

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: THE GORGE

Lease number: PT 004

Public submissions – Part 2

These submissions were received as a result of the public advertising of the preliminary proposal for tenure review.

May

04

167.

Submission #5
received 25/3/04.

10 Smacks Close
Papanui
Christchurch.5.
22 March 04

Re: The Gorge -Tenure Review

Dear Sir,
This proposal is completely unacceptable.

My proposal is to return the land to Crown ownership and control as a Conservation Area: I would accept grazing for a period of ten years.

To be honest I cannot believe that there is a proposal to freehold this land and it just leaves me depressed and angry.

If this land is not worthy of becoming Conservation land then what is?

Before viewing this land I travelled from Christchurch, taking the inland scenic route, route 73 which you could say parallels the foothills of inland Canterbury. West of Christchurch you have the forest covered hills of the Ashley and going south the bush of the Torlesse range. Between the Rakaia river and the Ashburton river you have pockets of bush with Alford and Mt Somers conservation areas. This is all land that can be seen from the inland scenic route and is what makes the trip interesting. The surrounding farmland is little different from what you would see on the main north/south road. So the beauty of this scenic route is both the land form [the hills] and the bush and forest as the road winds its way south. Between the Ashburton river [south branch] and the Rangitata river there is little of interest - some hills no bush. From the Rangitata going south you again encounter bush, Peel Forest, and backing onto this forest the Gorge pastoral lease.

Up to this point I am trying to point out the importance of keeping these hills bush covered for their visual impact, both for the travelling public but also for the effect it has on the surrounding farming community. It sets it apart from the flat plains and its boring landscape.

Basically these foothills covered in bush provide a welcome contrast between the flat plains and the dry barren land and eroded hills of the interior. I feel that this is one good reason for retaining this land.

The immediate question is, is the land suitable?

When arriving at the property, from the Orari river, admittedly I looked at the gorse and nearly did not bother to go any further, the clouds and the rain combining to put an inspection off. However, after getting past the gorse covered front paddock I was thrilled and disappointed to see the beautiful country behind. The disappointment was because of the fact that there was the proposal to leasehold this land. Further I couldn't believe that someone was openly destroying some of this land by bulldozing a track through it.

The land although you couldn't say was forested, certainly is in regenerating native bush. The valleys all have native bush and the gulleys that feed them do also.

Some of the bush was in flower, while other plants, coprosmas, were covered in blue

berries.

The bird life was amazing. Previously I had stopped at Peel forest and although this is a forest it did not have the bird life that the Gorge property had, probably due to the fact that the Gorge is regenerating bush and is therefore more diverse in its plant life and therefore attracting a greater range of birds. With the rain falling and the mist surrounding the hills, the steepness of the property it is a wonderful place. Because the property is steep and the bush regenerating, you are able to look out over the valleys, whereas in a forest you would be looking up into the bush. Therefore you are able to see further and see more than would be the case if in a forest. This adds to its attractiveness and differs from what you would see from the tussock covered country you would encounter above most forests.

From this point of view, it would provide a welcome contrast to that of Peel forest to which it should be added.

Further north, a new walkway has been added to the existing walks around Mt Somers adding to the recreational opportunities of the area. I would like to see the property retained in public ownership and walkways extended from Mt Peel into the Gorge property.

This area is already an important recreational attraction with a petition being held to prevent the valley being dammed. While I was there a group of tourists from Methven arrived to canoe down the river, the main rivers in the area were in flood and dirty while the Orari was clear. By placing the property in DOC hands and extending the walkway from Peel forest an important recreational opportunity will be created.

Personally I feel that tourists come here to see the environment not the towns or cities, and it is the environment that we promote overseas when we advertise the country so we have to continue to protect the special features that we have.

It was not many years ago, before the boom in dairying, that you could drive out into the country and find a quiet place to sit and relax, with nobody to bother you. Now every available piece of land is being used. Even land along riverbeds has been cleared and recreational opportunities have been severely reduced. Yes after The Lord of the Rings the world has heard of us, property prices have risen, but there is always a cost, and this is what it is going to be, a loss of our heritage and the Minister should be aware of this already. By leaving this property in Conservation Department hands you are retaining a unique area for future generations and retaining some of our heritage.

Regards,

Geoff Clark

Submission #4
received 24 March 2004.

17c

**THE GERALDINE TRAMPING CLUB,
76 PYE Rd. RD21,
GERALDINE.
22ND mARCH 2004.**

**BILL ROSS,
SOUTHERN REGIONAL PROPERTY MANAGER,
OPUS,
CHRISTCHURCH.**

Dear Sir,

Tenure Review- The Gorge Pastoral lease.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review proposal of the above property, (CON/50000/16/12671/00/A-ZNO).

The Club is in agreement with the proposals as outlined in the information pack.

Yours faithfully



Frank Thomas,
Geraldine Tramping Club
Tenure Review Committee.

TUE. 23-MAR-04 12:23

C&A.SINTENIE

036963888

P.01

166.

Submission #3

23 March 2004

South Canterbury Section NZ Alpine Club,
PO Box 368
Timaru

The Commissioner of Crown Lands
C/- Opus International Consultants Ltd,
PO Box 1482,
Christchurch

This is a submission with regard to the Tenure review of the (Orari) Gorge pastoral lease on behalf of the South Canterbury Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club.

Conservation Land

In general I support the proposal that existing stands of bush in the Scotsburn Catchment and on the north bank of the Orari be restored to full crown ownership. It is essential that these dwindling stands of native vegetation be preserved.

However, I feel that unless corridors (which are allowed to regenerate) link the isolated stands of bush on the north bank of the Orari, they will not be entirely sustainable.

Furthermore, I propose that it is vital, at this time, for all bodies concerned, to look seriously at the long term health of the Orari River Catchment, both in order to sustain the dwindling natural treasures in the catchment (eg. Blue Duck and remaining Beech stands), and also in order to sustain the land use downstream, which is dependant on a continuing (even expanding) water supply by way of the river as well as into the aquifers.

To this end, it would be beneficial to retain, at the very least, some sort of riparian strip alongside the river, which in this case is mainly steep, inaccessible, gorged terrain. This buffer zone would have a number of positive spin offs; not only providing more than the proposed, very patchy, habitat for the blue duck, but also in terms whole catchment and the health of the river. A riparian buffer zone would protect the steep banks of the river against erosion and slips, native vegetation would also have a greater capacity for retaining moisture in the soil and would also minimise run off, so improving water quality and maintaining the high recreational value of the river.

Access

I would like to see some provision for foot access along the main ridge of the freehold area of the block, from the Orari River to pt 1298 on the main Mt Peel ridge. This could be a continuation of the management access route along the ridge to the Scotsburn block. This access would give experienced trampers/climbers the option of an alternative route to/from the main Mt Peel ridge.

Thank you for hearing this submission,
Yours faithfully

Catherine Sintenie (On behalf of South Canterbury NZAC)

Submission #2

Received 5/2/04 165.

Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
PO Box 2516
Christchurch

Ph 03 366 0655

3 February 2004

Opus International Consultant Limited
PO Box 1482
CHRISTCHURCH

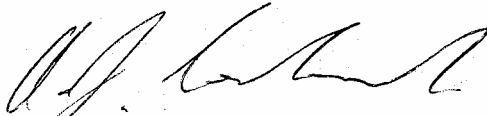
Attention: Bill Ross

Dear Bill

Tenure Review – The Gorge Pastoral Lease

Thank you for forwarding information about the preliminary proposal for this property. Forest and Bird has serious concerns about the proposal. Our concerns have been set out in our previous submission on the Scottburn pastoral lease. A copy of that submission is enclosed. Please accept the relevant parts as a submission on the review of this property. Because the properties are relatively small, adjoin each other and are managed by the same lessee, we consider the best result can be achieved by reviewing the properties jointly.

Yours faithfully



Tony Lockwood
Field Officer



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& BIRD**

ROYAL FOREST AND
BIRD PROTECTION
SOCIETY OF
NEW ZEALAND INC

Submission # 2 The Gorge.

Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
PO Box 2516
Christchurch Mail Centre

Ph 03 366 0655

Opus International Consultant Limited
PO Box 1482
Christchurch

Attention: Bill Ross

Dear Bill

Submission on Preliminary Tenure Review Proposal for Scotsburn and The Gorge Pastoral Leases

Introduction

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Forest and Bird) is New Zealand's oldest and most active voluntary conservation organisation. Formed in 1923 the Society has around 38,000 members in 56 branches around New Zealand. This evidence is on behalf of the Central Office. The Society's constitution requires it to:

"take all reasonable steps within the power of the Society for the preservation and protection of indigenous flora and fauna and natural features of New Zealand for the benefit of the public including future generations."

"Protection of natural heritage includes indigenous forests, mountains, lakes, tussocklands, wetlands, coastline, marine areas, offshore islands and the plants and wildlife found in those areas."

This submission is a combined submission for the Scotsburn and the Gorge pastoral leases. The leases are relatively small, the lease-holder is the same for both leases and Forest and Bird understands tenure review negotiations for both leases have occurred simultaneously, although final notification of the preliminary proposals has occurred separately. If submissions on both properties cannot be considered now we ask that you accept this submission as a submission on the Gorge review when it is notified.

North East Faces

These faces form part of the wider Scotsburn catchment. Whole catchment protection is desirable to provide aesthetic and ecological continuity and integrity, to protect landscape values and prevent unnecessary fragmentation of new conservation lands. Ridgelines and spurs provide a practical boundary on the ground and are a sensible location for new fencelines. The proposal to fence the forest edge and use this as the boundary between the conservation area and freehold land will create an unnatural and distinct separation between forest and pasture, rather than a natural transition from forest to shrubland to short tussock and finally snow tussock. The natural



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vegetation succession from valley floor to tops and all the transitional habitats for birds and invertebrates will be lost.

The Scotsburn catchment abuts the Lochaber pastoral lease and future tenure review of that property would make it possible to protect the majority of the catchment if the north-east faces of the Scotsburn and Gorge pastoral leases were included for protection now.

Forest and Bird supports the retention of the forest on the lower slopes in full crown ownership as set out in the preliminary proposal but emphasizes that conservation values do not stop at the forest edge.

There are significant patches of regenerating manuka shrubland on the lower to mid slopes of these faces outside the proposed conservation area boundary. In the gullies more advanced regeneration of forest and mixed shrubland is occurring and reaching significantly higher up the slope, well beyond the proposed conservation area boundary.

On the lower to mid slopes (500m-700m approx) the short tussock is in moderate condition and would recover if grazing was removed.

On the upper slopes (above 700m) the native vegetation of snow tussock and celmisia is relatively intact and unmodified (see fig 1).

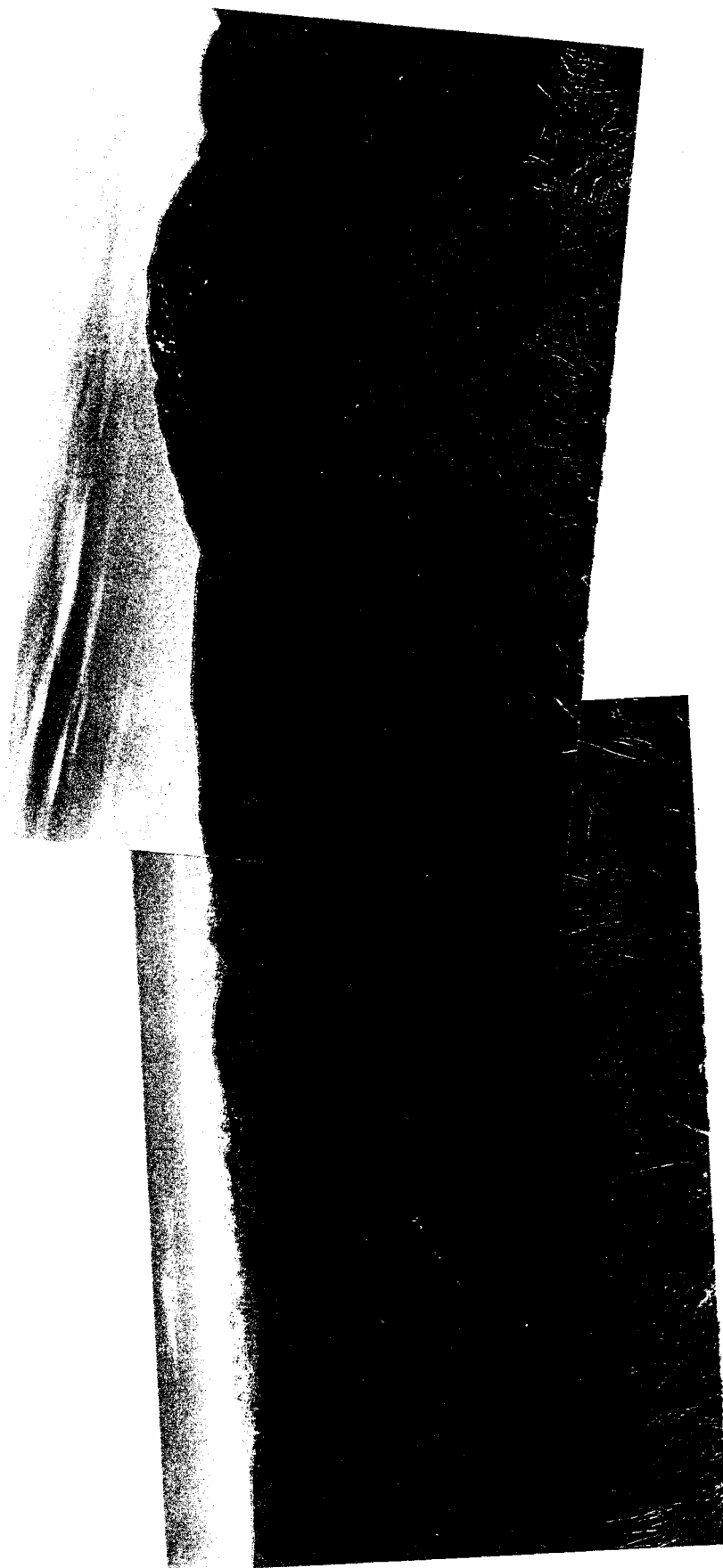
The tops from point 705 north through points 795, 720 and particularly from point 893 provide stunning views along the length of the Orari River gorge to the west to Mt Peel in the north, the Mt Peel conservation area in the east and out across the Canterbury plains to Banks Peninsula and the coast in the east and south (see fig2). Public access to this ridgeline would enhance the recreational experience of visitors to the Scotsburn. It would open up a number of options for round trip routes from Mt Peel and Little Mt Peel and the near by Mt Peel Conservation Area.

Forest and Bird notes that the conservation resources reports for the properties recommended the entire length of these faces to the ridgeline be protected. We support this recommendation and consider that there has been no justification for retracting the proposed conservation area boundary back to the forest edge in the preliminary proposals as notified.

Figure 1: North East Faces of Scotburn Catchment



Figure 2: View Up the Orari Gorge and Towards Mt Peel from Point 893



The Front Southern Faces and Gullies

These faces contain significant broadleaf/hardwood forest remnants on the lower slopes with forest regeneration occurring as high as the 500m contour in the gullies. The forest is more mature and natural than in other parts of the property with the possible exception of the Scotsburn. There are magnificent mature kowhai trees present and a relatively high diversity of species including broadleaf, fuchsia, wineberry, mahoe and horopito (see fig 3).

These front faces have high landscape values and are visible from a great distance across the Canterbury Plains including from S.H. 72.

Again Forest and Bird notes that the Conservation Resources Report recommended the protection of the forested areas of the front faces and are disappointed that this recommendation has not been carried through to the preliminary proposal. The photographs in figure 3 clearly demonstrate the conservation value of these forest remnants.

Shag Stream Catchment

The preliminary proposal highlights the value of the beech forest remnant at the confluence of Shag Stream with the Orari river. Forest and Bird supports the protection of this area as proposed, however the ecological values of the Shag Stream catchment continue beyond the river junction for the entire length of the stream. The upper catchment in particular contains perhaps the most intact native high country vegetation communities on the property. The mixed shrubland extends a very long way up the catchment where it gives way to snow tussock, celmissia, flax and shield fern that provides between 80 and 100% cover right to the ridgeline at point 893. This is illustrated in figures 4 and 5.

The mid catchment has significant regenerating forest dominated by fuchsia ribbonwood and wineberry with kowhai and various coprosma species also abundant (see fig 6). The mid catchment has an existing fence line on the true left of the stream that follows the new track and forest edge and would provide a logical boundary for protection of this area. On the true right of the stream the logical boundary is the ridgeline.

Un-named Stream on the True Left of Coopers Ridge

This stream valley which runs north-south between Coopers Stream and Shag Stream has similar ecological values and vegetation types and conditions as Shag Stream. Only the lower reaches are contained within the Gorge lease property, but protection of this area now would allow for the potential protection of the entire catchment during a future review of the adjoining Lochaber lease.

Figure 3: The Front South Facing Slopes Showing Significant Forest Remnants Not Included for Protection in the Preliminary Proposal.

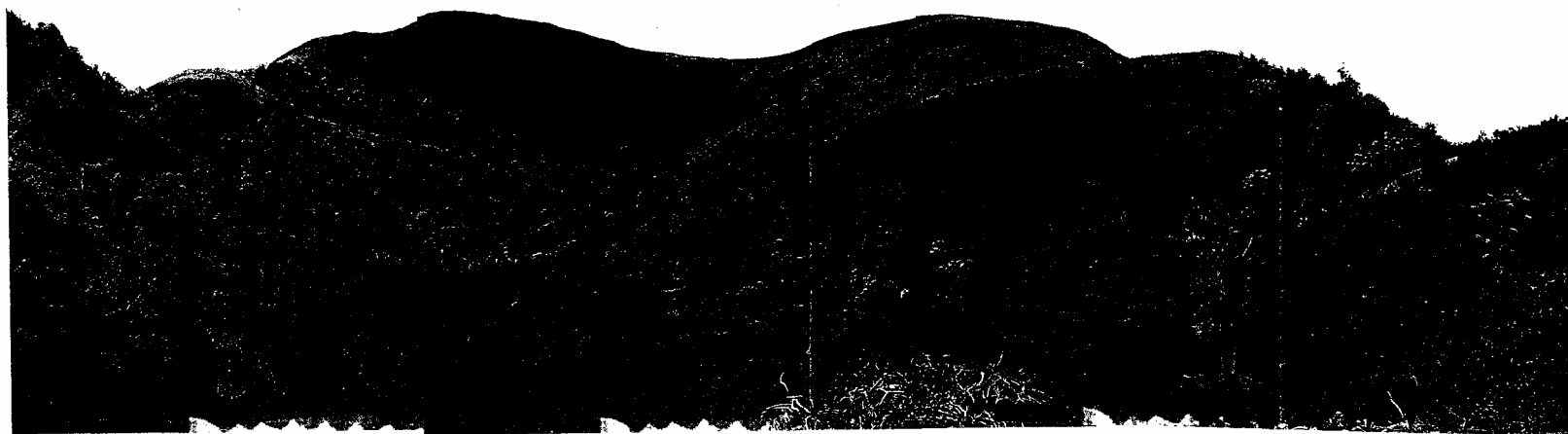
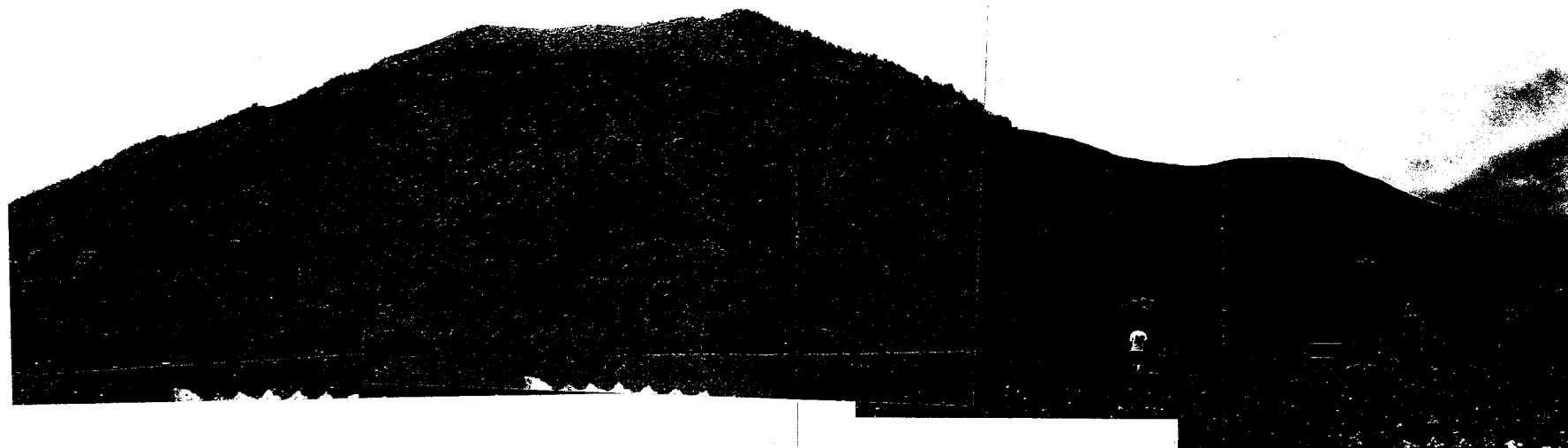


Figure 4: The Upper Shag Stream Catchment Showing Regenerating Shrublands and a Relatively Unmodified Snow Tussock, Celmissia and Flax Vegetation Community.



Figure 5: Upper Shag Stream

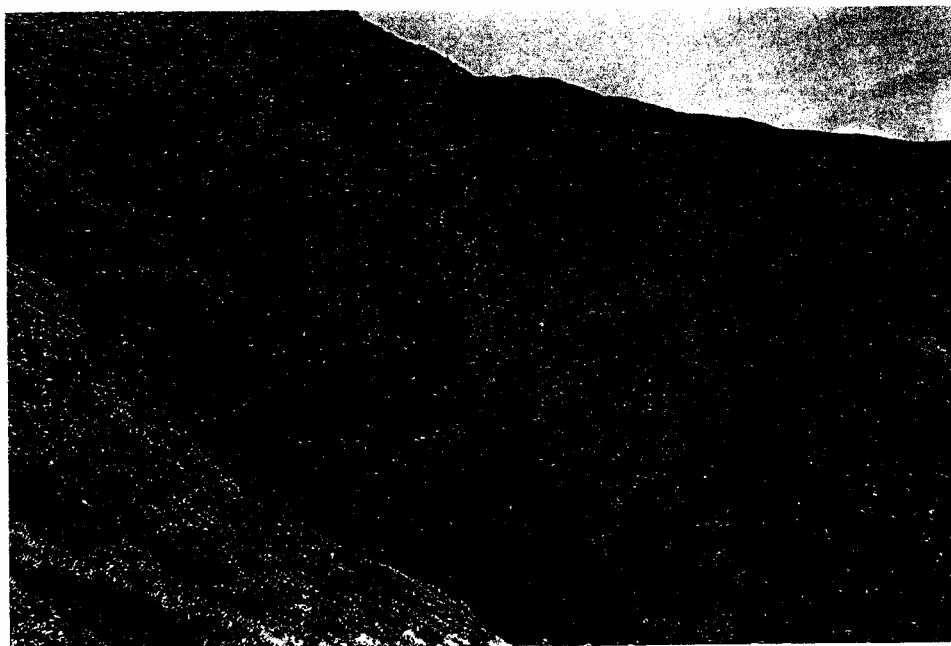


Figure 6: The Mid Shag Stream Catchment



Margins of the Orari River

The Orari River is a South Canterbury gem. It has outstanding geological, scenic, amenity and recreational values through the gorge sections that adjoin this property. The relatively intact native vegetation along its margins adds to these values and extends well beyond the immediate confines of the gorge in many places (see figs. 7&8). There are significant stands of manuka shrubland and small wetlands on the flats adjacent to the river, north west of point 410. The river and its surrounds are popular for pinicing, walking, swimming and kayaking. A 20m wide marginal strip is inadequate to protect these values.

Forest and Bird considers that a much wider strip that varies in width to accommodate a natural boundary of forest edge, ridge lines and spurs is more appropriate. This would protect the ecological and scenic values associated with the river and provide for better recreational access. This boundary is shown on the attached map.

General Comment on Retraction of Conservation Resources Report Recommendations

Forest and Bird notes that the following retractions in recommendations for full Crown ownership and control have been made from the Conservation Resources Report to the notified Preliminary Proposal:

Scotsburn	CR Report	Preliminary Proposal
North East Faces	130 ha	67 ha
Front (South) Faces	100 ha	0 ha
Total	230 ha	67 ha
The Gorge		
North East Faces	226 ha	76 ha
Landslip Area	47 ha	20 ha
Shag Stream	29 ha	17 ha
Total	302 ha	113 ha
Total – Both Properties	532 ha	180 ha

The table highlights that only about a third of the area originally recommended for protection on the basis of the department’s survey of conservation values has been carried through to the preliminary proposal.

The total area of both properties is 1384 ha. Of this the preliminary proposal recommends only 180ha remain in full Crown ownership and control and the balance of 1204 ha be freeholded. This represents only 13 % of the total land area. Forest and Bird considers this to be a very poor return to the Crown, especially in light of the new government objectives for tenure review, *“To receive a fair financial return to the Crown on its high country land assets”*.

Figure 7: The Orani River Gorge Below Point 410 and West of Huts. The Freehold Boundary Should Follow the Skyline of this Photograph to Protect the Scenic, Ecological and Recreational Values of the River Gorge

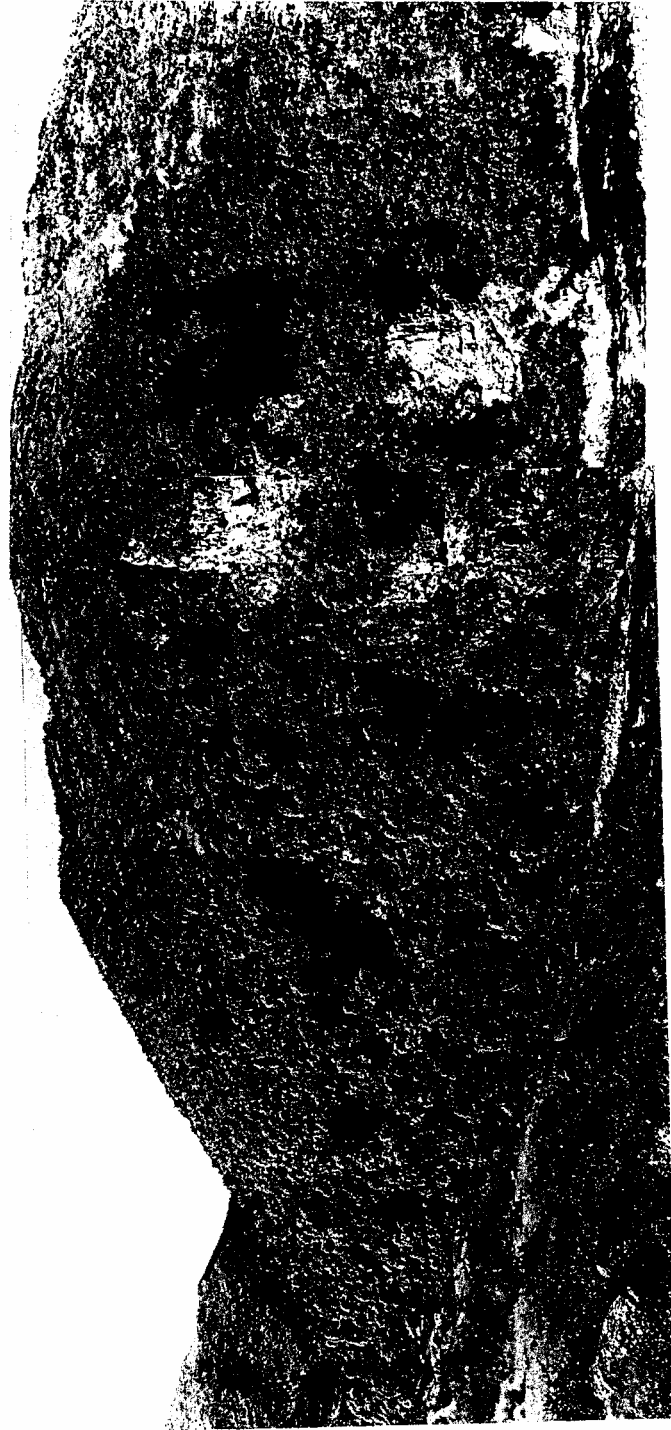


Figure 8: The Lower Orari Gorge from the Old Homestead Site Near the Road End Showing the Shag Stream Confluence and Shag Valley.



Whole Property Purchase, Practical Boundaries and Economic Viability

The above sections of this submission have highlighted the ecological, landscape and recreational values that need protecting to ensure compliance with the objectives of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to:

Protect significant inherent values of reviewable land by the creation of protective measures; or preferably by restoration of the land concerned to full Crown ownership and control

Secure public access to and enjoyment of high country land

The attached map shows the area to be restored to full Crown ownership and control to ensure protection of these values. To meet the objectives of the CPLA in the case of the Scotsburn and Gorge properties it is necessary for the Crown to secure the majority of the property except for the two areas marked A and B on the map. In our view these are the only two areas of the properties where grazing could continue “*in a way that is ecologically sustainable*” (CPLA 1998).

Forest and Bird acknowledges that while ensuring the continued economic viability of individual properties is **not** an objective of the CPLA, it is relevant to the practical negotiation of an agreement between the two parties. However we consider that in this case the negotiations that have lead to the preliminary proposal have given too much weight to ongoing financial viability at the expense of significant inherent values.

This is evidenced by the major retractions in land area highlighted in the table above and also in records of discussions between the parties regarding protection of the front faces. While several small isolated and discrete forest remnants do have ecological value on their own, their value increases dramatically if they can be managed as a single unit so that regeneration is allowed to occur between them, eventually creating a single much larger forest. Insistence by the leaseholder that all un-forested land between the gullies on these faces be available for ongoing grazing lead to the whole area being recommended for free holding.

Because the two land areas recommended for free-holding in this submission are relatively small and because of the practicalities and cost of fencing the new boundaries and providing access to them a full property purchase by the Crown is probably the most practical solution in this case.

Decisions Sought

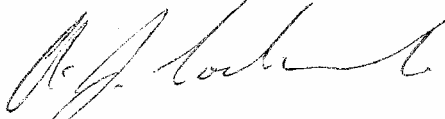
That the whole property except areas A and B on the attached map be secured in full Crown ownership and control to protect significant inherent values and that areas A and B be freeholded. Alternatively that the whole property be purchased and areas A and B be managed under a grazing lease if this is considered feasible given stock access and fencing considerations.

If negotiations with the leaseholder fail to secure significant gains in terms of the conservation, recreation and landscape outcomes suggested in this submission Forest and Bird strongly urges that the Crown withdraw from negotiations and the properties continue as pastoral leases.

New Tracking

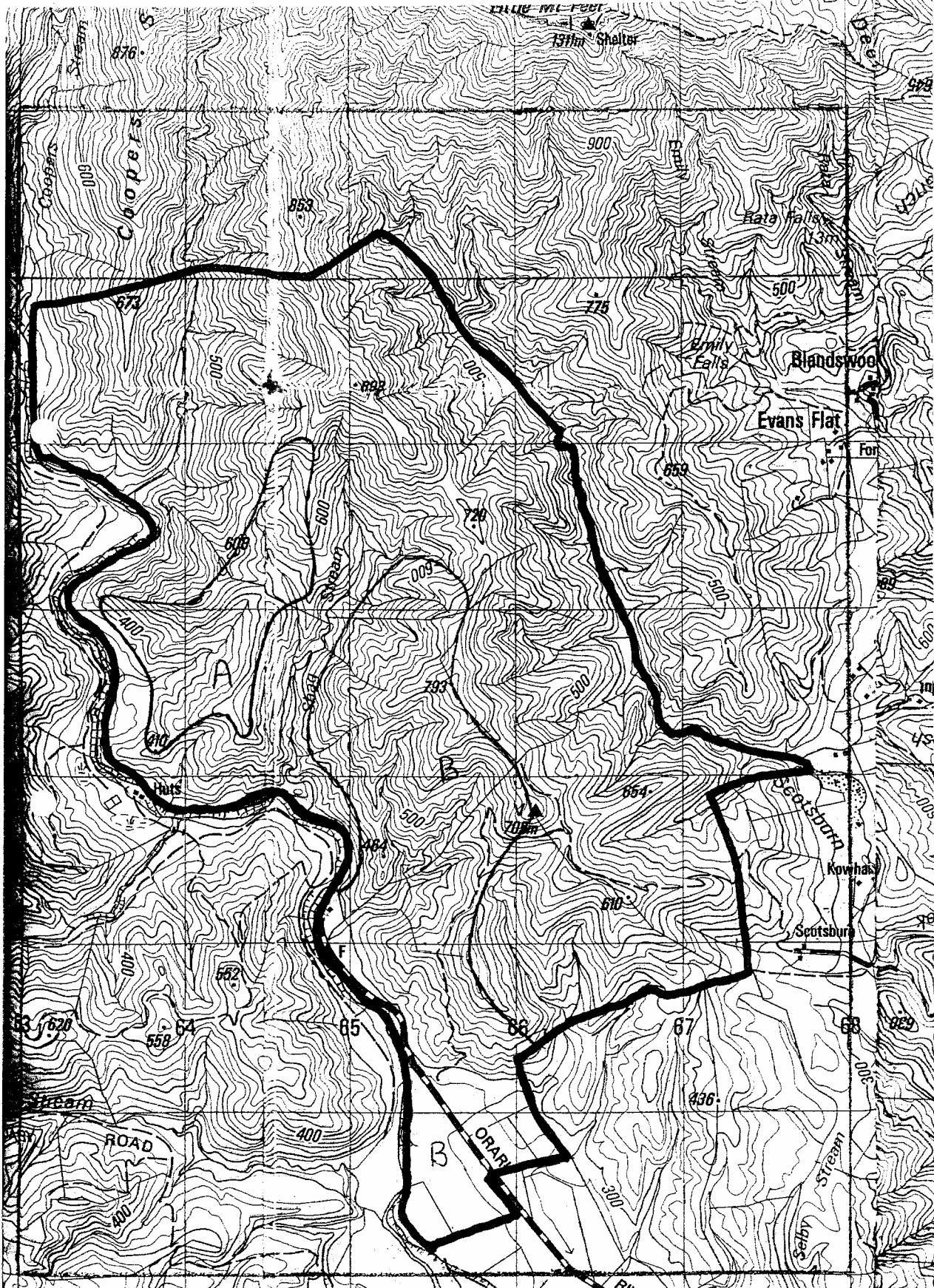
During a site visit to the properties we were disappointed to see the extent of new 4WD tracking. This has occurred through extensive areas of forest and on very steep slopes in the Shag Stream catchment. Apart from the obvious damage to the landscape values and forest it has created huge potential for erosion and sediment runoff into the stream. While not directly related to tenure review we are frustrated that this type of activity should be authorised (if in fact a consent has been granted) while the process is underway. It could be viewed as a deliberate attempt by the leaseholder to detract from the significant conservation values in the catchment. If so he has had some success. At the very least there is an implicit assumption that the area where the work has been done will be freeholded before any opportunity for public input into the final decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission



Tony Lockwood
Field Officer
For Conservation Manager

— Property Boundary — Proposed Freehold



Submission # 1 The Gorge



FOREST & BIRD

ROYAL FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND INC

South Canterbury Branch
29a Nile St
Timaru

18.12.03

The Southern Region Property Manager
Opus International Consultants Ltd
P.O.Box 1482
Christchurch

Attention: Bill Ross

Dear Mr Ross,

Re Tenure Review - Scotsburn Pastoral Lease Submission

The South Canterbury Branch, of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ Inc, would like to make the following comments and requests, on the preliminary proposal for tenure review that has been put to the holders of the **Scotsburn Pastoral Lease**,

We note that this is only a preliminary proposal and we would expect that when a firmer or the final proposal is developed it would, we ask, incorporate the comments and requests that the Branch has made in this submission.

We understand that the Gorge Block, which adjoins Scotsburn to the west, is also being assessed for possible review of tenure, and that the leaseholder of that land is also the lessee of Scotsburn as well. We believe it would be much better to consider the two properties jointly and not in isolation. So, we have made some comments on the Gorge Block as well as the substantive ones for the Scotsburn Pastoral Lease. But, we reserve the right to make further comments on the Gorge Block, when the preliminary proposal is released for public consideration and comment.

Members of the Branch inspected parts of Scotsburn and the Gorge Block, on the 4th of December this year and found that both areas contained significant inherent ecological and landscape values which, we feel should be retained by the crown, in addition to those already proposed.

The Branch is pleased that the bush areas within the Scotsburn Stream Valley and on the nearby land, designated as CA1 and CA2, will be retained. And that there will be some easements for access but we will make further comments on that matter later on.

With regards to the Scotsburn Pastoral Lease, we note that 442ha has been allocated for freeholding and only 67ha to be retained by the Crown. On the information provided, this seems to us an unequal division of the property. And, on the Gorge Block there is a steep

area on the western side, adjacent to the Orari River Gorge, which has been proposed to be retained by the Crown, and contains no or very little pastoral value. While the retention with the crown is supported, the loss of this land to the lessee is of little or no consequence and its monetary worth would be minimal. So, for both Scotsburn and the Gorge Block, when assessed, we ask for a more equal division of land between the crown and the lessee with land containing important natural values, being retained in crown ownership.

And, we are concerned that there are still stands of bush, shrublands and tussock grasslands which have been proposed to be transferred to freehold title. Such transfers of significant stands of indigenous flora and fauna habitats, is not acceptable to the Branch. Such sites with significant areas of bush, shrublands and tussock grasslands occur on both the Gorge Block and the Scotsburn Pastoral Lease and must not go to freehold title. Along with those sites containing bush and shrubs along the banks of the Orari Gorge, together with the large stands of manuka, the gullies within the Shag Stream Catchment, the bush and native trees along the “Pack” track, as well as along the front faces of the foothills and within some of the front hill gullies. Including the bush areas in and around the informal camping grounds near the Orari River Road.

Regarding stands of bush, shrublands and tussock grasslands, found on the Gorge Block, it cannot be determined yet if these are to be retained by the crown, not until the Preliminary Proposal for this area is released. So, we may make further comments about such areas at a later date.

South west of the Orari River Road, where the property borders the Orari River, along some stretches of the border with the river there is, or may be a band of native vegetation, including shrubs and trees. While it is not clear from the maps supplied, no areas of bush or native trees growing along these edges of the river should be transferred to freehold title including any part of the Orari riverbed itself. Clarification is needed here as to where the exact boundary lies along the property borders with the Orari River. And the land further up along Orari River Road where it is close to the edge of the river may also contain natural values which could require protection. So, again clarification is needed here as well.

With regards to the Scotsburn Stream, while it is pleasing that all the slopes in bush have been proposed to be retained by the Crown, further up the stream on the Gorge Block, we understand that the areas of river flats are proposed to be transferred to the freehold title. Here we feel the whole stream valley should be retained by the Crown so to maintain ecological and landscape cohesion and ensure access for the public up this interesting valley.

Both the Scotsburn and the Gorge Block are highly visible from both the plains and within the Orari Gorge itself and, significant inherent landscape values are found on both properties. It has long been recognised that the foothills, from Four Peaks, including Scotsburn hills and along to Mt Peel are most important because of the visual landscapes

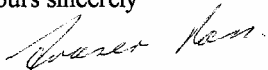
that they provide from many aspects, especially when viewed from the plains. So, we ask that these important significant inherent landscape values be retained and protected by Crown ownership or appropriate protective covenants. We have attached relevant sections from the *Landscape Assessment of the Timaru District's Coastal Environment, River Margins, and Front Ranges*” to support our claims that the landscapes of these properties are important and protected from potential threats such as forestry and tracking.

Regarding access, that proposed a-b and c-d routes on Scotsburn, is supported. And we would ask for additional access on the Gorge Block, from the end of Orari River Road, along the old pack track route to the ridge and then a route identified to allow reasonable access down to the Scotsburn Stream. We feel it is important that the public have access from the end of Orari River Road, up Shag Stream, over the hill and down to the Scotsburn Stream. But until the preliminary proposals for the Gorge Block are released, it is difficult to determine if access routes on the Scotsburn Pastoral Lease are adequate or not. Regarding access a-b there is a gap between it and c-d which appears be a legal road, here it should be made clear, with signs that there is a right of public access along this legal but not formed road. And, we ask that consideration be given to a public access provision between the CA2 and CA1 blocks along the property boundary, if that is practicable.

Inherent natural and landscapes values exist on both Scotsburn and the Gorge Block, in addition to those already identified to date, so, we ask for further consideration which will ensure that all important areas are retained in Crown ownership, as we requested above

The Branch would be pleased to provide further information, and clarify the points made, if that is required.

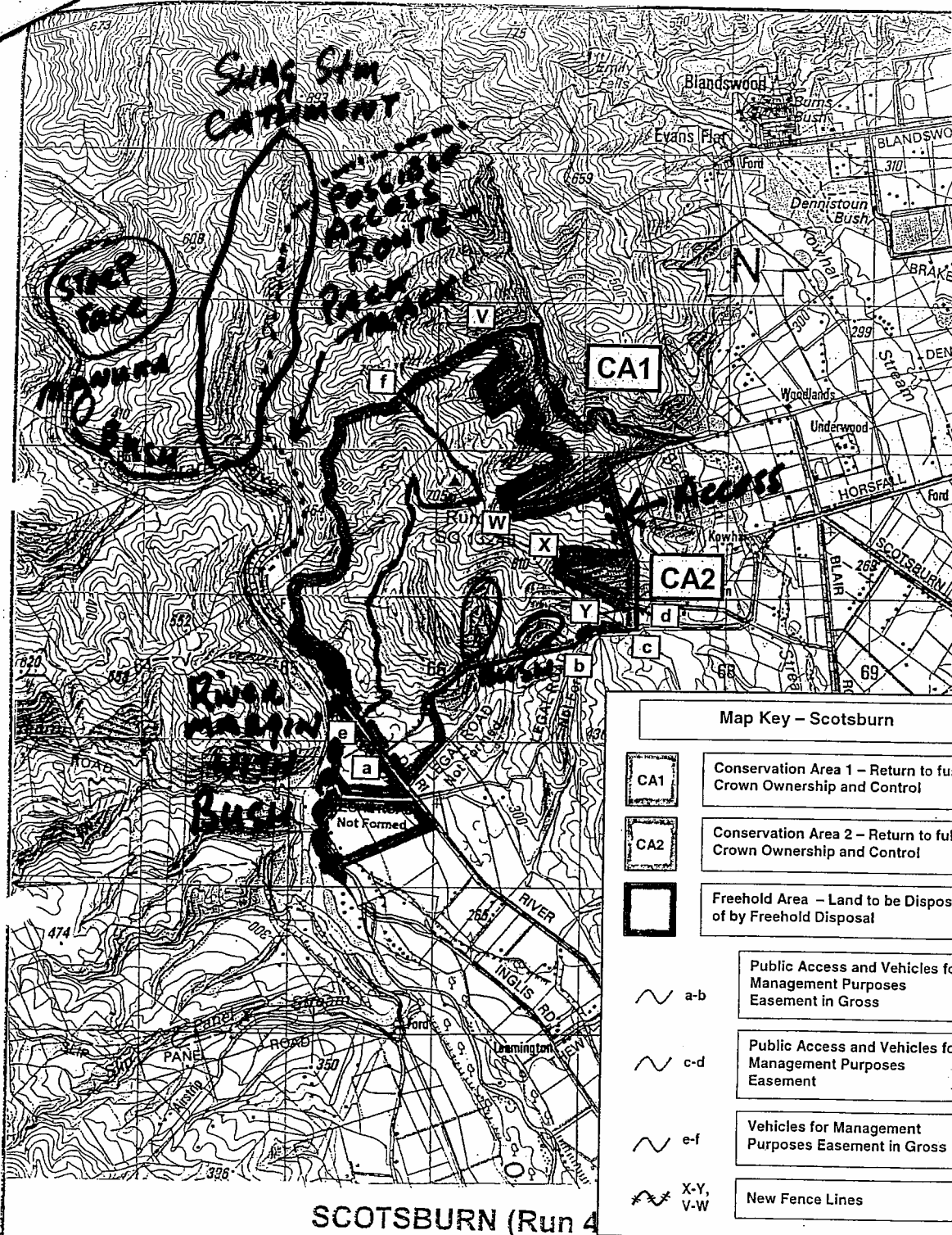
Yours sincerely



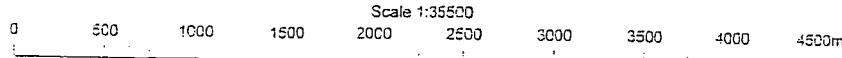
Fraser Ross
Branch Field Officer

Attachment: extracts from *Landscape Assessment of Timaru District's Coastal Environment, River Margins, and Front Ranges*

Map with requests outlined.



SCOTSBURN (Run 4)



Marginal strip subject to Section 24 (9) Conservation Act 1987

Version	1	2	3	4	5
Canterbury Land District					
NZMS 260 137					
				Sheet 1 of 1	
				Date 20/11/00	

"Landscape Assessment of Tomoua District's Rural Environment from Rangiora, and Front Ranges"
by Allen Nelson FAZLICK, June 1988.

4.0

DEFINING THE SIGNIFICANT AND OUTSTANDING FRONT RANGE LANDSCAPES

For this assessment the hill country is a general term for the rolling landform that encompasses both the angulated high hills and the gentler front hills facing the plains. This landform could be described as an intermediate landscape that separates the plains from the rangelands. The land-use pattern is characterised by cultivated farmland on the lower sunny slopes, regenerating shrubs and fernland on the darker faces, and extensive pastoral farming on the high hills.

To provide some consistency in the defining of the district's most recognisable natural features and landscapes, and their protection from inappropriate use or development, it is considered all the east and north facing foothills down to the junction with the plains are significant in a landscape context. Although being significant in a district context, the foothills should be given less weight than the higher altitude rangelands when considering controlling land use activities as this middle ground could be described as a "working landscape" where potential adverse impacts are fewer than within the more sensitive high country.



The hill country as viewed from along the Orari River Road

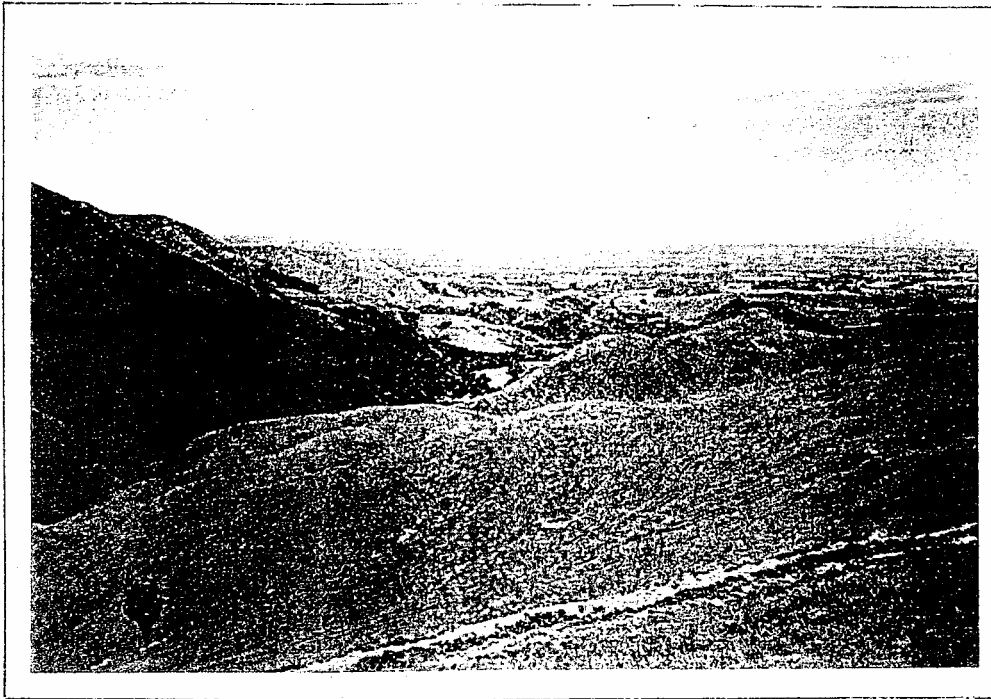
Furthermore in relation to what natural landscapes are considered to be outstanding, some direction is given again in the **WESI vs Queenstown Lakes** decision, where Judge Jackson ruled that outstanding natural landscapes should be assessed at a district level. For example one cannot compare the spectacular glaciated landscapes of the Queenstown Lakes district with the landforms that characterise the Timaru district which includes a chain of low mountains and rolling foothills that are viewed from different parts of the outwashed plains.

From this assessment it is considered that the district's low mountains or rangelands are both "prominent" and "conspicuous" when viewed from the surrounding road network and main urban areas. This is an important aspect of assessing outstanding natural features and landscapes, which was again highlighted by Judge Jackson's decision, *"Further, even if one considers landscapes in the loose sense of 'views of scenery' the first question that arises is as to where the view is from. One cannot separate the view from the viewer and their viewpoint."*

In conclusion, the findings of this landscape assessment coupled with Judge Jackson's ruling in relation to the recognition that should be given to prominent landforms within a broader geographic setting, makes the rangelands contained within the Timaru district an outstanding natural feature and landscape.

4.1

EASTERN HILL COUNTRY LANDSCAPE



Approximate lower boundary of the current R3 Zone.

DISTINCTIVE NATURAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Chain of hard rock hills with a predominantly north-south axis.
2. A soft rounded landform that rises rapidly from the outwashed plains.
3. Where feasible, the original vegetative cover has been converted into intensively managed farmland.
4. Single channeled streams contained within deep gullies and gorges.
5. Remnant shrublands still remain in inherently difficult areas to develop, such as rocky gullies and river gorges.

6. Sporadic cabbage trees still surviving on hillsides, with many individual plant's health in decline.

LANDSCAPE VALUES

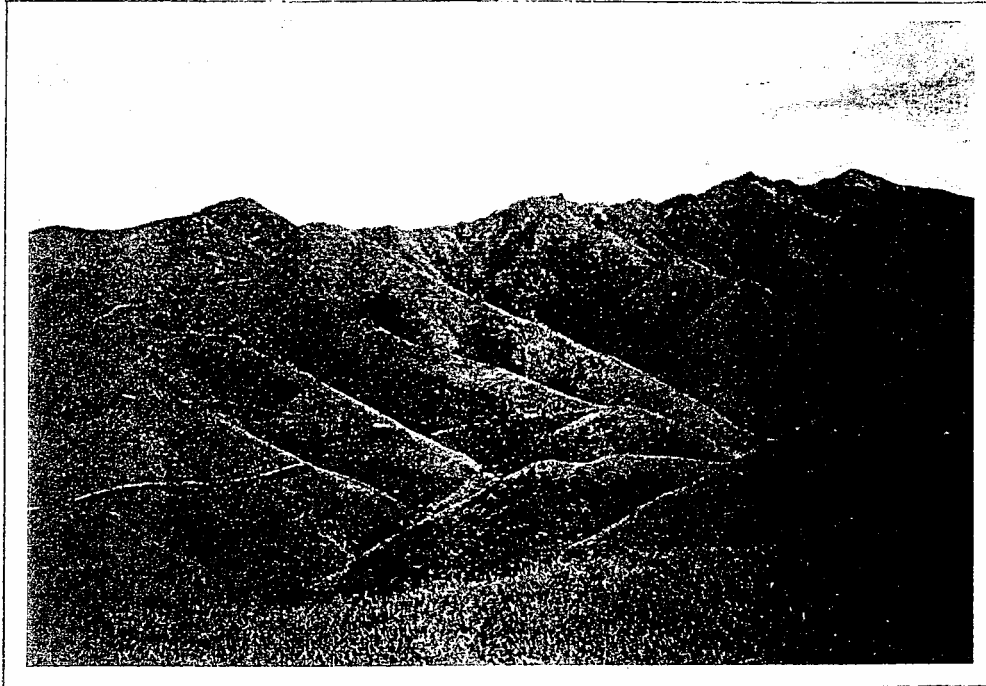
1. Important visual resource for South Canterbury, as the foothills form a backdrop or natural setting to the South Canterbury Plains.
2. Present landscape character is an expression of progressive farming techniques with the original vegetative cover being replaced by exotic grasslands.
3. With the foothills being subdivided into large grazing blocks, which complement the lower country's more intensive farming activities, results in the foothills having a mainly coherent land use pattern.
4. Landscape interest and diversity remain where native shrublands are still intact.

POTENTIAL THREATS

1. Further fragmentation of native shrubland communities making them ecologically unsustainable and/or visually insignificant.
2. Further invasion of weed species into natural areas.
3. The integrity of the foothill landscape would be further compromised by the siting of installations, e.g. communication towers being silhouetted against skylines.
4. New broad scale land uses which conflict with existing pastoral landscapes such as plantation forestry. Effects include:
 - Plantation forestry obscuring the underlying landform which results in loss of landscape character and subtlety.
 - The dark green, coarse texture and geometric outline of the typical coniferous forestry block contrasts sharply with the lighter colour variations and fine textures of pasture land.
5. Landscape values would be further compromised by buildings, e.g. dwellings and fertilizer bins, being located on prominent skylines.
6. Major earth disturbances, especially zig-zag tracking along prominent ridgelines.

4.2

FRONT RANGE LANDSCAPE



Upper section of the R3 Zone.

DISTINCTIVE RURAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Prominent low mountain peaks with surrounding dissected high hills.
2. Series of low spurs that descend down to valley floors.
3. Areas of bare ground at a high altitude caused by severe climatic conditions.
4. Broad leafed shrublands still intact, typically found in naturally unproductive areas such as in deep gullies or on cold faces. Some shrublands still occupying extensive altitudinal ranges which in an ecological context helps to link the ranges with the foothills.
5. Composition of the vegetative cover strongly influenced by farm management practices with the results of AO&TD being conspicuous during the spring growing season.

6. The Landscape character reflects the local slope aspect, and grazing patterns with the sunny drier faces being extensively modified while the darker faces are often clad in native species, either native grasslands or reverting shrublands.

LANDSCAPE VALUES

1. At a higher altitude the natural character of the South Island high country is still represented.
2. Prominent landmarks, e.g. Four Peaks Range, are highly visible from the more populated parts of the district.
3. The angular outline of the low mountain peaks contrast markedly with the rounded form of the foothills.
4. Frequently the contrast between shrublands and exotic grasslands creates a distinctive repetitive pattern.

POTENTIAL THREATS

1. Further fragmentation of native shrublands that will result in natural areas becoming ecologically unsustainable and/or visually insignificant.
2. Further loss of altitudinal sequences in native plant communities, especially along stream sides which provides this type of landscape with a special identity.
3. Further spreading of wilding pines from adjoining plantations.
4. Unsympathetic siting of auxiliary farm buildings especially within visually sensitive areas such as on skylines.
5. Further subdivision of grazing blocks which can result in hard edges to be formed between blocks due to stock pressure, changes in land cover and soil fertility (refer to example 1).
6. Inappropriate siting of farm tracks, in particular where they cut across natural features rather than following natural benches and contours (refer to example 2).
7. Further ecological decline in shrublands with seral species replacing long term species with these structural changes in the vegetation greatly affecting the visual qualities of the shrublands.
8. Soil and water qualities possibly being degraded by the loss of water retention species such as tussocks.

6. Further sub division and human settlement patterns, e.g. grazing blocks being sub divided.
7. Any major changes in land use that would cause fragmentation to the existing landscape character of the catchment, in particular the introduction of plantation forestry. Forestry would have adverse effects on the visual, ecological, and hydrological values of the catchment:
 - Effects on visual values: The mosaic of grasslands and shrublands would be replaced with a monocultural crop that would obliterate the subtleties within the topography.
 - Effects on ecosystems: The introduction of coniferous forests will directly compete for growing space, water, and nutrients and native shrublands that would appear to be expanding due to more recent conservative farming practices.
 - Effects on hydrology: From technical research undertaken in other regions of New Zealand it would appear that plantation forestry can affect a catchment's water yield especially during the drier summer months.