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**Level Two Geography**

**91240: Demonstrate Geographic Understanding of a Large Natural Environment**

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Peoples Interaction with the Land

There are many examples of human interaction with the natural environment at Tongariro Volcanic Centre (TVC).

Two of these are:

* The Maori and the part they played
* Introduced plant life

The Maori and the part they played;

In 1886, the Maori grew increasingly concerned as more and more Europeans came into the land wanting to buy the land at Tongariro Volcanic Centre. The worried Tuwharetoa chief, Horonuke Te Heuheu, spoke to his son-in-law, Lauwrence Grace, in 1881, and Grace advised the chief to place the mountains at Tongariro Volcanic Centre under protection of the Crown. The chief than consulted the other chiefs in the area and in 1887 they grifted the mountain peaks to the Crown. In 1917 this area became New Zealand’s first National Park.

The decisions the Maori made towards the natural environment was slight, but the effect enables the national park to remain a sacred place which is abundant with vegetation and natural wildlife... unlike how it may have been had the Maori sold the land to the Europeans.

Introduced plant life;

Introduced plant life into Tongariro Volcanic Centre has affected the natural processes of vegetation succession. Many plants that flourished in TVC caused the native species to die off. Examples are; Heather and Lodgepole pines (*Pinus Contorta*.) Both of these plants where brought in to make the volcanic wastelands more profitable. During the First World War, heather was introduced into Tongariro Volcanic Centre by a Scottish settler- John Cullen. Cullen thought the area would be good for ‘recreational hunting and shooting’ so he planted heather to provide food for the game birds. Natural native plants such as tussock was burned down to create space for the heather to grow… nowadays the heather has widespread like a weed, killing native plants in its way to a vast length of 1650 metres on the northern western sides of the park. Heather has survived attempts throughout the years to eradicate it and it is hoped that the regrowth of the native plants, such as beech, will eventually supress it.