

Max Olsen

Otago University Tramping Club

Winner \$1,000 Expedition Grant

Transit River Region, Fiordland National Park



Max Olsen, pictured in the Landsborough Valley

Max joined the OUTC in 2008 and is currently the Vice President. He describes his pre-university tramping trips as mainly on track with his family, but since becoming a member of the OUTC, his thirst for more challenging tramping has grown immensely. Since joining OUTC, Max has been increasingly attracted by the Transit River area, southwest of Milford Sound,

but its remoteness and relative inaccessibility had thus far put it out of reach. Max wrote 'There are several reasons why the Transit River region excites me more than anywhere else in the country. First, the topography of this area is unbelievably spectacular. Near-vertical mountain faces that plunge straight down to sea level surround the entire area. Second, the area is one of the most inaccessible (by land) in New Zealand, being cut off from surrounding areas by this same topography. Third, despite knowing a large number of people with significant tramping experience in and around Fiordland, I don't personally know anyone else who has been to the Transit area.'

Max plans a winter trip to take advantage of available spare time, and proposes to reach Anita Bay by means of a boat or kayaks from Milford Sound. From Anita Bay the party will cross to Transit Beach and then visit Lake Ronald. From Lake Ronald, Max hopes to attempt a crossing of the unnamed chain of hills to the east, and aims to camp beside the tarns marked near Pt 1,017-metres. Then the party will attempt to drop down into the Transit Valley, probably needing rope-work. From the head of the Transit, the party will head down the valley, possibly using pack-rafts (aquanauts) to descend the last six-to-seven kilometres of the river. Max also hopes to visit Lake Moreton, but winter conditions may prevent this.

Max plans a party size of three or four people and a trip window of around 10 days. In spite of undertaking the trip in winter, Max believes that climatic obstacles can be overcome with patience and appropriate contingencies. The party will carry a PLB, but no mountain radio as Max feels the wilderness experience will be more rewarding through no contact with the outside world. This expedition certainly epitomises meeting nature on nature's terms with rugged self-reliance. In essence, it encapsulates what the Expedition Award seeks to promote.

*FMC wishes Max and his party every success on the expedition and awaits the outcome with much anticipation.*