

# THE FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF NEW ZEALAND (INCORPORATED)

## SEVENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT 2009

**PATRONS** Allan Evans & Arnold Heine

### EXECUTIVE 2008-2009

**PRESIDENT** Rob Mitchell (*Dunedin*)

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT** Brian Stephenson (*Auckland*)

#### VICE-PRESIDENTS

##### North Island

Owen Cox (*Kapiti Coast*)  
Vivian Milne (*Auckland*)

##### South Island

Robin McNeill (*Invercargill*)  
David Round (*Christchurch*)

**SECRETARY** Phil Glasson (*Kapiti Coast*)

**TREASURER** Graeme Lythgoe (*Wellington*)

#### EXECUTIVE

Rick Barber (*Greymouth*)  
David Barnes (*Dunedin*)  
Richard Davies (*Wellington*)  
Jane Dudley (*Wellington*)  
*from March 2009*  
Quentin Duthie (*Wellington*)

Tony Haddon (*Nelson*)  
Hannah McGregor (*Wellington*)  
*until March 2009*  
Barbara Morris (*Taupo*)  
Dennis Page (*Hutt Valley*)  
Lex Smith (*Havelock North*)  
Barbara Spurr (*Christchurch*)

**AUDITOR** Accountants Plus Limited, Lower Hutt

## **Overview of 2008-2009**

The past year has brought a sea change to the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand. After nine years of Labour government, Helen Clark was swept from power by the National Party. The implementation of the new government's outdoor recreation strategies under Minister of Conservation Tim Groser are being monitored closely by FMC. Initial government focus on reducing the negative impacts of the Overseas Investment regulations and the Resource Management Act could have significant ramifications for the management of national park and conservation values. The collapse of the subprime financial market in the USA has been felt worldwide creating considerable economic pressures on governments and the private sector. Reduced economic activity is pressuring governments to implement budgeting savings. It remains to be seen how this will impact on management of New Zealand's conservation estate... Currently domestic tourism by New Zealanders holidaying at home, accounts for some 50 percent of national tourism activity. This is likely to expand in the short and medium term as increased financial pressures on families is modifying New Zealanders' recreational activities. Outdoor recreation could well see resurgence as Kiwi international travel is cut back. FMC' recreational advocacy is geared to protection of a wide range of recreational opportunities for tourists and families enjoying easy camping and hiking to the advanced challenges in our wild rivers mountains and wilderness areas. FMC promotes the skill development, independence and physical fitness instilled by safe outdoor recreation.

In 2008-2008 the Federated Mountain Clubs continued to campaign for quality management of National Parks and conservation lands. FMC has been active in the stakeholder consultation to develop a second generation of regional Conservation Management Plans. It strenuously advocated to the Minister of Conservation and the NZ Conservation Authority, the need for comprehensive planning rather than broadly based, indicative strategies initially favoured by the Department of Conservation. FMC advocacy during the year centred on supporting new CMS planning for the Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Wanganui, and Rakiura. Development of other regional CMSs in both the South Island and North Island is being monitored closely. The review of the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan is of singular importance. The Federation has been active in promoting improved management of the national park particularly the management of conflicting forms of recreation and managing their impact on natural values and the threats to the integrity of the national park boundaries from proposals for a Dart-Hollyford tunnel. FMC is ready to assess draft management recommendations due for public consultation in the second quarter of 2009.

## **Membership 2008-2009**

Federated Mountain Clubs' Club membership has remained relatively static over the past twelve months. Those clubs which report a declining membership are balanced by those that have managed to grow their membership during the year. There has been an encouraging increase in Individual Supporter membership and following the workshops at the 2008 AGM which expressed support for this idea your Executive is currently planning a promotion of this category of membership

The Executive has started promoting the Federation to Secondary Schools which are accredited to assess Unit Standards in the Outdoor Recreation Domain. By doing so Federated Mountain Clubs aims to raise its profile among younger people, stimulate increased interest in tramping and, in

turn expand tramping club membership. FMC is also taking steps to build closer links with University and Polytechnic tramping clubs, and the expanding number of walking clubs. The entire Federated Mountain Clubs membership has now been placed on an electronic database which has improved administrative efficiency considerably.

A summary of our membership is:

	<b>As at 28 February</b>	
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Number of affiliated Clubs	82	82
Club financial membership	8844	8672
Club associated membership	2184	2476
<b>Total Club Membership</b>	<b>11028</b>	<b>11148</b>
Individual Membership	248	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>11276</b>	<b>11468</b>
Associates (Schools)	12	12
Associates (Other)	19	19

### **New Conservation Parks**

The success of FMC and other recreational and conservation groups in their campaign for new conservation parks has seen the formation of extensive new mountain recreational areas. Notable additions have been the Oteake, Hawea, and Hakatere Conservation Parks. FMC especially welcomes the purchase of the St James Station in North Canterbury in the past year adding a wonderful area of mountain land on the southern fringe of the Nelson Lakes National Park. FMC participated in initial planning consultation on recreational planning for the new Park

### **Progress on Tenure Review**

The Federated Mountain Clubs continue to support Government policy to develop additional mountain recreational areas while freeholding quality land for farming and other development. Through the year FMC with invaluable support from Mike Floate, Dave Henson and Tony Haddon represented the interests of FMC members on tenure review recreational assessments on a series

of important leasehold properties in the South Island High Country. Prominent were Gladstone in the Kaikouras, Braemar at the head of Lake Pukaki, and Mt Aspiring Station in the Matukituki Valley).

## **Improving Recreational Opportunities**

FMC continues to explore new recreational opportunities for New Zealanders. It is campaigning for the gazettal of the Pouteri Wilderness in Southern Fiordland, expansion of appropriate outdoor recreation in the Mokihinui catchment, development of new camping, tramping and mountain biking opportunities on the Molesworth Station, and investigating potential new parks in Northern New Zealand.

## **Protection of Intrinsic Conservation Values**

FMC continues to advocate for reducing the adverse impacts of intrusive commercial activity on national parks and conservation lands including jet boats, aircraft and other mechanised transportation. A focus of FMC activity has been to raise Department of Conservation commitment to management of these problems as they impact on trampers, climbers and non tourism outdoor recreation. The Federation seeks increased controls on commercial aircraft movements over national parks to protect intrinsic natural values including natural quiet. Over the past year, FMC has been encouraged by increased activity by the Department of Conservation in this field. A positive development has been the capping of commercial aircraft movements at Milford Sound under the recently revised Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

## **Important Issues Dealt with by the New Zealand Conservation Authority**

In 2008 past President Brian Stephenson succeeded David Chandler as FMC nominee on the NZ Conservation Authority. We thank David for his measured advocacy of mountain recreation on the Authority over many years. In his final year he shared responsibility of successfully challenging the plans for commercial alienation of land in the Mt Aspiring National Park in response to commercial pressures to build a tunnel. We welcome Brian's commitment in his new role. In current deliberations the FMC supports the NZCA's efforts to maintain high standards for Conservation Management Strategy guidelines.

## **Mountain Safety Council**

President Rob Mitchell and Laurie Gallagher represented FMC on the Mountain Safety Council. Their work has been designed to ensure that member tramping and climbing clubs are well served by the Council's headquarters staff and local branches. FMC continues to press for greater support of local MSC activities and has been involved in developing the new strategic plan.

## **LandSAR**

Executive member Richard Davies has taken up responsibility for ensuring the interests of tramping and climbing clubs are taken into account in the development of the new management structure of LandSAR. FMC continues to emphasise the importance of volunteer tramping, climbing and other recreational expertise to support police, DoC and other professionals in providing high quality land search and rescue capabilities.

## **National Geographic Board**

Executive member David Barnes continues to represent recreational interests on the NZ Geographic Board and we acknowledge his dedication and enthusiasm in considering proposals to for the appropriate naming of important historic cultural and geographic features, both in remote mountain areas and urban areas.

## **Walking Access Commission Welcomed**

In 2009 there was cross party support for legislation to create a national Walking Access Commission. Commission members representing various recreational and farming stakeholders are charged with establishing practical guidelines for managing free public access to the nation's conservation lands. FMC is committed to developing the Commissions effectiveness and is involved in ongoing stakeholder consultation. The appointment of immediate past President Brian Stephenson as a Commission member is noted with pleasure.

## **Positive Liaison with the Department of Conservation**

The Federation values its strong relationships with professional staff in the Department of Conservation at national and regional levels. These ongoing relationships are helping develop a spectrum of internationally respected recreational facilities for New Zealanders and international visitors to the country. Interaction occurs at area, regional and national forums, Conservation Boards or specialist working groups such as local hut management. At a national level, FMC continues its commitment to the NGO Forum and the DoC-Tourism Consultative Forum and places a high value on the ready accessibility of Department of Conservation management

## **Cooperation with Recreation and Conservation NGOs**

FMC is in regular liaison with other national recreational and conservation groups, seeking to achieve the best possible recreational outcomes for members. During the past year this cooperation has gained greater depth as representatives of the Royal Forest and Bird Society, Fish and Game, and the Recreational Canoe Association have combined to work on protecting the natural values of New Zealand Rivers through the Living Rivers Coalition. Productive interaction is

also occurring with the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association and CORANZ. This cooperation extends into the tenure review processes and submissions on Department of Conservation management plans.

The FMC participates actively in the bimonthly Doc>NGO Forum organised by DoC Head Office

## **Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Recreation Council**

A government decision to encourage outdoor recreation nationally has led to the creation of the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Recreation Council to advise SPARC in this new field of endeavour. FMC is committed to supporting this new group.

## **Progress on Governance**

The Executive has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing its structure and administration following the retirement in 2008 of Barbara Marshall. Phil Glasson took over as Secretary and has spear-headed a review of administrative arrangements. A sub committee headed by Vice President Viv Milne has reviewed the policy on Honoraria and developed sound guidelines governing payments to the president, secretary, treasurer. Separately agreement was reached for an extension of Shaun Barnett's contract as Bulletin Editor.

Some of the changes recommended by the review will call for some minor constitutional amendments. At the 2009 Annual General Meeting, the Executive will be recommending changes to streamline the Federation's administrative structure. One will be to enable the Immediate Past President to remain in that position until the incumbent President steps down. A second is aimed at replacing the four Vice Presidential positions with one Vice President. The Executive considers that the geographical spread is more adequately met by its existing three Regional Advocacy Committees. The present Constitution is now on the website and printed versions are available for those who request it.

## **Developing the Communications Flagship – FMC Bulletin**

Over the year the FMC Bulletin continued to inform members of important issues affecting management of outdoor recreation in New Zealand. Aply edited by Shaun Barnett, Bulletins over the past year featured cover stories on the momentous life of Sir Edmund Hillary, the importance of formally gazetted the Poteriteri Wilderness, celebrating the purchase of the St James Station the need to protect the Mokihinui River on the western Flanks of the Kahurangi National Park, from hydro electricity development, and the threat creeping urbanisation and commercialization of New Zealand 's Great Walks. The North Island has been featured too with regular news on hut and track developments, in Northland, Waikato, the Kawekas and Kaimanuas. Appraisals of mountain accidents and the wiles of mountain weather and the retreating glaciers have informed. Developments in maps and radio technology have not been forgotten while those into mountain folklore have relished the tales from Ashley Cunningham and the irrepressible Uncle Jacko.

## **New Avenue for Member News**

Responding to member expectation of more information on the activities of the Federated Mountain Clubs, a monthly email newsletter was introduced in August 2008. This initiative has provided a diverse range of information such as: the planning activities of the Department of Conservation, progress on tenure review, announcement of new conservation parks, and concern over the demands to dam wild and remote rivers for hydro electricity, progress in developing walking access, and activities of the Mountain Safety Council. Website links and executive contacts are listed to encourage discussion and cooperative strategy development in association with clubs and individual members. Edited by Rob Mitchell and Dennis Page, the Newsletter quickly expanded from one to two pages each month. Member feedback on the move has been appreciative.

## **Website Refreshed**

The FMC website has had a major upgrade over the past year. The new website should be on line by May 2009 and has been developed to take into account newer web technologies. The purpose of the changes has been to ensure that information on the Federated Mountain Clubs is more readily available and more readily managed. An additional aim is to ensure that the site is more attractive, reflecting FMC's advocacy for outdoor recreation.

## **2008 AGM and Executive Meetings**

The full Federation Executive met three times during the year, in June and November 2008 and March 2009. The June meeting was held in Christchurch following the AGM. Highlights of the 2008 AGM were the presentations and farewell to Barbara Marshall who retired as Secretary after twenty three years of dedicated service. Her distinguished and dedicated service has been appreciated both by Federation members and our stakeholder communities. The November 2008 meeting was a one day meeting in Wellington, while in March 2009 the Executive met in Napier. In addition various groups of Executive members met in Wellington at regular intervals to discuss strategy and coordinate administration.

## **Finance**

The net surplus for the year is just over \$23,000. While this is a very satisfactory result, it also shows how difficult it is to forecast results for a voluntary organization like FMC. While our income was very close to budget several expenditure items were a lot lower. We are still in the process of reviewing and renewing our entire administration function combined with the set up of our office in Wellington and costs in this area were pleasingly under budget. We expected to spend \$15,000 on campaigns and in anticipation of a deficit requested and received a grant from the FMC Trust of \$16,000 but our actual campaign costs were \$10,000 lower. FMC's campaign costs are budgeted to be higher in 2010. Accordingly we have budgeted for a deficit of \$23,000. Thus this year's large surplus should be regarded as a temporary timing issue rather than an indication of a trend. That

said, the Federation is in a good financial position provided it can retain and even grow membership. There are several initiatives underway to try and achieve this.

The full set of audited annual accounts has been distributed to member clubs and additional copies are available from the Administration Officer on request

## **Executive Teamwork**

I wish to record sincere thanks to all members of the Executive for their dedication over the past year in representing member interests. Professionally, their diverse and complementary skills combine in a formidable team. Their work has involved extensive consultations with club members and government agencies. It has included investigation of recreational problems, progressing proposals for improved recreational parks and facilities and the protection of New Zealand's natural heritage. They have invested thousands of hours to FMC recreational advocacy; personal investigations and representation, using phone, email and letter. Their commitment through 2008-2009 has ensured that FMC has made positive progress in a rapidly changing environment. I wish to record the thanks of the Executive, for the energy and wisdom displayed by Hannah McGregor and wish her well in her new career. The Executive also thanks Barbara Scurr for her commitment over the past year, sadly cut short by illness, welcoming Jane Dudley as her replacement. I express particular appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary Phil Glasson and Treasurer Graeme Lythgoe. The work of Gail Abel as part time Administration Officer in Wellington, continues to be important in building up closer liaison between FMC its members, government agencies and other recreational groups. FMC is in good shape as it enters the 2009-2010 financial year.

*Rob Mitchell*

**President  
March 2009**