

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: KIRKLISTON

Lease number: PT 119

Public Submissions - Part 2

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

February 06

Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
PO Box 2516
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17 JAN 2005

Ph 03 366 0655

7 January 2005

The Commissioner of Crown Lands
C/o DTZ New Zealand Limited
PO Box 564
Timaru

Dear Sir

Submission on Preliminary Tenure Review Proposal for Kirkliston Pastoral Lease

Introduction

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Forest and Bird) is New Zealand's oldest and most active voluntary conservation organisation. Formed in 1923 the Society has around 38,000 members in 56 branches around New Zealand. This submission is on behalf of the Central Office. The Society's constitution requires it to:

"take all reasonable steps within the power of the Society for the preservation and protection of indigenous flora and fauna and natural features of New Zealand for the benefit of the public including future generations."

"Protection of natural heritage includes indigenous forests, mountains, lakes, tussocklands, wetlands, coastline, marine areas, offshore islands and the plants and wildlife found in those areas."

This submission is based on a thorough analysis of the "Summary of the Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review of Kirkliston Pastoral Lease", the Department of Conservation's "Conservation Resources Report" for the property and other associated documents, as well as a field inspection of the property undertaken in December 2004.

General Comments

For the vast majority of this property the land management practices of the previous 100 years or more have resulted in massive degradation of the ecological values. The most dominant plant species on the property is now *heracium pilosella*, which occurs in almost unbroken mats along with bare earth and rock between widely spaced tussocks, over large areas of the property. Heavy grazing by stock and rabbits, repeated burning, natural erosion of the disturbed ground surface and aggressive invasion by heracium following disturbance and erosion, have reduced the density of tussocks and completely removed the indigenous inter-tussock species.

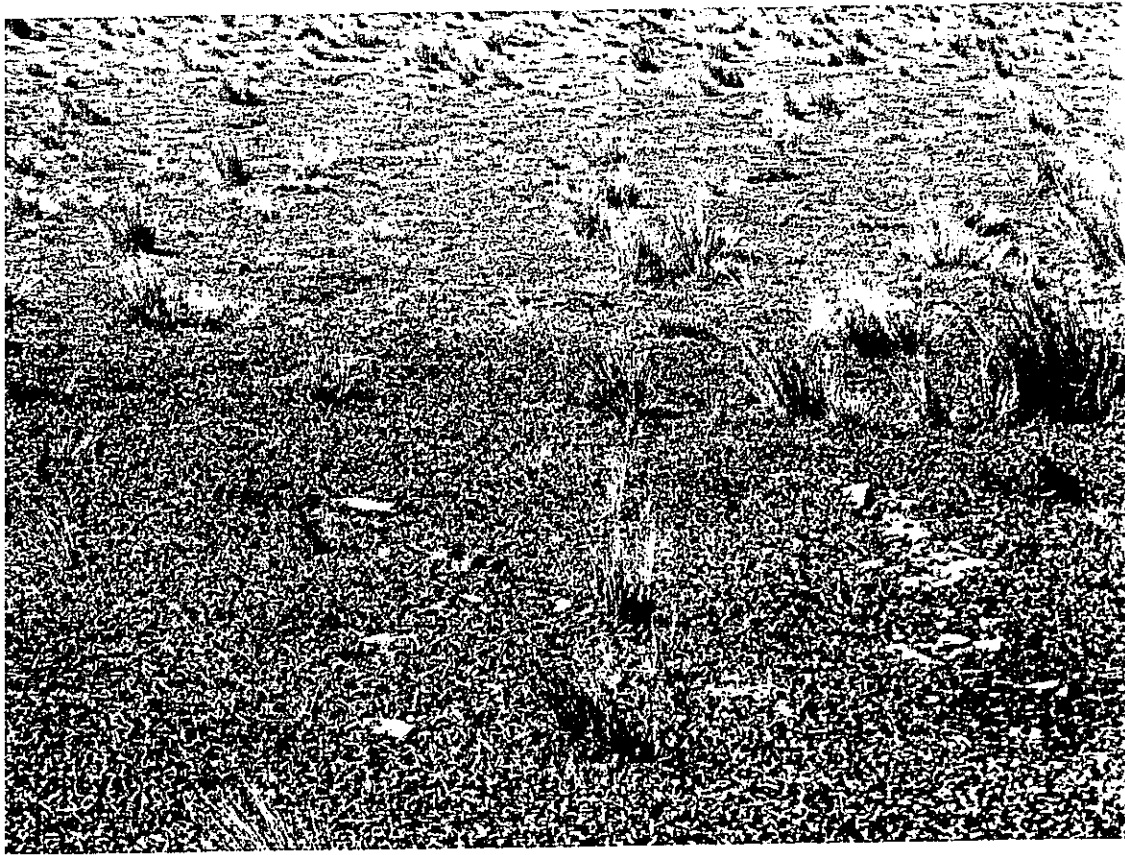


Figure 1: Typical vegetation community showing the dominance of heracium over much of the property

Management practices need to change dramatically to ensure this degradation is halted. Continued burning, heavy grazing and high rabbit numbers will not only result in the loss of all indigenous flora and fauna but also pose a very real threat to soil and water conservation. Management practices that have resulted in the land shown in Fig 1 cannot be interpreted as being “ecologically sustainable” and hence do not meet the objectives of Part 2 of the Act (sec 24(a)(i) CPLA).

To ensure the recovery of the indigenous vegetation and reverse its creeping dominance by heracium it is essential that the land is retired from pastoralism and managed for conservation purposes. The land above 1100 – 1200m is particularly susceptible to weed invasion and soil disturbance because of the fragility of the indigenous plant communities and the extreme climatic conditions at that altitude.

We note that the Director General of Conservation has refused to give his consent to this preliminary proposal as notified, stating that in his view the proposal does not meet either the objectives of Part 2 of the CPLA or the government’s objectives for the South Island high country. We are very concerned that LINZ has chosen to disregard the advice of a government department with a statutory responsibility to advise the Crown, Ministers and other government departments on conservation matters.

It appears that no independent alternative conservation advice from a similarly qualified individual or organisation has been used to refute the department’s position. In fact no rationale at all has been provided for the decision to proceed with the

preliminary proposal and disregard the department's advice that it is contrary to the objectives of the Act.

Proposed Conservation Area CA1

Forest and Bird supports the creation of this conservation area, but considers it is not large enough to protect the significant inherent values of the upper Basin Stream catchment. In both the eastern and western branch valleys the conservation values increase with altitude. From about 1200m the density of tussocks increases and heracium becomes less dominant in the inter-tussock gaps with indigenous herbs and mosses becoming more prevalent. In the western branch of Basin stream there are large areas of red tussock grassland, where the tussocks themselves are dense and in relatively healthy condition, although the inter-tussock gaps tend to be dominated by introduced pasture grasses.

We submit that a greater proportion of these upper valleys and basins warrant protection to ensure their ecological sustainability. Fig 2 contrasts sharply with fig 1 and shows the vegetation in the upper east branch of Basin Stream. Only full Crown ownership and control will ensure it does not resemble fig 1 in another 50 years.

A logical new boundary is the existing fence line descending the slope from point 1323 to the valley floor then ascending the other side of the valley to point 1254. This boundary is shown on the attached map. This boundary ensures adequate protection of the best areas of indigenous vegetation, including the only red tussock on the property, and makes use of an existing fence line.



Figure 2: Relatively intact indigenous vegetation community within CA1

Proposed Conservation Area CA2

Again Forest and Bird supports the creation of this conservation area but submits that it is not large enough to adequately protect the conservation values. From about the 1250m contour and higher vegetation patterns become dominated by indigenous species in many areas. The density of snow and fescue tussocks becomes greater and there is a greater diversity of native herbs, lichens and cushion vegetation with heracium less abundant.

The fellfield at the southern boundary of CA2 retains a high degree of naturalness and certainly warrants protection and we support its inclusion in CA2, however we consider the boundaries of the conservation area need to be extended much lower to include some of the values described above. The attached map shows a proposed boundary that makes logical use of ridgelines spurs and catchment boundaries to protect land at higher altitudes.

Again we are concerned that continuation of the current management regime on land at this altitude is not ecologically sustainable and will over time result in the vegetation patterns shown in figure 1 unless the area is retired and managed for conservation purposes.

Haldon Downs (F1)

The Haldon Downs have very high landscape values. The gentle rolling hills with relatively steep and incised valleys all inclined in a consistent westerly direction are a relatively unique landform and contrast strikingly with the steeper, higher and bulkier ranges that are the norm in the area and in New Zealand as a whole. Although the tussock grasslands are hugely modified and their ecological value is compromised, they still have value in the contribution they make to the landscape when viewed from a distance. The tawny yellow and brown colours are outstanding and are currently unbroken by visible farm tracks, roads or a multitude of glaring silver iron farming buildings.

The views from the high points of Kirkliston will be one of the highlights of visitors to the property in the future. They include stunning panoramas of the main divide with Aoraki dominant above Lake Pukaki just across the Mackenzie basin. They will also include views of the Haldon Downs from above. This landscape should be protected from inappropriate development.

We submit that the inclusion of a landscape protection covenant preventing subdivision, cultivation, new farm buildings or the construction of new roads or tracks would provide the necessary protection. We support the freeholding of the downs providing the covenant is in place. The proposed covenant is shown on the attached map as F1 and is bounded by the 900m contour, the northern boundary of CA2 and part of Pringle Stream.



Figure 3: The west sloping incline of the rolling Haldon Downs

Lower Slopes and Valleys and Pringle and Hay Stream Flats (F2)

The area shown as F2 on the attached map is dominated by introduced pasture grasses at lower altitude or highly modified short tussock grasslands on the higher slopes. It has little conservation value and is capable of economic use in a way that is ecologically sustainable. Forest and Bird supports the freeholding of this area.

Recreation Access

Forest and Bird fully supports the creation of the easement a,b,c,d,e to provide access to the new conservation areas. This is the most practical line for access and also provides access to adjoining conservation lands and the Hakataramea valley from the Mackenzie Basin providing opportunities for extended mountain bike rides and horse treks in the region.

Decision Sought

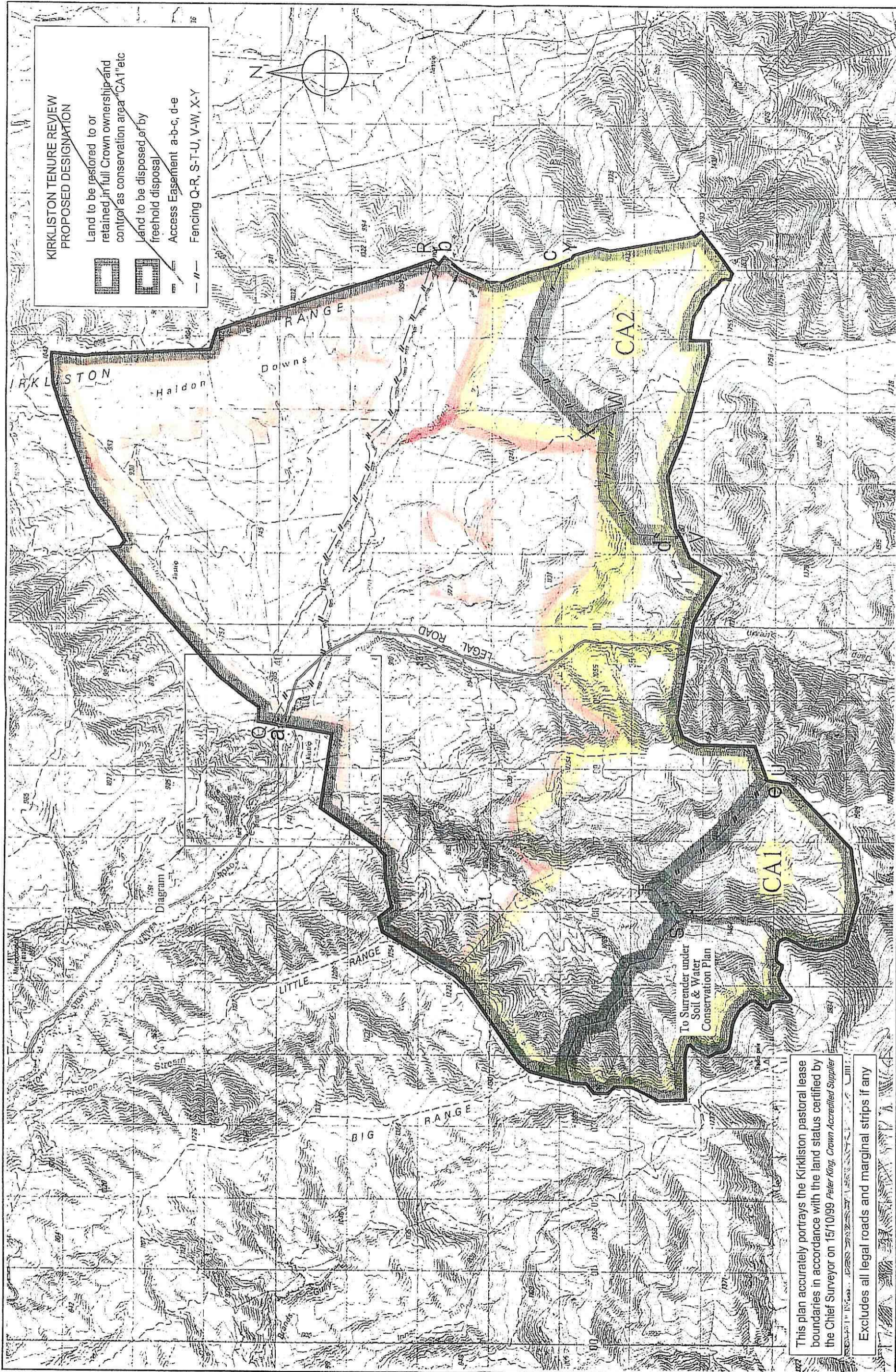
1. That the amended and enlarged areas marked CA1 and CA2 on the attached map are retained in full Crown ownership and control for conservation purposes to protect significant ecological, recreational and landscape values.
2. That the areas marked F1 and F2 on the attached map are disposed of as freehold title to the leaseholder.
3. That the area marked F1 has a landscape protection covenant established to prevent subdivision, cultivation, new farm buildings or the construction of new roads or tracks on the Haldon Downs above 900m in altitude.
4. That the easements and marginal strips contained in the preliminary proposal are retained.

If negotiations with the leaseholder fail to secure significant gains in terms of the conservation, recreation and landscape outcomes suggested in this submission Forest and Bird strongly urges that the Crown withdraw from negotiations and the property continue as a pastoral lease.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

pp *Ted Lockwood*

Tony Lockwood
Field Officer
For Conservation Manager



This plan accurately portrays the Kirkliston pastoral lease boundaries in accordance with the land status certified by the Chief Surveyor on 15/10/99 *Peter King, Crown Accredited Supplier*

Excludes all legal roads and marginal strips if any

DIT New Zealand
International Property Advisors



GLASSON POTTS FOWLER

The boundaries shown on this plan are indicative and are for illustrative and discussion purposes only. Precise boundary positions will be determined by survey during implementation

Land being disposed of as freehold will be subject to Part IV A of the Conservation Act 1987, and Part IV A applies to the entire length of the river or stream within the boundaries of the land to be disposed of

KIRKLISTON PASTORAL LEASE



Version	1	2	3	4	5
Canterbury Land District	Sheet 1 of 1				
Topographic Map 260 - 139	Date: September 2004				