

B.M.

BRUCE J MASON
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
9 Chapman Street,
Dunedin.

26 January 1987.

Dr Alan Mark and Allan Evans,
c/o 205 Wakari Road,
Dunedin.

Dear Sirs,

PROPOSED SKIFIELD DEVELOPMENT : DUNCAN AND MACKENZIE BASINS

The following are my preliminary observations of the suitability of the two basins for skifield development.

Your brief was :

- a. To report on relative terrain characteristics for downhill and cross country skiing.
- b. To make comparisons with major existing skifields in New Zealand.
- c. To investigate if road access in to both basins is feasible within a 1:10 grade without major bends.
- d. To report on general recreational and landscape values present.

For this report I have drawn on the methodology of my 1982 Parks and Recreation dissertation : 'Skifield Potential in the Wakatipu District' [1], on my skiing and mountaineering experience during the last 20 years, and on several days field inspection of the sites.

1. CONCLUSIONS

1.1 That both basins are extraordinarily large and diverse and if one or other were fully developed they would easily be the largest skifield in New Zealand.

1.2 That separate road access within a 1:10 grade is feasible to both basins, with no obvious construction difficulties up the Mackenzie Valley, but with constraints in the upper Duncan Valley of steep scree slopes and a potentially severe avalanche hazard.

1.3 That both basins have similar total skifield slope capacities, with the Mackenzie Basin better able to match likely New Zealand skier market requirements than the Duncan Basin.

1.4 The Mackenzie Basin would be the best option for skifield development, with the Duncan Basin best used for low impact recreation such as heliskiing, or ski touring and cross country skiing. [The total capacity of the Mackenzie Basin is so large that 'spill-over' lift development in the Duncan Basin would seem to be unnecessary.]

1.5 That the greater landscape value of the Duncan, in relation to the Mackenzie Valley, strengthens the case for formal recognition of its recommended Protected Natural Area status.

2. SNOW COVER AND RETENTION CHARACTERISTICS

I have not visited the basins under winter conditions, however my winter observations from the vicinity of Twizel, and in the central Ben Ohau and adjacent ranges suggest that both basins would normally have adequate snow cover for skifield operation. A normal winter snowline of at least 4500' could be expected. By way of comparison, base facilities at Tekapo, Fox's Peak, and Ohau skifields are at 4500', 4350', and 4700' respectively.

Both basins have desirable slope aspects for optimum snow retention. [A south-east aspect is the most desirable, to keep incident radiation to a minimum at early-mid afternoon when air temperatures peak.]

Duncan Basin is predominantly SE to E, with encircling steep faces SW to SE.

Mackenzie Basin ranges from WSW to S to SE to E, with a partially encircling NW face.

Above approximately 5500' snow tussock communities are replaced by continuous boulder-fields with a high proportion of large, angular rocks. I anticipate that any skifield development would require extensive rock removal, slope grooming, and trail formation. Pressures for such would inevitably arise, particularly after a poor snow year.

3. VERTICAL HEIGHT AND AREA.

Duncan Basin has a skiable area of approximately 640 hectares between the summit of Mackenzie Peak [7200'] and the shores of the upper Duncan lake [4400'], giving a maximum potential height of 2800'. However this may not be fully servicable by lift due to wind exposure. 2400' may be closer to the mark.

Mackenzie Basin has a skiable area of approximately 700 hectares between an unnamed peak [6900'] and at least the 4500' contour in the valley floor. This provides a maximum of 2400' vertical, but probably closer to 2100' due to wind exposure.

4. SLOPE GRADIENTS AND CAPACITIES.

By means of measured representative slope gradients, contour map and photo interpretation, I have categorised potential ski slopes into differing skier abilities in terms of the Branch & Rowan Slope Classification System [2].

Having mapped the different slope categories [see Appendix 1] I have determined the areas of each, and their skier capacities. The densities adopted for this exercise are the same as used in my 1982 study of the Remarkables and Coronet Peak skifields. These take in to account the hummocky terrain, which, while providing very stimulating skiing causes uneven skier distribution, and the probable wish to keep densities low and skiing experience high. I have also compared the capacities of each slope category with 'apparent skier market proportions'. These were used by the Mount Cook Group in their planning for the Remarkables Skifield, as at 1979. There may have been subsequent shifts in the New Zealand and overseas markets, with this likely to have been influenced by a general increase in skiing skills towards the intermediate and more advanced skier levels.

Table 1 DUNCAN BASIN : SLOPE CAPACITIES & SKIER MARKET

<i>Skill Classification</i>	<i>Acceptable Pitch</i>	<i>Area [ha]</i>	<i>Slope Capacity</i>	<i>% of Total Capacity</i>	<i>'Apparent Skier Market Proportions'</i>
Beginner	6-8.5 degrees	-	@125/ha -	-	5%
Novice	8.5-14	102	75 = 7650	50%	15
Low Intermediate	14-19	72	30 = 2160	14	27
Intermediate	17-22}		20}		30
Advanced Interm.	19-24}	196	15} = 2940	19	13
Advanced	24-31 }		10} = 1000		5
Expert	31 plus }	269	10 } = 2690	17	5
		===	=====		
		639	15,440		

Table 2 MACKENZIE BASIN : SLOPE CAPACITIES & SKIER MARKET

<i>Skill Classification</i>	<i>Acceptable Pitch</i>	<i>Area [ha]</i>	<i>Slope Capacity</i>	<i>% of Total Capacity</i>	<i>'Apparent Skier Market Proportions'</i>
Beginner	6-8.5 degrees	-	@125/ha -	-	5%
Novice	8.5-14	35	75 = 2625	17	15
Low intermediate	14-19	147	30 = 4410	28	27
Intermediate	17-22	264	20 = 5280	11	13
Advanced	24-31 }		10 }		5
Expert	31 plus	153	10 = 1530	10	5
		===	=====		
		709	15,495		

No Go (Sth. faces Mackenzie Pk.)

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Notes: [1] Beginner areas are not specifically identified, although plenty of capacity is apparent in both basins; only relatively small areas are required.

[2] The slope capacity may not ultimately be matched by lift capacity.

5. RELATIVE SKIFIELD SUITABILITY.

5.1 DUNCAN BASIN is characterised by a major over supply of novice slopes, and major under supplies of low intermediate and intermediate terrain. This may not matter if a skifield developer did not envisage utilising all the novice terrain, however the total capacity of the field would be reduced by a third [or to two thirds of that of the Mackenzie Basin]. Also there is not an ideal separation of 'novice/low intermediate' from more advanced slopes, or natural connections of similar gradient between the upper intermediate slopes and a base area at 5000'. Road access would disrupt skier use of the low intermediate slopes. These constraints could be overcome by the construction of suitably graded connecting trails.

5.2 MACKENZIE BASIN is characterised by an optimum supply of slopes to suit all ability levels, allowing full utilisation of its potential if desired. There is also a good separation of skier abilities with 'novice/low intermediate skiers confined to the northern half, and 'intermediate' skiers to the middle. 'Expert' slopes are distinct, separate units. Southern 'advanced intermediate' terrain will probably need return trails to reach a base area in the valley floor at 4500'+. Overall the terrain is vast and stimulating for skiing. A gentle saddle at 6200' connects the two basins.

6. COMPARISONS WITH MAJOR NEW ZEALAND SKIFIELDS

The Duncan and Mackenzie Basins are each three times the area of the largest skifields in New Zealand [in terms of serviced skiable areas], and with greater vertical height than is currently available in the South Island.

Table 3 NZ SKIFIELDS : COMPARISON OF AREAS & VERTICAL HEIGHTS

<i>Ski Area</i>	<i>Skiable Area</i>	<i>Vertical Height</i>
Duncan	< 640 ha	2400' [+?]
Mackenzie	< 700	2100' [+?]
Whakapapa	130 - 200	1890'
Turoa	> 110	2260'
Mt Hutt	c. 160	2000'
Treble Cone	c. 90	1640'
Cardrona	c. 95	1060'
Coronet Peak	220	1400'

7. ROAD ACCESS

7.1 DUNCAN BASIN

There are two options for road access:

The **Boundary Stream** tributary of Lake Pukaki saddles with the middle reaches of Duncan Stream. Roding would need to climb 900' vertically up a moderately steep moraine terrace from the Mount Cook road to gain access to gentle valley-floor terraces. A further climb of 1400' up moderately steep slopes would be required to gain the saddle at 4500'. This would require considerable switchbacking to maintain a 1:10 grade. This, and the approach off the main road would have a considerable visual impact.

To reach the upper Duncan Stream from the saddle, a road would either need to descend to the downvalley end of the upper Duncan lake and then climb to a possible base area at 5000', or traverse on a very gentle upgrade for 4.5 kilometres to the 5000' level. Both of these routes would entail crossing almost continuous scree with a side pitch of 27 - 35 degrees. While road construction is probably feasible over such terrain [as demonstrated by the Mt Hutt road access], the route would, in my view, be subject to severe avalanche hazard. This is evidenced by numerous avalanche traces in the scree. See further comments on avalanche hazard below.

The Boundary Stream roading option presents unnecessary construction costs and environmental impacts in comparison to the much easier Duncan Valley route. Boundary Stream would only become an option if consents for road construction through Pukaki Downs Station were not forthcoming.

The **Duncan Valley** option is the obvious approach, with negligible difficulties for its greater length; that is the lower and middle reaches. The total length of roading would be approximately 18 kilometres. It could leave the Mount Cook Road near the southern boundary of Pukaki Downs Station, and traverse broad, gentle terraces beside the Twizel River to the UCL boundary in the lower Duncan Valley : distance approximately 11 kilometres. The gradient of the valley floor increases slightly beyond here, but an almost straight alignment could be constructed within 1:10 to the lower Duncan lake, being another 4 kilometres.

An abrupt 700' climb to the upper Duncan lake would necessitate a sidling traverse at 1:10 on either valley wall between the two lakes. The eastern side would utilise the same face as a road from the Boundary Stream saddle. The western valley wall is gentler, with more limited scree, but also likely to be avalanche exposed. There is a considerable snow catchment/release zone along this valley wall which rises 2700' to a height of 6400'. The runout zone for large avalanches would be the broad fan traversed by a road [3700' - 4000' along this section]. A road could lead out on to moraine mounds on the valley floor below the upper Duncan lake and distance itself, to a degree, from the steep valley walls either side. However there are few sections, if maintaining a 1:10 grade with easy curves, that could remain beyond the reach of avalanches.

To reach the Duncan Basin from the upper lake outlet moraine [4400'] there is no alternative but to traverse steep scree slopes on either valley wall to reach an assumed base area at 5000' [this is a large gentle shelf, centrally located]. Side slopes above the lake are 27-32 degrees on the east and 27-30 degrees on the west. These rise uninterrupted 1700'-1800' from the lake shore. I anticipate that avalanches sweep down the full length of these slopes and in to the lake.

The length of the Duncan Valley between the lower lake and the head of the upper lake is extremely confined and, with the exception of the lakes and moraines, one valley wall runs in to the other. My overall impression is that in winter, particularly in heavy snow years, this would be a decidedly unhealthy locality to visit whether it be on foot, ski, or road.

The words of Ed Chapelle should be ringing loudly in the ears of anyone contemplating development proposals in this valley :

" The most important consideration to emphasize here is that any future mountain highway construction should include avalanche hazard analysis at the planning stage. This emphasizes the axiom that avalanche problems are far easier and cheaper to minimise or prevent at the planning stage of any enterprise than they are to cure after construction has begun." [3]

7.2 MACKENZIE BASIN

The same approach as above could be used to the Duncan-Mackenzie Stream confluence. The entrance to the Mackenzie Valley is too steep for a direct grade of 1:10 [vertical rise of 500'], however, with one easy bend on the MacMillan Stream outwash fan, a 1:10 grade leads back in to the valley above this obstacle. This climbing traverse would be the only earth disturbance seen from outside the valley. As it is at a relatively low altitude [3000'-3300'], with care in construction and revegetation of batters, these scars should heal quickly.

Once around the lower corner of the valley, the floor rises very gently [2 degrees], then increases gradually [5 degrees] to the upper bend in the valley at approximately 4000'. A steeper section of 500' then rises to the lip of a valley floor basin at 4500', this being too steep for a 1:10 grade without several switchbacks.

An alternative alignment within a 1:10 grade is possible between the lower valley bend and the 4500' level by a constant grade along the true right valley wall. This is a well vegetated face with side slopes of between of 25 and 32 degrees, with only very limited sections of screes to cross. This route would have the advantage of being on a sunny face, and being well clear of any avalanches down the snow-loaded northern wall. The avalanche hazard on the upper stretches of the proposed route is likely to be slight.

The total roading distance from Pukaki Downs is approximately 17 kilometres.

8. OTHER RECREATIONAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

Both basins are currently heliskiied by two operators. The northern half of the Duncan basin is probably too gentle to be of much interest to heliskiers. The southern basin and most of the Mackenzie basin is ideally suited, snow conditions permitting, for heliskiing.

All except 'expert' slopes are suitable for advanced cross country [x/c] skiing and ski touring, with the extensive 'novice' slopes in the northern Duncan basin providing ideal terrain for beginner x/c skiers. Existing ski touring activity has tended to focus on the Duncan basin. With skifield development in one basin, I would anticipate greatly increased backcountry skiing activity in the other. The connecting saddle between the two basins provides easy access on ski.

The summertime landscape of the upper Duncan valley is considerably more diverse and interesting for the general recreationalist than is the case for the Mackenzie valley. The Duncan exhibits several prominent geomorphological features including a fault scarp and lateral moraine on the faces below the Boundary Stream saddle, a succession of large moraines, the landslide and moraine impounded upper lake, the lower lake [complete with black shag colony], and six tarns scattered throughout the upper basins. There is potential for increased tramping activity once these features become more widely known. Although I have not been asked to comment on PNA values, it is apparent that the landscape values of the Duncan Stream strengthens the case for protected area status for this valley.

In contrast, the Mackenzie Valley is rather uniform and relatively uninteresting for tramping, it being without prominent moraine features. There is also an absence of tarns, lakes, or other focal attractions. Access to Mackenzies Peak is cut off from this direct southerly approach - it being more easily climbed from the Duncan side.

REFERENCES

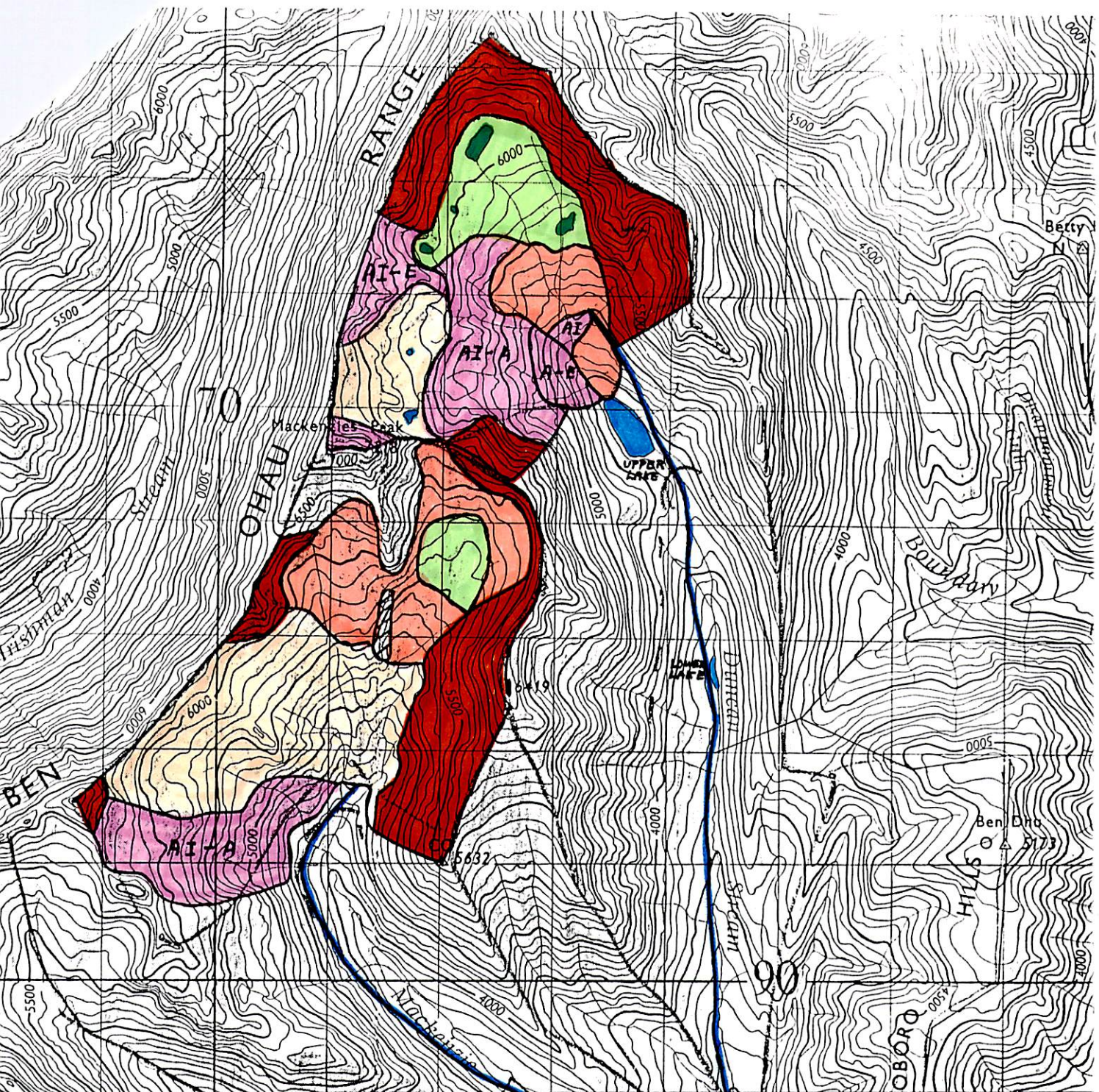
- [1] Mason, B.J. 1982. Skifield Potential In The Wakatipu District. An evaluation of the potential for, and the on-slope constraints to skifield development, principally at Coronet Peak and the Rastus Burn Basin of the Remarkables. Diploma in Parks and Recreation, Lincoln College.
- [2] Branch, B. and 1975. Developing an urban ski facility. Parks and Recreation [US] 10[9]: 20-25,52.
- [3] LaChapelle, E.R. 1979. An assessment of avalanche problems in New Zealand. NZ Mountain Safety Council Avalanche Committee Report #2, 53p.

I trust that this evaluation is sufficient for your purposes,

Yours faithfully,

B.J. Mason.

Bruce Mason.

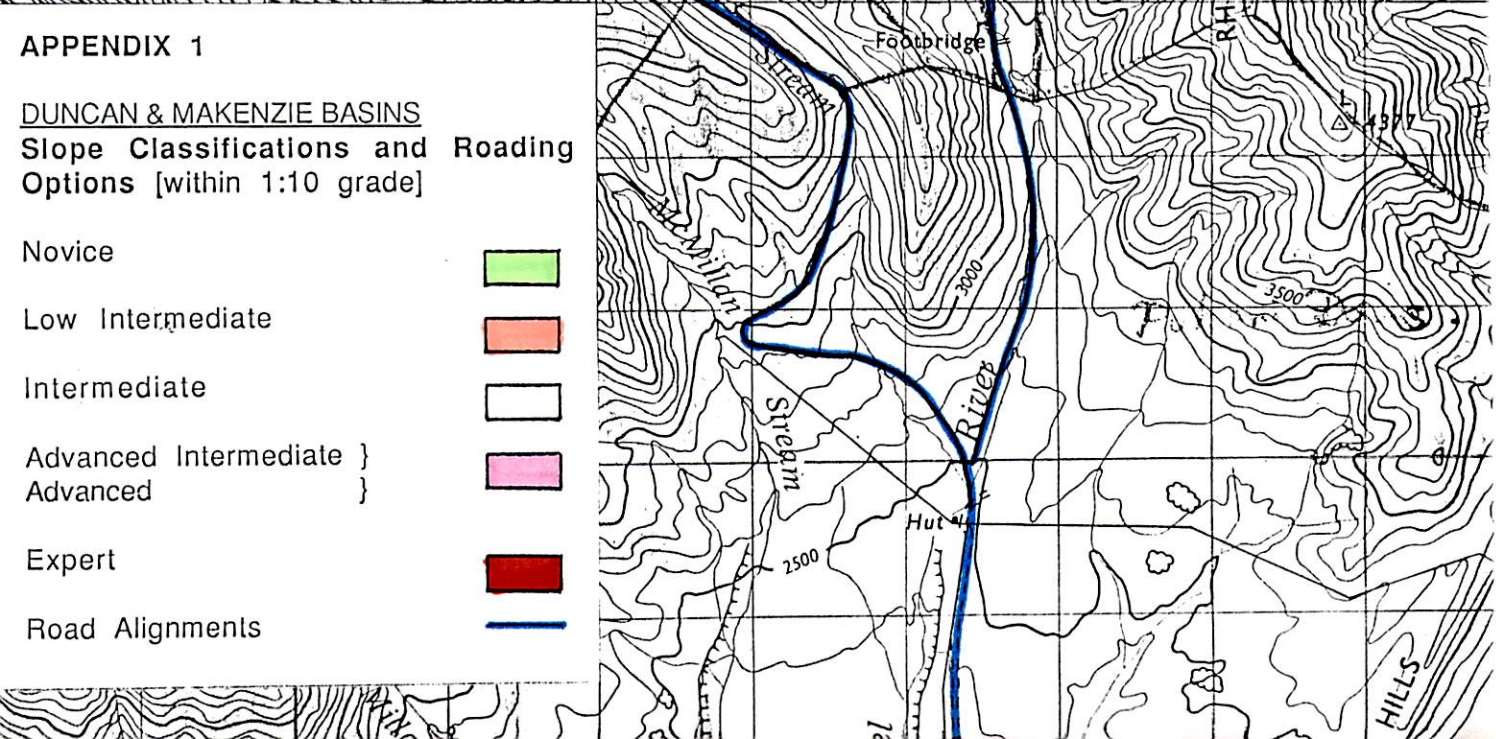
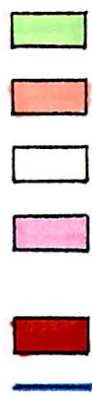


APPENDIX 1

DUNCAN & MAKENZIE BASINS
Slope Classifications and
Options [within 1:10 grade]

- Novice
- Low Intermediate
- Intermediate
- Advanced Intermediate }
 Advanced }
- Expert
- Road Alignments

Roading



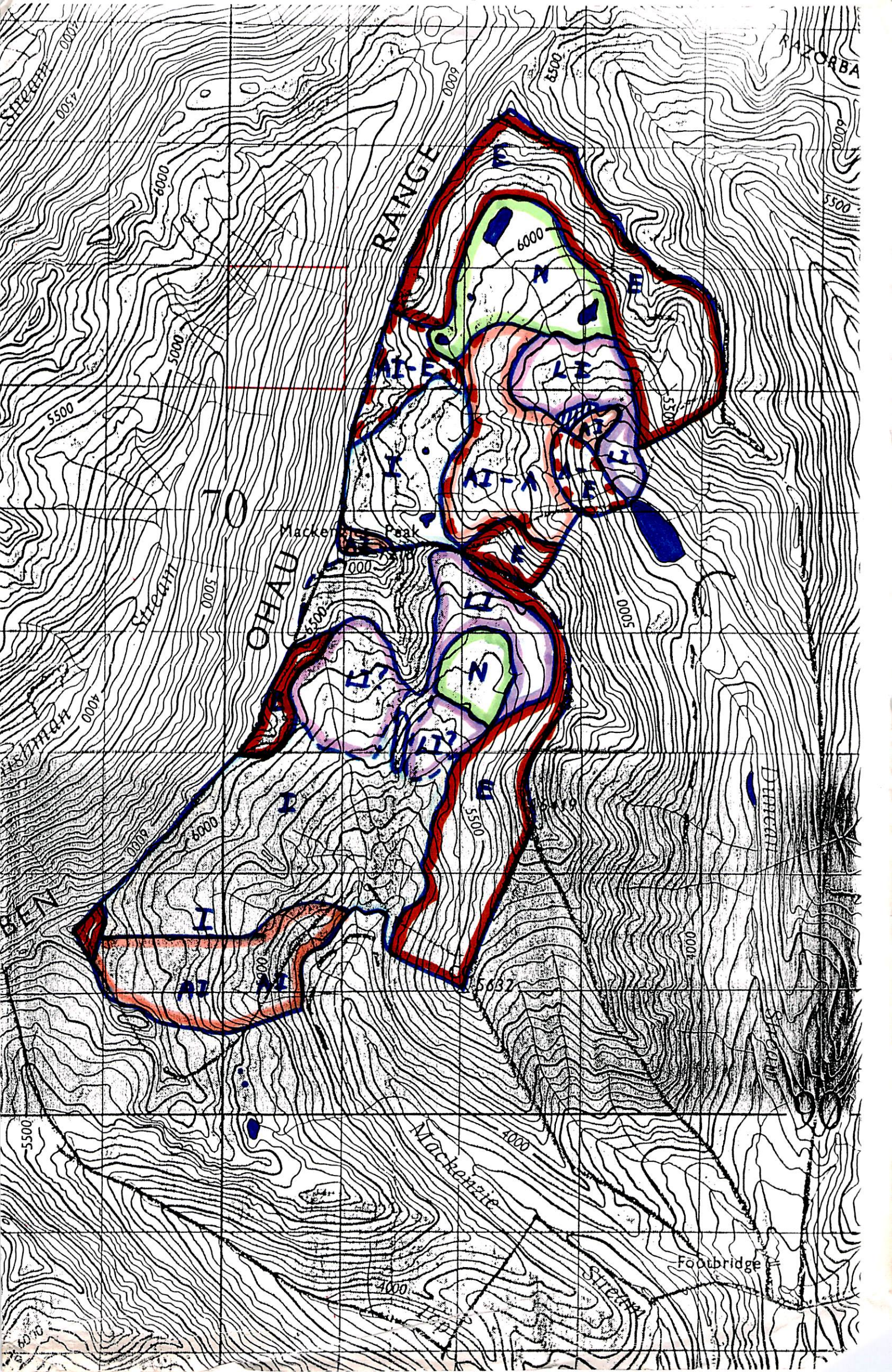
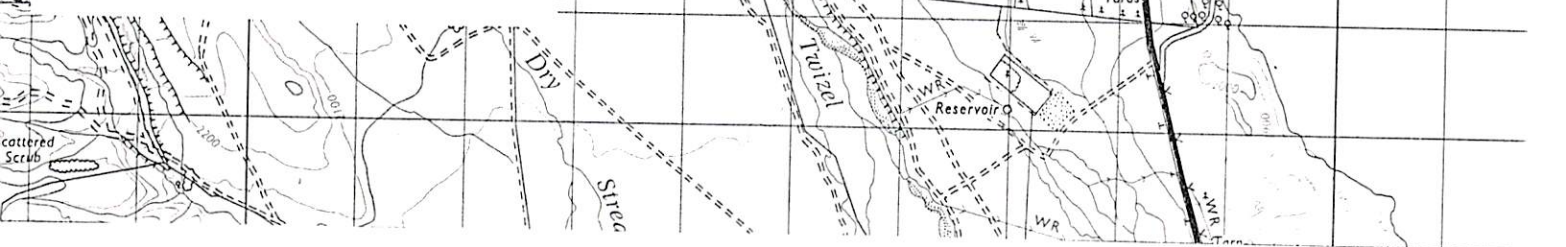
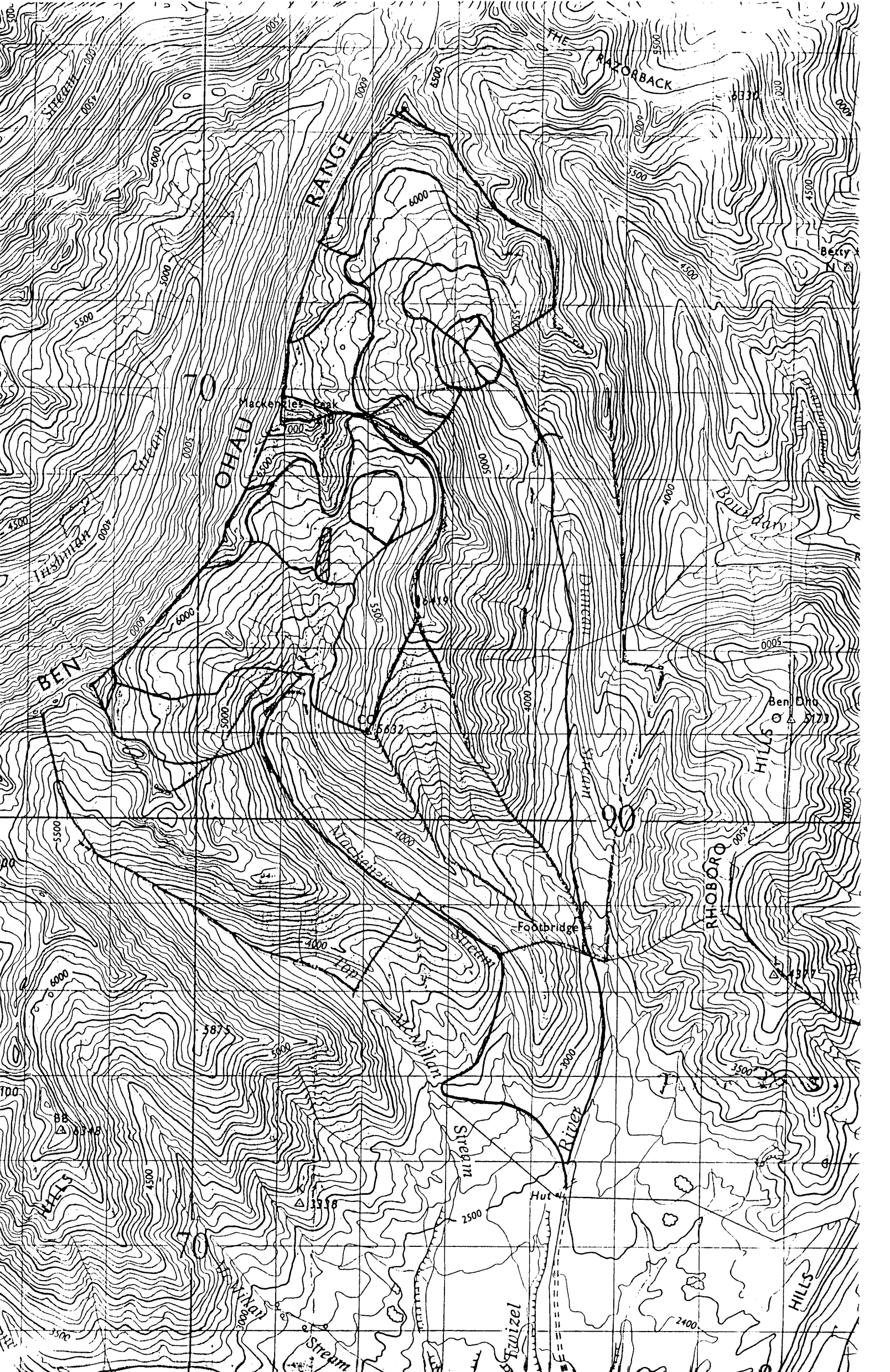




PHOTO POINT LOCATIONS





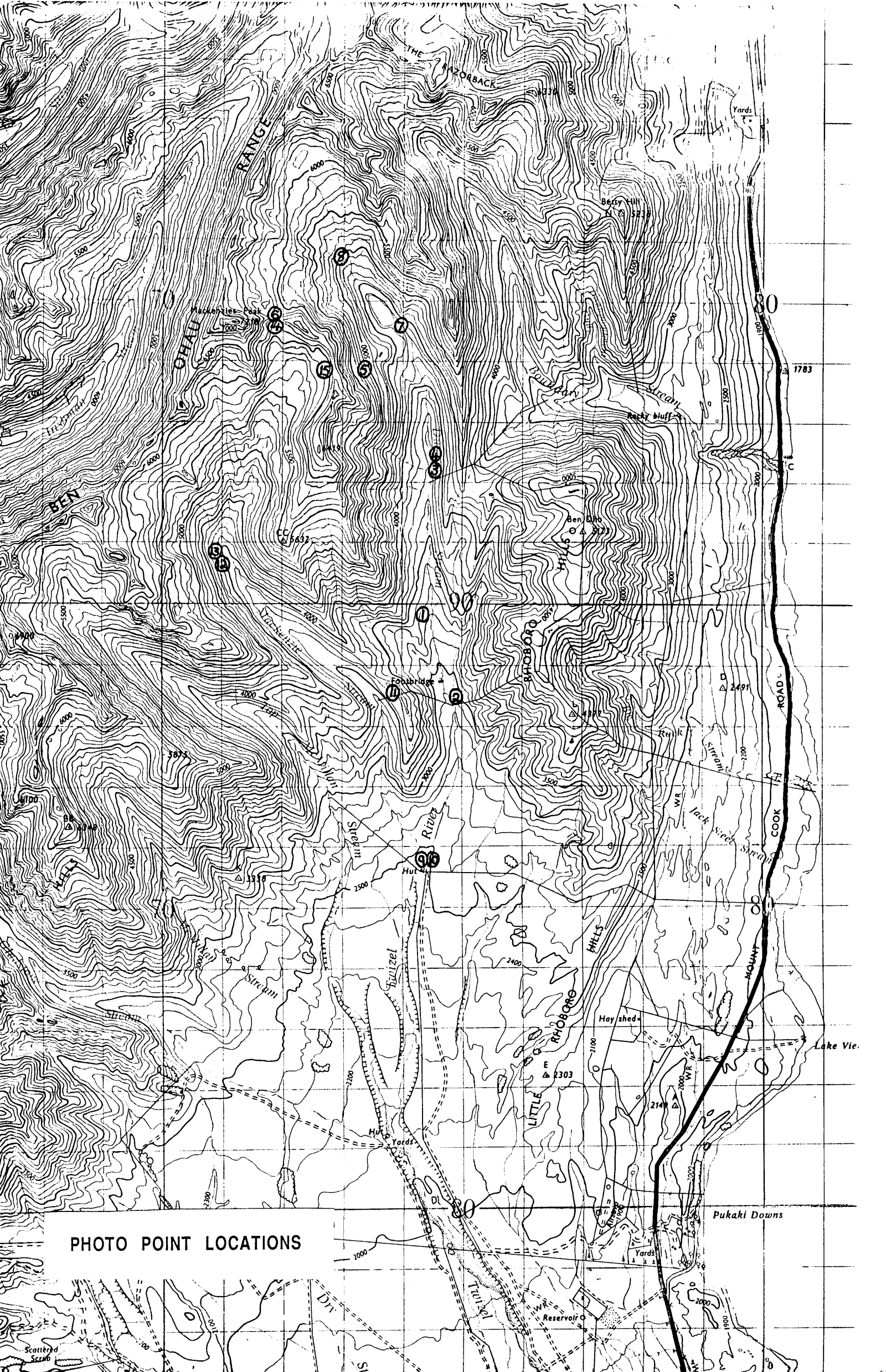
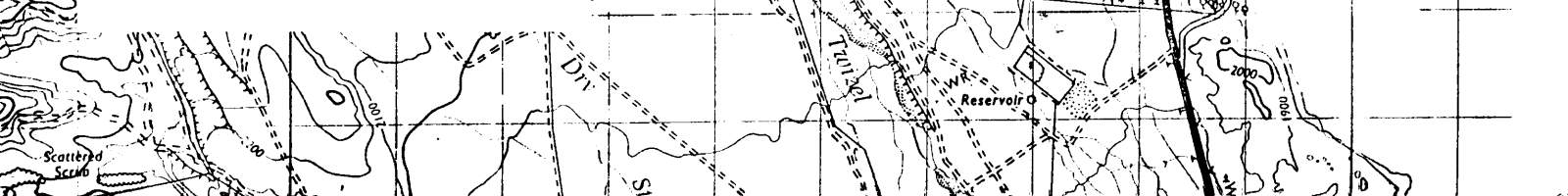
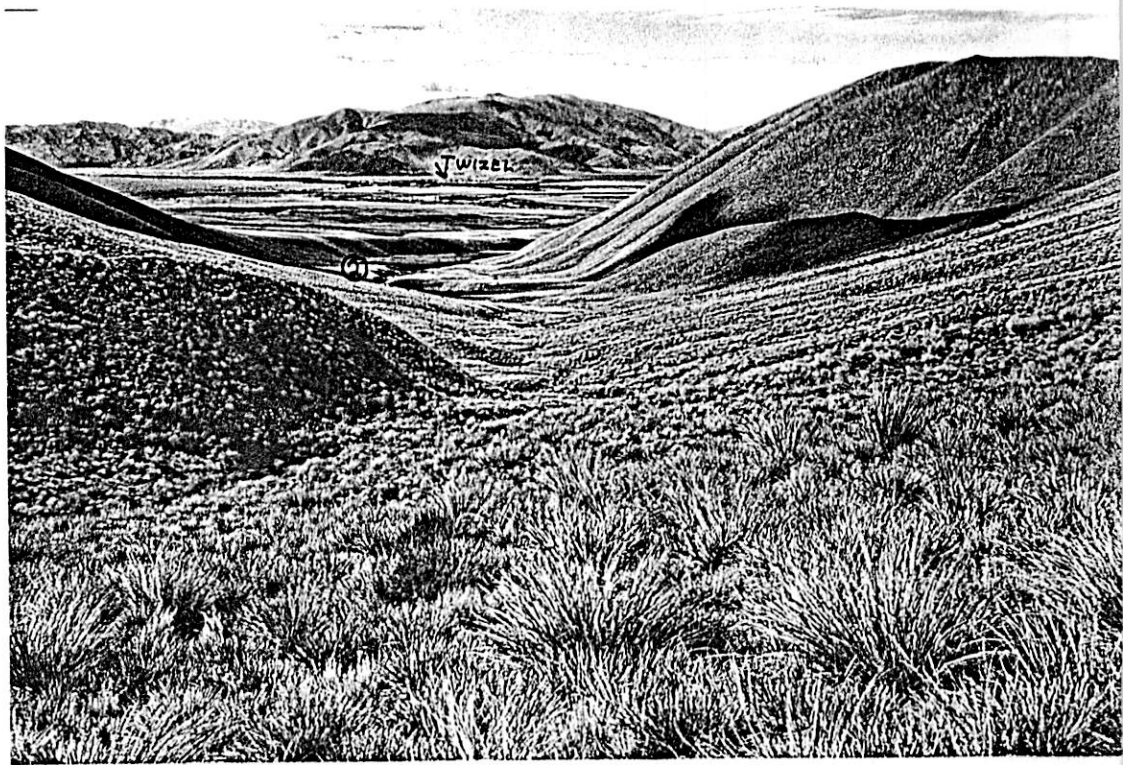


PHOTO POINT LOCATIONS



A. DUNCAN STREAM



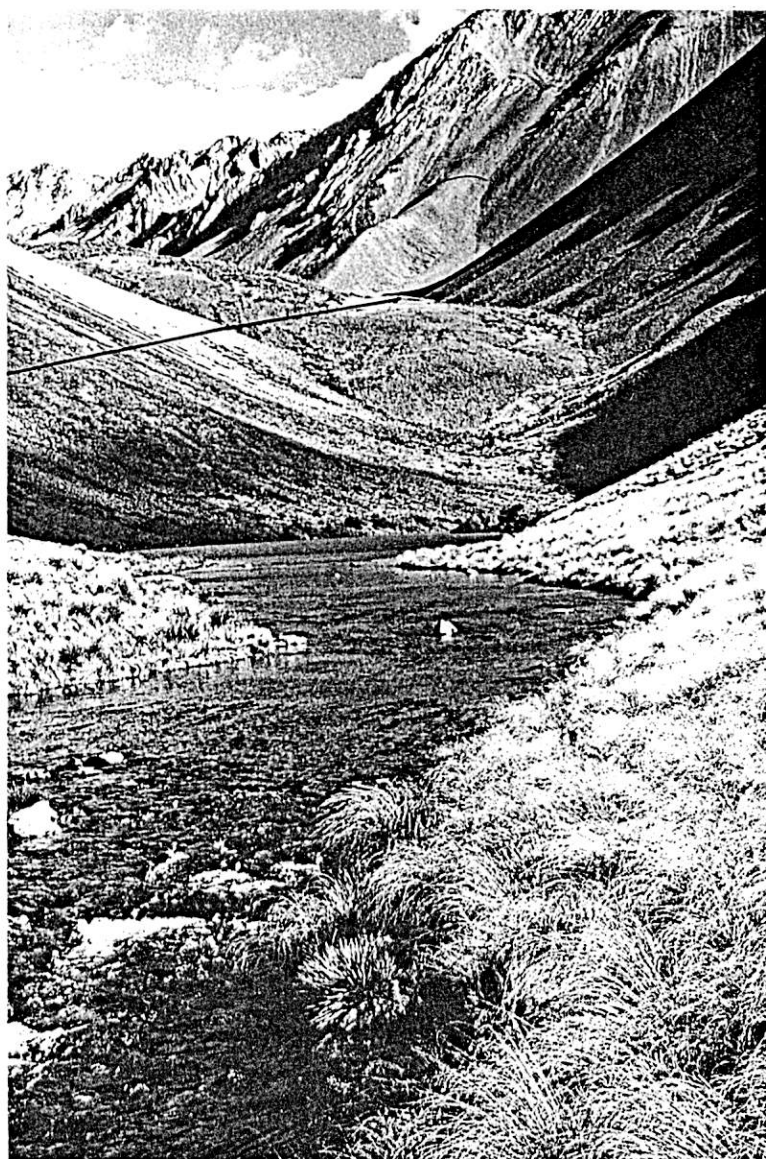
1. Downvalley view in lower Duncan Stream.



3. Valley near lower lake. Possible roading route from Boundary Stream shown. A road up the Duncan valley could traverse either valley wall.

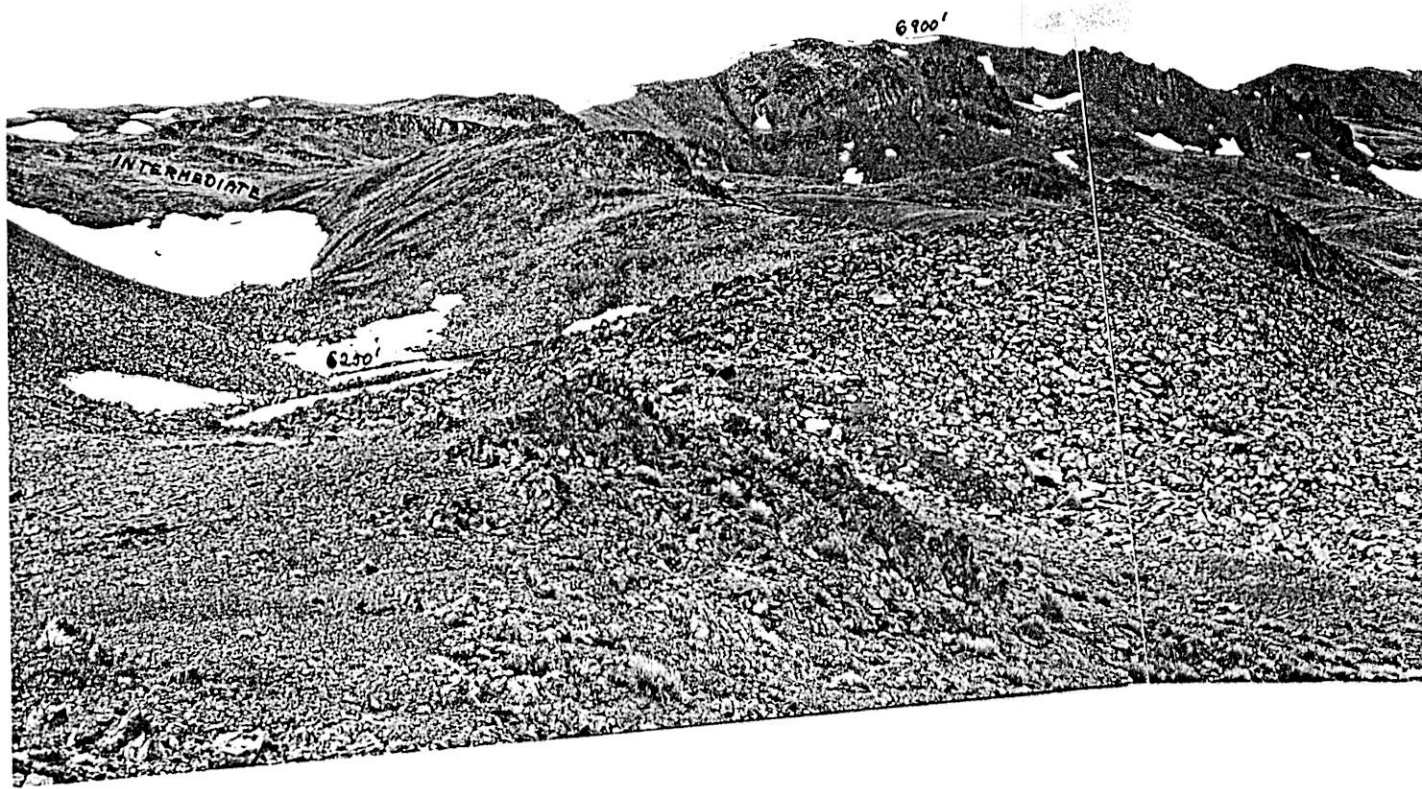
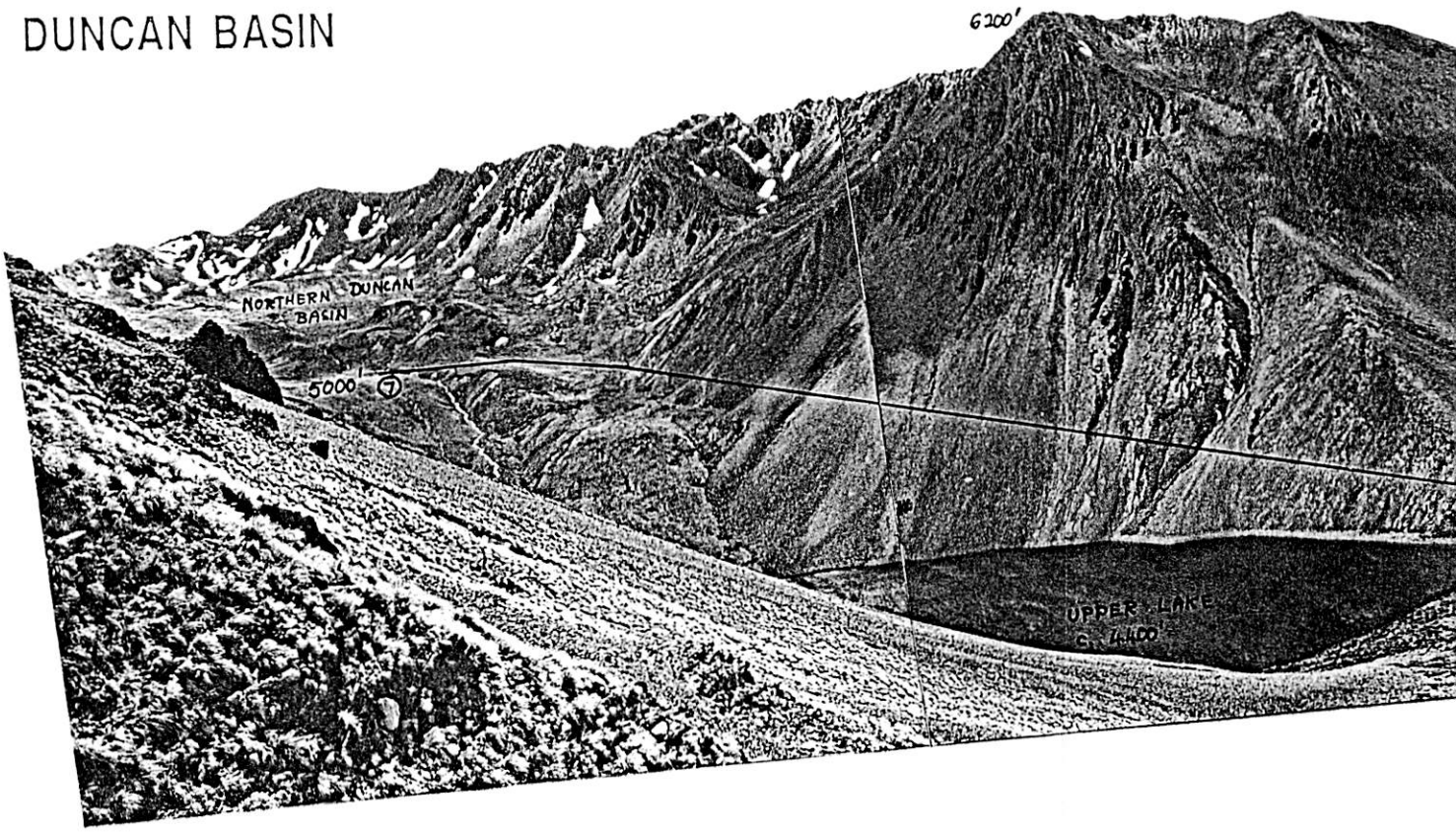


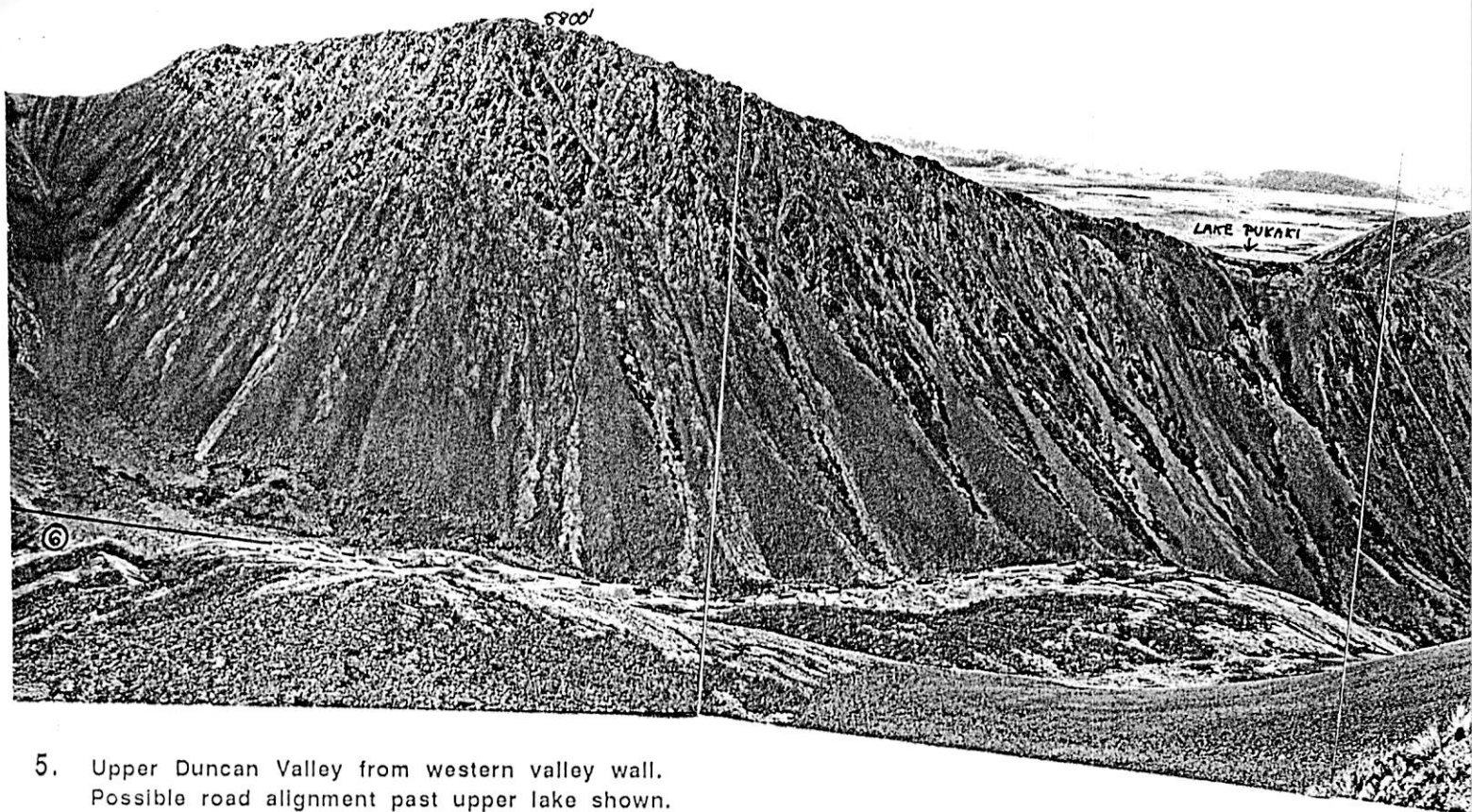
2. Upvalley [right] from near UCL boundary.



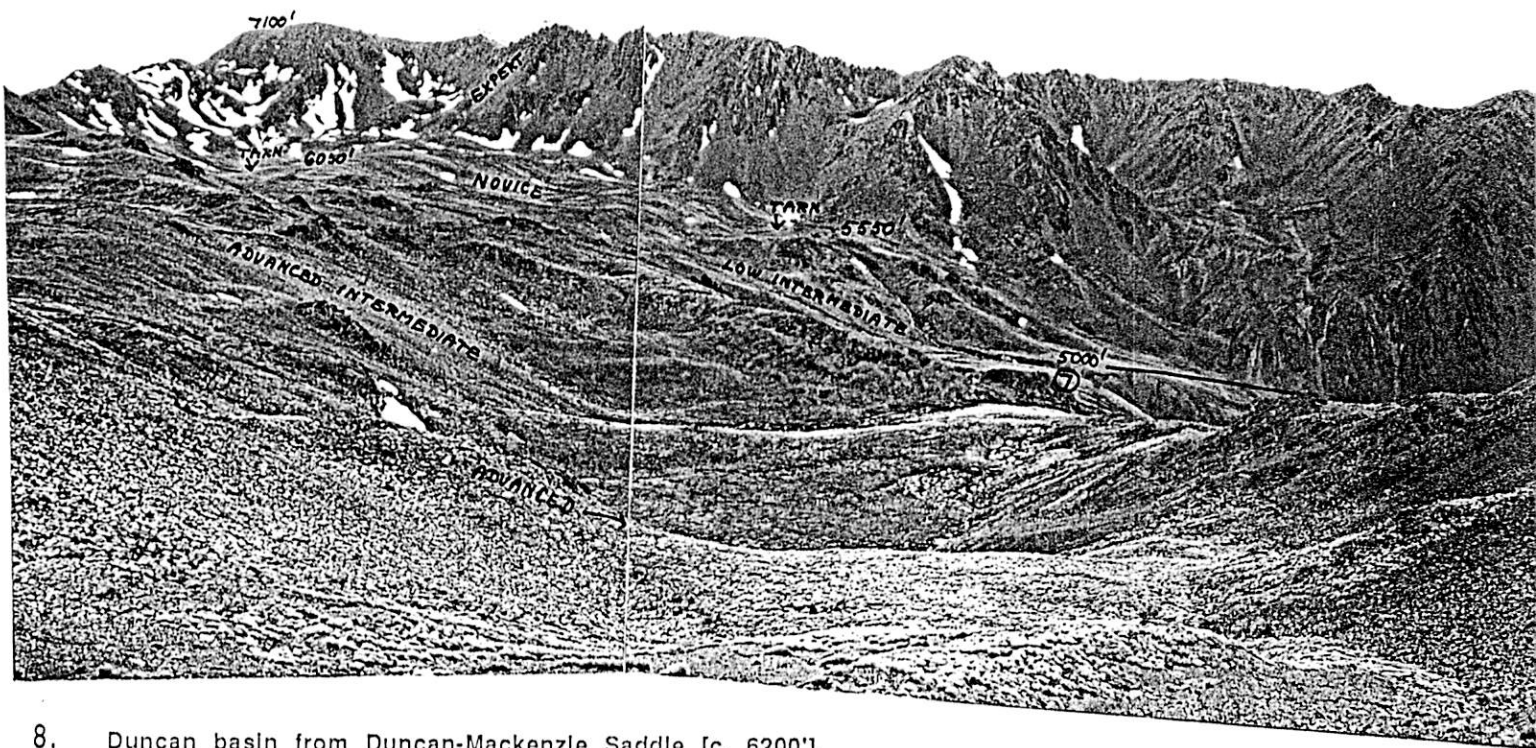
4. Outlet to lower Duncan lake, with moraine [centre]. Possible road alignment up Duncan Valley shown.

B. DUNCAN BASIN

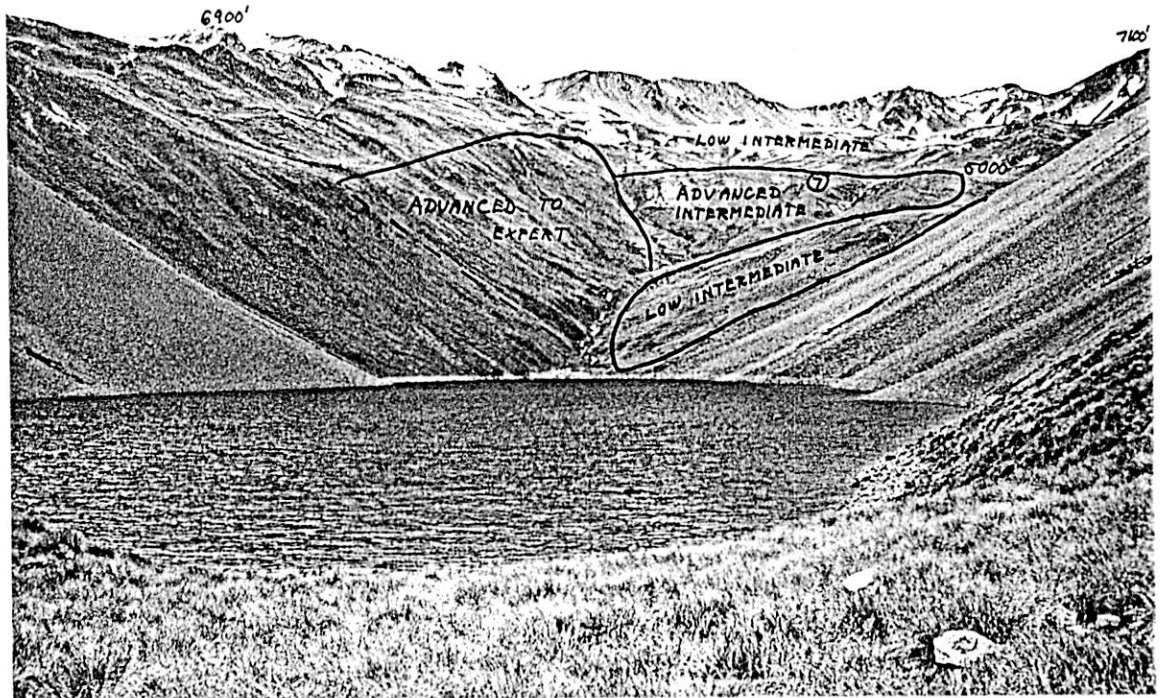




5. Upper Duncan Valley from western valley wall. Possible road alignment past upper lake shown.



8. Duncan basin from Duncan-Mackenzie Saddle [c. 6200'].



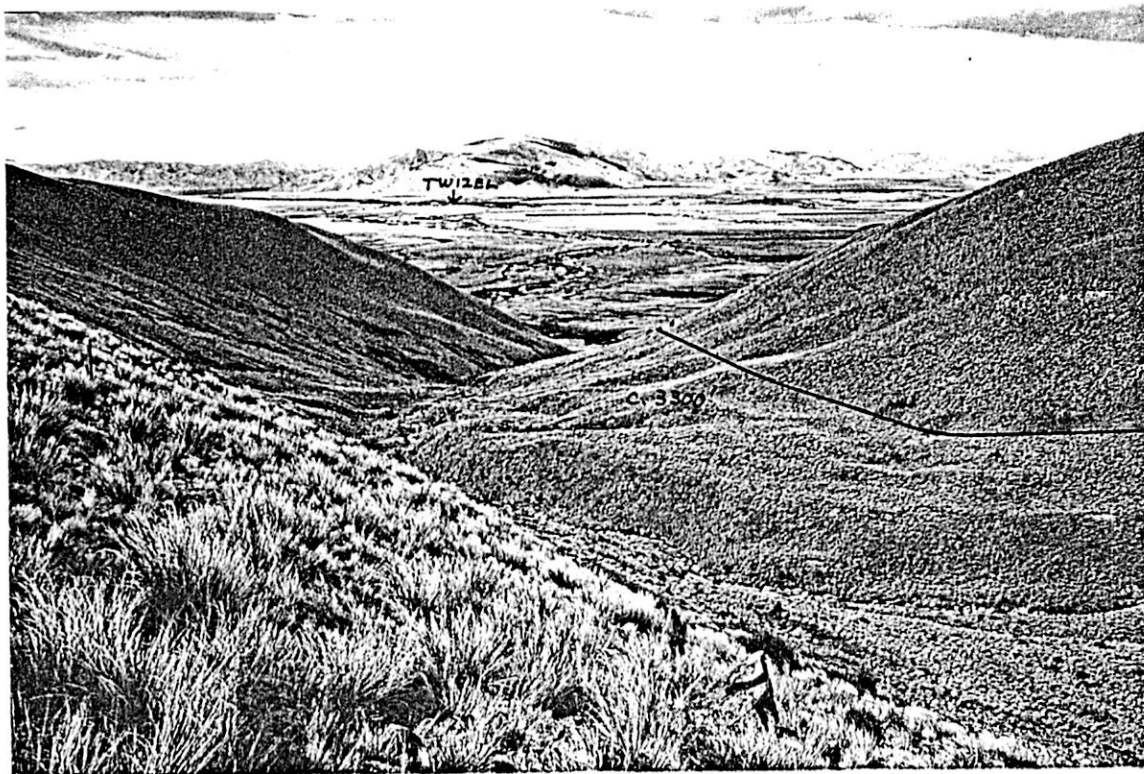
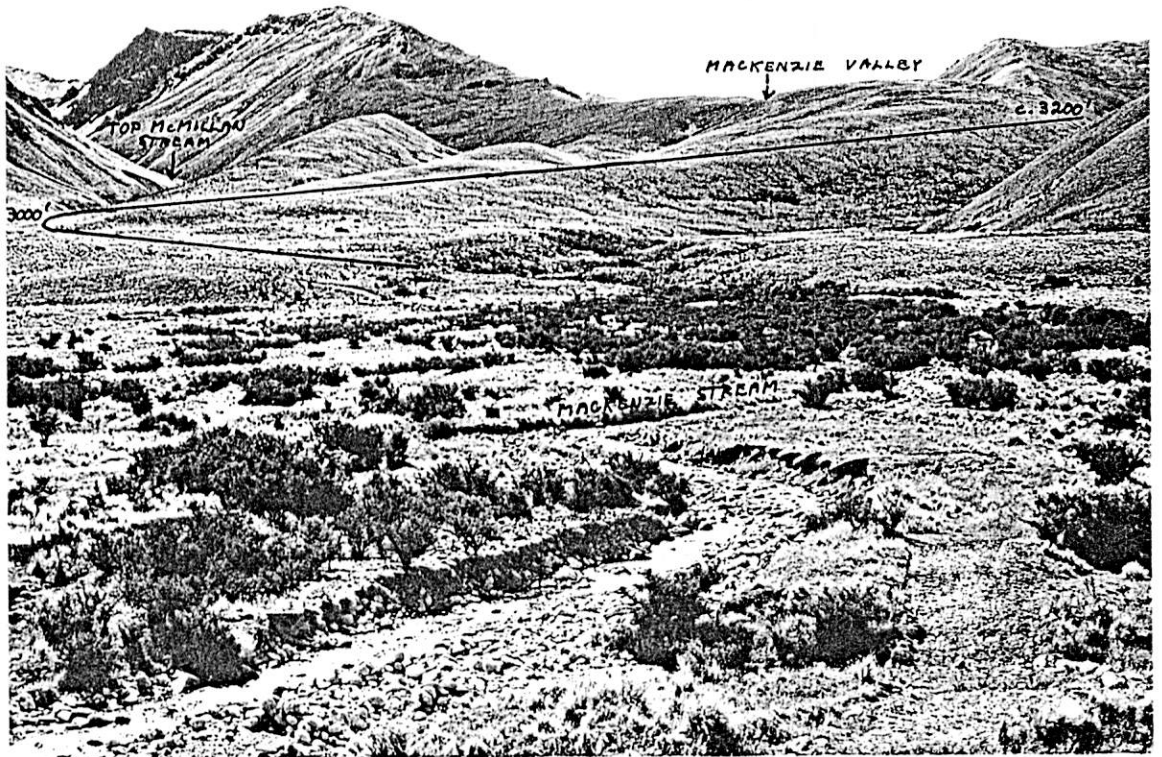
6. Upper Duncan lake from subterranean outlet [4400']. Some skler slope classifications shown.



7. Reverse view to photo 6 from 5000' level. Possible road alignment, slope classifications shown.

C. MACKENZIE STREAM

9. Possible road alignment
In to Mackenzie Valley
from Twizel river terraces.

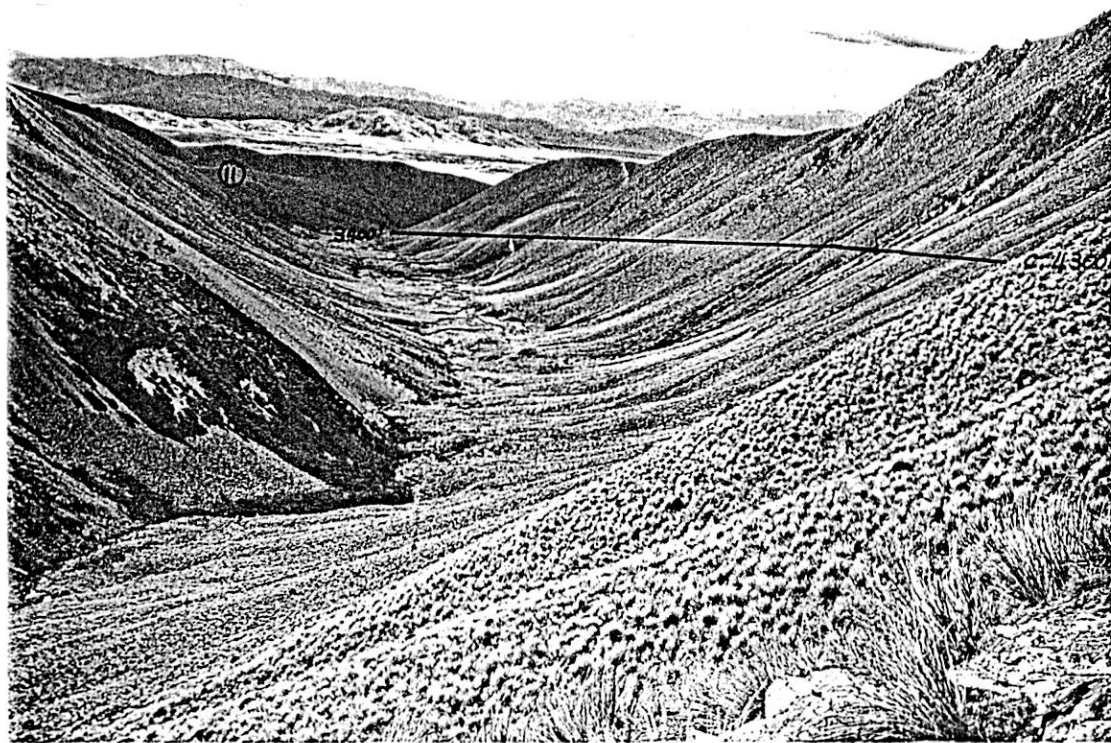


11. Downvalley view of
lower valley corner.
Approximate road
alignment shown.





10. Telephoto view of ascending traverse in to the Mackenzie Valley.



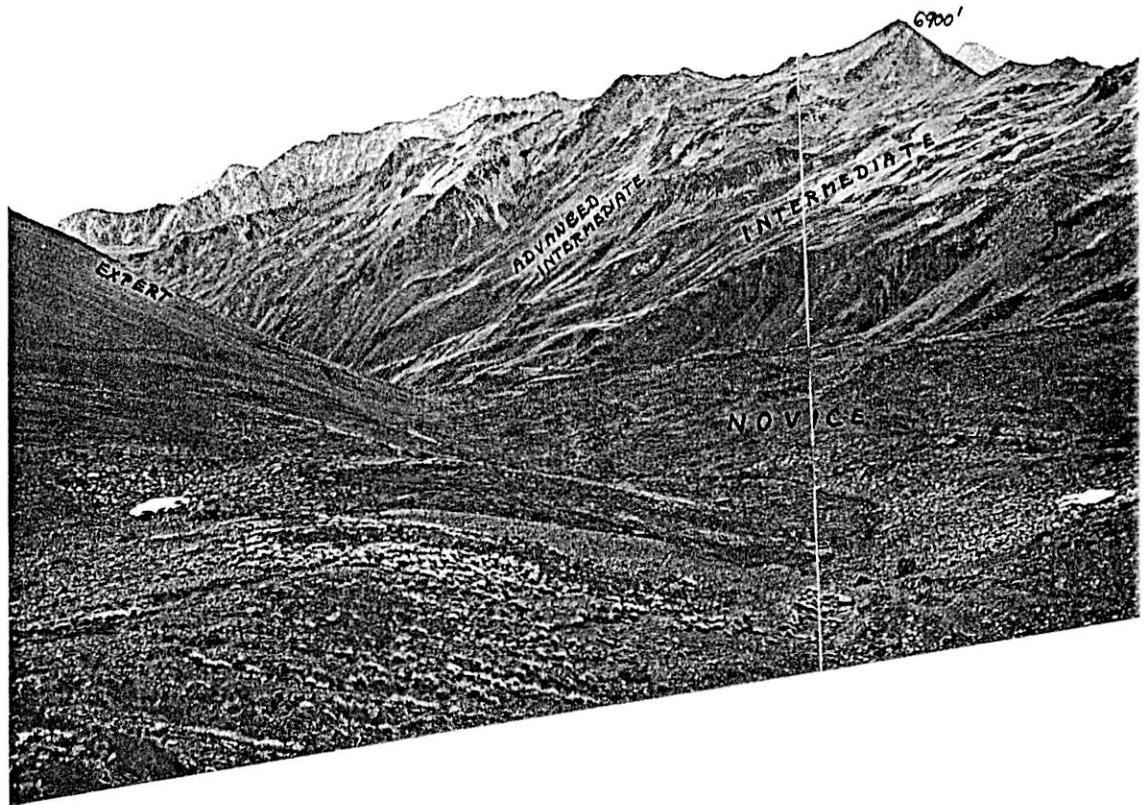
12. Possible road alignment up north-facing valley wall from lower valley corner.

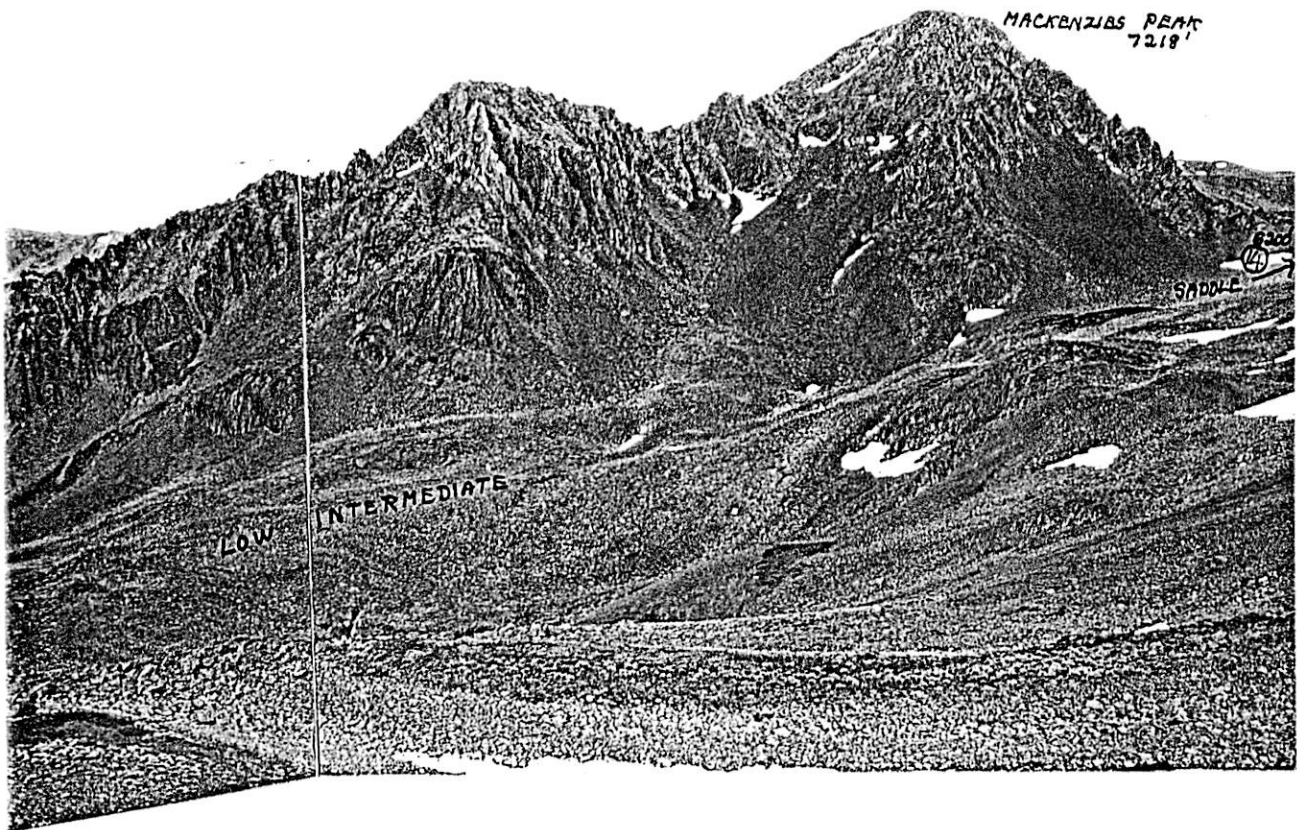
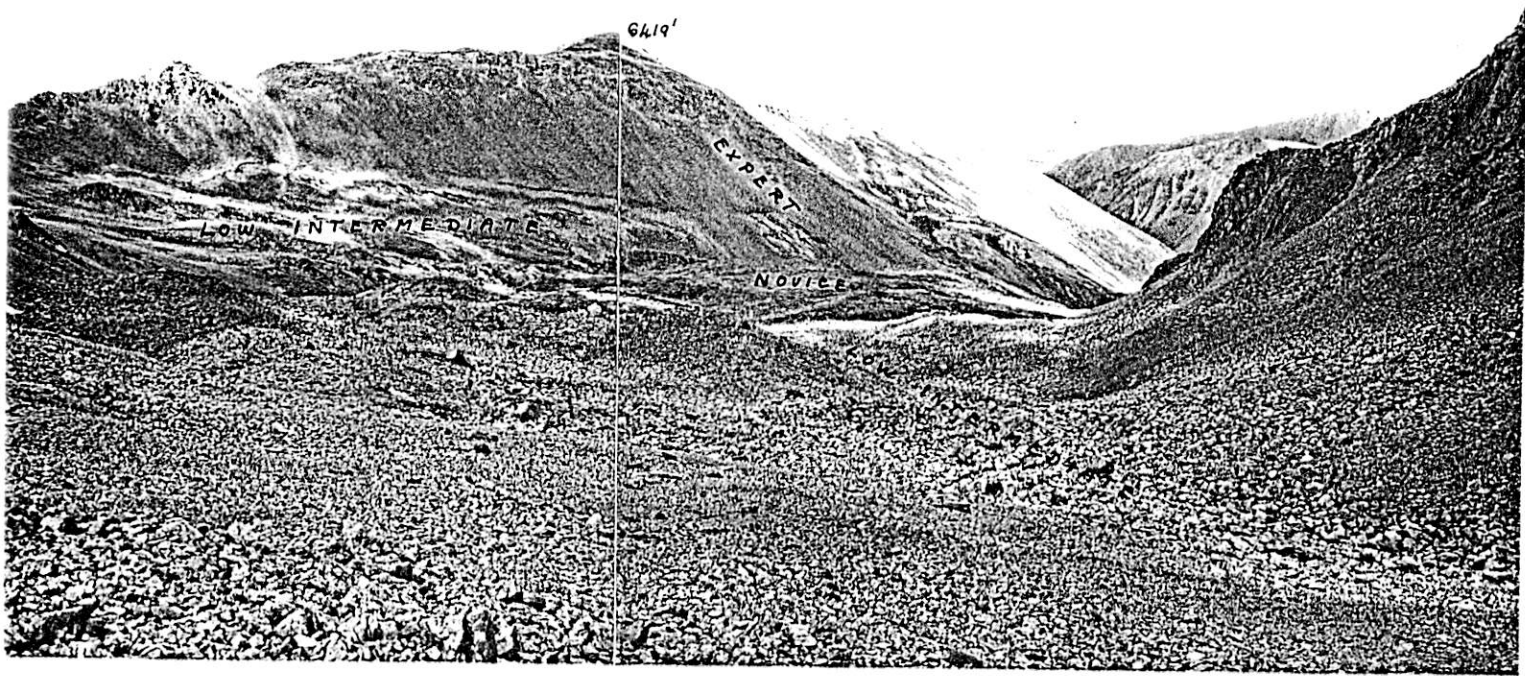


13. Possible road alignment around upper valley corner to lip of basin at approximately 4500'. (Photo taken from same point as # 12).

D. MACKENZIE BASIN

14. Northern Mackenzie Basin from Duncan-Mackenzie Saddle.





15. Mackenzie Basin from 6000' in northern basin.

TEHUKA.

7/2/87.

Land Settlement Board meeting 2-3/Feb 87..

PASAC recommendations endorsed for Pukaki, Tekapo, Grampians, Ahuriri, Omarama and Benmore Eco districts & Dept to begin negotiations with lessees for protection of the areas. Moratorium on PNA's to continue until PASAC Reports. Glentanner approval to develop by Mackenzie C C on flood prone areas (contrary to T & P Act & Local G Act). Ivey does not have any approved permits, hasn't signed any offers except for Helisking. L & S staff completely lax in letting him carry on his activities without approval.

Bruce Mason you did an excellent job on the Duncan/Mackenzie ski proposal. We circulated your report to Board members prior to hearing the deputation from the developers and it was well received especially the five folders of photos. Blew their case for the Duncan and the roading. Board agreed to PASAC rec for the Duncan, to allow further investigation of both valleys and instructed L & S staff to finalise the Management Plan Ben Chau to include PASAC rec. Bruce, well researched and a great help to get a quick and hopefully final decision.

All Land Settlement committees reappointed until 31/3/87. No appointment made in Otago. Genghis Kahn very upset with Turner but he didn't get his nominee. Board agreed to a rehearing of a request by Arthurs Pass & Bealey spur lessees to freehold after turning them down last year. Board members totally opposed to freehold as suspect they want to capitalise and we have another Tekapo. Wolds. I accused staff of misleading Board by intimating negotiations were at a point of almost being complete and Kenworthy had asked committee not to visit Wolds in Nov. Told them this was rubbish and staff hadn't even started to negotiate or even been there. Board rang Kenworthy who was most upset and wanted an inquiry into the allegations to clear his name. Board agreed they were sick of the delays and appointed Brian Palmer to visit and eyeball lessee. Palmers attitude is if the lessee mucks about with him he will use the stick. PASAC's recs on Birchwood really damn lessee's activities with cattle and I will send a copy to Min & D.G. of Forests following my letter of Dec 86. Kaitorete spit. Habgoods solicitor tried to pull the wool over Members eyes and did a good job except that Bryan Sleigh was there and blew out his arguments. Bryan is determined to get the Company out but Board let him down by agreeing to a further and final 750 m² to be removed. Board had agreed on 2/12/86 that Min of Lands rec to Min of Energy to decline application for a mining license. This could be countered by R F&B serving an injunction on Dept. Licensing under Sec 165 is legally suspect as this is for one off licenses.

Regards ; Allan Evans, Dist; Alan M, Bruce M, Les, Hugh, Dave, Bob M, Sue, John B,
Gerry M&S, Bryce J,

P.S. Habgoods can now appeal this decision and drag the issue out for ages.





19 May 1987

Mr Allan Evans
Grange Settlement
TEMUKA

Dear Allan

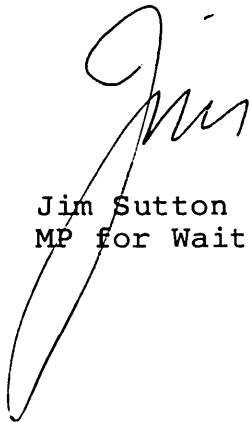
Thank you for the material you handed to me at Timaru Airport the other night.

The photographs of the MacKenzie and Duncan basin and stream areas are spectacular. The evaluation by Bruce Mason is most illuminating. You and Allan Mark have done a great service by commissioning his report. My own perspective on the development proposals and how they might fit in with a sensible conservation approach is much improved.

We didn't make much head-way at Glentanner. The issues seem complex in the extreme, particularly the impact of the relevant clause in the State Owned Enterprises Act. There probably won't be much progress until the court gives its decision on the Maori case. In the meantime one hopes that a satisfactory, secure leasehold arrangement can be arrived at. I hope to encourage some of the interested parties to get together with the Minister of Lands and Land Corp executives in the reasonably near future.

Thank you for your help, as always.

Kind regards



Jim Sutton
MP for Waitaki

ca.
1:8.5

4°

1:10

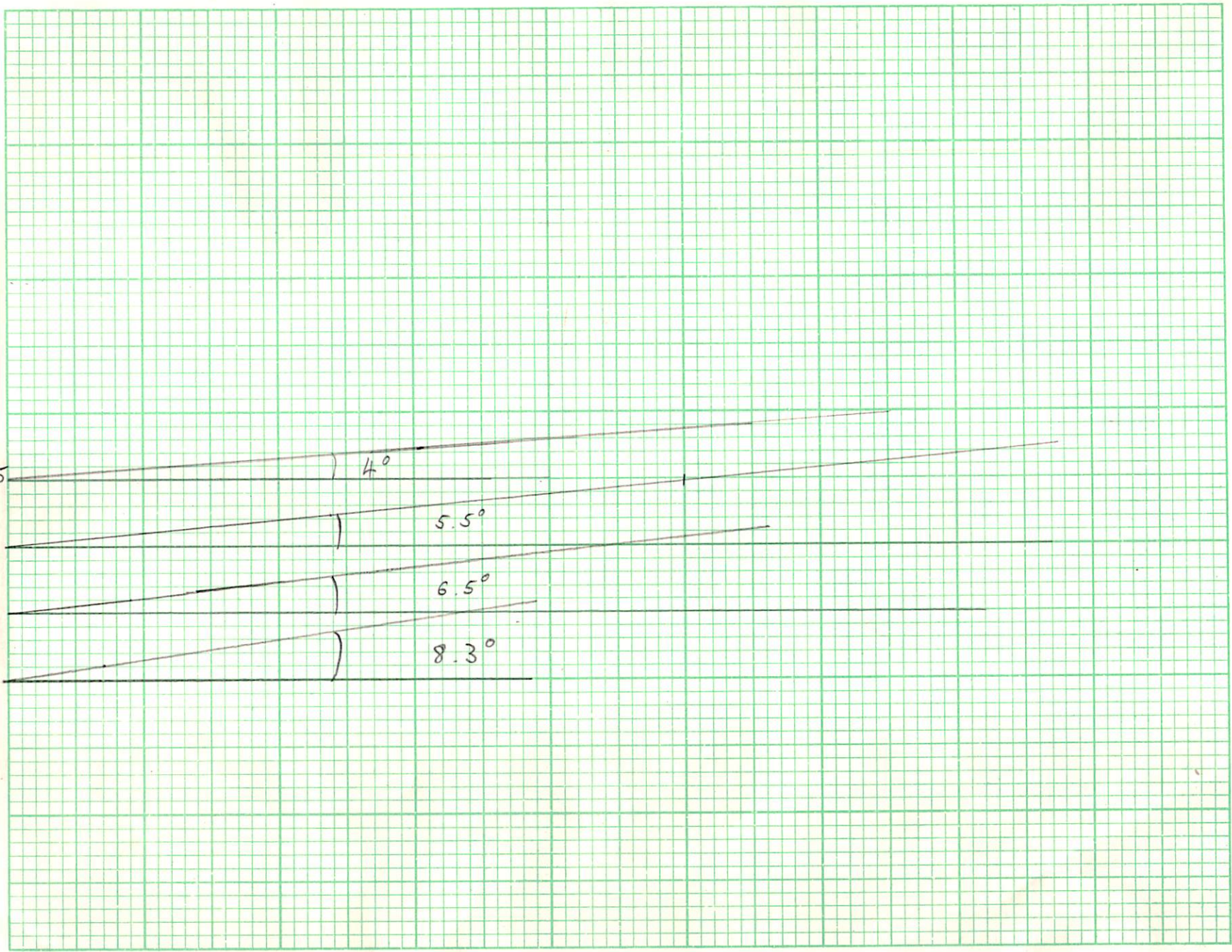
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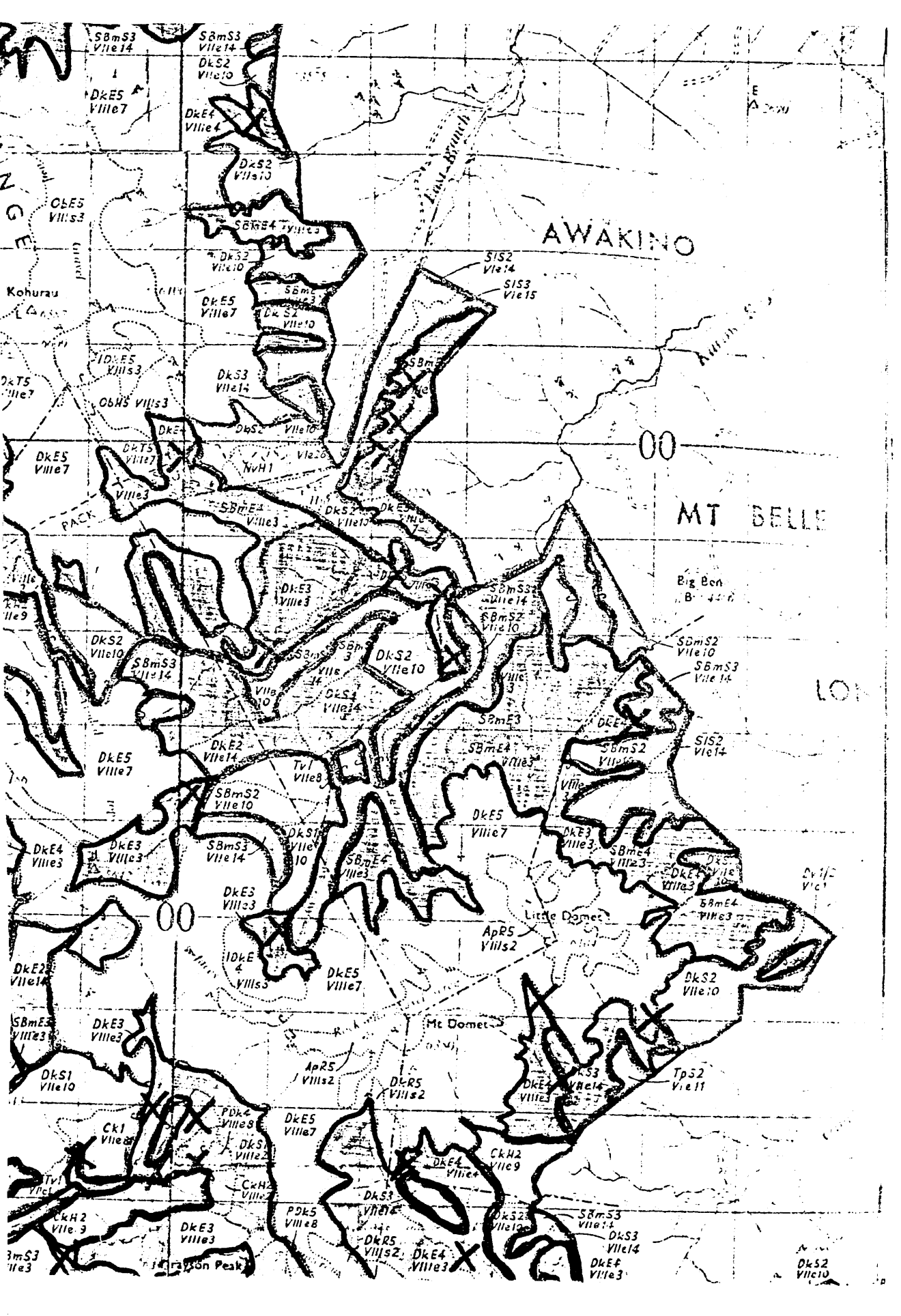
6.5°

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8.3°



1. Downvalley view in lower Duncan Stream.
2. Upvalley [right] from near UCL boundary.
3. Valley near lower lake. Possible roading route from Boundary Stream shown. A road up the Duncan valley could traverse either valley wall.
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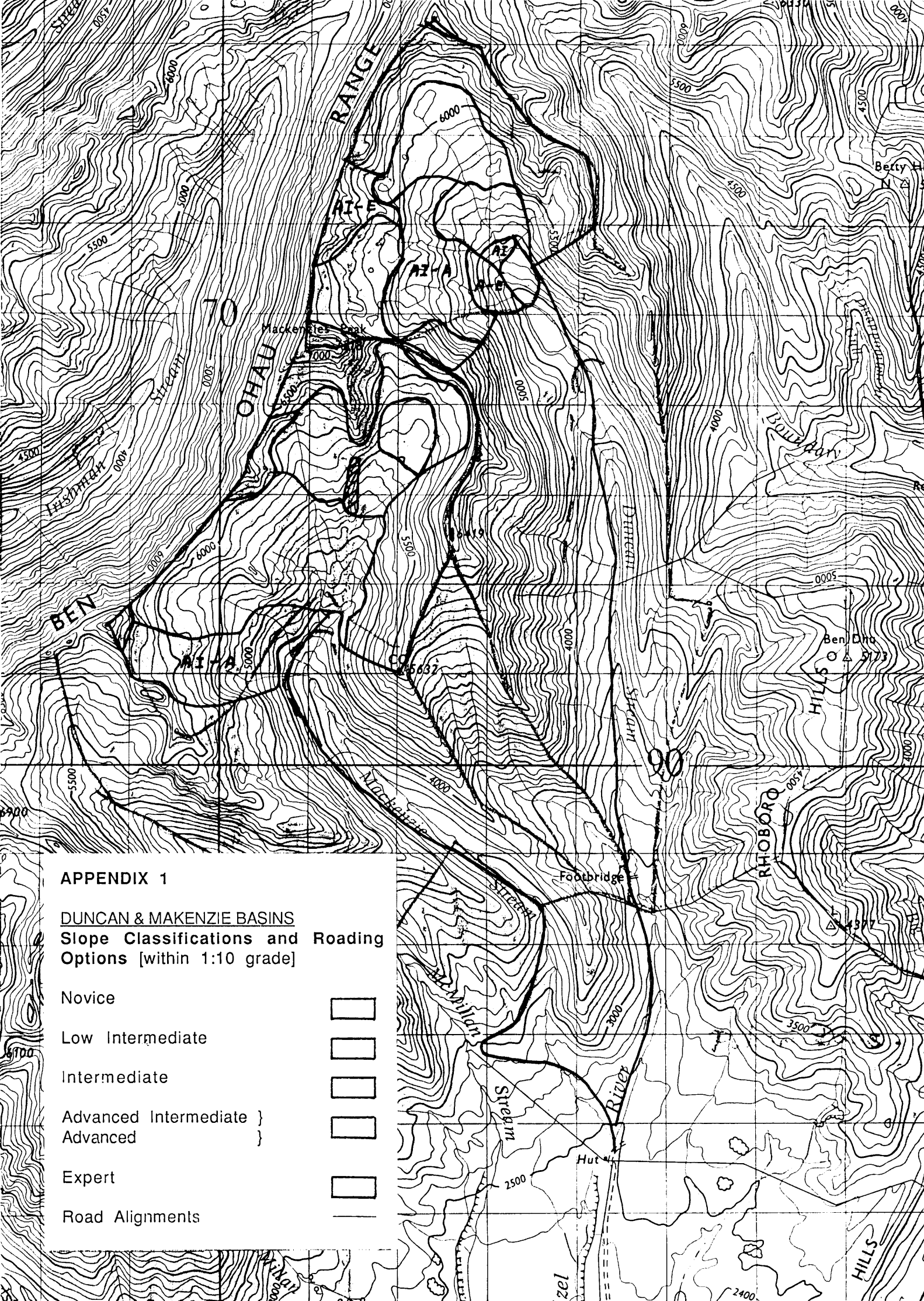
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APPENDIX 1

DUNCAN & MAKENZIE BASINS
Slope Classifications and Roothing Options [within 1:10 grade]

Novice



Low Intermediate



Intermediate



Advanced Intermediate }
 Advanced }



Expert



Road Alignments





Mason

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (Inc.) F.M.C. CANTERBURY MOUNTAIN
LAND GROUP,
C/- PO Box 577,
Christchurch.

P.O. Box 1604
Wellington

14 March 1986

The Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Department of Lands & Survey,
Private Bag,
CHRISTCHURCH 1.

Dear Sir,

BEN OHAU CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

We have received a copy of the draft Crown Land management plan for the Ben Ohau area and write to comment.

The Department and the author are to be congratulated on the document and its provisions. The draft plan gives a good explanation and description of the resource and goes on to make generally sound provisions for its management. F.M.C. advocates the removal of high land unsuitable for grazing from pastoral leases and the area covered by the plan is typical of the type of land of interest to us for its recreational value.

However a major flaw with the document is that it is restricted to unoccupied Crown Land and land in process of surrender on the eastern flanks of the Ben Ohau Range. In this regard we welcome the intention of managing Glentanner land as UCL, but we are alarmed at the licensee's intent of skifield and tourist development in this area; that this may be exclusively controlled for his sole benefit. Public rights must be provided for under public control. We submit that surrender of the POL should be insisted upon as a condition of any approvals for tourist development. This should be expressed in the Management Plan.

There will undoubtedly be land on the western (i.e. Dobson) faces and southern extension of the same range which are suitable for surrender and addition to the management area. This was no doubt considered by the Department at the time of lease renewal for Glen Lyon Station (1984). We understand that a run plan is proposed on Pukaki Downs. Land unsuitable for grazing should be added to the management area. Addition of such land will make the Crown Land Management area more geographically coherent. This would also be more relevant to recreational use of the Range as this is undoubtedly not confined solely to the eastern faces. In the past such management plans have tended not to indicate Departmental thinking on future surrender of neighbouring land, however the adoption by Government of the Destocking and Surrender Policy last year makes this an imperative. The Department now has a clear responsibility to identify such land. It would therefore be in keeping with this policy if the draft plan indicated suitable areas for addition on the western flanks of the range.

On the subject of recreational use we consider that the Department's assessment of such use and plans for its management are sound. This is obviously an area where commercial recreational use can be well integrated with other uses. F.M.C. has opposed the growth of commercial recreation in other areas where there is conflict between commercialisation and wilderness or natural values but we do not see such a conflict in this case.

Looking at management objectives (Chapter 5) these have our support with two minor comments. These are:


5.3. Fire Prevention: Implementation of this policy point states that lighting of fires in the management area shall be prohibited. This is unrealistic because a proportion of recreational users habitually use open fires for camping purposes etc. FMC does not suggest that these people have a right to light fires but we point out that this will occur whether there is a prohibition or not. Policy should be aimed towards encouraging responsible use of fire places rather than an unenforceable prohibition.

5.9 Management Area Boundaries: As suggested in our general comments above, we consider that the document should make a positive statement on areas suitable for addition on the western and southern flanks of the Ben Ohau Range.

We agree with the proposed land use zonings in paragraph 6 of the document.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully,



D.A. Henson,
Convenor.

LAND SETTLEMENT BOARD

MacKENZIE HIGHLAND DEVELOPMENT CO: REHEARING APPLICATION

File: HO CL 7/11/12

Case No. 10242

Prepared in Head Office

Proposal

1 To consider an application by the MacKenzie Highland Development Company for a rehearing pursuant to Section 17 of the Land Act 1948.

Background

2 Members will recall that under Case 10235, representatives from MacKenzie Highland Development Company made a presentation to the board outlining their proposals for a skifield in the Duncan Basin.

3 After considering the case and representations made, the board resolved:

1 To direct the Department of Lands and Survey to finalise the management plan for the Ben Ohau Crown Land Management area on the following basis:

- (a) The board confirms its acceptance of PASAC's recommendation for the Upper Duncan Stream.
- (b) That the feasibility of skifield development in both the MacKenzie and Duncan Basins may be investigated but any such feasibility studies are to take into consideration the requirement for protection of the PNA area.

2 That the company and the Department of Conservation be advised now that if at any stage a skifield development proposal is considered in respect of this general area then the board, on the basis of the information currently before it, envisages any major developments and facilities will take place in the MacKenzie Basin but that this does not necessarily mean public skifield use of the Duncan Basin is totally excluded.

General

4 The company were advised of the board's decision in writing on 12 February 1987, having been verbally advised of the decision on 5 February 1987.

5 By letter dated 23 February 1987 the company applied for a rehearing pursuant to Section 17, Land Act 1948. The application is within the 21 day period defined in the Act.

6 The grounds for the rehearing are set out in the company's letter attached.

Recommendation

7 That the board consider granting a rehearing pursuant to Section 17, Land Act 1948, to the MacKenzie Highland Development Company.

Decision

8 The Land Settlement Board on

HILL, LEE & SCOTT

BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

CHRISTCHURCH

- G. Hill LL.B.
- K. C. James LL.B.
- B. S. Palliser B.A. LL.B.
- M. K. Headifen LL.B.
- A. J. Cadenhead LL.M.(Hons.)

LEESTON

R. W. Angland LL.B.

8th FLOOR RAMADA TOWERS
 776 COLOMBO STREET
 P.O. BOX 13-004, CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.
 TELEPHONE: (03) 797-780

OUR REF: B. S. Palliser

YOUR REF: CL 7/11/12

23rd February, 1987

rec'd 24/2/87

The Secretary,
 Land Settlement Board,
 C/- Department of Lands & Survey,
 Private Bag,
WELLINGTON

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: DUNCAN BASIN SKIFIELD PROPOSAL - MACKENZIE HIGHLAND DEVELOPMENT CO

We acknowledge receipt of the Board's Decision of the 12th instant.

The applicant wishes the Board to rehear and reconsider the application pursuant to Section 17 of the Land Act 1948. The matters upon which a rehearing is sought are:-

1. The original application sought exclusivity - that is that should the feasibility study show that the proposed scheme would be viable then the applicant would have the exclusive right to a licence/lease to the area concerned. For the scheme to proceed, it is considered imperative that some commitment in this regard be given by the Board.
2. That the Board clarify the apparent conflict between provisions 1(a) and 2 of its Decision dated the 12th February 1982.

The situation is that the Department of Crown Lands in Christchurch interprets 1(a) as being totally prohibitive of any development in the Duncan Basin.

Reasons for reconsideration:-

- (a) It was clearly conceded by Dr Marks that he could see no objection whatsoever to the winter use of the Duncan Basin.
- (b) The only concern was the effect on the environment during summer months.
- (c) The company has suggested that the environment could be protected by 'walkways' such as exist in many reserve areas.
- (d) That the visitors to the area will be largely carried by elevated 'ski' lifts during both summer and winter. The company accepts that the nature of the prospective

protected area required special consideration but that this could be provided whilst still permitting visitors access to the area in the summer months to view the areas of interest.

The company wishes to be reheard on the question of the numbers of people to be accommodated on the mountain. The figure mentioned by the representative from the Tourist and Publicity Department (that is 3,000) may well have influenced the Board's thinking. The company would wish to emphasise that whilst the number of skiers using the field may well be of that order, the development as envisaged has always been to accommodate approximately 500 persons on the mountain.

- (e) That the Board and PASAC have failed, it is respectfully submitted, to comprehend the vast scale of the terrain and the very minor impact of the proposed development.
 - (f) The company and its advisers are well aware of the areas desired to be protected and see no conflict of use.
3. With reference to 1(b), the company agrees totally with the decision in this respect but sees a very real conflict between 1(a) and 1(b) based upon the known attitude of the Department of Crown Lands in Christchurch.
 4. With reference to item 2 of the Decision, the company sees clearly that the following requirements are vital to the proposed development and seeks reconsideration of the Decision in this respect.

Grounds:-

(i) The application is for the development of both the Duncan and Mackenzie Basins - not either one or the other. Only in developing both basins can a truly "international" ski resort be created with a full and balanced variety of skiable terrain.

(ii) The road:-

The company and its advisers are convinced that road access into the Duncan Basin provides the only reasonable alternative, bearing in mind the need for the facility to be of truly "international" standard.

A road into the Duncan Basin would be of a gradient and configuration most acceptable to overseas users. Any alternative would require "switchbacks" and sidecuts over extensive steep slopes.

(iii) Avalanche risks:-

The company acknowledges that avalanche danger is a hazard in any alpine environment. The company considers that this aspect is best addressed during the feasibility study and is of the opinion that if avalanche risks are too great in the Duncan Stream Route then the project would fail. It is a strongly held view that if the roadway were to be

built into the Mackenzie Basin then the whole facility would be reduced to the level of any other skifield in the County of which there is an over-supply. This is a very important consideration and addressed in the report from the Tourist and Publicity Department (Mr Don Hayman). The company considers that, if anything, the avalanche risks on the Mackenzie Basin route would be significantly greater - because of the greater vertical length of avalanche prone slopes traversed by this route.

How do they know.

(iv) Snow Retention:-

One matter which appears not to have been taken into full consideration and upon which the company wishes to be reheard is the fact that the snow retention in the Duncan Basin is considerably greater than that of the Mackenzie Basin, especially in the lower reaches late in the skiing season.

In simple terms, the Mackenzie Basin alone would not provide a sufficiently long ski season for development in that basin alone to be viable. This factor has become of vital importance in view of the Decision as it stands. Further photographic evidence is available for viewing.

How do they know

Please acknowledge receipt of this application and let us know the procedure to be adopted for the rehearing.

Yours faithfully,
HILL, LEE & SCOTT,

Per:

BSP:PS

Duncan Basin



CONSERVATION

02861

File 6-4-1

22 May 1987

Gerry McSweeney
Conservation Director
Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
PO Box 631
WELLINGTON

Dear Gerry

Find enclosed copies of the following letters.

- a) Minister of Tourism to Hill, Lee and Scott.
- b) Hill, Lee and Scotts letter to Minister of Tourism.
- c) LSB letter to Hill, Lee and Scott.

Following your verbal request.

They are provided to you under the Official Information Act.

J Pfahlert
J Pfahlert
for Director General

McSweeney



Office of the
Minister of Tourism

Wellington, New Zealand

8 May 1987

Hill, Lee and Scott
Barristers and Solicitors
PO Box 13004
CHRISTCHURCH

ATTENTION: Mr B.S. Palliser

Dear Sirs

I have received your letter of 27 March advising of the decision of the Land Settlement Board on the Mackenzie Highland Development Company's proposal to develop a ski field in the Duncan Basin.

While I understand that the new Department of Conservation will shortly publish the Ben Ohau Management Plan, it is of concern to me that further delays while it develops its own policies in relation to proposals such as yours is an inevitable cost of administrative re-organisation.

I have already made known my views on the need to tackle these issues urgently to my colleague, the Hon. Russell Marshall, Minister of Conservation, and by copy of this letter I am asking for his comments on the specific Duncan Basin ski field proposal. I will let you have my colleague's views when I have received his reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mike Moore', written over a horizontal line.

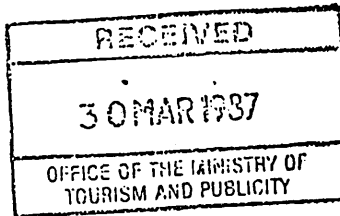
Mike Moore

HILL, LEE & SCOTT

BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

CHRISTCHURCH
P. G. Hill LL.B.
K. C. James LL.B.
B. S. Palliser B.A. LL.B.
M. K. Headifen LL.B.
A. J. Cadenhead LL.M.(Hons.)

LEESTON
R. W. Angland LL.B.



887/247
8th FLOOR RAMADA TOWERS
776 COLOMBO STREET
P.O. BOX 13-004, CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.
TELEPHONE: (03) 797-780

OUR REF: B. S. Palliser

YOUR REF:

27th March, 1987

The Hon. M. Moore,
Minister of Tourism,
C/- House of Representatives,
WELLINGTON

GENERAL MANAGER
TOURIST AND PUBLICITY DEPT

~~For draft reply
For reply by direction
For comments
Rejected~~

30/3/87

Dear Sir,

RE: MACKENZIE HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT CO.

Thank you for your letter of the 27th February, 1987.

We now enclose a copy of the letter received from the Land Settlement Board dated the 11th March 1987 advising that the rehearing application has been declined.

You will no doubt have read our letter to the Board seeking a rehearing and have noted that we had some difficulty in following the Board's reasoning, particularly insofar as the Duncan Basin was concerned.

We now find ourselves in exactly the same position with the reply from the Land Settlement Board, where it is clearly stated in the second paragraph that the Board is of the opinion that the Ben Ohau Management Plan covers the concerns of the MacKenzie Highland Development Company and provides the opportunities the company seeks.

However, in the final paragraph is a simplistic comment that the Board feels that there is a conflict in land use in the Duncan Basin, which means that the proposed skifield is best located in the MacKenzie Basin.

Whilst we have not had the opportunity of seeing the management plan in its final form, we feel that the Land Settlement Board has adopted a somewhat "Alice in Wonderland" approach to its decision, leaving the company in limbo as to exactly what its decision, if it in fact reached one, is.

We wonder if it would be possible for representatives of the company to meet with you at some convenient time when you are in Christchurch to discuss the situation and to seek your comments before any further action is taken.

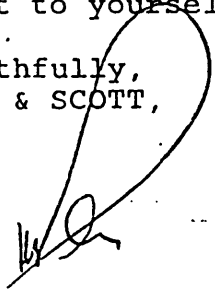
We are acutely aware of the situation which pertains, that is that the Land Settlement Board ceases to operate as from the end of this month, and that the governing authority will become the Department of Conservation.

It appears abundantly clear that the Board has failed totally to grasp the enormity of the area concerned and the very small "impact" that the proposed use will have on that landscape.

We look forward to receipt of your response, and if possible a time convenient to yourself for us to meet.

Yours faithfully,
HILL, LEE & SCOTT,

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'W. S.', is written over the typed name 'HILL, LEE & SCOTT'.

AJC:PS

LAND SETTLEMENT BOARD

Telephone 735 022
Telegraphic address: Headlands
Our ref: CL 7/11/12
Your ref:

Secretary
Land Settlement Board
C/- Department of Lands
and Survey
Private Bag
Wellington

11 March 1987

Hill, Lee and Scott
Barristers and Solicitors
Box 13-004
CHRISTCHURCH

Attention: B S Palliser

Dear Sir

REHEARING APPLICATION BY MACKENZIE HIGHLAND DEVELOPMENT CO

I refer again to your letter of 23 February 1987 in which you apply for a rehearing of the Land Settlement Board's decision as advised to you on 12 February 1987.

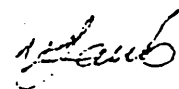
The board resolved to decline the application by MacKenzie Highland Development Company for a rehearing. In doing so the board was of the opinion that the Ben Ohau Crown Land Management Area Management Plan, which was adopted at the same meeting, covered your concerns and provided the opportunities your company sought.

The board wished to thank the company for their submissions and for their contribution to the management plan. The board appreciated members of the company appearing before it.

As the land in question will be administered by the Department of Conservation from 1 April 1987, it is suggested that the company approach that department in further investigating a skifield in the area.

May I take this opportunity to wish the company all the best in a venture which the board readily acknowledged was a worthwhile proposal, but felt that the conflict in land use in the Duncan Basin meant it was better located in the MacKenzie Basin.

Yours sincerely



V H Lamb
Secretary

MACKENZIE HIGHLAND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
GENERAL PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. CONCEPT: In brief the development proposals being contemplated are multi faceted and are based upon the concept of capitalising upon the several excellent geographic and topographic assets to be found in the Twizel and Ben Ohau Ranges area of the Mackenzie Country. We believe that very good prospects exist for the establishment of a first rate resort centre to cater to both summer and winter trade in considerable volume.

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL ATTRACTION ASSETS: Many lakes in vicinity with capability of servicing; fishing, water ski-ing, motor-boating, sailing.

- Lake Ruataniwha's international rowing capability which could be greatly promoted and capitalised upon.
- Horseback trail and free range riding.
- Trail biking.
- Sightseeing.
- Ski-ing in winter.
- Ice skating.
- Golfing.
- Swimming.
- Tramping, walking, climbing etc.

2. DETAIL OF ENVISAGED AND POTENTIAL FACILITIES AS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY:

- A. SKI AREA: Establishment of a significantly large ski area in the Duncan Basin.

This would require an access road from the Mount Cook road either through the property known as Ferrintosh or else Pukaki Downs.

The ski area would be provided with a number of uphill lifts, day lodge and other supporting facilities.

In addition it is likely that a large tarn in the vicinity could be utilised in the promotion and provision of ice skating.

We believe that one or more of the lifts would have appreciable summertime potential in catering to rides and associated high altitude sightseeing for tourists and visitors.

The ski area would be substantially developed at outset so as to provide in depth service and appeal from start-up. Later further development would follow in ensuing years.