

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: THE LARCHES

Lease number: PO 254

Public Submissions - Part 2

These submissions were received as a result of the public advertising of the Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review.

November

08

UPPER CLUTHA ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY (INC.)

SUBMISSION ON THE LARCHES TENURE REVIEW



To: The Commissioner of Crown Lands
C/O Opus International Consultants Ltd
Private Bag 1913
DUNEDIN

1. NAME:

Upper Clutha Environmental Society Incorporated
PO Box 443,
Wanaka.
Ph/Fax: (03) 443 1813
Email: uces@xtra.co.nz

2. ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:

PO Box 443, Wanaka

3. DETAILS OF THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL:

The Proposal provides for:

- a. An area of approximately 857 ha. to be restored to or retained in full Crown ownership and control as a conservation area pursuant to section 35 (2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998
- b. An area of approximately 976 ha to be disposed of by freehold disposal to the Holder pursuant to section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to Part IVA Conservation Act 1987, section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991, with the following protective mechanisms and qualified designations:

Protective mechanisms: Two conservation covenant areas of approximately 18 ha and 180 ha.

Qualified designations: An easement through the proposed freehold section to provide for conservation management access to the proposed access area (existing farm track), and an easement to provide public access by foot, horse and non motorised vehicles to the proposed conservation area (adjacent to the north east boundary).

4. LOCATION OF SUBJECT LEASE

The Larches is located at the lower end of the Cardrona Valley, one of six pastoral properties on the western faces of the Pisa-Criffel range. It is located at the end of Mt Barker Rd., and is opposite, and clearly visible from, the main Cardrona Valley Rd., an important tourist road, and the regularly used route between Wanaka and Queenstown.

5. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES OF THE PROPERTY

The importance of the landscape throughout this area has been recognised by a designation of "**outstanding natural landscape**" in the Queenstown Lakes District plan.

Return of the Summit to Crown Ownership

The property offers opportunities for recreational access to a valuable addition to the conservation estate in the area. To this end the Upper Clutha Environmental Society supports the proposal to return the summit plateau to Crown control, as it has significant conservation values in its landscape, as well as historic gold-mining relics and some nationally endangered plant species; it will be a valuable addition to the proposed Pisa Conservation Park and will fit in with the other land already returned to the Crown.

Being relatively near to Wanaka it has the potential to be much visited by walkers, and others looking for a view of the Upper Clutha basin. The property is valuable for both the opportunity to traverse the land itself and to enjoy views of the surrounding landscape from it.

Extension of the Proposed Conservation Covenant

In addition to the proposal to return the summit plateau to Crown ownership, the proposal provides for a conservation covenant over a strip of land below the plateau. The society considers that this covenant should extend lower down this highly visible slope, preferably covering the full visible slope area. The slope has several good stands of kanuka and other woody species such as olearia, coprosma, bush lawyer, porcupine scrub, native broom, manuka, carmichaelia and matagouri, which are superior to examples of vegetation in the surrounding area, and should be preserved as part of the outstanding natural landscape, particularly given the proximity of the view from the Cardrona Valley Road.

Avoidance of Further Visible Cutting into the Landscape

The preliminary proposal provides for two easements – the existing farm road, to be used for management purposes, and a 150m public access easement strip adjacent to the northern boundary. It is stated that the 150m width is provided to allow for the cutting of a zigzag track up this highly visible steep face.

The Society is strongly opposed to the creation of the boundary easement for the purposes of cutting an additional very visible track. The existing farm road is in close proximity, and is well graded for walking use. It would provide satisfactorily for public walking access. A second track and a second visible cutting into the slope are not required.

Farm activities can be protected by having a locked gate to keep out motorised vehicles, by appropriate signage, and, if necessary by exclusion of the public during key times such as lambing.

6. PROVISION FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE AREA

In addition to the opportunity to provide for loop walks in the extended Pisa Conservation area, it is understood that plans have been discussed, and are included in the QLDC Walking and Cycling Strategy, for a public walking and cycle route along the Cardrona Valley floor from Wanaka to Cardrona.

As the subject property lies on both sides of the Cardrona River, it is important that the opportunity of this tenure review is used to ensure that this section of the route is secured by appropriate easements alongside the riverbed if the marginal strip does not provide for practical through access. This will ensure the protection of future opportunities for public walking and cycling access to the whole valuable landscape of the Cardrona Valley.

Similarly access to and over the designated public road, shown on the proposal plan, across the Cardrona River should be protected to provide linked access for cyclists and pedestrians across the Cardrona riverbed from the Cardrona Valley Road.

7. SUMMARY OF UCES POINTS OF SUBMISSION

- The creation of the proposed Conservation area is endorsed, as an extension to the Pisa Conservation estate, both for the intrinsic values of the area, and as a viewpoint to the surrounding outstanding natural landscape.
- The area to be covered by the proposed conservation covenant should be extended to provide protection to the whole visible slope and its significant vegetation, much of which provides the best examples in the area.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

- The proposed public access easement up the northern boundary should be deleted and public access provided by way of the existing farm track, to avoid further cutting on this very visible slope.
- Public access should be ensured for future development of walking and cycling access up the Cardrona Valley, and across the Cardrona riverbed from the Cardrona Valley Road, to provide for public enjoyment of the outstanding natural landscape amenity of the area.

8. FURTHER PARTICIPATION BY UCES

Representatives of the Society would be please to participate in further discussions on the preliminary proposal and/or to present these submissions in person if required.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

22/9/08

On behalf of the Upper Clutha Environmental Society

UPPER CLUTHA TRAMPING CLUB

I N C O R P O R A T E D



P.O. Box 733 Wanaka

David Peyton
Tenure Review Contract Manager
Opus International consultants Ltd
Private Bag 1913
Dunedin.



The Larches Tenure Review Submission.

The Upper Clutha Tramping Club regards the creation of the proposed Conservation Area as an important addition to the D.O.C. estate offering heritage, biodiversity and recreational values.

However, we would like to make the following submission:

1. We would prefer that the proposed management purposes easement is available for public access as well as for management purposes.
Our reason is that this easement would provide a better standard of track and an easier gradient for most levels of walkers/ trampers and would be more suitable for mountain bikers.
We appreciate that it may be necessary for such a track to be closed to the public during some farming operations. It may also need to be locked off to prevent unwanted motor vehicle access in order to protect security of farm use.

2. If it is not possible to negotiate this easement for public access, we would like improved entry provision to the proposed boundary line public access easement.

With either option we would like to see a more direct access to point d from Mt Barker road.

3. We can see an opportunity in the future for a loop track from the Larches to Little Criffel Peak and then via the current D.O.C. Criffel track back to the Cardrona river, before returning along the river to the Larches.

To aid this, practical usable public access across the bed of the Cardrona river from legal public road to legal public road should be assured.

Sue Webb for Upper Clutha Tramping Club Committee. 17 September 2008

16



FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc.)

P.O. Box 1604, Wellington



12 September 2008

The Commissioner of Crown Lands
C/- Opus International Consultants Ltd.,
Private Bag 1913.
DUNEDIN

Attention David Payton

Dear Sir,



Re: Preliminary Proposal for Tenure Review: The Larches Pastoral Lease (Po 254)

I write on behalf of Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc. (FMC) which represents some 13,000 members of tramping, mountaineering, climbing and other outdoor clubs throughout New Zealand. We also indirectly represent the interests and concerns of many thousands of private individuals who may not currently be members of clubs but who enjoy recreation in the back country.

On their behalf, FMC aims to enhance recreation opportunities, to protect natural values, especially landscape and vegetation, and to improve public access to the back country through the tenure review process.

FMC fully supports the objectives of tenure review as set out in the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Act 1998, and the more recently stated government objectives for the South Island high country especially the following:-

- to promote the management of the Crown's high country in a way that is ecologically sustainable.*
- 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.*
- to secure public access to and enjoyment of high country land.*
- to ensure that conservation outcomes for the high country are consistent with the NZ Biodiversity Strategy.*
- to progressively establish a network of high country parks and reserves.*

[EDC Min (03) 5/3; CAB Min (03) 11/5 refer]

FMC appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Proposal for the review of The Larches pastoral lease.

For your information we attach as an appendix to this submission, the report which FMC prepared on the tenure review of The Larches in 2001, at the 'Early Warning' stage of the tenure review process.

THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL

FMC notes that the proposed designations are described as follows:-

General description of the proposal:

1. An area of approximately 857 ha to be restored to or retained in full Crown ownership and control as a conservation area pursuant to section 35 (2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

2. An area of approximately 976 ha (approximately) to be disposed of by freehold disposal to the Holder pursuant to section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to Part IVA Conservation Act 1987, section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991, the following protective mechanisms, and qualified designations:

Protective Mechanisms:

(a) A conservation covenant of approximately 18 hectares pursuant to sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 for the purpose of preserving the natural environment and landscape.

(b) A Conservation Covenant of approximately 180 hectares pursuant to sections 40(1)(b) and 40(2)(a) and (b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 for the purpose of the protection of landscape values.

Qualified Designations:

(a) An easement under section 36(3)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to provide conservation management access by non-motorised and motorised vehicles to the proposed Conservation Area.

(b) An easement under section 36(3)(b) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to provide public access by foot, horse and non-motorised vehicles to the proposed Conservation Area.

FMC SUBMISSIONS

The details of FMC views on, and support for, or objections to, the Preliminary Proposal are presented below and are arranged in the same format as the Preliminary Proposal quoted above.

PROPOSAL 1. An area of approximately 857 ha to be restored to or retained in full Crown ownership and control as a conservation area pursuant to section 35 (2)(a)(i) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

FMC understands that this area, occupying almost 900 ha on the Criffel Range and the rolling plateau stretching away towards the Pisa tops is the area shown as CA 1 on the Designations Plan.

FMC notes that this entire area, between about 1,200 m and 1,400 m mainly east of a line between Criffel Peak (1,282 m) and Little Criffel trig (1,341 m), corresponds with a large part of the area recommended for protection in the FMC Report (2001). We are pleased to note that our recommendation has been followed, and that the natural and landscape values of the remainder of the area recommended by FMC have also been recognized (and designated as CC 2). This area is proposed to be protected under a Conservation Covenant over an area which runs down to the fenceline at about 1,000 m. For our views on this proposal (CC 2) please see below.

FMC agrees that the proposed Conservation Area CA 1 has significant landscape values and offers excellent panoramic views of the Cardrona Valley and the Cardrona tops from Mt Cardrona through Highland Saddle to Mt Alpha which overlooks Lake Wanaka. Looking south and east there is an expansive panorama of the vast rolling plateau which includes the western parts of the Pisa Conservation area. This new Conservation Area should eventually be added to the Pisa Conservation Area to which it will be a worthy addition. Such worth will include both its high natural and landscape values as well as its potential for increased recreational activities. Although much of the area is dominated by Hieracium, this does not diminish its significant landscape and historic values.

A major topographical feature of the area is the catchment of the Luggate Creek with its deeply incised valleys especially in the vicinity of the Criffel Diggings. These diggings have significant historic value and provide additional interest for recreational visitors to the tops, and especially for those with an interest in the goldmining history of Otago. With an extensive network of well preserved water races and diggings, the area is of exceptional historic value because the mining system of gold workings, water races, dams and associated pack tracks is essentially intact and represents the last major (and one of the highest) alluvial goldfield to be discovered in Otago.

The description of the natural, landscape and historic values of this area in the Preliminary Proposal matches closely the description given in the FMC Report (2001).

FMC Submission

FMC unreservedly endorses and supports this proposal for a total of almost 900 ha of land to be restored to full Crown ownership control. We recommend that following the completion of tenure review the area designated CA 1 should be incorporated into the Pisa Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL 2. An area of approximately 976 ha (approximately) to be disposed of by freehold disposal to the Holder pursuant to section 35(3) Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 subject to Part IVA Conservation Act 1987, section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991, and the following two protective mechanisms, and qualified designations:

FMC understands that the area proposed for freeholding consists of that part of the lower slopes and front faces of the Criffel Range which are situated on The Larches pastoral lease, from the valley floor to the fenceline at about 1,200 m. The highest part of this area is proposed as Covenant area CC 2. We further understand that another small Covenant area CC 1, and two easements are proposed to be created within this proposed freehold area.

Much of the lower slopes, up to about 1000 m are characterised by Blackstone Hill and Arrow Steepland Yellow Grey Earth soils which are classified LUC Class VI and as such are likely to be capable of supporting sustainable pastoral use. FMC therefore supports the proposed freeholding of this area subject to some reservations which we explain below.

1. Land above about 1,000m

Above about 1,000 m there is a change to High Country Yellow Brown Earth Dunstan Steepland soils which are classified LUC Class VIIe. By contrast to the lower slopes, this land is of low suitability for pastoral use and it is unlikely that it could be managed in a way that promotes ecological sustainability. Without inputs of essential nutrients there will be a slow depletion of soil reserves. This depletion might be restored with the use of fertiliser but such application is generally considered not to be economically justifiable because pasture response is small at higher altitude. The following is an extract from the FMC Report (2001):-

“The lower slopes have been classified LUC Class IV and VI, the mid to upper slopes as Class VI and the highest slopes along the skyline are Class VIIe. The rolling plateau is all Class VII, due either to proneness to erosion, or climatic limitation.

It is likely that the lower and mid to upper slopes (LUC Class IV and VI land) are capable of supporting sustainable pastoral use with appropriate maintenance (Fig. 4). The highest slopes and the rolling plateau has by definition low suitability for pastoral use, and is heavily infested with tussock hawkweed (Fig. 5). As such it is not capable of supporting sustainable pastoral production.”

The land between about 1,000 and 1,200 m is proposed for protection under a Conservation Covenant CC 2 and has high landscape values which are recognised in the proposal document. The area also contains significant natural values including Carmichaelia and Matagouri which would flourish in the absence of stock grazing and burning or other scrub clearance. It is also badly infested with Hieracium especially above about 1,100 m.

Because it is unlikely that this area could support ecologically sustainable pastoral use, and because the conservation and recreation values of this area are higher than its productive value, FMC submits that this area should NOT be freeholded and that it would be more appropriate to return this area to full Crown ownership and control to be managed for conservation purposes by adding it to the proposed Conservation Area CA 1.

2. Proposed Covenant Area CC 1.

In addition to the values identified within the area designated CC 1, we have observed that more extensive shrublands of significant inherent value are present on the front faces below 1,000 m. We submit that consideration should be given to formal protection of such areas with natural and landscape values within the area proposed for freeholding.

3. Landscape protection

FMC believes that the proposal document is correct where it identifies important landscape values in the area designated CC 2. Clause 3 of Schedule 1 of the Covenant document appropriately describes the value and importance of the landscape within CC 2. FMC submits that this argument for landscape protection applies equally to that part of the Criffel faces of The Larches described in the Conservation Resources Report (CRR) as Landscape Unit LU 2. The front faces (described as LU 2) up to the fence line at about 1,000 m should therefore be protected as indicated for the proposed area CC 2.

FMC Submission

FMC has no objection to the proposal that part of The Larches pastoral lease (situated on the Cardrona valley floor and on the front faces of the Criffel Range up to about 1000 m, ie excluding CC 2) should become freehold.

FMC has reservations about other parts of this proposal as follows:

- 1. The land above about 1,000 m (designated CC 2) should NOT become freehold but instead it should be added to the proposed Conservation Area CA 1 and be returned to full Crown ownership and control.*
- 2. Consideration should be given to formal protection of additional areas (additional to CC 1) with significant inherent vegetation value (shrublands) within the area proposed for freeholding.*
- 3. The landscape of the front faces (described as LU 2 in the CRR) up to the fence line at about 1,000 m should be protected for the same reasons as indicated in the proposal document for the area of the proposed CC 2.*