

# to the Dry East

by Gerry McSweeney, Conservation Director



8,000 hectare park addition desirable and we sought a botanical survey of the area to find out what it contained.

## Surrendered From Grazing

The land in question is to be surrendered in 1992 from the huge 49,800-hectare Mt White Station under the terms of a Catchment Board high country retirement scheme.

In 1985 the owners of Mt White signed a run management plan which involves the destocking of 12,361 hectares of severely eroded mountainlands. More than 8000 hectares of that land behind retirement fences is to be surrendered from the lease and revert to full Crown (DoC) control and 4242 hectares will be destocked but remain within the title of the lease. (\*See over)

Left: Among glacial moraines known as the Mounds of Misery beside the Cox River there are small islands which have escaped the worst effects of a century of grazing and burning. They still host threatened plants such as Armstrong's hebe (Inset). In the wild this species is now confined to the Waimakariri River basin, although it is possibly the most widely cultivated whipcord hebe. Photo: G McSweeney



Above: Red tussock cushion bog, Big Flora Stream. These wetlands are now most uncommon in the high country, the victims of drainage and heavy trampling by cattle. On Mt White Station they remain largely unmodified.

Photo: G McSweeney

Far left: The spectacular Mounds of Misery viewed from Gray Hill. Scattered clumps of mountain beech date from pre-human times before large scale burning took place. They are now rapidly regenerating and expanding in area because of Mt White Station's sensitive farming practices. Photo: Mike Harding

Left: The predominantly Nelson-Marlborough tree daisy *Traversia baccharoides* propped up by Forest and Bird president Alan Mark with the author looking on. This plant reaches its southern geographic limit here in the Nigger Stream and to the east at Okuku Pass. Photo: Mike Harding



ure considerations, not landforms or vegetation. In fact there has still been no specific vegetation survey of the proposed Cox-Binser addition.

In its submission on the 1985 report, Forest and Bird gave support to the Cox-Binser addition. We felt it would protect within the national park a substantial area of forested mountainland and some areas of drier east-

ern mountain vegetation.

However, we also noted there was an important opportunity to go a lot further in correcting the deficiency of eastern mountainlands within the park. We argued that another 8,000 hectares east of the Cox-Binser addition should also be added to the park. We noted a range of distinctive botanical and landscape features that made this