

8 March 2024

To: all member clubs



Challenges abound for backcountry recreation

Our federation of 95 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.

As a result of past and imminent funding cuts to the Department of Conservation, we are fast approaching a crunch point where we need to stand firm together to ensure that our unique backcountry hut and track network is sufficiently maintained – by one means or another – for the benefit of current and future generations of all who appreciate being able to enjoy our natural wild lands.

We now face powerful economic interests and a political willingness to bypass critical protection mechanisms that have served the backcountry well over many decades.

Times have changed, and we need to be ready to stand firm for what we know are the long-term interest of backcountry recreation.

More than ever before we need your active support, both from continuing to affiliate your members, and also providing on the ground feedback on events in your part of the country. This year we initiated the club kōrero sessions that provide the FMC Executive with valuable direct feedback from a diverse range of clubs – we appreciate those clubs and supporters that have joined past sessions and encourage you to join future sessions to enable immediate update on issues of concern.

We are listening to the challenges clubs face to distribute the boxes of *Backcountry* magazines that in the past have arrived quarterly – we acknowledge that onward distribution (if it can't be achieved in person at club nights) is costly and administration time intensive. The magazine contains a wealth of information on current issues and events, so we are keen that our members do continue to have timely access to that information.

The easiest method for clubs to achieve distribution of the printed magazine to their members is to sign them up for the existing Direct To You (D2U) service that ensures that the magazine is on its way directly to your members as soon as it is printed. This year, also, we will likely be trialling an online digital mechanism whereby each new edition will be accessible online immediately to club members.

We trust that you are now progressing the work require to create your new club constitution as an important step towards achieving the mandatory incorporated society re-registration required by April 2026. Refer to various articles that have appeared in recent *Backcountry* magazines, and the advice provide on our Wilderlife website at [this link](#)

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.

Staff

FMC is expertly supported by part-time staff. Regrettably our executive officer, Danilo Hegg, has resigned recently, so we are now in recruitment mode for his replacement. Our existing staff are executive officer administration Rebecca Gray and executive officer communications Masha Oliver. Peter Laurenson, as editor of *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. Sincere thanks 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. The number of challenges we face even in a "normal" year is broad, so we are always keen for new FMC executive members to come on board to more evenly spread the workload.

Nominations for all positions can be made on the form enclosed in last week's mailout. Either post nominations to PO Box 1604, Wellington 6104; or email them to administrator@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 10 April 2024. 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 Administrator Rebecca Gray.

Safety in the Mountains and FMC Member Benefits

The twelfth edition of field guide *Safety in the Mountains* was published last year incorporating a number of useful updates. Refer to our website at [this link](#) for how to obtain copies for your members

Many member benefits are available from the use of the [FMC Discount Card](#) now supported by over 55 providers.

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 packliners and badges are available for purchasing from our website.

As ever, your Federated Mountain Clubs executive welcomes discussion with FMC members on backcountry matters and is keen to assist clubs to enable them to operate effectively.



Megan Dimozantos

FMC President

Ph: 021 804 044

Email: president@fmc.org.nz