



Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc)

23 March 2010

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Media Release: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand

Govt mining plan is death by a thousand cuts!

The Federated Mountain Clubs says the release of the Government's mining plans is just the start of the destruction of our greatest national treasure, the conservation estate.

The Government today proposed the immediate removal of mining protection from 7000 hectares, and a geological survey of nearly 500,000ha including national parks, wilderness areas and World Heritage Areas.

"The 7000 hectares identified for immediate sacrifice are only the start of a systematic erosion of our protected places" said FMC spokesperson Richard Davies. "A Government that thinks that mining and conservation can go hand-in-hand cannot be trusted to stop at surveying."

"The last National-led government created a list of mining no-go areas - Schedule Four - to protect in perpetuity our highest-value conservation land. Land that Parliament has defined as 'so beautiful, unique or scientifically important that its preservation is in the national interest'," he said.

"Now the Paparoa National Park is to have parts sacrificed, with magnificent lowland forest replaced by a dirty coal mine, and crystal clear streams with pollution. With a more comprehensive survey to follow, some of the finest landscapes in New Zealand, from Northland to Stewart Island, are in the line of the bulldozers."

"This Government has talked about 'low-value land' to disguise the fact that it has already made its mind up. They are not listening to New Zealanders who are telling them the real value of Schedule Four land" said Richard Davies.

"New Zealanders and international visitors enjoy these natural places because they offer something that money can't buy, and are unique to New Zealand. Our opposition to sacrificing them to quick cash is based on genuine concern for the places that we go to picnic, walk, tramp and climb."

"Privatisation of public land, to be destroyed by mining, in the International Year of Bio-diversity is a cruel joke," said Richard Davies. "As our Tourism Minister, John Key must be banking on 100% whitewash to fool the tourists who think our stunning natural places are in good hands."

"Protected land is held in trust for the people and future generations; it is not a piggy-bank awaiting a day when mining companies want to dig it up."

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