

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : CRAIGROY

Lease number : PO 233

Conservation Resources Report - Part 2

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.

March

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Appendix Four: FMC's written submission on recreational and related inherent values of Craigroy Pastoral Lease.

**RECREATIONAL AND RELATED SIGNIFICANT INHERENT
VALUES ON BEN NEVIS and CRAIGROY**

A Report for FMC to assist in the Tenure Review Process

November 2002

INTRODUCTION

This report is offered as a contribution to the statutory consultation process undertaken by the Department of Conservation (DOC).

The report focuses on those features of Craigroy and Ben Nevis which are known to be important for public recreational interests. It should be noted that while much of this interest focuses on access, the natural and historic values and landscapes have a fundamental impact on the recreational value of the property and greatly influence the quality of recreational experience enjoyed. It is for this reason that reference is also made to the natural and landscape values in this report. Much of the land on these properties has outstanding natural, and landscape values and its recreational significance is high because they are easily accessible in the Nevis Valley, from either Bannockburn or Garston.

METHODS OF SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

Because of severe time constraint this report is unlike most other FMC Reports, which are based on field inspections and detailed research. Instead, this report is based on existing knowledge of the area, on two earlier Reports on Outdoor Recreation in Otago (Mason 1988,1989) and the Otago Conservation Management Strategy.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BEN NEVIS AND CRAIGROY

Craigroy and Ben Nevis occupy a large tract of land in the lower Nevis Valley and stretch up to the crests of the Old Woman Range and the Hector Mountains respectively. Craigroy covers almost 4,500 ha on the eastern side of the valley between the Nevis Valley floor at about 600m and 1600m on the Old Woman Range, near Mt Black. Ben Nevis (14,500 ha) lies on the western side of the valley and its upper boundary runs along the summit ridge of the Hector Mountains including Ben Nevis (2234m) and James Peak (2072m). Ben Nevis also includes a series of stream catchments which are all tributaries of the Nevis River. From north to south these are the Left Branch of the Doolans, which marks the northern boundary of the property, the Nevis Burn, Schoolhouse Creek and Commissioners Creek, each of which are separated by prominent spurs running from valley floor to mountain top.

The homesteads of both properties are situated on the valley floor some 30 km from Cromwell but the whole Nevis Valley has a remote character because of its isolation. This isolation is due to the necessary crossings of either the Carrick Range (almost 1,300m at Duffers Saddle) or over the Slate Range, at 1,100m above Garston.

The Nevis Valley has been the site of much gold mining activity both on the valley floor and on the lower slopes of the valley sides. The place is like an outdoor museum with evidence of all stages of alluvial mining from the earliest paddocking and sluicing methods to electric and coal powered dredging operations which were at their peak around the turn of the century. There was also much hydraulic sluicing which has made its mark on the valley sides, with evidence clearly visible today.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND POTENTIAL

Craigroy and Ben Nevis are both important for recreational uses but for different reasons – Craigroy because it is associated with the Old Man – Old Woman – Garvies system of mountain ranges, and Ben Nevis because of its close association with the Hector Mountains and the Remarkables.

The higher parts of Craigroy provide the obvious route from Duffers Saddle, along the crest of the Old Woman Range to the Garvies. The Old Man and Old Woman Ranges are popular for cross country skiing in winter because they easily accessible by road to the snowline in the vicinity of Duffers Saddle. Mason (1988) reported that *"ease of access has resulted in the Old Man and Old Woman Ranges being among the most frequently used areas in Otago. Road access to the snowline provides one of the few opportunities for day trips from Dunedin or Invercargill.....a 40 km traverse the length of the Old Woman and Old Man ranges is possible, with an overnight camp."*

There is potential for similar trips to be made by mountain bike in summer and there is always demand from horse riders for new places to go.

The Remarkables are undoubtedly better known than the Hector Mountains but the latter offer a range of opportunities for summer and winter recreation. Traditional access has been from the Queenstown side, and more recently easy access has become available via the Remarkables skifield, Perhaps also, the western approach is more popular because Queenstown is where many recreational users start out from. Lake Hope, Ben Nevis, James Peak and Staircase Creek are the usual objectives for tramping parties setting out on the western side, but all of these, except Staircase Creek, could equally well be approached from the Nevis side.

With the improvement in, and securing of, public access through tenure review it is highly likely that recreational use from the Nevis side will increase. By vehicle it is not difficult to get to a dramatic and remote setting in the Nevis valley where lots of opportunities open up for day trips or longer excursions to the Hectors and Remarkables, and over Coal Pit Saddle to the Kawarau Gorge.

Mason 1989) has underlined the historic and continuing importance of the Remarkables and Hectors for recreation: *"The Remarkables, since the time of the earliest European settlement, have been regarded as the single most spectacular feature in a highly scenic region.*

Passive appreciation remains its greatest recreational value. The "stupendous declivity" of jagged crags, from level base to saw-toothed summit ridge, has a dominating presence over the Queenstown district. It is unrivalled by any similar landform in New Zealand and provides a backdrop for all manner of outdoor activities undertaken by many thousands of visitors from throughout New Zealand and overseas. For many it is an object of marvel and inspiration, without generating a need to touch or climb. The absence of any natural or man-made weaknesses in the 'declivity' inspires almost mystical qualities that give it a value beyond mere rock and cleft.

Government geologist T.N. Hackett and party made the first recorded ascent of Double Cone in October 1864. As Queenstown became less of a goldrush town and more of a resort, interest in climbing to the summit increased. Since at least the 1890s the climb up the northern Kawarau face or the western face, to Lake Alta and the summit, has been a popular attraction.

Before road construction, the Lake Alta area of the Rastus Burn was the focus of attention for trampers and climbers, with Single or Double Cone the objective. Two days, or a very long day, was required for the return trip."

The Garston – Nevis Road gets a great deal of public use when flooding of tributary creeks is not a problem. In recent times it has become increasingly popular for mountain biking and an annual 'Pub to Pub' bike race

is now held between Garston and Bannockburn. The valley floor and Nevis River are popular destinations for family groups, and for picnicking, fishing, camping, and gold panning.

FMC believes that the recreational importance and value of leases in the tenure review process should be assessed not only on its present usage but also on its potential. This is because current usage is usually less than its potential for a number of reasons. Partly because of the current land tenure under pastoral lease, access to parts of Ben Nevis and Craigroy has not been easy in the past so the recreational use is less than it might have been if public access was more readily available. There is significant potential for greater use in summer and winter (eg camping, exploring historic relics on the valley floor, climbing, skiing and tramping in the Hectors, and cross country skiing or mountain biking along the Carrick – Old Woman Ranges) and it is the full range of possibilities which should be considered during this tenure review.

Public access for tramping and mountain bike trips into the Doolans and over the Coal Pit Saddle road, tramping routes up the major spurs on Ben Nevis, cross country skiing on the Old Woman Range, ski mountaineering and touring on the Hector Mountains, together with exploration of historic gold mining areas and other family activities in the Nevis valley, are the main priorities for recreation in this tenure review.

SIGNIFICANT INHERENT VALUES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR RECREATION

It should be noted that while much of the recreational interest focuses on access, the natural values and landscapes of the recreational settings have a fundamental impact on the value of the back country. Furthermore, the views to be had from the many vantage points, and opportunities for exploring the relics of the gold mining era also greatly influence the quality of recreational experience enjoyed. It is for this reason that reference is also made to natural, historic and landscape values of these properties.

Mason (1988) recommended that the Old Woman Range be classified Natural Experience Zone. He stated *"While it is acknowledged that portions of the zone have been modified in historic times by burning, grazing, and more recently by farm and communications tracking, natural landscapes and systems prevail. The morphology of the alpine tundra and grasslands provides a distinctive setting for wildland recreation."*

The Old Woman Range has high landscape, recreation and nature conservation values by virtue of the area's intactness, remoteness and the predominance of natural values. Despite over 130 years of pastoralism, the native biota greatly outnumbers exotic species so essentially natural processes exist especially at higher altitude.

The mountain area is an enormous upland plateau forming the border between northern Southland and Central Otago. Views out to the surrounding ranges and valleys are spectacular. This area, which Mason (1988) has referred to as the "Polar Plateau," provides the largest continuous tract of cross-country skiing terrain in New Zealand. The area's sheath folded summit tors, summit peneplain landforms and active periglacial features are rated as internationally and nationally important geopreservation sites respectively.

The area was surveyed as one of the initial PNA surveys and virtually the entire mountain system over 1,000m was recommended for protection. This survey identified an area in the Barn Creek as an area recommended for protection (RAP 1/4). This RAP includes an elongated broad catchment extending from the summit tors at 1393m to a narrow constricted gorge flowing into the Nevis River at 670m. The dominant vegetation in the upper RAP is fescue tussock with patches of *Chionochloa rigida* scattered throughout.

A dominant feature above 1100m is the golden Spaniard. Below this point the fescue tussockland becomes dominant. The key ecological interest in the balance of this RAP is largely confined to scattered shrubland plants located within the lower catchment at 860-920m around the rock tors and boulder surfaces. At 920m a large patch of snow totara (*Podocarpus nivalis*) occurs. This is very restricted in the Old Man Ecological District and was noted as a special feature in the PNAP report.

Similar to other block mountain systems in Otago, this system contains several plant and animal species endemic to small areas within it. Additionally several nationally threatened or rare species including the

g. *Simplicia laxa* are recorded here, as well as *Geum pusillum* and *Gingidia enysii*. *Luzula crenulata* and *Parahebe trifida* are endemic. Typical alpine ecosystems are well represented although shrublands are confined either to the wetter parts of the area or to remnants on tor refugia.

The valley floor and lower slopes of both Craigroy and Ben Nevis contain many remains of 19th century gold mining activities which are of representative significance. There are examples of all stages of alluvial mining from the earliest paddocking and sluicing methods to electric and coal powered dredging operations which were at their peak around the turn of the century. There was also much hydraulic sluicing which has made its mark on the valley sides. The evidence, which is still clearly visible today includes not only the sluicing scars, but also the many water races which fed the sluicing and hydraulic elevating operations.

The flats and terraces contain a wide diversity of plants, many of which are small but significant because of their rarity. The relatively rare species include an unnamed *Leptinella* and *Galium*, both only found elsewhere in Otago on the Pisa Flats. A sedge, *Carex kaloides* is also becoming increasingly rare in Otago and the Nevis population is now one of the most important. Near the terrace edge above the Nevis River, *Olearia odorata* and matagouri occur, along with *Muehlenbeckia axillaris*, *Myosotis glauca* and *Raoulia australis*.

The focus of botanical interest in the flats is centred around Schoolhouse Fan and adjacent terraces. The majority of these fans have not been developed, and have only been extensively grazed. The flat is a mosaic of short tussock, sedges, exotic grasses, bare ground, cushion vegetation and the occasional remnant of *Chionochloa rubra cuprea*. A few herbs occur within these stands including the rare *Ranunculus ternatifolius*. Other species are *Gentiana grisebachii*, *Gaultheria nubicola* and *Ranunculus cheesemani*. The remaining conservation interest on parts of this broad fan is the sedge *Carex muelleri*, a dense tough rhizomatous species only 10-16 cm high. It forms distinctive communities that at first glance look like highly degraded festuca grasslands. This species is not common in Otago and the Nevis is described as the type locality for the plant. Schoolhouse Flat is the only area where it survives as a viable community.

The Ben Nevis run on the western side of the Nevis Valley constitutes the back-slopes of the Remarkables and Hector Mountains. These slopes are steep and mountainous, but are not as spectacular as the much better known front faces of the Remarkables. The crest height of the Hectors lies between 1920 and 2225m as far south as James Peak near the southern end of the Ben Nevis property.

Mason (1989) has described the natural values of the Remarkables and Hectors as follows: "*The flora of the area is somewhat unique in its combination of a few of the larger, more colourful alpine plants that characterise the wet mountains west of the Otago lakes, together with many of the distinctive high-alpine cushion plants that are a special feature of the drier Central Otago highlands. In addition there are a few alpine species of limited east-west range that are centred on the Remarkables and Hectors.*"

The plant cover consists of a mosaic pattern of high-altitude snow tussock grassland, dwarfed cushion, snowbank, herbfield and bog, with sparsely vegetated fellfield and rock debris slopes. These different environments are separated chiefly by altitude and topography. The most extensive plant community is snow tussock grassland rising from 1,000m to 1,800m dependent on aspect. The narrow-leaved snow tussock gives way to slim snowgrass at 1,200-1,500m, which in turn merges into blue tussock, or ends abruptly at the toe of the fellfield. The condition of the grassland is generally as good as, or better than, that found on the Central Otago ranges.

The extensive fellfields are relatively stable, consisting of jagged schist. The highest peaks of the Hectors are more rubbly than the central Remarkables and this is reflected by the restricted distribution of several fellfield species. A notable feature of these fellfields are heavy growths of leaf-like and twiggy lichens.

Unlike the Central Otago ranges, herbfields within the Remarkables and Hectors are infrequent, as are alpine bogs. The latter are largely confined to the vicinity of tarns in the upper Rastus Burn and Wye Creek."

It is understood that a large fenced area (6,844 ha) which includes the true right bank of the Doolans left branch, and the catchments of the Nevis burn, Schoolhouse and Commissioners Creeks, was voluntarily retired in 1980 and is fenced. The botanical values in this area vary and include shrublands, tussocklands, herbfield, fellfield, wetlands and rocky slopes. These are found within an altitude zone extending from 800m near the flats to the crest of the Hector Mountains at about 2,000m. The lower slopes of all these valley systems include scattered tall tussock at the lower altitudes which is thicker above about 1250m. Fescue and blue tussock are a component throughout, along with adventive grasses at the lower altitudes. The creeks climb steeply and the riparian zones contain a shrubby element of matagouri, Hebes and Coprosmas. In Schoolhouse Creek on a south facing slope, a large shrubland of *Hebe anomala*, *Carmichaelia orborea*, *Coprosma ciliata* and *C. propinqua* extends between 900m to 1,200m. Above 1,500m, depending on aspect, slim leaved snow tussock (*Chionochoa macra*) occurs in patches along with *Celmisia sessiliflora*, *Aciphylla kirkii*. Above 1,700m the snow tussock thins and becomes restricted to sheltered sites. The more exposed sites and those above 1,750m contain cushion vegetation of *Dracophyllum muscoides*, *Poa colensoi*, *Chionohebe thomsonii* and *Raoulia hectori*.

Given that this area has been voluntarily retired from grazing, and contains significant inherent values, it should be restored to full Crown ownership and control and managed for conservation and recreation purposes.

Most of the higher ground on Craigroy is characterised by High Country Yellow Brown Earth Carrick and Dunstan soils of Land Use Capability (LUC) Class VII, with only a narrow band of Obelisk Soils of LUC Class VIII along the ridge south of Mt Black. The lower slopes are characterised by Yellow-Grey Earth Blackstone Hill soils of LUC Class VI below about 800m.

On the Ben Nevis property, most of the Hector Mountains are characterised by High Country Yellow Brown Earth Dunstan Steepland soils with extensive areas of alpine soils and bare rock. Almost all the land above 1,000m is either LUC Class VII or VIII with a much higher proportion of Class VIII land than on Craigroy. As on Craigroy, there are Yellow Grey Earth Blackstone Hill soils of LUC Class VI on the lower slopes below about 800m and alluvial soils of LUC Class IV on the flats. These areas of higher capability are the most suitable for freeholding because they can be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable, but they occupy less than a quarter of the property.

Land which is classified LUC Class VIII or VIIe, is either entirely unsuited (Class VIII) or of very limited suitability (Class VII) for pastoral farming. Because sheep grazing on high country soils is a depletive process, the land cannot be managed "in a way that is ecologically sustainable" (as required by the CPL Act 1998) unless nutrient removals are replenished by fertiliser applications. Such applications are not likely to be economically justifiable above about 1,000m because of climatic limits on growth potential. The alternative is that these lands be restored to full Crown ownership and control and be managed by DOC for conservation and recreation purposes. The removal of grazing and burning would allow recovery of formerly more extensive ecosystems such as shrublands on the lower slopes and alpine cushionfields higher up. The tussock grassland would also benefit from the cessation of grazing and their vigour would improve. FMC favours this approach.

AREAS TO BE PROTECTED

There are two major reasons why FMC believes that significant areas of Craigroy and Ben Nevis should be restored to full Crown ownership and control. The first of these is the significant inherent value of vegetation and landscape and the potential of the existing alpine communities, tussock grasslands, herbfields, and remnant shrublands to recover from past grazing and burning and regain their former ecological status. The second is that they cannot be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable (as required by the Act) without nutrient replenishment (see the discussion above).

FMC therefore recommends that these lands (generally of LUC Class VIII and VIIe, above about 1,000 to 1,100m), should be restored to full Crown ownership and control and be managed by DOC for conservation

and recreation purposes. This would include the fenced area of area 6,844ha on the slopes of the Hector Mountains including the upper catchments of Commissioners Creek, Schoolhouse Creek, Nevis Burn and part of the Doolans, which has already been retired from grazing.

The upper slopes of Craigroy should similarly be returned to full Crown ownership and control, above about 1,000 to 1,100m. Much of this land is adjacent to, and would form an extension to, the Cairnmuir Conservation Area. A convenient dividing line between conservation land and possible freehold would be the line of the Carrick water race. On Craigroy the RAP 1/4 in Barn Creek should also become conservation land because of the significant inherent values identified in PNA surveys.

Reference has been made above to the highly significant landscape values for which the whole Nevis Valley and the Remarkables are well known. The integrity of these landscape values should be protected by some instrument such as a binding covenant over the entire area to become freehold. This should protect the landscape from the adverse and intrusive effects of erection of inappropriate structures and fencing, and from inappropriate developments such as forestry. FMC is not convinced that landscape protection provisions in District Plans under the Resource Management Act are sufficiently durable or robust to afford adequate protection of such significant inherent values.

The valley floor of the Nevis contains important historic and botanical values especially on the less modified parts of Schoolhouse Flat. A significant part of this Flat should be returned to full Crown ownership and control to protect the rare endemic plants which have survived there. The historic values are also important but may not be destroyed by grazing so a covenant may be more appropriate in this case. There is merit in considering an historic reserve to include the Nevis Township.

Mason (1989) reported that: *"At the conclusion of a year-long study in 1977, a Lands and Survey study team, commissioned by the former Land Settlement Board, recommended that a 20,000 ha scenic reserve be gazetted over the alpine zone of both the Remarkables and Hector Mountains. This was to include the high altitude Class 7 and all Class 8 lands between the Rastus Burn in the north, and Staircase and Commissioners Creeks to the south. The team concluded that only the Right Branch of Doolans Creek was suitable for skifield investigation.*

Only a small part of the reserves recommendation has been implemented and the skifield recommendation disregarded by Government decision. However, there remain strong recreation and landscape reasons for a large scenic reserve covering the northern Hector Mountains, retired pastoral lease and stewardship lands."

This has been accepted in principle by the Otago Conservation Board who made appropriate recommendations in the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago (see below).

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

It is understood that there are legal roads on both Craigroy and Ben Nevis which do not coincide with the formations on the ground. These are (i) the road running south along the crest of the Carrick Range on Craigroy, and (ii) the road leading north from the Nevis Crossing towards the Doolans Saddle on Ben Nevis. The preferred arrangement to secure public access would be for the actual formations of these roads to be formally recognised as the legal road. Alternatively, but less desirably, a formal easement for foot, mountain bike and equestrian use is recommended.

It is understood that marginal strips already exist on the Nevis River and all major tributary creeks (Left Branch of the Doolans, Nevis Burn, Schoolhouse Creek and Commissioners Creek, on Ben Nevis and on Coal Creek on Craigroy.. Because of the steep and rugged nature of the upper catchments of these creeks, the marginal strips do not provide satisfactory access. There are however, much more useful access tracks up the spurs between these tributary creeks on the western side of the valley. It is recommended that public access be made available by way of formal easements for foot, mountain bike and equestrian use on the 4 major spurs on Ben Nevis.

Access to the Nevis River for fishing and other purposes such as family picnics will be required. It is suggested that at least 3 access routes to the river be established by way of formal easements for foot use.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR OTAGO

There are important and significant statements made in the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Otago which was approved in 1998. The statements, objectives and stated priorities for action which were identified at that time are particularly relevant to the current tenure reviews. The CMS identified a number of Special Places which included the 'Remarkables' and the 'Old Man – Garvie' areas.

With regard to the 'Remarkables' Special Place the CMS stated:-

"Neighbouring land, in pastoral or special lease, also has high scenic, recreational and biological values. Part of Loch Linnhe Station has been retired and is under the department's management with a special lease allowing emergency use for grazing. The lower flanks of The Remarkables are covered by a special lease with conditions for landscape protection. The Hector Mountains and the Nevis Valley beyond are all in pastoral leasehold tenure, with virtually all properties having entered the tenure review process."

"Best known of the area's values are its recreational opportunities, particularly the ski area visited by tens of thousands of skiers each year. Climbing, tramping and ski touring are also of importance while parapenting, hang-gliding, hell-viewing, botanising and photography are other pursuits popular in the area. Angling for trophy brown trout in the Nevis is growing in popularity while the lower Nevis gorge is considered to be a supreme kayaking challenge."

*"The botanical values are well known and particularly high. The tussock grassland is extensive and largely unmodified. The alpine and sub-alpine plants are notable as the most eastern extension of several species including snow patch tussock (*Chionochloa oreophila*), *Ranunculus buechananii* and *Parahebe birleyi*. The area has a wide range of habitats (rock bluffs, boulderfields, cushionfields, tussockland, wetland, forest and sbrubland) from 350m to 2,320m."*

*"The natural and historic resources of the Nevis Valley are still being uncovered. Recent discoveries include uncommon galaxid species in the streams and special plant communities on the valley terraces, including red tussock grasslands, *Carex muelleri* and uncommon *Galium* and *Leptinella* species. The lower Nevis has a long history of human occupation and use, beginning with moa hunters in the 14th Century and periods of goldmining and farming right down to the present time. The Nevis Valley is a supreme example of a little modified and virtually treeless Central Otago landscape, and is said to be the most intact goldfields landscape remaining in Otago."*

The Objective for the 'Remarkables' Special Place is:- *"To protect the very high landscape and ecological values of the area, and its historic value, and the remoteness of parts of it, while allowing appropriate parts of it to be used for a range of recreational opportunities including the existing skifield."*

This is to be implemented through a number of methods which include:-

- (a) *Action will be taken to create and gazette a Conservation Park covering the lands administered by the department in this area, subject to its own management plan. The management plan will provide for an amenities zone covering the existing commercial ski area and any approved expansion of it, and will not derogate from the provisions of the ski area lease agreement.*
- (b) *Through pastoral lease tenure review negotiations, endeavour to add appropriate contiguous areas on The Remarkables, Hectors and in the Nevis catchment to the core Remarkables Conservation Park proposal.*

The Priority for the 'Remarkables' Special Place is:- *"Creation and management planning for the Conservation Park will be a priority for this Special Place, although timing and extensions will be kept under review as tenure change proposals develop on adjoining properties."*

In relation to the 'Old Man - Garvie' Special Place the CMS stated: that the objective was:- *"To protect the entire high altitude range crests for their landscape, nature conservation, cultural and recreational importance, to improve legal access to them, and to ensure that recreational and commercial uses are managed to sustain resources and ensure quality recreational experiences, including the remote quality of the Old Woman - Garvie area."*

The stated intention is that this objective will be implemented through:-

- (a) *"Pastoral lease tenure review on adjacent properties will provide opportunities to negotiate to protect the entire range crest. Overall management of these new areas with the existing areas will confer net conservation and management benefits (eg, rationalise fencing).*
- (b) *The integrated management of the high altitude areas administered by the department will be promoted through the concept of a "Kopuwai Conservation Park". If the park proposal proceeds, a management plan will be developed."*

The priority for the 'Old Man - Garvie' Special Place is: *"Completion of protection negotiations, including tenure reviews, will be a priority in this Special Place."*

The tenure reviews on Craigroy and Ben Nevis pastoral leases thus present an opportunity to make very significant advances towards these declared objectives and in particular to make major progress towards the realisation of two Conservation Parks - Kopuwai and Remarkables.

CONCLUSIONS

The tenure review of Craigroy and Ben Nevis is important as it provides an opportunity to secure public use and enjoyment over an area of outstanding scenic and recreational value, which also has very significant historical gold mining features.

It also provides an opportunity to increase the range of opportunities available in the general Lake Wakatipu/Queenstown area where there is increasing demand for recreational opportunities with increasing numbers of tourists. Furthermore, it is also an opportunity to ensure that the quality of recreational experience on those lands is maintained by recognising and protecting the significant natural, landscape and historic values described above.

It provides an opportunity to cater for the demands of tourists and satisfy a real need for true back country and remote experiences for NZ recreation seekers too.

The outcome of the tenure review of Craigroy and Ben Nevis, if it includes the important recreation and conservation recommendations included in this report, could contribute significantly to the achievement of the objectives declared for the 'Remarkables' and 'Old Man - Garvie' Special Places in the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago, and in particular to make very significant progress towards the realisation of two important Conservation Parks.