

This evidence is lodged by the Central Otago Environmental Society which was formed in 2007 by Central Otago residents with a common concern for the qualities that make Central such a special place.

The Main Objectives of the Society are:

1. The protection and preservation of the natural landscape and character of Central Otago, including, but not being restricted to, landscape values, amenity values, aesthetic values and Central Otago's endemic flora and fauna.
2. Raising awareness of issues concerning the natural landscape, heritage and resources of Central Otago with the wider public.
3. To encourage and support the Government, the Central Otago District Council, the Otago Regional Council, the Department of Conservation and other statutory authorities as appropriate, to establish policies and make decisions which will preserve and enhance the special character of Central Otago's landscapes, heritage and resources for the benefits of future generations.

Central Otago Environmental Society Incorporated

(Reg. No. CC20371)

The Nevis valley is a remarkable place. We believe that its rare suite of unique interlinked nationally important natural, recreational and historical attractions and values makes it more remarkable today than any other valley in Otago, and perhaps in all of the South Island of New Zealand.

The Nevis, even though it is, in favourable weather, less than an hour's drive away from Cromwell in the north, or Garston to the south, feels truly wild and remote. It is also, as the falcon flies, virtually just over the hills – the Hector and Remarkables mountains – from one of New Zealand's most popular tourist destinations, Queenstown.

The Nevis River and valley is a heritage landscape of national importance. It attracts a wide range of recreational users including those interested in nature conservation, mountain biking, kayaking, horse trekking, four- wheel-drive excursions, tramping and mountaineering. Historians and archaeologists and others affirm the valley's qualities associated with our heritage, from evidence of early Maori occupation to mining to pastoralism to the numerous recreational activities of today. Many go so far as to term the valley an outdoor museum.

The Nevis further contains numerous animal and plant species which are deemed nationally important (being endangered or rare) and must be

protected for future generations.

Anglers see the Nevis as a clean, wild and scenic river in a stark and in some parts startlingly lovely landscape whose mix of outstanding natural landforms have great appeal.

Notable New Zealand artists and writers of many kinds, including Grahame Sydney and Brian Turner, are drawn to the Nevis, find it a rich source of inspiration. Turner's poem 'Filming at Lower Nevis' (appended), and published in his volume *Inside Outside* (Victoria University Press, 2011), gives more than a little of the flavour and presence of the valley.

The gorges below the Nevis Crossing are wonderfully wild. A short distance downstream from the crossing the river emerges and runs through a series of beautiful pools in a section known as 'The Dell'. It is a magical place and the sense of seclusion there is enchanting, unforgettable.

Pioneer Generation's proposal would disregard the varied and major range of cultural, recreational and natural values associated with the river. It must be protected.

When considering the possible fate of the Nevis we think it salutary to consider the noted 19th century philosopher William James's observation: 'The most significant characteristic of modern civilization is the sacrifice of the future for the present...'

We believe that energy companies who advocate for dams and other projects on the grounds of so-called 'need' are often driven by a wish to compete with other energy providers and to show they can; and they frequently see societal 'wants' as 'needs'. In that they are mistaken, and possibly irresponsible. Continuing to build dams is to ensure that other ways of providing energy are not encouraged, and nor are greater efforts to use energy more efficiently.

Before applicants assert there is a 'need' for this dam they ought to examine and re-examine their belief and assure us that it isn't reliant on an attachment to attitudes and thinking prevalent in earlier times. In today's world hydro is outdated and unnecessarily destructive; newer technologies are available and advancing. Pioneer ought to be seen as truly pioneering, exploring and embracing the new.

In any case, Central Otago is already chockfull of dams and weirs. Pioneer owns, operates and maintains twelve power stations throughout Central Otago and Southland and undertakes contract maintenance for other electricity companies. The company also produces energy from

wind turbines in the Teviot Valley and at Mt Stuart, between Waitahuna and Milton in South Otago.

The Otago region provides a major part of New Zealand's energy. The Nevis is just about the only significant river in Central Otago that hasn't been dammed - the Clutha, Fraser, Teviot, Manuherikia and Taieri all have been, and more dams are planned or under investigation for them and other waterways in the district. Enough is enough. Otago has more than done its bit for the nation in this regard.

We ask that you decline Pioneer's application to dam the Nevis, for the values and issues it represents makes it not only of considerable regional, but national, importance.

(A signature is not required if you make your submission by electronic means.)

Address for service of submitter:

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Contact person: *name and designation, if applicable* Richard Kohler, Chair, COES, 135 McIntosh Road, Poolburn, RD2 Oturehua, Central Otago

Note to submitter

You must serve a copy of

Filming at Lower Nevis

Here one reflects on what McKibben means
when he writes of a wish to achieve in time
a 'right habitation of a place' for all our time.

Needs not wants is where one starts

and maybe ends in a place where stoicism speaks
and ambition's arrested, where skies
over the hills and mountains dress the valley
with light and shade more real than chimerical.

Silence, when broken, will not be suppressed,
the far off seems close at hand
and the wind's hiss in the sparse grass
is conspiratorial, both a welcome and a warning.

Some lived out their days here but many more
came and left, taking their impressions with them,
leaving their imprints behind. The early evening's gifts
include a bright new moon that temporarily

subdues transience, but there's no sign
that an Indian summer's under way,
there's just the past's aura in the present
and across the flats, where oats once grew

and sheep still graze, grey and brown mullocky
hunches in heaps, while under the hill
the river swings back and forth playing the music
of melting snow. Complacency never took root here,

and shibboleths were swept away in country
where little appears to have changed
since the days when the back of beyond
and the wild blue yonder were everywhere

no more than an hour away, and every campsite's
ashes were warm, even when abandoned by those
who sought and preferred solitude's solace to pointless ease
wherever it could be found and kept alive.

Brian Turner