



A FOREST PARK FOR TONGARIRO?

On 17 April a major public meeting in Owango was convened by King Country RF&BPS to discuss future management of the 25,700 hectare Tongariro State Forest. 150 people from throughout the region attended. Release of a Forest Service Land Use Study which identifies much of the forest as being suitable for pines and pasture, and the interim zoning of nearly half the forest for clearance has precipitated controversy throughout the region.

The meeting voted unanimously for the preservation of the State Forest in its present largely natural state and for its development as a Forest Park to benefit the King Country's growing recreation and tourism industry. A Tongariro Forest Park promotion committee was established including Forest and Bird, Federated Farmers, Taumarunui Borough and County Council, Outdoor Pursuits Centre, tramping, deerstalking, fishing and tourism representatives. This group has now presented submissions to Government supporting the Forest Park. Head Office Forest and Bird have also presented detailed proposals to the Forest Service recommending ecological reserve status for an additional 2,700 hectares of the forest.

The proposed Tongariro Forest Park would encompass both Tongariro and Erua State Forests. These forests include fascinating mosaics of cedar, matai, totara, rimu beach and tawa, which although logged in parts still contain important natural and recreational values. They occur at a much lower altitude than forests already protected in Tongariro National Park.

Anne Fraser, Councillor of RF&BPS King Country Branch stands beneath a huge rimu in Tongariro State Forest. This area lies within the Owango township water supply catchment, is mapped by Forest Service as "heavy scrub" and tentatively zoned for conversion to pines. These proposals have united King Country people to fight for their forests.

BAY OF PLENTY FORESTS FINALLY PROTECTED!

On 26 June the Government announced that it would fully implement the recommendations on the Kaimai-Mamaku forests made by the National Parks and Reserves Authority (NPRA). After reviewing all public submissions and Forest Service management proposals, the NPRA made eight detailed recommendations to Government. The most important of these was that the whole Forest Park and five important outlying native forests between Tauranga and Rotorua should be dedicated for permanent protection under Section 15 of the Forests Act. The NPRA also urged Government to encourage private landowners with native forest adjoining the park to give their forests permanent protection.

The battle to save the Kaimai-Mamakus has been an 11 year epic spearheaded by the people of the Bay of Plenty which also involved people from the Waikato to Rotorua. They all deserve congratulations from Society members on their success.

WHAT PRICE WATER EXPORT?

Triune Resources proposal to export fresh water from Deep Cove has not been well received in Southland. Triune envisages an export buildup to a level where up to two supertankers a day would call at Deep Cove. The majority of public submissions on the company's 300 page Environmental Impact Report are critical of the scheme. Economic benefits of the scheme were not spelt out in the E.I.R., while environmental and economic costs of the proposals are considered to be unacceptably high.

Deep Cove lies in the heart of Fiordland National Park. A major water export industry would be an intrusion into the grandeur and naturalness of this area. It would destroy the qualities sought by school children who visit Deep Cove Hostel for outdoor education courses. Fiordland Travel managing director, Les Hutchins, also considers it could destroy the valuable and expanding Fiordland tourist industry centred around Deep Cove and Doubtful Sound. Our Society is urging Government to identify alternative water sources for Triune with less impact on National Park values and the natural environment.

MAVORA LAKES PASTORAL PARK PROPOSAL IN SOUTHLAND UNSATISFACTORY

The Lands and Survey Department proposal to create 35,000 hectare pastoral park centred around Southland's Mavora Lakes in unsatisfactory. Public submissions closed on 6 July on Departmental plans for this important natural area which contains a representative sample of northern Southland's high country. The area includes the two Mavora Lakes, beech forest, extensive natural grasslands and wetlands of the Mararoa river and Winden Burn, all sandwiched between the impressive Livingston and Thomson mountains. It is also very popular for recreation. Mavora is in Crown ownership and meets all the criteria for a scenic reserve. As such it would be a prime candidate for national reserve status. A pastoral park, unlike a scenic reserve, offers insufficient protection to this important natural area. It seems designed to legitimise cattle grazing throughout the river flats and wetlands of the Park, grazing widely considered to be detrimental to natural values. The Mavora Lakes will be featured in our next issue of Forest and Bird which focuses on the South Island High Country and tussock grasslands.

BLUE DUCK SIGHTINGS REQUIRED

Duncan Cunningham, Wildlife Service, Internal Affairs, Wellington is surveying distribution of the elusive blue duck. Any readers who can provide sighting details together with dates and map grid references should contact Duncan.

BANKS PENINSULA FIRE HIGHLIGHTS SMALL RESERVE PROBLEMS

We are often criticised for seeking large reserves — measuring thousands of hectares and encompassing whole catchments as well as areas surrounded by buffer zones. The most important reason for seeking large reserves is that scientific studies and practical experience shows that usually only large reserves are biologically sustainable. Large reserves can support wide ranging bird species like kaka and parakeet. They are buffered from natural catastrophes such as disease, wind throw and drought simply because they contain a diversity of plant associations on a range of sites. Large reserves also minimise unnatural edge effects — dessication, wind, spray and fertiliser drift and even invasion by weeds like Old Mans Beard which thrive on forest margins and in modified forests.

Sadly many of our surviving reserves, although natural treasures are too small