

# **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name : Mt St BATHANS**

**Lease number : PO 116**

## **Conservation Resources Report - Part 4**

As part of the process of Tenure Review, advice on significant inherent values within the pastoral lease is provided by Department of Conservation officials in the form of a Conservation Resources Report. This report is the result of outdoor survey and inspection. It is a key piece of information for the development of a preliminary consultation document.

Note: Plans which form part of the Conservation Resources Report are published separately.

These documents are all released under the Official information Act 1982.

**September 06**

**APPENDIX SEVEN**

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand  
Written Submission



**HIGH COUNTRY  
CONSULTANCY**

Dr Mike Floate  
SH 8 Tarras, Central Otago, New Zealand  
Telephone and Fax 0-3-445 2829

**PASTORAL LEASE TENURE REVIEWS**

**Preliminary Reports on  
Recreational and Related Significant Inherent Values**

**CENTRAL and NORTH OTAGO PROPERTIES**  
**2. MOUNT St BATHANS**

**February 1999**

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

**Prepared for Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc.)**  
**With financial assistance from New Zealand Lottery Grants Board**



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FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc.)

P.O. Box 1604, Wellington  
22 MARCH  
RECEIVED

1931  
75  
years  
2006

CONS	
A.M.	
C.R.M.	
B.S.M.	
T.S.M.	
H.R.A.	✓
H.C.T.R.M.	
K.A.M.	
OTHER	

20 March 2006

Tony Perrett  
High Country Tenure Review Manager  
Department of Conservation  
PO Box 5244  
DUNEDIN

Dear Tony

**Re FMC Reports on Recreation and Related Significant Inherent Values  
On pastoral Leases restarting reviews in 2005-06**

You will be well aware that FMC has been preparing Reports on the recreational and conservation values of properties which have entered the Tenure Review process in the past. We understand that a number of those leases are re-starting the process for a variety of reasons. It is our understanding that the following list of properties are re-starts in 2005-06. We list those properties below together with the date on which FMC previously offered reports on these properties:-

- Kinross                                      March 1997                                      QV
- Mt St Bathans                                      February 1999                                      DTZ
- Cloudy Peak                                      January 2003                                      DTZ
- Shingley Creek                                      April 2003                                      Opus
- Branch Creek                                      June 2003                                      Opus
- ~~Whitecomb~~                                      No Report                                      QV

In order to be part of the statutory consultation process in 2005-06, we now enclose copies of the reports which were submitted to DOC and the Crown Agents on the dates listed above. The list also indicates the Crown Agents who are dealing with those properties in 2006. These Reports are offered as the FMC contribution to the statutory consultation process undertaken by the Department in 2006. We hope that these Reports will be helpful to you in developing tenure review proposals for these pastoral leases. We look forward to commenting on the Preliminary Proposals in due course.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michael J S Floate  
FMC Tenure Review Co-ordinator, Otago/Southland.

Cc Ian Harvey  
QV Valuations Ltd.  
John Wickliffe House  
Princes Street  
PO Box 215  
DUNEDIN

Cc Dave Payton  
Opus International Consultants Ltd.  
114 Rattray Street  
Private Bag 1913  
DUNEDIN

Cc Ken Taylor  
DTZ New Zealand  
PO Box 27  
43 Tarbert Street  
ALEXANDRA

**Pastoral Lease Tenure Reviews February 1999**

**Notes on properties entering the Tenure Review Process 1998-1999**

**Central and North Otago Properties**

**Contribution from Mike Floate on behalf of FMC**

The following pastoral lease properties in Central and North Otago have entered the Tenure Review process for 1998-99:-

**Glenfoyle, Mount St Bathans, Kawarau (and Mt Difficulty), Gorge Creek, and Glencoe.**

<u>Station</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Topo Map</u>	<u>LUC Map</u>
<b><u>CENTRAL OTAGO AREA</u></b>				
GLENFOYLE	Po 364	Luggate	G 40	S 115, 124
MOUNT St BATHANS	Po 116	St Bathans	H 40, H 41	S 125
KAWARAU (Mt Difficulty)	Po 234	Bannockburn	F 41, F 42	S 133
GORGE CREEK I, II	Po 096, 378	Roxburgh	G 42, G 43	S 143

**NORTH OTAGO AREA**

GLENCOE	Po 366	Waianakarua	I 42	S 146
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**RECREATION AND RELATED PUBLIC INTERESTS**

**General Considerations**

Some brief notes were written up following a discussion of the recreational and conservation interests in these properties at a meeting in Dunedin on 3 December 1998. At that meeting NGO's, DOC staff and Knight Frank staff were present but it was not possible to present a full account of the public interest values of the properties as no maps had been available, and no preparation was possible prior to the meeting. Those notes are included as an appendix to this Report.

This Report consists of a more comprehensive assessment of the recreation and associated significant inherent values on each of the properties including site inspections, studies of topographical and Land Use Capability (LUC) maps, and consultation with recreational user groups.

Site inspections were carried out during January and February 1999 and FMC is grateful to the runholders for their co-operation, and to Knight Frank staff for making the appropriate arrangements.

One of the properties in this group (Glenfoyle) is isolated from other pastoral leases which are already in the tenure review process. It should however, be considered in relation to recreational opportunities in the Hawea/Lindis general area.

Mount St Bathans is an important property from a recreational perspective as it straddles the Mount St Bathans ridge and includes part of the Dunstan Creek corridor. It stretches from the Manuherikia River over to Dunstan Creek and also extends up towards the Dunstan Mountains on Dunstan Peak. Access to the upper reaches of Dunstan Creek and Mount St Bathans itself are important both because

## MOUNT St BATHANS

Mount St Bathans is a large pastoral lease of about 9,000ha, which extends from the mid reaches of the Manuherikia River, over the crest of the St Bathans Range at 2,000m and down the steep St Bathans faces to Dunstan Creek, and finally up to the summit of Dunstan Peak at 1,569m (Fig. 1). Approximately half of the total area lies above 1,000m including about 1,200ha on Dunstan Peak and over 3,000ha on Mt St Bathans (including the St Bathans faces and the ridge running down towards the township of St Bathans). It extends from about 700m on the valley floor to over 2,000m on the St Bathans Range (Fig.2).

This property has great significance for recreation and conservation. Recreational interests include tramping and possible winter ski touring, mountain bike riding, horse riding and possible 4WD use with runholder's consent. Important routes include:-

- (i) access through the Dunstan Creek corridor
- (ii) day trips to or over Dunstan Peak,
- (iii) access through the Cluden Pass to the Lindis and Upper Clutha areas,
- (iv) extended trips (possibly in winter as well as summer) along the St Bathans Range.
- (v) A round trip up Mount St Bathans (run boundary) and return via the spur on the true right of Rocks Creek.

Conservation interests (associated with enhancing the recreational experience) are primarily focused on the landscape values of the higher country (including Dunstan Peak and the St Bathans Range, Figs. 1, 2 and 3) and the Dunstan Creek gorge (Fig. 4), together with the St Bathans faces. There are also some areas which have been identified as Recommended Areas for Protection (RAPs) through the PNAP surveys. Historic interest is associated with the Scandinavian and Otago Water Races, both of which cross the property.

The Dunstan Creek corridor connects the southern Mackenzie country to the Maniototo at St Bathans and provides an important recreational alternative to the Lindis Pass which connects the Mackenzie country to the Upper Clutha (Fig. 5). En route there is a musterers hut which could provide useful overnight accommodation for recreational travelers, and would be invaluable shelter in an emergency or bad weather. This hut should be made available for public use through tenure review (Fig. 6). The Dunstan Creek route also has links to the Upper Clutha and Lindis areas via the Dunstan Pass and via the Cluden Pass (Fig. 7). It is not possible to drive vehicles directly over either of these passes but there is a ridge track north from the Cluden Pass which provides access to the Richmond Hut and yards on Cluden Station. More important from a recreational perspective are the opportunities for tramping, mountain bike or horse trips over any and all of these routes. It should be noted that Timburn Station in the Lindis area is just over the pass (Fig. 8), and is also in the tenure review process. The potential for increasing recreational use of the Dunstan Pass and Cluden Pass crossings from St Bathans should not be underestimated. Public access easements for walking, and riding (mountain bike and horse) through all these routes should be an essential outcome of tenure review of Mount St Bathans. Use of these tracks for 4WD trips (with runholders consent) should also be considered (Fig. 8).

The problems of 4WD recreation were discussed in respect to Glenfoyle. The problems with 4WD and trail bike use are twofold: They are incompatible with more passive forms of recreation, and they have potential to do great damage to tracks and wetland vegetation. There is also the question of who should be responsible for track maintenance. Nevertheless, it is a valid form of recreation and consideration needs to be given to what places might be suitable, bearing in mind these problems. Existing farm tracks in drier areas present opportunities where the risks of environmental and track

damage are less than elsewhere and both Glenfoyle and Mount St Bathans may have opportunities which should be considered. Perhaps 4WD access could be made available for public use with the runholder's consent.

Dunstan Peak stands as a prominent outlier of the main Dunstan Mountains and is located close to the source of the Cluden Stream, Lauder Creek and many tributaries on the true right of Dunstan Creek. It thus provides an excellent vantage point with views along the Dunstans, and across the Maniototo to more distant ranges to the east including North and South Rough Ridges, Kakanui Mountains and Rock and Pillar Range (Fig. 9), and to the south (Old Woman, Old Man and Knobby Ranges). This makes Dunstan Peak an attractive destination for day trips although it has not been greatly used in the past. Tenure review provides an opportunity to make Dunstan Peak more accessible and hence cater for the increasing demand for recreational opportunities. Public access easement for foot, mountain bike and horse use, (and perhaps 4WD use with runholder's consent) should be negotiated during tenure review.

Mount St Bathans is an even more dominating feature of the district and stands out from all over the Maniototo (Fig. 10), the Upper Clutha area and Lindis Pass highway, and even further afield. It therefore attracts attention and invites recreational activities but access is currently a problem. In part, this is due to the distances involved but it also involves traversing at least two pastoral leases. This situation could be improved through tenure review, and public access easements over Mount St Bathans land should be negotiated. Access is required to the highest point on the track at 1621m, with opportunity for independent travel beyond that point to the summit (Fig. 11), and along the crest of the range. A good round trip would include the high point (1621m) and return down the spur south of Rocks Creek on the southern boundary of the property. These routes are all indicated on the attached map.

An increasing problem for people wishing to do trips involving overnight stays in the backcountry is security of car parking at road ends. Consideration should be given during the tenure review process to making provision where possible for car parking off highways, and in the most secure places possible near the start of new easements over land which becomes freehold through tenure review. In the case of Mount St Bathans consideration should be given to future opportunities for off-road parking in the vicinity of Fish Pond Road (giving access to the Dunstan Creek gorge), and perhaps at the airstrip just off Hawkdun Runs Road (giving access to Rocks Creek).

Recreational experiences are greatly enhanced by being able to enjoy landscape and other natural and historic features (Figs 2, 3 and 4). This is one reason why the protection of such significant inherent values is an important part of tenure review. Features which should be protected as an outcome of tenure review on Mount St Bathans include:-

- (i) The entire western face of the St Bathans Range from valley floor to the crest of the range at 2,000m (Fig. 2).
- (ii) Tussock grasslands and sub-alpine cushion plant communities identified as Protection RAPs (Dunstan B2 and B3) by the PNAP surveys in the Dunstan Ecological District (Figs. 12 and 13).
- (iii) Landscape values of the natural features through the gorge in the Dunstan Creek valley (Figs 4, 5, 6 and 7).
- (iv) The head of the Rocks Creek catchment above about 1,000 to 1,100m (Fig 14).
- (v) Historic Scandinavian and Otago Water Races and other associated gold mining relics.

The greater part of the St Bathans face (ie. land above about 1,200m) is classified as Land Use Capability (LUC) Class VIII land (Kaikoura Steepland soils) and as such is not capable of supporting

sustainable pastoral use (Figs 11 and 14). The remainder of the face on the Mount St Bathans lease is all LUC Class VIIe erosion-prone land (also Kaikoura Steepland soils) which has very limited productive value and is almost certainly not capable of ecologically sustainable pastoral production. In view of the highly significant landscape value of the entire St Bathans face, and erosion hazards on much of it, it is argued that the entire face should be returned to full Crown ownership and control, and transferred to DOC as conservation land. This area is indicated in green on the attached map.

The case for protection of the two RAPs on Dunstan Peak has been made in the PNAP Reports and these areas should become conservation land through tenure review. From a landscape and public recreation and conservation perspective it can be argued that significant inherent values on Dunstan Peak cover a larger area. The area of greatest landscape interest in the Dunstan Creek gorge lies upstream of the stock bridge (grid ref. 547.947, Infomap H40, see Figs 15 and 16), and includes the steep lower parts of the Pass Creek and Sawtooth Creek catchments (Fig 15). The other half of the landscape in the gorge would be included in the area recommended for protection on the St Bathans face. Almost the entire area above 1,000m on Dunstan Peak carries tussock grassland (and a smaller area of cushionfield at the top) which appears to have been little grazed in recent times. This should all become conservation land.

The head of the Rocks Creek catchment above about 1,200m is also classified as LUC Class VIII land (Kaikoura Steepland soils) and the remainder of the upper part of the catchment is entirely LUC Class VIIe erosion prone land and is also Kaikoura Steepland (Fig. 14). It is argued that none of this land is capable of ecologically sustainable pastoral production, and that above the line indicated on the attached map, it should all be returned to full Crown ownership and control, and transferred to DOC as conservation land.

It is therefore suggested that there should be a single area of land stretching from Dunstan Peak, down to and including the Dunstan Creek gorge, up the St Bathans face and over the St Bathans crest to about half way down Rocks Creek, which should become conservation land. This whole area (indicated in green on the attached map) contains significant inherent values which should be returned to full Crown ownership and control, and transferred to DOC as conservation land.

This area could be separated from the intended freehold land utilising much of the existing fencing. There is a convenient fenceline across the face of Dunstan Peak at about 1,200m which could be extended to points 1213m and 1036m and linked to the existing fence down the spur south of Pass Creek to the bridge on the valley floor (Fig. 15, Ref. Infomap H40 547.947). Similarly there is an existing fence which separates the upper and lower parts of Rocks Creek catchment (at about its narrowest point) which could become the conservation land boundary.

The balance of the property, consisting of:-

- (a) the eastern and south-eastern slopes of Dunstan Peak below about 1,200m, and down to Dunstan Creek south of the bridge (Fig. 9),
- (b) the lower half of the Rocks Creek catchment, and
- (c) the valley floor and terraces between Hawkdun Runs Road and the Manuherikia River,

appear to be capable of ecologically sustainable pastoral use and therefore suitable for freeholding.

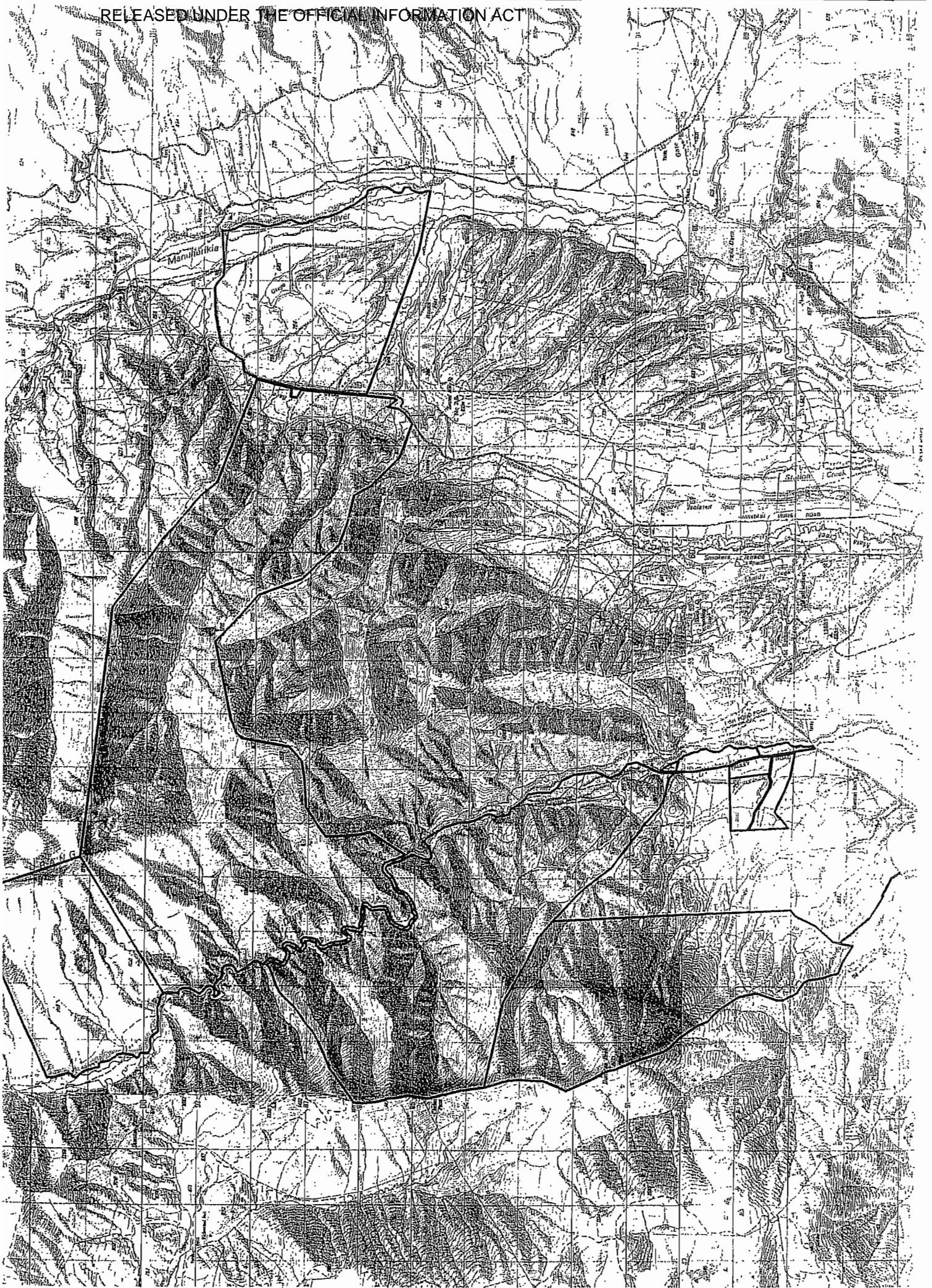
It is realised that the property would be divided into two separate blocks but this may not be so inconvenient as might appear. At present stock graze the two areas concerned and are moved between them by road as droving stock over the tops would be extremely arduous, and the land between is already retired from grazing. Alternatively, the two parts of the property could be run as separate enterprises.

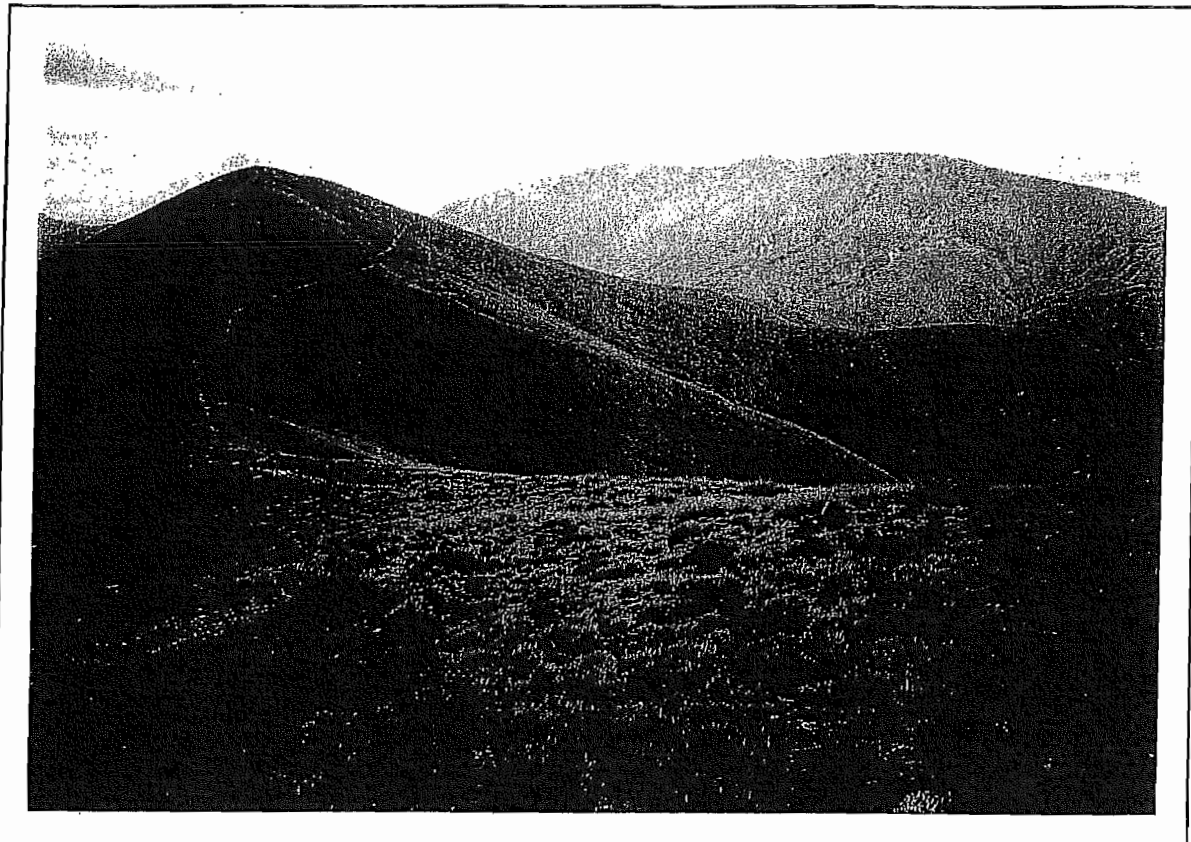


Within the area which may become freehold there are certain features which have significant inherent values and which are of interest to the public. Historical features including the Scandinavian and Otago water races which played such an important part in the gold mining history of the area, and other associated gold mining relics add interest for recreational visitors. There are also a number of wetland features and red tussock communities between the road and the Manuherikia River which have significant conservation values. These features could be protected from the adverse effects of inappropriate development under a binding covenant registered on the freehold title.

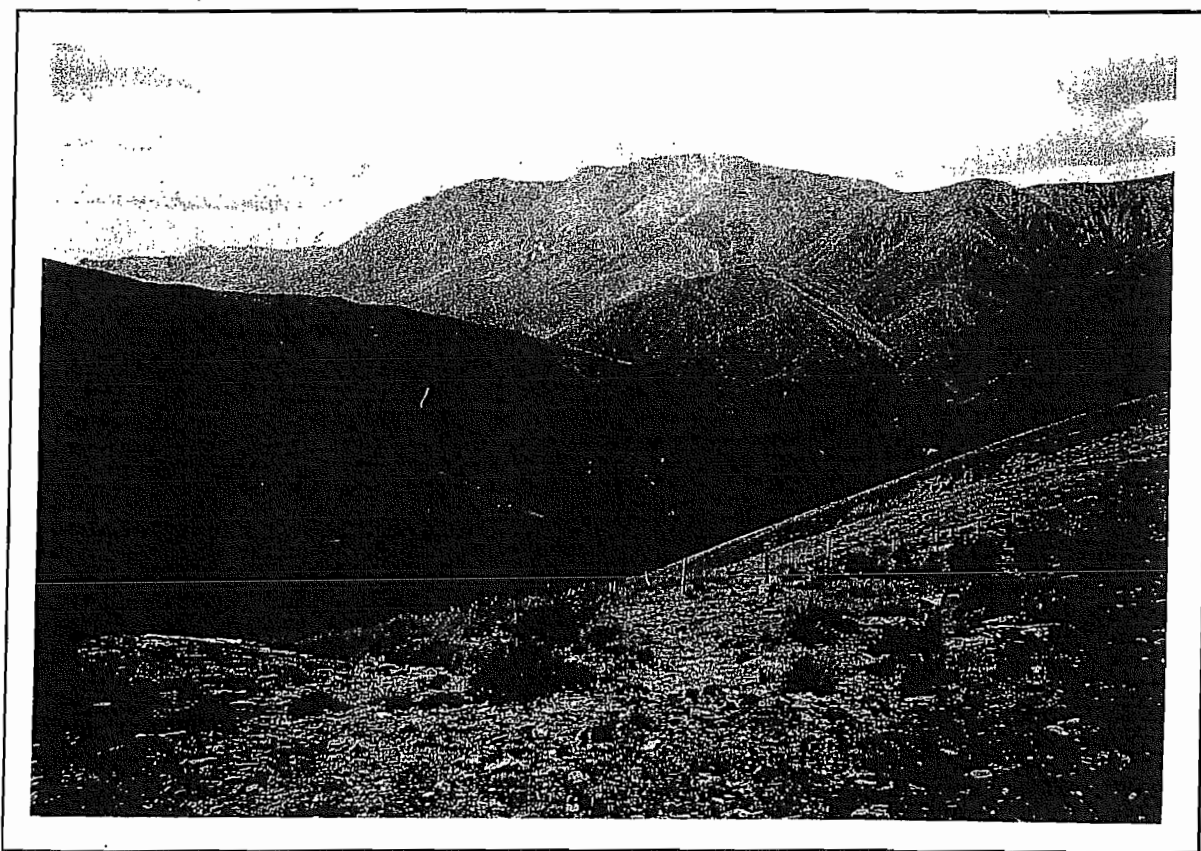
In the same potentially freehold area in the Manuherikia valley there is an area of wilding tree spread from a plantation. This poses a serious threat to neighbouring areas and removal of wilding pines should be a condition of gaining freehold title to the land.

On the attached map the recommended conservation area is indicated by a green. Important public access routes and the desired easements (or legal road confirmation) for foot and mountain bike access are indicated in yellow.





**Fig 1. Mount St Bathans pastoral lease extends over the summit of Dunstan Peak (1,569m), near where this photo was taken, down to the Dunstan Creek gorge and over the St Bathans Range, which is on the skyline, and finally down to the Manuherika River.**



**Fig 2. The Mount St Bathans pastoral lease covers a wide altitude range from 700m in the valley floor to over 2,000m on the crest of the St Bathans Range, and includes much land with significant inherent values including outstanding landscapes, and high recreation and conservation values.**



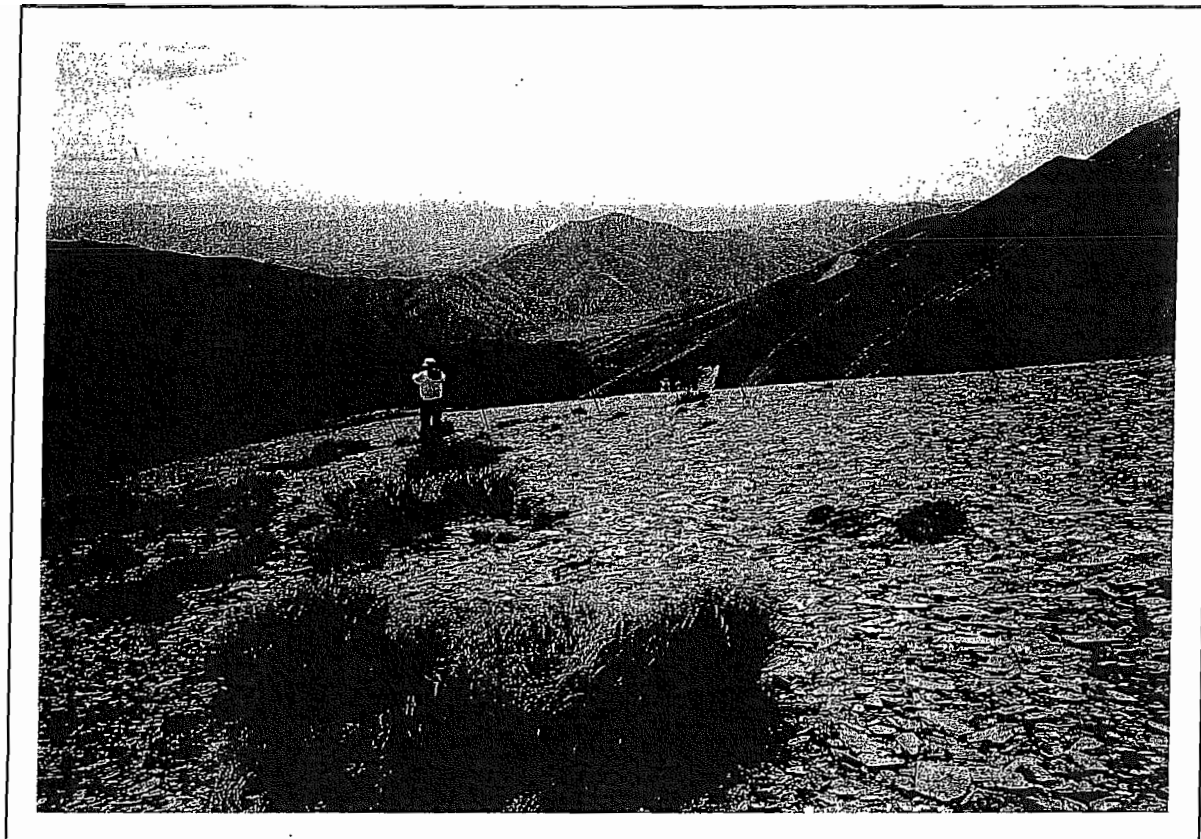


Fig 3. Landscape values of the St Bathans Range are outstanding and underpin the recreational value of the area. The Upper Dunstan Creek flats and the Dunstan Pass leading to the Lindis country can be seen in the middle distance with Mount Aspiring National Park and the main divide on the skyline.

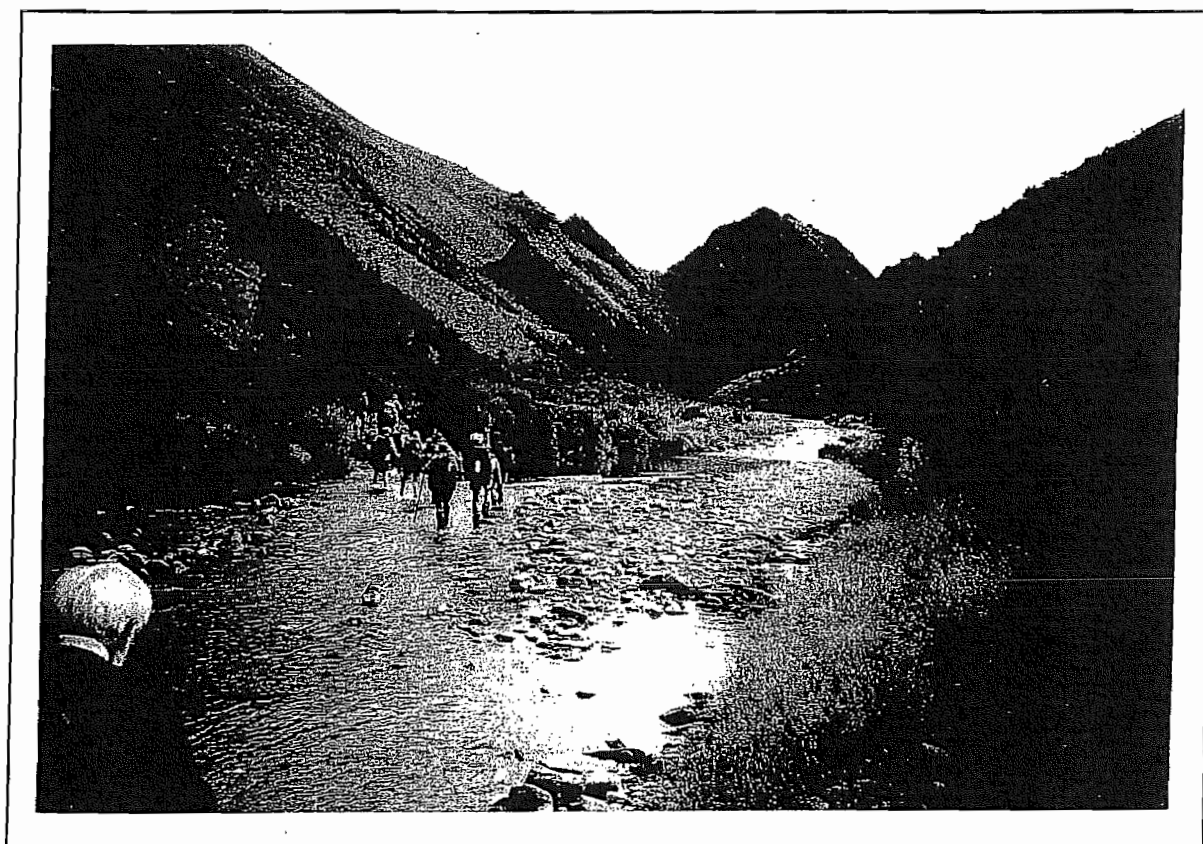


Fig 4. The Dunstan Creek gorge is a major recreational access corridor providing an alternative link from the Mackenzie country to Otago, and which has very high landscape and conservation values. This area should revert to full Crown ownership and control, and be managed by DOC for public use.

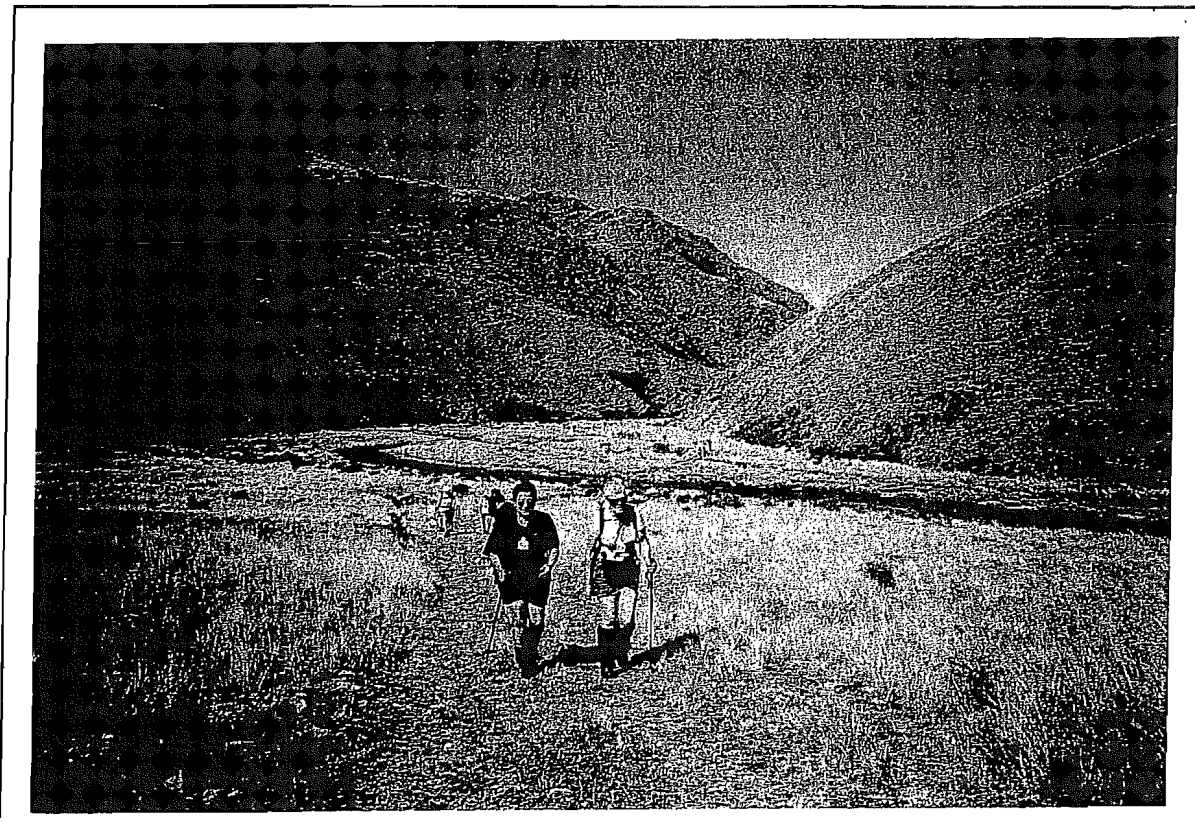


Fig 5. The Dunstan Creek corridor connects the Mackenzie country with Otago, and could be an important recreational alternative to the Lindis Pass for trampers, mountain bike riders, horse trekkers, and perhaps also for 4WD use with runholder's consent.

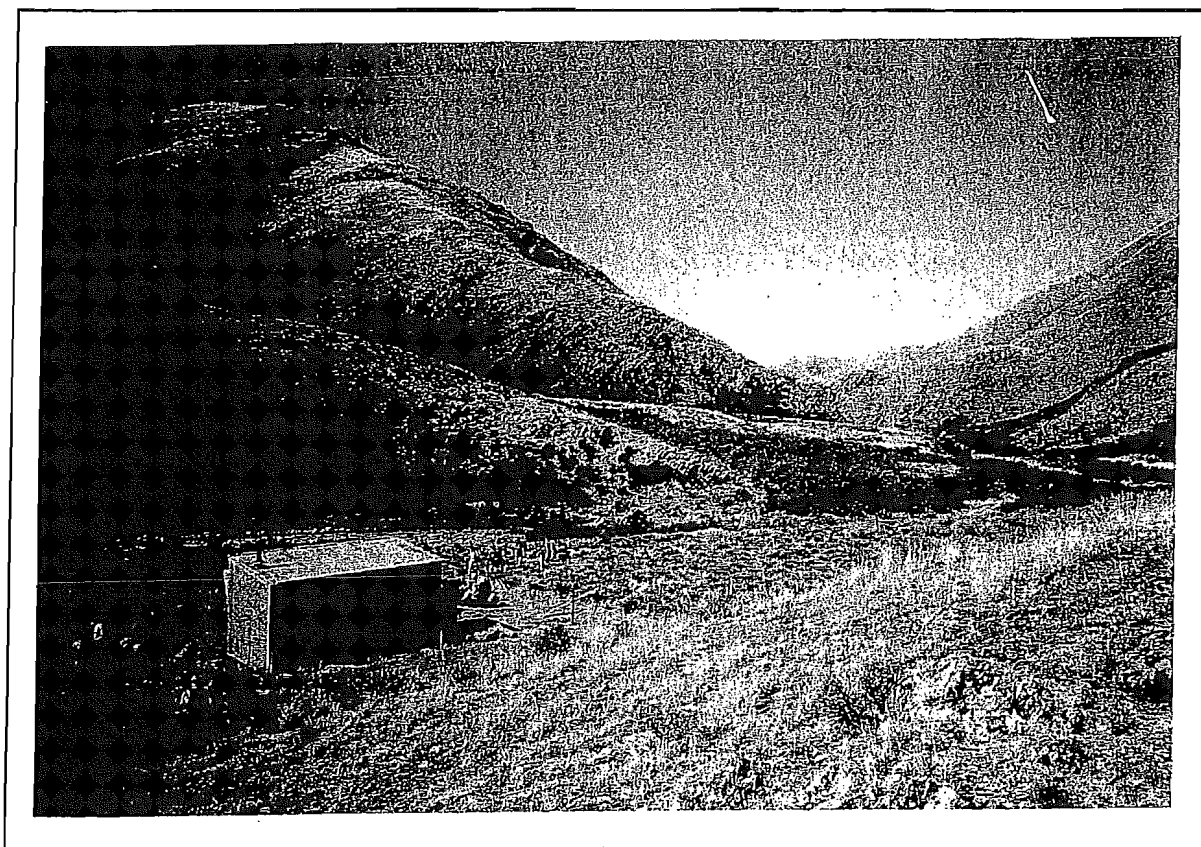


Fig 6. En route through the Dunstan Creek gorge there is a musterers hut which would provide useful overnight accommodation for recreational travellers, and would be invaluable shelter in case of emergency or bad weather. Public use should be negotiated through tenure review.