

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: RHOBORO DOWNS

Lease number: PT 093

Fish & Game Report

As part of the process of Tenure Review Fish & Game councils may provide advice on significant inherent values within the pastoral lease, and the information may be incorporated in the Conservation Resources Report. The advice is part of the information gathered and assessed for the development of a preliminary consultation document.

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

August

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27 JUL 1999

27 July 1999

Ray Ward-Smith
Knight Frank
PO Box 564
TIMARU

Dear Sir,

TENURE REVIEW – RHOBORO DOWNS

Please find attached Central South Island Fish and Game's Tenure Review Report on Rhoboro Downs.

Yours faithfully

Frank Scarf
Fish and Game Officer

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

Central South Island Region

32 Richard Pearce Drive, PO Box 150, Temuka, New Zealand. Telephone (03) 615 8400 Facsimile (03) 615 8401 Email: jgraybill@clear.net.nz

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT**TENURE REVIEW REPORT**

PROPERTY: Rhoboro Downs

LOCATION: TWIZEL

1. Brief Description of Property

Rhoboro Downs, located 7 km from Twizel, comprises some 7,615 ha, of which about half is moderately steep-steep east facing mountain lands of the Ben Ohau Range. Portions of the property have been developed through cultivation or oversowing and topdressing but the bulk remains in unimproved native pasture state.

The property is bounded by Pukaki Downs Station to the North and Ben Ohau Station on the South. Lake Pukaki forms the eastern margin.

2. Rivers Lakes and Streams

Flowing north to south through the property are four streams; from east to west, Tay Stream, Twizel River, Dry Stream and Frazer Stream.

Of these the Twizel is the largest and has a mean flow of about 3.5 cumecs. Low flow usually occurs in April/May each year when the flow in the Twizel at the subject property can be expected to recede to about 1.5 cumecs.

Comparative statistics for the Frazer are mean flow 0.8 cumecs and low flow 0.2 cumecs. Darts Bush Stream which drains much of the Hill Block forming the eastern face of the Ben Ohau Range is a major tributary of the Frazer, joining the Frazer immediately downstream of the Rhoboro Downs boundary with Ben Ohau.

Dry Stream, as the name suggests is ephemeral. Of more interest is Tay Stream which is generated as spring flow near the boundary with Pukaki Downs. It appears that this water is intercepted by a water race that in turn discharges into Lake Wardell.

3. Sportfish Angling and Gamebird Hunter Values**3.1 Sportfish**

Rainbow and brown trout inhabit both the Twizel and Frazer. The streams are more noted for their spawning and nursery values rather than for the size and numbers of adult fish stock. However both streams are fished by angling

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adherents using dry fly spotting techniques. Such anglers are often into 'catch and release', with the 'high country angling experience' being more important than the success rate.

The Twizel discharges into Lake Poaka which is located just over the boundary in Ben Ohau land. This lake supports a good stock of larger fish. With vehicle access to the lake edge, this water is popular with locals and visitors alike.

A National Angler Survey conducted by NIWA (National Institute of Water and Atmosphere sciences) in 1993/94 angler season records 612 angler days spent fishing the Twizel River. This compares favourably with the Ahuriri (4478 angler days), the Tekapo (2225 angler days) and the Ohau River (636 angler days).

The Lake Benmore fishery is reliant upon rivers such as the Twizel, Tekapo, and Ahuriri which provide the spawning and juvenile habitat necessary to sustain that lake fishery. Trout spawning is known to occur well up the Twizel into the Duncan Stream. Unfortunately for the Fraser, the culvert under the Pukaki-Ohau canal is not well designed and tends to impede fish passage restricting Benmore spawning fish to spawn downstream from the crossing.

The waterrace draining into Lake Wardell is considered to provide opportunity for the few fish resident in the lake to migrate upstream to spawn. However Lake Wardell is too small to sustain fish to any size or number.

3.2 Gamebirds

Mallard and grey duck, paradise shelduck and Canada geese are present throughout the area. Numbers are comparatively low and confined mainly to the wetland areas in and around Rhoboro Downs property.

Population concentrations of Canada geese has proved to be a major problem to high country farmers and Fish and Game. However Rhoboro Downs Station is comparatively free of such nuisance.

4. **Recommendations:**

4.1 Access

In conjunction with Ben Ohau tenure review and the aspirations of Department of Conservation and other NGO groups, there is, we submit, a case to establish vehicle access to Darts Bush Stream, following the 'paper' road alignment (as appropriate) along the boundary with Ben Ohau.

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Other than that we advocate for foot access along the Twizel River to enable anglers to fish the stream. We would not expect the Twizel in this property to attract major use. Anglers who do take advantage will more likely be more interested in the wilderness experience and if they catch a fish, they would likely release the catch back to the river.

4.2 Habitat

The Twizel River and Frazer Stream are the only waterways which legally would qualify for marginal strips. Habitat associated with the Twizel River is valued and to us is deserving of marginal strip protection.

Frank Scart
Fish and Game Officer
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