

Proposal to Add Land to Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park

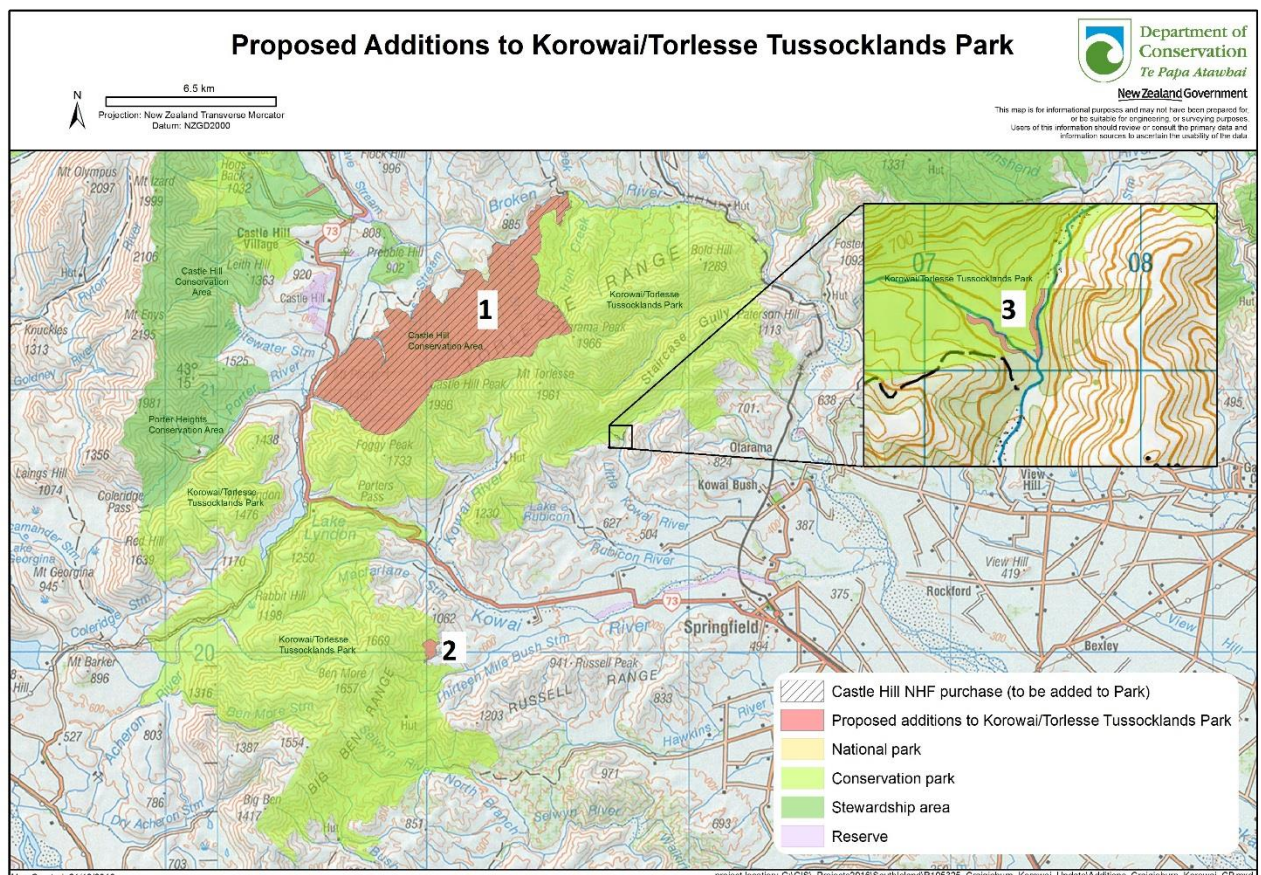
Purpose

This document provides information enabling the public to comment on a Department proposal to add approximately 3282 hectares of stewardship land (held under section 25 of the Conservation Act 1987) to Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands (Conservation) Park. The land proposed for addition to the Park is numbered on the map below and described in the table on page 2.

Context

The Minister of Conservation invites any person or organisation to provide to the Department of Conservation's Director-General written objections or submissions on the proposal. The Department shall take these objections or submissions into account when providing a department briefing to the Minister seeking a decision.

Relevant land



Location Map

Areas proposed for inclusion into the park are coloured red and are numbered to correspond with Table 1 on page 2.

Table 1: Relevant Land Proposed to become Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park

Identifying Name	Location Map Identifier	Legal Description	Area (hectares)	Important Conservation Values
(Part) Conservation Area - Castle Hill	1	Section 7 SO 387006	3250.8000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes of the western Torlesse Range (refer Photos 1-6). • Rock outcrops and bluffs on upper slopes, with inaka (<i>Dracophyllum</i>) shrubland and mountain beech forest together below • Mid- higher altitudes contain: Slim Snow-Tussock Grassland; Montane rockland; Montane scree and alpine plant communities.
Conservation Area - Ben More	2	Section 12 SO 378671	29.6550	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small part of a regionally significant natural the landscape on the eastern Big Ben Range with mountain beech and tussocklands (Photo 7).
Conservation Area - Little Kowai River	3	RS 41336; RS 41337	1.4280	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small part of a regionally significant natural landscape being the eastern Torlesse Range. The area lies within a large area of mountain beech forest (Photo 8).

Description of the Areas Proposed for Inclusion

1. (Part) Conservation Area - Castle Hill

Includes the generally north-west facing slopes above 700-800 metres of the of the Torlesse Range between Broken River Hut and Dry Stream. The area includes Mt Plenty and the western slopes of Castle Hill Peak, The Gap, Red Peak, Junction Peak and Back Peak.

2. Conservation Area - Ben More

A roughly square parcel in the upper Thirteen Mile Bush catchment on the north-east Big Ben Range, between 700-1000 metres altitude, that extends 500-600 metres into the existing Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park along the eastern slopes of the 1623m peak to the north of Ben More.

3. Conservation Area - Little Kowai River

Two small elongated land parcels alongside the upper Little Kowai River at about 600 metres altitude that extend 200-300 metres into the existing Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park along the south-east face of the Torlesse Range.

Background

The values of these areas have already been assessed as being significant.

The creation of Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park stemmed from a 1991 Royal Forest and Bird report recommending additional protection for some 15,000 hectares of public conservation land centred on the Torlesse Range. These lands contain high natural values through the unique dry mountain range flora and fauna, and important landscape, geological and research values.

Purchases in the late 1990s through the Nature Heritage Fund (NHF) of the Avoca and Ben More Pastoral lands and the Adams Block created the opportunity for a larger conservation park (some 22,000 hectares) based along the Torlesse Range and Ben More slopes straddling State Highway 73, the main route across Ka Tiritiri o Te Moana/Southern Alps to the West Coast of the South Island.

A 2001 discussion document noted that “Western half of northern flanks of Torlesse Range should be included if these become conservation area through tenure review or purchase.” This statement is relevant for Area 1 in Table 1.

Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park was created in 2001 by notice in the New Zealand Gazette (25 October 2001 pages 3645-3646). 22,000 hectares of land was involved.

Parcels RS 41336 and RS 41337 (Conservation Area - Little Kowai River) were Crown land parcels allocated to the Department in 1987 but were not added to the Park in 2001 even though they lie immediately adjacent to it.

Conservation Area - Ben More became public conservation land in 2007 through tenure review.

In 2011 NHF purchased part of Castle Hill Pastoral lease land including Section 7, SO 387006.

This proposal is in line with policy 2.2.12 and Table 5 of the current Canterbury (Waitaha) Conservation Management Strategy 2016 which requires conservation areas within and adjoining the Big Ben and Torlesse ranges, and bounded by Coleridge Pass and Porter River to the north, Broken River to the east, and farmland to the west and south to be considered for addition to the Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park.

Values of the Areas Proposed for Inclusion

1. (Part) Conservation Area - Castle Hill (ex part Castle Hill NHF purchase)

Protecting the landscapes of the western Torlesse Range are an important focus of the landscape when travelling on the highway between the top of Craigieburn Cutting and Castle Hill. The highly distinctive skyline of the range is dominated by “The Gap”, a visual highlight which draws the eye.

The Torlesse Range is dominated by rock outcrops and bluffs on the upper slopes, with inaka (*Dracophyllum*) shrubland and mountain beech forest together below. Also present at mid-higher altitudes are: Slim Snow-Tussock Grassland; Montane rockland; Montane scree and alpine plant communities.



Photo 1: Panorama of part western Torlesse Range



Photo 2: View from Kura Tawhiti Access Track of Castle Hill Peak in distance with areas of mountain beech forest on lower slopes. Tussock-grasslands on Mt Plenty shown on upper right.



Photo 3: Closer view of mountain beech forest on Castle Hill Peak above Ghost Creek



Photo 4: A large scree washout fan at the bottom Mt Plenty from SH73



Photo 5: Mountain beech forest, rockland and scree on steep slopes of the Torlesse Range

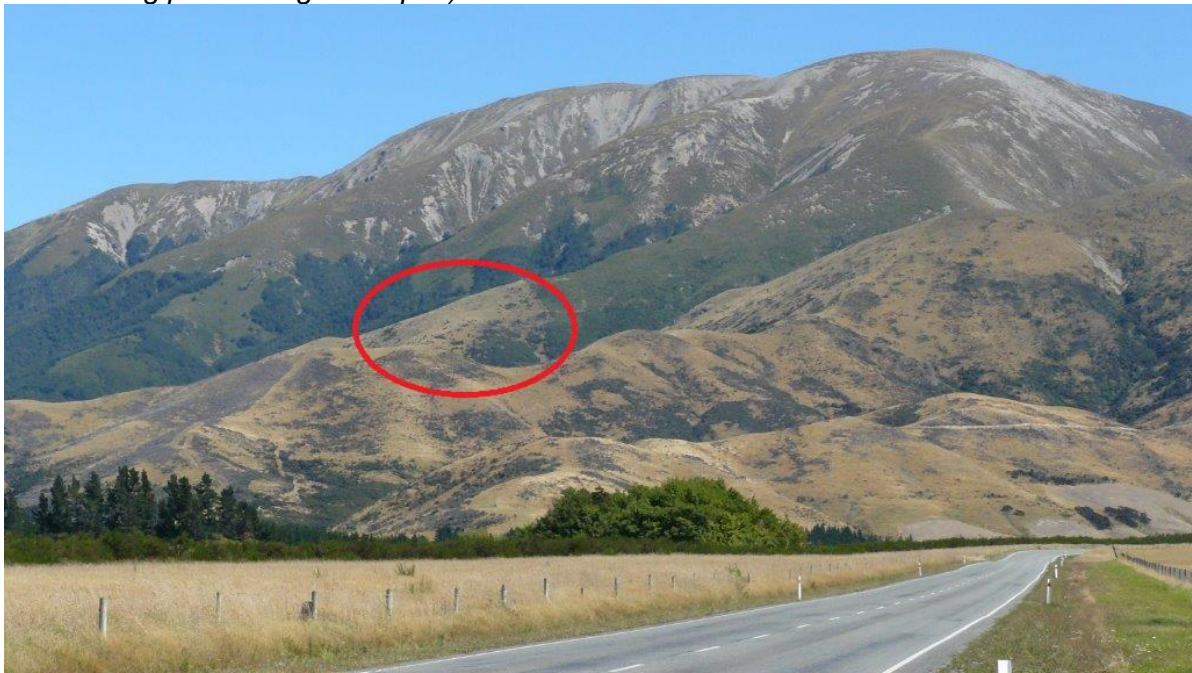


Photo 6: Slim snow-tussock grassland on Mt Plenty

2. Conservation Area - Ben More (ex Ben More tenure review)

A small part of a regionally significant natural the landscape north of Benmore Track which includes mountain beech and tussocklands to the south of SH73.

Photo 7: View of the eastern slopes of Ben More highlighting 30ha area (to be added to surrounding park on higher slopes)



3. Conservation Area - Little Kowai River (stewardship land via 1987 allocations)

A small part of a regionally significant natural landscape being the eastern Torlesse Range north-west of Springfield. The area lies within a large area of mountain beech forest seen from SH73 travelling west across the Canterbury Plains.

Photo 8: Eastern Torlesse Range slope with highlighted area of mountain beech forest area within existing park to which an additional small area of contiguous forest is to become part of the park



Submissions or objections invited

Written submissions or objections are now invited on the proposal to add land to the Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park and will be accepted up to and including 5.00pm 20 June 2018. They may be sent to the address below or emailed to:

slmchristchurch@doc.govt.nz

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