

PROPOSED TENURE REVIEW



WAIORAU STATION

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Comments will be received up to 5 pm Monday 14 June 1993

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CURRENT POSITION

The main tenure is the Waiorau pastoral lease (P 250) held by John and Mary Lee. The current lease expires on 30 June 1993 and has been renewed for a further 33 years in accordance with the terms of the lease. The lease allows for the grazing of 4,400 sheep, but Mr and Mrs Lee have a personal stock limit of 5,500 sheep and 300 cattle in recognition of their improvements to the property. The pastoral lease gives the lessees full rights to the pasturage, but no rights to the soil. As the lease is a permanent tenure trespass rights are held by the lessees and any public access is at their discretion. The area contained in the lease is 6,754 hectares.

Overlying 4,000 hectares of the higher country is a commercial recreation permit held by Nordic Ski Area Ltd. This permit for a term of ten years from 1 June 1988 is for the purposes of operating a Nordic Ski Area subject to an approved management plan.

Other commercial activities are undertaken on the range which are neither sanctioned nor prevented under the Land Act or either of the above occupancy rights.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

LOCATION

Waiorau is situated in the Cardrona Valley 20km south of Wanaka. Waiorau runs east from the Cardrona Valley Road to the crest of the Pisa Range. It is bounded by the freehold property of Mr and Mrs T Scurr to the South, Po 252, Robrosa to the north and Po271/Po272 Mt Pisa to the east.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

ASPECT	Generally regarded as a cold property lying west through south.
ALTITUDE	470-1900m asl.
CONTOUR	Small area of river terrace at the western end of the property, moderately steep face rising to extensive well dissected rolling tops.

RAINFALL	650 to 900 mm per annum.
REVERSION	Sweet briar has been an ongoing problem. Excellent control has been achieved and maintenance of this will be an ongoing cost.
EROSION	No significant erosion. Some slumping on the front face.
WEEDS & PESTS	Briar as above. Currently very low but increasing evidence of hawkweeds. Broom in vicinity of Cardrona river.
	Rabbits are at moderate levels on front face. Last poisoned in 1989. Varying numbers of pigs (including Tb animals) on block from time to time.

SOILS	1130 ha	Obelisk soils
	2111 ha	Carrick Hill soils
	810 ha	Carrick and Carrick Hill soils
	440 ha	Carrick soils
	1080 ha	Dunstan Steepland soils
	950 ha	Blackstone Hill soils with some areas of Arrow Steepland soils
	232 ha	Eweburn soils
	6753 ha	TOTAL

LAND USE CAPABILITY

232 ha	Class IVs	3 %
35 ha	Class V	1 %
915 ha	Class VIe	14 %
3749 ha	Class VIIc & e	55 %
1822 ha	Class VIIIc	27 %
6753 ha	TOTAL	100 %

COVER

58 ha	Fair Cultivated Pasture
1545 ha	AOSTD - requiring further maintenance topdressing
3000 ha	Unimproved native tussock
2150 ha	Fell field
6753 ha	TOTAL

GENERAL.

A moderate sized run in the mid to upper reaches of the Cardrona Valley. The property is generally cold and runs to the high point of the Pisa Range. Stock numbers have declined to some extent while the lessee has concentrated on developing first the Cardrona Downhill Skifield and more recently the Waiorau Nordic Ski area and a range of other commercial activities. Fertiliser has been reduced but weed and pest control actively pursued.

CONSERVATION VALUES

Waiorau pastoral lease lies in the Pisa Ecological District, in the Cardrona Valley. Some 8560 ha of the Pisa tops were recommended for protection (RAP) by a PNAP survey in 1985. The Pisa tops contain broad ridges, spectacular tors, steep cliffs, cirques and a variety of valley systems. The vegetation is wide ranging in diversity and representativeness and, as this block mountain is the highest in Otago, the ecological significance is reflected here. The RAP identified as A# Pisa tops, has an altitudinal range from 670 - 1960 m with the majority above 1500 m. The RAP extends over a number of properties.

The property also includes a diverse landscape in three principal zones; the front faces, the ridge crest and the RAP. Important aspects of the gold mining history of the Cardrona Valley are evident on the property including the Touhys gold field and the Cardrona - Roaring Meg and Cardrona - Lowburn pack tracks.

PROPOSAL:

1. To surrender Po250 Waiorau from 31 December 1993.
2. To transfer an area of approximately 4018 hectares to the Department of Conservation for reservation.
3. To allocate an area of 2735 hectares to Nordic Ski Area Ltd.

5. To make the freeholding subject to a conservation covenant over areas "A" and "B".
6. To make the proposed reservation subject to a recreation permit.

DISCUSSION

There are three important aspects to this proposal:

1. To preserve important conservation values on the Pisa Range.
2. To provide an opportunity for public access to and use of an important alpine area.
3. To facilitate a range of commercial activities specific to this situation.

The majority of an important RAP will become conservation estate thereby protecting a unique flora (and possibly fauna). One fringe area is covenanted to protect the natural values in a manner compatible with commercial use. A second area is covenanted to protect the history of an important gold mining area.

Public access is provided for. Full access up an existing legal road (paper) will be identified and available as of right. Mr and Mrs Scurr who own the adjoining property are agreeable to this event though the route is close to their farm buildings. This leads to the proposed conservation area which will be available to the public. Should parties wish to take the ski area road, access will be available on a commercial basis.

Mr and Mrs Lee have developed a range of uses for the mountain crest including sheep farming, nordic skiing, motor vehicle testing and filming of advertisements and features. A third party operates a self drive skidoo operation under a separate permit. There are also numerous potential uses such as summer mountain biking, guided walks etc. Freehold tenure provides greater opportunity for such proposals, while the controls of the Resource Management Act prevent unreasonable demands on the environment and a conservation covenant protects the broader landscape concerns over a key area.

The proposed permit will provide adequately for low impact use of the conservation area, while protecting important portions and providing for public access. The proposed Conservation Area is also currently utilized by the army for winter training and some helicopter activity. Under this proposal these uses will require DOC consent in terms of the management of the area.