

## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name: MT ASPIRING STATION**

**Lease number: PO 231**

### **Public Submissions - Part 1**

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

**October 09**

## Submission 1



## Mount Aspiring Crown Pastoral Lease Tenure Review

### Submission from Otago Fish & Game

The Otago Fish & Game Council (Fish & Game) wish to make the following submission regarding the preliminary proposal for the Mount Aspiring Property.

#### Public Access

Fish & Game wish to see the provision for hunting dog access across easements to the riverbed and/or conservation land. The area has a long history of game-bird hunting and dogs are essential to retrieve birds that have fallen into the river or are on the far bank. We understand the issue regarding sheep measles but feel a provision requiring a vaccination certificate to be carried by hunters may alleviate this concern.

The provision for the carrying of guns over the easements and public access provisions in general are supported as this will facilitate a larger range of recreational opportunity. This will allow the historical recreational opportunities to continue for future generations.

#### Fish & Game Access for Management Purposes

Fish & Game may on occasions need to access land for the management of sports fish and game bird species. We understand that we have the same access rights for management as the Department although this has not been formally confirmed. In the interim we request that wording be added to the proposal which confers the same access rights to Fish & Game as the Department with regard to management access. Alternately a letter from the Department or LINZ confirming that Fish & Game have the same management rights would meet our concerns.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John Hollows'.

John Hollows  
Environmental Officer

27 March 2009

*Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats*

Otago Region

Cnr Hanover & Harrow Sts, PO Box 76, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand. Telephone (03) 477 9076 Facsimile (03) 477 0146  
[www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

## Submission 2

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10 Smacks Close  
Papanui  
Christchurch 8051

Re Mt Aspiring Tenure Review

Dear Sir,

I'm in agreement with the majority of this review, however, the land that is not part of the valley floor should be returned to Crown ownership.

In other words, the land on the right of the West Branch of the Matukituki river and that is not part of the valley or 'toe' of the hill, which, at present is placed under a CC, should be returned to Crown control.

I accept that this would make the property uneconomic and is not likely to happen, but the land should be left to revert back to its natural state.

This valley is of outstanding beauty and to continue to graze the higher land is really a poor reflection on this country.

Certainly any land in any other review would not have this classification. Hopefully the Crown will buy it, or it be gifted to the Crown, sometime in the future.

The land behind what I take as the Homestead should also have a CC placed on it. Also consideration could have gone to a CC being placed along the river margins above and below their confluence, on the true right of both. This need only have been 20-30 metres wide. I realize that both sides have little or no native vegetation and are developed but a transition zone from the riverbed to farmland would have merit, especially in an area of such outstanding beauty and the importance of the river contributing to this uniqueness.

Good to see vehicle access up the East branch is prevented.

Regards  
Geoff Clark

email j.gclark@xtra.co.nz

## Submission 3

3



**Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)**

P.O. BOX 1120  
DUNEDIN



9 April 2009

The Commissioner of Crown Lands  
C/- Opus International Consultants Limited  
Private Bag 1913  
DUNEDIN, 9016

Dear Sir,

**Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review: Mt Aspiring Station (Po 231)**

The Otago Tramping & Mountaineering Club Inc is one of New Zealand's oldest tramping clubs, and has over 200 members. It is involved in a variety of mountain activities throughout Otago and beyond. The Matukituki Valley and the mountains surrounding it have long been a particularly important area for our activities.

The Club believes that, in the main, this is a good proposal that will secure the objectives sought by the Crown Pastoral Lands Act 1998. The land allocation recognizes the appropriateness of returning much of the higher found to full Crown ownership and control, and also recognizes that, with suitable access provisions and some conservation covenants, most of the lower land is suitable for continued farming.

We do have two areas of concern.

Firstly, we feel that the terms of the grazing concessions in Mill Creek and on the Cattle Face are too liberal. We accept the rationale of using these concessions as a mechanism for transition away from grazing these areas, but are of the view that the periods proposed are excessive. We also feel that the period and stock levels are based on untested assumptions about the impact on the vegetation and its ability to recover and that stricter monitoring requirements, with the ability to reduce stock levels if the effects are too great, would be appropriate.

Secondly, we are strongly opposed to the tenure review process being used for the granting of a concession to Trilane Industries Ltd for the operation of their lodge. Tenure review is a process by which an exchange of rights is negotiated between the Crown (representing the public interest) and the lessee. Trilane Industries Ltd cannot be a party to the agreement. Their recreation permit expires upon completion of tenure review, and

contains no obligation or expectation of continuance. When the land reverts to full Crown ownership and control, they should then apply for a concession from the Department of Conservation. That application could then be considered in its own right, rather than as a peripheral matter within this review. There is simply no reason for Trilane Industries Ltd to be gifted a concession as part of this process.

Yours faithfully

David Barnes  
**Conservation and Recreation Advocacy Officer**



## **Submission 4**

(4)

**NORTH OTAGO TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB**  
**PO Box 217**  
**Oamaru 9444**

12 April 2009

Commissioner of Crown Lands  
C/o Opus International Consultants Ltd  
Private Bag 1913  
Dunedin 9016



Dear Sir

**Mt Aspiring Tenure Review**

The North Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club does not support the preliminary proposal for tenure review of the Mt aspiring Pastoral Lease.

The interests in the Club in this matter lie in access to Mt Aspiring area for climbing and tramping, and in the quality of the tramping experience offered which includes the flora and fauna. We are not convinced that all elements of the draft proposal as presented are necessary to achieve this.

For instance, proposed conservation area CA5 comprises modified pasture on grassy flats. An easement would be sufficient to provide access into the national park. It has been demonstrated elsewhere that government agencies are not effective in managing these sorts of areas, with pasture thatching and weed infestation being frequent outcomes which could be better managed by controlled grazing. Similar considerations apply to the proposed phasing out of grazing concessions GC1 and GC2.

There appears to be adequate justification for proposed conservation areas CA2, CA4 and the eastern section of CA1. It is less clear for the western section of CA1 below the alpine zone. The proposed recreation concession RC in CA1, with provision for helicopter landings, is an inappropriate use of the area. The case for including the lower part of proposed CA3, where "the vegetation is dominated by introduced species of pasture grasses", is not well made. Conservation covenants could be employed in this area, as are proposed for the areas to be freeholded.

The Club supports the easements for access proposed for the areas to be freeholded.

Yours sincerely

John Chetwin  
Secretary

## **Submission 5**

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**SUBMISSION OF THE QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL ON THE  
TENURE REVIEW PROPOSAL FOR MT ASPIRING STATION PASTORAL LEASE**

**DATE:** 23 March 2009  
**SUBMITTER:** Queenstown Lakes District Council  
**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:** C/- Ralph Henderson  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Queenstown Lakes District Council  
Private Bag 50072  
QUEENSTOWN  
(03) 441 0493



Dear Sir/Madam

The Queenstown Lakes District Council appreciates the opportunity to submit on the tenure review proposal for Mt Aspiring Station pastoral lease. The Council has an interest in tenure review proposals within this District for four primary reasons:

- ensuring sufficient public access is provided;
- ensuring indigenous biodiversity values are identified and managed appropriately;
- ensuring heritage values are recognised and provided for;
- ensuring outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features and other significant visual amenities are protected.

In making this submission the Council wishes to recognise the stewardship role the Aspinall family have had over this land and the previous contributions they have made to the conservation estate and community use of this area including:

- the transfer of approximately 2/3rds (estimated 20,000 ha) of Mt Aspiring Station into Stewardship Land or the Mount Aspiring National Park at the time of the renewal of the lease in 1957. This area included some of the core mountains of what is now the Mt Aspiring National including Mt Aspiring, Rob Roy, the Bonar Glacier and Avalanche Peak
- the protection of remnant populations of Oleria, a threatened plant
- the transfer of 2 acres of pastoral lease to create a recreation reserve around the Otago Boys' High lodge
- the operation of a second school lodge in the east branch of the Matukituki

The Council wishes to raise the following matters:

**1. Outstanding Natural Landscapes**

The Council notes that Mt Aspiring Station is located in an area that is considered to be an outstanding natural landscape within the District. As the station is the gateway to the Mt Aspiring National Park it is an area highly visited both by day travellers and those undertaking longer wilderness trips. Consequently although clearly a working station it contributes to and forms part of the wilderness experience for many of those visiting this national park.

Outstanding natural landscapes are vulnerable to the effects of development and changing land use practices. The freeholding of land can increase the pressure for the development of these areas.

**2. Public Access**

The Council is supportive of moves to increase public access in the District through the creation of walking and cycling trails. The Council acknowledges the importance of Mt Aspiring Station as a means of accessing a number of wilderness areas for recreational purposes and submits in support of the retention of the routes identified in the Preliminary Proposal.

**3. Future Management of Farm**

The farming of high country stations is a significant part of the economic and social history of the District and remains important today. The Council is supportive of the freeholding of land through the tenure review process insofar as it facilitates the retention of Mt Aspiring Station as an operating farm unit. The continued farming of these areas assists in the management of the land and contributes to the local economy.

Please do not hesitate to contact the writer if you have any questions with respect to this submission.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ralph Henderson', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ralph Henderson  
**Senior Policy Analyst**

## **Submission 6**

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Commissioner of Crown Lands  
C/- Opus International Consultants  
Tenure Review Contract Manager  
Private Bag 1913  
Dunedin 9016



RE: Mt Aspiring Pastoral Lease: Title OT386/143  
17 April 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Dunstan High School has had a forty year relationship with the Aspinall family at Mt Aspiring Station. During that time our school has had the privilege to use the Old Mt Aspiring Homestead as an outdoor education centre for countless thousands of our students. The camps up at Mt Aspiring are without fail the highlight of their five years of secondary schooling.

The benefits to students are huge – we have independent research that shows major increases in personal and social skills, levels of trust, leadership and teamwork. Anecdotal evidence we see shows huge gains in confidence for students, new appreciation for the outdoors and a desire to preserve it, an increased understanding of conservation, a willingness to give back to the place that has given so much to them, new friendships are made and we then try to transfer these benefits into gains at school, at home, in relationships and link growth to future employment possibilities. Our camps focus on introductory adventure experiences, search and rescue specialist camps, leadership training camps and biology camps.

The Centre is administered by the Mt Aspiring Trust and the school is a key player in the trust along with the Aspinall family. Part of the aims of the trust have been to preserve the history of the area , to develop it as a modern sustainable outdoors centre, to re-establish native trees and plants in some areas as well as to offer courses and facilities to others wishing to take part in adventure education. The location is very special and the "feel" is quite unlike other outdoor centres I have experienced – Aspiring has a sense of "family", isolation, stunning beauty and magical personal growth experiences take place there for many people.

We have always had a fantastic relationship with the Aspinall family and the Station. The Aspinalls have always been extremely helpful to our groups, in assisting us with information or support, in accessing the site, in maintenance of the site, advising us on the river and occasionally in assisting with help when things have not gone to plan.

Over the years I have noticed this assistance and willingness to help has been offered to countless numbers of tourists who have had accidents, got stuck, crashed their cars etc... and that this willingness to help others access Aspiring National Park has never wavered in spite of the numbers of people who leave gates open and don't show respect for the land or people working the land.

Finally I have to thank the Aspinalls for their foresight in gifting their family home into an outdoors centre. Generations of Central Otago students have benefited from the facility and because of that I believe many have become better citizens and stewards for our outdoor heritage.

Eric Schusser   
Head of Department Outdoor Education

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## Submission 7



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7

David Payton  
Tenure Review Contract Manager  
Opus International Consultants Limited  
Private Bag 1913  
Dunedin, 9016



**FOREST  
& BIRD  
Dunedin Branch**

PO Box 5793  
Dunedin

20.4.09

Dear Sir,

I enclose these submissions on the preliminary proposal for Mt Aspiring Pastoral Lease on behalf of the Dunedin Branch of Forest and Bird.

Thankyou for the opportunity to make submissions on this proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Ledingham".

Janet Ledingham  
For the Management Committee of the Dunedin Branch, Forest and Bird Protection Society

Email [jlendingham@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jlendingham@xtra.co.nz)  
622 Highgate, Maori Hill, Dunedin 9010.  
Phone 03 467 2960

## **Submission on the Preliminary Proposal for Mt Aspiring Pastoral Lease**

### **On behalf of the Dunedin Branch Forest and Bird Management Committee.**

This submission is written on behalf of the Dunedin Branch of the Forest and Bird Protection Society which has approximately 565 members, many with strong interests in the High Country values and recreational opportunities as well as in botany and natural history in general. Many of the members enjoy active recreation in the back country and are very aware of the need to ensure the protection of natural values, vegetation and landscape, historical sites and to improve public access through the tenure review process.

The submission is written with reference to the objectives of tenure review as set out in the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998, and the recently stated government objectives for the South Island high country, especially the following:-

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

### **Introduction**

The Mt Aspiring lease borders the Mt Aspiring National park and this review is clearly an important one as it is likely to result in welcome additions to the Park. The significant inherent values of the lease are well described in the Conservation Resources Report (CRR) and in the proposal document.

### **The proposal:**

#### **Land to be restored to Crown Control**

**2.1. Conservation Areas, CA 2, CA 4 and CA 5.** An area of approximately 613.5 hectares in all to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as conservation area pursuant to Section 35(2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

##### **2.1.1 Conservation Area CA 2**

CA2 consists of 3 discrete blocks totalling about 572ha backing onto Mt Aspiring National Park on the true left of the Matukituki River. These areas have been un-grazed, and will remain so. However we submit that the bush edges of CA2 where they march with CC1 could be at risk from cattle incursions in particular since there is no fencing to exclude stock. We ask that monitoring be put in place to detect any damage that might occur, particularly from cattle. If such damage does occur consideration should be given to restrict the grazing in CC1 to sheep only.

Vegetation is dominated by beech forest, and occasional Hall's totara with regenerating beech in isolated areas which have been disturbed by fire, and with shrublands throughout. There are also cushionfield communities on the outwash fans. Two threatened species, *Olearia hectorii* and *Pachycladon cheesemanii* are present.

The area has a high level of naturalness blending into the adjacent National Park and forms an important part of the Matukituki Valley landscape.

*We fully support the creation of CA2 for all the values outlined in the proposal. We suggest that monitoring of the bush edges be put in place to detect any damage from cattle incursions from CCI.*

#### **2.1.2 Conservation Area CA 4**

CA4 covers the Raspberry Flat road-end parking and facility area.

*We fully support the recognition of this area as a CA since it is the main starting point for many tramping and other activities in the West Matukituki Valley*

#### **2.1.3 Conservation Area CA 5**

CA5 consists of 40ha on the grassy flats beside the Matukituki River between Cascade Hut and Aspiring Hut. It is the natural entrance to the National Park at this point and it is entirely appropriate that it be secured as a CA.

**2.2 An area of approximately 6,970 hectares (CA 1 and CA 3) to be restored to Crown control as conservation area pursuant to Section 35(2)(b)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to qualified designations.**

This proposal covers two CAs, both subject to qualified designations in the form of grazing concessions.

#### **2.2.1 Conservation Area CA 1.**

This area is known as the Mill Creek block and is completely surrounded by existing public conservation land. The whole area has also been recognised as an 'area of significant landscape value'.

The block, which is mainly above the treeline, ranges in altitude from about 600m in the west near the East Matukituki to 2,165m on Dragonfly Peak. The ecological and recreational values and indeed all the significant inherent values are well described in the proposal and the CRR.

*There is no doubt that the entire Mill Creek block should be returned to full Crown ownership and control as a Conservation Area and we support the creation of CA1 unreservedly though feel the grazing concession terms should be shortened considerably*

#### **Qualified Designations:**

**2.2.1 (a) The proposed conservation area CA 1 will be subject to a grazing concession (GC 1 Mill Creek) in favour of Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

This concession covers about 650ha in the lower reaches of both branches of Mill Creek and is stated to provide for phase-out summer grazing for 250 steers for 4 months over a 10 year period. We note from the CRR and from a recent inspection by Upper Clutha Forest and Bird members that cattle damage is present in places, pugging and deeply entrenched tracking damage and little regeneration on the forest margins. We consider that the proposed stocking rate is unlikely to have detrimental effects on other vegetation but strongly suggest that monitoring provisions should be included in the concession conditions so that the grazing regime can be modified if detrimental effects are demonstrated.

*We feel that a 5 year phase-out period would be desirable rather than 10 years and that provision for formal vegetation monitoring, both baseline and then at regular intervals should be included in the conditions.*

#### **Qualified Designations:**

**2.2.1 (b) The proposed conservation area CA 1 will be subject to a grazing concession (GC 2 Cattle Face) in favour of Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

This concession covers about 180ha on the Cattle Face between bush line and about 1,100m on the western face of the Mill Creek Block. It will provide for phase-out winter grazing for 180 steers for 6 months over a 10 year period, and 100 steers for a further 5 years. We have some concern that this stocking rate could adversely affect the vegetation and will delay its recovery from past adverse effects of burning and grazing and submit that 10 years should be the maximum limit for this concession..

Since the upper boundary appears to be un-fenced, we believe that the stock are unlikely to be confined to the permitted grazing area on Cattle Face and therefore request that monitoring of the tussock grasslands should also be carried out and added to the management prescription in Schedule 3 which covers vegetation monitoring.

**2.2.1 (c) The proposed conservation area CA 1 will be subject to a recreation concession (RC) in favour of Trilane Industries Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

We do not believe that the recreation permit to Trilane Industries for a mountain lodge at about 1,750m on the Albert Burn Saddle should ever have been approved and we consider that it would be entirely inappropriate to grant a new Conservation Concession within the proposed CA1. It should simply expire when the tenure review is completed. The associated aircraft movements associated with the enterprise are intrusive and unacceptable in such country,

*We do not support this recreation concession.*

#### **2.2.2 Conservation Area CA 3**

CA 3 is 2,000ha in all on the southern side of the West Matukituki extending from Mt Tyndall to Glenfinnan Peak in the East. It has been mostly un-grazed as it has a large area of alpine and sub-alpine zones. The characteristics of the vegetation and the extent of recreational opportunities have been well described in the proposal and the CRR. It has outstanding landscape values.

*We unreservedly support the creation of CA3*

**2.2.2 (a) Qualified Designation: granting of a concession (GC 3) in favour of the holder of the proposed freehold.**

**That the proposed Conservation Area CA 3 will be subject to a grazing concession (GC 3) in favour of the holder of the proposed freehold pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

The Upper Matukituki Faces Grazing Concession (GC 3) covers some 200ha and includes several discrete parcels of land over the lower portion of Conservation Area CA3, adjacent to proposed freehold land on the valley floor. We note the provision in Schedule 3 (the Management

Prescription document) to reduce grazing levels should monitoring indicate adverse effects are occurring, but feel that the monitoring provisions outlined in Schedule 3, point '4' (*Monitoring will be limited to periodic inspections by staff, consultation with the concessionaires and observations by the public*) are not sufficient given the 30 year term for this concession.

It is stated in the proposal document under '2.2.2' that merinos are to be excluded as they are a breed more likely to drift beyond the freehold boundary, but we cannot see this fact included in the concession document, **Appendix 6, Grazing Concession 3 - Upper Matukitiki Faces.**

*We accept the reasons for the inclusion of this grazing concession to cover stock drift since there is no fencing proposed to prevent this. The fact that merinos are to be excluded should be stated in the Concession document and the provisions for monitoring should be more comprehensive.*

### **2.3. Land to be disposed of by freehold disposal to Mt Aspiring Company Ltd. Subject to Protective mechanisms**

**An area of approximately 2091 hectares to be disposed of by freehold disposal to Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to Part IVA Conservation Act 1987, Section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991 and protective mechanisms.**

The area proposed for freehold includes the Valley flats and lower slopes from the Homestead up the West Branch of the Matukituki River to Cascade Hut, flats in the East Branch of the Matukituki River up to and including Glacier Burn.

*We accept that most of the area proposed for freeholding is likely to be capable of supporting ecologically sustainable pastoral use and do not believe that this is likely to affect the outstanding landscape values of the Valley.*

#### **Protective Mechanisms:**

**The proposed freehold is subject to protective mechanisms being conservation covenants pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

**2.3.1 An area of approximately 1,160ha (CC 1) is to be subject to a Conservation Covenant pursuant to Section 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

This area covers includes all the valley flats, fans and lower slopes in the West Branch of the Matukituki River West Branch and, in the East Branch 50ha in the vicinity of Glacier Burn. The covenants will to protect the landscape values from inappropriate use and development, and protect isolated pockets of indigenous vegetation on the flats and in steep gullies on the lower slopes of the land from being cleared.

We note that, as the boundary of CC1 on the true left of the Matukituki River is shared with both CA2 and with the National Park that the beech forest may be at risk of damage, particularly from wandering cattle. We think it is important that stock, particularly cattle, are excluded from both CA2 and the present National Park and submit that sheep grazing only should be specified under this covenant prescription to protect the beech forest margins.

*We endorse the creation of this covenant and note the comprehensive nature of the description of the values and the conditions in schedule 1. We submit that sheep grazing only should be permitted in the area where the boundary abuts the beech forest of the National Park and CA2.*

**2.3.2 An area of approximately 2.3ha is to be subject to a Conservation Covenant (CC 2) pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(c) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

This enclosed covenant covers a small area on the true right of the Matukituki River opposite the Otago Boys Bridge and will protect the threatened *Olearia hectorii* and will also enhance the *Olearia* community by recruiting new trees and associated species, We commend the provision of public access for the purpose of education about this species.

*We endorse this covenant and note and commend the comprehensive nature of the descriptions and conditions in schedule .,*

**Protective Mechanism: Proposed easement for public and conservation management access.**

**2.3.3 The proposed freehold is subject to a protective mechanism being easements pursuant to Sections 40(2)(b) and (c) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 for public and conservation management access over the following routes:- "a-b", "c-d", "e-f", "c-g", "h-i", "j-k", "l-m", "n-o", "p-q", "r-s" and "t-u" on the plan.**


*We endorse the provision of these easements for public and conservation access.*

**2.3.4 The proposed freehold is subject to a protective mechanism being an easement pursuant to Sections 40 (1)(b) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to convey water and for management purposes.**

*We endorse this easement.*

**We look forward to the completion of this tenure revue and welcome the potential additions to the Mt Aspiring National Park that are likely to result from it.**

We would like to thank the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Proposal of this pastoral lease and John and Sue Aspinall for giving Forest and Bird members permission to inspect the lease.

  
Janet Ledingham,

For the Management Committee of the Dunedin Branch, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

## **Submission 8**

8

**TENURE REVIEW Po231 MT ASPIRING  
UPPER CLUTHA TRACKS TRUST SUBMISSION**

To: David Peyton,  
Tenure Review Contract Manager,  
Opus International Consultants Ltd.,  
Private Bag 1913,  
Dunedin.



**NAME:**  
Upper Clutha Tracks Trust  
C/o John Wellington  
272 Ballantyne Rd  
RD2  
Wanaka 9382

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE/POSTAL ADDRESS:**  
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**MT ASPIRING TENURE REVIEW PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL**

The property is Pastoral Lease land, being Part Run 715, Run 773 and Part Run 458 being all the land in the Instrument of Title OT386/143.

**The Preliminary Proposal provides for:**

1. An area of approximately 613.5 ha. To be restored to or retained in full Crown ownership and control as a conservation area pursuant to section 35 (2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998. These are labelled CA2, CA4 & CA5 in the plan.
2. An area of approximately 6970 ha. To be restored to Crown control as a conservation area pursuant to section 35 (2)(b)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998, subject to qualified designations. These are labelled CA1 and in the plan.
3. An area of approximately 2091 ha to be disposed of by freehold disposal to the Holder pursuant to section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to protective mechanisms.
4. **Protective mechanisms:** Three conservation covenant areas of approximately 2091 ha, 1160 ha and 2.3 ha. Proposed easements for public and conservation management access.

Easement "a-b" provides foot, non motorised vehicle and vehicle access to the Cameron Flat car park at Point "b"

Easement "c-d, e-f, c-g, h-i and j-k" provides foot and non motorised vehicle access along the valley floor of both East and West branches of the Matukituki River. Route "h-i" is a high river route to the East Matukituki Valley from the Otago Boys High School footbridge at "h".

Easement "l-m, n-o, p-q, r-s, and t-u" provides for foot only access. These are mainly the steep tracks branching off the main valley. Section "n-o" provides access to Wishbone Falls from a car park at "u".



## **THE UPPER CLUTHA TRACKS TRUST**

The Upper Clutha Tracks Trust's objects are

"to promote, support, fund and advocate for the establishment of:

- 1 a functional interconnected network of tracks for walking, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, horse riding, roller skating, and any similar recreational leisure activities in the Upper Clutha area, whenever such trails will contribute to the social, cultural, environmental or economic wellbeing of residents or visitors to the District.
- 2 the roading network for commuter and recreational road cycling.

The Trust also endorses, and works to achieve the QLDC strategy for Walking and Cycling in the Upper Clutha Basin.

The stated goals of the Strategy are

- 1 Make Walking and cycling an attractive and safe option for getting around the Upper Clutha area
- 2 Promote the opportunities for walking and cycling in Upper Clutha.
- 3 Ensure that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are always fully taken into account in the Council's land use and transport planning, recreation planning, urban design, engineering and land development process.
- 4 Deliver a consistent approach to walkways in the Upper Clutha by working in partnership with other landowners agencies and interested parties.

The first goal states further the objective

1. To continue to expand the walking and cycling infrastructure network in the Upper Clutha area using this strategy as guidance, but also responding to emerging needs and opportunities.

## **THE UPPER CLUTHA TRACKS TRUST SUBMISSION:**

The Trust regards the creation of the proposed Conservation Area as an important addition to the Conservation Estate in the area, offering important heritage, biodiversity and recreational values.

In line with Trust objectives, the following submission deals only with issues of access to the proposed area.

### **A. Proposed Easements:**

The Preliminary Proposal provides for easements to provide access to the proposed Conservation area and Mt Aspiring National Park. The easements provide for both public access and management purposes.


The Trust supports all the easements proposed and believes that these provide good access to the adjoining land managed by the Department of Conservation on the public's behalf.

The Trust notes that the easement wording in clause 2.1 has been amended to remove reference to horses. The Trust is not clear if this amendment is just a technical adjustment or whether the intention is to prevent access to the public on horseback.

The Trust supports non motorised access including horse riding and believes that these easements should not preclude this access.

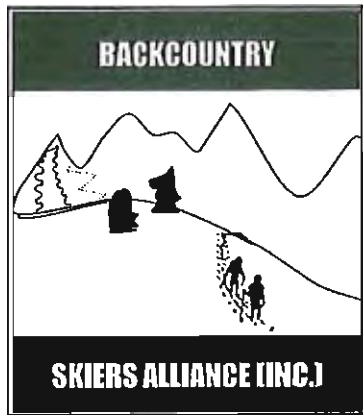
The Trust also notes that easements "l-m", "p-q" and "t-u" are subject to a 3 week closure period in October for Lambing. It is further noted that the right to review the closure of route 't-u' after 10 years has been retained by the Crown. The Trust believes that this right of review should apply to all three easements.

The Trust would also comment that the Leaseholder has always been generous with access over the leasehold land which is appreciated by the Trust and local population. As a consequence of this goodwill the Trust believes that the access resulting from the review process is a good result for the public, and importantly secures this access should a future landowner have a negative view on public access.

Signed:   
JOHN WELLINGTON  
Trustee

Date: 19/4/09

## Submission 9



9

**Backcountry Skiers Alliance**  
**PO Box 168**  
**Alexandra**  
**Email: backcountry@xtra.co.nz**



16<sup>th</sup> April 2009

OPUS International Consultants  
Private Bag 1913  
Dunedin  
Attn: David Payton

**Submission on Preliminary Tenure Review MT ASPIRING Po 231**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Our members are regular users of MANP including both branches of the Matukituki valley and other lands within or nearby Mt Aspiring Station.

Our members are concerned about the possibility of uncontrolled development on any newly freeholded lands adjacent to Mt Aspiring National Park, or adjacent to the new conservation areas created as a result of the preliminary tenure review. Development, such as subdivision and retail, close to the park entrance would greatly devalue the recreational experience of park visitors.

Similarly we continue to be concerned about tourism concessions within conservation lands, in particular those involving motorised access. The increasing use of aircraft and helicopters for commercial activity is destroying any sense of remoteness within our parks.

Specific points pertinent to the Aspiring review include the following:

**CA1**

We believe that the lodge on the Albertburn saddle must be removed and the recreational concession not be granted. The lodge sits above the east Matukituki valley, which is the remoter and quieter of the two branches. The east branch, especially beyond the Glacier Burn sees fewer visitors, and is undeveloped compared to the west branch. Tramping tracks become increasingly challenging beyond the farmland, quickly becoming routes only. There are no huts. The lodge is directly opposite a point halfway along Bledsloe gorge. This is the high traverse route between Junction and Ruth flats, a remote tramping experience which would be hugely devalued by helicopter traffic.

The Department of Conservation in their Draft Mt Aspiring Plan also designate the east branch as remote. The lodge is right on park boundary and it is entirely appropriate that the remote zone will move eastwards to cover the headwaters of the Albert Burn itself.

Furthermore the Department of Conservation Guidance on Significant Inherent Values and Related Matters under the Tenure Review Programme Crown Pastoral Lands Act 1118 (CPLA) standard 83 refers to the Department's Statement of Intent which "has an intermediate outcome of "A range of quality recreation opportunities is available". "The concept of a range of opportunities is that different recreation opportunities will be provided for in different settings in different places. It is inherent in the idea of quality recreation opportunities that incompatible activities will be separated".

The Department's Statement of Intent 2008-2011 states that they will provide "A range of quality recreation opportunities, consistent with the protection of conservation values...in areas managed by the department, and promoted so that all New Zealanders have the opportunity to derive benefits from them".

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**BSA is an Incorporated Society with members throughout New Zealand. The objectives of the Society are first, to foster non-motorised winter recreation in backcountry areas; and second, to promote and protect the resources upon which our members activities are based.**

The commercial lodge, along with helicopter flights (2 x 200 flights per year, 2 x 3 per day) are activities incompatible with the recreational opportunities in the remote setting of the east branch. The lodge would appear to be largely for private accommodation. If this is true, its presence is at odds with Conservation General Policy which is clear that such facilities should be phased out.

We accept the grazing concessions and terms so long as unrestricted foot access remains available to the public all year round.

**CA2**

This section provides a useful mountain bike route from the footbridge and eastwards to the old homestead. When the river is low a loop could include crossing at the tractor ford and back to the road. We believe this track should be promoted as a biking (and walking) route. Extension of the bike route into CC1 and to "f" is allowed for but we suggest the biking is stopped at "d". Although biking stops at the park boundary this may otherwise be difficult to police.

Of course should CA2 be added to MANP then the issue of MTBs within the park is raised.

**CA3**

We would want the foot easements through the lower freehold to be clearly marked and signposted. Access must be year-round.

**CA5**

Again the merits of allowing/promoting mountain bike access beyond the legal road ("k") and to the park boundary need to be discussed. BSA agrees that biking must definitely stop at or before Aspiring hut.

**Various Foot Access Easements**

Access must be all year round. Adequate signage needs to be erected at all access routes. Adequate parking space needs to be created.

**Other Concessions**

There is no need to further encourage concessions. BSA opposes any new concessions that involve motorised access (generally helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft, or vehicular).

**Freehold land use**

Mt Aspiring station is the gateway to MANP. We believe that few New Zealanders would want to see development in the Matukituki valley and as such it is inappropriate to grant unfettered freehold of the property. At the very least there should be covenants over any land that is to be freeholded to control subdivision and development. The District plan and RMA cannot be relied on to prevent inappropriate development and the Crown should not give away its rights to do so over any part of this property.

Overseas experience has shown the periphery of national parks often get built up. The park buffer zone is an equally sensitive landscape as is the lakeside zone where the bar has been raised very high for free holding (in terms of landscape protection). The tenure review could identify a discrete development zone where some limited future development could be absorbed and protect the rural nature of the balance of the freehold under a landscape covenant.

**Conclusion**

BSA supports the preliminary tenure review only if adequate steps are taken to protect and enhance the recreational experiences for the majority of visitors users who simply wish to walk, tramp or ski in the natural quiet that the land has to offer.

Yours Sincerely

John Robinson  
Secretary, BSA



## **Submission 10**



FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc.)

P.O. Box 1604, Wellington

10



20 April 2009

The Commissioner of Crown Lands
C/- Opus International Consultants Limited
Private Bag 1913
DUNEDIN, 9016

Dear Sir,

Re: Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review: Mt Aspiring Station Pastoral Lease (Po 231)

I write on behalf of Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc. (FMC) which represents some 13,000 members of tramping, mountaineering, climbing and other outdoor clubs throughout New Zealand. We also indirectly represent the interests and concerns of many thousands of private individuals who may not currently be members of clubs but who enjoy recreation in the back country.

On their behalf, FMC aims to enhance recreation opportunities, to protect natural values, especially landscape and vegetation, and to improve public access to the back country through the tenure review process.

FMC fully supports the objectives of tenure review as set out in the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998, and the more recently stated government objectives for the South Island high country especially the following:-

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

[EDC Min (03) 5/3; CAB Min (03) 11/5 refer]

FMC appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Proposal for the review of Mt Aspiring Station.

For your information we attach as an appendix to this submission, the report which FMC prepared on the tenure review of Mt Aspiring Station in May 2005, at the 'Early Warning' stage of the tenure review process.

THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL

FMC notes that the proposed designations are described as follows:-

General description of the proposal:

- An area of approximately 613.5 hectares (consisting of Conservation Areas CA 2, CA 4 and CA 5) to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as conservation area pursuant to Section 35(2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.
2. An area of approximately 6,970 hectares (consisting of Conservation Areas CA 1 and CA 3) to be restored to Crown control as conservation area pursuant to Section 35(2)(b)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to qualified designations.
2.1 Qualified Designations:

The proposed conservation area is a qualified designation being subject to grazing concessions (GC 1 and GC 2) in favour of Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

The proposed conservation area is a qualified designation being subject to a recreation concession (RC) in favour of Trilane Industries Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

3. An area of approximately 2,091 hectares to be disposed of by freehold disposal to Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to Part IVA Conservation Act 1987, Section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991 and protective mechanisms.

Protective Mechanisms:

3.1 The proposed freehold is subject to protective mechanisms (CC 1 and CC 2) being conservation covenants pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

3.2 The proposed freehold is subject to protective mechanisms being easements pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(c) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to provide public access to the proposed conservation areas.

3.3 The proposed freehold is subject to protective mechanisms being easements pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to provide conservation management access to the proposed conservation areas.

3.4 The proposed freehold is subject to a protective mechanism being an easement pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to convey water and for management purposes.

INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that FMC provided a Report in May 2005, following the Early Warning meeting related to properties introduced in 2004. That Report was entitled "*Preliminary Report on the Recreational, Landscape, Historic and other Conservation Values and Recommendations for the Outcomes of Tenure Review MOUNT ASPIRING STATION.*" For your information a copy of the text of that report is appended to this submission.

Mt Aspiring Station 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.

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. FMC is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to this Review.

In the FMC Report (2005) a number of recommendations were made including the following:-

*"The landscapes and views to be had from the valleys and vantage points within this property are outstanding and deserve recognition and protection.*

*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.*

*The Mill Creek block (about 4,300ha of mainly Class VIII land) cannot be managed in an ecologically sustainable way because of its very severe limitations for pastoral use.*



*Most of the generally north facing slopes above about 1,000m have 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. There is a case for these steep slopes to be returned to full Crown ownership and control.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*It is also recommended that a camping and car park area should be designated at Camerons Flat as a Recreation Reserve.*

*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 Shotover Saddle to Tyndall Stream and the Shotover. Recommendations are given for secure public foot access over five such routes for foot travel and one for vehicle access."*

FMC is pleased to note that a number of these recommendations have flowed through to formal proposals in the present Preliminary Proposal document. Where recommendations have been heeded, this will be acknowledged in the submissions that follow.

## **FMC SUBMISSIONS**

The details of FMC views on, and support for, or objections to, the Preliminary Proposal are presented below and are arranged in the same format as the Preliminary Proposal quoted above, with numbering as in the Preliminary Proposal document.

### **General description of the proposal:**

**2.1. An area of approximately 613.5 hectares (CA 2, CA 4 and CA 5) to be restored to full Crown ownership and control as conservation area pursuant to Section 35(2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

**2.1.1 The proposed Conservation Area CA 2** consists of 3 discrete blocks totalling about 572ha adjacent to Mt Aspiring National Park on the true left of the Matukituki River. We understand that these areas are currently ungrazed, and will remain so.

Vegetation is dominated by beech forest, and in places regenerating beech, with shrublands throughout. There are also cushionfield communities on the outwash fans.

The area has a high level of naturalness blending into the adjacent National Park and forms an important part of the Matukituki Valley landscape. This area is characterised by steep topography and dense bush which is not conducive to extensive recreational use. However, there are many other parts of this proposal which do offer recreational opportunities and this area (CA 2) contributes importantly to the landscape which forms the gateway into Mt Aspiring National Park.

FMC is however, concerned about potential damage to bush edges of the CA 2 areas where they abut onto areas designated CC 1. We submit that this threat requires to be monitored and mitigation measures (such as fencing or restricting grazing to sheep only) should be applied if warranted: (see Section CC 1 below).

**2.1.2 The proposed Conservation Area CA 4** covers only about 1.5ha and corresponds to the area recommended in the FMC Report (2005) for recognition as a Recreation Reserve on Raspberry Flat. This area provides road-end facilities including a carpark and extra land for expansion as required.

FMC acknowledges that this area and the facilities it provides will improve visitor enjoyment of the proposed Conservation Areas and adjoining National Park.

**2.1.3 The proposed Conservation Area CA 5** covers some 40ha on the grassy flats beside the Matukituki River between Cascade Hut and Aspiring Hut. It forms the natural entrance to the National Park and is currently an incongruous finger of leasehold land penetrating into the park.

FMC is pleased that this narrow strip of semi-natural pastureland will become conservation land and should in future be free of the unpleasant consequences of cattle grazing. This proposal should also prevent cattle wandering into the bush edges of the National Park beyond Cascade Hut because of the new fencing which is proposed.

#### **FMC submission**

*FMC fully supports and strongly endorses the proposal that the areas marked on the Plan as CA 2, CA 4, and CA 5 should be restored to full Crown ownership and control as Conservation Area.*

*We submit that provision should be made for monitoring potential damage to bush edges of CA 2, and that provision should also be made for mitigation measures to be applied if warranted by monitoring.*

**2.2 An area of approximately 6,970 hectares (CA 1 and CA 3) to be restored to Crown control as conservation area pursuant to Section 35(2)(b)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to qualified designations.**

This proposal covers two areas, proposed as Conservation Areas CA1 and CA3 respectively, each subject to qualified designations. In this submission we deal with CA1 and CA3 and their associated qualified designations under separate headings.

#### **2.2.1 Proposed Conservation Area CA 1.**

This area of about 5,000ha is generally known as the Mill Creek block and is completely surrounded by existing public conservation land. Partly for this reason it was recommended in the FMC Report (2005) that the entire area should be designated for return to full Crown ownership and control. The entire block has also been recognised as an 'area of significant landscape value'. FMC is therefore disappointed that although some 5,000ha are proposed as Conservation Area, the two branches of Mill Creek and the Cattle Face will continue to be grazed for up to 15 years. We consider this too long a period in relation to the objective of allowing the holder to modify his farming system to accommodate the consequences of tenure review and his reduced land holding.

The altitude of this block, which is mainly above the treeline, ranges from about 600m in the west to 2,165m on Dragonfly Peak. The block consists of an eastern and western side separated by the central 'spine' which is the main ridge between Mt Eostre and Dragonfly Peak. To the west of this 'spine' lie the steep and precipitous western faces which drop from an average of about 1,900m along the 'spine' to about 600m at the bush edge on the Cattle face. The eastern half of the block includes both branches of Mill Creek as well as the headwaters of the Albert Burn and Minaret Creek. The Mill Creek catchment includes two deeply incised U-shaped valleys which rise from about 1,000m to more than 1,900m in the top basins of the east and west branches of Mill Creek.

The eastern part of the block includes a rich diversity of plant communities. These communities range from the pasturelands and ephemeral wetland communities of the valley floors through the tussock grassland communities, interrupted by shrublands and mountain flax communities on steep rocky bluffs, to the snowbank and herbfield communities in the top basins and the cushionfield and fellfield communities of the high alpine zone above about 1,800m. These communities constitute magnificent altitudinal sequences of ecological systems from valley floor to mountain top.

It was these special features which persuaded FMC that the entire Mill Creek block should be returned to full Crown ownership and control as a Conservation Area. The area also has significant inherent values which provide wonderful settings for a range of recreational activities including tramping, climbing, ski-touring and other kinds of recreation possible in a remote alpine environment such as the more passive pursuits of photography and studying ecology. This setting is also a superb landscape in its own right and also provides magnificent landscape views when seen from Mt Aspiring and other peaks adjacent to the Matukituki Valley.

**FMC submission**

*FMC fully supports and strongly endorses the proposal that the area marked on the Plan as CA 1 (Mill Creek) should be restored to Crown control as Conservation Area. We look forward to the time when this area will be free of grazing and recreation concessions, and will be a worthy candidate for addition to Mt Aspiring National park.*

**Qualified Designations:**

**2.2.1 (a)** The proposed conservation area CA 1 will be subject to a grazing concession (GC 1 Mill Creek) in favour of Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

FMC understands that this proposed concession covers some 650ha in the lower reaches of both branches of Mill Creek. It will provide for phase-out summer grazing for 250 steers for 4 months over a 10 year period. We calculate that this stocking rate is equivalent to between 0.5 and 0.6 SU per ha per annum.

We do not believe that this modest stocking rate is likely to do a great deal of ecological damage, but we do believe that monitoring will be required to confirm this, or to modify the grazing regime if the results of monitoring warrant such action.

We recommend that the conditions of the Concession should include vegetation condition monitoring and provide the Minister with discretionary powers to reduce or cancel the grazing concession if necessary. We question the need for a phase-out period as long as 10 years to achieve the objective of allowing the holder to modify his farming system to adapt to the reduced land area resulting from tenure review. We would prefer a shorter period (say 5 years) which would allow the native communities an earlier start to their recovery from past adverse effects of burning and grazing.

**FMC submission**

*FMC accepts the need for phase-out grazing but would prefer a shorter period (say 5 years) which would allow the native communities to start earlier on their recovery path from past adverse effects of burning and grazing. We are not convinced that the permitted summer grazing stocking rate of about 0.5 to 0.6 SU per ha per annum will not cause any ecological damage and recommend that provision for vegetation condition monitoring should be included in the conditions of the Concession. Furthermore, we submit that the Minister should have discretionary power to modify or terminate the grazing concession should this be warranted by the results of monitoring.*

**Qualified Designations:**

**2.2.1 (b)** The proposed conservation area CA 1 will be subject to a grazing concession (GC 2 Cattle Face) in favour of Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

FMC understands that this proposed concession covers some 180ha on the area known as Cattle Face between bush line and about 1,100m on the western face of the Mill Creek Block. It will provide for phase-out winter grazing for 180 steers for 6 months over a 10 year period, and 100 steers for a further 5 years. We calculate that the initial stocking rate is equivalent to about 2.5 SU per ha per annum. We are concerned that this stocking rate for winter grazing may have adverse ecological effects on the vegetation on the Cattle Face and will certainly delay its recovery from past adverse effects of burning and grazing.

We note that the Concession includes a Management Prescription (Schedule 3) which provides for vegetation condition monitoring. We recommend that the Management prescription should also provide the Minister with discretionary powers to reduce or cancel the grazing regime if monitoring results warrant such action.

We do not understand the logic of the argument that the longer term concession on the Cattle Face compared with Mill Creek is reflective of the higher component of introduced pasture species and reduced diversity of ecological values. We would have thought that this might be an argument for the earlier termination of the concession, and the start of native vegetation recovery from past adverse effects. We submit that a total of 10 years maximum should be allowed to achieve the objective of allowing the holder to adjust his farming system to the new land holding following the completion of tenure review, with a reduction in the stocking rate part way through this period to enhance the regeneration process.

We question how the stock will be confined to the permitted grazing area on Cattle Face when the upper boundary appears to be unfenced. We submit that monitoring of the tussock grasslands should also be carried out and the Minister be granted powers to take appropriate action if necessary.

#### FMC submission

*FMC accepts the need for phase-out grazing but would prefer a shorter period (say maximum of 10 years with a part-way reduction in stocking rate). This would allow the native communities to start earlier on their recovery path from past adverse effects of burning and grazing (ie regeneration).*

*We are concerned that the permitted winter grazing stocking rate of about 2.5 SU per ha per annum may cause ecological damage. We note that vegetation condition monitoring is included in the Management Prescription, but submit that the Minister should have discretionary power to modify or terminate the grazing concession should this be warranted by the results of monitoring.*

*We note that there appears to be no means of confining the stock to the consented area. We submit that condition of the tussock grasslands above Cattle Face should be monitored and that the Minister should have discretionary powers to deal with wandering stock if environmental damage is shown to occur.*

#### **2.2.1 (c) The proposed conservation area CA 1 will be subject to a recreation concession (RC) in favour of Trilane Industries Limited pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

FMC was known to be opposed from the outset to the granting of a recreation permit to Trilane Industries for a mountain lodge at about 1,750m on the Albert Burn Saddle. FMC continues to be opposed to this permission and considers that it would be entirely inappropriate to grant a new Conservation Concession when the surrounding area becomes part of Conservation Area CA 1 on the Albertburn Saddle below Dragonfly Peak.

It is our understanding that it is normal for recreation permits over pastoral lease land to expire when the outcomes of tenure review change the status of the land over which the permit applies. For example, the Recreation Permit granted to R and S Brown of Cairnmuir Station to operate a Skidoo Concession over part of Carrick Station would be extinguished upon completion of tenure review of Carrick Station. It would only be continued if a new Recreation Concession was granted by DOC which would then be the manager of the new Conservation Area. Similarly, Trilane Industries would require a new Recreation Concession from DOC to maintain the Whare Kea Lodge on the Albertburn saddle if and when it becomes part of the new Conservation Area CA 1. FMC would be strongly opposed to any such granting of a new Recreation Concession to Trilane Industries.

**FMC submission**

*FMC was opposed to the granting of a recreation permit to Trilane Industries to operate Whare Kea Lodge on the Albert Burn Saddle when it was pastoral lease land. FMC notes that this permit will expire when land tenure changes as an outcome of tenure review. FMC will continue to be strongly opposed to the granting of any new recreation Concession by DOC to continue to operate Whare Kea Lodge on the new Conservation Area CA 1 in the Mill Creek Block.*

**2.2.2 Conservation Area CA 3**

The proposed Conservation Area CA 3 covers some 1,970ha on the slopes above the true right of the West Branch of the Matukituki River, extending from Mt Tyndall to Glenfinnan Peak, above the Mt Aspiring homestead. Much of this proposed conservation area is situated in the sub-alpine and alpine zones and includes many peaks above 2,000m. The area generally runs down to about 1,000m and is largely ungrazed. The boundary extends down in places to include shrublands around riparian areas. The lower boundary of CA 3 generally follows the lower limit of indigenous vegetation and the upper limit of grazed and improved pasturelands but there are exceptions to this generalisation.

Vegetation communities within this area range from riparian shrublands at lower elevations, patches of remnant beech forest, shrublands, and subalpine shrublands in incised gullies, extensive tussock grasslands stretching up to the subalpine zone which is characterised by herbfield, cushionfield, and fellfield communities among bare rock and scree at the highest elevations above 2,000m.

The area covers almost 2,000ha and includes a wide variety of significant habitats and distinctive ecosystems such as alpine fellfield, flush zones, bog and snow-bank communities. It is outstanding for its range of mountain bio-diversity and superb landscape features.

It is also an area of outstanding recreational value with great opportunities for climbing, tramping, ski touring and more passive activities such as fishing, photography, painting and scientific study. The area is rich in its own opportunities but also leads to other recreational opportunities on adjacent conservation land including the National Park, and Black Peak and Shotover Conservation Areas.

The area includes the landmark alpine peaks: Mt Tyndall (2,465m), Red Rock (1,858m) and Glenfinnan Peak (1,890m) while well known climbing peaks Craigroyston (2,211m), Sharks Tooth (2,096m) and Fog Peak (2,240m) are very close to the southern boundary of this proposed Conservation Area on Mt Aspiring land. We endorse the statement in the proposal document that "*the context of the broader landscape setting represents what is often described as an iconic high country landscape of fluvial-glacial created landscapes and natural vegetation*".

**FMC submission**

*FMC enthusiastically supports and strongly endorses the proposal that the area marked on the Plan as CA 3 should be restored to Crown control as Conservation Area. We believe that the landscape, mountain biodiversity values and recreational opportunities of this area are simply outstanding. Much of this area is of such high quality that it should undoubtedly be added to Mt Aspiring National Park. The only difficulty will be in defining the lower boundary of the area to be incorporated into the National Park.*

**2.2.2 (a) Qualified Designation: granting of a concession (GC 3) in favour of the holder of the proposed freehold.**

That the proposed Conservation Area CA 3 will be subject to a grazing concession (GC 3) in favour of the holder of the proposed freehold pursuant to Section 36(1)(a) of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

FMC understands that the Upper Matukituki Faces Grazing Concession (GC 3) covers some 200ha and includes several discrete parcels of land over the lower portion of Conservation Area CA 3, adjacent to proposed freehold land on the valley floor. One of these parcels of land consists of a narrow contour band across the faces below the Shotover Saddle at about 1,100m. The other areas are smaller parcels along the interface between the proposed freehold land and Conservation Area CA 3.

We understand that these concession areas are intended to provide a buffer between the proposed areas of freehold and conservation land. We accept that this buffer zone is necessary because we agree that contour fencing of the lower boundary of the Conservation Area is not a practical proposition. Furthermore, we understand and accept the logic which underpins the permission to graze ewes, lambs, rams and hoggets with no restriction on the time of the year. However, we are concerned that some grazing stock may wander further up the slopes than is intended. A change of sheep breed to Merino, or a marked increase in stocking rate could encourage greater uphill migration of stock so we believe it would be wise to monitor the movement of sheep on these faces. We note that merino sheep seem to be excluded from this concession area in the proposal document but there is no specific exclusion of Merinos in the management prescription (Schedule 3). If there is a trend for greater uphill migration there may be a case to reconsider the conditions of this concession. Provision should be made in the Concession to modify its conditions if there is a significant increase in uphill stock migration.

We note that the proposed duration of this Concession is 30 years, and we consider this excessive. We recommend a term no longer than 10 years which might be renewed for a second term of 10 years depending on the results of monitoring and the 10-year review of the management prescription.

#### **FMC submission**

*FMC accepts the need for a buffer zone between the proposed freehold and conservation areas. We also understand and accept the logic which underpins the conditions of this grazing concession. However, we are concerned about the potential threats to higher zones of native vegetation which could be posed by greater uphill migration of grazing stock. We submit that there should be provisions in the conditions of the Concession to monitor stock movements, to specifically exclude Merino sheep from the Concession area, and to modify the conditions if necessary to minimise damage to higher zones of native vegetation. The concession should be granted for a term of only 10 years in the first instance but that may be renewed for a further 10 years depending on the results of monitoring and the 10 year review of the management prescription.*

#### **2.3. Land to be disposed of by freehold disposal to Mt Aspiring Company Ltd. Subject to Protective mechanisms**

**An area of approximately 2091 hectares to be disposed of by freehold disposal to Mt Aspiring Company Limited pursuant to Section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to Part IVA Conservation Act 1987, Section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991 and protective mechanisms.**

The area proposed for freehold consists of the following components:-

- Valley flats and lower slopes from the Homestead up the West Branch of the Matukituki River to Cascade Hut.
- Valley flats in the East Branch of the Matukituki River up to and including Glacier Burn.
- About half the proposed freehold area lies between 350 and 450m.
- The other half on the western faces below CA3 extend up to 1,100m.
- In total these areas represent the best LUC Class IV and Class VI land on Mt Aspiring Station.

The FMC Report (2005) acknowledged that this land should be capable of supporting ecologically sustainable pastoral use, and therefore be suitable for freeholding. Some of the higher land on the slopes below CA 3 has been Classified LUC Class VIIe with severe limitations for pastoral use above about 1,000m. Such land is probably unsuitable for freeholding because pastoral use may be ecologically unsustainable, but we acknowledge that it is probably impossible to fence this area out of the proposed freehold area. Because of the mountainous setting of the

Matukituki Valley, the entire area has very high landscape and scenic values which are unlikely to change with freeholding because the valley is already a mix of farmed and indigenous vegetation types which creates an almost 'European' pattern of land use, with an altitudinal division between these land uses.

We also note that it is proposed to protect some individual areas of conservation value under covenant. We comment on these proposals below, together with our submissions on the provisions for public access.

**FMC submission**

*FMC accepts that most of the area proposed for freeholding is likely to be capable of supporting ecologically sustainable pastoral use so long as nutrient status is maintained by fertiliser use to replenish production removals. We recognise that there are some smaller areas which have severe limitations for pastoral use, but which are probably impossible to fence off from the area proposed for freeholding.*

**Protective Mechanisms:**

The proposed freehold is subject to protective mechanisms being conservation covenants pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

**2.3.1 An area of approximately 1,160ha (CC 1) is to be subject to a Conservation Covenant pursuant to Section 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

FMC understands that this area covers about half of the area proposed for freehold disposal, and includes all the valley flats, fans and lower slopes in the West Branch of the Matukituki River. In the East Branch the Covenant area is restricted to some 50ha in the vicinity of Glacier Burn.

We understand that the covenant is designed to protect the landscape values from inappropriate use and development, and to protect isolated pockets of indigenous vegetation on the flats and in steep gullies on the lower slopes of the land proposed for freehold disposal.

We note that the main isolated pockets of native woody vegetation have been identified and included in the Covenant document and are prohibited from being cleared.

*We note that a significant length of the upper boundary of CCI on the true left of the River is shared with the National Park or with Conservation Area CA 2, and consists of native beech forest. We are concerned about the potential damage which could be caused by stock (particularly cattle) wandering into and thrashing the edge of the bush. We recommend that the terms of the Concession should specify sheep-only grazing where there is a risk of damage to bush edges caused by grazing cattle.*

*FMC has studied the terms and conditions of this proposed covenant and note that the description of the values in Schedule 1 is much more comprehensive than most other similar documents we have seen. This is appropriate and important because if the values are not properly described, it is hard to understand how they can be adequately protected.*

We particularly note and approve of the detail provisions of Clause 9 in Schedule 2, regarding the prohibition of clearance of native woody vegetation.

**FMC submission**

*FMC respects the fact that considerable effort has been made to identify the natural values of those areas proposed for freeholding, significantly more detail than usual has been included in the definition of the values in Schedule 1, and appropriate conditions for the protection of those values are included in Schedule 2 of the Covenant document. We recommend that where there is any risk of cattle damage to the bush edge of the National Park or of Conservation Area CA 2, that the Concession should impose a condition in Schedule 2 that only grazing by sheep will be permitted.*

**2.3.2 An area of approximately 2.3ha is to be subject to a Conservation Covenant (CC 2) pursuant to Sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(c) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.**

FMC understands that this covenant covers a small area on the true right of the Matukituki River opposite the Otago Boys Bridge. This is designed to protect the threatened tree daisy (*Olearia hectorii*) and to restore the Olearia community by recruiting new trees and associated species, and to enclose the protected area.

We particularly note and respect the provision of public access for the purpose of educating the public about this species.

Just as for Conservation Covenant CC 1 above, we again note the precision with which the values are identified and described in Schedule 1, and that appropriate provision is made in Schedule 2 for the protection and enhancement of this grove of the tree daisy, *Olearia hectorii*. We further note that a management prescription document (Schedule 3) defines how the protection and enhancement will be implemented.

**FMC submission**

*FMC respects the fact that the natural value of the Olearia grove in this proposed covenant area is well defined in Schedule 1, and appropriate conditions for the protection and enhancement of this threatened species are included in Schedule 2 of the Covenant document. We also approve of the provision for public education about, and appreciation of this tree daisy. We note too that specifications are given in the management prescription document (Schedule 3) for the implementation of the protection and enhancement measures.*

**Protective Mechanism: Proposed easement for public and conservation management access.**

**2.3.3 The proposed freehold is subject to a protective mechanism being easements pursuant to Sections 40(2)(b) and (c) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 for public and conservation management access over the following routes:- "a-b", "c-d", "e-f", "c-g", "h-i", "j-k", "l-m", "n-o", "p-q", "r-s" and "t-u" on the plan.**

The specific provisions for public and management access are as follows:-

- Easement "a-b" provides foot, bike, and vehicle access to the Cameron Flat car park at "b".
- Easements "c-d", "e-f", "c-g", "h-i", "j-k", provide foot and bike access along the valley floors of both branches of the Matukituki River. Route "h-i" is a high water route to the East Branch from the Otago Boys footbridge at "h".
- Easements "l-m", "n-o", "p-q", "r-s" and "t-u" provide foot only access for steep routes branching off the main valley.

FMC understands that most easements are 10m wide, except "l-m", "p-q", "r-s" and "t-u" which are 20m wide to accommodate the possible need for track relocation in the event of creek washouts.

We further understand that route "j-k" up the West Matukituki valley to point "k" at Cascade Hut provides foot and bike access over an easement 10m wide following the old walking track and a 4WD farm track in places. We accept that this access would be perfectly acceptable most of the time. However, given that Aspiring Hut has a long and distinguished history as an NZ Alpine Club climbing hut there are requirements from time to time for wider public use requiring permission for vehicle access. It is possible that such permission might be granted by the holder on occasions when it is required but it would be preferable to have some legal provision made for such use. We envisage a possible future change in ownership when the new holders (possibly overseas owners), may not be so amenable as the Aspinalls to special purpose access to Aspiring Hut. FMC preference is definitely for occasional legal vehicle access to be permitted for special and specific one-off occasions.



FMC submission

*FMC accepts that most of these access provisions will be adequate for conservation and recreational purposes and by the public generally. However, we can envisage occasions when vehicle access to the NZ Alpine Club Aspiring Hut may be necessary for wider public events. We submit that legal access should be sought for special 'one-off' access by vehicle for certain occasional events.*

2.3.4 The proposed freehold is subject to a protective mechanism being an easement pursuant to Sections 40 (1)(b) and 40(2)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to convey water and for management purposes.

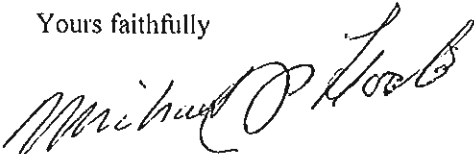
FMC understands that this easement is required to allow the continuation of activities which have not in the past been formalized in any agreement. Such activities include the provision of water from Big Creek for the toilet at Raspberry Creek road end car park, a pipeline to convey that water and for a helipad to enable the servicing of the road-end facilities.

FMC submission

*FMC accepts the need for this concession and has no objection to its designation along the line "v-w" and at point "Z".*

Finally, FMC appreciates this opportunity to comment on the tenure review of Mt Aspiring Station, and is grateful to the agent, Opus International Consulting Ltd. Ltd., for making arrangements for us to inspect the property, and the runholder for his co-operation and permission to drive to Aspiring Hut.

Yours faithfully



*pb* Phil Glasson.  
Hon Secretary, Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc.

**Simon de Lautour**

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**From:** Dave Payton [Dave.Payton@opus.co.nz]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 22 April 2009 12:50  
**To:** 'Simon de Lautour'  
**Subject:** FW: Mt Aspiring tenure review

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Mike Floate [mailto:mike.floate@extra.co.nz]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 22 April 2009 11:42 a.m.  
**To:** dave.payton@opus.co.nz  
**Cc:** tperrett@doc.govt.nz; secretary@fmc.org.nz  
**Subject:** Mt Aspiring tenure review

Good morning David

On behalf of FMC I have recently sent you a submission on the Preliminary Proposal for the tenure review of Mt Aspiring Station.

Under the heading Section 2.2.1, that submission included the following statement:

FMC was opposed to the granting of a recreation permit to Trilane Industries to operate Whare Kea Lodge on the Albert Burn Saddle when it was pastoral lease land. FMC notes that this permit will expire when land tenure changes as an outcome of tenure review. FMC will continue to be strongly opposed to the granting of any new Recreation Concession by DOC to continue to operate Whare Kea Lodge on the new Conservation Area CA 1 in the Mill Creek Block.

We wish to make it abundantly clear that FMC was, is and will continue to be strongly opposed to the granting of any concession to Trilane Industries related to the Whare Kea Lodge on the Albert Burn Saddle. We are opposed to the siting of the Lodge at this site, to its use for accommodation and guiding purposes and to the use of helicopter transport for clients or materials to and from the lodge.

We wish to make this clear now because we understand that this is the only opportunity for public input or expression of opposition to the concession which is part of the Tenure Review Proposal.

FMC also wishes it to be noted that the application for and granting of concessions as part of the tenure review process is most unsatisfactory as it precludes most public input into the process because most people would not look for a concession application as part of a tenure review proposal.

Please consider this e-mail as part of the FMC submission on the Preliminary Proposal for the tenure review of Mt Aspiring Station and append it to the submission to be sent to the Commissioner for Crown Lands.

Dr Michael JS Floate

on behalf of Phil Glasson, Secretary, Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ, Inc.

**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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Map showing the Mill Creek block surrounded by existing public conservation land

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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 'trampers' 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 dactyldium, 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 screes 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 Estre 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 trappers 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.

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