

26 June 2026

Attention: Emma Hunt, Principal Ranger

To: Director General  
Department of Conservation  
32 River Road  
Rangiora 7400



submitted by email to: northcanterbury@doc.govt.nz

## **Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc.**

### **Submission on public notice for the disposal of the Evangeline Bivvy, Lake Sumner (Hora Kura) Forest Park**

Tēnā koe Emma

Thank you for the email on 11 May 2026 advising of the public notice for the disposal of the Evangeline Bivvy, Lake Sumner (Hora Kura) Forest Park.

#### **FMC's interest**

It is appropriate that the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc (FMC) be invited to comment.

Our objectives include promoting and advocating for outdoor recreation in New Zealand and public access to New Zealand's natural wild lands, mountains, lakes, rivers and coasts. Founded in 1931, FMC represents over 23,000 people in the outdoor community, through over 90 clubs and individual supporters. We are therefore directly affected by the proposal.

#### **FMC's position**

FMC strongly opposes the disposal of Evangeline Bivvy, without early consultation before it was given to a third party, because every publicly owned hut and bivvy on our public conservation land is a part of our collective backcountry cultural heritage.

Since 2024, FMC's Love our Huts campaign has reinforced how much our backcountry community value these facilities with over 500 huts and bivvies receiving health checks and cleans by over 600 volunteers.

The future management of every hut is important as we continue to lose huts through attrition by fire, flood and landslide events. Even more distressing is that in relation to Evangeline Bivvy, Richard Janssen, a volunteer, had restored the bivvy<sup>1</sup> in November 2019, which was classified as having heritage value, to a tidy and valuable asset for recreationalists, including hunters who wish to explore remote and elevated parts of Canterbury's High Country adjacent to Lake Sumner.

Unfortunately in March 2023, a landslide damaged the bivvy<sup>2</sup> and it was removed without any consultation with FMC or any other outdoor community representation. Undaunted, Richard arranged for some other volunteers to carry out a drone-based geological assessment of the area to find a new site. Three potential

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/341718286036736/search?q=Evangeline%20Bivvy%20restoration>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2026-consultations/disposal-of-evangeline-bivvy/>

alternative sites were identified. This information was supplied to DOC (via personal communications from Craig Benbow), but was ignored and without any consultation the bivvy was moved from its temporary placement at the Lakes Station and gifted to the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust<sup>3</sup> to be used for a shelter on the Te Ara Pataka/Summit Walkway.

FMC suggests that it would have been far more cost effective to move and reinstate Evangeline Bivvy near its original site and to build a new shelter on the Te Ara Pataka/Summit Walkway. This work could have been undertaken, for example, by the Backcountry Trust (BCT) and volunteer workers.

## Next Steps

The original (and restored) Evangeline Bivvy was relocated on the Te Ara Pataka/Summit Walkway to be used as a shelter without alternative options being discussed with the wider outdoor community, including with FMC as a leading representative organisation. This is a breach of trust and is counter to the expectations of FMC and recreational users of the backcountry who, as key stakeholders, should be involved in decision making about huts.

Although DOC is entrusted with the management of conservation land, it is on behalf of all New Zealanders who have an interest in how the land is managed. FMC is not opposed to a shelter on the Te Ara Pataka Track; it is concerned about the lack of consultation about Evangeline Bivvy and other decisions that will affect backcountry recreationists.

To redress these problems:

- We strongly recommend that DOC reinstates the local DOC / Canterbury Recreation User Group (RUG) meetings where these decisions can be discussed early on, and that FMC is invited to be a member of this Group.
- FMC would support the option to build a new bivvy in a new location, in the headwaters of Evangeline Stream, using volunteers and third party funding.

Nāku, noa nā,



Allan Brent  
President  
Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand

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<sup>3</sup> <https://roddonaldtrust.co.nz/te-ara-pataka-day-shelter/>