

FMC Member News September 2009

Here is the latest news on FMC advocacy and significant developments of importance to trampers, climbers and all

interested in safe outdoor recreation.

FMC Opposes Government Investigation of Mining on Conservation Land

At the end of August, the Minister for Energy and Resources, Gerry Brownlee, announced that the government wants to assess the mining potential in National Parks, Wilderness Areas and other core conservation lands. These lands, listed in Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act, are currently off-limits to mining. The Minister of Conservation's recent decision to exclude the most ecologically valuable part of the proposed Oteake Conservation Park from the final boundaries gives a strong indication of the Government's intentions. Fortunately, an amendment at the time Schedule 4 was created in 1997 will ensure that any changes to the Schedule will require consultation with FMC and other organizations. Your Federation is opposed to this brazen threat to treasured national parks and other public conservation lands, that FMC has fought so hard for over many decades. We will be developing information and a campaign for you to get have your say (see the next Bulletin and our website soon). First: we encourage you to send a photo of a favourite conservation place to the Prime Minister - You can email a digital photo to him at j.key@ministers.govt.nz with an explanation of why you don't want it mined; or you can post a photo-print and write on the back like a postcard (Prime Minister, Freepost, Parliament) - simple, powerful and personal. Second, join our petition against mining on conservation lands. There is a petition that you can print from the FMC website; sign, circulate amongst friends and colleagues then send it to the government. The petition is all located at: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/mining/> together with additional information such as a copy of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act, and a list of reserves that are currently protected. It is important that FMC members make their views known.

Wild Rivers Campaign Launch

The Federation recently joined other recreationists and conservationists in a Wild Rivers campaign to increase protection for New Zealand's remaining wild rivers. See the August *FMC Bulletin* for more details. With the Mokihinui decision imminent, the Hurunui Water Conservation Order under appeal, and dam proposals becoming more frequent, it is time for a coordinated campaign to assert the value of wild rivers and highlighting the development threats they face. FMC will put some funds towards this campaign, most likely to produce a high-quality poster. We would welcome your help in this campaign via the following: **1)** Will your club be willing to deliver Wild Rivers campaign material (such as a magazine) to tramping huts over the summer - if so, how many can you deliver? **2)** Please put 28-29 Nov in your club trip schedule as a "Day on a Wild River" - more details will follow on events on a wild river near you. **3)** Send us your photos and stories of your favourite wild river, describing why it should be retained in a wild state - email to wildrivers@fmc.org.nz and, <http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/rivers>.

Hurunui River Conservation Order Decision and Dam Applications

The decision on Fish and Game's application for a Water Conservation Order on the Hurunui River was recently released. It approved an Order for protection of north branch and Lake Sumner with some protection for the main stem to the coast. However, it excluded the South Branch from the Order as an attempt at a 'balanced' or compromise decision. Both sides are likely to appeal the decision to the Environment Court. For further information: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/freshwater/water-conservation/application-water-conservation.html> Concurrently, the Hurunui Water Trust applied to Environment Canterbury for water storage and irrigation take involving a 75m-high 7km-long dam on the South Branch and a weir on Lake Sumner raising the lake level up to 3m. The flow of the main stem would lose its natural variability and be reduced by 32 cumec. FMC submitted against this proposal because it will fundamentally alter a wild river that is much loved by trampers. It would also impact significantly on conservation values, e.g. removing habitat for the black-fronted tern, and is in direct conflict with the Water Conservation Order that FMC supports. We are reliably informed that low-impact alternatives for water storage are available. For further details, see: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/submissions/>

St James Conservation Area – FMC Submission

The Federation has made an extensive submission to the Department of Conservation on future management of the St James Conservation area near the Lewis Pass. We emphasized strong support for the management of tramping, climbing and other outdoor recreation opportunities such as mountain biking and family camping, that arise from linking the area with Nelson Lakes National Park, the Lewis Pass National Reserve and the Molesworth Station Farm Park. We opposed any directive, including from DoC, which focused on *utilisation* of conservation land rather than *protection*. FMC's understanding of the "conservation economy" policy is that it relates to the value that can be gained from keeping landscapes and eco-systems in a natural state, as opposed to the conventional economic view that natural resources in conservation lands should be exploited or harvested. Some proposals suggested for managing the St James area include wind farms, and water storage lakes for hydro or irrigation schemes. FMC has opposed these as inappropriate conservation management. For further information consult: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/submissions/>

Kahurangi National Park Partial Review

Your Federation has made a submission on this – Please see <http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/submissions> for further information.

Te Araroa Walkway - Oriwa Ridge Proposal

Your Executive has considered the proposal for the Te Araroa Walkway through the Tararua Ranges after consulting with Wellington tramping clubs on this matter. The suggestion to use the Oriwa Ridge is opposed by FMC because the area is currently untracked and managed as a remote experience zone. Please contact Executive member, Owen Cox (owencox@paradise.net.nz) if you would like further information on this matter. The FMC submission is on :<http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/submissions/>

Tenure Review

The Preliminary Proposals for the Tenure Reviews of the Craigroy and Ben Nevis Stations (leased by Pioneer Generation Ltd., and covering a total of almost 19,000 ha) were advertised for submissions on 12 September (closing date 30 November, 2009). The high and mid altitude plus the valley floor sectors of these properties are of high significance because of their recognized recreation and conservation values. Clubs or individual members who would rather see the creation of a new conservation park in preference to the valley floor being inundated by hydroelectric development, can assist the Federation's cause by lodging a submission. Copies of the proposals can be obtained from Darroch Valuations, Dunedin (Level 1/401 Moray Place, Dunedin 9016 or <http://www.darrochvaluations.co.nz>).

Government Backtrack on Protecting Lakeside Landscapes and Access

There is potential for negative impacts on iconic lakeside landscape and recreational amenity values following the Government's decision to reverse a clause that blocked Tenure Review on lakeside properties and to delegate planning authority to LINZ, DoC and local councils. These changes are designed to assist short-term economic development, and some fortunate lessees stand to make huge capital gains (based on amenity value) while the public purse gains nothing from the sale of former Crown land. FMC believes the Government should review its decision because the Resource Management Act is not an effective, or a fair way, to resolve this matter. We will be following this issue closely and will be making submissions where appropriate.

Review of Aircraft Management at Milford Sound

After lobbying from the tourist aircraft industry, the Government has ordered a Ministerial Review of aircraft management at Milford Sound. The Review will examine aircraft management provisions in the Fiordland National Park Management Plan that were endorsed by the NZ Conservation Authority and the previous Government. The industry is seeking to overturn a compromise agreement between aircraft industry and other recreational users of the National Park that was the result of extended negotiations over many years. Any change instigated by the Government could damage the authority of national park management plans. As a party in the original negotiations, FMC will be arguing that the provisions of the existing National Park Management Plan be confirmed by the National-led government.

Aircraft Management in Conservation Areas

The Federation has written to DoC's Canterbury Conservancy to comment on its proposed Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) framework – including its impact on 'natural quiet' and wilderness areas, deer number reductions and interactions with other users. In its submission (<http://www.fmc.org.nz/advocacy/submissions/>), FMC applauds the requirement for GPS data loggers to be used by WARO operators and for the data to be made available to the Department. In the interests of public safety, sound aircraft movement and land management, FMC has regularly advocated that this equipment should be used by all tourist, film industry, search and rescue, and charter aircraft undertaking concession activity over the public conservation estate. It is fortuitous that new, stringent requirements of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority have apparently enabled DoC to add this requirement.

New Book on Alpine Explorer, Jacob Lauper

FMC, through its Mountain and Forest Trust, will provide funding for a new historical book by Hilary Low. The publication, to be produced by Canterbury University Press, is a translation of the record of Swiss-German explorer Jacob Lauper, who accompanied Henry Whitcombe on his 1863 exploration of the Rakaia headwaters.

Search and Rescue Governance

The Land SAR AGM is on 26 September. The Council will be considering a proposal to change the constitution. This change would remove the council and instead have a direct line of accountability from the membership (SAR groups) to the Board. SAR groups would then vote at the AGM rather than the Council. Your Executive is currently considering its position on the above proposal and we will report further in future newsletters.

Place Your Club Order for the New Topo Maps

All clubs should now have the FMC Bulk Order forms for the new Topo Maps and be collating orders from members. Individual Supporters (i.e. people who paid their subscription directly to the FMC and who do NOT belong to a club) can download an order form and details from <http://www.fmc.org.nz/services/maps>.

Auckland Recreational Planning Forum in October

Reminder that the FMC will be holding a half-day forum in Auckland on Saturday 31 October 2009 to gather opinions on outdoor recreation opportunities in the northern regions of the North Island. In addition to FMC, representatives from tramping clubs, DoC and regional councils will be in attendance. Those interested in attending or obtaining more information should email northforum@fmc.org.nz by 10 October 2009.

Wanted - Lively Tramping Photos

We would like to have fresh photos of our member clubs to use as banner photos across on the FMC website. If your club has a photo that you think might be suitable please email it to webmaster@fmc.org.nz. Shots must have a very wide format (croppable to a ratio of 4.3:1). We are looking for lively shots in interesting locations with club groups with four or more people!

FMC Bulletin Survey Reminder

Your club has received a Survey form for the FMC Bulletin. We urge you to complete and return it to PO Box 1604, Wellington as soon as possible.

Posters / Safety in the Mountains Booklet

The FMC has stocks of posters featuring national park scenes and its own Safety in the Mountains Booklet. All are at very reasonable prices. Details and an order form are on <http://www.fmc.org.nz/services>.

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