



Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc)

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FMC Member News July 2010

Here is a summary of activities by the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand in July 2010, plus news on significant developments of importance to trampers, climbers and all interested in outdoor recreation.

Mining Campaign Update – Newsflash!

Thanks to strong public support and the efforts of other like-minded organizations, we've won enduring cross-party protection of all lands listed under Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act from mining. The Government has completely backed down on its original plans, and will even ensure that future additions to, or the creation of new National Parks and Marine Reserves are automatically included in the Schedule 4 list. This is a major win for the conservation and recreation movement and FMC's executive and members can be proud of our contribution to this campaign - most recently helping organise a 400-strong march in Invercargill. President Richard Davies said: "This is a momentous decision, in a hard fought battle to protect conservation values in NZ. It is important that the Government has respected the National Parks Act that enshrines protecting these areas for recreation and conservation in perpetuity. Profound thanks all FMC clubs and members who joined us in defending our national parks by marching, submitting or sending a postcard to ministers."

However, other aspects of the decision pave the way for more mining on non-Schedule 4 conservation land, which is concerning to FMC. For example, areas such as Lewis Pass National Reserve, and the area between the Hooker-Landsborough Wilderness Area and the Haast River, are not in Schedule 4 and are now included in an aerial survey for mineral potential. President Richard Davies says, "FMC will strongly argue against poor law-changes as they make their way through Parliament's select committee process. It is crucial that robust rules are in place to ensure mining does not take place where it will unduly impact on conservation and recreation values."

FMC Scholarships for Youth and Young Adults

We can now confirm, thanks to the generosity of the FMC Trust, the creation of two new scholarships for members under the age of 30 years to assist them with their outdoor pursuits. The total pool is \$2,500 p.a. and is split as follows: \$1,000 as a grant to cover a multiday expedition within mainland New Zealand or its offshore islands (≥ 5 nights duration); and 5 x \$300 grants to contribute towards or cover costs of outdoor skills acquisition and training for youth, including hire of an instructor for a club course or for an individual to partake in an instructor training course. Full details of the criteria and how to make an application will be notified in the August 2010 *FMC Bulletin* and application forms plus criteria will be posted on our website at the same time. The first round of applications will close in early April 2011 with the winners to be announced at the June 2011 AGM – The recipients will have up to one year after that with which to spend their grants. The current FMC Executive gratefully acknowledges the efforts of former executive member, Jane Dudley, in initiating this award scheme.

Great Walk Hut and Annual Hut Pass Fee Increases

Effective from 2 July 2010, the cost of an Annual Hut Pass for backcountry huts will increase from \$90 to \$120 (or \$84 with FMC discount) and the six-month pass from \$60 to \$90. The cost of Great Walk hut fees will rise by \$5 a night, but these huts will continue to be free for persons under 18. Note that the cost of individual tickets for backcountry huts is not increasing. The Department of Conservation maintains that fees have been held since March 2008, but that increases are needed due to rising costs and that even with the increase, the revenue collected will still only cover a proportion of the costs of maintaining NZ's hut network. FMC was caught by surprise by DoC's announcement and we also have concerns that some huts that are outside of the Great Walk system are being moved over to an Internet booking system as they become more popular, effectively removing them from the Annual Hut Pass system and eroding its value further. We have raised these concerns with the Department and will keep you posted of any further developments.

Club Database Survey – A Reminder to Complete and Return, Please!

We are currently conducting a survey of our member clubs to find out how they store their membership data and whether there may be some way that we can assist clubs with this task. The survey has been mailed to all clubs and you can also answer it on line. The online link has been emailed to all clubs but if your club seems to have been left out then please contact the secretary: secretary@fmc.org.nz. The survey closes at the end of this month!

Wild Rivers – Pure New Zealand – Help Needed

The Wild Rivers campaign is now supported by 11 nationwide organizations with a collective membership of many hundreds of thousands of individual members. Preparations are under way for both a "Celebrate the Mokihinui" event at Mokihinui on Labour Weekend, and the spring launch of what will be a major petition. There is also continued attention to the plight of Canterbury's rivers, especially the Hurunui and its Water Conservation Order.

In addition, we are seeking assistance from any members who have a computer, broadband connection, an interest in preserving our threatened wild rivers, and an occasional half an hour to help provide content for the Wild Rivers Coalition website (www.wildrivers.org.nz). Please contact Tony Haddon: tony@kaka.co.nz

Executive Member, David Barnes, Reappointed to NZ Geographic Board

FMC has a nominee as of right on the NZ Geographic Board and David Barnes (FMC Exec member) has been re-nominated for a second, three year, term. This board assigns, approves, alters or discontinues the use of names for geographic features (e.g. place names), undersea features and Crown protected areas in New Zealand, its offshore islands and its continental shelf and the Ross Sea region of Antarctica – Visit the following link <http://www.linz.govt.nz/placenames/about-geographic-board/index.aspx> for further information.

Anne River Hut (St James Walkway) Destroyed

Anne River Hut on the St James Walkway (Lewis Pass, BT23, E1560113 N5310544) was completely destroyed by fire over the weekend of 3-4 July 2010. This was a key hut on this route - It is now 30km between major huts (13 hours+). The Anne Cullers Hut (4 bunks) still exists near this site but availability should not be relied upon. Water is available from the streams. Tents should be carried on this route as a replacement hut is estimated to take 12 months to build.

Fishers Track – Kurua Road Access Issues (Tongariro-Taupo Conservancy)

There are access issues relating to this track which runs from National Park through to Retaruke and which is earmarked as part of the national cycleway. A \$10 charge has been imposed on trampers and cyclists by an adjoining landowner who believes that the track crosses his land and does not follow the legal road corridor. FMC has written to the Ruapehu District Council requesting clarification on the status of the track, and what action the Council is intending to pursue to ensure public access in the future. We will keep you updated via this newsletter.

On-Going Matters...

FMC Photo Competition CD and 'Join a Club' Brochures:

Clubs that wish to obtain a copy of the CD compilation of 100 photos from our recent photo competition are reminded to complete the order form that was mailed out earlier this month and return (with payment of \$10) to our mailing address; PO Box 1604, Wellington 6140. Individual supporters may also obtain a copy by writing and sending payment to the same address. We also have copies of the 'Join a Club' Brochure for clubs to make use of in their own promotional efforts and these are available from our administration officer, Gail Abel, at the above address or via e-mailing: admin@fmc.org.nz.

Experts Needed Please:

Are you interested in assisting the work of the Federated Mountain Clubs but don't have time to serve on the executive, or just want to focus on a particular issue? Your executive is interested in compiling a register of members who are willing to assist or advise us on matters that require expertise. Effective advocacy is an area that requires considerable time and effort of executive members and we would like to tap into additional talent/knowledge where we are able. Examples of expertise could include: Someone with extensive knowledge of conservation lands in a particular region; knowledge in an area such as high country tenure review or access issues; knowledge in an area of science such as

biology, geology etc – particularly how they might relate to an issue such as pest control or mining etc; or someone who works regularly with other like-minded organisations. In addition to the above, you may be able to think of other areas in which you may be able to assist us. If so, we would be delighted to hear from you via secretary@fmc.org.nz.

FMC Mountain and Forest Trust Donations:

The FMC Mountain & Forest Trust is a charitable trust that supports the work of FMC, as well as supporting projects that are in accord with FMC's objectives. To donate to the Trust, please click on the following link: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/fmc-trust/>. To find out how to leave a bequest to the Trust in your will, please contact the Trust secretary at trustfmc@fmc.org.nz. In addition to electronic web access, donation forms have been sent to all clubs and are being sent to supporters as they renew. All donations to the Trust qualify for a 33% tax rebate. Unfortunately, there is an error on the Donation Form. The form doesn't provide a space for the Expiry Date or Name on Card for people paying by credit card. Please add this information to the form.

Instruction Courses:

We have recently added to our website comprehensive details of the Mountain Safety Council Courses and relevant links (<http://www.fmc.org.nz/services/instruction-courses/>). We urge clubs who want to gain instruction for their members to contact their local MSC branch if they do not feel they have the skills to run the courses themselves. Those clubs that are running their own courses and are happy to open them up to members of other clubs please contact the secretary via secretary@fmc.org.nz. We can arrange for details of your course to go on our website or be circulated by email to clubs in your area.

FMC contemplates 2011 conference on “Our National Parks”

At the AGM, people participated in a workshop on the best focus of a FMC conference in 2011 to celebrate 80 years of the Federation. The theme of “Our National Parks” was proposed and is being contemplated as the focus on a 2-day conference in June that will draw together the history and current status of New Zealand's premier protected lands, and evaluate their future. The theme will not ignore threats such as mining or pest animals, but considerable emphasis will celebrate progress made and anticipate further progress in future. Your executive is beginning planning and all offers of assistance – including financial donations – are welcome. Please contact Ben Clendon on clendonb@gmail.com

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