



Aorangi mountain is of immense Maori cultural, scenic and scientific importance. The concept of Maori reservation, Nga Whenua Rahui, could protect natural and cultural values yet provide owners with income from the land. Photo: Quentin Christie, Soil Bureau, DSIR.

region. They have other scientific values – providing insights into the evolutionary history of biota and landscapes, and acting as a reservoir of genetic diversity.

Conservation Targets

The mainstream of conservation in the Moawhango focuses on Aorangi Mountain. This is a leftover pedestal of once more widespread marine sediment. Informed local residents such as Tony Batley (see *Forest and Bird* 1950s articles) watch over Aorangi with bated breath whenever logging proposals are put to the combined Maori ownership of the Aorangi block in the northwest Ruahines. The magnificent rimu-black beech forests on the south-west flanks are currently threatened by helicopter extraction and represent the most alarming threat so far (see *Forest and Bird*, November 1985, Conservation Update). Logistical and soil and water conservation problems have vetoed previous schemes, but such concerns evaporate with heavy lift helicopters. Logging would be a lamentable step since these high density podocarp-beech stands are now very restricted on western slopes of the Ruahines.

Beyond the forest the biogeographic hot-spots at Makirikiri Tarns and Reporoa Bog need urgent conservation attention. To protect landscapes values, small fences around local peat bogs are tragically inadequate.

The 4751 ha. Aorangi block represents the best opportunity to protect a suite of representative Moawhango landscapes. One solution may lie in a Nga Whenua Rahui proposal to incorporate the block on a long term lease arrangement within the adjacent Ruahine State Forest Park. The block offers a significant revenue to the Maori owners from deer capture. Any negotiations must recognise the diverse cultural values. An ethic of sustainability for both value systems needs to be incorporated in any proposal — a possible early challenge to the Department of Conservation. ✎

Geoff Rogers is an ecologist at Victoria University completing a PhD on landscape history in the Moawhango whose work is financially supported by a Hellaby Indigenous Grasslands Trust Fellowship. He is keen to see the PNA programme extended to other sensitive North Island districts.

YOU DESERVE A HOLIDAY . . .



CYCLE CHINA

This is one of the world's great adventures. Join us as we meander through rural China, meeting the local people and visiting areas well away from standard tourist itineraries.

The riding is leisurely as a vehicle carries all gear and we stay in comfortable village hotels, feasting on gourmet country cuisine.

Contact us without delay for our stunning free catalogue of adventures.

Venturetreks

P.O. Box 37-610 Parnell Auckland Ph 799-855



HIMALAYAS THE EASY WAY

Join us for the adventure of your life!

We present a program of small group Himalayan trekking and rafting holidays graded for all levels of fitness and experience, many for the complete beginner.

The towering majesty of the highest peaks on Earth presents a spectacle you will always savour. This is combined with a chance to meet colourful people of ancient, diverse cultures.

Adventure holidays also available to all the World's other major mountain ranges and wild areas.

Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms

Address:

.....