

## Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: SIMONS HILL

Lease number: PT 046

### Public Submissions Pt 1

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

October 04

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28 September 2001

QV Valuations  
PO Box 13 443  
CHRISTCHURCH

Attention: Barry Dench

Dear Barry

**SIMONS HILL – TENURE REVIEW**

The following provides an assessment of Fish and Game values in relation to the Simons Hill property.

1. The Mary Burn is a popular small stream trout fishery. It contains self sustaining populations of both brown and rainbow trout.
2. There is a wetland area (see attached map) that provides habitat for Canada geese and paradise shelduck, and hunting opportunity.
3. There is a chukor population on the property that may provide upland game hunting opportunity. (See the Richmond report for a history of chukor hunting.)
4. Access to these resources is important and with this in mind we request that the following is negotiated and included in the tenure review process:
  - a) Vehicle access to the Mary Burn for anglers where the pylons cross it and at the irrigation intake (see attached map).
  - b) Access to the wetland area for Canada geese and paradise shelduck hunting. (This could be provided from the same vehicle track that gives access to the Mary Burn.)
  - c) Access to the hill area (see map) for upland game hunting, as per b) above and from the road to the west of the Tekapo River where it bounds the property.
  - d) Marginal strips on the Mary Burn within and where it bounds the property.

Yours faithfully



Vaughan Lynn  
Fish and Game Officer

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**THE GERALDINE TRAMPING CLUB.**  
**76 Pye Rd, RD 21,**  
**Geraldine.**  
**13th, July 2004.**

Barry Dench,  
Quotable Value Ltd,  
PO Box 13-443,  
Christchurch.



**SIMONS HILL TENURE REVIEW,**

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Simons Hill tenure review.

The Club is content with the preliminary proposals, as set out in your letter to Mr R Gillespie, ref: CON/500000/16/12780/A-ZNO-04.

We would welcome information on any further outcomes, of the above, or any other high-country stations you are dealing with.

Yours faithfully,



F.D. Thomas.

**THE GERALDINE TRAMPING CLUB.**

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Anne  
Steven  
LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECT

12 July 2004

The Commissioner of Crown Lands  
c/o Quotable Value NZ Ltd  
P O Box 13-443  
CHRISTCHURCH



Dear Sir

**Re: Preliminary Proposal for Simons Hill Pastoral Lease Tenure Review**

I wish to make a submission on the proposals for tenure review on Simons Hill Pastoral Lease.

I am a registered Landscape Architect and member of the High Country Landscape Group of the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects. My family home is in the Mackenzie Basin and I am very familiar with its landscape and landscape values. I also undertook the landscape assessment for the Department of Conservation on Simons Hill in 2000.

**Submission on Proposed Tenure Review of Simons Hill Pastoral Lease**

- 1 I fully support the proposal to retain the east side of Simons Hill as conservation land. The protection of this area in perpetuity is a very positive outcome from the tenure review of the lease.
- 2 I do not support the proposal to dispose of the Pukaki Flats and permit them to be freeholded.

I strongly disagree with the statement in the preliminary proposal that the flats do not have significant inherent values.

I identified the Pukaki Flats as an area with significant inherent landscape value in my report and recommended they be retained in Crown ownership as conservation land. The Department of Conservation identified more than half of the flats area as significant (more from an ecological perspective) and recommended retaining them in Crown ownership under conservation management.

**Landscape Values of the Pukaki Flats**

Outwash plains are an iconic feature of the Mackenzie Basin – vast, open, flat, windswept spaces with a specialized dry fescue tussock cover and associated insect and bird populations. The sinuous surface patterns of meltwater channels are intriguing and distinctive.

The Mackenzie Basin is one of our most distinctive outstanding natural landscapes. The things that make the Basin distinctive and underlie its outstanding status include:

- the huge scale of the landscape and its component elements especially its landforms
- the dominance of landform and its high legibility

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- the extreme openness of the landscape in many places (absence of trees, structures, huge flat spaces, absence of development over large areas)
- the marked visual simplicity, uniformity and coherence with a strong horizontal emphasis and a dominance of brown, grey and ochre colours
- the ability to see unimpeded for great distances across the Basin and a marked sense of vast open space

The outwash plains contribute in a major way to this distinctive character, forming the floor of the Basin. They are a distinctive and iconic landform of the Basin with very distinctive visual and sensory characteristics (vast space, flatness, openness, simplicity, subtle visual patterns).

Although degraded (mainly through rabbit browsing and spread of hieracium) they are still one of the more natural parts of the Basin because of the absence of development over such large areas.

Dryness and wind exposure, sparseness of the vegetation cover (fescue tussock along with small intertussock species such as lichens, pimeleas, coprosmas, raoulias and native heaths), and poor light infertile soils are the defining elements of these plains – this is what they are. The flora supports a diverse insect population especially endemic grasshopper species.

This flora and the natural conditions of the outwash plains cannot in my opinion support long term pastoral use in their indigenous state.

The flora and the conditions would need to be substantially altered to make grazing viable and physically sustainable, through over-sowing and topdressing, cultivation and the sowing of exotic pasture and fodder crops, irrigation and shelter planting, and subdivisional fencing for pasture management. Such development and associated landscape change is illustrated clearly in the dairy farm development by Lake Ruataniwha. Very little of the indigenous character of this area remains.

Such development totally and irreversibly alters the essential character of the outwash plains, especially cultivation, irrigation development and tree planting (presence instead of absence of trees; richer exotic ground cover instead of sparser tussocks or other native species, or the fauna they support, in cultivated areas; enclosed spaces and fragmentation of landscape instead of immense space and uniformity with long distance views interrupted; presence of cultural structures such as centre-pivot irrigators and border dyking; green instead of brown and grey indigenous colours).

The outcome is a cultural “anywhere landscape” with significantly less landscape value and making no contribution whatsoever to the special “place” of the Mackenzie Basin.

Outwash plains are very poorly protected as part of the full range of our natural environments. To achieve an appropriate level of protection that actually protects the essential character of the plains (a major component of which is immense scale), very large and intact areas need to be protected.

It is acknowledged that many of these areas are in a degraded state however if we do not protect what we have left then there will be no opportunities safeguarded for future revegetation and enhancement of these fantastic areas.

The Pukaki Flats on Simons Hill Station are exemplary of the Mackenzie outwash plains and enjoy all of their characteristics.

I quote from my report “it is the sheer scale and openness of the plains that allows the extensive uninterrupted views right across the Basin that are so memorable.

To some, the plains appear bleak, hostile and lifeless, to others they are a special landscape feature and geomorphological phenomena, or home to particular indigenous plant and animal species. Whatever the perception, the plains are fundamental to the character of the outstanding landscape of the Mackenzie Basin.”

Currently this area is one of the larger more intact areas of outwash in the Basin due to freedom from development, “one of the larger remaining examples of this much reduced vegetation type.” (DOC Conservation Resources Report). The DOC reported that there were a high number of juvenile and seedling tussocks on the flats, and that the large size of the area would make it more viable as an ecosystem.

The scoping report describes the flats as Class VI and VII land with very poor shallow infertile soils, prone to drought and being of little grazing or agricultural value. These physical attributes form the essential indigenous character and define the outwash plains

Clearly, extensive development would be required to make them viable for grazing on a long term basis. Such development will not sustain the indigenous attributes of the outwash plain as I explained earlier therefore

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on-going use of this area is not ecologically sustainable. Exotic and cultural attributes would replace the indigenous attributes.

**The outwash plains are one of the few remaining low altitude areas on a significantly large scale that are undeveloped in the Basin. They are highly sensitive to change in landscape terms and their values are significantly threatened now, mainly from cultivation and irrigation proposals.**

**In order to retain the landscape integrity of the Basin as an outstanding natural landscape, it is essential that the floor of the Basin – the outwash plains – be protected and enhanced as natural landscape.**

**Tenure review provides a one off opportunity to permanently secure the outwash plains under conservation management as an essential indigenous landscape component of the Mackenzie Basin. A significant opportunity is present with the tenure review of Simons Hill Pastoral Lease.**

I submit that if the flats are allowed to be freeholded, then the ecology and landscape values will not be sustained due to the inevitable development for more productive pasture. Furthermore the opportunity for enhancing their natural values in the future will be permanently lost.

I submit that the proposed tenure of the Pukaki Flats be re-considered and that their values be recognised and protected, as provided for under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Anne Steven', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Anne Steven

NZILA Registered Landscape Architect  
Member of the NZILA High Country Landscape Group