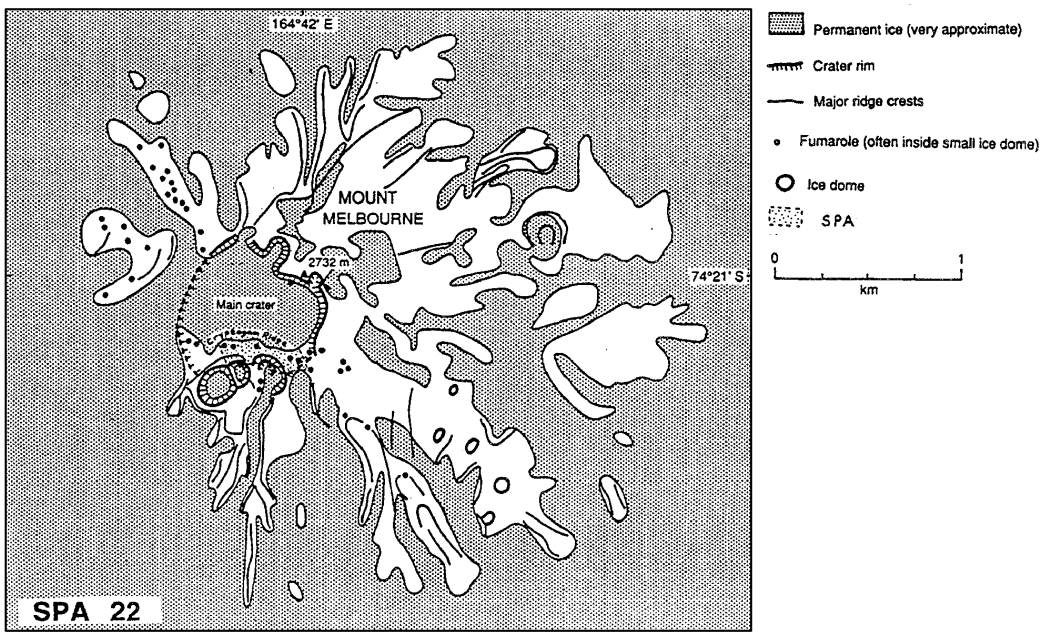
Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 118 (Specially Protected Area No. 22)
Cryptogam Ridge, Mount Melbourne, Victoria Land

1. Geographical location. Mount Melbourne (74°21'S, 164°42'W) lies between Wood Bay and Campbell Glacier, northern Victoria Land, on the western side of the Ross Sea.

2. Management Plan

i. Description of Area. The Area includes most of Cryptogam Ridge on the southern rim of the main summit crater (2,733 m altitude), and extends to about 1,200 m by 500 m. Geothermal activity occurs along about 300-400 m of the ridge and is marked by discontinuous areas of ice-free ground, surrounded by numerous ice hummocks up to 1 m high and scattered hollow ice towers up to several metres in diameter and 4 m high. The warm ice-free areas are mostly gently sloping with narrow terraces up to 1.5 m wide. More general details for the adjacent areas are given for the surrounding SSSI No. 24.



ASPA 118
Map A*

ii. Reason for designation. The geothermal ground within the Area supports a unique community of bryophytes, algae and microbiota, including the only known occurrence in the Antarctic of the moss *Campylopus pyriformis* and the very rare continental occurrence of the liverwort *Cephaloziella exiliflora*, otherwise unknown above about 500 m elsewhere in the Antarctic. This site is comparable with the only other known high altitude geothermally influenced ice-free area near the summit of Mount Erebus. This fragile and sterile habitat is of exceptional biological interest and should be afforded maximum protection from human influence to maintain its unique pristine state.

iii. Date of designation and originator. June 1990; New Zealand and Italy.

iv. Access points. Access should be only from either end of Cryptogam Ridge and not from the ridge slopes.

v. Entry permit requirement. Entry into the Area is only in strict accordance with a current permit, issued by a Participating Government or its authorised representative, specifically for a compelling scientific purpose which cannot be served elsewhere, or for site inspection, and which will not jeopardise any aspect of the natural ecosystem or its biota within the Area (see Antarctic Treaty Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora, Article VIII). Details of the visit should be included in the national annual report of Exchange of Information for the same Antarctic season in which the activities were carried out.

vi. Prohibitions. To avoid or minimise human impact is it prohibited to:

a. enter the Area without wearing sterile protective overclothing and footwear, to be provided by the supporting national operator;
b. use any sampling or other equipment within the Area which has not been first sterilised using an acceptable method;
c. land a helicopter within the Area; helicopters should land near the summit of Mount Melbourne only at a specified point in or adjacent to the main crater, no closer than 200 m from the boundary of the Area;
d. incinerate, bury or otherwise dispose of any waste, including all human waste, within the Area; all such waste must be removed from the Area;
e. bring into the Area any fuel or food, or leave any form of other supplies within the Area, other than markers required for monitoring studies;
f. erect any form of building within the Area.

vii. Pedestrian routes. None specified, but pedestrians must not use the ridge crest as a way of access to parts of the surrounding SSSI. Extreme precaution must be taken to avoid disturbance of all ice-free ground or interference with ice structures within the Area, unless required as specified in the permit.

viii. Scientific research and sampling. Where at all possible collections and general observations of geothermal soils and organisms should be made from positions outside the Area, unless directly related to the monitoring of Cryptogam Ridge; all activities within the Area must conform strictly with those specified in the permit to enter the Area.

ix. Inspection and maintenance. Inspection visits should be made to the Area no more than once every five years to assess the state of the site and to monitor any significant biological or environmental changes. Other visits should be made as necessary to maintain boundary markers, notices, etc.