

FMC monthly update September 2019... from Waikato TC and FMC Exec member Alan Grant

Hi all,

It's been another busy month for the FMC Executive, highlighted by several 'wins':

- **Waitaia Bay Rd, near Whitianga** was a planned forestry access road through going through DOC estate. This month it has had it's 'application to construct' overturned due to the impact it will have on the area it passes through and the views, as it follows a ridge line. The owner of this private pine forest will now have to consider other options to remove his harvest
- There's a similar appeal underway by FMC a little further north at **Whangapoua**, where another access road was approved in 2016, but the process may have been flawed. So now that a request has been made for an updated approval, DOC are revisiting it, with FMC leaning over their shoulder. We hope that it will be similarly rejected.
- These are just two local and quite minor examples but they show the way development can overtake our natural areas, small chunks at a time
- And on the West Coast, a 'run of river power' scheme on the **Waitaha River near Hokitika** has been declined by the Environment Minister, David Parker, after a hearing process that included FMC submissions. The locals are upset due to the loss of economic upsides but the outdoor recreationists, particularly kayakers, are delighted that the river will remain pure and natural

It's interesting to see the info flowing from numerous special interest groups this month including:

- The **Wilding Conifer** organization, part of the Ministry of Primary Industry, running a 2 day Conference to build awareness and focus on Conifer reduction activity.
- Last month it was the **Environment Defense society (EDS)** with a 2 day event in Auckland themed 'Landscapes'. They are now focusing on fresh water policy
- And if you're interested, there a **Kea Summit** coming up to plan action to further protect these wonderful birds. In the recent past they were shot as pests by farmers

DOC remains busy on many (every) front including:

- Reopening the last 10 tracks in the **Kaimai** ranges after completing improvement work intended to mitigate the spread of Kauri Dieback. They say that they have upgraded 12km of tracks up there, being part of 76 upgraded nationally although permanently closing 30.
- Planning an upgrade to some of the **Mt Taranaki** tracks, to create a "Taranaki Crossing" from Dawson Falls to Mangorei Rd., as a multiday walk. This will be funded by Shane Jones' Provincial Growth Fund. FMC supports the intent but doesn't want every track up there turned into a footpath with handrails as upgrading towards Great Walk standards can do.
- Planning a review of **Hut Standards** and pricing nationally, which FMC will be represented on.

And FMC has special action underway in a number of areas including:

- The recent **Island Hills** high country station's tenure review seemed to ignore many access and conservation requirements, so a legal review of that decision has been agreed to. This will be assess it's legality and better understand the grounds and process by which it could be challenged and overturned

- Planning an upcoming campaign with and for all FMC members on **Recreation Transition**. This will cover how we can all become more sustainability aware in our tramping and travel decisions and in our everyday life, in a fun, positive, local way. More to come on that.....

So lots to do and share. More next month. If you have any queries on any of this or would like more info, please contact me on 0274 501 530 or at alan.grant@fmc.org.nz Have a good month out there.

Alan