

Ruari Macfarlane – FMC Exec

I'm thrilled for the opportunity to contribute to the valuable work of the FMC Executive. Why? FMC's advocacy - both recreation and conservation - consistently and strongly represents the values and interests of our NZ outdoors community, and the inherent worth of the spaces we care for. I love our wild and natural places, and am passionate that we preserve those left, and increase scope of protection where it makes sense.

I'm a dedicated climber and backcountry skier, and it's been obvious for a long time that the trips that make the greatest impression and impact on us, and give the greatest rewards, are those far from the road, with time and space to adjust to wild, natural space around us. Although I've been an NZAC member since my teenage years (when I started tramping and climbing in Southland, Fiordland, and Otago), and more recently also a member of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club, my background in the NZ outdoors is broader than mountaineering. At various times I've put a lot of time into skiing, kayaking, tramping, surfing, hunting, sailing and fishing, and still enjoy most of these.

I'm an IFMGA Mountain Guide, and with occasional guiding, spent four years as a team leader / coordinator on Parks Canada Visitor Safety, providing alpine SAR services and avalanche forecasting to the Canadian public. I've since worked a year on DOC's SAR Team in Aoraki / Mt Cook, and am switching to a Biodiversity role in Spring 2021. Prior to this, I spent a decade as a ski patroller and avalanche technician. I've also worked in pest control on Rakiura, on a shovel and chainsaw for Parks Canada's Jasper trail crew, and with bears, whitebark pines and beyond (also for Parks Canada), getting involved in threatened species monitoring and management. I've volunteered time to bird census/banding, to natives planting and trapping, and to teaching mountain travel skills. I love seeing others learn to love the mountains and valleys as they travel through them, and rate technical proficiency second to developing a passion for land and movement.

I enjoy writing for club publications, with articles & photos published in the NZ Alpine Journal, Climber magazine, Canadian Alpine Journal, & on the FMC blog! On behalf of Parks Canada, I submitted accident analyses to the American Alpine Clubs annual "Accidents in North American Mountaineering" book, and am contributing to a Canadian ski mountaineering guidebook. I was a local administrator for Parks Mountain Safety's social media accounts, and have seen the power of social media to engage & enthuse the public we represent.

I've a fairly wide interest within FMC's scope. I regard conservation as the highest priority, followed by recreational access; but our outdoors culture, history, etc. remain interests also. I believe it crucial that government policies represent the best long-term interests of NZ, both people and land, looking beyond short-term economic gain. With my work background, I can understand perspectives of land managers and private concessionaires, but my convictions remain rooted in conservation and recreation, and I'm looking forward to my FMC involvement representing them.

I care for the views and values this community - while appreciating the diversity of views on some topics within the community, I also recognize the shared interest and unifying importance of the lands we care about – and I care that governance of our lands really takes into account what we as a community value. I have submitted on a number of environmental issues & development proposals over time (in favour of conservation). I am a lover of the outdoors in general, conservation, wild places and also recreation; a climber, trumper, backcountry skier/split-boarder and kayaker (I also fish, occasionally hunt, surf, run, mountain bike...), a mountain guide and a member of the Aoraki SAR team. My values align more strongly with conservation and recreation, than with commercial interests, however, where these conflict: i.e. I'm a climber and lover of natural spaces first, and a guide/worker (a sometimes distant) second. This Spring, I am working in a threatened species role for DOC, and am applying to study Ecology or Wildlife Management at Otago 2022. Despite managing to keep busy, I can't think of a better use of what time I can make, than to support the aims and help carry out the work that FMC does. Increasingly as the years pass, 'm appreciating FMC as integral to preserving our natural heritage, and access to enjoy it.