

## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name : HAPPY VALLEY**

**Lease number : PO 361**

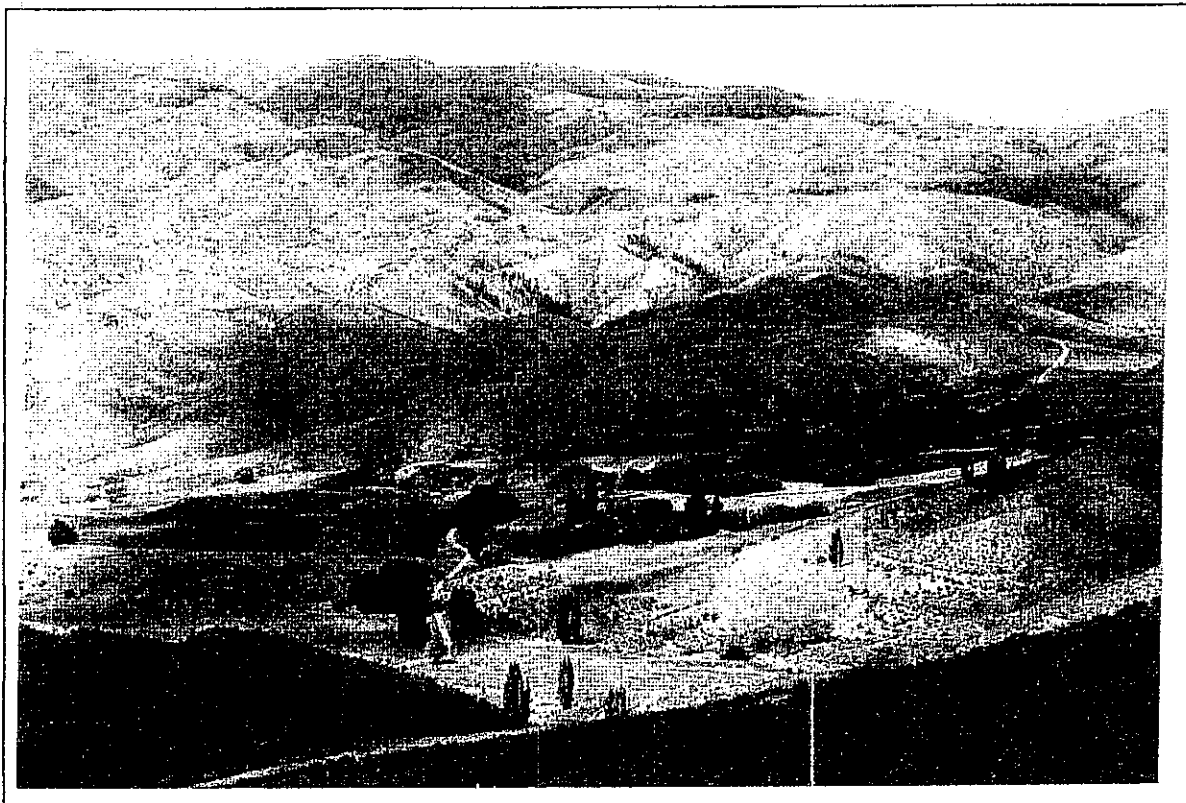
### **Conservation Resources Report - Part 7**

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.

**August 06**



**Fig.1.** The homestead and the best of the farm land on Happy Valley is situated in the Bannock Burn valley. It is well seen why Bannockburn is sometimes called 'the heart of the desert'. The semi-arid landscapes in the background (mainly on Hawksburn Station) illustrate the twin problems of drought stress and rabbit infestation.



**Fig. 2.** The back boundary of Happy Valley rises from 1,173m at Duffers Saddle (middle distance in this view) to 1,473 at the highest point on the boundary with the Old Woman Conservation Area. The land is classified LUC Class VIIe with severe limitations for pastoral use but its natural and landscape values are much higher. It is unlikely that such land could be managed in a way that promotes ecological sustainability.

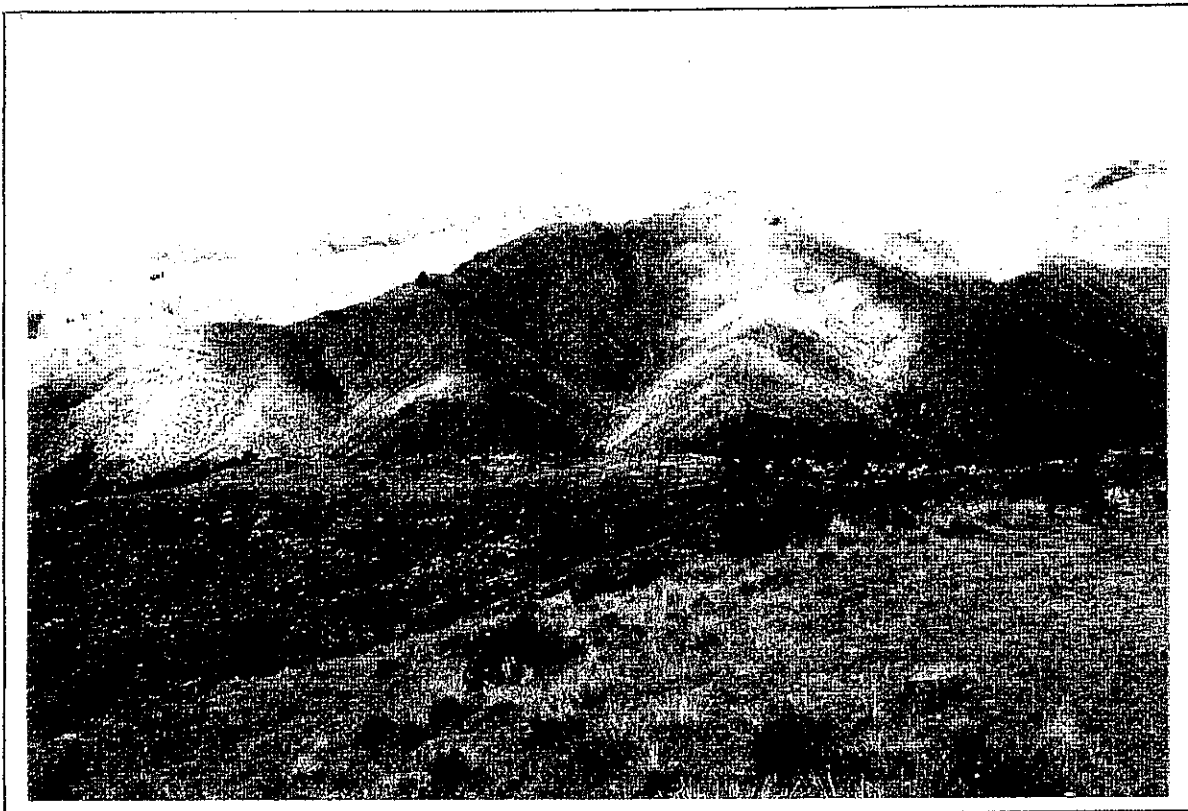


Fig. 3 Much of the lower country is steep, semi-arid and has only low pastoral value (LUC Class VII) because of frequent drought stress and rabbit problems, as seen in this view of Round Hill. If the rabbit problem can be contained it may be possible to manage this land in a way that promotes ecological sustainability. If this can be done the land may be suitable for freeholding.

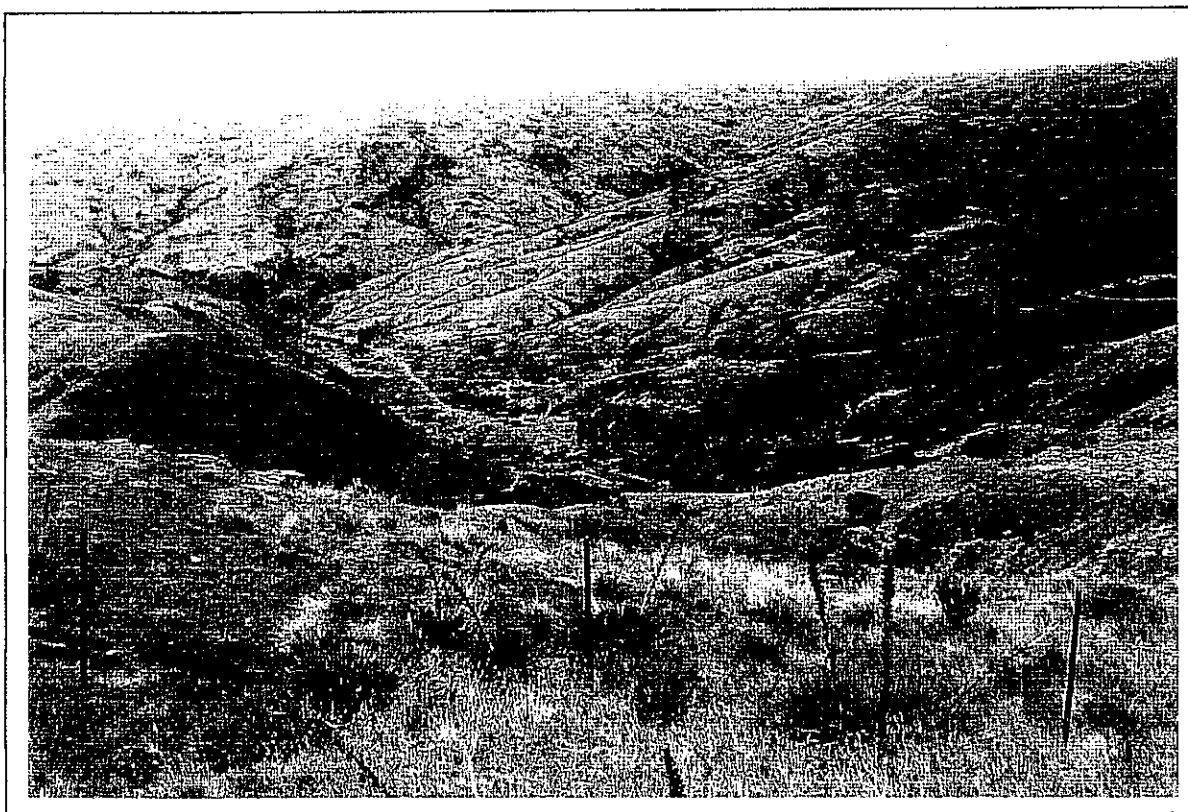


Fig. 4. A sequence of soils with increasing moisture status extends from the semi-arid lower slopes in Duffers gully to the tussock tops on the skyline. The mid-altitude country, with Arrow and Blackstone Hill soils (LUC Class VI), offers the best prospects for pasture improvement. This land should be able to support ecologically sustainable pastoral use, thus making the land suitable for freeholding.

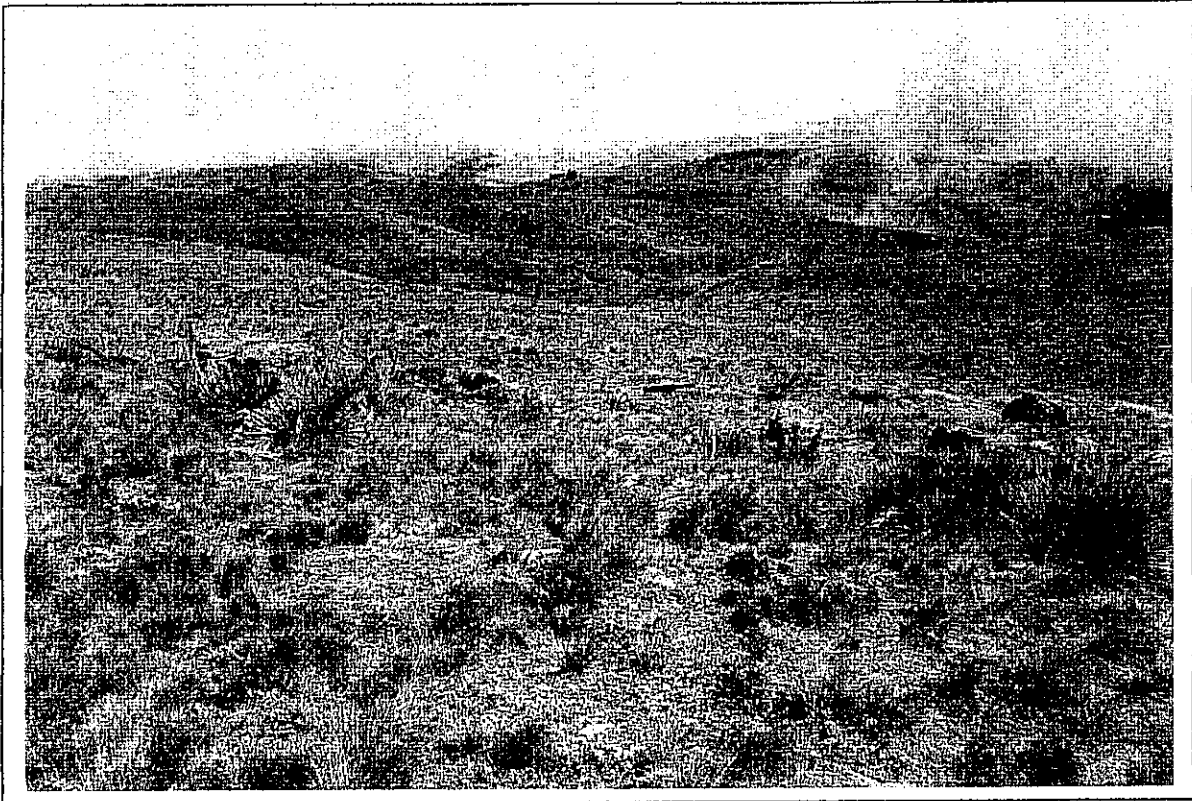


Fig. 5. Most of the higher country, above about 1,000m, is either tussock grassland or sub-alpine herbfield and cushionfield characterised by Carrick Hill and Dunstan Steep-land (LUC Class VIIe). Such land has severe limitations for pastoral use but has highly significant inherent values.

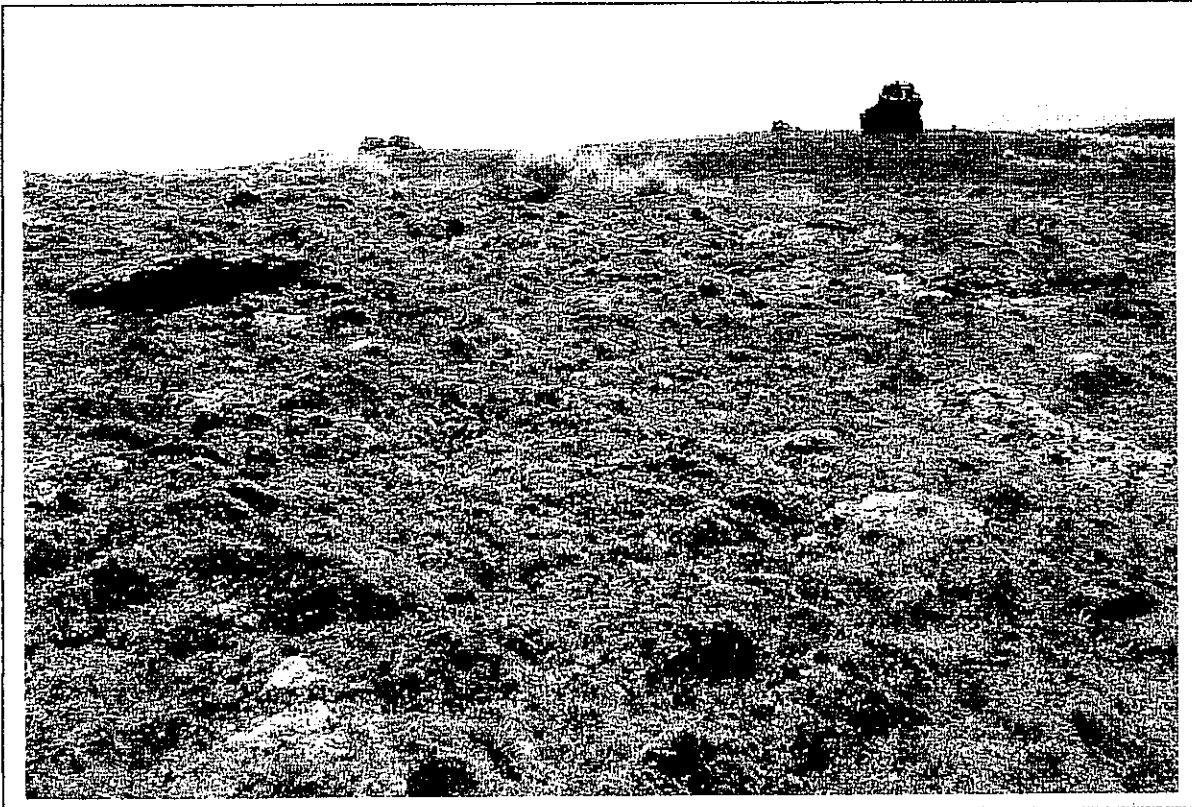
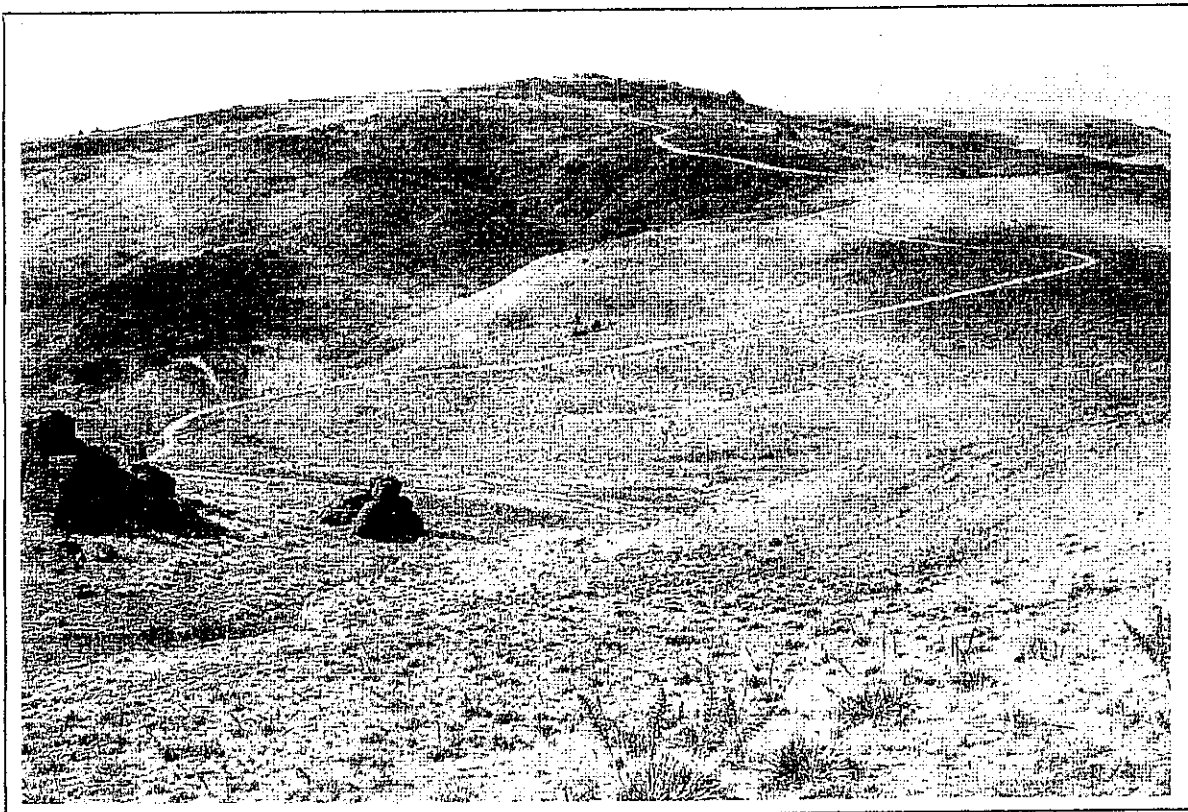
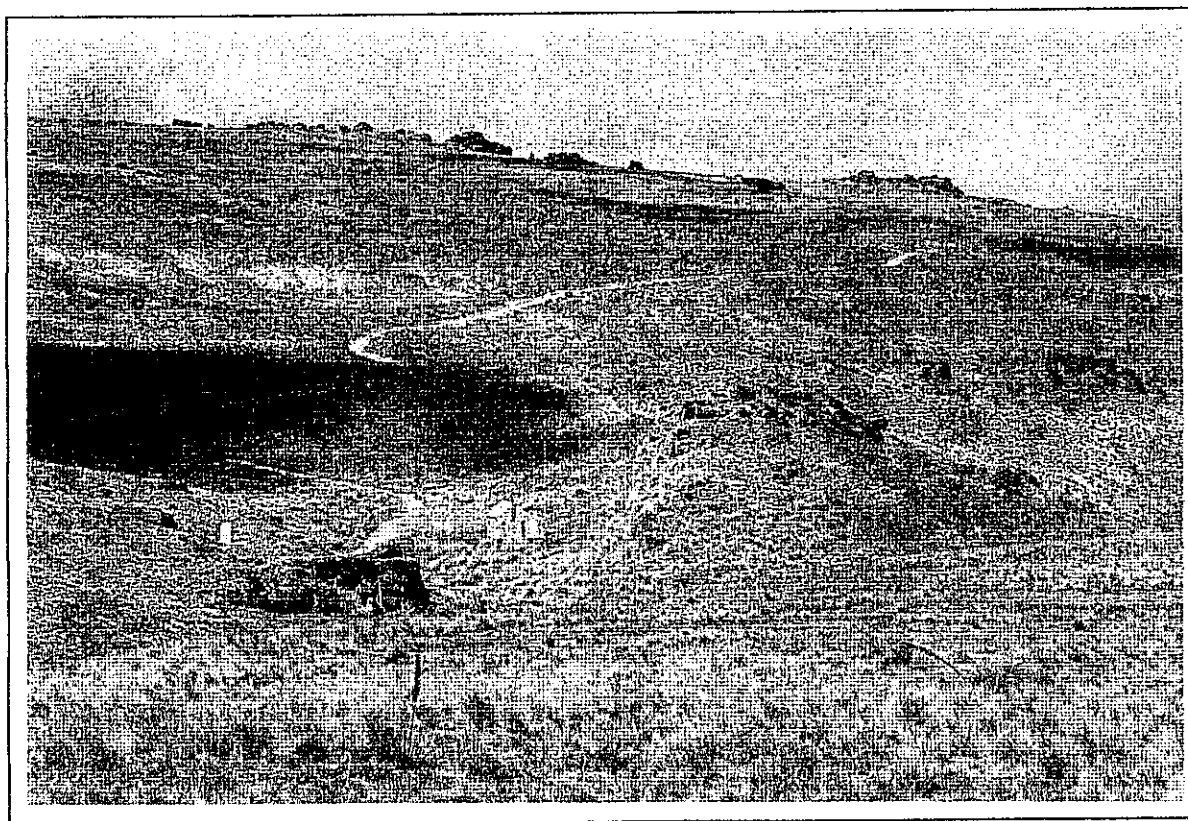


Fig. 6. Protected Natural Area (PNA) survey identified an area in the upper reaches of the Bannock Burn as a first priority RAP. The survey report stated that "*The vegetation contains a full altitudinal sequence of communities from montane tussock and scrub through to high alpine cushionfield. Cushionfield is widespread across the upper plateaux and east around the head of the Bannock Burn.*" This view shows part of the upper plateau at the head of the Bannock Burn.



**Fig. 7. The track from the Nevis Road down to Duffers Saddle and along to Mount Black is well used by cross country skiers in the winter and could be more popular with trampers and mountain bike enthusiasts in the summer months. Public access to and along the Old Woman Range from the Nevis Road is one of the most critical recreation issues in this tenure review.**



**Fig. 8. Beyond the yards at the SW corner of Happy Valley, access is through the Old Woman Range Conservation Area and is therefore available to the public. The hut illustrated here is situated in the Conservation Area and is particularly important for enjoyment of the Old Woman Range in winter.**

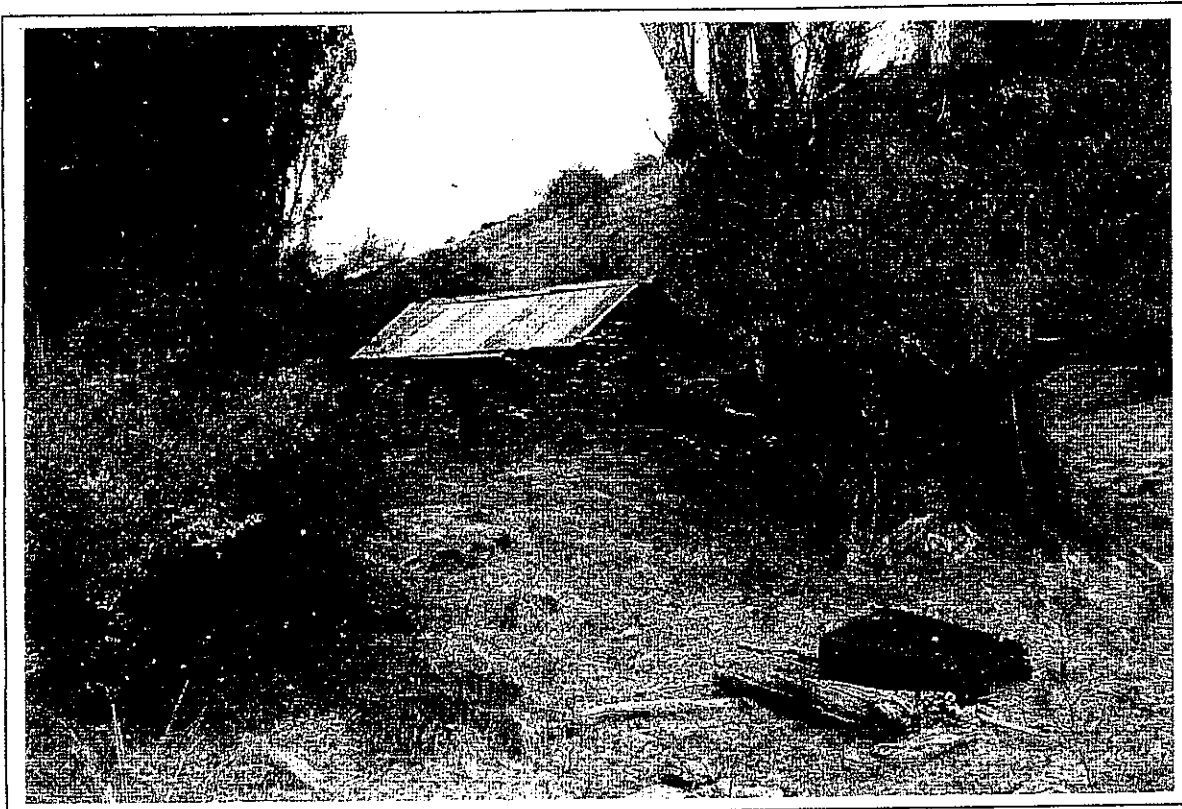


Fig. 9. The historic remains in Duffers Gully include a charming old stone cottage which has been kept in good repair, and which could be enjoyed by recreational users as a lunch stop on either sweltering hot days, or cold wet days. The whole area including the hut and gold mining relics should be designated Historic Reserve with public access. Controlled grazing might be permitted to continue.

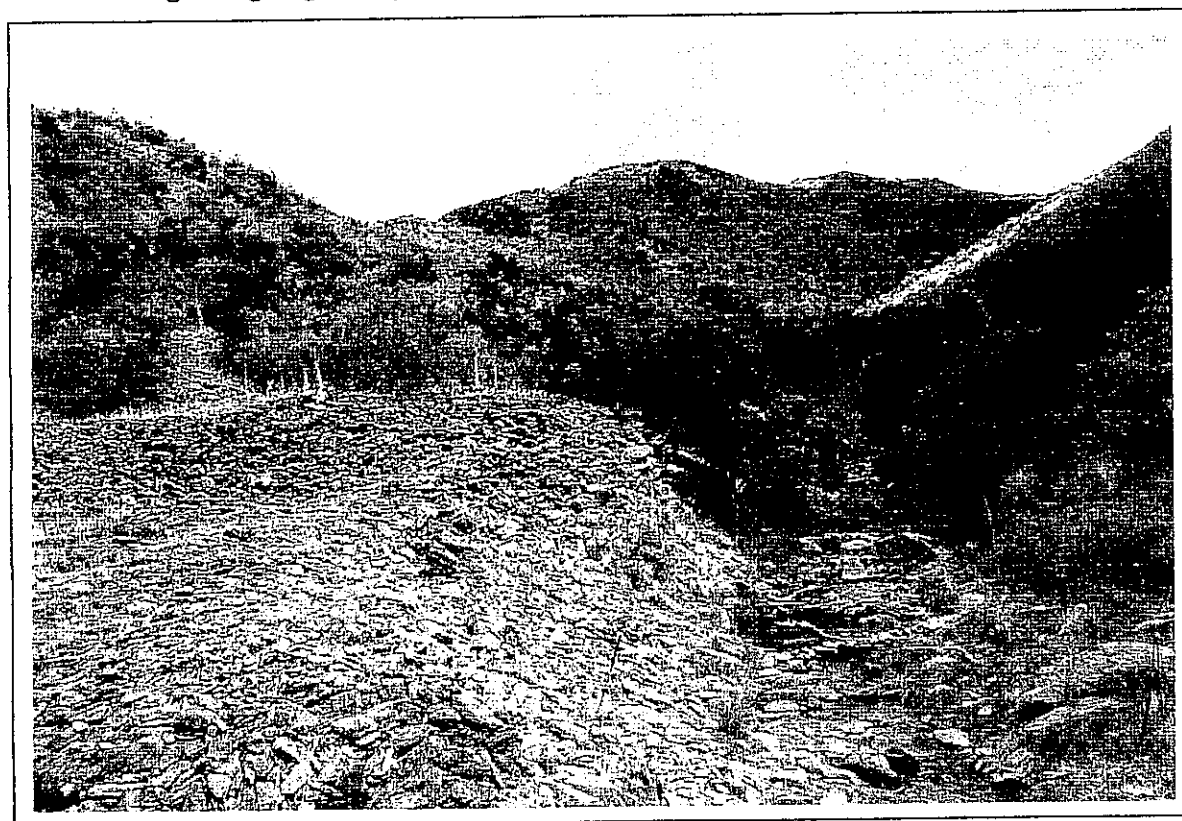
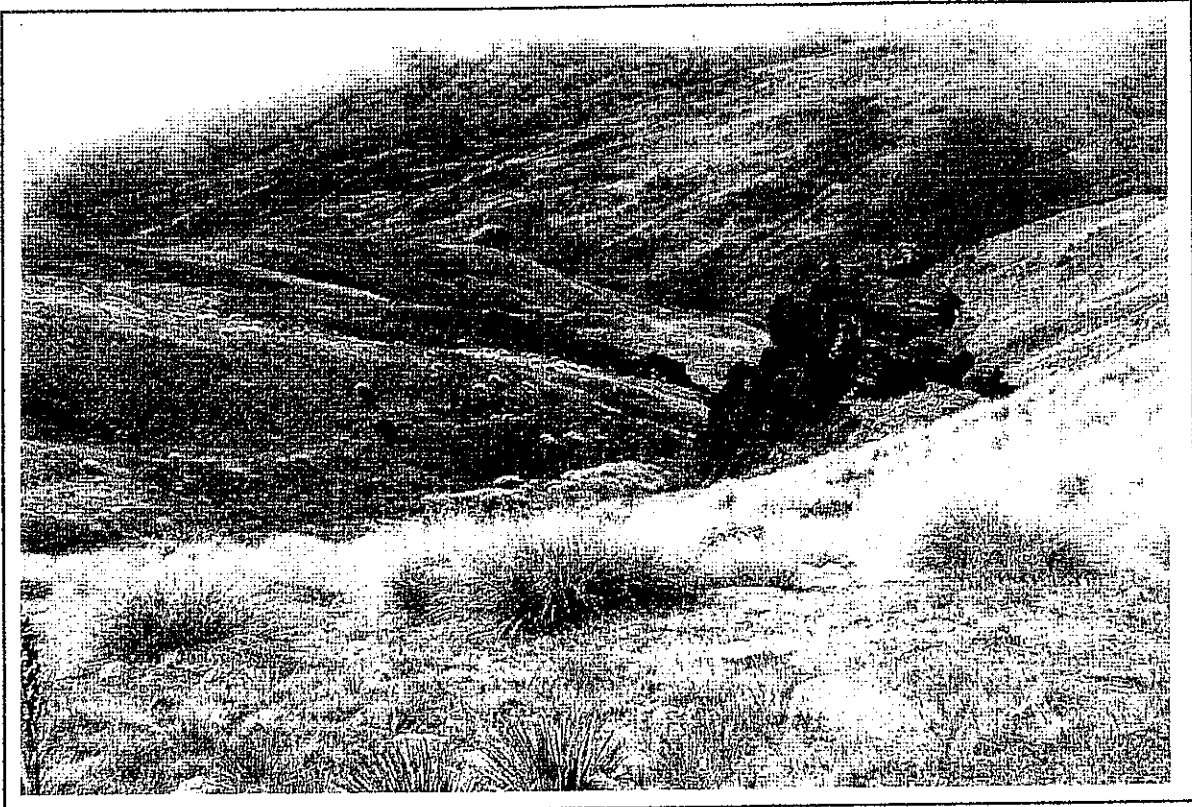
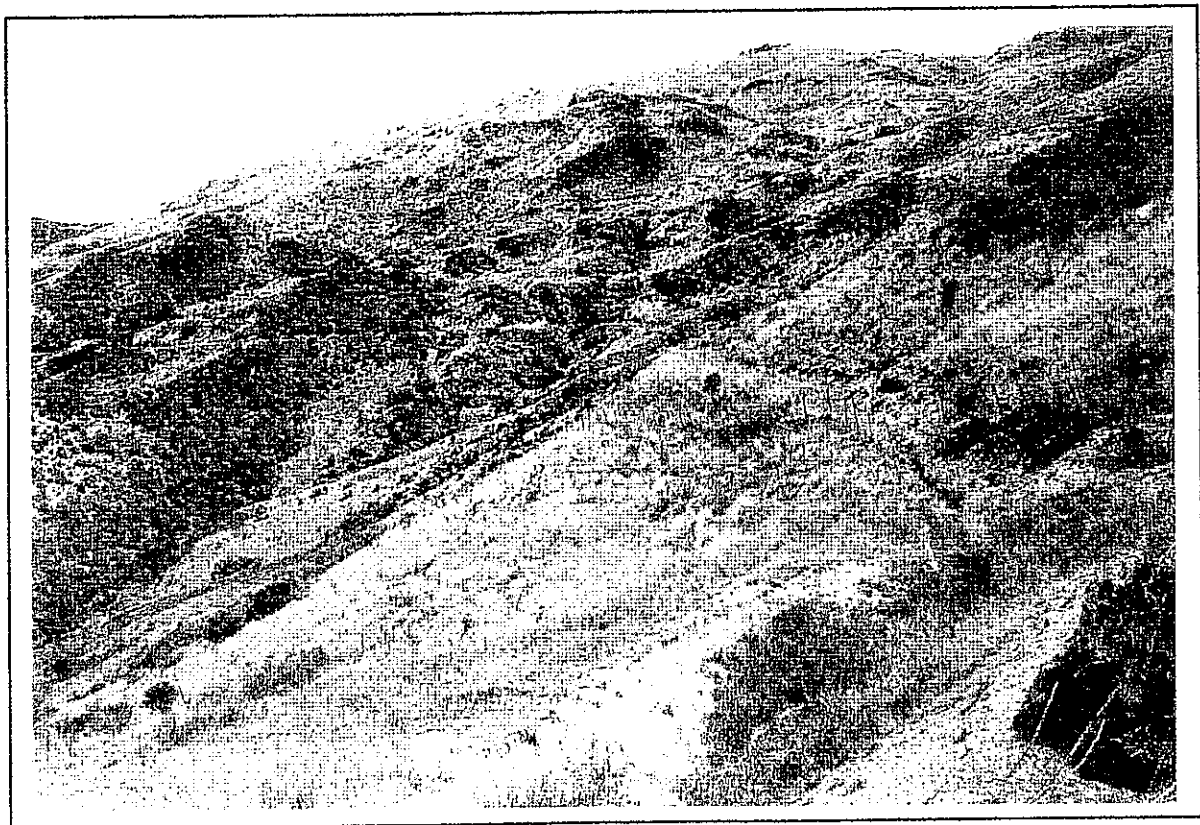


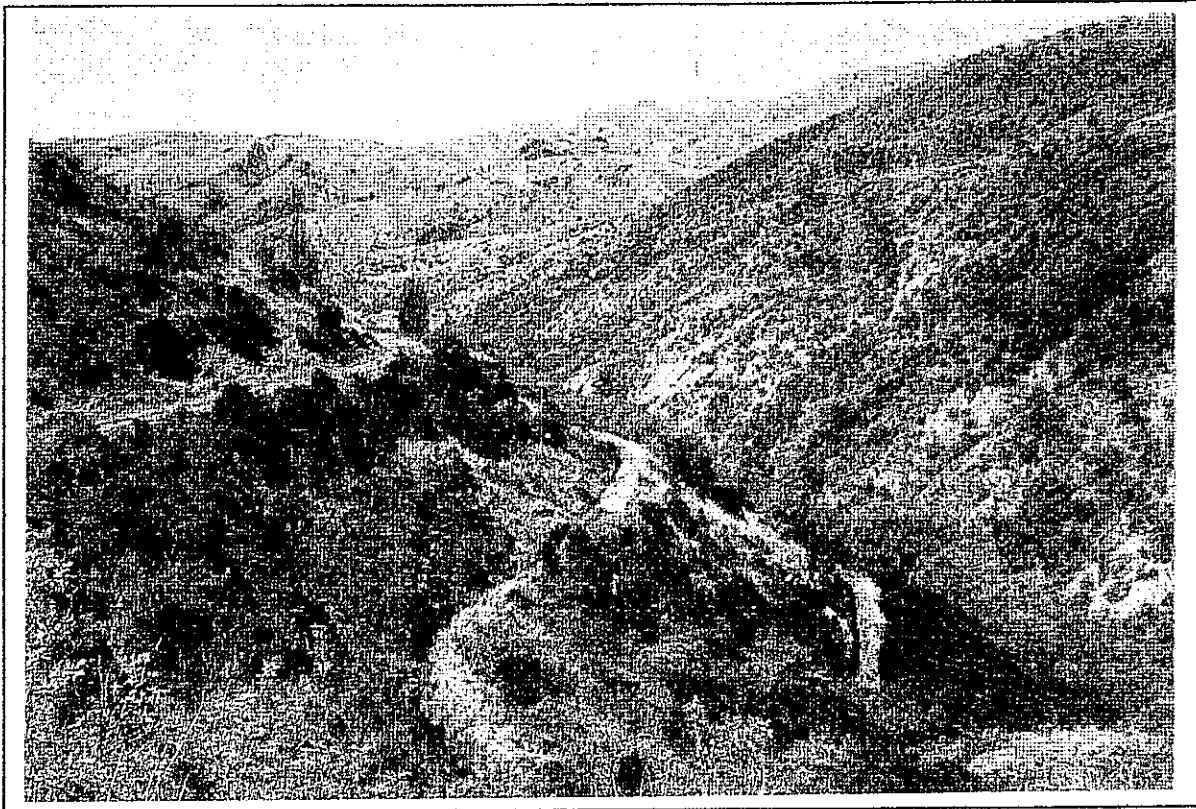
Fig. 10. This area in the mid reaches of Duffers Gully gives the feeling of an 'oasis' among a 'desert' of semi-arid hills and is clearly a special destination for those privileged to go there. It is not only in stark contrast to its parched surroundings, but also abounds in history, dating back to the goldmining days of the 1870s. FMC believes this would be a great destination for day trips from the Hawksburn Road.



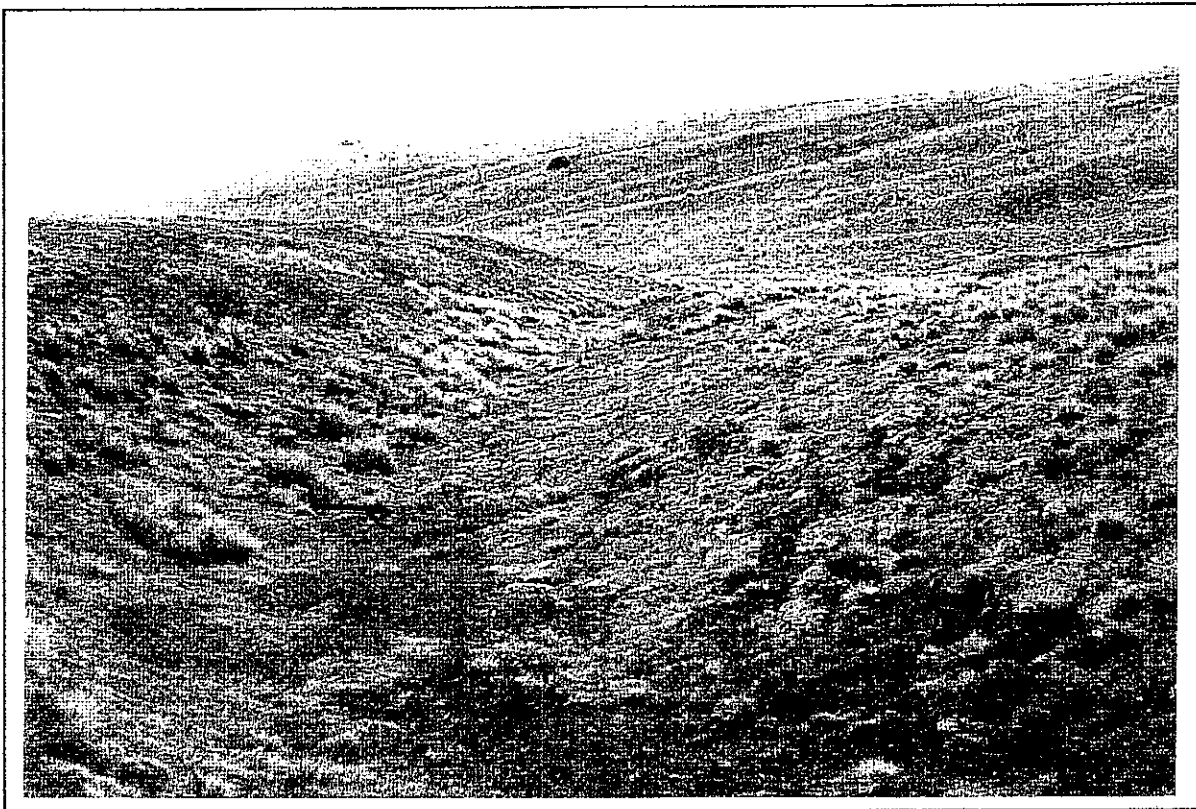
**Fig. 11.** An easy walking trip for locals would be to follow the historic Carrick Race, which would give access to the well known Young Australian water wheel on the neighbouring Carrick Station. The race passes below the big tor in the centre of this view and continues around the contour, northwards to the Carrick Station boundary (off to the left of this view).



**Fig. 12.** Exploration of the water race in the mid reaches of Duffers Gully would add another dimension to the day walk to the stone cottage in Duffers Gully. Such exploration would enhance the public knowledge and appreciation of the efforts made by the early gold miners. This race passes through the saddle between Duffers Gully and Tucker Gully.



**Fig. 13.** The lower reaches of Bannock Burn are enclosed within a steep-sided gorge. There are native shrublands in the gorge, albeit invaded by briar, which are traversed by a pair of water races. A contoured road gives easy access which the public might enjoy if an easement could be provided across the farmland.



**Fig. 14** This is an area of high natural and landscape value in the top block of Happy Valley between the Nevis Road and the rim of the Bannock Burn catchment which consists of tussock grasslands, felldfield with cushion and snowbank communities and tors, very similar to that described in RAP1/5. This area should also be returned to full Crown ownership and control to be managed for conservation and recreation purposes.



**PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL SUBMISSION  
TO LINZ AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**

**RE: TENURE REVIEW HAPPY VALLEY LEASE AND WILD ANIMAL  
CONTROL.**

Submitter: Southern Lakes Branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers (SLB);  
Prepared by Tenure review subcommittee. 28 April 2006

**Introduction**

This preliminary submission is presented to the Tenure Review board to aid them in preparing their preliminary proposal submission to the respective landholder. The information contained below has been sourced from several references or from member's experiences.

Based on previous tenure reviews formally accepted and current proposals presented for submission there is a trend towards increasing the quantity of crown land for conservation reserve. We welcome this trend and support the action.

We do however have concerns about the limited public access to some of the new areas and revised access for some of the existing areas. We would like to identify future management and wild animal control issues that are created as a result of limiting public access to conservation lands. With the aim to have the public utilising the new lands with greater accessibility and the public helping the Department of Conservation (DOC) to manage the new and existing lands.

**Wild Animal Control and Access**

New lands being restored to the Crown and controlled as Conservation estate are at risk of wild animal infiltration. Current Conservation areas already require significant Wild animal Control with some areas requiring considerable expenditure on a regular basis.

The experience of any high country farmer or recreational user will attest to the ranging habits of wild animals such as deer and goats. These wild animals in particular do not graze the same areas that are stocked with sheep and consequently seek "cleaner" grazing. They will inhabit these clean areas and without some form of population control, over populate and eventually over graze the inhabited area. With DOC then having to spend large quantities of its limited funds to control the problems that, as experience and history have shown seem rather inevitable and sometimes offside with the public.

We therefore take this opportunity to outline a few of the recent trends associated with access and wild animals with particular emphasis on red deer and goats, as these are the

animals currently creating the largest pest problem to the Central Otago and Southern Lakes regions high country. And the most likely to become problematic in the newly acquired lands.

General discussion and consensus within the Southern Lakes Branch of the NZ Deerstalkers is the increase of deer numbers and the explosion of goats within conservation administered lands particularly on the open tussock country or the "tops".

Our members are enjoying great success as a result and are frequenting areas that would have otherwise gone unused. The access to these areas is generally by 4WD to the estate boundary or to within the estate itself which greatly increases our members enjoyment of the estate as we can harvest the animals with a minimum of transportation issues.

We are finding that access to some conservation lands, that require landowners permission to access is no longer available, with one of the main reasons for restricted access being the landowners themselves utilising the conservation estates as there own safari parks or animal storage areas for when the prices of wild animal meat reach economic recovery operation levels.

DOC has aims to preserve and protect the conservation estates entrusted to it and we support them in their efforts. We see the benefits of biodiversity and the reclaiming of the high country to ensure the existing biodiversity is preserved and protected. We do not wish for the days of the deer recovery operations of the 1960s with large scale culling of wild animals as a necessary measure to 'save' the biodiversity New Zealand is blessed with having. We instead would like the Public of New Zealand to be able to both experience and be involved with the estates that are being secured for them.

The delicate and sometimes rare nature of the native high country Flora and Fauna that will benefit from the new estate management will flourish in the short term with the removal of grazing and farming practice. This does however create a large abundance of food for wild animals deemed as pests under the wild animal control act.

By DOC's own acknowledgement they consider that in Central Otago the small numbers of deer scattered in pockets about the ranges are of little significance. While that may be the case at present, due to the ranging habits given above. It is expected that with the changes about to take place the number of wild animals are going to increase in the respective ranges as a result.

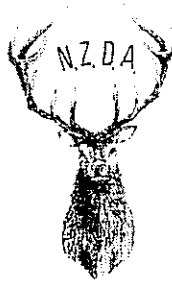
Hence we would like to see public access maintained, upgraded or installed to within the new estates lands in the form of easements in favour of all new Zealanders.

Without the necessary access placing members of the public such as ours within harvestable distances to the wild animals, numbers on the newly created Conservation Estate are expected to increase and subsequently require large expenditure from DOC to control the problem.

We trust the above information will help in your preparation of the preliminary proposal submission for the Happy Valley Lease.

Southern Lakes Branch NZDA  
Tenure Review Subcommittee

Prepared By David Rider and Alan Mackie



**PROPOSED SUBMISSION  
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**

**RE: TENURE REVIEW HAPPY VALLEY**

Submitter: Central Otago Deerstalkers Club

April 2006

**Introduction**

A new habitat type is developing on the additional conservation lands within the ranges throughout Central Otago. Destocking of these areas is going to form a clean pastoral grassland attractive to the small numbers of deer now residing in the surrounding farm land.

Without the necessary access placing hunters within a reasonable distance. (about 5kl) red deer numbers on the newly created Conservation land are going to;

1. rise undisturbed
2. If left for long enough will impact on the very flora and fauna the Department of Conservation (DOC) is trying to preserve.
3. Require late control intervention ( which would cause public controversy)

*With DOC' s aims to "preserve and protect" --changes caused by deer are not desirable.*

**Red Deer Habits**

This submission will show the potential threat to the biodiversity of the new conservation areas.

Central Otago Department of Conservation (DOC) consider the small numbers of deer scattered in pockets about the ranges are of little significance to the natural bio-diversity and present flora. With the habitat change about to take place within that range it is easy to overlook the potential deer movement which will have impact in the future on the vision for the new conservation lands .

On the un-stocked conservation areas there is always going to be abundance of clean food.

When sheep are moved to the same area that red deer are grazing, deer will move, looking for clean pasture.

Deer are going to move into the unstocked areas of conservation land. If these deer are left out of reach of the recreational hunter their numbers will grow. This will in the future be a cause of concern for the bio diversity that DOC wish intact and regenerating, for the enjoyment of users.

*Under the above scenario the Department is going to be accumulating deer on their lands*

### **How could hunters help?**

In the words of KW Frasers

"Status and conservation role of recreational hunting on conservation land"

1. " recreational hunters take a very large number of deer each year and as this is not based on any economic return, is on going"

2. "Costs associated with recreational hunting are only a small fraction of what state funded control would cost."

3." most important advantage of enhanced recreational hunting is its public acceptability "

ie.hunters using the venison is more acceptable than leaving the carcass.

4. "is the most stable tool "(there is more consistency with the recreational harvesting)

*If DOC and hunters can work together, experience and expertise from both sides will limit deer numbers.*

### **Allowing hunter vehicles to access the conservation lands --**

(alluded to in the" Wild Animal control act 1977) would :

1. limit the ability of deer movement to the back of these blocks beyond hunter reach.

2. limit any modifying of significant inherent values of that area.

3. Be seen as encouragement for our particular recreational pursuit. An invitation to participate and enjoy our special Central Otago Conservation areas.

4. Deer taken from the new conservation area will reduce numbers across the total range.(Animals coming from adjacent farms while stock are out on summer pastures.)

5. will fulfil DOC obligation Re: Biodiversity out come: Natural habitats and ecosystems will be maintained in , or restored to, an indigenous natural character, through effective control of deer and other pests. \*

\* DOC Policy Statement on Deer Control

### Conclusion

"Enhanced recreational hunting will be most cost effective where the enhancement can be achieved through a few time limited actions such as provision of more access"(eg roads tracks,legal rights- of- way access across private land). KW Fraser "Status and conservation role of recreational hunting on conservation land."

4WD access for hunters should be

1. limited to dry periods (November,December, January February and March)
2. a cheap, stable publicly acceptable management tool available to DOC.
3. at DOC's discretion

With an easement already written into the final Proposal for DOC management purposes, it may only need DOC to look into the legality of having this encompassing deer management by hunters or make small changes to that easement.

*After highlighting these issues, we trust the Department will consider our submission ----- as a request to help them keep deer numbers below levels when they have adverse environmental effects.  
----- by implementing the strategies stated in this submission the need for a controversial emergency cull will be non existent.*

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to have input to this tenure review.

Central Otago Deerstalkers Club  
Secretary

Alan Mackie

Dear Tony,

My response to the recent meeting in Alexandra on the 2005-06 tenure review program follows:

## 2. Happy Valley

Although somewhat degraded, the upper slopes of this property contain many significant inherent values, particularly botanical and ecological, and given its proximity to the much-used and historical Nevis Road, should be formally protected and managed in the public interest. The important conservation values in this area would complement significantly the intrinsic values in the existing Conservation Area which adjoins it to the south of the upper boundary.

Although the entire catchment of Bannockburn Creek was recognised as having high conservation values in the PNA Survey of the Old Man Ecological District in the mid 1980s, the lower reaches have since degraded to the point where it can no longer be justified. Accordingly, my recommendation is for the upper slopes to be transferred to full Crown control and management; the lower boundary being demarcated by the existing fenceline across the upper Bannockburn, down the ridgeline between this and the upper southern branch of Duffers Creek and across these branches in the vicinity of the Ford, to the northern boundary of the property about one km below the roadside airstrip.

I trust these comments and recommendations will be of value in the further evaluation of the future options for these four properties.

Sincerely, Alan F Mark FRSNZ.