



CLUTHA DISTRICT COUNCIL

MT STUART

RECREATION RESERVE

MANAGEMENT PLAN

31 July 2003

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1 PREFACE

The Mount Stuart Recreation Reserve Draft Management Plan is a guide for the future development, maintenance and management of the reserve. Prepared under the Reserves Act 1977, it is intended to facilitate the provision of outdoor recreation activities and public enjoyment whilst retaining the open space value of the reserve.

In preparing this plan, recreation opportunities and facilities within the reserve were evaluated with consideration of how they contribute to the broad spectrum of recreation activities/public use presently and in the future.

The aim of the plan is to facilitate the best management of the reserve by providing guidelines for control, use maintenance, preservation, conservation, and development and planning.

Council approved the Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve Management Plan on 31 July 2003.

This plan is effective from 2003 to 2013 and will remain under regular review during this period to meet the above aim.

2 INTRODUCTION

This management plan is for the Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve located adjacent to State Highway 8 Manuka Gorge vested in the Clutha District Council.

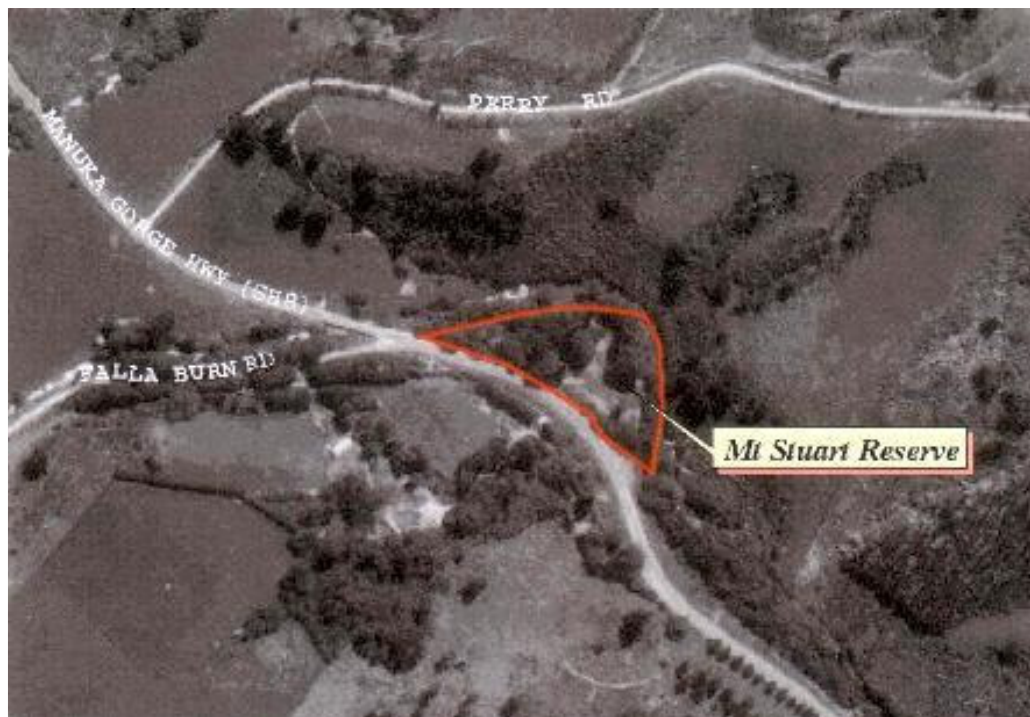
For many years the area has been used by local people, the travelling public and visitors; as a rest area, for picnics, and, as a fishing spot.

The area was identified in the original Bruce County District Scheme “as proposed reserve” for ultimate acquisition by the Bruce County Council. The review of that District Scheme in September 1985 uplifted the proposed reserve designation but the trees within the area were identified as having scenic significance and botanical interest.

Consequently, the trees were provided with some protection by that plan. The land was purchased by Council (CDC) in 1991, following the subdivision of an adjacent property. This protection was rolled over into the now operative CDC District Plan, however the actual trees protected are not specifically identified. The reference is to “exotic trees” only. It is unlikely that all exotic trees on the site were identified as significant and worthy of protection.

The current District Plan is very specific in identifying individual trees which are protected at other sites. The Mount Stuart Reserve reference is not specific enough for a planning document of this nature.

During 1999/2000 controversy arose when several *Macrocarpa*/Pine trees were felled by the Council without having first obtained resource consent under the Resource Management Act and in breach of its own District Plan.



2.1 Location of Reserve

The reserve is located adjacent to State Highway 8, Manuka Gorge, near the Fallaburn Road turnoff. It is approximately 11 kms west of Milton, and 25 kms east of Lawrence.

2.2 Legal Description

The legal description of the reserve:

Lot 5 DP 22436 Blk XLIX Tokomairiro SD

The area of 1.64 hectares is designated within the Clutha District Plan as Recreation Reserve. Also noted within the District Plan (Table 13.2 Register of Significant Trees), the reserve has Exotic Trees of scenic significance and botanical interest.

Reserve status was formally gazetted in 1992.

The reserve is designated as R377 District Reserve in the draft CDC Reserves Strategy document.

2.3 Purpose of Management Plan

The reserve contributes to the provision of a broad spectrum of outdoor opportunities within the general area. The management plan is intended to minimise conflict and interference between differing recreational users whilst maintaining or improving the quality of the existing recreation environment.

2.4 Need for Recreation Reserve

Recreation Reserves should provide for the recreational needs of the resident community whilst meeting the demands of visitors.

3 MANAGEMENT AIM

The basis for the management of reserves is explained in the Reserves Act 1977. That is:

- To provide for the recreation activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and the beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities.

The aim of this management plan is to provide a comprehensive framework for the provision of recreation opportunities in the Mt Stuart area.

4 MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Management objectives provide a framework in which management aims can be achieved. It is fundamental to reserve management that objectives and policies are clearly defined so decisions regarding any activity proposed or carried out on a reserve are taken in accordance with those objectives and policies.

- **Subject to and in addition to the Management Plan (9) for the reserve the following objectives and policies apply.**

4.1 General

- To manage the reserve in perpetuity in such a way that recreational qualities will contribute to the distinctiveness and diversity of the community and to the extent compatible with conservation values.
- To provide a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities.
- To minimise conflict and interference between recreationalists.
- To offer forms of recreation experience that alternative sites in the vicinity cannot provide.
- To maintain and improve the quality of the existing recreation environment.
- To manage the reserve in accordance with its classification of Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

4.2 Use

- To promote and facilitate use of the reserve based on identifiable recreational demands that are compatible with the character and sustainability of the resource.

4.3 Public Access

- To permit freedom of access to the reserve except as limited by the terms of any lease of the reserve or district Bylaw.
- To facilitate public access to the reserve at a level that can be sustained without detriment to the natural resource or quality of recreation experience.

4.4 Open space

- To manage and promote the open space values of the reserve.

4.5 Protection

- To manage and protect the natural amenity values of the reserve.

5 MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Management policies are statements of intent describing what will, or will not, be done to achieve objectives.

5.1 Administration

The reserve is administered as a recreation reserve under the control of the Clutha District Council. Input from local organisations, committees, or individuals having suitable expertise and interest in the reserve would be evaluated on an individual basis. The Council proposes that a community group be appointed to manage and maintain the reserve. This will be subject to further investigation into the authority and responsibilities that the Council can delegate efficiently and effectively. It is important to co-ordinate management to ensure recreation opportunities and provisions continue at a satisfactory level.

5.2 Leases and Licences to Occupy

There is an informal agreement in place with a local farmer to graze the area from time to time to keep vegetation under control.

If such an arrangement was to continue a suitable formal agreement should be drawn up.

5.3 Signs

- To erect a minimum number of information and/or interpretative signs of a type, which complements the landscape.
- To adopt a uniform design and standard for signs on recreation reserves within the Clutha District Council area.
- To prohibit the erection of signs not consistent with the use and purpose of the recreation reserve.

5.4 Prohibited Activities

Certain activities are restricted or prohibited because of the effects they may have on the reserve or upon public enjoyment. The Reserves Act 1977, Council Bylaws and policy determine which activities are specified as prohibited in this management plan.

- To prohibit overnight camping other than within designated camping grounds/areas.
- To prohibit the lighting of fires outside of designated areas.

Uncontrolled fires are a hazard and a threat to the surrounding flora and fauna, building structures and facilities, residential housing and human life. Restrictions on use will lower the chance of fires becoming out of control.

- To prohibit the removal or damage of any tree, scrub or plant material within the reserve without Council authorisation.

Vegetation is an important component of a reserves value. Reserves are for the enjoyment of the public, not for the needs of individuals or organisations acting in their own interest. Council may authorise the removal of any tree, scrub or plant material in the reserve that could be a threat to biodiversity, public safety, or existing amenity values.

- To prohibit dogs in the reserve other than those in the custody, charge or control of a personage, and that dogs are led on a leash or are under adequate control by other means. This prohibition is also enforceable under the Clutha District Council Dog Control By-laws. It is also the responsibility of the same personage to remove any faecal matter the dog may produce.

5.5 Modes of Transport

- To permit horses in the reserve and on formed access roadways.
- To permit freedom of pedestrian access on the reserve.
- To permit vehicular and motorbike access on the formed access roadways.
- To permit mountain bikes on the formed access roadways.

5.6 Maintenance

The general appearance and up-keep of this reserve has been of concern. Reserves need to be maintained to a standard, which facilitates safe and enjoyable usage. Maintenance issues include mowing, weed control, control of noxious animals/pests, tree management, drainage and ground conditions.

In 1999 interest was shown in opening up/developing the area, to make it more attractive to visitors. Subsequently some *Macrocarpa*/Pine trees were felled and removed without resource consent and this caused some controversy.

An informal agreement has existed with a local farmer to graze the area to keep vegetation under control.

6 RESERVE DESCRIPTION

6.1 Physical Description

The reserve is situated on an area of land bounded by State Highway 8 and the North branch of the Tokomairiro River. The area is essentially flat with a terrace dropping down to the river. (ranges from 103 to 96 metres above sea level).

There are a number of mature exotic tree species in the reserve with some native and weed species.

6.2 Flora

The reserve consists predominantly of the exotic species Oak (*Quercus robur*), Elm (*Ulmus procera*), and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Also present are two large and impressive Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), Poplars (*Populus nigra*), and a Lime tree (*Tilia x europaea*).



Sequoiadendron giganteum

There are the stumps of five Macrocarpa/Pine, four, which appear to have been cut relatively recently, and one somewhat earlier. There are significant numbers of Sycamore seedlings in the vicinity of the mature trees.

There is one Silverbirch (*Betula pendula*), which is dead and requires felling.

There is an area of Hawthorn along the bank in the vicinity of the river, and several small pockets of Manuka. In damp and shady areas there are clumps of Fern. There are a number of Willows along the riverbank some of which have had branches trimmed back from the river, and a few Flax.

Areas of Broom are obvious, especially along the fence line adjacent to State Highway 8. There are large patches of Hemlock and some *Muehlenbeckia* is also present in small pockets.

The extensive grassed areas are of mixed species with Ragwort, Thistles and other weeds present. This plan makes provision for the control of noxious plants and weeds within the Reserve. The ground cover is fairly long and rank.



Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve - "Top" grass area looking east

6.3 Fauna

The reserve has been subjected to grazing by domestic stock. There are the usual range of bird species present in the reserve including Chaffinch, Blackbird, Thrush, Bellbird etc.

There are rabbits present in the reserve. Noxious pest control may be necessary in the Reserve if there is an abundance of rabbits.

7 PRESENT USE AND FACILITIES

The reserve is used by people as a picnic and rest stop. This is evidenced by a small amount of rubbish lying around the reserve, and vehicle tracks. There is easy access to the river, which offers small stream trout fishing, and swimming.

This section of the north branch of the Tokomairiro River through the reserve provides an excellent setting and safe environment for families to enjoy water type activities.



Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve – Access to river looking upstream

There have been small fires lit within the reserve.

There are presently no facilities or signage to or within the reserve.

The access off State Highway 8 is not obvious and is pot holed quite badly down through the gateway (old posts and cyclone type gate).

Several “tracks” run off this access road and these are cut up in places with mud and badly bogged areas. The damage has been caused by heavy vehicles and others moving in the area and through the soft spots during wet spells. There is evidence of a tracked vehicle having “walked” around a “loop track” which runs down to and along the river bank.

There is a post and wire fence in fair condition, which runs along the boundary with State Highway 8.

8 ADJOINING LAND USE AND ALTERNATIVES

The adjoining land uses are the State Highway on the southern boundary with bush clad farmland on the northern side – true left bank of the north branch of the Tokomairiro River.

9 MANAGEMENT PLAN

9.1 Reserve Management and Maintenance

A Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve Sub-Committee will be established to assist in the administration of the Reserve and to undertake maintenance in the Reserve.

9.2 Significant Trees

Following an inspection of the reserve with an Arborist, a report was received which identified a total of five significant trees requiring deadwood and broken branches removed, and one tree which is dead requiring to be felled.

The advice from the Arborist will be acted on as soon as any required consents are obtained. (2003/04 year).

The report also advised that professional tree maintenance will be required on a once in five year basis.

A figure will be put in the Annual Plan to achieve the suggested tree maintenance on a once in five-year basis (2008/09 year).

It was also noted in the Arborist's report that a few of the Sycamore saplings might be used to provide a low cost opportunity to form a high screen for the partly "open" grassed section of the reserve nearest State Highway 8.

A number of specific trees within the reserve will be registered as significant within the CDC District Plan. These trees had been identified previously and have been further commented on by the Arborist engaged to report the trees health and overall condition.

The identified trees will be registered as significant within the District Plan and are appended to this management plan for the Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve.

Following the trimming of deadwood and broken branches this material will be removed from the reserve for firewood or sold if an opportunity exists to help defray costs.

It is proposed the Hawthorn will also be removed from the area.

The Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve Sub-Committee will arrange to remove the trimmings and deadwood from the reserve, and take action to remove the Hawthorn from the area.

9.3 Vegetation

The rank growth of grass within the reserve will be trimmed/cut and the open areas cleaned up. There are some areas of noxious weeds, which will require action by spraying.

Following the removal of the deadwood and trimmings from the reserve the grass areas will be mown, and noxious plants sprayed. Mowing will be carried out at least three times annually and the noxious plants sprayed as required to achieve eradication ultimately. (2003/04 year ongoing)

9.4 Signs

An entrance sign to the agreed CDC reserves standard and style utilising international symbols will be placed at the entrance point to the reserve (2004/05 year). The sign will advise visitors to take their rubbish away.

9.5 Facilities

Access to the reserve from State Highway 8 will be graded and metalled to provide a turnaround point and access to the riverbank. The old gateway will be removed (2004/05 year).

Three picnic tables will be provided in the reserve and provision will be made in the Annual Plan to facilitate this. These will be permanently sited and of solid construction (2005/06 year).

9.6 Lighting of Fires

Only approved BBQ's will be permitted within the Reserve.

9.7 Maintenance

Following the initial "upgrade" of the area, grass cutting will be maintained at least three times annually. (Tractor mounted mower possibly using a local farmer might be possible). See **9.3 Vegetation**.

9.8 Grazing

If grazing is to continue, a simple formal agreement will be negotiated. Some areas of the reserve can be "break" fenced periodically to contain stock as they are rotated around the lesser used areas away from those providing access to the riverbank.

Any costs for grazing will be offset by achieving mowing of the grass by a local farmer if practicable.

A cattle stop may be erected at the entrance by the Sub-Committee to control stock but a gate is not proposed.

9.9 Water Race

Subject to Sub-Committee resources the former water race may be reconstructed. However there is no provision for Council funding.

10 CONCLUSION

With modest initial expenditure and ongoing costs, the Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve will be enhanced to provide an excellent district recreational site with opportunities for local people, visitors, and travellers through the area.

In considering this Management Plan the over riding factor must be the funding of any initial improvements/upgrading and subsequent maintenance costs.

APPENDIX 1 - Budget

| | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|--|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 PARKS & RESERVES | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deadwooding etc (Per quote) | \$ 1,600 | | | | | | | | | |
| Mowing 3 times/year | | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 |
| Spraying | \$1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | | \$ 750 | \$ 750 | | \$ 750 | \$ 750 | \$ 750 |
| Sign (manuf. & installation) | | \$ 750 | | | | | | | | |
| Access roading metal/grading | | \$ 5,000 | | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | | \$ 1,000 | | \$ 1,000 | |
| Rubbish bins green vandal proof 2 @ \$900 | | \$ 1,800 | | | | | | | | |
| General Maintenance (one offs - vand. etc) | | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 | \$ 1,000 |
| Picnic Tables 3 @ \$500 (perm. Sited) | | | \$ 1,500 | | | | | | | |
| Tree maintenance (every 5 years) | | | | | | \$ 1,500 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Annual Totals | \$ 2,600 | \$ 10,550 | \$ 4,500 | \$ 3,000 | \$ 3,750 | \$ 4,250 | \$ 3,000 | \$ 2,750 | \$ 3,750 | \$ 2,750 |

APPENDIX 2 - Significant Tree Listing

The Mt Stuart Recreation Reserve contains a number of trees with exceptional scenic and botanical significance. There is also an historical linkage with these trees and the early European settlement of the area.

The Sequoia, Lime, Oak and Elm trees located in the reserve will be given the protection of the District Plan. The protected trees are identified on the attached map. Pine, Poplar and Sycamore trees will be informally monitored to control any undesirable spread.

The health and condition of these trees to be monitored professionally on the basis suggested by the Arborist, or at a frequency dictated by natural events. (following severe winds for example) and maintained accordingly.

