

LEGISLATING A SUSTAINABLE LAND ETHIC FOR NEW ZEALAND

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This article explores competing discourses of sustainability in New Zealand's South Island. As active resource managers, high-country pastoralists' conception of "country" contests predominant reductive and binary models of production/conservation and economic resource/visual resource and suggests a more complicated dynamic between scientific and cultural paradigms of sustainability than has been acknowledged. This dynamic is captured in the internationally driven top-down concept of equitable sustainable land management with a dual commitment to both cultural and ecological diversity as defined locally, formulated as part of the United Nations Rio Declaration of 1992, agenda 21, chapter 13. I examine an emergent high-country "land ethic" by exploring textually and ethnographically the legislative arenas within which discourses of sustainability have been defined and by examining the relationship of economic, ecological, and community sustainability to "country." The article elicits the cultural components of a remarkably transnational and yet strategically local high-country understanding of sustainable land management.

DERIVING MY TITLE from Deborah Bird Rose's "Exploring an Aboriginal Land Ethic" (1988), I respond to her plea for the articulation of an indigenous Western land ethic by exploring competing discourses of sustainability in New Zealand's South Island. Like other theorists working in the anthropology of place, Rose returns cultural agency to anthropologists' understandings of ecological systems while simultaneously advocating an acentered land ethic. She asks that we attend to the political economy of knowledge and that we increase understanding of our role as moral agents in the systems of which we are a part. Drawing on her own ethnoecological studies in

the Yarralin-Lingara area of the Northern Territory of Australia, Rose invites a shift in perception to see how Ngarinman people understand human life as existing with “a living and conscious cosmos,” one that Elizabeth Povinelli, in her work with Belyuen communities in the Cape York Peninsula, has revealed as a sentient environment that her interlocutors call “country.”

While my South Island interlocutors also call their place “country,” I do not propose to argue that the New Zealand pastoral high country, an extensive area of Crown leasehold land, is a sentient environment to the pastoralist families who graze their sheep and live there or to the various national players with an interest in these public lands. But I do want to illustrate, through an analysis of ethnographic and textual materials, the kinds of active resource managers high-country people are as they respond to a transnational rhetoric of sustainability (see also Nero and Hess, this volume). Their conception of country contests predominant reductive and binary models of production/conservation and economic resource/visual resource and suggests a far more complicated dynamic between scientific and cultural paradigms of sustainability than has been acknowledged.¹ This dynamic is captured explicitly in the internationally driven top-down concept of equitable sustainable land management with a dual commitment to both cultural and ecological diversity as defined locally, formulated as part of agenda 21, chapter 13, “Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development,” at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.²

Rose’s catalyst, Aldo Leopold, implies that ethics may be “a kind of community instinct-in-the-making” (Leopold 1969:403), and I examine this emergent instinct by exploring the legislative arenas within which discourses of sustainability are defined and by examining the relation of sustainability to “country” as these discourses pertain to pastoral high country and can be traced historically. In particular, while acknowledging competing aspects in the positions of various stakeholders in the New Zealand high country, I draw on my ethnographic data with one category of players—high-country runholders—and attempt to articulate the particularity of their evolving land ethic. The ethic is part of an immediate ecosystem and responds to Rose’s plea for the development of an indigenous Western land ethic not in the wilderness or in exotic places (and minds), but “in our own back yards, farms and stations” (1988:387). I aim to elicit the cultural components of a remarkably transnational and yet strategically local high-country understanding of sustainable land management.

To provide a historical context, I trace transformations and sociopolitical currents in Crown land legislation as it shaped the pastoral leasehold tenure system, focusing especially on the Land Act of 1948 and the land classifica-

tion system it established. A plural history in which various constituencies articulate ties to mountain lands is often voiced in terms of legal conventions or commercial and technical designations. This history displays the complexity of competing interests that typically interact and intersect in making policy that shapes sustainability (see Lieber, this volume). These conflicts must be examined within the context of changing political parties and market forces in New Zealand farming and shifting values regarding, and definitions of, nature and culture,³ land and nation. The idea of sustainability, then, is contested, processual, and political (see Evans, this volume).

The contemporary focus of my analysis is on the effects of government restructuring with the election of the fourth Labour government in 1984, on a series of subsequent legislative initiatives for land-management reform (such as the 1991 Resource Management Act and the 1995 Land Bill), and on high-country inputs and responses to the concomitant studies and legislative initiatives.⁴ Marsh argues that because “farmers may not take account of impacts of farming which are not directly reflected in prices and costs,” their calls on “non-market costs” in natural systems must lead to legislative intervention that will restrict such use in order to ensure that they be sustained (1994:16). Inevitably, then, sustainability must be defined and controlled through legislation. While sustainability operates as a dominant value at the international level (Bradsen 1994:99), it remains “an elusive target” (Marsh 1994:16).

The regulatory arena of land legislation has defined the conditions of high-country occupation, ownership, and management and reveals continuously conflicting values between runholders and others with an interest in these public lands. My purpose is not to intrude on the terrain of scholars in land-resource management who can best assess the relationship between land-tenure legislation, land management, and the degree of range degradation in the South Island (as does the Martin Report),⁵ but rather to illustrate that changes in legislation mark key tensions in New Zealand national culture between constituencies competing to define the high-country landscape and its management, occupation, and ownership. The values at stake include commitment to pastoral use, to freehold and leasehold tenure of pastoral lands, to public recreational access, and to nature conservation, including landscape preservation and species protection, and to a much lesser extent cultural heritage (as in historical or pioneering) protection. A rhetorically consistent and oppositionalized tension emerges between the protection and preservation of a less culturally mediated landscape, often summarized simplistically as a tension between production (pastoral use) and conservation (nature preservation and protection), and the protection and preservation of *pakeha* mountain pastoral culture and its landscape.⁶

Early Legislation: Production and Economic Sustainability

Initially pastoralists were attracted to Crown lands outside settlement blocks because Crown licenses (as they were known), issued for varying amounts of time depending on the province, were generally cheaper than other lands; by 1865 “virtually the whole of Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago, including Southland, was . . . registered and stocked up as sheep or cattle runs, right to the limits of the forested and permanently snow-capped Main Divide” (Centre for Resource Management 1983:33, citing Kevin O’Connor and I. G. Chris Kerr).⁷ Beginning in 1876 with the abolition of provincial governments, pastoral lands were under the jurisdiction of a central government that “was largely ineffective in preventing the degradation of the tussock grasslands through the combined effects of fire, sheep, snow, depression, rabbits, cultivation, war and insufficient knowledge and capital” (Kerr 1984:25); these effects were apparent by the 1880s, coinciding with falling wool prices, and continued until the 1950s (Centre for Resource Management 1983:36–37). Under the 1877 Land Act, licenses were auctioned as their terms expired and sold to the person bidding the highest annual rent for up to ten years, with the preemptive right to freehold 320 acres around the homestead; the system persisted until the 1948 Land Act (ibid.:35).

Management of South Island mountain lands led the government immediately after World War I to commission Leonard Cockayne to “make an economic investigation of montane tussock grasslands,” the results of which were published in a series of articles in the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture* beginning in 1919 (McCaskill 1969:154). Former High Country Committee chair David McLeod explains that a Southern Pastoral Lands Commission was appointed in 1920 to look into the burning of tussocks, the overstocking and continuous grazing of sheep without improvement, increasing numbers of rabbits, and land tenure (McLeod 1980:16–17). These issues persist today in addition to concerns over the damage to pastoral grasslands caused by introduced hieracium (hawkweed species) and Canada geese, and the intrusion of exotic conifers (wilding trees) into the visual landscape. In response to the commission’s report, an amendment to the Land Act of 1924 restricted burning at certain periods and encouraged more attacks on rabbits by runholders. McLeod notes that little else was done at the time, and in thinking over the thirty-year management of his property, Grasmere, he writes that he “made use of every available square yard, however rugged or inaccessible, and of every plant that sheep would eat, no matter what its value might be to the environment as a whole . . . slowly coming to realise the part that depletion and nutrition played in the struggle” (ibid.:17). In

the 1940s some farmers worked with the commissioner of Crown lands and the Land Settlement Board to reduce rent paid through livestock reduction. For example, in my Rakaia valley field site, Double Hill station reduced its rent from \$1,150 per year to \$750 in 1948.

In 1937 Molesworth, the largest single holding, was abandoned because of rising costs and falling production, and the Crown took over much of the station to “reduce the degradation and erosion of these lands and to achieve sustainable land management” (South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management 1994:84). This was a time when rabbits were yet again in crisis numbers and high-country farming, after eighty years of extensive grazing, promised to become uneconomic (see McLeod 1975). The Lands and Survey Department, developed from the department originally concerned with surveying Crown lands and leasing them to settlers, was the administrative body, but its local administrators, the commissioners of Crown lands, were surveyors, not specialists in pastoral use. The simple system used to determine tenure was to lease a run to the highest bidder at auction. Rents, varying widely among properties, were based on sheep numbers. In 1940, seeing their future foreshadowed, the runholders met with the minister of lands, who approved the High Country Committee as an advisory body on all matters concerning the South Island high country. It comprised representatives from each of the provincial land districts,⁸ and in 1945 it was incorporated as the High Country Committee of Federated Farmers. The minister also agreed to appoint one high-country man from names submitted by the High Country Committee to each land board as seats were vacated.⁹

Legislating Rehabilitation: The Land Act of 1948

Legislative advances in the 1940s and 1950s provided the administrative framework for rehabilitation through such acts as the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act of 1941 (creating catchment boards) and the Rabbits Act of 1955. The key piece of legislation, the 1948 Land Act, created the current system of pastoral lease tenure for Crown land, the terms of which determine high-country land use and figure heavily in runholders’ claims to security of tenure. The minister of lands introduced the act, saying: “It may be necessary for some control to be exercised over the type of land contained in the lease for soil conservation purposes to prevent erosion and regenerate some of the hill country contained in the lease” (in Kerr 1982:4). The tussock grasslands were at a low point, and public concern for soil conservation shaped the Crown’s reluctance to allow for the permanent alienation of the high country; even fertile lowlands were seen as threatened by high-country erosion (see Cumberland 1981 for a geographer’s view).

The act replaced pastoral licenses with leases that confer the following rights and obligations on lessees: a lease perpetually renewable at thirty-three-year intervals with “fair annual rent” fixed by the Land Settlement Board,¹⁰ “set at a rate per 1000 stock units of unimproved carrying capacity—adjusted for location, stock performance, and other ‘special factors’” (Kerr 1984:26); the exclusive right to pasturage over the land comprised by the lease but with no right to soil and water, trees (and shrubs), wild or introduced animals and scenery, and no right of freehold; de facto trespass control; restrictions on stock numbers, burning of vegetation, and cultivation, cropping, and grassing of land, with stock numbers and adjustment of boundaries subject to the permission of the commissioner of Crown lands (New Zealand Government 1948: section 99). The act was supplemented by provisions for control of rabbits, adoption of improved technology and management, and the availability of finance, mainly from the reinvestment of farm income (Kerr 1984:25).

The legislation gave security of tenure to land classified by the Land Settlement Board “as being land suitable or adaptable for pastoral purposes only” (New Zealand Government 1948: section 51.1) and facilitated rehabilitation of the high country (Kerr 1987:3) by providing “occupiers with the confidence to invest in long-term management strategies” (South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management 1994:84).¹¹ Insecurity of tenure has often been cited by high-country lessees as the source of environmental deterioration.¹² In *Spirit of the High Country* lessees note that the Land Act provided both “a real sense of ownership” and a “conservation ethos” (South Island High Country Committee of Federated Farmers 1992:19), but the authors of *Pastoral High Country* argue instead that the scapegoating of insecurity of tenure became part of high-country mythology (Centre for Resource Management 1983:40), and pastoral scientists Douglas and Allan agree, acknowledging that economic conditions, limitations of technology, and overgrazing were more critical (1992:13). Following the Land Act, “the history of the hill and high country . . . has been one of dramatic improvement of vegetation, rising stock numbers, intensification and diversification” (Centre for Resource Management 1983:48). Prices peaked during the Korean wool boom in 1950–1951 but were undermined by a waterside workers strike in 1951 that stopped the sale of wool. Run management for soil conservation purposes promoted development of pastoral runs in the 1960s (Centre for Resource Management 1983:49); lowland development by runholders through top dressing was subsidized in return for retirement from grazing of pastoral leases on severely eroded mountain ranges, especially class 7 and class 8 high country; this measure was accompanied by careful control of animal stocking and by noxious weed and animal control.

A marked shift from extensive grazing to rotational grazing and greater subdivision of blocks improved productivity and marks an organically based understanding of land management. Despite a focus in New Zealand on soil conservation and grasslands ecology at this time, productivity remained the primary goal and led to the development and intensification of production and use in the land-development movement of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s through aerial oversowing and fertilization (Isern 1992). Farmers told me that subsidies also promoted production and quantity well into the 1980s and in so doing shaped people's images of high-country farmers for the worse.¹³

Freeholding Farmland and Protecting Multiple-Use Lands

In 1970 rent was made reviewable every eleven years but only after the thirty-three-year leases had run their course. Because the thirty-three-year leases would be due for renewal in the early 1980s, the Land Settlement Board and the lessees began to consider the basis for establishing a "fair annual rent." The Land Amendment Act of 1979 switched to a valuation-based rental system, with the rental rate for pastoral leases at 2¼ percent of the value of land exclusive of improvements (LEI) with a two-step phase-in period (see Kerr 1982:4).¹⁴ In 1981 lessees, concerned about the impact of revised rentals based on the value of land, persuaded the government to set up a Committee of Inquiry into Crown Pastoral Leases (Kerr 1984:27). The "Clayton Committee" recommended phasing out pastoral leasehold tenure by reclassifying suitable land as farmland and "establishing a tenure called 'multiple use' land for areas within pastoral leases which, in the public interest, ought not to be permanently alienated" (in *ibid.*:27). Many who claim to protect the public interest believed that the thirty-three-year lease term had made runholders the beneficiaries of highly concessional rentals, but they also believed that eleven-year intervals were still too long given rapid inflation. Many argued that the committee protected the pastoralists' interests above the public interest; runholders, however, noted with distress that their input had not been sought.

The Land Settlement Board did not endorse the Clayton Committee recommendations but, in a series of resolutions put forward to the minister of lands in April 1983, preferred "(a) the retention of the existing form of pastoral lease, (b) the facilitation of partial reclassification of suitable land within leases, and (c) the protection of conservation and recreational values of significance" (Land Settlement Board 1983, quoted in Kerr 1984:27). Kerr notes the practical effects of these recommendations, including the gradual reclassification and freeholding (on the lessees' initiative) of at least part of

most leases; the covenanting of land by the Crown for conservation, recreation, or other purposes; and continued restricted tenure for pastoral use of land not reclassified or covenanted (*ibid.*:27). Freehold title would only be available “in a manner which does not compromise identified conservation or recreational values of significance” (in McSweeney 1983:53).

The initiatives for recalculating the basis for rents on leases to force farmers to freehold particular lands within their leases and for reclassifying the pastoral high country during the 1970s elaborated the distinction between farming land designated for production, which was proposed for freeholding, and conservation land designated for preservation. Farming land fit an earlier model of sustainability in which economic production based on a model of extraction of resources (i.e., soil) took primacy, while conservation land fit an evolving model of sustainability in which environmental preservation based on a model of ecological balance (i.e., species) took primacy. Legislating new classifications that fixed the distinction between productive freehold land and multiple-use conservation land promised to carve up the landscape into categories defined in terms of different uses and value, and in terms of simultaneously competing discourses of sustainability. Government restructuring of the administrative mechanisms for owning and managing high-country lands has been ongoing through the 1980s and 1990s and has reified these distinctions. The protection of natural and recreational values has replaced productivity on the national agenda.

Contemporary Legislative Initiatives: Conservation and Ecological Sustainability

For two decades, and especially throughout the period of my fieldwork, the high country has been a highly contested zone in a rapidly changing New Zealand political arena. Total high-country lands comprise 6 million hectares or 22 percent of New Zealand’s land area of 27 million hectares. Of this, in 1994, 2.45 million hectares of land (tussock grasslands, peaks, glaciers, rivers, lakes, and some native forests)—approximately 48 percent of the South Island high country, 20 percent of the South Island, and 10 percent of New Zealand’s total land area—were held as Crown pastoral leases in the South Island, with a total of 341 pastoral leases carrying approximately 2.8 million stock units. The balance of Crown land is 3.5 million hectares, consisting of the Department of Conservation estate and national parks (data from Commissioner of Crown Lands 1994:10; South Island High Country Committee of Federated Farmers 1992:2).

My initial fieldwork in 1986, 1987, and 1988 overlapped with the period of radical reorganization by the Labour government in the management of

pastoral lands;¹⁵ new institutional arrangements were part of a new approach in economic policy, environmental policy, and public-sector restructuring (Hayward 1987:41). Key players during my fieldwork include government departments in the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, the Public Lands Coalition of conservationists lobbying to retire leasehold land, and recreationists urging open access; the South Island Ngai Tahu, who brought claims before the Waitangi Tribunal against the Crown for compensation in pastoral leasehold lands; and the runholders who lease the pastoral high country from the Crown. Other processes included ongoing land-legislation reform, the privatization of state-owned enterprises begun in 1987 under the Labour government,¹⁶ and an economic downturn in agriculture.

Conservationist Gerry McSweeney and soil scientist Les Molloy note that tussock grasslands contain “a unique group of plants and animals adapted to temperature extremes, drought, heavy snowfalls, fire and even to erosion of the unstable mountain ranges” that have little environmental protection (McSweeney and Molloy 1984:2). They are concerned about the threat to these grasslands posed by pressures from agricultural development and freeholding, as well as pressures from hydroelectric development, irrigation development, exotic forestry, tourist villages, and ski areas (*ibid.*:3). While high-altitude lands have been protected through retirement programs, low-altitude tussock grasslands and high-country wetlands remain at risk, they argue. McSweeney and Molloy note that pastoral lease administration has focused primarily on farming, rather than on the protection of natural and recreational values; they urge the securing of reserves in tussock grasslands and share the view of nonfarming constituencies with concern for the public interest in the high country that the Land Settlement Board “overwhelmingly reflects the political, departmental and farming interests on it” (*ibid.*:3; cf. Centre for Resource Management 1983).¹⁷ In their view, the election of the fourth Labour government in 1984 reflected Labour sympathies for the public interest. Within the Ministry of the Environment, Landcorp (Land Corporation) and the Department of Conservation, together with the Land Department and the Department of Survey and Land Information (derived from the former Department of Lands and Survey), are concerned with pastoral leases (see figure 1 in South Island High Country Committee of Federated Farmers 1987:2). From the perspective of groups such as the Federated Mountain Clubs, this division of responsibility was an improvement over administration by the Department of Lands and Survey, and the Land Settlement Board, with their presumed pastoral bias (see Henson 1986:24). It suggests a shift from a preference for pastoral use of these lands to an accounting of a diversity of values and uses (Hayward 1987:43).

Protecting the Public Estate and the Fourth Labour Government

In September 1986 the cabinet decided to implement a partnership between Landcorp and the Department of Conservation, with the former responsible for commercial farming and land-management operations, and the latter for the identification and protection of conservation values in high-country lands. This separation maps onto that between production and conservation. Pastoral leases and licenses were to be administered by Landcorp together with a number of farms and unalienated Crown land, but the leases remained under Crown ownership, with the corporation serving as agent. As the branch of the Ministry of Environment that deals with planning and policy advice and the monitoring of the environmental effects of policies, the Department of Conservation's main role is nature conservancy, including both a management and an advocacy role "looking after the public interest in the public estate for the intrinsic values of that estate, to allow the appreciation of the estate, to permit recreation on it and to safeguard the future options regarding it" (Woollaston 1987:53).

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Conservation Woollaston emphasized that the separation of conservation and preservation objectives from production objectives underpinned the establishment of the Department of Conservation and noted that the intensity of feeling surrounding the administration of high-country lands is over production versus conservation values (1987:51):

The debate from the public's perception became one that involved not just the use of or access to public lands; it also became a debate about the preservation of a valuable part of our national self image, our national identity. I don't want to suggest though, that only those that live in towns and look through their centrally heated windows at the Southern Alps have any sort of emotional attachment to that land. Those involved in production from that land identify just as strongly with it collectively and I think much more strongly as individuals. They become, in a good sense of the word, very possessive of the land. I think the symptom of this has been the increasing identification of Crown lessees as "owners" of their farms and the land they lease. (Ibid.:52)

For precisely these reasons, the High Country Committee was distressed by the division of production from conservation. Referring back to the 1948 Land Act, High Country Committee chair Hamish Ensor noted that "this was plainly a recognition of the fact that, within that line, production and pro-

tection should go hand in hand to the benefit of the nation" (1987:69). Ensor's concerns were shared by Chris Kerr, a management officer of the Tussock Grasslands and Mountain Lands Institute at Lincoln University, who noted that "land protection, land management and soil conservation are indistinguishable" (Kerr 1987:8); in either case, at stake are soil, water, and vegetation, all of which former land-tenure legislation (such as the Land Act of 1948) was designed to protect (*ibid.*:5).

Even more distressing to runholders was the uncertainty of negotiations over marginal strips along streams and rivers, plant and animal pest control, and the Protected Natural Areas (PNA) program. Riparian strips three meters or more in average width were understood by the government to be excluded from transfer to state-owned enterprises such as Landcorp. Provisions in the State-Owned Enterprises Bill (section 24.2b) and the Conservation Act (section 64.4) dictated the exclusion, presumably to provide public access or for the protection of river banks and water quality. The government in 1987 indicated that it planned to eliminate taxpayer funding for the control of weeds and pests, but runholders could not carry the burden of this control, which totals NZ\$15 to \$25 million per year;¹⁸ one runholder, for example, is currently spending 12 to 25 percent of his gross income on such control. Local and regional pest-control authorities with a separate authority focusing on national pest problems seemed likely (Kerr 1987:2).

The PNA program, established in 1982, was meant to "identify and protect representative examples of the full range of indigenous biological and landscape features in New Zealand, and thus maintain the distinctive New Zealand character of the country" (South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management 1994:63). Here aesthetics become an integral part of what is sustainable. Teams were to identify these sites, which would then be managed through a voluntary arrangement between the Department of Conservation and the lessee. The PNA program was implemented slowly with no completion date targeted and a presumed shortage of funds; many farmers had moratoria placed on lands with potential PNA designation, removing that land from farming use and complicating their ability to plan or sell leases. As one runholder noted, "Protected areas should be everyone's asset, not the farmer's liability alone." A danger of PNAs for runholders is that they can increase tourism, leading to potential disruption of stock management and increased land degradation from human use.

Similar in purpose to the PNA is the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, which protects landscape features on private land by accepting gifted or bequeathed land and by open space covenants. Established by act of Parliament in 1977, the trust provides, protects, and enhances open space, defined as "any area of land or body of water that serves to preserve or to facilitate

the preservation of any landscape of aesthetic, cultural, recreational, scenic or social interest or value” (cited in Clendon 1988:23). The National Trust is of special interest to leaseholders because it is “able to provide a legally binding means of protecting special landscape features, in perpetuity and independent of government or commercial interests” (ibid.:23). The trust usually assists with fencing expenses and with legal and survey costs incurred in registering a covenant agreement on a land title. At stake then “in the evolution of balanced high country land management” are both nature conservation and agricultural development (McSweeney 1983:54). By 1994 Gerry McSweeney was claiming nature conservation as “our only sustainable land use” because “a young nation such as ours draws on natural icons to establish our identity,” trade and tourism depend “on our clean green image,” and nature tourism sells “active experiences” to visitors (not of the “thrill and kill” kind) (1994:58–62).

An additional player with an interest in the public estate is the recreationist, whose voice is heard most loudly through Federated Mountain Clubs. While arguing that the pastoral lease system was fairly effective when it first evolved, the spokespeople for such groups, such as David Henson, say that current changes in land use demand changes in land tenure. They favor more surrender of high-country lands to the Crown rather than retirement, where lands remain ungrazed but within the lease. They favor access to class 7e (severely eroded class 7 lands) and class 8 lands also but claim that run-holders argue over these classifications. An equally powerful spokesman is University of Otago botanist Alan Mark of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Mark 1985). He argues that the classification “pastoral” is meant to apply to land with clear agricultural value and no recreational value; national values are embedded in high-country lands, and these values must be met first by fully assessing the public interest in these lands. He, too, favors the surrender and compulsory destocking of class 7e and 8 lands if necessary, though he acknowledges that this practice might leave uneconomic those runs for which these lands occupy a large percentage, noting that the idea “gets the backs of farmers up” (Alan Mark, pers. com., 15 June 1987).

Legislating Sustainable Management: The Crown Pastoral Land Bill of 1995

In reviewing pastoral lease tenure, the 1994 “South Island High Country Review” (the Martin Report) maintained that it “is not achieving sustainable management and does not provide the flexibility to make the necessary changes towards ecological sustainability and economic viability”; the report called for a review of pastoral lease tenure and aimed to make freehold “all

land not required by the Crown for the public interest” (New Zealand Minister of Lands 1995:4). Of the four objectives outlined by the report—promoting sustainable land management; transferring the state’s productive assets to the private sector; protecting the public interest in nature conservation, recreation, access, landscape, and cultural and historic values; and considering the Treaty of Waitangi—I will focus on those concerning sustainable land management and freeholding.

The Resource Management Act of 1991 defines sustainable management and subjects all land regardless of land tenure to management constraints ensuring sustainability of “natural and physical resources.” Section II.5.2 of the act reads:

In this Act, “sustainable management” means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well being and for their health and safety while—

- (a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
- (b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems; and
- (c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

The act refers to matters of national importance such as preservation of coastal features, protection of outstanding features and landscapes, protection of habitats for indigenous vegetation and fauna, preservation of public access to shorelands, and the relationship of *te iwi Maori* with their *taonga*.

Reinforcing the Resource Management Act, Minister of Lands Dennis Marshall sought to address land degradation, specifically evident in the encroachment of weeds, pests, reduced productivity, reduced profitability, and reduced capacity to maintain inputs; to “clarify accountabilities for the condition of land and to create incentives for sound land use practices” in part by making certain parcels freehold in order to increase incentives for farmers to adopt sustainable land-management practices; and to increase the resilience of land by freeing it from the lack of diversification that pastoral leases ensure (Marshall 1995:5). Marshall worked on the Crown Pastoral Land Bill of 1995 to bring about land-reform policy that ranged in its considerations from increased freeholding to the government’s taking back pastoral leases

altogether. He built on prior reviews of the tenure regime and, in particular, came to favor a "land categorisation proposal" creating three categories of land: "farm" land for freeholding, "restricted use" land retained by the Crown and managed under lease for a range of both production and protection purposes, and "conservation" land to be placed in the Conservation Estate (New Zealand Minister of Lands 1995:3).

The bill outlines the procedure for seeking tenure review in which a runholder can initiate purchase. The Martin Report, after scrutinizing pastoral lease tenure and noting that lessees are reasonably content with the status quo, urged that tenure review progress rapidly precisely because it provides a strategy for improving sustainable management in the high country (South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management 1994:87). Ecological sustainability, as defined by the Resource Management Act, is said to take top priority in these negotiations. As runholders understood this, it meant that all leasehold land is "up for grabs since it will begin on a level playing field," that classification is gone (for example, class 7e and class 8 land), and that the central issue is the method by which the price is set for freeholding. As one runholder said to me: "No farmer in his right mind is going to trade in a 2 percent rent for a 10 percent mortgage," but the Crown "wants to work this out because it is costing them money" (field notes, 6 May 1995).

One runholder had initiated this process on an interim basis pending review of the Crown Pastoral Land Bill. Two issues emerged in the early stages of the review: public access and the valuation of what might be sold. The family noted that they were undergoing the review process not to gain freehold, but rather "we are in this to resolve issues about the RAPs [Recommended Areas of Protection] and the uncertainty that the Department of Conservation has imposed on us."¹⁹ With the "RAPs on hold," the runholder said, he wanted them "to make up their minds." The family was told it was critical for them to specify what they wanted out of the tenure-review process; they were told repeatedly that they should be no worse off at the end of the day in either financial or productive terms. While I was there, the lessee consulted with the Ngai Tahu to see what kinds of specific demands on these lands the tribe might make with the Crown; their representative had no specific demands and acknowledged that even if burial sites were present, they would best remain undisturbed by being unacknowledged. Like the lessees, the Ngai Tahu representative did not feel that all land should be open by right to a public. Similarly, Tipene O'Regan, chairman of the Ngai Tahu Trust Board, does not trust public ownership. He cuts through the "kiwi taste" for the destructive absolutist "ideological landslides" that have dominated tenure reform in recent years and aligns his position with the farming community: "It's one of the reasons why I like high country field

days, and why I like dealing with people who really do work the land, rather than sitting around and philosophizing about it" (O'Regan 1994:63). O'Regan characterizes the Eastern Polynesian people who came to New Zealand as "habitual interventionists with the environment" and says that their production ethic worked in an environment that was rapidly self-healing. Over time, he suggests, when they became Maori, they were "forced into a relationship with their environment based on sustainability." Sustainability, he argues, is "not really as a concept preservation of a resource. That is, preservation for preservation's sake. . . . It is the preservation for use. It is conserving and caring for them for use." Conservation, then, is "wise use and protection of the reproductive capacity of the resource" (ibid.:64–65).

Members of the High Country Branch of Federated Farmers met in Timaru on 15 May 1995 to discuss the Crown Pastoral Land Bill on its way to a Select Committee.²⁰ The runholders were generally supportive of the bill, but three clauses received their attention. Clause 20 aims "to promote the sustainable management of reviewable land" and to facilitate "(1) the restoration to full Crown ownership and control of reviewable land that has high inherent values; and (2) the freehold disposal of reviewable land capable of productive use; and (3) the creation of appropriate public rights of access to and enjoyment of reviewable land." Runholders noted that the bill does not define "productive use" and does not specify what "the enjoyment" of lands might mean. "Inherent values," after much discussion, was glossed as meaning (natural and physical) conservation values, and the discussion turned to consideration of compensation, with the suggestion to add a clause reading "where a determination adversely affects sustainable management, the financial loss will be equated" (field notes, 15 May 1995).

As was often the case in such meetings, I was asked to contribute, and I risked suggesting that the high-country community might write in the collective self as part of inherent cultural values. During a field day on sustainability at Mt. Peel station, consultant John Tavendale mapped out the following mission statement for the property and its owners since 1855, the Acland family: "To manage the property in an optimum Physical and Financial manner with financial returns not to have precedence over good standards of improvements, sustainable pasture management, yet ensuring that the property will continue to be farmed by the Acland Family" (New Zealand Conference on Sustainable Land Management 1994a:49). Sustainable ownership as a resource is critically at stake in this statement. Clearly these are not the cultural values intended by the legislation. The Martin Report differentiates three kinds of resource values, all of which are designated as economic—use values (benefits derived by society in either an active or passive way), option values (preserving options for future use), and exist-

ence values (values held by people willing to pay to keep things in existence) (South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management 1994:12). The report gives primacy to yet another value, primary or intrinsic: the basic ecological characteristics of systems that are the “‘glue’ that holds everything together” in such a way that the value of the ecosystem “will exceed the sum of the [economic] values” (ibid.:12). The concept is akin to Kroeber’s understanding of culture as superorganic, except that ecology has replaced culture.

Clause 14 of the bill, “Discretionary Actions,” authorizes the commissioner of Crown lands, when considering tenure-review applications from lessees, to have regard for “ensuring (so far as is practicable) the protection of the inherent values (other than recreation values) of the land.” As the New Zealand Minister of Lands explains (1995:17–18), the commissioner can take into account not only soil conservation values but also “nature conservation, landscape, historical and cultural values.” Historical and cultural values receive no elaboration in his proposals, however. Some farmers were concerned that this clause “can stuff up a run—production will not win out over conservation.”

Clause 31 was considered the most important, because it empowered “the imposition on land being disposed of of covenants intended to ensure sustainable management” (New Zealand Minister of Lands 1995:iv in explanatory notes). Runholders read this clause as a blank check to the commissioner regarding covenants but noted also that it extended the categories of land that could be freeholded and would elicit opposition from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Shared by Ngai Tahu and the runholders is a diachronic integrative, interactive model of their relations to environmental processes in which sustainability is “an outcome of systemic processes that link people to one another within a community, to their natural environment, and to other communities” (see the article by Lieber in this volume). As Lieber underscores, what is to be sustained is a particular kind of relationship between a population and an environment; here (and throughout the Pacific) social relationships are at stake and land is a template for the familial. In contrast, urban-based environmentalists and NGOs argue for preservation of a presumed static past.

Sustaining Aesthetic Landscapes: Preserving Open Space

NGO opponents of the Land Bill, who also seek to return high-country lands to an undegraded state, vigorously oppose the freeholding it suggests. Just as the profoundly modified British moorlands (also burnt and grazed) seem to

have exerted a spell on Marion Shoard's protection advocates (1982:57), so does the New Zealand high country exert a similar spell for some, that is, as a site for discovering wilderness.²¹ Shoard argues that people are not only herd animals but also loners, hence the desire of the wilderness lobby for the open space of the moorlands (ibid.:58). She extrapolates seven components of wilderness: wildness (the antithesis of domestication), openness (its emptiness and the dominance of the sky), asymmetry and homogeneity (simplicity with no obvious pattern, silence, and solitude), height (demanding physical exertion), freedom to wander at will (liberation and tracklessness), the absence of human handiwork (an "appearance" of being untouched by humans), relics of ancient man (historical monuments), and wind (ibid.: 59–60).

Similarly, a rebel high-country daughter argues not for the sustainability of resources but for the sustainability of landscape—of expansive and solitudinous tussock grasslands, and of an open-space aesthetic (cf. Norton 1991: 16). Lesley Shand, an active conservationist in the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, celebrates openness, homogeneity, nakedness, and wilderness (as domesticity's converse):

The real issue of the high country rarely gets aired, yet drives the passion which fires people who know the back country and understand it. . . . It was summed by Bernie Card, once Field Officer in Lands and Survey and then the head equivalent in Landcorp, with what he said to me after the Awatere Valley hearing part of the Clayton Report—"Landscape." I agree with him that landscape incorporates many things. The real threat we face is the loss of those *inimitable, irreplaceable landscapes*—great distances, sweeping vistas and with them goes the natural vegetation, space and the feeling you are seeing a living massive 3D oil canvas—but it's *real*. Those vast distances uncluttered by buildings and in the most part without outward vestiges of colonisation—introduced trees.

I am talking of low altitudes in the high country, where else in lowland areas can you find such untampered with space. The Land Bill commodifies and turns the high country into real estate, and allows the landscape to be chopped into blocks. Smaller blocks are what domesticated humans used to town sections can cope with mentally. They cannot cope with the open space. It's unmanageable in their eyes so it's turned into tidy little blocks of domesticity.

People's imaginations must instead be fired by the concept of OPEN SPACE. That to me would be the greatest loss of all—imposing [the] clutter of domesticity on a landscape so beautiful in its naked-

ness. You really see the form of the country. The underlying geologic forms that are the coat hanger of the present landscape are there for the wondering at. You can imagine and speculate about the great forces that created those forms. I dread the thought of clutter for it.

The high country will lose its inscrutability.

(Lesley Shand, pers. com., 12 May 1995)

The pamphlet to which Shand refers, produced by the High Country Public Lands Campaign in May 1995,²² is a call to arms to save the high country from a “sell-off” by “killing” Marshall’s Land Bill and by blocking privatization and permanent alienation through “unconstrained freeholding” of “hundreds of thousand of hectares of the high country now owned by all New Zealanders” (High Country Public Lands Campaign 1995:1). Federated Mountain Clubs has referred to the Land Bill as “The Last Great Public Land Carve Up” (Barr 1994:26). Arguing that covenants are insufficient, the pamphlet says that the bill “marginalises conservation” and fails to protect the high country’s “remaining indigenous character . . . from continued burning, grazing and farming use.” It “fences nature into a corner” by allowing only areas of (arguably) “high inherent” conservation value to be allocated to the Department of Conservation and thus neglecting “large wildland areas important for ecosystem protection and recreation” that should be part of the public conservation estate. For the coalition, the Land Bill’s major purpose should be to “safeguard nature conservation, landscape, public access and other Crown interests,” and the responsibility of the commissioner of Crown lands is to “protect natural character and indigenous vegetation and wildlife habitat” (High Country Public Lands Campaign 1995). Sustainable in these terms is the presumed continuity of the past, continuous with an indigenous, timeless landscape to which New Zealanders have access, which section 2 of the Conservation Act of 1987 attempts to define: “Conservation means the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their *intrinsic* values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations” (emphasis added).²³

Of primary value for sustainability is a particular kind of heritage, identified by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society as the land forms, vegetation, and wildlife of the high country that are unique and distinctive, that is, endemic to the place. At stake with the proposed privatization is the protection (sustaining) of “the mountains and tussock lands, sweeping valleys and dramatic landscapes of this region” (Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand 1995). Like Lesley Shand the society seeks to take advan-

tage of a naturalized historic moment when conservationists might preserve an unbounded visual landscape, like the British moorlands, in which a “network of extensive parks and reserves to protect the natural areas” might be created (*ibid.*). “Outstanding wildlands” comprise this unbounded landscape, the components of which are areas of recreational significance, “the Southern Lakes,” “the rolling tussocklands of the Lindis Pass area, the mountainscapes of the McKenzie Country, and the vast braided rivers and gorges of the Rangitata and Rakaia, Waimakariri and Clarence Rivers” (Barr 1994:26).

Cultural Diversity and Community Sustainability

Legislating sustainable land management has taken a new twist in the 1990s. Such legislation is necessary, according to Australian lawyer John Bradsen, because without it the two sets of forces illustrated above will prevail: material forces (economics) and nonmaterial forces (values, attitudes, and beliefs) (1994:100). Bradsen argues that the former force sidelines ecological systems, ignores land as part of nature, and lacks a sense of the community (as distinct from individuals), while the latter is full of contradictions, inconsistencies, and wishful thinking. Bradsen suggests on the basis of models in South Australia that the best legislative models empower, organize, and guide communities (*ibid.*:102). Community has become the third force in the sustainability equation as community-based collaborative models of ownership emerge.

In New Zealand the Rabbit and Land Management Programme provides such a model and has established the prototype for future initiatives. Established for the period 1989–1995 and funded with NZ\$25 million from the central government, the regional councils of Marlborough and Canterbury, and farmers from these areas, the program was a comprehensive response to pest and noxious weed devastation with its goal “to achieve ecological, economic and community sustainability in the dry tussock grasslands.” Involved were farm families in the program area, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and an advisory committee made up of those with direct involvement in the high country; four hundred thousand hectares of land were involved, including ninety-eight farms with especially badly rabbit-infested lands. The program responded to the nexus of problems created by rabbit and hawkweed infestation, the stresses of a highly variable climate, and the declining financial viability of high-country farming. It focused on rabbit control (through poisoning, shooting, and fencing), “whole farm” plans (with a focus on property plans and good land management), and semi-arid lands research involving collaboration between landholders and researchers in a variety of organizations (Rabbit and Land Management Programme 1988).²⁴

Reminiscent of Leopold's definition of the land ethic as a "community instinct in-the-making," Bradsen's view is entirely compatible with the international goals of the Mountain Agenda for developing approaches to sustainability that "empower mountain communities to exercise more control over local resource management and conservation" and to recover and foster "the cultural expressions of mountain peoples" whose cultural diversity provides a basis for sustainability (Mountain Institute 1996:13). The not-so-extraordinary parallel between cultural diversity and biodiversity, between community sustainability and ecological sustainability (and, as I will argue, between cultural identity and a sense of place, and between human body and the land) prompts us as anthropologists to imagine how we might find a way to enter these dialogues on sustainability by factoring human communities into biodiversity. For example, Mike Evans (this volume) talks about social and cultural practices that bind people together in a transnational context and on which the integrity and sustainability of Tongan identity depends.

My approach is shaped by Robert Netting, who homeostatically jump-started political ecology in his *Balancing on an Alp*, where he attended to the conditions of land tenure, the distribution of land, and its economic significance as social and cultural facts "grounded in history and perpetuated by custom and law" (Netting 1981:14; see Lieber, this volume, for another longitudinal analysis). In taking these components into account along with environmental possibilities and the specificity of subsistence systems, Netting conceptualized the social world as part of the ecological arena and directed attention to the significance of land regulation (as well as intensification and expansion) in shaping the allocation of certain resources (1981:40, 42). For smallholders some kinds of resources lend themselves to communal management (Netting 1993:173). In the Swiss Alps, where Netting worked, communal land tenure was essential to smallholders' management of land in a profoundly modified environment; while ranchers and pastoralists are not smallholders in Netting's terms (*ibid.*:3), the less-modified New Zealand Alps may similarly continue to benefit from a form of communal land tenure and management.

Comparative cultural ecology, environmental historian Donald Worster suggests, invites people to look at the landscape (for example, an instrumentalized river and its social consequences) in order to see "the interplay between humans and nature and to track the social consequences it has produced—to discover the process by which in the remaking of nature, we remake ourselves" (1992:63). Worster asks not if human beings dominate nature, but which humans dominate nature. If the sustainable land ethic rejects individuality and individual ownership and management of resources in favor of Crown ownership and management to preserve the public estate,

it might recraft community, too, not by compartmentalizing land into categories of freehold and Crown land (or categories of production and conservation), but by imagining a different kind of communal ownership—characteristic of but distinct from European alpine tenure patterns—at the district or regional level.

Taking Ownership of Sustainability

The most vocal voices for freeholding in the high-country community argue from a systems-based approach to sustainability in a farming or land-management system. Here the interaction among indicators of sustainability provides the measurable components into which sustainability breaks down: financial (profit, risk, and capital), social (employment, knowledge base, community effects, and values), and ecological (soil, water, and ecological quality and nonrenewable resource use). These indicators are aspects of a range of sustainable land uses including conservation, pastoralism, forestry, and commercial recreation. Fusing conservation and diversified production in sustainable land management is said to be achievable through processes of local ownership, meaning ownership of problems and of codes of practice (Ensor 1994:79–80). “Practical pastoralists” will have to join forces with skilled advisors, agencies, financiers, and politicians; secure tenure and assets must be assured; ownership and the preservation of tradition are incentives to long-term planning; financially robust operations should be sustained; biological controls for hieracium species and rabbits should be introduced; and outside interests should be rejected unless people buy the privileges of ownership. Above all, the “pastoral future will depend on farmers’ ability to understand, take ownership and address sustainable land management” (Brown 1994:40). These farmers and the constituencies they represent have adopted an explicitly science-based sustainable land ethic in which “the answer lies in building strong farmer/science/agency partnerships” (Ensor 1994:80).

As a plan of action this approach is entirely consistent with the international Mountain Agenda of wanting to empower mountain communities to “exercise larger control over local resource management and conservation and generate income in sustainable and equitable ways” (Mountain Institute 1996:26). In *Spirit of the High Country* and in “Sustainability in the South Island High Country” (South Island High Country Committee of Federated Farmers 1992, 1994), the high-country community demonstrates the importance of protecting local people’s interests, recognizing their knowledge, and supporting and initiating long-term monitoring of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of their actions. Above all, the agenda calls for local communities to participate in “all decisions that affect their natural

resources” in locally driven programs (Mountain Institute 1996:22). Some see New Zealand as a pioneer: “in this regard New Zealand might get it right—it’s small enough and focused enough with the contemporary shifts framing the debate to have the edge on the world in terms of claiming it is clean and green . . . [although] with nitrogen runoff, we might lose that edge.” This farmer thinks that the “ultimate measure” of sustainability is in water and runoff (pers. com., 8 May 1995).

The community has been proactive in the face of challenging social, financial, and environmental constraints in recent years. Farmers note that in the 1980s (and before) it was “all production, production with no concern for environmental issues whereas now, environment is the critical factor”; acknowledging that “farming management is not a static option,” farmers state that past financial concerns must be replaced with equal attention to ecological and social concerns (New Zealand Conference on Sustainable Land Management 1994a:50). With so many interest groups making claims on these lands, farmers refuse to stand passively by and let others call the shots; in fact they are working to outsmart urban rhetoric by quantifying it. They are developing computer modeling for measuring components of financial, ecological, and social sustainability and for surveying and monitoring vegetation (Aubrey and Ensor 1994).²⁵ The computer model STOCKPOL is used to ensure that specific options for farming are biologically feasible; another computer model, RANGEPACK, calculates and projects economic outcomes (New Zealand Conference on Sustainable Land Management 1994a: 56). In the upper Rakaia valley, together with a Landcare group and some funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, farmers are monitoring approximately one hundred species of vegetation in twenty sites per property, examining three to five sites per property per day. They selected a range of sites—with varying altitude and aspect, and including unimproved and improved country as well as back and front country—and worked with a list of salient species such as hawkweed, blue tussock, snow tussock, and sweet vernal. They defined an area one hundred by one hundred meters and drew a line through it to do a species count. Then they entered the data into a computer (graphing it on three axes) to produce a baseline against which to measure change.

An advocate for the Rakaia monitoring project believes that these data will provide definitive evidence against people who argue that areas are degraded by stock. He gave me the example of one hill on his family property that environmentalists declared a tussockland, and he explained to me that they don’t realize that it isn’t in its natural state—it has tussocks because it is grazed and also has superphosphate applied; with grazing removed, the tussocks wouldn’t maintain themselves. An authentic natural state therefore

cannot exist. Other farmers told me that while computers measure what actually is happening physically, management decisions are often made “from the gut,” from intuition, “from an instinct for farming.” Similarly, Stevens (this volume) illustrates that soil fertility analyses match Tongan farmers’ hunches. While “ag-sci types struggle to understand” the computer programs, they “come easily to the farmers who understand intuitively what it is about.” A farmer said that such a program “gives one the vocabulary to notice indigenous vegetation,” thus taking care of “information holes” in their systems. He said that it has provided farmers with an opportunity to learn about what they don’t know rather than to voice what they do know. Another farmer in the Rakaia valley quietly and confidently asserted that the best measure of land degradation is in the condition of his stock (pers. com., 1995). Runholders know that with any property, stock provide the ultimate measure of health.

In 1990 a discourse of sustainability was imposed on the high country as part of an international agenda to manage mountain ecosystems, and farmers, while recognizing the need to embrace actively and to define this top-down concept (to make it theirs), shared their doubts about it with me: “it’s the in term, but it hasn’t been defined,” “what does it mean to be sustainable?” “what is to be sustained?” “for whom is it to be sustained?” In this hermeneutic vacuum they are responding locally to sustainability as the newest colonialist mentality (see Stevens, this volume) and seizing collective agency by pioneering computer software to measure the concept and move it beyond rhetoric. Their actions are about ownership of the concept.

An Indigenous Land Ethic: Sustaining Local Communities

Anthropologist Roger Keesing has shaped a now-influential Pacific literature theorizing cultural identity, emphasizing its fluidity and constructedness, proclaiming the situatedness rather than the inherentness of its authenticities, and helping to jettison threadbare “coral reef” essentialized understandings of culture as accretive, consensual, static, and coherently indigenous; indeed indigeneity is a pastiche (1993). Similarly, an indigenous state of nature is also a pastiche, and “country,” like cultural identity, is as much a construction as an essence. Just as theorists of cultural identity reject a biological model of culture as species (Jackson 1989), so also must theorists of place reject a biological model of a “natural” landscape as having fixed, albeit diverse, inherent features. And yet it is precisely inherent and intrinsic values that clauses 14 and 20 of the 1995 Land Bill and the Conservation Act of 1987 objectify, essentialize, and specify as needing the protection afforded by sustainable land management. At stake in the complex maneuverings to

define sustainable land management are competing ideas about what these values are and which form of cultural landscape in the high country should prevail.

The truth is, as novelist of place Wallace Stegner remarks, “a place is more than half memory” (1994:591), and nostalgia for the way places used to be is a sign that “we have made a tradition out of mourning the passing of things we never had time really to know.” He cites Wendell Berry

and his belief that if you don't know where you are you don't know who you are. He is talking about the kind of knowing that involves the senses, the memory, the history of a family or a tribe. He is talking about the knowledge of place that comes from working it in all weathers, making a living from it, suffering from its catastrophes, loving its mornings or evenings or hot noons, valuing it for the profound investment of labor and feeling that you, your parents and grandparents, your all-but-unknown ancestors have put into it. He is talking about the knowing that poets specialize in. (Ibid.)

Stegner's call is to preserve place by sustaining habitation, not through nostalgia or replication of false authenticities. He tells his readers to be still, to belong, as indeed the current generation of high-country families have sought to do. And he, the poet, provides a formula for the sustainable in his own acentered land ethic: “Only in the act of submission is the sense of place realized and a sustainable relationship between people and earth established” (ibid.). Stegner's Western land ethic has been under fire from multicultural critics, suggesting that the substitution of “place” or “nature” for “culture” in Jean Jackson's title “Is There a Way to Talk about Making Culture without Making Enemies?” is an equally risky task when applied to the environment.

Preservation is not straightforward, and knowing what is to be preserved seems to rely on rootedness and realizing that a country of pastoral lands is also a pastiche, like identity. In positing that people treat valued landscapes as “shrines to the past,” David Lowenthal has written that people's preferences for past over present landscapes derive from “erroneous perceptions” that fail to acknowledge that such pasts (like identities) are complex and fluid accretions of time periods (1982:93). Lowenthal explains why people revisit these valued landscapes in memory—because the past is highly malleable through mental processes of selectivity and imagination, and because we can imagine a false continuity through landscape (and perhaps solitary escape in landscape) that counters the fragmentary nature of our lives. While Lowenthal addresses a primarily visual or representational landscape, rather than land in its more overt physical, geographical sense, his concept of valued landscapes resting in the valorization of a mythical past is equally applicable to

conservationists' concerns for nature resources with high inherent value and to old-fashioned discourses of sustainability with their emphasis on ecological continuity and preservation of an idealized, past balance of self-sustaining resources free of human intervention. Contemporary political, economic, and ecological pressures in the New Zealand high country preclude the continuation of a discourse of landscape and demand a return to treating this terrain on the terms of its managers and owners, the high-country community, for whom this place has been "country," an inhabited site invested with cultural meanings.

One farmer's reflections, although not typical, are provocatively resonant of Stegner's and Lowenthal's situational sense of place. He believes that the world never has been sustainable in its original form because change is essential to its condition (see Lieber, this volume), that sustainability time spans should be lengthened and land use slowed down to a minimum to ensure the same potential for future generations. He urges a return to mulching and fallow lands, both practices that he is experimenting with on his Otago property to control hieracium and rehabilitate the soil. In particular he attacks the profit motive sustained by the ideology of economic growth by urging lower expectations in terms of productivity and by using the horse as a way of returning to and preserving an endangered land ethic that celebrates animal husbandry, the soil, and the local community (Morris 1996: 176–178). Stegner says to be still, to belong; Morris says to follow Stegner's lead. Morris's thoughts, as dated as they may seem—he acknowledges that they may sound crazy—are reflected in the community-based, interactive project of legislating sustainable land management for pastoral lands at present and in community-based, local-level land care groups. His analogy of the land to the human body, similarly (and momentarily) sustained by drugs in the form of fertilizers, gives one pause as it suggests a series of linked analogies paralleling the historical progression from production to conservation to community in land legislation—land : body :: natural/biological diversity : cultural diversity :: country : cultural identity. If the analogy holds and dominant cultural metaphors become ensconced in land-management policies, Bradsen's legislative underpinnings in community and the Mountain Agenda's commitment to the simultaneous preservation of linked biological and cultural diversity may provide New Zealand with the grassroots model for an innovatively progressive sustainable land ethic.

NOTES

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1. See John McPhee 1971 for a philosophical consideration of conflicts and convergences between discourses of conservation, wilderness, development, and hydraulic engineering. See Dominy 1997 for an Australian case study.

2. As a global network, the nongovernmental Mountain Forum is committed to promoting and implementing the Mountain Agenda. The Mountain Forum's webpage can be found at <http://www.mtnforum.org/>. The regional Asia/Pacific Mountain Forum has as its focal point ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development), with its network on sustainable development of mountain and upland areas of Asia. Its Web site is <http://www.icimod.org.sg/>. See Mountain Institute 1996.

3. Rangelands scientist Kevin O'Connor, in "The Conservation of Nature and Culture in New Zealand Mountains," has defined culture in this instance as "the impact of work on environment by a people acting under the impulse of a continuing tradition," but he understands such culture to be adaptive and creative, not "slavishly mimicking" one's grandparents (1989:99). As he notes, "Continuing culture also requires a continuing environment." In the Australian Alps, the term "cultural heritage" is used instead. For an exploration of parallel issues in the context of the Australian high country in New South Wales and Victoria, see Scougall 1992.

4. Textual data include the Resource Management Act of 1991, the proceedings of the 1994 New Zealand Conference on Sustainable Land Management convened at Lincoln University (1994b), the comprehensive "South Island High Country Review" (called the Martin Report) produced in the same year by the South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management, the new Crown Pastoral Land Bill (revising the 1948 Land Act and made into law in 1998), the extensive reports of the Rabbit and Land Management Board, and farmer initiatives in computer modeling such as Project FARMER (the acronym for "Farmer Analysis of Research, Management, and Environmental Resources") of the Rural Futures Trust (Aubrey and Ensor 1994).

5. Commissioned by the ministers of conservation, agriculture, and environment, the "South Island High Country Review" is known as the Martin Report after Graeme Martin, chair of the South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management, which authored the report.

6. *Pakeha* refers to New Zealanders of Anglo-Celtic descent.

7. The Tussock Grasslands and Mountain Lands Institute, dissolved in 1988 and replaced in 1993 by the Centre for Mountain Studies, has published extensively on pastoral leasehold land, focusing on tenure, management, and sustainability (see especially its Centre for Resource Management 1983:31–54 for a history of land tenure).

8. In 1983, 369 runs under pastoral lease were distributed among the provinces as follows: Marlborough, 15 with one representative; Canterbury, 155 with three representatives; Otago, 200 with three representatives; and Southland, 25 with one representative. The average run size is 6,850 hectares.

9. Land boards were superseded in 1948, but high-country representation continued on the newly formed Land Settlement Board.

10. A chief pastoral land officer was responsible to the Land Settlement Board, which, in turn, was under the minister and Department of Lands and Survey. The board could reclassify land. Section 167 of the 1948 Land Act gives the minister of lands the right to set aside Crown land as a reserve even if it is subject to a pastoral lease.

11. The implications of the wording are unclear now, although in 1948 it is likely that pastoral use was the only conceivable meaning intended. As Kerr asks (1987:3), "Is it intended that pastoral land be used exclusively for 'pastoral purposes' and thereby exclude all other uses?"

12. Underlying the legislative dependence of scientific resource management of tussock grasslands in New Zealand has been an implicit bias toward the tragedy-of-the-commons model, which tends to assume that the "users are selfish, unrestricted by social norms of the community, and trying to maximize short-term gains" (McCay and Acheson 1987:7). However, as McCay and Acheson also point out, contextual factors must be considered in any attempt to generalize from this model. The argument has worked to the runholders' advantage in securing them the tenure that undermines extractive, nonsustainable productivity. See also Netting 1993:185 for a complex reading of the relationship of security of tenure to investment; he writes that "smallholders cannot wittingly destroy their own resources and thereby ruin the future livelihoods of their offspring" (*ibid.*:333).

13. This kind of ecologically compromising pastoral activity is linked to local intentions realized through global markets as illustrated by Evans, Stevens, and Shankman in this volume.

14. In contrast, in the United States the formula is more complicated and also the subject of bitter debate. "The formula consists of a base value of grazing on public land adjusted by indices reflecting current year land lease rates, cost of production and beef cattle prices. Annual increases or decreases of fees will be limited to no more than a 25% change from the previous year's fee. The fee will not, however, be lower than US\$1.35 per animal unit per month (AUM). AUM is the amount of forage consumed by one cow and one calf, one horse, or given sheep or goats in one month" (in Ensor 1993:20).

15. For timely discussions of recent changes in land administration (pastoral land and administrative reforms), see New Zealand Mountain Lands Institute 1989, Tussock Grasslands and Mountain Lands Institute 1987.

16. See especially *The Fourth Labour Government: Radical Politics in New Zealand*, edited by Boston and Holland (1987).

17. The composition of the Land Settlement Board at the beginning of my fieldwork was minister of lands (chairman); three representatives of the Department of Lands and Survey; one representative each from the Treasury, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Valuation Department, and the Rural Bank; and four private members (all farmers). Alan Mark (professor of botany and advocate for the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society) and Alan Evans (former Federated Mountain Clubs president) were invited to attend.

18. Earlier Robert Muldoon under the National Party eliminated Tax Payer Input for the same.

19. RAPs were areas created by the preliminary ecological survey work completed as part of the Protected Natural Areas Program and were defined under the Resource Management Act. While some lessees participated in having such areas designated, others did not. Action on RAPs has been suspended.

20. See New Zealand Government 1995 and New Zealand Minister of Lands 1995 for documents under discussion.

21. See also Graber 1976. Graber's "wilderness ethic," distinct from Leopold's garden-based "land ethic," is an urban phenomenon that, she argues, is out of touch with the means of rural livelihoods (ibid.:114).

22. The campaign involves the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Federated Mountain Clubs, the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, and Public Access New Zealand.

23. Crown Pastoral Land, 86-1, Interpretation, defines "inherent values" as natural resources (as defined by the Conservation Act of 1987) and recreational, cultural, and historical values (New Zealand Government 1995:2). The runholders referred to such areas as the "Crown jewels."

24. See the *Report of the Rabbit and Land Management Task Force* (Rabbit and Land Management Programme 1988).

25. For example, the Martin Report resists definitive statements but expresses concern for the possible decline of organic matter, nutrient levels, and soil pH (South Island Working Party on Sustainable Land Management 1994:28). In response to the report's conclusions about nutrient imbalance on unimproved country, the South Island High Country Committee of Federated Farmers (1994) provided specific calculations for balancing nutrient losses by artificial inputs.

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