

Department of Conservation  
PO Box 10-420  
Wellington

November 22, 2000

Mr Hugh Logan, Director-General

Dear Mr Logan,

Thank you for your reply in respect of the Tongariro Taupo Conservators decision. The range of factors you have indicated as the basis for a decision, were all addressed in our submissions and there was little rebuttal of our position by other submissions, written or verbal. You may wish to obtain a copy of the submissions.

We do not dispute that the hearing was conducted in a professional manner, only that the conclusion reached took little apparent notice of the information submitted. You suggest a change was made to draft policy. The departmental officers went to great lengths to deny a policy. I had a telephone discussion at 10.20am on Friday 28 July with a terse Mr Green on that subject, over which version of their CMS drafts we were addressing. Mr Green denied that any draft CMS was policy and stated it was being constantly revised. The reason for our pressure to re-address this issue was the unilateral departmental changes made to the publicly released draft that did originally allow 4WD use.

A request for the most recent version of the CMS was denied on the basis of "there is no CMS, it has not been approved". I was provided with two pages of "background information" with the letter of invitation to make a submission. Other material, including draft business plans were provided by the conservancy under duress.

The position taken by the conservancy will, in our opinion, only create a major problem with unwanted and illegal vehicle incursions into conservation land that will be expensive and maybe impossible for the department to control. Intrusion is likely to be by the general public, over whom we have no influence, except by example.

The proposed concession by the conservancy of limited access to one route will only cater for a very small number of vehicles and if our members are to maintain it, then the public will need to be prevented from using the route. This will be necessary to achieve the environmental standards advocated in our submissions, which will not be attainable without strict control of the very restricted resource made available.

The Tongariro Taupo Conservancy is being remarkably short sighted and will undoubtedly have major problems with vehicle incursion in the future. To avoid this situation in other conservancies too, it is suggested again, that a national guideline for off highway vehicle access to conservation land be established through consultation. The mountain bike fraternity has such a guideline (Department HO Manual 2.15.1.). The NZFWDA is willing to co-ordinate interested parties.

We still believe, as you will realise, that our recreation has been sidelined by that one conservancy, with little rationale and no provision made for any future consideration within the CMS. The NZFWDA are shortly to consider the option of a judicial review of the Tongariro Taupo Conservancy's decision process in this matter. The Director General may direct changes to a CMS based on new information or new perspectives and we urge a change in perspective over 4WD's and other off highway vehicles.

Yours sincerely

Peter Vahry  
President