

Major benefits for tourism

The larger World Heritage area would spread the tourism benefits over the whole of the south-west region, rather than just funnel tourists to the "hot spots" of Mt Cook and Milford. Tourism promotion could be co-ordinated, and divisive parochialism about attractions would have to stand aside.

Dave Osmer, tourist operators from Makorora — near the Haast Pass and next to Mt Aspiring National Park — sees the proposal as an exciting one. "The bottom line is that World Heritage status means more tourist dollars. It would be tragic if Otago and South Westland missed out on this great idea," Dave says.

Towns like Haast and Wanaka which lie between the Fiordland and Mt Cook/Westland proposals and are surrounded by land of comparable beauty and ecological importance stand to gain a lot from the larger proposal.

Moreover, it would be folly for New Zealand to nominate two separate World Heritage areas in the south-west which exclude a number of unique natural features and ecosystems found in the area. These include the world's only extensive kahikatea swamp forests; the beech-podocarp forest boundary of South Westland which dates from the time when great glaciers obliterated forests, throughout the region; outstanding wetlands near Haast and the unusual ultramafic rock landforms and vegetation of the Red Hills and the Cascade Plateau.

By nominating a south-west Heritage area, New Zealand would be achieving a notable milestone in international conservation — what better way to celebrate our National Park Centennial year?



Celmisia markii, a recently named needle-leaved species that forms loose cushions up to 1 metre across in the low alpine zone of South Westland-Fiordland. First collected by Dr A. F. Mark in his vegetation survey of Mt Aspiring National Park, it is restricted to the coastal ranges of the Park, apart from two records in Fiordland near Cascade River and above Caswell Sound.

Photo: A. F. Mark

Some places have special importance for people. They have inspired us by their beauty; given us insights into the history of life on our planet; taught us about the functions of natural ecosystems; informed us about the evolution of our own species and culture; enthralled us with wildlife spectacles; saved species of outstanding universal value; and provided us with examples of how man can live in harmonious balance with his environment. Many such places are so valuable that they form part of the heritage of all mankind.

Jeffrey McNeely

International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources



Only 2 percent of New Zealand's dense kahikatea remain, spread across the South Westland coastal plain. The forests are under management moratorium until 1990, but would be a vital part of the World Heritage area. — Heretaniwha Point and Ohinemaka State Forest.

Photo: Quentin Christie, Soil Bureau

This Dusky Sound rata is likely to be the tree to which Captain Cook moored the *Resolution* on March 27, 1773, staying until April 28. The cultural significance of south-west New Zealand is highlighted by the fact that the first pakeha boat and house were built in Dusky Sound.

Photo: A. F. Mark

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