

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

**Lease name : Rainbow Station
Lease number : PN 001**

**Lease name : Rainbow Station
Lease number : PM 025**

Conservation resources report

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.

The report attached is released under the Official Information Act 1982.

Copied October 2002

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION REPORT ON TENURE REVIEW OF THE RAINBOW STATION UNDER PART 2 CROWN PASTORAL LAND ACT.

Part 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Rainbow Station (6,468ha) is located in the upper Wairau Valley, in Marlborough, and encompasses the catchments of the Rainbow River, Paske, Coldwater and Judges Creek. In total the property is confined to the valley floor and extends over some 60 kilometres from end to end. The homestead is located close to State Highway 63, approximately 10 km from St Arnaud.

Rainbow Station is surrounded by public Conservation land. The majority of this land was either state forest, which became stewardship land in 1987 or was surrendered out of the Rainbow pastoral lease in 1990. Part of the southern boundary of the station borders "Molesworth Station" in the upper Wairau.

No public Conservation land is included in this review, nor is there any freehold land that could be considered in conjunction with this review.

This property is located at the intersection of several Ecological Districts (E.D.). Most of the property lies within the northern and eastern boundaries of the Travers Ecological District and part of the Bounds E.D.'s. Sedgemere E.D. adjoins the property to the south and covers part of Molesworth Station. While in the north along side the Red Hills part of this area is in the Red Hills E.D. Coldwater, Judges and the upper Wairau catchments drain south from within the Bounds E.D. The other E.D.'s have not been surveyed from a PNAP perspective, but there have been numerous surveys carried out in the upper Wairau/Rainbow Valley over the years.

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PART 2

INHERENT VALUES: DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION RESOURCES AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.

2.1 Landscape

The Rainbow pastoral lease is very long and narrow in shape and is comprised of a number of landscape unit's (9). The boundaries of these landscape units are an arbitrary line between steep side slopes of the rangelands and the various river valley floor units, which make up the greatest proportions of the property.

The various landscape units are:

i) *Homestead Area*

This encompasses the flats adjacent to the Wairau River alongside SH 63. The main physical components are the river terraces and the lower foothill slopes. The dominant vegetation is pasture grassland. While on the more marginal land there still remain extensive manuka/kanuka shrubland. There is also some plantation forestry.

The visual pattern is predominately a land use that reflects better productivity of the flats, while the shrublands under the Red Hills reflect the underlying ecological patterns.

ii) *Wairau River Valley*

This unit extends from the homestead area as the valley narrows, south to the "Old Rainbow Homestead," where the valley branches out. The main physical component is the river terrace, above the Wairau River, which is predominantly mixed beech forest and the flood plain of grassland and shrubland.

Dissecting this valley is the hydroelectric transmission line and towers, which has resulted in the clearances of the beech forest under the lines, creating a pasture like grassland along the length of this unit.

The landscape qualities in this unit are all moderate to high, with the distinctiveness within the valley being between the forest, river terrace and wide shingle flood plain.

The transmission line has compromised the land unit considerably by creating clean man made lines. The associated road is also evident in parts of the valley, especially the lower valley where it has been tarsealed.

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iii) *Rainbow/Wairau Confluence*

Primarily confined to the river flats adjacent to the Wairau River. This section is predominantly open, modified grassland. Shrubland extends from the toe slopes and fans onto the plains. There are scattered beech forest remnants remaining on the shady lower slopes.

This unit contains several cultural elements, including the "Old Rainbow Homestead" and associated holding paddocks. It is a more traditional backcountry landscape.

The attributes of the landscape in this unit are moderate-high with distinctiveness and visibility being high, despite the road and transmission line. The effect of the latter has been minimised as it follows the edge of the shrublands and rock debris outcrops.

iv) *Rainbow Valley floor*

This unit extends from the Wairau River to the Rainbow Gorge. This area comprises the extensive flood plain and associated river terraces. The vegetation pattern reflects the site stability of the river. Included are extensive grasslands on older flood plain terraces, matagouri on fans, and beech forest/shrubland on the lower hill toe slopes. The riverbed itself has a number of new and old systems, with varying regeneration patterns.

The colour, texture and patterns contribute to the character of this unit, and overall the attributes of this unit are high and very distinctive.

v) *Paske/Rainbow Catchment*

This unit comprises the upper Paske and Rainbow above the Rainbow Gorge. The Rainbow is a narrow valley surrounded by steep scree faces, whereas the Paske is a wider valley with the river channel entrenched, with a single benched terrace. The toe slopes above are predominately a tall tussock grassland and alpine shrubland. Patches of beech forest survive as remnants within this catchment. The unit is predominantly indigenous, with few introduced species. There is no modification and consequently its attributes have a high ranking.

vi) *Hells Gate*

A small compact unit comprising the winding rocky gorge of the Wairau River. This gorge occupies the narrow valley floor, the exception being the built-up platform of the road. The vegetation varies from short tussock grassland, briar and shrublands on the steep gorge faces. There are remnant beech forest and patches of manuka/kanuka.

Transmission lines, access roads and cableways give this area a sense of being a utility corridor. However it does have a wild and very scenic quality.

vii) *Upper Wairau*

This is the back of the Rainbow Station where it adjoins "Molesworth Station." The Wairau broadens here and gives the strong impression of a transition zone between the more western rangelands and the drier eastern country. This latter point ranks the unit highly in terms of its attributes, as it is the only unit representative of a drier inland environment on the station.

viii) *Coldwater/Judges Creek*

Both these units are similar being narrow enclosed valleys which broaden into long colluvial fans and cones that in many places extend from just below the rocky ridge line to the valley floor.

Short tussock grasslands with a random distribution of beech remnants dominate the vegetation. The rocky entrance to the valleys is dominated by matagouri shrublands.

Both these valleys are secluded and have high natural values, with no modification.

Overall the Rainbow pastoral lease contains a wide range of natural landscape values which both alone and collectively make a positive contribution towards the natural character of the South Island High Country. The accessibility allows for a diverse range of landscape experiences over a short distance.

2.2 Landforms and Geology

The Rainbow pastoral lease consists of only the river flats/terraces associated with the Wairau/Rainbow Rivers. The lowest point on the station is 440m and this ranges through to 1350 metres a.s.l. in the upper Paske. The upper valley systems all flow in glaciated valleys which are characterised by extremely steep heads and broad sloping bottoms, infilled with scree and alluvial material. The process of infilling continues and has contributed to the broad fans and terraces of the lower valley.

The surrounding mountains are highly sheared, well-indurated, graded/bedded greywacke and argillite. The presence of the main Alpine fault, submarine volcanic activity, earthquakes and climate have all contributed to the beds of sediments found in the valley.

Small steep tributaries flowing out of the cirques of the St Arnaud and Raglan Range have contributed to the sedimentation process in the lower valley while glaciation has deposited material on the lower valley and left moraines at the Wash Bridge and near the "old Rainbow homestead."

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The resulting soils are Tasman and Craigieburn on the flats and terraces, Katrine on the rolling hills and Bealey and Lewis on the steep land. The soils have a low to very low natural fertility.

2.3 Climate

The climate is strongly continental in type. Winters are very cold with intense frost, while in the summer droughts occur, with hot dry winds. Rainfall can be intense and over the property varies from 1500mm to 3000mm. Frosts are intense over the winter and can occur through out the year in upper reaches of the station. Snowfalls are not uncommon over the entire property. The shape of the valley systems channel air movement and in many places cold air drainage has affected the vegetation patterns.

2.4 Vegetation

The vegetation of the Rainbow Station has been modified through a number of man made events. Early Polynesian fires would have influenced part of the upper Wairau and early colonisation would have had a dramatic impact on the vegetation of the valley. The Wairau was a very early stock route into Canterbury, so the valley floor has been grazed since 1855. Grazing and the frequent fires that were lit to open up the early route and to provide fresh growth have had a considerable impact on the vegetation. This, along with high sheep and red deer numbers for at least 50 years has also contributed to forming vegetation patterns that are highly induced in the main valleys. It is only in the remoter locations and upper valleys where the vegetation patterns are less induced. The impacts of burning and grazing have modified the vegetation patterns, causing retreat of the forests, depletion of shrublands, and migration of short and tall tussock grasslands on to forest and shrubland soils. There has been a migration of tall tussock grasslands to short tussock and in many places the trend has been to pasture grassland.

The property can be divided into a number of vegetation/landscape patterns. From the junction of the Rainbow and the main Wairau River, down to the Rainbow homestead, most of the pastoral lease is below 900 m.a.s.l. The valley sides are mostly beech forest. There is also a considerable area of manuka-kanuka/matagouri shrubland on terraces and fans such as Stockyard face. The high river terraces, including the areas beneath the transmission lines, are pasture grassland, with matagouri or manuka-kanuka and beech forest. There are some grazed wetlands in the valley floors. Open lands are extensive in the riverbed.

Above the Rainbow/Wairau confluence there are no high terraces and the hill slopes merge directly with the valley floors. In the upper Rainbow valley below the Rainbow Hut there are large areas of pasture grassland, some of which have been top-dressed. Above the Rainbow hut, and in the side valleys of the Paske Creek, Coldwater Creek, and Judges Creek, there is relatively little forest apart from in Judges Creek. In some instances there is very little valley bottom grassland, this has been replaced by extensive areas of bare riverbed. In these upper valleys, the grasslands are largely confined to the hill

slopes, with pasture grassland dominated by brown top on the lowest slopes and an increasing proportion of fescue grassland above 1000m.a.s.l. This fescue grassland is in fact the main grassland of the upper valleys, although brown top is usually co-dominant. Tall-tussock grassland becomes important only above 1300 m.a.s.l.

There are small patches (< 0.5 ha) of wetland in the heads of these valleys, and although they are still grazed up to 1500 m.a.s.l, they have a greater proportion of native plant species than the wetlands in the main valley.

The other shrubland types are dominated by subalpine species replacing manuka -kanuka shrubland and matagouri shrubland in the upper valleys.

Around the Homestead paddocks the area is a mixture of improved pasture that is highly developed and well fenced, with areas of regenerating kanuka/manuka growing on the unimproved flats under Red Hills. The poorer gullies and shady slopes contain scattered manuka/kanuka that provide an interesting landscape pattern. Exotic forestry and shelterbelts are also present.

The main vegetation communities in the valley are:

Beech forest

Mixed beech forest is present on the lower altitude slopes and terraces. This is predominantly red beech (*Nothofagus fusca*) and silver beech (*N. menziesii*) on terraces and toe slopes towards the lower valley. Most of the forest on the valley floors in the upper reaches of the property is mountain beech (*N.solandri* var. *cliffortioides*).

Common small trees and shrubs found in the forests are broadleaf (*Griselinia australis*), lancewood (*Pseudopanax arboreus*), pokaka (*Elaeocarpus hookerianus*), and putaputaweta (*Carpodetus serratus*), several small-leaved coprosma species (*C.rhamnoides*, *C.microcarpa*, *C.sp. aff.parviflora*, *C.linariifolia*) and *Myrsine divaricata* in wetter places. Mistletoe (category B) is possibly present throughout the beech forest and several plants were noted near Lees Stream.

Ground cover is variable through out the forests, prickly shield fern, *Blechnum* spp, mosses and *Hebe vernicosa* are the more common species.

There is abundant forest regeneration throughout most of the area.

Manuka-kanuka shrubland

There are extensive areas of shrubland dominated by manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) and kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) on the lower altitude portions of the property. This shrubland varies greatly in density, from thick shrubland to open woodlands and shrublands with areas of grassland or bare ground. Kanuka is particularly extensive on the terraces and flats below the Rainbow homestead down to the Wash Bridge.

Beneath the canopy of this dense shrubland and in small openings, particularly in wet patches, there are a wider range of woody species including *Coprosma* spp., *Cyathodes empetrifolia*, *C. juniperina*, *Gaultheria antipoda*, *Leucopogon juniperina* and *Neomyrtus pedunculata*. The occasional beech tree is often present throughout the shrubland community. *Olearia serpentina* is common on the valley floor and lower slopes adjacent to the Red Hills Ridge.

Ground plants are usually uncommon but may include, *Carex* spp., *Uncinia* spp., orchids (species of *Pterostylis* and *Thelymitra* at least) and scattered ferns, mainly small *Blechnum* spp. As well as mouse-ear hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*) and catsear (*Hypochoeris radicata*)

Matagouri shrublands

Matagouri (*Discaria toumatou*) ranges from scattered bushes to dense shrubland or low forest. On the thinnest soils on the low terraces the shrubland is short and stunted, with short grassland species

On better soils the stature of the matagouri increases as does the associated flora and species such as *Olearia odorata*, *Aristotelia fruticosa*, *Cassinia* spp., *Corokia cotoneaster*, *Coprosma* spp. (*C. rigida*, *C. cf. parviflora*, *C. propinqua*), *Melicytus alpina*, *Hebe* species. The vines *Clematis* spp., *Muehlenbeckia* spp. and *Parsonsia* spp. may be present. The tallest stands may strictly speaking be termed forest (mean stem diameter >10 cm) and include other species of trees and shrubs, particularly *Pittosporum tenuifolium*. Near the "Old Rainbow homestead" there are large stands of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) associated with the matagouri.

Celery pine-snow totara shrubland

Mountain celery pine (*Phyllocladus alpinus*) and snow totara (*Podocarpus nivalis*) in various combinations are present in a few places on steep hill faces and frost hollows at the heads of valleys, generally well above the areas included in the grazing licence. *Hebe venustula*, other *Hebe* spp., and snow tussocks are common associates.

Riverine vegetation

Associated with the forest and shrubland are small gorges in the main valley. These areas such as the Hamilton Burn are visible when crossed by the road. These places have plants that are uncommon elsewhere because they are protected from grazing, e.g., *Olearia avicenniifolia*, *Hebe traversii*, fuchsia (*Fuchsia excorticata*), three finger (*Pseudopanax simplex*), and flax (*Phormium tenax*). The uncommon shrub *Pittosporum patulum* (endangered) is reported from this locality (S. Courtney pers. comm.). And is known from several other locations near the lease boundary. Also *Hebe cupressoides* and *H. armstrongii* (endangered) have previously been recorded in the Hells Gate area but have not been relocated. Hells Gate area is also the type locality for *Ischnocarpus novae zelandiae* (endangered).

Tall-tussock grasslands

These grasslands are primarily above the areas of pastoral lease but extend into the upper reaches of the Paske valley. Mid-ribbed snow grass (*Chionochloa pallens* spp. *pilosa*) (= *C. rigida* in Wraight (1963)) is the main species, and is common above 1300 m.a.s.l. The common associated species are typically species of *Celmisia*, *Coprosma*, *Epilobium*, *Geum*, *Hebe* and species listed under fescue grassland. Carpet grass (*Chionochloa australis*) is a conspicuous component above 1500 m on exposed sites. On moist fertile sites towards the lower limit of this grassland there is an increasing component of adventive species including brown top and *Trifolium* spp.

Broadleaved snow grass (*Chionochloa flavescens* spp. *brevis*) is present mainly on steep bluffs and colluvial slopes above 1500 m.a.s.l. in association with *Dracophyllum* spp., or *Hebe* spp., and the large herbs *Aciphylla ferox*, *Celmisia monroi*, and *Schoenus pauciflorus*.

Wet seepage's and stream margins also contain remnants of red tussock (*Chionochloa rubra*).

Pasture grasslands

This term applies to grasslands dominated by brown top (*Agrostis capillaris*), danthonia (*Rytidosperma* spp.), and sweet vernal (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Scattered native species such as hard tussock (*Festuca novae-zelandiae*), *Leucopogon fraseri*, *Helichrysum filicaule*, *Geranium sessiliflorum*, *Gnaphalium* spp., and *Poa cita* are sometimes present. The adventive mouse ear and hawkweeds (*Hieracium pilosella*, *H. praealtum*) are common in places, particularly towards the lower side valleys. Clovers (*Trifolium* spp.) and *Lotus corniculatus* are common in damp areas at low altitudes in association with a wide range of communities. Matagouri is a common associate of this vegetation. This grassland dominates the main valley floors, at least where there is grassland, and also some lower slopes.

Fescue and other grasslands

There is some hard tussock in the valley floors but the main species is *Festuca matthewsii*. The Paske, Coldwater and Judges valleys contain *Festuca matthewsii aquilonia*, which is confined to Marlborough and inland Nelson. This species is relatively intact in most of the valleys but it is being preferentially grazed and is being depleted. Pasture species are important, as co-dominants at the lowest altitudes and *Rytidosperma* become abundant well away from the valley floors. Other common species or groupings are *Oreomyrrhis colensoi*, *Poa colensoi*, *Elymus* spp., *Epilobium* spp., and the adventive mouse ear and hawkweeds (*Hieracium pilosella*, *H. praealtum*).

Silver tussock grassland (*Poa cita*) in association with mainly adventive species is common on recent alluvial deposits and dominates moister and higher fertility soils around watercourses.

Wetlands

Apart from the alpine tarns above the pastoral lease, and a small tarn on a terrace in the middle Wairau, the wetlands are associated with braids or springs of the stream systems.

These are grazed throughout most of the area and comprise mainly *Carex coriacea* and pasture species or weeds. In the upper Rainbow Valley there is a wetland area extending over several kilometres that has been fenced off. This contains remnants of *Carex secta*, flax (*Phormium cookianum*), matagouri, and hebe (*H. salicifolia*), with smaller native plants including species of *Agrostis*, *Carex*, *Epilobium*, *Gnaphalium*, *Helichrysum*, *Histiopteris*, *Isolepis*, *Juncus*, *Poa*, *Plantago*, *Schoenus pauciflorus*, and *Viola*. These small herbs are also to be found at numerous toe slope seepage's throughout.

Openlands

These are extensive throughout the pastoral lease and only have a sparse vegetation cover. Aside from the steep scree slopes above the pastoral lease, there are large areas of bare river flood plain. The vegetation on these surfaces is highly variable, with *Epilobium* spp., *Raoulia* spp, scattered grassland species, and *Helichrysum parvifolium* all prominent at one point or another.

Introduced plants/weeds

Exotic broom is present in the Wairau Valley along most of its length to the Molesworth boundary. Hawthorn is present near the "Old Rainbow Homestead" and these along with the broom present the most significant conservation threat. Gooseberries and raspberries are present on the Rainbow flats and the latter are found near the "Old Rainbow Homestead". Willows are scattered along the main valley system. Currently there is very little briar. Hieracium is present on the main valley floors and is especially noticeable in Coldwater Creek.

2.5 Fauna

A number of species of birds have been recorded on Rainbow station over the years. The majority of the birds are endemic species while the balance are introduced. Most of these are found either in the braided riverbed, wetlands, or beech forest and shrublands.

The Wairau and Rainbow River beds are extremely valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife. The low numbers of introduced plants, such as willows, lupin and briar and the broad range of habitats make the broad valley systems important for feeding and breeding. The key threatened species recorded are the black-fronted tern (category B), banded dotterel (category C) pied stilt, South Island pied oystercatcher, and black billed gull

The bush and shrublands are important for a range of terrestrial species, the most notable being, yellow crowned kakariki (category C), kaka, rifleman, greywarbler, bellbird and tomtit. In the open tussock grasslands and the upper valleys the NZ falcon is often observed along with the kea. In the lower valley the Fernbird, a nationally rare species has been recorded. This is part of the only recorded population in Marlborough and is eastern most population in the South Island. The Green gecko is also found in the same locality.

The common skinks and gecko have been recorded elsewhere on the property, but searches for other species have not been successful to date. The Kaikoura bluff weta (category B) has been recorded in Judges Creek and the long-toed and scree skinks (category B) have been recorded nearby on similar habitat.

2.6 Historic

The primary historical significance of the Upper Wairau is as an important inland route between Nelson/Marlborough and Canterbury.

It was known and periodically used by the Maori to access food sources (eels, birds and Moa) in inland Marlborough and to move between the northern, central and western areas of the South Island. A splinter group from the Te Rauparaha- led war party of 1831 used the route to Hanmer reuniting with the main group before the attack on Kaiapoi. It is also reported that Ngati Tumatakokiri, Ngati Apa and other survivors of these attacks sought lonely refuge in the remote back country including the Upper Wairau and Rainbow.

To date no Maori archaeological sites have been recorded in the Upper Wairau but it is quite probable that evidence of seasonal campsites remains.

Pioneer pastoralist Frederick Weld was the first known European to explore this route in March 1855, opening the way for the stocking of the Amuri and Canterbury runs from the established Nelson settlement. For the following forty years it remained the primary inland route between Nelson and Canterbury.

In 1846 Nathaniel George Morse and Dr John Henry Cooper drove the first sheep to the Upper Wairau and squatted on the Wairau side of the Tophouse Saddle. The original Top House stood on the small terrace several hundred metres west of the old Red Hills buildings. The significant Top 2 trig, which marked the Nelson/Marlborough boundary, was pegged into the sidewall of the house. When the first depasturage licences were issued by the Nelson Provincial Council in 1854 this land was not included in the top run (Raglan). In 1856 it was gazetted a Stock Resting Area in recognition of its strategic role in the movement of stock between Nelson Marlborough and Canterbury. In 1874 a Provincial Sheep Dip was established on the flat below the first Tophouse in an effort to control scab. The remains of this dip have not been found.

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There does not appear to have been any single initial runholding of the Upper Wairau between Tophouse and Hells Gate but J. W. Saxton and his sons as part of the Tarndale Run (1856 - 1868) took up many of the flats, including those up the Rainbow. An 1864 map shows a homestead occupied by G.W. Schroder in the vicinity of what was later the site of the first Rainbow Accommodation House. The Upper Wairau remained an adjunct of Tarndale through the runholding of Nathaniel Edwards (1868 - 1870), John Kerr (1870 - 1877), and William Acton Adams (1877 - 1911). During Acton Adams' tenure Rainbow/Tarndale became amalgamated with Molesworth and continued so under various owners until the whole property reverted to the Crown in 1937. In 1939 the Rainbow block was separated out again and licensed to David Oxnam. The Rainbow Run has also incorporated land from the Red Hills Run including the old Red Hills homestead buildings.

As use of the route increased, the Nelson Provincial Government set aside reserves for accommodation houses at Rainbow, Tarndale and Acheron in 1865. The first Rainbow House was built in the early 1870s with 12,000 acres of Reserve around it. This house was of cob, was situated approximately 1 kilometre below the Rainbow junction with the Wairau and by 1886 was described as being in a most dilapidated condition. It burned down shortly afterwards with loss of life and was replaced by the present cob homestead in about 1894.

The original Top House was superseded in about 1859 by another cob house with a thatched roof built just inside the present Rainbow Skifield turnoff from SH 63. This second Top House was also known as Wiesen's after long time owner Adolf Wiesenhavern. The present Tophouse replaced this in 1887.

Thus several generations of accommodation houses were built on the Rainbow Run. The first and second Tophouses and the first Rainbow house are reduced to archaeological sites. The second Rainbow house is a significant historical structure which must be seen in context as an integral part of the most extensive chain of old accommodation house remaining in New Zealand (Tophouse, Manuka Island, Rainbow, Tarndale, Acheron). The other remarkable common denominator is that Ned James built all these surviving cob buildings.

The most difficult section of the route (it was never suitable for wheeled traffic) was through Hells Gate where at least three routes were cut with Government assistance. The first in 1859 was at too high an altitude and later work in 1865 and 1881 - 1884 concentrated on lower routes. Remnants of an old two metre wide benched track can be found on the true right starting about 2 kilometres above the Rainbow junction and ascending to about 80 metres above the present road before descending to Coldwater Creek. This pack track is shown on an undated but early plan.

Other key historic places on the present run include the Red Hills cob house and slab barn. The age of these buildings is not precisely known but is believed to predate 1900. They represent vernacular building methods once common on South Marlborough runs.

Dip Flat has significance as the Electricity Department works camp during installation of the transmission lines and a place in the history of conservation as a NZ Forest Service trainee hunters camp (1957 - 1963). Several buildings remain in the ownership of the Air Force and the Department of Conservation.

In summary, the Tophouse to Hanmer route, of which Rainbow Station forms a significant part, is absolutely unique as an early, important high country road which has had comparatively minimal subsequent development and retains all its mid to late 19th century accommodation houses and other evidence of human occupation of that era. The historic feel this gives visitors is an important aspect of its attraction that should not be underestimated and as far as possible protected.

Historic places for which physical evidence has been found within the present area of the Rainbow Run are:

1. The site of the first Top House. (1847)
2. The Red Hills cob house and slab barn (1890s?)
3. The site of the second Tophouse Accommodation House. (1859-1887)
4. Dip Flat camp.
5. The second (existing) Rainbow Accommodation House (1894)
6. The site of the first Rainbow Accommodation House (1870s-c.1894)
7. An associated building site which may be Schrodgers farmstead. (1860s)
8. Remnants of the early stock road through Hells Gate. (1860s?)

2.7 Public Recreation

2.7.1 *Physical Characteristics*

The Wairau Valley is only accessible by road from the north or south. The northern end is accessible from State Highway 63, the main road from St Arnaud to Nelson or Blenheim. Access from the south is from Hanmer and the Clarence Valley. This route is physically more difficult and demanding, as there are numerous fords and scree to negotiate. This road is of a low standard and is sometimes only passable in 4WD vehicles, particularly following rain events when fords become impassable as they become covered with debris. This route is also only open for 6-8 months of the year as winter snow and ice closes the route. The road follows the valley terraces in the Wairau and is an ungraded gravel road. This road was upgraded when the transmission lines were put in and a number of bridges and concrete fords were constructed. Today the level of maintenance has fallen off and the road is now only passable in mainly 4WD vehicles. However, even summer rainstorms can make the road impassable and treacherous.

The route through the valley is extremely scenic, as the public can experience a diverse range of landscapes over a relatively short distance. Despite the modification by the intrusive transmission line towers, it is still today a predominately natural landscape. The physical characteristics of the Rainbow Station with the flood plain, terraces and its peripheral valleys, contribute significantly to the high natural character of the area. The combination of factors has resulted in the overwhelming desire for the public to have access through the valley.

Access is also possible from the east and west, but only by foot. The peripheral valleys are bush clad and steep.

2.7.2 *Legal Access*

The front homestead paddocks are dissected by State Highway 63, the main Blenheim/St Arnaud/Westcoast road. In 1990 the road to the Rainbow skifield road was legalised, from SH 63 through to Six Mile Creek. This resolved a number of years of bitter disputes over access. The farm road into the homestead area is legal and follows the formation past the homestead and yards to the junction of the legal ski field road. Beyond the Six Mile there are no legal roads. The lack of legal roads through the Rainbow has been an issue since the 1950's, when the farm track was reconstructed as a road onto a different line. It was thought that this road was meant to be on a legal road line. However it is apparent that a survey to legalise the road line was never actioned.

The majority of the Wairau and Rainbow River have section 58 marginal strips laid off, but in places legal road forms part of the riverbank. The Paske, Coldwater, Judges, Six Mile Creeks and the Hamilton River Rivers have s.58 marginal strips laid off.

2.7.3 *Activities*

Rainbow Station already receives considerable recreational use from a broad spectrum of users. The property is sandwiched between 2 public Conservation areas, as well as being close to Nelson Lakes National Park. The lower valley is accessible to Nelson and Blenheim people and is regularly utilised by visitors from the lower North Island. The road through the valley has been a focus of interest from historical times. The route was the first stock route into North Canterbury, and has considerable historical appeal. In the 1960's and 1970's the road was accessible by cars as it was well maintained. The route has long been promoted as a shorter and more scenic route from Nelson to Canterbury via Hanmer. The scenic nature of the route and the isolation, along with the fact that the public could visit the backcountry of Molesworth, has contributed to the increasing demand for access.

The opening of the Molesworth road over 6-8 weeks in the summer has increased the demand for access so that a round trip can be undertaken. In the past access was by permission only, as there was a locked gate at the Six Mile.

Over the last few summers the road has been open to the public for a couple of months. A Rainbow Station employee is stationed at the "Old Rainbow homestead" and collects a fee. This fee pays the wages and allows the landowner to concentrate on farming without the worry of requests for access. For the balance of the year access requests are handled from the homestead. There is however a very constant demand for access most days of the week. By far the highest use would be from 4WD recreationalists whose primary purpose is "sightseeing", experiencing the scenic and history of the station as they drive through.

The advent of the Rainbow skifield and the legalisation of the road have promoted access requests. The other requests are for permission to gain access to under-take a variety of recreational pursuits. These are:

- i) *Trampers* - The Wairau/Rainbow Valleys provide a wide variety of interesting day trips and 2-3 day trips. Access is available to a number of side valleys, the main one being Lees Stream, which provides good access into the Branch and Leatham. The upper Rainbow/Paske and Begley provide a number of popular tramping routes through into the Clarence Valley and Nelson Lakes National Park. Hamilton's and the Six Mile also provide access to the St Arnaud Range. Hamilton's and Connors also provide access to the upper Begley and a return route down the Begley and Rainbow. Currently the Paske hut owned by the Department of Conservation is located on the property. These routes all require access to get to the starting points. Improved access would enhance their popularity.
- ii) *Deerstalking* - Rainbow Station was the home for the Forest Service deer cullers in the days when deer numbers were high. Dip Flat was the Forest Service training camp for many years and has an historical association for shooters. The valley with its bush and open flats is still attractive to deer stalking, as are the adjoining forests.
- iii) *Mountaineering*. Access through the valley for summer and winter climbing on the adjoining peaks is gaining popularity. There are a number of unnamed peaks, which are accessible as day trips if vehicle access is available, rather than the normal 2-3 day trek.
- iv) *Fishing*. The Wairau River is a difficult but popular river to fish. It almost has the feel of an exclusive fishery. There has been considerable interest in recent times in improving the spawning streams and in the 1980's one stream was fenced so that stock could be excluded.
- v) *Gamebird shooting*. There are a number of game birds found in the valley, with the most prominent being Canada Geese.
- vi) *Mountain biking*. The road has found favour with this recreational group and a large number undertake the ride from SH 63 through to Hanmer. The "Rainbow Rage" attracts over 1000 bikers who take part in a formal ride through the property to Hanmer.

vii) *Rafting/Canoeing*. The upper Wairau does provide opportunities for white water activities, ranging from a few hours in duration to those that follow the Wairau to the sea.

The commercial activities that utilise the lease are not well known. There are 9 known commercial operators that hold recreation permits for 4WD safari's, cycle tours, guided fishing and wagon trekking. There are possibly another 6 operators who operate over the property that are either in the process of obtaining consents or do not have them.

PART 3

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS & PLANS

3.1 Consultation

An early warning meeting was held in Blenheim on 29 April 1999. This meeting was attended by a good cross section of interested parties. The following points were raised:

- All the land above the gorges should become Conservation Land
- All forests should be protected
- Road should be legalised
- Free as of right access for all user groups
- Protect wetlands
- Improve access to the Red Hills
- Improve access to the rivers and streams
- Keep the road as a gravel road to maintain the "Wilderness effect"
- Remove stock from the upper reaches of the lease, preferably by containment behind fences.

The above were the main issues, but all the groups contributed information that helped with the resource material. The Council of Outdoor Recreation Association and the Marlborough Mountain bike club have contributed a written submission as a follow up to the meeting. A draft report on the significant inherent values has been received from Forest and Bird along with a preliminary report from FMC. Also the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board have provided written comment to the Department of Conservation.

3.2 District Plan.

Under the new "proposed" Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan, publicly notified in November 1997, the station falls within rural zone 4. Under this zoning farming, keeping domestic livestock and homestays are permitted activities. Homestays are limited to no more than 5 visitors. Commercial forestry is permitted on land below the 1000m contour. Erection of further accommodation buildings is restricted to one dwelling house per title.

3.3 Nelson Marlborough Conservation Management Strategy

Rainbow Station falls within the "Upper Buller Management Unit". The relevant objectives in this unit include:

- i) Land status review of the Rainbow Forests
- ii) Obtain legal protection for threatened species and important communities.
- iii) Maintenance of access and facilities for recreational use.
- iv) Advocate for provision of legal access to major valleys and through to Hanmer.
- v) Control the spread of wilding pines on the Red Hills.

Tenure Review of the Rainbow Station meets many of the objectives outlined in the CMS

PART 4

MAPS ETC

4.1 Illustrative Maps

4.1.1 Topo/Cadastral

4.1.2 Values