

POSTSCRIPT

11.1. REPORT OF THE OFFICIALS COMMITTEE ON WEST COAST RESERVES PROPOSAL

Subsequent to the writing of the ten chapters of this publication, the Minister of Forests released the report of the Officials Committee on West Coast Reserves Proposals (1) on 19th April, 1979, after the contents had been approved by Cabinet. Rather than modify chapters 1 - 10, the Officials Committee report and the Nelson Conservancy draft zoning proposal for the Paparoa region are evaluated in this postscript.

The report on the West Coast reserves culminates many years of government deliberation of this contentious issue. The most important conclusions and recommendations of the Committee are summarised below:

- 26 ecological reserves totalling about 100,000 ha set aside, 7 of them with reductions in area from that originally proposed by the Scientific Co-ordinating Committee;
- 30 amenity "reserves" totalling about 30,000 ha set aside, 8 of them with major reductions in area from that originally proposed by the N.Z. Forest Service;
- Waikukupa S.F. transferred to Westland National Park;
- S. Okarito S.F. retained as State Forest, to be managed for timber production and recreation;
- the most significant changes were in the Buller sub-region where 100,000 m³ of timber were made available through modifications to the proposed Ngakawau and Tiropahi ecological reserves;
- only 4,000 ha of potential agricultural land was in the reserves compared with a total of 400,000 ha of

potential agricultural land in other tenures or non-reserve State forest;

- only 6 of the amenity "reserves" to be gazetted, the rest of the "amenity zones" in management plans;
- all reserves to be open for prospecting and mining, subject to appropriate conditions being applied to preserve their values.

The Officials Committee had an unenviable task. In its composition the committee was overwhelmingly development-orientated (particularly in the preponderance of Ministry of Works and Development, Mines, and Forest Service members); yet it attempted to achieve a compromise - probably failing to satisfy all parties in the process. However, the report finally put paid to the myth that the proposed reserves were a "locked-up" bonanza of timber, agricultural land, minerals and hydro-electricity. Even the amount of timber foregone is only about three years cut at present permissible levels - hardly significant to the regional economy in the long-term. The future economy of the West Coast is going to lie, instead, in the productive potential of the land outside the reserves and the sooner the spokesmen for the regional economy quit crying about the "lock-up of valuable resources" and get on with improving their under-developed agricultural lands, the better it will be for the West Coast community.

Despite the report's attempt at compromise there are a number of recommendations which will have considerable recreational impact and are not justified on the evidence presented. They are:

- retention of South Okarito as State Forest,
- choice and low status of amenity reserves,
- permissible uses in reserves.

11.1.1. Retention of South Okarito as State forest

The failure of the committee to recommend the addition of the forests of S. Okarito to Westland National Park is the major disappointment of the report. The report states that the committee gave "... full weight to the case made by the National Parks Authority ..." but they considered that "... the resources of the forest are critical to the timber industry of the region and that such consideration outweighs the desirability of national park extension"(1).

Yet the reader is given none of the factual information upon which, presumably, this decision was made, with no analysis of the pros and cons and the weightings given to each option. Clearly this decision reflects the overwhelming commercial orientation of the committee, and such a bald conclusion indicates that the committee simply traded off S. Okarito forest for the part of Waikukupa forest south of Hauraki Creek.

If the committee were intent upon a compromise, yet were sincere in their concern to protect outstanding scenic and scientific features, they could have devised a "fall back" boundary between Lake Mapourika and Blanchards Bluff; the forests of the 3-Mile Lagoon catchment could have remained State forests while those of the 5-Mile Lagoon catchment (including Alpine Lake, the northern lateral moraines of the Waiho, and the historic features behind 5-Mile beach) could have been incorporated into the national park. Evidently, this possibility never occurred to the committee!

To date, NZFS has shown enterprise in re-opening the old track system to 3-Mile Lagoon and the coastal recreational resource could be adequately managed either as national park or State forest. The crucial issue is the logging of the forests comprising the foreground of the view of the Southern Alps from Okarito Trig. NZFS are confident that logging can be done without impairing the outstanding visual appeal (probably 25% extraction of dense basin podoc-

carps and 60% extraction of hill country podocarps). The quality of logging will be a heavy responsibility as future generations will be the judge of their expertise.

But there is still the nagging doubt whether it is really necessary to log the forests of S. Okarito at this time, yet. The Native Forests Action Council claim that there is sufficient timber further north. Even clearfelling part of lanthe or Saltwater State forests would probably be preferable to those interested in outdoor recreation in this remarkable region - even though this would be an "irreversible" change and cut across the conservation ethic of "sustained-yield". In addition, the West Coast sawmills are generally cutting well below their permissible level, a consequence of the depressed state of the Nations' economy, and this is further argument for a "wait and see" approach with respect to S. Okarito.

11.1.2. Choice and low status of amenity reserves

The report is deliberately misleading when it states (p.90) that "... the only additional reserve proposal not already zoned for amenity purposes in the original Beech Project zonation, or subsequently added by recreational interests, was an area linking the Nancy and Tass River valleys, which was proposed by the Commission for the Environment" (1). In fact, the Commission for the Environment proposed two other areas:

- Alexander River / Absolum Creek,
- Lower Waitahu valley,

but these were not accepted by the Forest Service. In addition, FMC have in the past requested that the montane valleys of the Clarke, Upper Grey (Gentle Annie Gorge) and Deepdale should be excluded from logging. In total then, there are at least five additional montane valleys with high recreational value which should have been considered for amenity reserve status by the committee.

This omission begs the question as to how the "amenity reserves" were delineated in the 1978 West Coast Forest Policy (2). As already discussed in sections 6.5 and 7.4.3, the public have not been given a detailed account of the amenity reserves, of their values and why they were chosen, one similar to the deliberations of the Scientific Co-ordinating Committee on the ecological reserves. It is known that a comprehensive study of the recreational and historic resources of North Westland has been carried out (3) but it has still not been published, two years after the Hokitika conference.

An inescapable conclusion from reading the Officials Committee report is that the "amenity reserves" are fairly low priority; they occupy only 10 pages of the report and their description is non-existent in many cases. Only six of them (Appendix), generally lakes, are deemed worthy of gazettal as amenity reserves while the montane valleys are only amenity zones. To add insult to injury, the committee seem to consider that a magnificent wilderness valley like the Otututu should be open to logging - if the Forest Service consider it necessary! Clearly the committee never even inspected the Otututu valley, or, for that matter, most of the other 30 "amenity reserves". Such an uninformed opinion on the Otututu casts doubt on the credibility of both the committee and NZFS with regard to many other contentious issues regarding the reserves, e.g. whether difficult country such as the karst plateau of the western Paparoas can ever be economically logged. Anyone who has ever visited the Otututu valley would be impressed with the large number of wild sidestreams which would require permanent bridging - all for the sake of a paltry amount of red and silver beech in the heart of a remote mountain range.

Because many of these amenity zones are montane valleys they are particularly susceptible to small-scale hydro development. The report gives no indication of whether something as ephemeral as an amenity zone will stand up to such proposals. In addition, prospecting and mining in

such zones are deemed to be an appropriate multiple-use provided it can be done discreetly. And, finally, the report clearly considers logging permissible in amenity zones (p.93) "... provided the amenity values are protected or enhanced and provided the public, through access to a draft management plan, has had an opportunity to comment on any logging proposal".

In summary, then, the report indicates that the Committee and the Forest Service have given merely cursory treatment to the concept of amenity reserves in North Westland. The indications are that FMC and other recreation/conservation organisations are going to have to press hard at the management plan stage for greater protection for the recreational resources of the region.

11.1.3. Permissible uses in reserves

As stated above, it appears that most of the proposed amenity reserves listed in the appendix will be open to logging, hydro-electricity development, prospecting and mining under appropriate conditions. With respect to ecological reserves the report makes no comment on hydro-electricity development but clearly states that they are open to prospecting and mining subject to the "usual environmental safeguards" couched in typical woolly phraseology (p.20 of the report).

The overall conclusion is that the Officials Committee has significantly reduced the security of the ecological and amenity reserves, to such an extent that they are now a pale shadow of the fine concepts envisaged by the wording of the recently amended Forests Act. Once again the Forests Act with its multiple-use philosophy will be seen as a poor vehicle for preservation of landscapes and biota and, inevitably, will cause recreational organisations to press for management under more specific preservationist legislation such as the National Parks Act or Reserves Act.

11.2. NZFS MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR PAPAROAS

At the same time that the Minister of Forests released the West Coast Reserves report the N.Z. Forest Service released draft proposals for the future management of the State forests of the Paparoa - Punakaiki region (4). The NZFS zoning map is reproduced as Fig.11.1.

In some respects the NZFS zonings are a major improvement:

- the 6 ecological reserves are a major zoning category constituting 22% of the State forest,
- most of the coastal karst topography is now zoned recreation or ecological reserve (Tiropahi and Porarari),
- most of the State forest (47%) is protection forest.

However, a number of objections still remain:

(1) Sawlog supply areas in Charleston State Forest

The southernmost between Tiropahi reserve and Bullock Creek of two sawlog supply zones remains the most objectionable feature, being a wedge of production forest in the trough between the coastal karst country and the crest of the Paparoa Range. The effect of such logging would be similar to that in South Okarito, effectively cutting off the coastal recreational zone from the natural mountainous hinterland. This zone would also eliminate the section of the inland pack track from Bullock Creek to the Fox River.

Some of the northern sawlog supply zone would involve the felling of forest in the catchment of Ananui Stream and, hence, affect the Metro Cave system. If this catchment were to be excluded this zone would be largely acceptable on balance and is probably necessary to supply the timber industry of the Buller subregion.

In a recent submission to the NPA, the Native Forests Action Council argue that "... the total resource of

currently merchantable sawlog forest in the Buller subregion is sufficient both to sustain the timber industry and to provide for the existing and proposed State forest reserves and the proposed national park" (5). The likelihood of alternative supplies in the Buller subregion has also been discussed already in section 9.5.2(i).

(2) Lack of a wilderness zone

In view of the acknowledged wilderness values of the central core of the Paparoa Range, the lack of any wilderness zone in the draft management zoning is a major omission on the part of the Nelson Conservancy of Forest Service. Admittedly, Mr A. Kirkland, Deputy Director-General of Forests, expressed in his press release the opinion that there was "... adequate scope particularly in the northern part of the range for purposefully retaining a near 'wilderness' state" (5).

However, the wilderness valleys of the Ohikanui and Otututu are zoned "recreation" in the Nelson Conservancy zoning map, implying eventual development for recreational use. If such development eventuated it would fly right in the face of the views of FMC and the case for a wilderness area outlined in section 9.5.1.

Administratively the Paparoas are a difficulty for NZFS. The State forests of the range are divided almost equally between Nelson Conservancy and Westland Conservancy and there is a good case for rationalisation of administrative boundaries. Ideally, the indigenous forest management of the Buller/Inangahua region should be closely integrated with that of the predominantly indigenous forestry of Westland Conservancy to the south. In many ways Westland Conservancy are showing a more progressive approach to indigenous forest conservation and there are some obvious recreational advantages in expanding this Conservancy to incorporate the forests of the Buller/Inangahua district.

11.2.1. Is the national park option still necessary for
the Paparoas?

In summary, while NZFS management zoning has some good features it still does not adequately recognise the need to preserve the scenic, scientific and wilderness values of the Paparoa region. Therefore, the national park option should be considered fully by all parties within government.

REFERENCES

1. ANON., 1979: Report of Officials Committee on West Reserve Proposals to Minister of Forests, March 1979. 107 pp.
2. N.Z. FOREST SERVICE, 1978: West Coast Forest Policy, August 1978. 6 pp. + maps.
3. JOHNSTONE, A.D.; STATON, J.A.; GILLMAN, E.A. 1977: Scenic, recreational and historic values of the West Coast beech project area. Paper delivered at NZFS Hokitika Seminar, June 1977. 22 pp.
4. N.Z. FOREST SERVICE, 1979: Management proposals for State forest land around the Paparoa Range. Background notes from Nelson Conservancy for Mr A. Kirkland's press release of 19 April 1979.
5. NATIVE FORESTS ACTION COUNCIL, 1979: Paparoa National Park : supplementary submission to the National Parks Authority, 10 May 1979.



APPENDIX

Summary of Reserves recommended by Officials Committee on
West Coast Reserves Proposals

A. Ecological Reserves:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Area (ha)</u>	<u>Recre- ational Value</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Area (ha)</u>	<u>Recre- ational Value</u>
Fenian	Oparara R./Karamea gorge	4370	Medium	Lake Hochstetter	L.Hochstetter/Ahaura R.	3330	V.High
Ngakawau/Orikaka	Orikaka R./Buller R.	15497*	High	Deep Ck.	Nelson Ck./Arnold R.	530	Low
Tiropahi	Tiropahi R./W. Paparoas	3349*	V.High	Glasgow Ck.	Arnold R./Nelson Ck.	240	Medium
Porarari	Porarari R./W. Paparoas	7592	V.High	Saxton	Blackball/E. Paparoas	3990	High
Blackwater	Blackwater R/N.Paparoas	9370	Medium	Roaring Meg	Blackball/E. Paparoas	3590	V.High
Fletcher Ck.	Inangahua/E. Paparoas	2800	High	Card Ck.	Kaiata Ra.	3100*	High
Coal Ck.	Inangahua/Brunner Ra.	3960*	Medium	Greenstone	N. bank Greenstone R.	3010*	Medium
Capleston	Inangahua valley	240	Low	Three Mile	Taramakau R./Kumara	210	Low
Central Maruia	Maruia R./Warwick R.	6200	V.High	Shamrock+	Goldsborough/Waimea R.	540	High
Lake Christabel	Clear Grey R/Brown Grey R	10490	V.High	Saltwater	Poerua R./Saltwater Lag.	1971	High
Big River	Inangahua/Snowy R.	6640*	V.High	Oroko Swamp	N. Okarito	192	Low
Waipuna	Upper Grey/Ahaura R.	1930	Medium	S. Okarito	S. Okarito	8892	V.High
Flagstaff	Ahaura R./L.Hochstetter	2240*	Medium	Waikukupa	Omoeroa - Gillespies	13207	High

* modified or reduced in size from original recommendation of Scientific Co-ordinating Committee.

+ recommended for amenity reserve instead.

B. Amenity Reserves:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Future Status</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Future Status</u>
Charleston	W. margin, Charleston S.F.	Amenity Res.	Nancy/Tass	Nancy & Tass valleys	"
Reefton	environs S.H.7. near Rahu Saddle	"	Robinson	Robinson valley	"
Lake Daniells	L. Daniells, upper Maruia	"	Hauptiri	Hauptiri valley	"
Lake Ahaura	L. Ahaura	"	Mitchells	Kumara - Brunner road	"
Lady Lake	Lady Lake	"	Dillmanstown	Dillmanstown/Kumara	"
Upper Arahura R.	mid reaches, Arahura valley	"	Taipo	Taipo R.	"
Ohikanui	N. Paparoa Ra.	Amenity zone.	Kokatahi	above Kokatahi valley	"
Inangahua W.	near Larry's Ck.	"	Inangahua Landing	Inangahua E.	Reduced in area
Otututu	E. Paparoa Ra.	"	Larry's Ck.	Inangahua	"
Garvey Ck.	S. Victoria Ra.	"	Deep Ck.	Rahu Saddle	"
Upper Waitahu	Victoria Ra.	"	Lower Matakītaki	Lower Matakītaki	"
Tutaki	Tutaki/Matakītaki	"	Ahaura R.	Ahaura gorge	"
Upper Matakītaki	Upper Matakītaki R.	"	Kakawau	Sawyers Ck.	Water supply
Glenroy	Glenroy R.	"	Taramakau	Taramakau R.	Reduced in area
Maruia E.	Upper Maruia	"			

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Inside Back Cover: The valleys - Arawata Valley from the Haast Range, South Westland.

Gil van Reenen

Back Cover: Paparoa coastline across Meybille Bay, North Westland.

Les Molloy



