



*File:*           **63919-GRA**

*Date:*           **5 March 2018**

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**Email response from Catherine Cowan as partial response to request for information**

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**From:** Cowan, Catherine  
**Sent:** Monday, 5 March 2018 2:50 p.m.  
**To:** Rebecca Beaumont  
**Subject:** Re: Cowan -Haast grazing licence Area B- 63919-GRA - Request for information

Hi Rebecca,

Following up from our phone call today at 2pm.

The map reference is: PAC-11-01-407

The Assessment from Andrew Wells was inspected on 23/12/15 and report written 31/3/16.

I will work on expanding the 'Assessment of effects' and explain why it is low impact.

Thank you kindly,  
Catherine

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**From:** Cowan, Catherine  
**Sent:** Monday, 26 February 2018 2:40 p.m.  
**To:** Rebecca Beaumont  
**Subject:** Re: Cowan -Haast grazing licence Area B- 63919-GRA - Request for information

Hi Rebecca,

I have just tried to make contact, your voice message mentions you are on leave and then on a workshop until Thursday.

I was just hoping to have a conversation in regards to Area B, 63919-GRA.

In responses to additional information needed:

1. Map of application area; You will have a map of the area in our file because it is the exact area of the previous licence.

2. Assessment of effects; You also will have in our file the 'Vegetation Assessment' which was completed by Andrew Wells in the Haast Valley. He private contracts to DoC. Andrew did a field inspection along with a report for your department. You will have this, as we were also provided a copy. Incursion onto adjoining land is managed by natural boundaries. The same set cow numbers stay in their certain areas in the valley. Stock numbers are all exactly the same as the previous license. We have set sustainable stocking numbers.
3. Term of licence sought; No intention to mitigate a potential effect, we just thought it would be easier to apply for less time therefore it falls under non-notified. If this is not the case we are better to apply for 15 years and notify.
4. Supporting documents referred to in the application; Again the 'Vegetation Assessment' by Andrew Wells is explained above under 2. The practices like mentioned in our original application are continuing exactly the same way in which it has always been done in previous licenses. Sustainable set stock numbers. The land area is extensive therefore the cows have low impact.
5. Consultation with Te Runanga O Makaawhio; We have never previously had to do this in the past. I am currently trying to get hold of Helen Rasmussen from the local Iwi. I will be back in contact with a response.

I will try to touch base again, once you return back to work.

Thank you kindly,

Catherine

Cellphone: 027 418 5433



*File:*           **63919-GRA**

*Date:*           **23 March 2018**

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**Email response from Catherine Cowan as partial response to request for information**

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**From:** Cowan, Catherine

**Sent:** Friday, 23 March 2018 8:49 p.m.

**To:** Rebecca Beaumont

**Subject:** Re: Cowan -Haast grazing licence Area B- 63919-GRA - Request for information

Hi Rebecca,

Sorry, sorry Ive only met the deadline date by date not within working hours!!

Sorry I had meetings in Timaru and have only got home now and forgot to send this very early this morning. Here we go!

Assessment of Affects Extension....

Effects on native vegetation: Grazing has a positive effect on vegetation in the Haast as can be proven by the lack of grazing in the joining Landsborough Valley. Cattle and ourselves as occupiers do a very good job at keeping weeds in check. The alternative is a large expense in maintaining weeds such as but not limited to gorse, broom, blackberry and ragwort. The vast majority of the vegetation which the cattle graze is modified grasslands. These have been improved with non native grass species throughout 150 years of pastoral use. By adhering to the current stock levels in this area of the lease we ensure that there is an adequate feed surplus built up throughout the summer to ensure that over winter the cattle are able to utilise this surplus The benefits of this are two fold. It ensures that our cattle stay in healthy condition with high reserves of body weight throughout the winter. The second effect is that it prevents cattle from grazing too heavily into the adjoining bush and therefore preventing excessive damage to vegetation. This is supported by Andrew Wells vegetation report.

Effects on native birds and bats: To my knowledge there are no significant effects on native birds and bat species. Due to the extreme nature of the Haast Valley flooding would have a bigger effect on any ground nesting birds than cattle. As far as I am aware most of the native bats which live in the Haast Valley live in the cliffs on the opposite side of the road which are well away from our grazing areas.

Effects on amenity and visual values: In our opinion cattle have a positive effect on the amenity and visual values in the Haast. Haast River Safaris which is the only major tourism operation in the Haast have expressed to us that for the vast majority of the tourists that

they carry on there boats, for most the highlight is seeing the cattle grazing in the valley. In my experience travelling and talking to people traveling in New Zealand, people like to see beautiful landscapes but, most are far more interested to look at animals in a beautiful landscape such as the Haast. We would consider ourselves as caretakers of this environment and like any responsible person would like to see it looked after for the next generation. The way in which the cattle graze the Haast Valley, roaming freely about the river flats, creates a beautiful scene, one which is highly photographed, painted by artists and just enjoyed by those who look upon it. If you were to look at the most sold postcards in New Zealand they are all pictures of livestock or animals. Sheep on the road to Mount Cook, lambs in a paddock etc. This is a scene which hasn't changed in over 150 years and brings great enjoyment to both foreigners and Kiwis alike. This style of farming is very limited, existing only in South Westland and carried on proudly by families that have been involved in the area since its settlement.

Effects on waterways, riparian zones and water quality: There are no significant effects on waterways or water quality in the Haast. The Haast river flows such a huge volume of water that any nutrient leaching / runoff through urine or dung, is like the proverbial drop in the ocean. This is a vastly different scenario to say an intensive farming system beside a small stream in a dryland environment. In that situation nutrients build up in the soil and leaches into waterways or runoff in rain events. In our situation the Haast is constantly being flushed with heavy rainfall events and flooding. The cattle infrequently cross the river and when they do any possible contamination is very quickly hugely diluted to undetectable levels. This is also a river system which has no downstream lakes or streams etc feeding out of it. The Haast runs straight out to sea in contrast to say a Braided Canterbury river which may feed many streams, lakes, aquifers, houses, wetlands etc. were nitrification can be a real issue.

Effects on the efficient operation of our farm: The Haast Valley is a very low input farming operation and is the backbone to our farming operation. It enables us to employ three staff permanently, all of which live locally. Two have young families attending the local playgroup at this point and the local school in the future. If we were to lose the valley lease then it would not be possible for us to employ these people. There are no alternative jobs in the area and all three employees and their families are only able to stay in the area because of this employment. One of our staff members was able to give up a job working for Macraes mine, living in Dunedin to work on the farm, and the other two staff members and their families were both looking to leave the area had they not been able to gain employment with us. Though the number of cattle may not seem significant to some, it allows the farm some economies of scale. This is vital for the efficient operation of the farm.

Effects on adjoining land: There are no effects on adjoining land. The edge of the lease is fenced on one side to stop cattle wandering onto the road and on the opposite side there are steep mountains and dense bush which the cattle do not climb or enter. Downstream there is more grazing including two blocks of freehold in the valley, one owned by ourselves and the other by the Nolan Family. Upstream is the Landsborough valley and the cattle do not cross up into the valley.

Lastly, I am still currently in the process with the local Iwi. I have spoken with Helen Rasmussen but she has retired from this area. I am still trying to track down Paul Wilson but he is hard to get hold of due to the storm and his house being destroyed.

Hopefully this completes the application. Look forward to hearing back.

Have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards,  
Catherine

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**From:** Rebecca Beaumont

**Sent:** Friday, 9 March 2018 12:22 p.m.

**To:** Cowan, Catherine <Catherine.Cowan@lincolnuni.ac.nz>

**Subject:** RE: Cowan -Haast grazing licence Area B- 63919-GRA - Request for information

Hi Catherine,

Thanks for that response and for our discussion on Monday.

What I would like to confirm now is the timeframe in which you can provide the further information that we discussed.

As discussed, the Conservation Act has changed so it is now very clear that you as the applicant need to provide all the required information to the Department to enable us to make an informed decision on the significance of the effects of the application, and the application itself. There are also timeframes in which further information should be provided and in your case, this was originally the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, although there is scope to agree on a new date for supplying information. For this purpose, I'd like to know when you think it would be reasonable to set this new date. Would the 23<sup>rd</sup> be appropriate? This is two weeks away.

Thanks for confirming that the plan from the previous grazing contract can be used, and providing a reference. I have attached it to this email to ensure that I have the right plan as the reference you supplied was to the whole file.

I have also located the monitoring report from Andrew Wells that you would like to have included in your application, thanks for that information as the "vegetation assessment" referred to in your application.

The two outstanding pieces of information sought related to:

- An assessment of effects of the application. In the original request, I set out the various aspects that this could include and on the phone I reiterated that the Department must base our assessment on the information that you provide within the application, so the more information you can supply, the better understanding we have of the application.
- The outcome of any consultation with Te Runanga o Makaawhio.

When we spoke on the phone, you confirmed that you have not undertaken any consultation with Te Runanga o Makaawhio. This is a sufficient response to this aspect of the request. The department may undertake consultation with Te Runanga o Makaawhio as part of the processing of the application and you can continue to choose to undertake your own consultation.

So please let me know if the 23<sup>rd</sup> is suitable as a new date for the information to be provided, and if not, what date you would be able to meet. I will then discuss with my manager, who has the delegation to approve the timeframe for response.

Thanks,  
Rebecca

**Rebecca Beaumont**

Permissions Advisor - *Tūtohu*

Hokitika Shared Service Centre – *Wahanga Ratonga Pokapū o Hokitika*

**Department of Conservation- Te Papa Atawhai**