

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : MOA HILLS

Lease number : PO 314

Conservation Resources Report - Part 4

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.

November 05

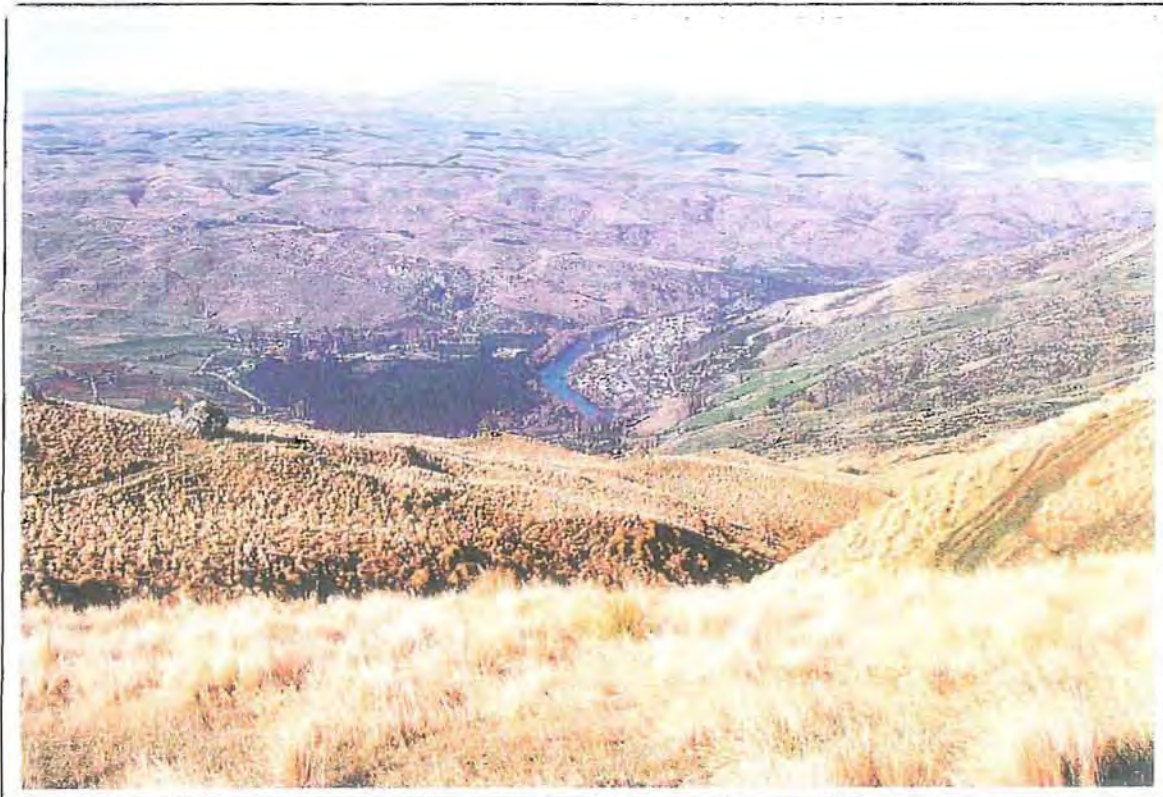


Fig. 1. The landscapes and views to be seen from the Old Man Range are outstanding and add greatly to the enjoyment of traversing Moa Hills. From a recreational perspective, one of its greatest values is in providing access as part of the traverse from Mt Benger to the main crest of the Old Man Range. This view is looking down to the Clutha River and Roxburgh from the northern end on Moa Hills.



Fig. 2. There is a legal road along the eastern boundary of Moa Hills but its position just inside the boundary does not conform with the paper road. The track provides an important link between the Mt Benger Scenic Reserve and the main crest of the range and the evolving Kopuwai Conservation Park but the problem of its legal alignment will need to be resolved. This view is looking south towards Mt Benger.



Fig. 3. Moa Hills occupies some 3,500ha on the rolling plateau between about 800 and 1,100m on a southern extension of the Old Man Range towards Mt Benger. From near the southern boundary at about 1,100m can be seen the Umbrella Mountains (skyline left), and in the far distance the Garvie Mountains. Both these mountain ranges lie to the west of the Pomahaka River which is the western boundary of Moa Hills.

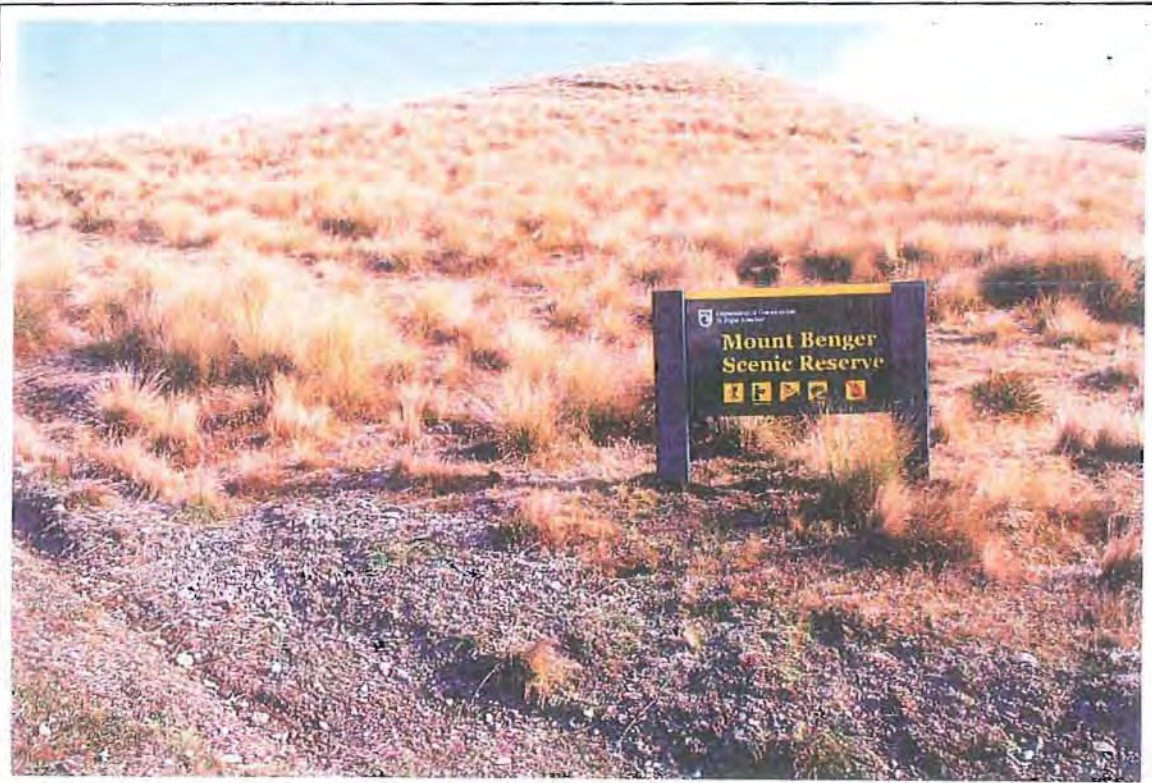


Fig. 4. The tussock grasslands and biodiversity of the Mt Benger Scenic Reserve have been protected as a consequence of recommendations made by the Protected Natural Areas survey of the 1980s. The Reserve lies immediately to the south of Moa Hills and was formerly part of Silverbirch Station. It could eventually be linked to the Kopuwai Conservation Park,.



Fig. 5. The main recreational interest in Moa Hills is as part of the traverse along the length of the range from Mt Bengier to the Kopuwai Conservation Park which will include Hyde Rock and the Obelisk. Travel is mainly by mountain bike and 4WD, but also by horse and on skis on occasions. This view shows one of the main tributaries of Bullock Creek and the track heading north to the main summit of the range.



Fig. 6. The Old Man Plateau is characterised by a vast rolling sea of tussock grasslands and the Moa Hills landscape contributes to this in no small way. The headwaters of Bullock Creek and the Pomahaka River both lie to the north of Moa Hills and can be seen from the Pomahaka Road which runs west, close to its northern boundary. These seemingly endless rolling open spaces show little influence of development (ie. very few tracks or fences) and just invite exploration.

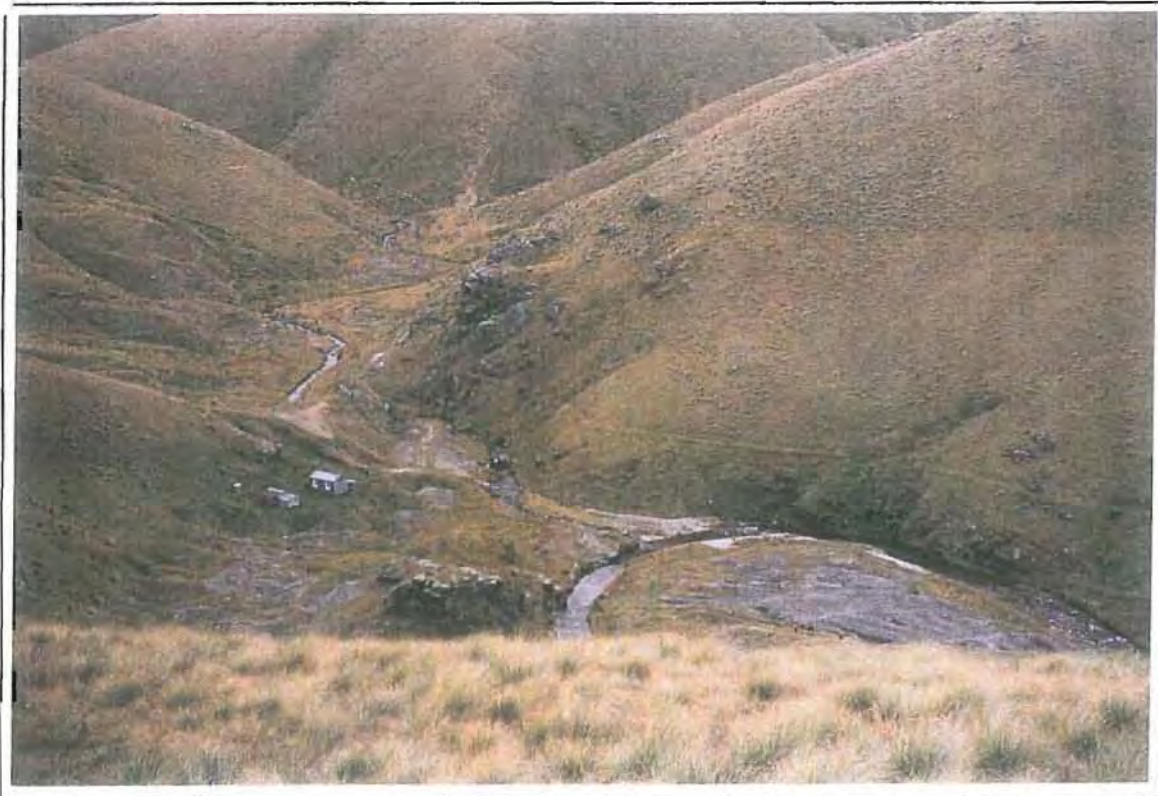


Fig. 7. There are significant gold mining relics in the Pomahaka Valley. There is a water race which has its intake in the Little Pomahaka and runs along the western faces of Moa Hills below the junction with the Pomahaka River. The tailings from former gold workings surround the confluence of the two branches of the Pomahaka. These relics are best reached using the Pomahaka Road, a little north of Moa Hills boundary.



Fig. 8. The objective to create a high altitude Conservation Park on the Old Man Range was foreshadowed in the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago, 1998. The Bain Block, a little to the north of Moa Hills, was the first area to be declared the Kopuwai Conservation Area. Tenure review of Moa Hills and other pastoral leases along the range provides an opportunity to further this objective and eventually link the Mt Benger Scenic Reserve to the Kopuwai Conservation Park.



Fig. 9. There is good access to Moa Hills both from the north via the Coal Creek Road, and from the Mt Benger Road seen here crossing Silverbirch land. Both are legal roads but do not necessarily follow exactly the alignment of the paper roads. Tenure review presents an opportunity to resolve these issues but only on those parts of the road on Moa Hills land.



Fig. 10. From the recreational 'cross roads' just north of Moa Hills, there is an option to follow the steep Bullock Track down the Clutha face to Roxburgh. It is well used by local walking groups for day trips and adds to the range of options for round trips by mountain bike.

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FOREST & BIRD

ROYAL FOREST AND
BIRD PROTECTION
SOCIETY OF
NEW ZEALAND INC23rd May 20005

Mr Tony Perrett
The Manager Tenure Review
Department of Conservation
77 Stuart Street
PO Box 5244
DUNEDIN

Dear Tony

Please cover in
your final CCR and
recommendations
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MOA HILLS- An early report.

This property was introduced to us at the last meeting of stake holders held in Alexandra on 23rd September, 2004 and again discussed on 12th April 2005.

We would be pleased if you would accept this report on Moa Hills from our branch of the Forest and Bird Society.

This is a preliminary report only; as we are to meet with the lessee who wishes to show us around the property, together with some other interested groups, some time later this month, after which we hope to be in a better position to add to this report. Although this property is familiar to us we made an inspection of the property from the legal road running along the full length of the east side of Moa Hills in early May 2005, as you and your department dealing with this run wish to have our input as soon as possible to enable you to meet your deadline with the CCL.

We fully support the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 and also the complementary objectives to that act recently announced. (Please refer to EDC Min 5/3; CAB Min (03) 11/5) These are:-

- *To promote the management of the Crown's high Country in a way that is ecologically sustainable.*
- *To promote the significant inherent values of reviewable land by the creation of protective mechanisms; or preferably, by the restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control.*
- *To secure public access to and enjoyment of high country land for the public to enjoy.*
- *To ensure that conservation outcomes for the high country are consistent with the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.*
- *To progressively establish a network of parks and reserves.*

1.0 General.

- This property lies behind the town of Roxburgh on the west side of ridge running between Mt Benger in the south to the Old Man Range in the north. It is at a low point on this ridge lying between about 900ms in the north rising to about 1160ms in the south. The lowest point will be 550ms on the western boundary which is the Pomohaka River.
- Although relatively low compared with many runs under tenure review it is situated on the comparatively high ground surrounding the Central Otago hinterland and catches most of

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the colder weather coming from the south of Otago. Therefore its climate is somewhat colder and wetter than many other higher pastoral leases that are under review.

- In appearance the property appears to be unmodified with very few roads and no disturbance of soil when constructing fences. Over sowing and topdressing is not much in evidence even if it has been carried out to any extent in the past.
- It is in the Umbrella Ecological District and RAP O5 TIMBER CREEK HEADWATERS, is immediately to the south of the property .
- Mt Bengier itself is a Scenic Reserve.
- The Otago Regional Council and others are conducting trials into the burning of tussock country on the northern slopes of Mt Bengier.
- Under the land classification system the soils are mostly classed as VII with a small area of some 300ha on the south western corner being classed as VI.

2.0 Inherent Conservation Values.

- The landscape on this property is outstanding, it is extremely significant, with its tall tussock, numerous flushes and groups of tor rocks. (See photos # 1 & 2).
- There are several interesting historic values involved in the road between the Roxburgh / Coal Creek area to the Pomohaka River and its associated gold fields; including the now historic "Bullock Track" This latter track is now signed and marked to the crest of the range - we understand by the people of Roxburgh.

3.0 Other Matters.

- The Conservation Management Strategy for Otago in its "Objectives for Old Man - Garvie", states:

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 commercial use are managed to sustain resources and ensure quality recreational experiences including the remote quality of the Old -Woman-Garvie Area.

- Again; the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago in its "Priorities for Old Man Garvie", states:

Completion of protection negotiations, including tenure reviews, will be a priority in this Special Place.

- In this connection we point out that Bains Block, part of Kopuwai is approximately 5kms to the north of Moa Hills and the Mt Bengier Scenic Reserve is on its southern boundary.

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4.0 Access and Recreation.

- There is a legal road from Ettrick over the top of Mt Benger and along to Coal Creek, to the Pomohaka River in the West and along the crest of the Old Man range to the north. This legal road will no doubt not align itself with the present tracks or formations but this could be attended to at the time of the next survey. As the road appears to be kept in reasonably good order by the local authority we see no reason as to why we cannot expect that there will be any problem in securing access for all time, *for the public to enjoy*. This access should be available for foot, cycle, horses and 4WD vehicles, the latter under some conditions.
- At present this route from Ettrick to Coal Creek is used and enjoyed by the people of Roxburgh and surrounding districts; mostly in summer when the road is in good order. We see this is a great asset to the local population at present and in the future. Here again sensible precautions will have to be taken by both the Department of Conservation and the local authority in protecting the roads under discussion in certain conditions; mostly in the winter. At present the Department of Conservation is allowing the use of 4WD on conservation land if no departure is made from the present routes.

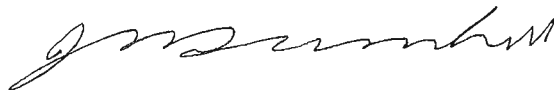
5.0 Discussion and Conclusions.

3.1 *In view of the fact that Bain's Block, which is already part of Kopuwai, is to the north and the Mt Benger Scenic Reserve is to the south, consideration must be given to returning Moa Hills to the Crown control to complete the Kopuwai Conservation Area, as the Objectives and Priorities subscribed to in the CSM for Otago*

3.2 *In view of the fact that the land is mostly class VII c and e, we cannot see that even if regularly supplied with fertiliser the land will be able to support pastoral farming, mainly because it will not be economically viable. For this reason we see again that the land should be returned to full Crown ownership and control.*

We thank you for the opportunity to make this input.

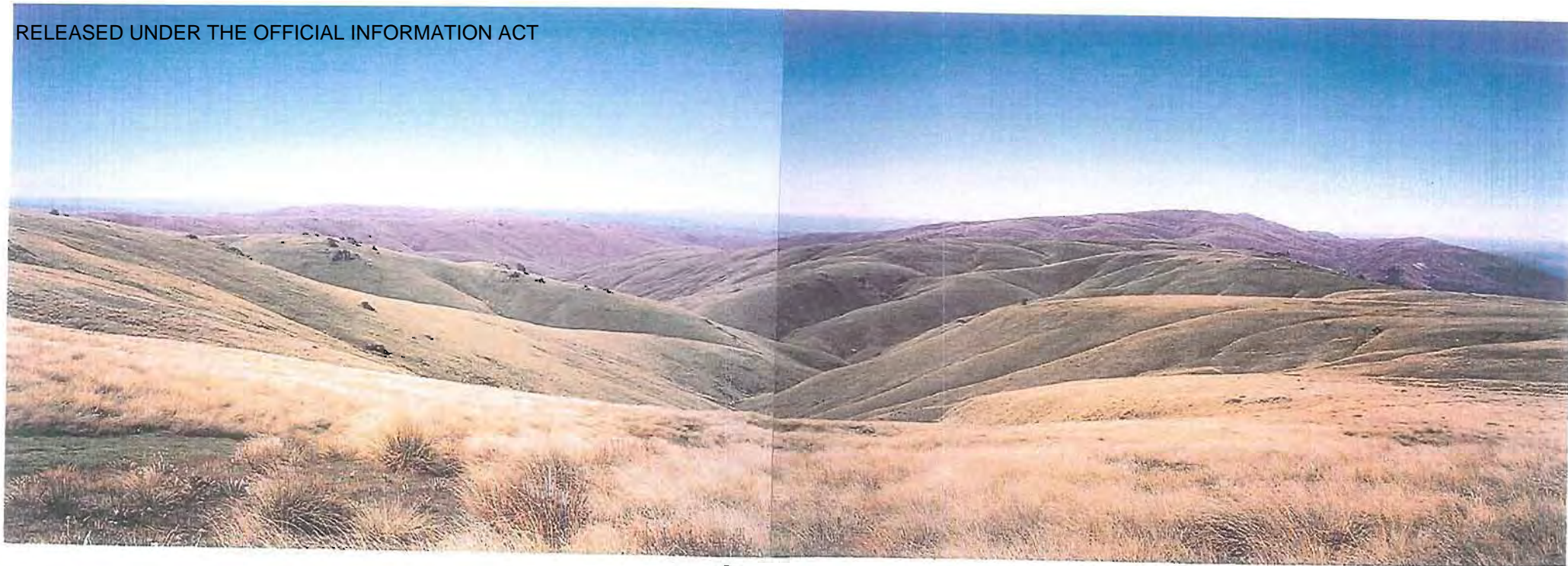
Yours faithfully



John L Turnbull

For Upper Clutha Branch Forest and Bird.

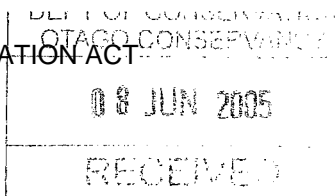
Attached, 2 photos.



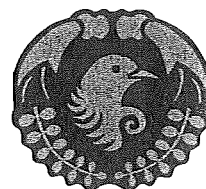
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FOREST
& BIRDROYAL FOREST AND
BIRD PROTECTION
SOCIETY OF
NEW ZEALAND INC31st May 2005

Mr Tony Perrett
Manager, Tenure Review
Department of conservation
77 Stuart Street
PO Box 5244
DUNEDIN

*Brice
to action
please.*

CONS	
A.M.	
C.R.M.	
B.S.M.	
T.S.M.	
H.R.A.	
H.C.I.R.M.	<i>[Signature]</i>
K.A.M.	
OTHER	

Dear Tony

MOA HILLS - Additional Early Report

Please also refer to our report of 23rd May 2005 on this property.

We have again inspected Moa Hills with the help of Mr Bevan Lille of DTZ Alexandra who arranged the introduction with the lessees Messrs D Michelle and J Dean. We wish to thank Mr Lille, also the lessees for taking the time off work to show us over the property. Having them as guides was most beneficial and greatly appreciated.

This report is our input in the Consultation process as prescribed under: **Section 26 Consultation, Part II of the CPL Act 1998.** We would be pleased if you would note and incorporate our comments in you report to the Commissioner of Crown Lands. In compiling this early report we are mindful of the Conservation Management Strategy of Otago, as approved of by the Conservation Authority, and take a broader view of any particular property than we would when making a submission on a preliminary proposal of a property; when under that process the property under review is supposed to be taken in isolation. Therefore this report is made after seeing Moa Hills on the ground and in relation to all neighbouring properties going through the tenure review process, or which have been already returned to the Crown as a conservation area after having been through the process. In this case we must consider Gem Lake and Whitecombe, (the latter incorporated in the Glenary review) to the west, which are also going through the process, the Bain Block to the North and Mt Benger scenic reserve to the south.

1.0 Landscape.

1.1 When viewed again and taken in conjunction with the neighbouring properties the landscape values of Moa Hills become increasingly important. The total landscape of the Upper Pomohaka river basin, of which Moa Hills is a large part of, is most significant and matches that of Manorburn Conservation Area, or parts of Te Papanui in quality.

1.2 The landscape is a tussock landscape with outcrops of tor rocks. The tussock gives the landscape its texture and with the flushes at the head of the basins and gullies has the same character as Manorburn and Te Papanui.

1.3 It must be realised that as the landscape is in better order than a lot of other tussock country in Otago due to the fact that it has been moderately stocked over the years and no over sowing or topdressing with fertiliser has ever been undertaken. If subdivision and development had taken place the present landscape would be more broken, with dozed fence lines and tracks, and with the introduction of clover and other exotic grasses the tussock would have deteriorated. As it is, the only introduced grasses are mainly browntop and sweet

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vernal.

2.0 Access and Recreation.

2.1 The lessees advised us that the road formation between Mt Bengier and the top of the Coal Creek road is not on the legal road line as originally surveyed. The legal road is on the other side, or Roxburgh side, of the eastern boundary.

2.2 If Moa Hills were to become freehold, at the time of survey this could be corrected if the various parties involved agreed. However, if the road were to be reformed on the east side of the boundary fence this would degrade the landscape further.

2.3 As the risk of fire in the summer is very high especially so with vehicles using the road at that time, the present road formation could be brought up to a higher standard and act as a fire break. This would require some commitment from the local and regional authorities.

2.4 Tramping, or walking, cycle riding and horse riding would be the main uses for this road running along from Mt Bengier to join up with the legal road running right through to the north of the Old Man Range. 4WD vehicles could use the route provided the formation did not suffer in any way

2.5 Although only a short distance from Roxburgh and SH8 the whole area draining into the Pomohaka river has a "remote" atmosphere; this is an added attraction for those seeking a remote experience.

2.6 We see that the recreational uses of Moa Hills have not as yet been realised. When the area becomes known, the public will find it attractive as it is close to SH8

4.0 Discussion and Conclusions.

4.1 Moa Hills will have to be taken as one unit in reaching any decision as to its future. There can be no splitting up of the block into land to be reserved for conservation and land being disposed of on a freehold basis. We can give three reasons for this: (i) The land is mainly classified as VIIc and VIIe both of which are not considered worthy of topdressing with fertiliser as they are not proven to be economically viable to do so - VIIc indicates that the climate is a limiting factor, in this case it is considered cold country. (ii) If the property were to be fertilised or developed in any way the mainly indigenous vegetation and associated eco-systems would be destroyed. (iii) From our own observations of the Bain block, over several years now, it is becoming increasingly obvious to us that by de-stocking this type of country, that even if previously burnt, as Moa Hills has been in the past, the tussock cover does respond and come back, so too the woody vegetation. The increase in the celmisia population on the Bain Block is a good example of this.

4.2 In our first report to you on this property we believe we arrived at the correct solution from a conservation point of view. *To retain the high inherent conservation values Moa Hills should be considered as an addition to Kopuwai in the north and Mt Bengier Scenic reserve to the south.*

4.3 It should also be noted however that in the Cabinet Policy Committee Minutes of 9th February 2005 (POL Min (05) 2/9) item 23 "...that, the Government is willing for the Crown

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to be a high country lessor indefinitely in cases where doing so is consistent with all the high country objectives, including the objectives of obtaining a fair financial return to the Crown". That is the alternative to be considered.

4.4 We believe the priorities as stated in the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago "*Priorities for the Old Man - Garvies*",

Completion of protection negotiations, including tenure review, will be a priority in this Special Place.

This should be the eventual outcome.

We thank you for the opportunity to add further to our initial early report, and trust you will give due consideration to our comments on Moa Hills.

Yours faithfully



John L Turnbull

For Upper Clutha Branch Forest and Bird.

Attached photos

Photo (1) Is taken from the Waikaia Bush Road looking down the Bain Block towards the Moa Hills on the left and the Umbrella Range on the right. It fully explains the consistency of the tussock landscape.

Photo (2) On the same page, shows a view of the tussock landscape taken from the south end of the property, (where the burning trials are being undertaken) looking over the whole of Moa Hills towards the Bain Block in the middle distance. It again displays the tussock cover and high value of the tussock landscape.

Photo (3) View from road looking west towards the Pomohaka River.

Photo (4) Similar to (3), Umbrella Range in the distance.



1 North slopes of Mt Benger showing tussock and flushes at the head of the basins.



2 Looking west down the middle branch of Bullock Creek.



3. Photo (3) A view from the road looking towards the Pomohaka River



4. Photo (4) Similar to (3), Umbrella Range in the distance.

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