

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : Mt ASPIRING STATION

Lease number : PO 231

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.

November 05

APPENDIX 9: Letter from the Commissioner of Crown Lands to Jerry Aspinall
1958.Dunedin C.1,
22nd December, 1958.Mr J.C. Aspinall,
P.O. Box 94,
WAIKATA.

Dear Sir,

History of Mt. Aspiring Station.

I refer to your discussion with an officer of this Department, some time ago, concerning this matter. I regret that it has taken so long to let you have the information but a good deal of research has been involved.

You may recall that you mentioned some specific points on which you desired information. These were as follows :-

1. When Run applied for.
2. When Runs relinquished, any subdivisions etc., and the subdividor's name.
3. Any information on Forests, Mills etc., and the persons concerned.
4. Particulars of any surveys made of the Runs.
5. Any requests for assistance etc., in roading.

As you are aware Mt. Aspiring Station comprises Runs 458, 465 and 468, Cascade, Matakītiki, Motatapu and Polnoon S.D's and the present area of the station is 71,474 acres, including 13,000 acres in Matakītiki S.D. formerly held under Miscellaneous Licence.

I enclose a schedule showing the lessees of the Runs, since they were first taken up.

These three Runs have never been surveyed except for reconnaissance survey. The ridges and peaks of mountains and the west branch of the Matakītiki River were taken as defining the boundaries of the Runs. The areas of the Runs were estimated. The diagram shown on the lease document, and lithographs of this area, give only a general indication of the location of the run boundaries.

There has been no subdivision of the Runs. The area of Run 458 was originally 21,860 acres but in 1932 10 acres Riverbank Reserve was deducted reducing the area to 21,850 acres. Run 465 had an original area of 2,320 acres and in 1932 40 acres Riverbank Reserve was deducted from it also giving an area of 2,280 acres. Run 468 has always had an area of 34,300 acres. The licence itself was not altered. The area shown was 58,474 acres which was arrived at by deducting from the original area of 58,480 acres the 6 acres taken for the New Zealand Alpine Club's hut in 1947.

In 1919 by N.Z. Gazette 8th May page 1291, 4500 acres of bush within the boundaries of Runs 458 and 468 was declared Provisional State Forest. By this same Gazette 2200 acres of bush in Run 465

was also declared Provisional State Forest. These bush areas had never been included in the Pastoral Run Licences over the Runs.

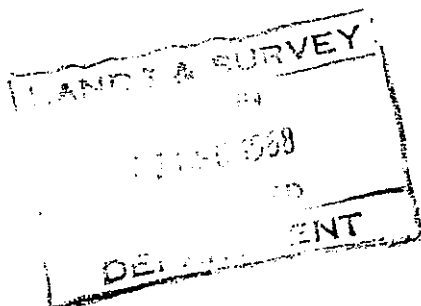
The only record I have of an application to take timber from these Runs is that in 1926 Mr W.A. Scaife was granted permission to cut posts and strainers from an area adjoining the west branch of the Matukituki River about two miles above the junction of the west and east branches of the River. However, in his application Mr Scaife mentioned that the area from which he wished to take the posts had once had a mill working through it. Section 2, Matukituki S.D., 160 acres, which adjoins the south boundary of Run 465, and which has never been included in the Pastoral Run Licences, at one time had a sawmill situated on it. A plan dated 31st January, 1877 has the following note in it. "Application T. Russell and Company, Sawmill Lease Area." I have no record of this mill or who worked it.

It is possible that N.Z. Forest Service may have some information about milling of timber on the Provisional State Forest areas.

In 1930 representations were made to the Minister of Lands to have the bluff, which obstructed access to Mt. Aspiring Station, removed. An agreement was reached with Mt. Aspiring Company whereby this Department advanced £500 for improvements to the road around the bluff. The Annual Rental payable under the Pastoral Run Licence was increased by £25 as from 1939 to cover interest. As I advised in my letter of the 15th August, 1958 this debt has now been written off and the renewal lease is, therefore, not loaded with it.

I have no correspondence earlier than 1898. The information regarding former lessees, however, is recorded in a register and this was still available.

The 13,000 acres which are now included in the Pastoral Lease were originally taken up on a year to year licence by Mr Henry Charles Barker in 1924. The land prior to 1924 was unoccupied. At that time the tenancy contained 16,000 acres. The present area of 13,000 acres was arrived at by deducting 3,000 acres taken for Provisional State Forest in 1919 by N.Z. Gazette 8th May page 1294. The year to year tenancy was transferred to Mt. Aspiring Company Ltd as from 13th November, 1940. This tenancy continued up to 1957 when the area was included in the new Pastoral Lease.



Yours faithfully,

C.K. Eville,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Encl.:

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CLASSIFICATION, SURRENDER, RENEWAL OF LICENCE
AND DISPOSAL OF LAND WITHOUT COMPETITION.

FILES: H.O. 8/9/328
D.O. PR.1672
M.1136

CASE NO: 58/ OTAGO LAND DISTRICT.

LICENSEE: Mt. Aspiring Co. Ltd. 58/6

<u>SHAREHOLDERS:</u>	Any Aspinall	3000	Shares.
	John Charlton Aspinall	3990	"
	Jessie McBride Russell	1000	"
	Alfred Roland Miller	<u>10</u>	"
		8000	"

LAND: Run Name: 'Mt. Aspiring'.

Survey Description:

- (a) Runs 458, 465, 468, Cascade, Matukituki, Motatapu & Polinson S.D's 58,474-0-00p.
- (b) Area in Matukituki S.D. 13,000-0-00p.

Area: 71,474-0-00p.

Location: On very poor partly gravelled road 30 miles N.W. of Wanaka which is 193 miles N.W. of Dunedin.

Amenities: No Rural Mail; Radio Telephone; Electricity - own plant; Store, School 30 miles; Saleyards and Railway 70 miles.

LICENCE: (a) Tenure: Pastoral Run Licence under Land Act, 1908.

Term : 35 years from 1.3.22.

Expires: 28.2.57.

Annual Rent: £50. - . - .

History: Runs held by separate licensees from 1883 until 1908 when they came under control of one licensee. Total A.R. £10. Renewed 1922 as one licence A.R. £25. Transferred 1927 John Aspinall to Company Consideration £2,000. Annual Rent increased 1939 under Section 164, Land Act, 1924 from £25 to £50 (Access Loading £500. Interest £25 per annum).

(b) Tenure: Miscellaneous Licence issued under Land Act, 1948.

Term : 2 years from 1.1.57.

Expires: 31.12.58.

Annual Rent : £5. - . - .

History: First selected 10.12.24^{24?} (16,000 acres) year to year A.R. £5. - . - . Transferred to present company 1.10.40. Area reduced to 13000 acres (deduction of 3000 acres - Provisional State Forest).

*Action please
11.8.58
P*

INVESTIGATION
DOCKET:

Completed and filed on District Office file.

CROWN IMPTS.: Nil.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Soil - schisty loam with extensive rock outcrops; variable aspect; altitude 1100-10,000 ft. highest point in new lease to be recommended will be 7,000 ft; very steep mountainous slopes terminating in valleys with extensive flats; 35 acres ploughable - further 30/40 acres possible; Rainfall 90 - 110" at homestead, 160" at Aspiring Hut; watered by creeks, swamps and rivers - sufficient; shelter by natural formed contours. Valleys inclined to be windswept by northerlies; bracken fern on lower steep faces. Browntop on flats; Geological erosion on high country. Considerable riverbank erosion from Matukituki River and mountain streams; no severe snow risk under normal good management. Under new proposed boundaries quite good balance of summer and winter country.

Present Cover:

17 acres 2 years Rye pasture - good.
4 " 1 year pasture - good.
15 " Old Pasture - fair.
58433 " native state. High summer country
58474 acres mainly blue and snow tussock. Lower slopes light bracken fern with brown-top; fescue and blue tussock, some white clover and native grasses. Valley flats small blue tussock, brown-top, fog, white clover, cutty grass, native grasses; patches of silver tussock and matagouri. Black scrub on winter country face adjacent to East branch of Matukituki River.

WEEDS & PESTS:

Ragwort (spreading), St. Johns Wart and Burdoch. Keas (well controlled) and Deer (controlled by Internal Affairs Department).

STOCKING:

	<u>Ewes</u>	<u>Other Sheep</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Cattle</u>		<u>Calves</u>
		<u>Wethers</u>	<u>Hoggets</u>		<u>Bdg.</u>	<u>Ors</u>	
1952/53	1671	100	400	2171	229	N.A.	140
1953/54	1760	60	420	2240	233	219	136
1954/55	1770	65	450	2285	260	196	195
1955/56	1820	60	497	2377	330	315	215
1956/57	1840	70	470	2380	330	360	N.A.
Average	1772	71	447	2290	276	272	171

PRODUCTION:

	<u>Shearing Tally.</u>	<u>Wool (lbs)</u>	<u>Per Sheep</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Lambing</u>	
					<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1952/53	1654	14600	8.8	Average	N.A.	N.A.
1953/54	2039	17000	8.3	13% for sheep.	1270	72
1954/55	2036	16209	7.9	Est. 7-10% for cattle.	1260	71
1955/56	2164	N.A.			1430	78
Average	1973	15936	6.2		1320	73

SALES:

	<u>Ewes</u>	<u>Wethers</u>	<u>Lambs</u>	<u>Cattle.</u>
1952/53	Nil.	57	479	86
1953/54	Nil.	51	776	70
1954/55	84	20	707	20
1955/56	110	Nil.	802	141
Average	49	32	691	79



FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc.)
P.O. Box 1604, Wellington.

PASTORAL LEASE TENURE REVIEW

**Preliminary Report on the Recreational, Landscape, Historic
and other Conservation Values, and Recommendations
for Outcomes of Tenure Review**

MOUNT ASPIRING STATION

May 2005

**Compiled for Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) of NZ (Inc.)
by Dr Michael J S Floate, High Country Consultancy,**

**PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE RECREATIONAL, LANDSCAPE, HISTORIC
AND OTHER CONSERVATION VALUES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
OUTCOMES OF TENURE REVIEW ON MOUNT ASPIRING STATION**

***A Report for FMC based on Field Inspections and other Research
to assist in the Crown Pastoral Lease Tenure Review Process***

May 2005

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Fig. 1. Mount Aspiring is one of the most significant pastoral leases to come under review in Otago, and indeed in the whole of New Zealand. It covers almost 10,000ha, of which about 70 per cent is mountain land of very high scenic, landscape and recreational value. It adjoins Mount Aspiring National Park and significant parts of the pastoral lease are of such quality that they should eventually be added to the Park.

Fig. 2. The landscapes and views to be had from the valleys and vantage points within this property are outstanding. The Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road (which runs through the pastoral lease) is particularly important as the gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park, and is used by upwards of 10,000 visitors every year. It is imperative that these natural vistas are preserved for future generations. This view is of Mt Tyndall, the Tyndall Glacier and Shotover Saddle, an important route to Skippers and Lochnagar.

Fig. 3. The modern Mt Aspiring homestead is situated in the West Matukituki valley near Camerons Flat and the junction with the East Branch of the River. The runholders, the Aspinall family, are well known for their generous hospitality and assistance in times of emergency. Here they are welcoming a large group from a local Historical Society who are enjoying the view to Mt Avalanche beyond Homestead Peak which towers above the original homestead in the East Matukituki.

Fig. 4. Almost three quarters of the property lies above 1,000m and is characterised by large areas of LUC Class VIII land which is completely unsuitable for pastoral use. This land does have, on the other hand, very significant natural, landscape and recreational values. This view shows the Albert Burn Saddle and the new Trilane Hut (H) perched at 1,700m on pastoral leasehold land.

Fig. 5. This view is looking down the Tummel Burn into The Branches Station from above the ridge that includes Shotover Saddle. A well used tramping route leads over the Saddle to Tyndall Stream (extreme right) and the Shotover River below the forks. Mount Aspiring Station is important not only for the many recreational opportunities within its boundaries but also for the routes which lead to special places beyond its boundaries. Those places include Lochnagar which is hidden among the mountains on the right.

Fig. 6. The original homestead (H) was on the flats in the E. Branch of the Matukituki River, seen here from above Camerons Flat at the junction with the W. Branch. All the high country on the true right of the E. Branch (to the left in this view) is part of Mt Aspiring National Park while the bush on the true left is part of the Mt Alta Conservation Area. The large snow covered block (Mill Creek, MC) above the bush, and above 1,000m is LUC Class VIII land: Part of the pastoral lease which should become conservation land.

Fig. 7. *"There are extensive stands of red, silver and mountain beech which survived logging in early European times with remnants of early milling at Mill Creek"*. There is a particularly good example of beech forest which almost surrounds the Mill Creek block of Mount Aspiring Station. Above the bush, in the Mill Creek block, can be seen part of the extensive tussock country running up towards Mt Estre.

Fig. 8. Most of the country above about 1,000m has been classified LUC Class VII or VIII and is extremely steep and either severely limited or totally unsuitable for pastoral use. The lower slopes are also very steep. The land below about 1,000m has been classified LUC Class VI where the limitations are less severe and where some land has been improved by oversowing and topdressing but is prone to invasion by bracken and 'woody weeds'. These are a problem for pastoral use but are also an indication of the potential to restore former biodiversity.

Fig. 9. Much of the property is already heavily used by trampers and climbers and commercial concession operators bring their clients to the Matukituki Valley and the Rob Roy glacier. Many other people just enjoy the scenic wonders of the valley and river or are content to absorb the views or record them on film.

Fig. 10. A particularly popular destination is Aspiring Hut, built by the NZ Alpine Club. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 people per year walk to Rob Roy or Aspiring Hut. This illustration shows an Alpine Club gathering in 1999 to celebrate 50 years of climbing based at Aspiring Hut. The hut is situated on conservation land just beyond Mount Aspiring Station western boundary. Public access to the hut and beyond is essential for full enjoyment of Mount Aspiring National Park.

Fig. 11. There are almost endless opportunities for outdoor recreation on the mountains and in the rivers of Mount Aspiring Station and the adjoining National Park. This view shows Mount Aspiring and illustrates the challenging climbing opportunities which are on offer within the Park. This National Park includes much remote and wilderness country, but despite these characteristics access is easy up the Matukituki Valley through Mount Aspiring Station.

Fig. 12. There are opportunities for peaceful enjoyment of the natural values and visual appeal of mountains and valleys. There are choices of routes for trampers both within the property and to its boundaries and beyond. Above the waterfall seen in this view there is a steep climb to the Shotover Saddle. Well named Sharks Tooth can be seen on the skyline towards the left. The Matukituki also offers a wide range of water-based activities from kayaking to more passive activities such as photography and painting.

Fig. 13. There are many classic climbs in and around Mount Aspiring Station and the adjoining National Park. One which is not too demanding but provides spectacular views and considerable satisfaction is Dragonfly Peak. This has been called a 'tramper's climb'. Dragonfly is the highest point in the Mill Creek block of the pastoral lease and is seen here from a campsite on the Albert Burn Saddle.

Fig. 14. The East Matukituki is the lesser of the two branches of the river but still offers a wide choice of interesting and rewarding recreational opportunities. This sign at Camerons Flat offers some tempting suggestions for one day and longer trips. This site, at the confluence of the East and West Branches, is like a recreational cross roads. It would be very useful if a carpark and camping area was provided here.

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared following the Early Warning Meeting in September 2004 at which the properties entering the tenure review process in 2004 were introduced. Inspections of the property were carried out by driving up the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road on various occasions and from the air, en route to the West Coast. This report is partly based on that field knowledge, partly on experience from several tramping trips in the area and also on information gathered from other sources listed below. The report is offered as a contribution to the statutory consultation process undertaken by DOC.

This is one of the most significant pastoral leases to come under review in Otago, and indeed in the whole of New Zealand. It covers almost 10,000ha, of which about 70 per cent is mountain land above 1,000m of very high scenic, landscape and recreational value (Fig. 1). It adjoins Mount Aspiring National Park and significant parts of the pastoral lease are of such quality that they should be added to the Park.

The report focuses on those features of Mt Aspiring Station which are important for public recreational interests. It should be noted that while some of this interest focuses on access for recreation, the very high natural values and fantastic landscapes of the area 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 both natural and landscape values in this report. The landscapes and views to be had from the valleys and vantage points within this property are outstanding (Fig. 2). It should be noted that the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road (which runs through this pastoral lease) is particularly important as the gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park.

This property must be one of the best known and iconic pastoral leases in New Zealand situated as it is at the major gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park. Thousands of New Zealand and international visitors come to the Matukituki valley every year to enjoy the scenery, tramping, climbing, ski mountaineering and many other recreational activities which are available in and around the Park.

Mt Aspiring Station homestead is now situated in the West Matukituki valley near Camerons Flat and the junction with the East Branch of the Matukituki River (Fig. 3). Formerly, the old homestead was across the river, on the flats in the East Branch. This old homestead is now used as a lodge by Dunstan High School.

The pastoral lease covers nearly 10,000ha and consists of three contrasting land types. These are (i) the Mill Creek high country block, (ii) the north facing steep slopes between Mt Tyndall and Fog Peak and (iii) the flats in the valleys of the East and West Branches of the Matukituki River.

Mt Aspiring Station was formerly much more extensive before some 20,000ha of the high country was relinquished when Mount Aspiring National Park was established in 1964. There is still much of the property which has all the attributes of suitability for addition to the National Park which it adjoins over almost 20km of its boundary on the true left of the West Branch and the true right of the East Branch of the Matukituki River.

Almost three quarters of the property lies above 1,000m and is characterised by large areas which have been classified in Land Use Capability (LUC) Class VIII, completely unsuitable for pastoral use (Fig. 4). This land does have, on the other hand, very significant natural, landscape and recreational values. Outcomes of tenure review with respect to these values will be discussed later.

METHODS OF SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

Mount Aspiring Station has mainly been assessed by inspection from the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road and from a knowledge of the property gained from many tramping trips in and around the National Park. The property has also been observed from the air, en route to the West Coast. This report is based partly upon these observations and partly on information gathered from other sources. The other sources include studies of topographical and Land Use Capability (LUC) maps, and consultation with recreational user groups. A study of "Outdoor Recreation in Otago" was undertaken by Mason (1989) and published by FMC. Reference is made to this Recreation Plan for Otago in the recreation section below. The Conservation Management Strategy for Otago has also been used as a source of reference.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MOUNT ASPIRING STATION

Mount Aspiring Station is a large pastoral lease of almost 10,000ha, situated in the Matukituki valley immediately adjacent to Mount Aspiring National Park. To the south, the pastoral lease boundaries with The Branches (Fig. 5), and with Matukituki Station in the south east at Niger Peak. In the West Branch all the land to the west and north is included within Mount Aspiring National Park. Similarly in the East Matukituki, the Park boundary is on the true right (Fig. 6) while the Mill Creek block on the true left is completely surrounded by Conservation Land (Fig. 6). The bush fringe which runs up to about 1,000m is part of the Mount Alta Conservation Area which also bounds the eastern side of this block. To the north, the Mill Creek block is bounded by the Albert Burn Conservation Area. Finally, the north west corner below Dragonfly Peak adjoins the National Park at Hester Pinney Creek.

The Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Otago contains a general description of the Matukituki which is recognised as a "Special Place":-

"The Matukituki Valley is a typical wide glaciated valley with steep sides and flat floor formed by old glacial outwash terraces. It is drained by the Matukituki River which is strongly braided below the confluence of its eastern and western branches. Above Camerons Flat the valleys are narrower and the rivers have much steeper profiles."

"There are wetlands along the springline at the junction of the terraces and the foot of the mountains. Vegetation is tussock grassland in the main on higher land grading to alpine flora, with beech forest remnants in the gullies and southwest facing slopes. The tussock grassland has been modified by grazing, burning, and below 800m by oversowing and topdressing. The lower slopes are often in bracken shrubland and exotic grasses."

"Landscape values [Fig. 1] are high, both within the valley looking towards the mountains, and as seen from Wanaka and the lake and even as far away as the state highway north of Luggate."

"There are extensive stands of red, silver and mountain beech which survived logging in early European times with remnants of early milling at Mill Creek". There is a particularly good example of beech forest which almost surrounds the Mill Creek block of Mount Aspiring Station (Fig. 7).

"Olearia bectorii in the west Matukituki opposite Otago Boys High School lodge and at the Matukituki Forks is a threatened species. The beech forest provides valuable habitat for forest dwelling birds, including kaka. The wetlands support waterfowl and wading bird species and the braided riverbed provides habitat for black-fronted terns, banded dotterels and wrybill plover. Kea are conspicuous around the huts and at treeline. Falcone are present in the area."

The recreational history and use of Mount Aspiring pastoral lease was briefly described by Mason (1989):-
"[The Matukituki valley] has been the traditional centre of interest for generations of Otago trampers and climbers. The first exploratory climbs and pass crossings were in 1862-63. Mt Aspiring was first climbed in 1910.

Since the NZAC commenced a hut building programme in 1932 domestic trampers and climbers have consistently patronised this sector of the present park. This has particularly been the case since completion of the large 'Aspiring Hut in 1949 and of 3 high huts.

Excluding an indeterminate number of day-visitors, probably in the order of 1-2,000 people now visit the valley annually. Additionally several thousand bed-nights are spent in the valley by students at two school lodges. Improved road access is resulting in a pattern of increased day-walking, rather than dramatic increases in longer duration trips, as has been experienced in the Routeburn-Rees."

As noted above, the property consists of three contrasting land types. These are (i) the Mill Creek high country block (Figs. 6 and 7), (ii) the north facing steep slopes between Mt Tyndall and Fog Peak (Figs. 2 and 8), and (iii) the flats in the valleys of the East and West Branches of the Matukituki River (Figs. 1, 2, 6, and 9).

The Mill Creek block (Figs. 6 and 7), covering about 4,500ha, lies almost entirely above 1,000m and extends up to Mt Estre (1,995m) and Dragonfly Peak (2,165m). It is mainly characterised by Moonlight Steepland High Country Yellow Brown Earth soils and Haast Podsolised High Country Yellow Brown Earth soils. These soils (or almost the entire Mill Creek block) has been classified LUC Class VIII which is entirely unsuitable for pastoral use because of severe limitations due to climate and both actual and potential erosion. There are only very small corridors of LUC Class VII in the branches of Mill Creek. This land (also Moonlight Steepland) only accounts for about 200ha. The remainder of the block (about 4,300ha of Class VIII land) cannot be managed in an ecologically sustainable way because of its very severe limitations for pastoral use. Instead it should be assessed on the basis of its very high landscape and natural values.

The generally north facing steep slopes on the true right of the Matukituki valley, between Mt Tyndall and Fog Peak (Figs. 2 and 8) extend from an average of about 400m on the valley floor to a maximum altitude of 2,496m on Mt Tyndall. The crest of the ridge includes Red Rock (1,858m), Sharks Tooth (2,096m) and Fog Peak (2,240m) as well as several unnamed peaks above 2,000m and the important crossing at Shotover Saddle at 1,554m. These steep slopes are mainly characterised by Moonlight Steepland High Country Yellow Brown Earth soils but there are also extensive areas of Alpine Steepland. Most of the country above about 1,000m (about 2,300ha) has been classified LUC Class VII or VIII and is extremely steep and either severely limited or totally unsuitable for pastoral use. It is most unlikely that Class VII land can be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable.

In order to be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable in the long term, as required by the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, any losses of essential nutrients in animal products (meat and wool), and by burning, must be replenished. The alternative is that sooner or later the ecosystem will be depleted and degraded. Replenishment with fertiliser application is usually not economically justifiable because pasture growth response is very small at these higher altitudes. Under these circumstances pastoral use cannot be sustainable in the long term. Class VIII land simply should not be used for pastoral purposes because of ecological damage to native sub-alpine ecosystems, the likelihood of erosion and because plant growth is very slow.

The lower slopes (below about 1,000m) on the true right of the Matukituki valley (Fig. 8) are also very steep and characterised by Moonlight Steepland soils. These soils occupy some 1,500ha on the lower slopes where the limitations are less severe and where the land below about 1,000m has been classified LUC Class VI. Some land has been improved by oversowing and topdressing but is prone to invasion by bracken and 'woody weeds' (Fig. 8). 'Woody weeds' are on the one hand a pastoral problem but on the other hand, they represent ecological assets which have the potential to revert to former shrubland and forest ecosystems. Under these circumstances conservation values need to be assessed and considered as an alternative to unsustainable pastoral use.

The valley floors (Figs 1, 2, 6, and 9), in both the East and West Branches of the Matukituki, represent the best land on Mount Aspiring Station. The valley floors cover about 1,000ha and are occupied by Recent Alluvial Matukituki soils some of which are classified LUC Class IV and some Class VI, with high or medium suitability for pastoral use. Some of the Class IV land is even cultivated for growing winter feed crops.

An important feature of this pastoral lease is its situation close to Wanaka and Mt Aspiring National Park. Given these attributes and the increasing numbers of overseas visitors looking for recreational opportunities in the area, this situation enhances its value for outdoor recreation. Much of the property is already heavily used by trampers and climbers and several commercial concession operators bring their clients to the Matukituki valley and the Rob Roy glacier (Fig. 9). Many other people just enjoy the scenic wonders of the valley and river or are content to absorb the views or record them on film. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 people per year walk to Rob Roy or Aspiring Hut (Fig. 10).

The qualities of nature, scenery, landscape and opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities are such that consideration needs to be given in this tenure review to possible future additions to Mount Aspiring National Park. Foremost among these considerations would be the upper part of the West Matukituki (including Raspberry Flat and above), as well as Shotover Saddle, and the entire Mill Creek block.

Secure public access up both branches of the Matukituki River, and the recreational use of the rugged mountain lands on Mount Aspiring Station are likely to be among the main recreational issues in this tenure review. Associated with the very important recreational use of this property is the need to protect the outstanding natural, scenic and landscape values of the valley and mountains. It is becoming increasingly important to ensure that the wonderful settings we are able to enjoy today are still available for future generations of back country recreation people.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND POTENTIAL

There are almost endless opportunities for outdoor recreation on the mountains and rivers of Mount Aspiring Station (Figs. 11 and 12). These opportunities range from demanding climbing and ski touring in the mountains (Fig. 11) to peaceful enjoyment of the natural values and visual appeal of the river valley (Figs. 1, 9 and 12). In between, there are choices of routes for trampers both within the property and to its boundaries and beyond (Figs. 2, 5 and 12), and a wide range of water-based activities from kayaking to more passive activities such as photography, painting and family picnics.

Some of the better known examples within Mount Aspiring pastoral lease include climbing Mt Tyndall, Sharks Tooth (Fig. 12) and Dragonfly Peak (Fig. 13), and tramping in the East Branch to the Glacier Burn (Fig. 14). Extended trips can be made to the Kitchener River, Rainbow Stream and up to Wilmot Saddle and Sisyphus Peak. One of the best known trips in the East Branch is through Bledisloe Gorge to Rabbit Pass and the famous (or infamous) Wilkin Waterfall, while the Rock of Ages Bivvy, the Kitchener cirque and Turnbull Thomson Falls are worthy destinations in their own right (Fig. 14). The main West Branch attracts even greater numbers of visitors heading for Aspiring Hut (Fig. 10), Liverpool Biv and the Arawhata Saddle on the true right and French Ridge and Mt Aspiring (Fig. 11) on the true left of the valley, to name but a few destinations in the Park. Well known crossings to the west and south include the Cascade Saddle route to the Dart (within the National Park) and over Shotover Saddle to the Tyndall Stream (Fig. 5), Lochnagar and the Shotover valley.

It is a good mountain bike ride up the valley to Aspiring Hut (Fig. 10) but because bikes are classed as vehicles, use of bikes within the National Park is not permitted. Both branches of the Matukituki River offer opportunities for kayaking and fishing. The natural values and geology of the area provide excellent sites for professional and amateur study (and photography) of plants, animals birds and rocks.

For all these reasons and opportunities there is already extensive recreational use of the well known Matukituki Valley and adjacent Mount Aspiring National Park. FMC believes that when significant areas of Mount Aspiring Station are added to the National Park, usage will become even greater. At least in part this will be due to the increasing numbers of free and independent travellers coming to NZ. There is significant potential for growth in the recreational opportunities associated with both branches of the Matukituki River, and on the mountains within this pastoral lease.

There have been no problems with recreational access on Mount Aspiring Station while the Aspinall family hold the lease and indeed the family are well known for their hospitality generally and for assistance in emergencies. Public access could however, become a problem on change of ownership and it is unlikely that any new runholder(s) would be as hospitable and welcoming as the Aspinalls. This is why attention needs to be given to securing public access during this tenure review.

FMC believes that the recreational significance of this property (and other leases in the tenure review process) should be assessed not only on its present usage but also on its potential. This is because we believe that current usage has not yet reached its potential for a number of reasons. Increasing numbers of visitors to the Wanaka area also indicate that there is significant potential for greater use, and it is the full range of possibilities which should be considered during this tenure review.

SIGNIFICANT INHERENT VALUES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR RECREATION

This report focuses on those features of Mount Aspiring Station which are important for public recreational interests. It should be noted that while some of this interest focuses on access for recreation, the natural values and landscapes of the areas concerned have a fundamental impact on the recreational value of the

place and greatly influence the quality of recreational experience enjoyed. It is for this reason that reference is also made to both natural and landscape values of this pastoral lease.

Mason (1989) has given a description of the vegetation over the wider area he refers to as West Wanaka (between the lake and Mt Aspiring National Park):- *“Above 700 m, dependent on aspect, today's predominant vegetation is tall tussock grassland [Fig. 13]. The narrow-leaved snowgrass is dominant, with the mid-rib snowgrass in the wetter areas close to the main divide. These grasslands are in fair condition. In drier areas tall tussock has been succeeded by short fescue tussock, generally as a narrow altitudinal zone above bracken fern belts along the lake faces. Pasture grasses dominate lower slopes, valley floors and where oversowing with grasses and clovers have replaced bracken and tussock [Fig. 8].*

Ribbons of beech and broad-leaved species in gullies are remnants of once considerably more extensive forests. In 1865 it was recorded that the West Wanaka lake faces were clothed in beech forest with patches of dacrydium, podocarpus, and phyllocladus species. Today it is predominantly covered by bracken fern. In the west extensive silver beech forests remain, in particular in the Albert Burn, East Matukituki, and upper Makarora, with Hall's totara present at higher altitudes.

Broad shrub belts above present bushlines, and on shady faces, indicate the former extent of forest. In places impenetrable stands of mingimingi, hebes, mountain celery pine and dracophyllum species are colonising formerly burnt forest areas.

“In the alpine zone, herbfields occur only to a limited extent, with fellfield and scree being more prevalent. In 1865 Buchanan listed the alpine species to be found on Mt Alta, concluding that this locality on West Wanaka demonstrated the richness of Otago's alpine flora. He further described the sub-alpine zone as characterized by a belt of coarse tussock grasses, celmisia, (veronica) and ranunculus but noted the presence of sheep tracks as high as 1830m.”

AREAS TO BE PROTECTED

Because Mount Aspiring Station consists of three very distinct land types, these will be dealt with separately in this section.

1. The Mill Creek high country block (Figs. 4, 6, 7 and 13)

The Mill Creek block of about 4,500ha is virtually all situated above 1000m and it is most unlikely that it can be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable in the long term. This is because of the slow drain on nutrient reserves due to the removal of nutrients in animal products. Without replenishment in the form of fertiliser this drain will clearly lead eventually to depletion and degradation of the ecosystem.

There are a number of reasons why the whole block would be better to be returned to full Crown ownership and control, and to be managed for conservation and recreation purposes. The reasons are:

- The block is completely surrounded by public conservation land, mainly Mt Alta Conservation Area, Albert Burn Conservation Area and in the north-west corner by part of Mount Aspiring National park.
- Access to the block by stock can only be through the bush on conservation land. Two access ways through Mt Alta Conservation Area are currently being used. Damage so caused by regular passage of stock through the bush would cease if grazing was terminated.
- Pastoral use of the land is almost certainly ecologically unsustainable in the long term.
- There is potential for significant recovery in stature of the high altitude tussock grasslands and sub-alpine plant communities in the absence of grazing.
- There is currently some tramping and climbing on Dragonfly Peak and Mt Este which is not compatible with cattle grazing. Dragonfly is regarded as a “tramper's climb”.

- Ultimately the area should be added to Mount Aspiring National Park because of its high natural, landscape and recreational values.

2. The north facing steep slopes between Mt Tyndall and Fog Peak (Figs. 2, 8, 9 and 12)

There are some 3,800ha of very steep north facing slopes between the homestead and Mt Tyndall. About 2,300ha of these slopes lie above 1,000m and are mainly snow tussock grassland, bare rock or sub-alpine vegetation, with very serious limitations for pastoral use. Pastoral use would almost certainly be ecologically unsustainable for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to the Mill Creek block. Stock rarely venture up high and prefer to graze on the improved pasture on the lower slopes. On the other hand the conservation values of these upper slopes are very high.

There is a case for such land to be returned to full Crown ownership and control but to fence the boundary between lower ground and higher slopes would be difficult if not impossible. Even if it was possible it would lead to undesirable landscape effects due to exaggeration of the fenceline by stock camping effects. Alternatively, the nature of the terrain might be enough to confine grazing effects to the lower slopes.

There is extensive public use of these slopes for access to Shotover Saddle and Tyndall Stream as well as Red Rock and Mt Tyndall. It is also possible that much of the land in Branches Station, and further south in Coronet Peak Station will become conservation land and eventually be added to Mount Aspiring National Park. In this broader context it would be illogical to have a narrow strip of freehold land on the faces below Mt Tyndall and Shotover Saddle. Furthermore, the upper part of the West Matukituki Valley (upstream from and including Raspberry Flat) is heavily used by the public.

There is clearly a need to look at the tenure review of Mount Aspiring Station in the wider context of neighbouring properties and their likely future, as well as the proximity of the National Park. It is likely that ultimately there will be major additions to the Park and the outcomes of tenure review of Mount Aspiring Station should help to facilitate that process.

It is therefore recommended that the faces west of Raspberry Creek should be returned to full Crown ownership and control and to be managed for conservation and recreation purposes. This would enable the bush and waterfalls in Big Creek, and access to Shotover Saddle and Mt Tyndall, to be eventually added to Mount Aspiring National Park.

3. The flats in the valleys of the East and West Branches of the Matukituki River (Figs. 1, 6, 8 and 9)

The best pastoral land (LUC Classes IV and VI) is confined to about 1,000ha on the valley floors in both branches of the Matukituki River. These lands are the 'engine room' of pastoral farming at Mount Aspiring. The land is capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable and is therefore suitable for freeholding. However, given this situation at the main gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park, there is extremely heavy public use of Raspberry Flat and the tracks to Rob Roy Glacier and all those attractions of the National Park which are accessible from the Matukituki.

It is essential that an area at Raspberry Flat, and an access corridor to Mount Aspiring Hut are excluded from the freehold and made available for public use. This is proposed because the outcomes of tenure review will be permanent. While there are no problems of public use with the Aspinall family as runholders, that may not be so under some future freehold ownership. It is unthinkable that public access to Mount Aspiring National Park could be denied by some new overseas or corporate owner. It is therefore recommended that Raspberry Flat and an access corridor to Mount Aspiring Hut should be returned to full Crown ownership and control to be managed for recreational purposes, probably as a Recreation Reserve.

Similarly, an area should be designated at Camerons Flat for camping and car parking (Fig. 14).. This area could also be designated as Recreation Reserve.

There is a very small area of pastoral lease to the north of Glacier Burn on the flats in the East Branch. This should not be included in the freehold but instead should be returned to full Crown ownership. This would protect the natural values of the Glacier Burn itself if the north end of the flats were fenced off on the true right of Glacier Burn.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

The most important access routes for recreation on Mount Aspiring Station generally follow both branches of the Matukituki River but there are also very important crossings over the main river to the East Branch, and over Shotover Saddle to Tyndall Stream and the Shotover. Public access over some or all of these routes may evolve as a consequence of tenure review if the recommendations made above are adopted in the Preliminary and Substantive Proposals for Review. In the event that some or all of them are not adopted, alternative provision for public access will, be needed.

Secure public foot access over the following routes will be required:-

- From near Bridal Veil Waterfall on Matukituki flats to Shotover Saddle. Note that the climbing route to Mt Tyndall may be in land that will become Conservation Area. This, and the climbing routes to Sharks Tooth and Craigroyston Peak, Fog Peak and Glenfinnan Peak must be secured for public use.
- Across Camerons Flat to the Matukituki ford and up the E Matukituki flats to the Glacier Burn footbridge and track leading up through the bush in the Glacier Burn catchment. Access will also be required across the ford and flats for bone fide parties with permission to use the Old Homestead (Tititea Lodge). Alternative access for such people, and for the public, to use the track to and from Otago Boys footbridge in times of high river flow must also be secured.
- If the Dragonfly Peak/Mt Eastre/Mill Creek block does not become Conservation Area, then public climbing access to these peaks will be required.
- Public foot access should be secured from Raspberry Creek carpark, up the flats to the Rob Roy bridge and up the track to the Rob Roy Glacier via the true left of Rob Roy Stream.
- Public foot and mountain bike access should also be secured from Raspberry Creek carpark to Cascade and Aspiring Huts: this should include the high-water route on the true right above the Rob Roy Stream confluence, and the section over Wilsons Bluff.

Public bike and vehicle access needs to be guaranteed as follows:-

- Road access over the Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road to the carpark at Raspberry Creek should be confirmed as legal road, to ensure that public vehicle and bike use of the road is secure as an outcome of this tenure review. Mountain Bike use of the Matukituki valley as far as the boundary of the National Park also needs to be secured.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR OTAGO

There are important statements in the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago, in which the Matukituki area is recognised as a "Special Place". The objectives for this area are:-

"To protect the high landscape and ecological values of this major access corridor and buffer to Mount Aspiring National Park and provide for an appropriate range of recreational uses compatible with the character of the valley and surrounding mountains and with the maintenance of high quality visitor experiences."

Implementation statements include the following:

- Formal protection will be negotiated for areas of *Olearia hectorii*.
- Improve legal foot access from Raspberry Hut to the Aspiring Hut Conservation Area.
- Opportunities that may arise through pastoral lease tenure reviews, will be used to negotiate for the protection of areas of high landscape and biological importance, to secure recreational access to valued areas, and to lead to more efficient or effective conservation management.

It should also be noted that the Priority for Matukituki is:-

"Improving the security of and opportunities for enhanced public enjoyment of this Special Place will be a priority."

It is clear that there are major opportunities in this tenure review to achieve several of the stated objectives of the CMS.

CONCLUSIONS

1. This is one of the most significant pastoral leases to come under review in Otago. Almost 10,000ha of high country of which about 70 per cent is mountain land above 1,000m. It climbs as high as 2,500m on Mt Tyndall and includes mountains and valleys with very high natural, scenic, landscape and recreation values. Adjacent to the National Park, it is very important for recreational activities from the most strenuous and challenging to family picnics and passive pursuits such as photography.
2. The tenure review of Mount Aspiring Station is a one-off opportunity to enhance the recreational opportunities of the Matukituki/Wanaka area, and to increase the recreational and conservation values of some of the lands between the town and Mt Aspiring National Park by formally protecting the very significant inherent values described above.
3. The landscapes and views to be had from the valleys and vantage points within this property are outstanding. The Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road (which runs through the pastoral lease) is particularly important as the gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park.
4. Mt Aspiring Station was formerly much more extensive before a significant part of the high country was relinquished when Mount Aspiring National Park was established in 1964. There is still much of the property which has all the attributes of suitability for addition to the National Park which it adjoins along almost 20km of its boundary.
5. *"The Matukituki valley has been the traditional centre of interest for generations of Otago trampers and climbers. The first exploratory climbs and pass crossings were in 1862-63. Mt Aspiring was first climbed in 1910"* (Mason 1989).
6. The Mill Creek block (about 4,300ha of Class VIII land) cannot be managed in an ecologically sustainable way because of its very severe limitations for pastoral use. Instead, it should be assessed on the basis of its very high landscape and natural values. Six bullet point reasons are provided as to why it should be returned to full Crown ownership.
7. Most of the generally north facing slopes above about 1,000m has been classified LUC Class VII or VIII and is extremely steep and either severely limited (Class VII) or totally unsuitable (Class VIII) for pastoral use. It is most unlikely that Class VII land can be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable for reasons which are explained above.
8. There is a case for these steep slopes to be returned to full Crown ownership and control but to fence the boundary between lower ground and higher slopes would be difficult if not impossible. Even if it was possible it would lead to undesirable landscape effects due to exaggeration of the fenceline by stock camping effects. Alternatively, the nature of the terrain might be enough to confine grazing effects to the lower slopes.
9. It is recommended that the faces west of Raspberry Creek should be returned to full Crown ownership and control and to be managed for conservation and recreation purposes. This would enable the bush and waterfalls in Big Creek, and access to Shotover Saddle and Mt Tyndall to be available to the public and eventually added to Mount Aspiring National Park.
10. The best pastoral land (LUC Classes IV and VI) is confined to about 1,000ha on the valley floors in both branches of the Matukituki River. This land is capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable and is therefore suitable for freeholding. However, there is extremely heavy public use of

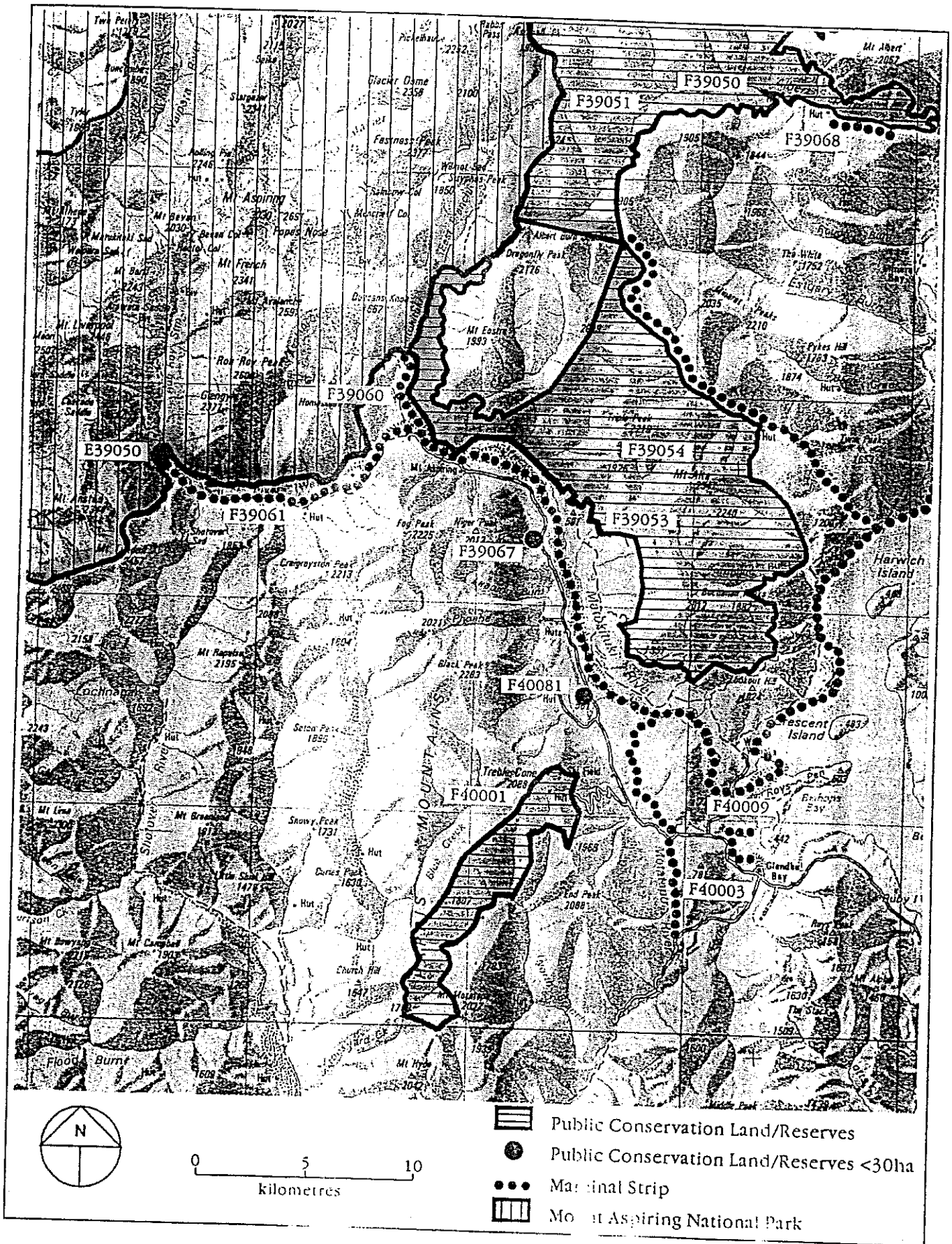
Raspberry Flat and the tracks to all those attractions of the National Park which are accessible from the Matukituki.

11. It is recommended that Raspberry Flat and an access corridor to Mount Aspiring Hut should be returned to full Crown ownership and control to be managed for recreational purposes, probably as a Recreation Reserve.
12. It is also recommended that a camping and car park area should be designated at Camerons Flat as a Recreation Reserve.
13. The very small area of pastoral lease to the north of Glacier Burn should not be included in the freehold but instead should be returned to full Crown ownership. This would protect the natural values of the Glacier Burn itself if the north end of the flats were fenced off along the true right of Glacier Burn.
14. An important feature of this pastoral lease is its situation close to Wanaka, and Mt Aspiring National Park. Given these attributes and the increasing numbers of overseas visitors looking for recreational opportunities in the area, this situation enhances its value for outdoor recreation.
15. The qualities of nature, scenery, landscape and opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities are such that consideration needs to be given in this tenure review to possible future additions to Mount Aspiring National Park. Foremost among these are the upper part of the East Matukituki (including Raspberry Flat and above), as well as Shotover Saddle, and the entire Mill Creek block.
16. There are almost endless opportunities for outdoor recreation on the mountains and rivers of Mount Aspiring Station. These range from demanding climbing and ski touring in the mountains to peaceful enjoyment of the natural values and visual appeal of the river valley. In between there are choices of routes for trampers both within the property and to its boundaries and beyond, and also a wide range of water-based activities from kayaking to passive activities such as photography and painting.
17. It is a good mountain bike ride up the valley to Aspiring Hut but because bikes are classed as vehicles, their use within the National Park is not permitted. Both branches of the Matukituki River offer opportunities for kayaking and fishing. The natural values and geology of the area provide excellent sites for professional and amateur study (and photography) of plants, animals birds and rocks.
18. All the montane experiences described above offer great exhilaration in their own right as well as providing strong reasons why significant parts of the valleys and mountain lands of Mount Aspiring Station should be seriously considered as probable additions to Mount Aspiring National Park.
19. The most important access routes for recreation on Mount Aspiring Station generally follow both branches of the Matukituki River but there are also very important crossings over the main river to the East Branch, and over Shotover Saddle to Tyndall Stream and the Shotover. Public access over some or all of these routes may evolve as a consequence of tenure review if the recommendations made above are adopted in the Preliminary and Substantive Proposals for Review. In the event that some or all of them are not adopted alternative provision for public access will be required.
20. Recommendations are given for secure public foot access over five such routes for foot travel and one for vehicle access.
21. The outcome of the tenure review of Mount Aspiring Station, 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 Matukituki "Special Place" in the Conservation Management Strategy for Otago.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FMC is grateful for assistance from the runholder and the Crown agents in making this assessment possible. Part of the inspection was carried out in February 2005 and FMC is grateful to the runholder for co-operation and granting permission for access on numerous other occasions in the past. FMC is also grateful to staff of DTZ for access to LUC maps of the area.

Map 34 Matukituki



Map showing the boundaries of public conservation land around Mount Aspiring Station.



Fig. 1. Mount Aspiring is one of the most significant pastoral leases to come under review in Otago, and indeed in the whole of New Zealand. It covers almost 10,000ha, of which about 70 per cent is mountain land of very high scenic, landscape and recreational value. It adjoins Mount Aspiring National Park and significant parts of the pastoral lease are of such quality that they should eventually be added to the Park.



Fig. 2. The landscapes and views to be had from the valleys and vantage points within this property are outstanding. The Wanaka Mount Aspiring Road (which runs through the pastoral lease) is particularly important as the gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park, and is used by upwards of 10,000 visitors every year. It is imperative that these natural vistas are preserved for future generations. This view is of Mt Tyndall, the Tyndall Glacier and Shotover Saddle, an important route to Skippers and Lochnagar.



Fig. 3. The modern Mt Aspiring homestead is situated in the West Matukituki valley near Cameron Flat and the junction with the East Branch of the River. The runholders, the Aspinal family are well known for their generous hospitality and assistance in times of emergency. Here they are welcoming a large group from a local Historical Society who are enjoying the view to Mt Avalanche beyond Homestead Peak which towers over the original homestead in the East Matukituki.

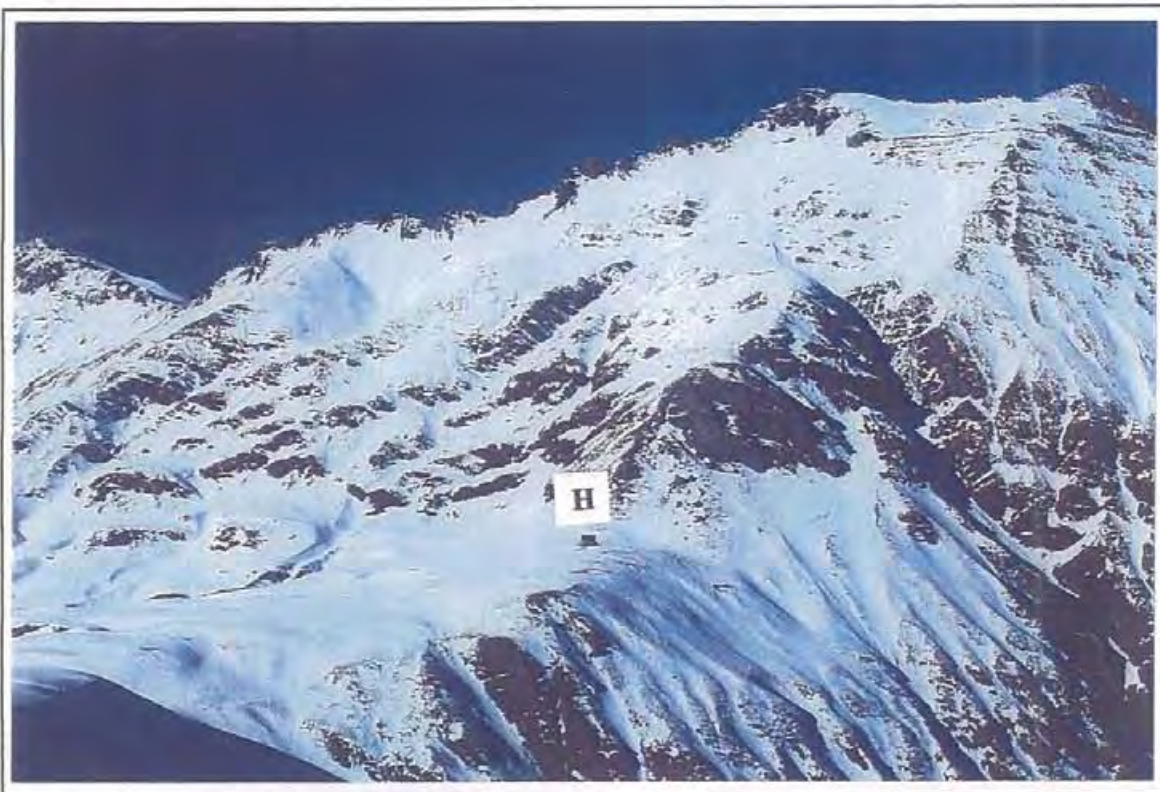


Fig. 4. Almost three quarters of the property lies above 1,000m and is characterised by large areas of LUC Class VIII land which is completely unsuitable for pastoral use. This land does have, on the other hand, very significant natural, landscape and recreational values. This view shows the Albert Burn Saddle and the new Trilane Hut (H) perched at 1,700m on pastoral leasehold land.



Fig. 5. This view is looking down the Tummel Burn into The Branches Station from above the ridge that includes Shotover Saddle. A well used tramping route leads over the Saddle to Tyndall Stream (extreme right) and the Shotover River below the forks. Mount Aspiring Station is important not only for the many recreational opportunities within its boundaries but also for the routes which lead to special places beyond its boundaries. Those places include Lochnagar which is hidden among the mountains on the right.



Fig. 6. The original homestead (H) was on the flats in the E. Branch of the Matukituki River, seen here from above Camerons Flat at the junction with the W. Branch. All the high country on the true right of the E. Branch (to the left in this view) is part of Mount Aspiring National Park while the bush on the true left is part of the Mt Alta Conservation Area. The large snow covered (Mill Creek, MC) block above the bush, and above 1,000m is LUC Class VIII land: part of the pastoral lease which should become conservation land.

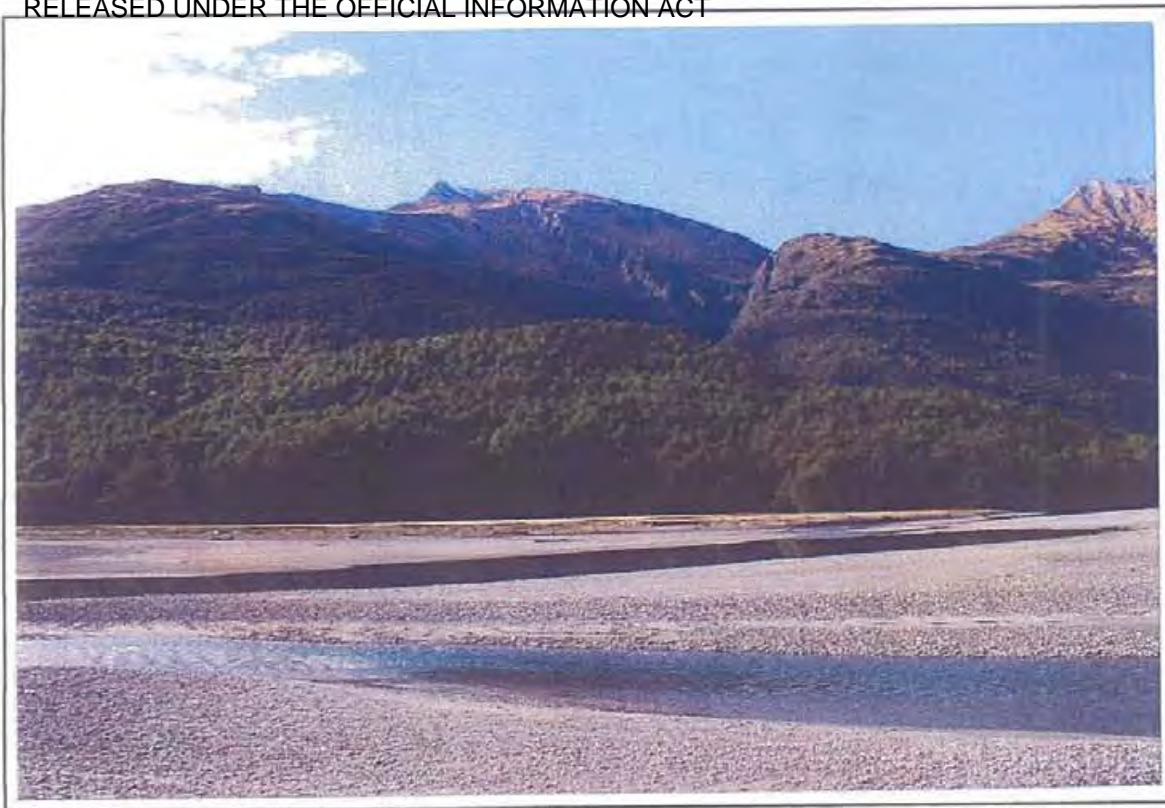


Fig. 7. *“There are extensive stands of red, silver and mountain beech which survived logging in early European times with remnants of early milling at Mill Creek”.* There is a particularly good example of beech forest which almost surrounds the Mill Creek block of Mount Aspiring Station. Above the bush, in the Mill Creek block, can be seen part of the extensive tussock country running up towards Mt Estre.



Fig. 8. Most of the country above about 1,000m has been classified LUC Class VII or VIII and is extremely steep and either severely limited or totally unsuitable for pastoral use. The lower slopes are also very steep. The land below about 1,000m has been classified LUC Class VI where the limitations are less severe and where some land has been improved by oversowing and topdressing but is prone to invasion by bracken and ‘woody weeds’. These are a problem for pastoral use but are also an indication of the potential to restore former biodiversity.



Fig. 9. Much of the property is already heavily used by trampers and climbers and commercial concession operators bring their clients to the Matukituki valley and the Rob Roy glacier. Many other people just enjoy the scenic wonders of the valley and river or are content to absorb the views or record them on film.



Fig. 10. A particularly popular destination is Aspiring Hut, built by the NZ Alpine Club. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 people per year walk to Rob Roy or Aspiring Hut. This illustration shows an Alpine Club gathering in 1999 to celebrate 50 years of climbing based at Aspiring Hut. The hut is situated on conservation land just beyond Mount Aspiring Station western boundary. Public access to the hut and beyond is essential for full enjoyment of Mount Aspiring National Park.



Fig. 11. There are almost endless opportunities for outdoor recreation on the mountains and in the rivers of Mount Aspiring Station and the adjoining National Park. This view shows Mount Aspiring and illustrates the challenging climbing opportunities which are on offer within the Park. This National Park includes much remote and wilderness country, but despite these characteristics access is easy up the Matukituki Valley through Mount Aspiring Station.



Fig. 12. There are opportunities for peaceful enjoyment of the natural values and visual appeal of mountains and valleys. There are choices of routes for trampers both within the property and to its boundaries and beyond. Above the waterfall seen in this view there is a steep climb to the Shotover Saddle. Well named Sharks Tooth can be seen on the skyline towards the left. The Matukituki also offers a wide range of water-based activities from kayaking to more passive activities such as photography and painting.



Fig. 13. There are many classic climbs in and around Mount Aspiring Station and the adjoining National Park. One which is not too demanding but provides spectacular views and considerable satisfaction is Dragonfly Peak. This has been called a 'tramper's climb'. Dragonfly is the highest point in the Mill Creek block of the pastoral lease and is seen here from a campsite on the Albert Burn Saddle.



Fig. 14. The East Matukituki is the lesser of the two branches of the river but still offers a wide choice of interesting and rewarding recreational opportunities. This sign at Cameron's Flat offers some tempting suggestions for one day and longer trips. This site, at the confluence of the East and West Branches, is like a recreational cross roads. It would be very useful if a carpark and camping area was provided here.