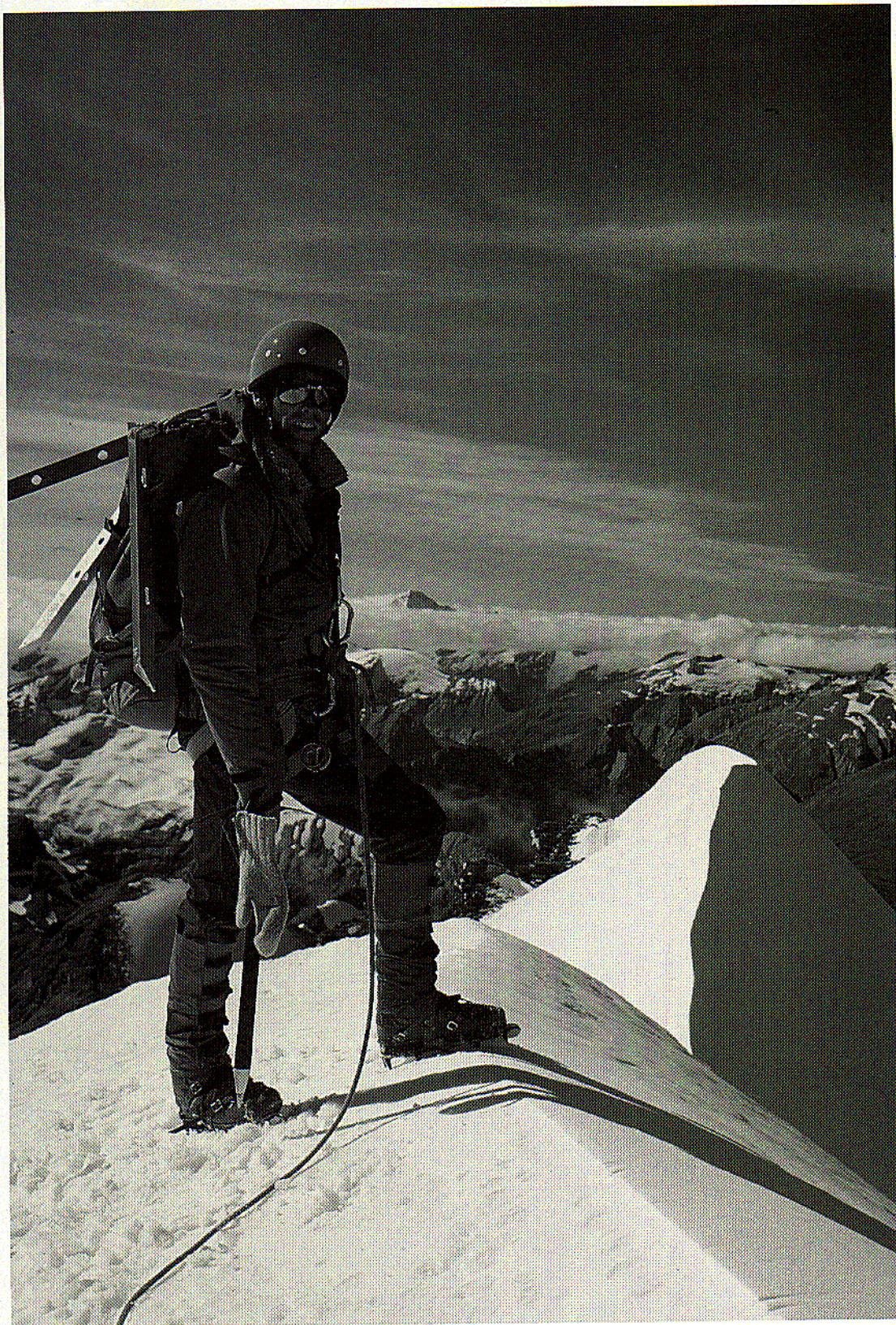


# OUTDOOR RECREATION in OTAGO

A Recreation Plan

Bruce Mason



Volume Two:  
SILVERPEAKS  
& OTAGO'S ALPS



## **THE AUTHOR**

Bruce Mason is a recreation and conservation consultant, based from his home town of Dunedin.

As an active outdoor recreationalist he has spent much of his free time roaming the South Island high country during the last 20 years. His travels have taken him to Antarctica, and to North America where he undertook a private study tour looking at recreational impacts and the management of national parks and forests. His conclusions were published by the New Zealand National Parks Authority in 1974. This work was instrumental in introducing a minimum impact code of user ethics to back country New Zealand. Concern for the environment and recreational users' welfare led to terms on the Otago Walkway Committee and the FMC Executive, and as President of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club. The latter body awarded him life membership in 1985.

Professional involvement in the outdoors has included 8 years as a reserves ranger with the Department of Lands and Survey, engaged in historic resource assessment and the establishment of the Otago Goldfields Park. During this period he obtained a Diploma in Parks and Recreation from Lincoln College. For the last 8 years of private practice, he has been variously engaged by FMC and the Public Lands Coalition (FMC, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, New Zealand Acclimatisation Societies). His primary role has been to conduct research and give advice on matters relating to South Island pastoral lease management and requirements for protecting recreational values, wildlife habitats, landscape, and areas of botanical importance. A recent major involvement was the successful national campaign by the PLC reversing the misallocation to the new State-owned enterprises of large areas of Crown land with high recreation and conservation values.

## **THE PUBLISHER**

The Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (Incorporated) is a national alliance of over 120 affiliate and associate clubs representing some 16,000 members who are interested in climbing, mountaineering, tramping, hunting and skiing in the mountains and wild places of New Zealand.

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Photo: Bob Entwistle



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## CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	5
Silverpeaks and Maungatua Range	9
The Remarkables and Hector Mountains	31
Richardson and Harris Mountains	42
Mount Aspiring National Park Dart, Rees and environs	63
West Wanaka, Young Range, and Hunter Valley	84
Lindis Pass, Grandview, Dingle, Ahuriri	95
<i>Glossary</i>	104
<i>Maps: see pages 7, 10, 16, 40, 44, 83, 94, and 103</i>	

Dedicated to the Memory

of

Peter Child

1923 – 1986

*Tramper, mountaineer, naturalist*

and

Peter Mitchell Chandler

1927 – 1989

*Tramper and historian*

## PREFACE

This work is the second of two volumes to cover the high country and upland recreational resources of Otago, east of the main divide. The first volume, dealing with Central Otago's block mountains, was published by FMC in March 1988.

The rationale and approach adopted in Volume One carries over to this volume. Reading of the Preface and Introduction to Volume One is essential for an understanding of this work, and in particular for explanation of FMC's zoning and Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) approach.

The purpose of *Outdoor Recreation in Otago* is to identify land/recreation management needs from the perspective of one major user group—foot and ski orientated recreationalists. The work also provides a documented basis for creating understanding of the needs and relationships of the 'FMC user group,' with the natural resources of the land, its management, pastoral occupiers, and other recreational groups.

The vigorous media coverage that Volume One generated, both before and after release, indicates that public debate on many of the issues raised was overdue. Responses have been both considered and reactionary, overall being strongly supportive. Perhaps because of the explicitness and breadth of approach of Volume One some critics read offence into what was neither intended, or even printed. All responses, in hindsight, have been appreciated as nothing would be worse for me, and the backers for this project, to see years of effort gathering dust on departmental shelves. Its function as a reference for land manager, educationalist and recreationalist should hopefully ensure that this will not be the case.

The challenge ahead for all parties, with either monetary or emotional attachments to the high country, is to publically express their needs and perceptions for these important lands in an explicit and reasoned manner. It is only with community participation in the many official decisions that *are* being made on the public behalf that any meaningful planning and valid decision making can be made. The completion of *Outdoor Recreation in Otago* will provide another challenge (if such is needed!) for this to happen.

The views expressed are intended to either reflect FMC's position to date, or likely future position based on past policy. As author I accept responsibility for the interpretation of the Federation's objectives and policy, and for the views expressed.

### Acknowledgements

This publication would not have been possible without the financial support of the following organisations. Research, editorial and printing costs have been variously met by FMC, and by grants from the N.Z. Lottery Board and the Minister for the Environment. My sincere thanks.

Special thanks to Les Molloy for conceiving the project and editorially guiding me through the formative stages. Subsequently Brian Turner acted as editor and adviser. His practical guidance and good humour is appreciated.

The production assistance of the following has been greatly appreciated:

Pat Tristram for typing initial drafts before the word processor era, followed by Ann Morrison of the Mountain Safety Council, Wellington. The Otago Acclimatisation Society made their laser printer available to me. Marjorie Mason acted as proof reader.

Hughes Lithographics, Dunedin scanned the photographs, with admirable results. The Department of Survey and Land Information produced base maps (Licence No. 1989/44). Martin Connell completed map draughting. Many thanks also to Barbara Larson and her team at John McIndoes, printers.

Numerous people provided information and comments over an extended period. Most are acknowledged in Vol One or are directly accredited in each chapter reference. Apologies for any omissions. My thanks to various Department of Conservation staff who supplied information on request, or at some inconvenience to themselves, provided me access to archival material. No contributor had any control over what, or how information was used. No responsibility for its treatment can be fairly placed at their feet. All photographs are accredited to their authors, except those by myself.

Special tribute is due to the late Peter Chandler. Much of the historical information, especially goldfields history, is the result of Peter's tireless research over many years.

Sincere thanks to the FMC Executive, my family, friends, and sympathisers for their interest and support during this project.

B.J.M. June 1989.

## FMC's Objectives

In addition to FMC's national role in the promotion of active recreation and mountain safety practices, the Federation actively promotes public access to mountain lands and the conservation of these environments. FMC's particular goals in the South Island high country are:

- the protection and improvement of public recreational opportunities;
- the conservation of natural landscapes and ecological values, as important components of the recreational setting.

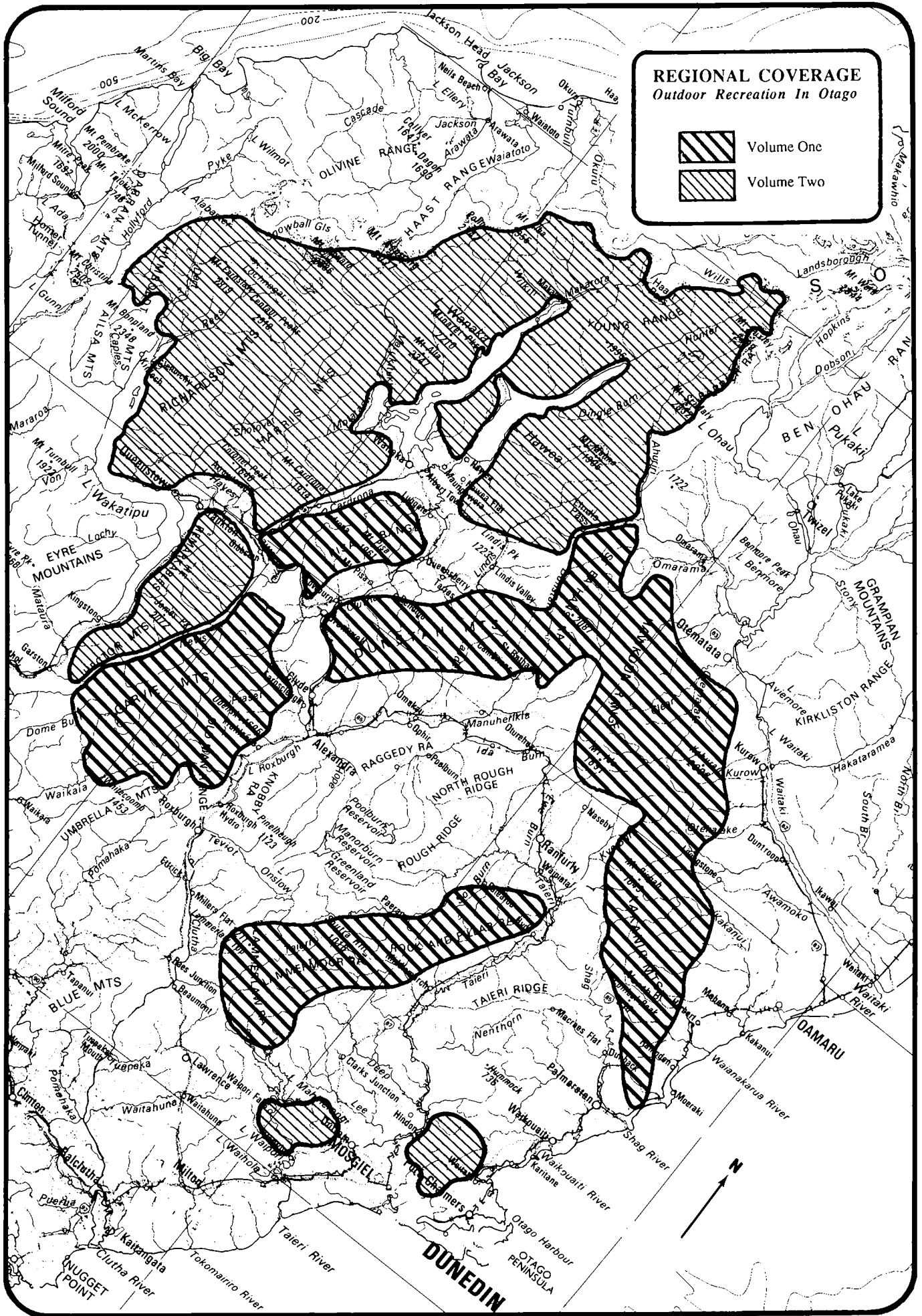
To achieve the above goals, the Federation seeks:

- the removal from pastoral leases and licences of high land unsuitable for grazing, and the making available of these lands for public recreation through more appropriate tenures;
- the evolution of tussock landscape management systems, and the identification, for protection, of typical and special landscapes throughout the high country;
- completion of the PNA programme to achieve a representative network of protected areas, with reserve status where significant opportunities for public recreation exist;
- improved public access through leasehold land to public land within or beyond. Where recreational use is random and of low intensity, the Federation generally considers that informal arrangements are adequate. For regular access routes, and areas of regular recreational activity, formal arrangements for public use are sought;
- allocation and management of recreational resources through local and regional planning, by application of the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) concept.



# A RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM FOR THE OTAGO HIGH COUNTRY

RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCE ZONING					
	WILDERNESS	REMOTE	NATURAL	OPEN SPACE	CULTURAL
<b>SETTINGS</b>					
NATURAL-CULTURAL SETTING	Large tracts of unoccupied land, native forest and grassland; alpine, lakes, rivers.	Settings and activities same as for wilderness, but with minor incompatibilities. eg. smaller size, presence of a hut, less adequate buffering etc.	Unoccupied native forest and grassland; alpine, lakes, rivers.	Semi natural grasslands.	Facility orientated. May have natural landforms, but be highly modified. In mountain, forest, grassland, rural, coastal situations.
PREDOMINANT LAND USE	Wilderness recreation.		Nature conservation.	Extensive grazing.	Farming, forestry, hydro lakes, recreational facility areas/skifields.
ACCESSIBILITY	Physically inaccessible with unroaded buffer zone. No defined routes within. No recreational air access.		May have foot tracks, bridges, road/vehicle tracks. May have legal restraints on public use, but generally available. Variable air access.	Roads, off-road vehicles, foot tracks, horse trails. Aircraft use.	Roads throughout, defined walking and vehicle tracks.
SOCIAL SETTING	Very low density use. Minimum impact practices. No, or at most, very brief inter-group contact. No visible or audible contact with motorised craft. Legal rights of use.		Low to high use and inter-group contact. Density depends on degree of resource protection required. Minimum impact practices encouraged. Variable rights of use.	Low to moderate use and inter-group contact. Some sharing of space and facilities. Few rights of public use.	High density use. Heavy social and technological interaction. Use actively encouraged. Variable legal rights.
COMMERCIAL RECREATION	Very low density/negligible. Only under one-visit permits to avoid over-promotion and over-use; under the same physical limitations as other users. ie. no facilities, aircraft or vehicle access.		Nil to moderately high intensity/highly variable. Activities and facilities excluded from some areas; otherwise under licence, subject to protection of environment and other users' rights.	Generally low intensity. With landholders, and official consents where required.	High to very high intensity. No restraints, other than land ownership and planning controls; official consents on lands of the Crown.
DEVELOPMENT & FACILITIES	None, except temporary facilities for management.		Variable; depending on management priorities, or policies to maintain diversity of recreational opportunities.	Some; confined to specific activity sites.	Considerable developments; sophisticated facilities.
MANAGERIAL SETTING	No discernible management presence. Pre-entry education. No overt promotion of use. Free-ranging, unconfined use.		Management may be obvious; signs, rangers, but generally low-key. Some user group conflicts. Zone may be subdivided in to different intensities of use and management.	Informal use. No recreational management. User group conflicts.	Obvious signs of use, control, and promotion. Emphasis on visitor services. Separation of activities within defined areas.
ACTIVITIES	Mountaineering, ski mountaineering, cross country skiing, deer stalking, tramping, rafting without air access, fishing.	As in wilderness.	As in wilderness plus: Primitive camping, walking, canoeing, rafting, sailing, fishing. Variable use of recreational aircraft.	Heli-skiing, cross country and ski touring, tramping, walking, horse riding, fishing, game bird hunting, off-road vehicles, informal camping, picnicking, sailing, rafting, power boats, aircraft.	Outdoor education and accommodation centres, camping grounds, picnic areas, skifields, walkways, horse riding, off-road vehicle trails, power boating, sailing. May be constraints on recreational aircraft.





**REGIONAL COVERAGE**  
*Outdoor Recreation In Otago*

	Volume One
	Volume Two

## Glossary

Terms additional to those in *Outdoor Recreation in Otago Vol 1*, pp.78–79.

### Landform Terms

Bog (cushion)	Common on plateau tops and localised within alpine basins. Vegetation is generally dwarf and carpet-like.
Bog (string)	A specialised form of cushion bog characterised by terraces, embankments, and ponds. Rare outside of the boreal zone of the Arctic.
Cushion moor	Alpine tundra-like vegetation characterised by the dominance of dwarf, mat-forming cushion plants.
Fellfield (alpine)	Characterised by a high proportion of bare, rocky, but relatively stable ground interspersed with a sparse cover of alpine plants.
Herbfield (alpine)	Communities where large mountain daisies ( <i>Celmisia</i> spp.) become dominant over grasses.
Ox-bow lakes	Cut off horseshoe-shaped river meanders, forming lakes and swamps. Common feature of valley plains.
<i>Roche moutonnée</i>	Solid bedrock overridden by glacier. Plucked and scoured into a distinctive smooth, mammillated upstream surface, with a jagged quarried downstream side. Takes name from a fancied resemblance to fleeces of gigantic sheep.
Schistose	Strong foliation or lamination in coarse grained metamorphic rocks due to alignment of platy minerals.
Snow bank	A specialised plant community subject to prolonged seasonal snow cover.

### Mining Terms

Battery	A stamp battery used for crushing (by impact) gold-bearing rock (usually quartz) to release and allow the saving of gold.
Berdan	A heavy rotating metal bowl used for secondary crushing of tailings from batteries, and for the further recovery of gold.
Buddle	Large diameter, circular and sloping concrete table used for the wet separation and saving of different mineral fractions including gold.
Mullock	Waste non gold-bearing rock extracted from underground mines.
Paddock(ing)	Systematic mining of alluvial ground, followed by orderly placement of tailings.
Pelton wheel	Pelton's patent hurdy-gurdy (high pressure) water-driven turbine used for driving machinery or generating electricity.
Sluice channels	Tailings/waste-water races with inbuilt riffles to trap gold.
Sluicing	Process of using high pressure ('hydraulic') or low pressure ('ground') water to sluice away alluvial ground.
Stamp	Heavy pestles (usually metal) used for gravity rock-crushing within battery mortar boxes. Usually in configurations of 5.
Wing dams	Usually hand-stacked boulders placed face-on to the current in a wall formation. Used for diverting rivers from part of their course.

### Land Tenure etc

Conservation Area	Land held for conservation purposes under S. 7 Conservation Act 1987. Not able to be disposed of.
Crown Grant	The result of a 1840 proclamation that all titles to land were to be derived from, or confirmed by, a Crown grant. The Crown's pre-emptive rights to purchase and sell land were waived by Crown grants to the N.Z. Company etc.
Destocking	Process of stock removal from (high altitude) fragile lands, often by Government grants or off-site development compensation. Term of destocking/retirement usually long term.
Hundreds	Traditionally meant an area capable of sustaining a hundred people; based on an

Licence To Occupy	1850s official policy of dividing up land for close agricultural settlement. Short term tenancy for grazing or other purposes. Maximum term 5 years, no right of renewal, variable conditions. (S. 68 Land Act 1948).
Pastoral Run Licence	Forerunner of pastoral lease. A licence to occupy for pastoral purposes. Maximum term 35 years, no right of automatic renewal. (Land Act 1924).
Reclassification (Reserves)	Change of classification of reserves by Minister of Conservation according to their principal or primary purpose. (S. 24 Reserves Act 1977). Classification options are: recreation, historic, scenic, nature, scientific, government purpose, local purpose.
Resume/resumption	Proclamation action taken by the Crown to resume possession of the whole or any portion of land held under lease or licence for any public purpose, mining, or public works. (S. 117 Land Act 1948). <i>See Destocking.</i>
Retirement	
Stewardship Area	A Conservation Area managed so that natural and historic resources are protected, but able to be disposed of. (S. 25 Conservation Act 1987).

### Classifications

#### *International River Grading:*

(1 to 7 system)

1	Slow to moderate current, scarcely any white water.
2	Straight forward rapids; no specialised paddling techniques required.
3	More formidable and tricky rapids; irregular waves up to 1 m; deliberate guiding of canoe required.
4	Fast and high volume of water, big foaming waves irregularly spaced. Recovery strokes, rolling ability necessary.

#### *Land Use Capability (LUC):*

(See Vol One p.78 for definition).

Class 4	Capable of arable use but with severe limitations.
Class 5	Non arable, slight limitations to pastoral or forestry use.
Class 6	Moderate limitations to pastoral or forestry use.
Class 7	Severe limitations or hazards to pastoral/forestry use.
Class 8	Very severe limitations: unsuitable for primary production.

#### *Skier Slope Classifications:*

(After Branch and Rowan 1975).

Beginner	10–15% Gradient	=	6–8.5° Pitch
Novice	15–25%	=	8.5–14°
Low Intermediate	25–35%	=	14–19°
Intermediate	30–40%	=	17–22°
Advanced Intermediate	35–45%	=	19–24°
Advanced	45–60%	=	24–31°
Expert	60% +	=	31°+

### Common and Botanical Names

Bracken-fern	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>
<i>Carex</i>	Sedge species
<i>Cassinia vauvilliersii</i>	Mountain cottonwood
<i>Celmisia</i> spp.	Mountain daisy
<i>Dracophyllum</i> spp.	Dragon leaf
Flax (N.Z.)	<i>Phormium tenax</i>
Kahikitea	<i>Podocarpus dacrydioides</i>
Kowhai	<i>Sophora microphylla</i>
Lodgepole pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>
Matai	<i>Podocarpus spicatus</i>
Mid-ribbed snow tussock	<i>Chionochloa pallens</i>
Mountain cedar	<i>Libocedrus bidwillii</i>
<i>Phyllocladus alpinus</i>	Mountain toatoa/celery pine
Ribbonwood	<i>Hoheria lyallii</i>
<i>Spagnum</i>	Moss species
Terpentine scrub	<i>Dracophyllum uniflorum</i>

### Conversions

Ounce (oz)	=	28.35 grams (g)
Pound (£)	=	\$2 nominal