

1 March 2023



To: All member clubs

Our federation of 100 clubs has played a critical role in achieving and successfully defending protection for Aotearoa's wild lands and on-nature's-terms recreation for over nine decades.

Over the last year a number of significant challenges have arisen for backcountry recreation. They will require us to be especially vigilant and nimble to ensure our interests are comprehensively represented by effective advocacy and achievable campaigns.

The army concept of "hurry up and wait" seems to apply for the urgent requirements placed on us to respond to conservation law reform proposals, and the full and partial revisions of conservation management strategies and plans, only to be followed by glacial progress. The relatively short timeframes in which we have had to respond and to counter unfavourable situations taxes our resources.

Not everyone accepts that recreation is one of the primary purposes of the conservation estate and it is with some dismay that we note that the Covid-19 opportunity to "reset" mass tourism appears to have been missed. And now incredibly massive weather events have significantly damaged much North Island backcountry recreation infrastructure, at a time when the funding and resources available to restore them are already pitifully stretched. It is inevitable that the recovery funding for this infrastructure will come under threat as a result of competing requirements; as well as questions asking what backcountry infrastructure is sustainable in the long term in the face of future major weather events will arise.

We must be prepared to work through these challenges. A key element of being able to do that is the support of all our membership. Thank you for being a member of FMC and for the strength that your own membership provides to us for the benefit of us all.

For partially-affiliated clubs and national bodies, we request that you seriously consider the value that FMC provides to all of your members and renew your membership with increased resolve and declared membership numbers to provide essential support to FMC in these challenging times.

I will now recap a few of these challenges and also remind you of some of benefits of FMC membership.

### **Stewardship Land Review**

For many years FMC's *Forgotten Lands* campaign advocated for the reclassification of stewardship land. The reclassification process is now underway, with the West Coast of the South Island being

FMC – FEDERATED MOUNTAIN CLUBS

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work in progress. FMC submitted extensively on the first draft and other areas are now getting underway. It is fair to say that there are a number of challenges in the initial proposals. Here, too, we will need to act decisively where proposed classifications are seen to be detrimental to our members' interests.

### **Incorporated Society Re-Registration**

With the passing of a new *Incorporated Societies Act* in 2022 there is now a process underway that requires all incorporated societies to re-register with a new constitution, and potentially change their financial reporting to a more standard structure. FMC has reviewed and submitted on the new Act and related Regulations, and will be there to support your club to navigate the process over the next three years. Later this year we will see the finalisation of the Regulations and the availability of tools to assist with constructing your new constitution.

### **Staff**

FMC is expertly supported by part-time staff, Executive Officer Operations, Danilo Hegg and Executive Officer Administration, Rebecca Gray. We are recruiting for an Executive Officer Communications. Peter Laurensen, our editor of *FMC Backcountry*, continues to produce insightful editions of our esteemed quarterly magazine. Financial Advisor, Daniel Parkinson's, expertise lets Executive members get on with advocacy. Alexandra Hodge, Communications Assistant, keeps our online channels open, helpful, and engaging. Our sincere thanks go to you all.

### **Federated Mountain Clubs Executive**

It's that time of year when we ask clubs to consider nominating a member for the Executive. The role presents many backcountry-related issues. If you have skills in policy, planning, law, media, finance, or administration, or you are passionate about promoting amateur recreation interests, you will be particularly welcome. FMC's Executive is a working executive, with four full-Executive meetings a year and sub-committee meetings online, or face-to-face as needed. All costs are met.

We have had insufficient nominations for Executive to have an election for too many years, and it is always healthy to have an election, at least from time to time. I would dearly love us to have an election so that we can debate and decide the direction of FMC.

Nominations for all positions can be made on the form enclosed in this mailout. Either post nominations to PO Box 1604, Wellington 6104; or email them to [eo@fmc.org.nz](mailto:eo@fmc.org.nz), ensuring each nominee also sends an email consenting to the nomination. All nominations must be received no later than 5pm on Wednesday 6 April 2022. Where more nominations are received than available positions, you will then be advised of the voting procedures.

If you would like to discuss the Executive role, please contact me or Executive Officer Danilo Hegg.

### **Membership fee increase**

This year fees have increased by no more than \$3.00 per person for New Zealand members and by \$5.00 for overseas members so that we can keep advocating for the backcountry and recreation

as strongly and effectively as we presently do. This will be our first fee increase in six years and just the second in 26 years. I am confident you will not begrudge the price of half a cup of coffee.

### ***Safety in the Mountains and other FMC Member Benefits***

The twelfth edition of our field guide *Safety in the Mountains* is shortly with the printers, incorporating a number of useful updates. Our cartoon characters—apart from Doris, who was never in fashion—have gone out and updated their tramping gear for one thing. Look out for advice from us when it becomes available.

Many member benefits are available from the use of the [FMC Discount Card](#) now supported by over 60 providers, including a 30% discount on DOC's Annual Hut Pass.

Our media includes the [FMC website](#) where you can learn more about FMC, the [Wilderlife website](#) that provides a wealth of information for recreation clubs and individuals, our quarterly magazine [Backcountry](#) that contains articles of immediate interest to backcountry recreation and our [Facebook page](#) (*Facebook group FMCNZ*) where we post interesting news items as they happen.

We manage the provision of scholarships and training grants to encourage the development of backcountry skills.

FMC pack-liners and badges are available for purchasing from our website.

As ever, your Federated Mountain Clubs Executive welcomes discussion with FMC members on backcountry matters.



Robin McNeill, MNZM

**President**