

FMC offers safety training scholarships for new Pack-rafters

Dear FMC affiliated clubs, individual supporters and associate members;

FMC launched our '[Outdoor Community](#)' campaign in 2015 to identify and enhance the diverse array of recreational pursuits that member clubs and individuals are passionate about. The campaign identifies a pursuit annually that, "takes place in the same environment as tramping and shares the ethos of exploration, companionship and appreciation of nature", and make its development a priority for FMC over a July – June period.

FMC is pleased to continue its support for Pack-rafting for 2017/18 by offering up to [15 safety training scholarships of \\$300](#). As Pack-rafts are so forgiving to paddle, a beginner can often make it down a grade 2/3 river with little technique. This is encouraging many new Pack-rafters on to rivers which are beyond their actual skill level. Our concern is that people will not have the skill to identify and avoid water hazards, the experience to fully understand the consequences, or the ability to perform a water rescue. The aim of the scholarship is to provide a kick-start to the spread of Pack-rafting water skills and safety awareness among FMC members who wish to take up Pack-rafting, but are not from a whitewater paddling background.

FMC has been working with Whitewater NZ and the existing Pack-rafting community to develop safety recommendations and training resources to help our members, and the wider outdoor community, get into Pack-rafting with a more informed and safer learning progression. As part of this collaboration, we've assisted with the formation of the Pack-rafting Association of NZ (PRANZ). These new resources will soon be shared via the [PRANZ website](#), *Wilderlife.nz*, *Backcountry* magazine and other channels. We're also assisting the organisation of a [Pack-rafting meet up 24/25 March 2018](#) to encourage the development of community and the sharing of knowledge.

We're currently promoting the training scholarship via our online channels as well as the November *Backcountry*, but with spring upon us, the window of opportunity to apply for scholarships for training this season is relatively short. So we're emailing all our clubs and individual supporters to ensure all our members have the opportunity to apply if they wish to. We encourage you to pass this email on to your members and friends.

Applications close by 31 November, with recipients announced early December. [Courses dates are on the providers website](#), and it will be the responsibility of the scholarship recipients to book themselves onto a [suitable course](#) with the training provider. An excellent opportunity to make the most of travelling to Fiordland would be to attend the scheduled training course on 22/23 March, then the [PRANZ Pack-rafting Meet up 24/25 March](#), followed by some time after the meet up for more trips, using new skills with new friends.

To learn more about the scholarships you can check out the [news release on FMC.org.nz](#), or [apply for a scholarship online](#).

For any other questions about the FMC Pack-rafting Scholarships, please feel free to email me; dan.clearwater@fmc.org.nz

Kind Regards,

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