

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : SHINGLEY CREEK

Lease number : PO 034

Conservation Resources Report - Part 4

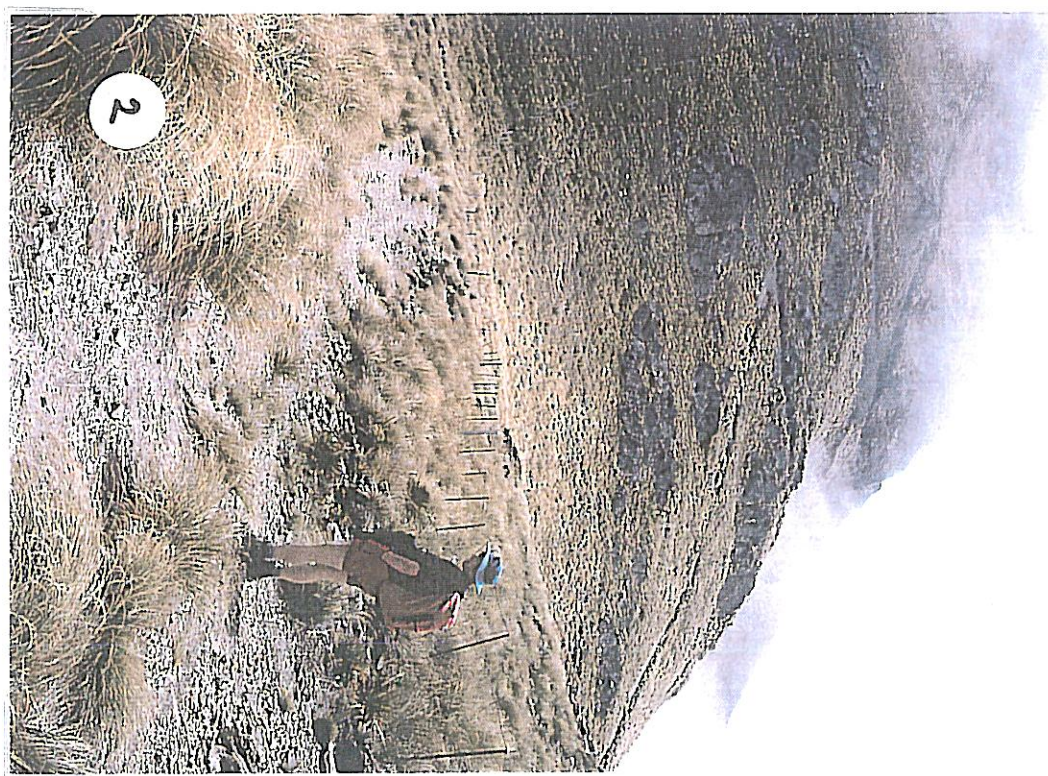
As part of the process of Tenure Review, advice on significant inherent values within the pastoral lease is provided by Department of Conservation officials in the form of a Conservation Resources Report. This report is the result of outdoor survey and inspection. It is a key piece of information for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

May

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**APPENDIX THREE: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (Inc.)
– Submission**



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

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
 OTAGO DISTRICT OFFICE
 21 APR 2003
 RECEIVED

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C.R.M.	
B.S.M.	
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H.R.A.	<i>[Signature]</i>
H.C.T.R.M.	
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Bruce to note

19 April 2003

Tony Perrett
 High Country Tenure Review Manager
 Department of Conservation
 Private Bag 5244
 DUNEDIN

Dear Tony

FMC Reports on Recreation and Related Significant Inherent Values on Pastoral Leases currently under Tenure Review: Shingley Creek

FMC has been preparing reports on the recreational and related significant inherent values of the pastoral leases which entered the review process in October 2001 and September 2002, and we are now pleased to offer our Report on the Shingley Creek pastoral lease as part of the statutory consultation process.

The FMC Report has been compiled following recent inspections of the property to assess the recreational and related significant inherent values of the property. As you will gather from the content of the Report, we have also made use of various sources of published information.

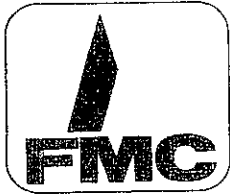
FMC hopes that this Report will be helpful to you and the Crown Agents in developing tenure review proposals for Shingley Creek. We look forward to commenting on the Preliminary Proposal in due course.

Yours sincerely

Michael J S Floate

Dr Michael J S Floate
 FMC Coordinator, High Country Tenure Review Otago/Southland/Westland

cc Dave Payton
 Manager,
 Opus International Consultants Ltd.
 144 Rattray Street
 DUNEDIN



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

PASTORAL LEASE TENURE REVIEW

Preliminary Report on
Recreational and Related Significant Inherent Values

SHINGLEY CREEK

April 2003

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

**RECREATIONAL AND RELATED SIGNIFICANT INHERENT VALUES
ON SHINGLEY CREEK**

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

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Shingley Creek consists of a pastoral lease of about 800 ha, and a corresponding freehold area which stretches down to the homestead which can be seen in the centre of this picture. There has been quite extensive pasture improvement and much of the land appears to be capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable.

Fig. 2 This view is looking down into the Siberia Creek catchment from above the northeastern boundary. The track in the middle distance marks this boundary and also provides an alternative route to the Kakanui Mountains and the Hectors Plateau. Because of the recreational interest in these areas access across Shingley Creek land is the most critical issue in this tenure review.

Fig. 3 The areas of greatest recreational interest lie beyond the boundaries of Shingley Creek pastoral lease. Access to areas such as the Hectors Plateau and the volcanic peaks like Kattothrust, far left in this view, is critical. The road which stretches into the distance starts on Shingley Creek and crosses the Kakanuis to the Kakanui River Valley. It follows a legal road but the actual formation should be recognised as the legal road.

Fig. 4 It is important to be able to gain public access to Obi (Trig B) because from Obi there are recreational routes to Kakanui Peak and the Kakanui Mountains, as well as to the Hectors Plateau. This view shows the zig zag track to the summit of Obi. If this does not coincide precisely with the alignment of the legal road, the formation on the ground should be recognised as the legal road during tenure review.

Fig. 5 Although most of this pastoral lease may be suitable for freeholding, there is a small area of high ground adjacent to the boundary with The Dasher, between about 1,100m and 1,300m which has been classified LUC VIIe and which is almost certainly not capable of supporting ecologically sustainable pastoral use. These Kaikoura Steepland soils would be better used for conservation purposes. The vegetation is less modified than elsewhere on Shingley Creek pastoral lease.

Fig. 6 In this area of Kaikoura Steepland soils, the tussock grassland is depleted but there is also considerable biodiversity including sub-alpine shrubs like *Drachophyllum* and *Coprosma* together with *Celmisia* and *Luzula* species. This area is worthy of protection on account of its significant inherent values.

Fig. 7 The trip to Obi is interesting in itself, but is even more interesting in that it leads to some unique features of the Hectors Plateau which are a great asset to the recreational people of North Otago. The zig-zag climb is steep but the views are worth the effort expended in getting to such a vantage point. Such are the reasons why access across Shingley Creek is so important.

Fig. 8 Despite its modest altitude, there are many interesting sub-alpine plants in spectacular natural rock gardens right alongside the track, and these add greatly to the recreational experience of a trip over Obi. Although not actually on the Shingley Creek pastoral lease, this area might be regarded as an upward extension of the natural values of that property.

RECREATIONAL AND RELATED SIGNIFICANT INHERENT VALUES

ON SHINGLEY CREEK

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared following the Early Warning Meeting in September 2002 at which the properties entering the tenure review process in 2002 were introduced. An inspection of the property was carried out in January 2003 with the kind permission of the runholder. This report is offered as a contribution to the statutory consultation process undertaken by the Department of Conservation.

The report focuses on those features of Shingley Creek Station which are important for public recreational interests. It should be noted that while much of this interest focuses on access, the natural values and landscapes of the property have a fundamental impact on its recreational value 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 rim of the Siberia Creek catchment and from Obi are outstanding and add greatly to the enjoyment of traversing this property. From a recreational perspective its greatest value is in providing access to the Kakanui Mountains and the volcanic peaks of the Hector's Plateau.

Shingley Creek is a small pastoral lease of about 800ha situated on the Pigroot side of the Kakanui Mountains. It appears to be associated with a corresponding area of freehold land reaching down to the homestead in the lower reaches of the Shingley Creek catchment (Fig. 1). The pastoral lease is almost entirely situated in the Siberia Creek catchment, between about 600m near the highway and almost 1200m on the spur between Shingley Creek to the West, and Waddells Creek to the East (Fig. 2). Its eastern boundary coincides with the western limits of The Dasher.

There is a legal road which links the Shag Valley and the Kakanui River valley. This road climbs a prominent spur on the Shingley Creek Station freehold before following the eastern boundary of the pastoral lease and reaching a high point on Obi (Trig B). From there the legal road continues over the Hector's Plateau (Fig. 3) by way of Siberia Hill and Mount Difficulty to join The Dasher Road at the homestead of that name.

Although small, Shingley Creek is important in the tenure review process because of its close proximity to several other properties under review. These include The Dasher and Mt Stalker to the East, and Islay Downs and Mt Dasher to the West and North. Its importance lies in its situation leading up to the Kakanui Mountains at Obi (Fig. 4) and the access it provides to the interesting basalt volcanic peaks like Mt Dasher, Kattothrust and Siberia Hill (Fig. 3) as well as to the main Kakanui Mountains including Kakanui Peak and Pisgah. Other pastoral leases are involved along the Kakanui Mountains and these include Clover Flats, Longlands, and Dome Hills. Still further to the north, but closely associated in the recreational context are Ben Ledi and Mt Alexander, all of which are at various stages of tenure review. This highlights the importance of considering the outcomes of this tenure review in the wider context of the whole range of Kakanui Mountains and recreation opportunities generally in North Otago. This lease cannot be properly considered in isolation from these other properties.

METHODS OF SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

A site visit and field inspection was carried out in January 2003. In part this report is based on the field inspection and in part it is based on information gathered from other sources. Those sources include both publications and accounts by members of local tramping and outdoor recreation groups that have been consulted about trips undertaken in the Kakanui Mountains area. A study of "Outdoor Recreation in Otago" was undertaken by Mason (1988) and published by the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (FMC). Reference is made to this recreation plan for Otago in the recreational opportunity discussion below. Land Use Capability (LUC) maps have been used to assess the extent

of soil types and topographic areas and their significance with respect to sustainable pastoral use. The Conservation Management Strategy for Otago, has also been used as a source of reference.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SHINGLEY CREEK STATION

Shingley Creek pastoral lease is located on the southern side of the Kakanui Mountains, some 50 km inland from Palmerston. The property extends from a high point (almost 1,300m) near Obi (Fig. 4) on the Kakanui Mountains, and drops to about 600m near where the Pigroot highway crosses the Pigroot Creek. It includes the entire catchment of Siberia Creek (Fig. 2).

Almost all the land below about 1000m has been improved by fencing, oversowing and topdressing and there is a large area of developed land on the adjoining freehold (Fig. 1). There is very little land which is still in a semi-natural state. This semi-natural area is adjacent to the boundary with The Dasher and lies between about 1,100 and 1,300m (Fig. 5).

Recreational use of the area has been relatively light in the past although it has considerable potential. There is some use by local pig hunters, and other users include local trampers and occasional mountain bike enthusiasts. With increased knowledge of the area and improved access through tenure review it is likely that usage by walkers and mountain bike enthusiasts will increase.

LAND RESOURCES OF SHINGLEY CREEK STATION

Most of the pastoral lease in the Siberia Creek catchment is typified by High Country Yellow Brown Earth Hightop Hill soils with some Brown Granular Loam Cargill Hill soils derived from basalt parent material. There are also small areas of High Country Yellow Brown Earth Kaikoura Steepland soils on the highest ground in the northeast corner, and along the ridge which marks the boundary with The Dasher. This area of Kaikoura Steepland soils generally coincides with the small area of semi-natural vegetation referred to above (Fig. 5).

The highest ground, lying between about 1,100 and 1,300m, carries Kaikoura Steepland soils which have been classified Land Use Capability (LUC) Class VII, of very limited suitability for pastoral farming. The lower parts of the Siberia Creek catchment have been classified LUC Classes IV to VI and are therefore probably capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable.

In order to be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable in the long term, any losses of essential nutrients in animal products (meat and wool) must be replenished. The alternative is that sooner or later the ecosystem will be depleted and degraded. LUC Class VII land may not be capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable because it may not be justifiable economically to replenish (in the form of fertiliser) the nutrients which are lost through grazing and burning. On lower country where pasture growth rates are higher, topdressing is worthwhile, but at higher altitudes (above about 1,000m), pasture growth and hence response to fertiliser is limited by climate. Under these circumstances conservation values need to be assessed and considered as an alternative to unsustainable pastoral use.

The small area Kaikoura Steepland area, of LUC Class VII with semi-natural vegetation cover (Fig. 6), situated between about 1,100 and 1,300m, is almost certainly better retained in full Crown ownership and control to be managed by the Department of Conservation for conservation and recreational purposes.

It seems likely that most of this pastoral lease, on the other hand, is capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable. So it is therefore probably suitable for transfer to freehold ownership.

RECREATIONAL USE AND POTENTIAL NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The recreational use of Shingley Creek Station must be considered in the wider context of public recreation on the Kakanui Range, and include not only present usage, which is light, but also future

potential usage by trampers, skiers, mountain bike and horse riders, and by hunters.

Mason (1988) notes with respect to recreation in the Kakanui Mountains that *"tramping activity tends to be concentrated on the forested Waianakarua catchment with its deeply dissected ridge and valley system."* He also notes that *"over the greater area of the Kakanui Mountains there is less frequent tramping activity. Features such as the volcanic caps of Siberia Hill and Kattothyrst, and the high points of Kakanui Peak and Mt Pisgah are the more usual attractions. Winter snow cover provides another dimension, particularly for ridge climbs from the Pigroot. When snow cover is sufficient, extended ski tours on variable terrain are possible from Obi in the south along the main crest to Dansey's Pass. This is a distance of over 35 km. The crest is relatively narrow with greater variations in gradient than is found on most Central Otago ranges. The crest is suitable for both cross-country and alpine ski touring in the right conditions."*

Recreational importance of Shingley Creek is that it provides access across the property for trips along the Kakanui Mountains or along the legal road over Obi (Fig. 7) to Siberia Hill and Mt Difficulty, and onwards to The Dasher Road (Fig. 3) and Mount Pleasant Road, and thence out to the Kakanui Valley Road.

It is almost certain that both now and in the future the predominant use will be as a means of getting on foot, or mountain bike or possibly horse to the more interesting terrain beyond Shingley Creek boundaries (Fig. 3). One possible exception to this generalisation could be pig hunting as signs of rooting were noted during the inspection and local hunters do use the general area from time to time.

Local tramping clubs from Dunedin, Central and North Otago also use the area from time to time, with access being both from the Pigroot side and from the Kakanui Valley. With tenure reviews in progress on several neighbouring properties (see those listed above) an increasing number of through trips over and along the range are becoming possible. The area is also well suited to mountain bike and horse riding, and in some seasons for cross country skiing. It is likely that with increasing pressure for new recreational areas, and increasing knowledge of this area, together with improved access, usage will increase following the completion of these tenure reviews.

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 for car parking, where possible 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 Shingley Creek Station, it would be very helpful if off-road parking could be provided near the end of the legal road. If parking could be provided reasonably close to the homestead, without causing undue disturbance to the owner or manager, then this would help to improve the security situation too.

Finally, it is argued that the recreational significance of properties under review should be assessed not only on present usage but also on potential. This is because current usage is much less than its potential for a number of reasons. Because of the current land tenure under pastoral lease, and because access to the ridge system has not been easy in the past, the recreational use of the Kakanui Mountains and the road over Obi is less than it might have been if access was freely available. There is significant potential for greater use and it is the full range of possibilities which should be considered during this tenure review.

In summary, this assessment indicates that there is considerable scope for increased recreational use of the Kakanui Mountains and the road over Obi to the east if easier access over Shingley Creek Station becomes available. Predominant uses would be for tramping, mountain bike trips and horse riding, and the possible use of the Kakanui Mountains for cross country skiing in some seasons, as well as use by local pig hunters.

SHINGLEY CREEK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER KAKANUI AREA

An important part of the tenure review process which is sometimes overlooked, is to consider the property in question in relation to recreational and other related public interest values and accessways on neighbouring properties. Where neighbouring properties are also undergoing tenure review, an overview should be taken of the outcome of this review in the context of the wider network of possible recreational opportunities over the entire geographic area.

Shingley Creek is situated in an area where a number of other tenure reviews are in progress. These include The Dasher and Mt Stalker to the East, and Islay Downs and Mt Dasher to the West and North. Its importance lies in its situation leading up to the Kakanui Mountains at Obi (Figs. 4 and 7) and the access it provides to the interesting basalt volcanic peaks on the Hectors Plateau (Fig. 3) as well as to the main Kakanui Mountains including Kakanui Peak and Pisgah. Other pastoral leases are involved along the Kakanui Mountains and these include Clover Flats, and Dome Hills. A significant area formerly part of Longlands is now conservation land. Still further to the north, but closely associated in the recreational context are Ben Ledi and Mt Alexander, all of which are at various stages of tenure review, and could provide near continuous access along the range to Danseys Pass.

Public access to and over Shingley Creek is therefore important because the outcomes of these other tenure reviews are likely to provide opportunities to plan for through trips from the Pigroot to Danseys Pass and the Kakanui valley in the foreseeable future. This tenure review of Shingley Creek needs to bear in mind all these possible future possible options, and to make appropriate decisions to facilitate recreational opportunities for the future.

We argue below that ensuring public access across Shingley Creek to the terrain beyond is the key issue in this tenure review. However, there are alternative routes to achieve this objective. The preferred choice is probably the legal road up the spur from the homestead, but a route from the Pigroot highway starting at the Pigroot Creek might be an alternative. This route would involve a short crossing of Islay Creek land into the lower part of the Siberia Creek catchment (Fig. 2).

SIGNIFICANT INHERENT VALUES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR RECREATION

This report focuses on those features of Shingley Creek Station which are important for public recreational interests. It should be noted that while most of this interest focuses on access, 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.

In practice, by far the largest part of Shingley Creek has been much modified by pastoral farming and land development over the years. Consequently few areas of even semi-natural vegetation remain. Furthermore, the landscapes of greatest interest are concentrated near the back boundary of the property and beyond.

There is however, an area close to the track up the eastern boundary with The Dasher, adjacent to the legal road leading to Obi and beyond, which does still have significant inherent value (Figs. 5 and 6). This is the area characterised by Kakanui Steepland soils which carries a depleted tussock grassland. Although depleted in terms of its tussock stature the plant community does contain a wide range of sub-alpine species including *Drachophyllum* and *Celmisia* together with other high altitude plants including *Coprosma* and *Luzula* spp (Fig. 6).

Beyond the Shingley Creek boundary the altitude increases to 1425m at Obi (Trig B) and on the road up to the summit there are superb natural rock gardens including such interesting plants as the southern Eidelweiss (Fig. 8). Natural features such as this certainly add to the value of the recreational experience of traversing the wider environs of the Kakanui Mountains.

Because it is unlikely that the area of LUC VIIe land could be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable, it would be better to be returned to the Crown and managed for conservation and recreational access. The area concerned is no more than about 100ha and its exclusion from the farm would have no impact on the farming business. If necessary, an easement for management purposes could be provided.

AREAS TO BE PROTECTED

There is an area of about 100ha, close to the road up ridge between the catchments of Siberia Creek (on Shingley Creek Station) and Waddells Creek (on The Dasher) which has significant inherent value. This is the area characterised by Kakanui Steepland soils, which has been classified LUC Class VIIe, and which carries a depleted tussock grassland (Figs. 5 and 6). Although depleted in terms of its tussock stature, the plant community does contain a wide range of sub-alpine species and is worthy of protection.

Because of these significant inherent values, and because it is unlikely that the land could be managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable, it is recommended that it should be returned to the Crown and managed for conservation purposes and recreational access.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

Access across Shingley Creek land to the Kakanui Mountains and over Obi (Fig. 4) to the Hector's Plateau (Fig. 3) is the most important issue in this tenure review. There is an existing road up the spur from Shingley Creek homestead, up the eastern boundary of the pastoral lease and up to Obi at Trig B (Fig. 7) which provides the required access and follows a legal road from Shingley Creek to The Dasher. However, the actual road formation may not precisely coincide with the alignment of the legal road, thereby making problematical its use by the general public. This situation needs to be resolved during tenure review. The preferred solution would be formal recognition of the actual road formation as the legal alignment. Failing that, the next best alternative would be the establishment of an easement over the existing road for foot, mountain bike and equestrian use.

There are alternative routes to the legal road described above. One route starts at the Pigroot Creek crossing on the Pigroot highway. This route would involve a short crossing of Islay Creek land into the lower part of the Siberia Creek catchment. Thence the route could follow a track up the south boundary of the lease to join the legal road at the southeast corner of the pastoral lease. Another alternative suitable for foot use, would climb the central spur to point 1128m on the northern boundary, and then turn eastwards to Obi (Fig. 2). These alternatives would keep well away from the homestead.

OTAGO CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In the Otago Conservation Management Strategy for Otago (CMS) the Kakanui Mountains are recognised as a Special Place. The objectives for this Special Place are: *"to maintain the natural resources contained within the existing protected areas on the Kakanui Mountains while taking opportunities that may arise through pastoral lease tenure review to negotiate protection of and access to areas of high natural and recreational value."*

The CMS states that these objectives will be implemented by methods including:

- *"Foot access negotiated at key points for the public to areas managed by the Department, with public vehicular access having a lower priority."*
- *"Protection of key areas for natural and historic resources will be sought through pastoral lease tenure review negotiation opportunities"*.

It should also be noted that the priority for the Kakanui Mountains Special Place is that *"in this Special Place, tenure review negotiations and wilding pine control will be the priority method for*

implementing the objective during the course of this CMS."

It is clear from this statement of priorities that DOC is committed to achieving its objective for the Kakanui Mountains Special Place through the tenure review process, and that significant progress would be made towards the objective if this tenure can be successfully negotiated.

CONCLUSIONS

Significant conservation and recreation gains are possible outcomes of this tenure review. FMC recommendations for outcomes from this tenure review are as follows:-

1. Although the current recreational use of the Kakanui Range is relatively light, there is considerable potential for increasing recreational use of the range by trampers, mountain bike users and horse riders, by hunters, and in some seasons in winter by cross-country skiers.
2. There is a large proportion (about 700ha) of improved pasture land on land of LUC Classes IV and VI on Shingley Creek which is probably capable of being managed in a way that is ecologically sustainable so it is therefore likely to be suitable for freeholding.
3. Formal public access to the range top via Shingley Creek needs to be established through tenure review. The preferred solution would be formal recognition of the actual road formation as the legal alignment. Alternatively, an easement should be established over the existing road for foot, mountain bike and equestrian use. Another alternative would be a route starting from the crossing of the Pigroot Creek on the Pigroot highway described above.
4. There is a small area between the catchments of Siberia Creek (on Shingley Creek Station) and Waddells Creek (on The Dasher) which has significant inherent value and is worthy of protection. This area should be returned to full Crown ownership and control and be managed for conservation and recreational purposes.
5. The tenure review of Shingley Creek should be carried out with full weight being given to tenure reviews proceeding on nearby properties, and the probable outcomes of those reviews. It is important that an overview is developed now for the entire network of recreational opportunities on the Kakanui Mountains. It is important that decisions taken for Shingley Creek are appropriate in relation to recreational opportunities which may become available through these other reviews.
6. The Draft CMS for Otago states that the objective for the Kakanui Mountains Special Place is "to maintain the natural resources contained within the existing protected areas on the Kakanui Mountains while taking opportunities that may arise through pastoral lease tenure review to negotiate protection of and access to areas of high natural and recreational value." It is further stated that "in this Special Place, tenure review negotiations..... will be the priority method for implementing the objective during the course of this CMS." These statements demonstrate DOC's commitment to tenure review and show that the objective for the Kakanui Mountains Special Place could be significantly advanced by the negotiation of good outcomes on Shingley Creek.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Permission to visit and inspect the property was granted by the runholder and this is gratefully acknowledged. This inspection was facilitated by the staff of DTZ New Zealand who also provided access to LUC maps. Local tramping clubs and others were helpful in providing accounts of trips undertaken in the area.