - on <i>Kelleria villora</i> )
<i>Brachaspls nivalis</i>	(grey alpine grasshopper)
<i>Deinacrida connectens</i>	(giant weta)
<i>Nannochorista philpotti</i>	(NZ's only scorpion fly)
<i>Percnodalmon merula</i>	(black scree butterfly)
<i>Metacrias huttoni</i>	(tiger moth)

Bare ground, rocky ground, patches of lower herbs, taller grassland nearby are all important aspects of the high alpine crests of the Hawkdun Range for these species.

### **Birds**

Due to Braeside's variation in aspect, altitudes and plant communities, a variety of birdlife has been observed during survey work. The present day avifauna consists of the New Zealand falcon and Australasian harrier ranging over the tussock grasslands. The shrubland of Clear Stream contained blackbirds, chaffinches and silvereye, while the surrounding tussocklands had the usual pipit and skylark. The blackbilled gull, finches and sparrows have also been observed in the locality. Quail probably occur along the lower slopes and flats of the Manuherikia Valley.

### **Lizards**

Giant scree skinks *Lelolopisma walmatense* were recorded nearby on the south slopes of Mount Ida by Whitaker in 1985. He also suggested that the species may be present elsewhere in the area. During the PNAP study no giant scree skinks were located, only the common skinks *Lelolopisma maccanni* and *L. nigriplantare polychroma* and the gecko *Hoplodactylus maculatus*.

## Animal Pests

Braeside has rabbits on the flats which have an impact on farming values, while the Hawkduns have hares, along with the occasional pig and deer. The latter two do not occur in any great numbers and tend to provide some recreational sport.

## PLANT PESTS

Braeside is relatively weed-free, especially in the main Hawkduns themselves. No wilding pines have been observed during survey work. A few small patches of introduced broom are found alongside the track near the hut at the base of the Short Spur. Providing prompt action occurs, this localised problem can be dealt with. *Hieracium* is present but not as extensive mats.

## LANDSCAPE

The Hawkdun Range forms a substantial part of the backdrop of the Central Otago high country. This massif stands impressively above the Ida Valley plains and is visible from many directions. From within, the remote and limitless nature of this landscape creates a feeling of wilderness which is highly valued by those seeking solitude. Braeside forms part of this, with a mixture of differing landscape units that were defined in a DOC Landscape Assessment of the Hawkdun Ecological District undertaken in 1994. This report identified three landscape components, all based on the attributes of intactness, coherence, distinctiveness and visibility. The western flank of Braeside on the Hawkdun scarp is very visible and relatively intact, which means that any further land use changes to these mountain flanks will be visible from many parts of the district. For example, the Braeside section of the Hawkdun scarp face encloses the Ida Valley to the north. The tussock is relatively uniform and contrasts markedly with the surrounding flats. The Hawkdun Crest is very distinctive, being level and smooth in comparison with the angular landforms of the adjacent valleys. The fellfields and vegetation composition make up an outstanding natural landscape.

The other landscape unit encompasses the spurs and gullies that drain to the east into Clear Stream. This country provides a contrast with the western scarp and summit crests in that the valleys are more incised and gorgy, and the spurs are not as level and smooth as elsewhere. On Braeside the mountains convey a strong impression of natural character, with few signs of human occupation. All the landscape units when combined in an integrated and holistic manner, make it an area worthy of protection.

## RECREATION

### Legal Access

Access to this property is via the public Home Hills road running off State Highway 85. This road appears to have been surveyed to a point where it crosses the Johnstone water race. Beyond this point, the road formation follows the legal line, but may for public recreational access security purposes require proper survey. Running off the Home Hills road are a number of unformed paper roads. The Johnstones and the Mount Ida water race have two legal easements that run through the property.

The Clear Stream is the only water body with a marginal strip or unformed road along the boundary with Braeside. Other creeks or streams may require marginal strips as a result of survey work for this tenure review.

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### **Existing Use/Future Use**

The 4WD track on to the Hawkdun Range from the Home Hills Road along with the track along the range from the Ida and Soldiers Syndicate POLs make the area accessible to off road vehicles. A number of vehicles make trips through Braeside to Otematata or as round trips through Mount Ida and Soldiers Syndicate properties at Kyeburn. To date this access has been freely given, but has not been as of right. Huts in the area and one on Braeside at the end of the Short Spur facilitate overnight stops.

Hunting still tends to be relatively popular with the occasional pig or deer being shot.

Tramping probably has been confined to the areas north and south of Braeside, with destinations such as Mount Ida being fairly attractive. Ski touring is developing as a growing winter use on the Hawkdun Range. Extended ski trips are possible, providing parties are self-sufficient, as there are no huts near the crest of the range.

The Mount Ida water race has long been the focus of a walkway proposal skirting the Hawkdun Range and in recent years has been used by the goldfields cavalcade as well as mountain bikers.

Braeside holds the key to good public access on to the Hawkduns. The track up a prominent spur provides the easiest gradient on to the range and the hinterland beyond. Legalising access to this track should enable the potential of the Hawkduns to be realised in the longer term.

## **HISTORY**

### **Maori Occupation**

While no sites are specifically known on this property, it is considered likely that Braeside was used by moa hunting parties. On an adjoining property evidence of occupation in the form of ash, bone and stone flakes have been found. An area of outcropping silcrete near Little Peepoes contains stone fragments that are similar to artefacts.

### **European**

Braeside (Run 227) had its origins as part of the early Hawkdun Station in either 1857 or 1858. Mr G McLean was acting as an agent for the Studholme family who played an important role in the early history of New Zealand. The lease had a chequered career for some years with different leasees. In 1882 when the leases expired and the property was divided into two when Ross and Glendinning acquired Run 227 as part of Blackstone Hill acquiring a total of some 145 000 acres. Subdivision of the Hawkdun Runs occurred when the leases expired around 1907 and 1917 and the station was subdivided into present day runs.

There are only two areas of historical interest on Braeside Pastoral Lease, these are the Mt Ida water race and Johnstones water race. The Mt Ida water race was opened in 1877 as a gold mining race to service Naseby and to flush out the Hogburn sludge channel. This race of some 120 km winds around the base of the Hawkduns in Braeside and then crosses the flats of Braeside to the Idaburn Hills. While most of the original line is still intact, modern day maintenance has been carried out by mechanical excavators and has destroyed its character. Today it provides irrigation water to the Naseby area. Johnstones water race is still visible today, but its exact origin and purpose have not been researched.

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## CONSERVATION PROPOSAL

This tenure exchange proposal would allow all the front country on the flats around the Home Hills road to become freehold. The principal nature conservation values on the Hawkdun Range, along with landscape and public recreation features, warrant retention in Crown ownership and could become conservation land.

This latter area includes a small area of wetland at the base of the range, along with the shrubland alongside Johnstone Creek, and encompasses the tussocklands on both flanks of the Hawkduns, as well as part of the Clear Stream RAP. This area would provide a link between the existing conservation lands on the range and open up the area for recreational use.

Public access will be required from the Home Hills road to the proposed conservation land. It is envisaged that an easement for vehicles could be created over the existing 4WD road to the base of the Hawkdun Range into the proposed conservation area.

Another access point over a 4WD track near the northern end of the property could be realigned so that an unformed paper road becomes the existing track. This point could provide better access to the existing conservation land as well as to the proposed area on Braeside. This route is possibly a more direct walking route to the tops, especially in the winter months.

An easement along the Mount Ida water race to allow for public access is desirable to cater for walkers, mountain bikers and horse trekkers.

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Some 7520 ha could become conservation land to be managed by DOC. This area links existing conservation land, and its protection would enhance recreational opportunities and ecological protection of existing areas. The combination of all these areas could realise the draft CMS proposal for an Oteake or Manlototo Conservation Park.

### Public Access

The two key access points from the Home Hills road across the freehold land should be signposted. The main access point across the flats to Johnstones water race could be made available for vehicle usage. Once the proposed DOC boundary is reached provision could be made for a car park area along with the appropriate signs. This would provide a jumping off point for access on to the Hawkdun Range. Vehicle access higher on the range poses track maintenance problems and it may be desirable that a permit system be introduced on a user pays basis.

The other access point on to the Hawkduns near Coal Gully could be primarily for foot access only, while Mount Ida water race route could be signposted and marked where it is appropriate. These access easements could be secured by way of easements under the Conservation Act.

### Recreation

Good access on to the Hawkdun Range will open up as of right recreational opportunities. Many of these opportunities can be successfully catered for with minimal management inputs. An existing hut on Braeside could be maintained and managed by DOC for recreational use. An existing vehicle track down to the hut will possibly not be maintained in the short term.

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**azing**

Retirement from stock is preferred for the proposed conservation area of 7520 ha area. Unfenced natural boundaries occur with adjoining leases in the east, and these are not totally stock-proof and some minor stock trespass can be expected.

**Pest Control**

Pigs and the occasional deer should be controlled where necessary by the recreational shooter. Hares and rabbits are not considered a problem at these higher altitudes.

Scattered broom around the lower track and hut at the end of the short spur is a potential problem. Action now would eliminate this concern. Monitoring of weeds along the DOC farm land margin will be an ongoing management concern.

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Montane shrublands in Clear Stream gorge (950m). On left (north-facing slope) is *Olearia-matagouri* scrub; on right (south-facing slope) is mixed tussock-shrubland



Mixed tussock - shrubland (960m) - Clear Stream RAP.  
Visible are *Dracophyllum longifolium*, *Hebe buchananii*, *H. reticulata*, *Coprosma rugosa*, *Olearia colorata* and *Chionocholea rigida*.

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*Chionochloa macrochaeta* / *Celmisia viscosa* tussock-herbfield on the summit of Mt Ida (1600m). View is northeast toward St Marys Range



Scree vegetation on the steep southwest slopes of Mt Ida (1500m). Visible are scattered plants of *Hebe epacridea*, *Dracophyllum primum*, *Raoulia eximia*, *Poa colensoi* and *Chionochloa macrochaeta*

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