

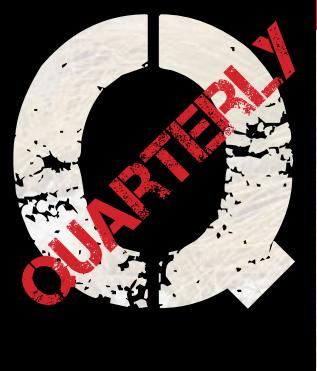
**25**  
**YEARS**



**NZOIA**  
Excellence in Outdoor Leadership



**CONGRATULATIONS TIM WILLS:  
TALL TOTARA**



ISSUE 65: DECEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ZEALAND OUTDOOR INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION

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**NZOIA QUARTERLY**  
**ISSUE 65: DEC 2013**  
ISSN 1175-2068

**PUBLICATION**

The NZOIA Quarterly is published four times a year by:

New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association Inc.  
PO Box 1620  
Nelson 7040  
New Zealand

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

\$20 annually. The NZOIA Quarterly is distributed free to members of NZOIA.

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Articles should be submitted in Word format. All photos must be supplied individually in jpg format and cannot be used if embedded in a Word document.

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Cover Photo: Tim Wills



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### EMAIL COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Emails to members are one of the primary methods that NZOIA communicates with its members. All member emails are sent in the weekly NZOIA 4YA (every Friday) and include updates to the member only job board, spaces on assessments, refresher workshops and trainings, changes/updates to current initiatives/reviews within the outdoor industry, Executive updates and updates to the assessment, refresher and training calendars and requests for model students. Emails sent at other times will be specific to you.

If you are not receiving weekly emails every Friday from NZOIA, then we either don't have your current email address, or the email address in your membership account is incorrect.

**PLEASE check the email address in your membership account, as email is the main method of regular communication with members. Alternatively, please contact the NZOIA office if you do not have a username and password for the 'Members only' section' of the NZOIA website, and would like to be able to check your membership and revalidation details online.**



## Chairperson's Report

This issue marks the departures of Matt Cant and Andy Thompson from their respective CEO and Chair roles. Both have dedicated a lot of energy and enthusiasm to NZOIA. NZOIA has grown considerably over the 13 years that Matt has been involved, firstly on the Executive and since 2005 as Chief Executive. Mike Atkinson has also stepped aside from the Technical Sub-Committee Chair role, and Jon Lasenby from the Board. Andy, Mike and Jon have each put large amounts of unpaid time into key roles to support NZOIA, and will now be able to claim back more family and personal time. A big thank you to all of you from the Board for your contributions to NZOIA.

The Symposium and AGM at Outward Bound was my first NZOIA gathering since an NZOIA meeting at Rotoiti Lodge about 20 years ago. It was a great weekend – courtesy of Natalie & Penny's superb organisation, OB hospitality, great workshops by NZOIA members, and trying to keep up with Dave Ritchie on the Queen Charlotte track – me on my full suspension Giant Anthem, Dave on his single-speed – he did look a bit knackered by the end! Other highlights included instruction in the finer points of Waka Ama paddling, and Cutter "racing" in the complete range of Marlborough Sounds weather – from a perfect sailing easterly, to rowing conditions, to a southerly storm and hail, back to rowing again. Thanks OB team, and congratulations to all involved in a very professional and enjoyable Symposium.

Three weekends after the Symposium and AGM I have been working on maintaining my outdoor credentials. The weekend after the Symposium an email from previous TSC Chair Linda Wensley had me clearing out the spider population in my whitewater boat and heading for Murchison. Following born again slalom boaters Linda, Clare Cosson, Jo Parsons, Steve Chapman and Graham Charles darting from eddy to eddy down the Granity stretch on the Buller had me yearning for a slalom boat again. The following day was a ride on one of NZ's "Great Rides", the Old Ghost Road. Definitely a work-out, and a truly "great ride" – take your mountain bike for a spare day next time you are heading to Murchison. As I write this, I'm looking out the window at Mt Robert and the St Arnaud Range on a glorious Nelson Lakes day after a tamer early morning paddle on a mirror calm Lake Rotoiti. My mountain bike is calling out for a ride when the day cools off a bit. What a great part of the world we live in.

It is a challenging and exciting time for NZOIA. There were some great conversations on the future at the Symposium and AGM. Thanks to Pete Cammell for his presentations on a potential new sector qualifications model. Peter has continued to explore the concept with others in the outdoor sector since the Symposium, and is working with Grant Davidson to develop more detail as to how the model might work in practice through Skills Active as the sector Industry Training Organisation.

Jo Parsons is the Board member overseeing this, so if you have any questions or thoughts contact Jo. We have the first conference call of the new Board the last week in November, with some important topics on the agenda including the qualifications system, financial viability and NZOIA management needs. The first formal, face to face Board meeting will be in February.

I have been doing some work for the Board looking in more detail at the NZOIA financials. As summarised in the new "Board talk" section of 4Ya (22 November), NZOIA has sufficient funding and cash reserves to continue the existing model for another couple of years. Beyond that, to continue the current model would require one or a mix of four things – ongoing grant funding at a higher level than the current year, other funding to cover the full costs of running the qualifications system, increased membership and assessment/course fees, and reductions in costs. Fortunately there's time to explore the options. Keep an eye on the 4Ya "Board talk" section for updates. Also coming up in 4Ya is an explanation from Stu Allan on the Adventure Activity Regulations and sole traders – an area that Matt has put a lot of effort into over the past year, and Stu has been working on in MBIE.

Back to the Symposium and AGM, and celebrating success. It is a pleasure to congratulate Matt Cant for being awarded a life membership of NZOIA, Tim Wills for receiving the Tall Totara award, and James Geddes as Emerging Instructor.

Best wishes to everyone for Xmas and the New Year, and a safe and enjoyable summer.

Gillian Wratt, Acting Chairperson

### Custom & Contract Courses

**NZOIA courses not being run at a suitable time or location? Want to get all your staff sorted when and where it suits you?  
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Contact the programme and membership manager to discuss your needs and we'll do our best to make it happen.

Costs may vary from scheduled courses and minimum numbers of participants dependent on the course type will apply.

Email: [admin@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzoia.org.nz) Phone: 03 539 0509

NZOIA gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the following organisations:



Member Organisation



# TALL TOTARA AWARD 2013



When we think about what makes an "excellent" outdoor instructor it is easy to focus on technical skill and ability to communicate such information to others. But if we stop to think for a minute about outdoor instructors that have truly inspired us it is more a package of qualities and abilities that captures us and makes being lead feel like a privilege. Tim is such an instructor.

Tim is very good natured, with an even temperament and calmness under pressure. Make no mistake, Tim has excellent technical skills and, as many of his staff have found out, a very competitive streak!

Tim is an irrepressible and enthusiastic adventurer whose personal record extends from rock climbing multi-pitch routes in New Zealand, Thailand, Australia, the USA and Europe, ice climbing in Japan and mountaineering ascents in the Southern Alps, extended solo trans-alpine and off track bush trips, sea kayaking and caving to screaming along on his Hobie Cat (those who've been crew will know the outcome here is never certain!)

Tim's instructing career spans working with youth at risk, teaching tertiary level instructor training programmes and a 19 year involvement with Adventure Specialties Trust involving a variety of positions. He has worked with a huge variety of clients groups ranging from parents and young children on programmes with family counselling centres, youth development programmes, outdoor pursuits instruction for schools and adults undergoing alcohol and drug rehabilitation.

In recent years Tim has also bought his technical skills and knowledge of compliance to help Christian Camping New Zealand provide better training pathways for its members and increase their understanding of the changing face of providing adventure programmes and obligations for compliance.

Tim is currently Chief of Operations at Adventure Specialties Trust and oversees all the core operations including managing staff and ensuring all the Trust's compliance needs are met.

He is an inspirational leader with an uncanny ability to lift a programme or training session to another level. Tim is Christian with a strong set of personal values that permeate his life and his work with others.

Chris North wrote in his support of Tim's nomination, "I met Tim in the mid-1990s when I was working at Manukau Institute of Technology and I was contracting to Adventure Specialties Trust for practical trips. I immediately liked Tim. Over the next four years I co-instructed with Tim regularly. With his quick smile and love of fun, I thought he might be a soft-touch for the tougher students, but Tim has the uncanny ability to move from playful to serious without losing credibility or damaging relationships. Switching between these different roles is a key strength of Tim's that I aspire to."

Through my interactions with Tim, my work as an outdoor educator improved, and the programme at Manukau Institute of Technology developed. He held the students to high standards, challenged me on some of my practices and gave great suggestions for improving our progressions and focus.

I remember Tim said a prayer at the start of a Whirinaki tramp that transformed our walk through the misty podocarp giants into an amazing spiritual experience for me and my group and opened my eyes to the power of spiritual dimensions of the outdoors.

I consider Tim to be an outstanding example of holistic outdoor education, with strong outdoor skills, ability to relate to a wide range of people and a long term commitment to improving outdoor experiences in Aotearoa."

Daniel Werner from the Salvation Army Blue Mountain Adventure Centre in his nomination support letter wrote; "When I have worked alongside Tim I have enjoyed watching the master at work. He teaches with passion, he inspires clients with confidence, then equips them with skills to make their on going lives better, never missing an opportunity for a teachable moment or a practical life lesson."

Another aspect of Tim's life highlighted in his nomination was that he is a family man with four daughters. In 2009 Tim took his family on a yearlong "Wild Wills World Adventure" which included trekking and helping out at an aid project in Nepal, travels through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, Europe, USA and Australia (daughters then 4 to 12 years old!).

As Mark Johnston in his nomination of Tim for this award noted "The girls love their dad and in a society where father role models are becoming more difficult to find, Tim is exemplary. As a father myself, I have appreciated the many discussions we have had that draw on his wisdom and experience. The work/life balance is something that Tim has managed extremely well. Tim is generous with his home and family. Many people have enjoyed meals at his home or have been included in the Wills' family adventures."

Tim holds the NZOIA awards Rock 2, Alpine 2, Bush 2, Kayak 1, Sea kayak 1 and is also a Senior Raft Guide grade 3 and a Raft Guide grade 5. He is an assessor for both NZOIA and Skills Active. Tim has a B.A. in Geography and a Diploma in Teaching. Tim and his wife Kim also spent 2 years in Japan teaching English.

As I have collated information from the nomination and support letters for this Quarterly article I have been reminded of what a privilege it has been to have had Tim as a work colleague, friend and someone with whom I have shared many adventures. Our association motto "Excellence in Outdoor Instruction" is clearly evidenced in Tim. He is a "Tall Totara".

*Lyndsay Simpkin, CEO of Adventure Specialties Trust*

## LEAD EXPEDITIONS OVERSEAS



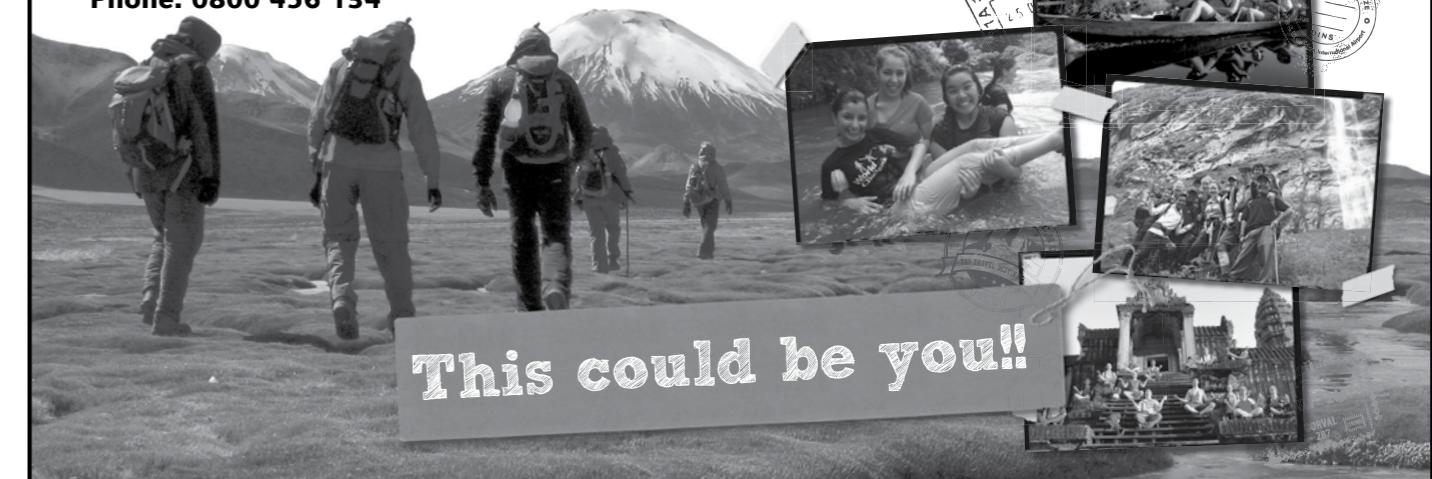
**World Challenge Asia-Pacific is currently recruiting Expedition Leaders** for challenging one to four week student-led expeditions to one of over fifty 'developing world' destinations in South America, Asia and Africa.

### For more information:

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Email: [leaders@worldchallenge.com.au](mailto:leaders@worldchallenge.com.au)

Phone: 0800 456 134



**This could be you!!**

## We want your story!

We are looking for contributions from you, the NZOIA members, for the NZOIA Quarterly. Do you have a story to tell? Do you know someone who has thoughts to share?

Articles could be:

A personal adventure and how your experiences have impacted your instruction of others. / An incident, near miss or accident that others could learn from. / A personal profile - an interesting tale about how you got to be where you are now in the world of outdoor instructing. / An organisation that is doing innovative and interesting things - with its programme, philosophy, direction and instruction. / A reflection on any aspect of outdoor instruction that you think would be educational and beneficial for others to hear. Contact Jen Riley the editor with your ideas and for guidelines: [editor@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:editor@nzoia.org.nz)

*Photo: Johnny Johnson*



# Adventure safety – how can you help?

Rachael Moore, Adventure & Outdoor Project Leader, Tourism Industry Association NZ (TIA)

As NZOIA members we feel deeply about the safety of those in our care and our colleagues and therefore work hard to ensure we are technically competent. However, as a sector we are becoming much more aware that relying solely on our technical skill is not sufficient to manage safety in the outdoors.

I remember when the penny dropped for me. I was leading a 12-day expedition on Nepal's Karnali River in the mid-90s. We were several days into the trip when an unexpected late monsoon downpour hit. The river quickly rose several meters and what had been a class 4+ largely pool drop trip became a solid class 5 continuous river. Although it was a relatively commonly run trip, the guides didn't know the river well, it was only my second trip and none of us had been on the river at that level. Some of the rafts flipped and we lost track of who was where. I remember tying my boat up at the bottom of the gorge, scrambling back up the shoreline and seeing bags, paddles and helmets floating in eddies and running the 'what now' options through my head. It dawned on me that I really didn't know if the clients' or guides' lifejackets were any good. I wasn't sure which boat had the first aid kit. We didn't have any plan for what to do if we became separated as a group. I didn't know where the next campsite might be (the ones we had planned on were all flooded out). I hadn't thought through any emergency scenarios and had no idea how to get from the river to a road or to a village where there might be a phone to call for help (other than travelling another five days downstream). I didn't know when the folk in the office might raise the alarm, or what they would do when they did... the list goes on. I felt physically sick with dread and utterly overwhelmed. To cut a long story short, *luckily* everything turned out fine, nobody was hurt and we all found each other within the same afternoon.

BUT it did make me realise that when I am working in activities that involve inherent risk, the safety of those in my care, my co-workers and myself, relies on a lot more than just guiding my raft well.

Today's instructors and guides wouldn't dream of running a commercial trip as unprepared as I was back then (and just for the record; neither would I!). Instead, it's normal to hear us discussing the following two questions:

1. I'm technically competent, but what more **can** I do?
2. I'm technically competent but what more **should** I be doing? (this question comes up increasingly more and more as safety expectations of the public increase and regulations evolve to keep up)

These questions have been front of mind for me for many years now and the answers form the basis of how I operate as both a guide and an instructor and in my current role as TIA Project Leader Adventure & Outdoors. In this role I am responsible for facilitating the development of a safety guidance framework with and for our sector. That framework is the [www.SupportAdventure.co.nz](http://www.SupportAdventure.co.nz) website – specifically its guidance on overall safety systems and Activity Specific Guidelines (ASGs). The guidance has been developed by hundreds of experts within our sector, including many NZOIA members.



Although the website was originally developed to support operators (employers) to manage safety, it has also become an invaluable tool for instructors and guides to answer the 'what can I do' and 'what should I do' questions. It gives you a way to help ensure that you significantly decrease the chance of getting into a situation like I did on the Karnali, and that if things do go wrong you can focus on the immediate rescue or crisis, knowing everything else is in place – the plans, the equipment, the processes.

## SupportAdventure supporting you with the 'what can I do' and 'what should I do' questions

Below are some hot tips from the guidance on the website, and some links so you know where to go for more. I hope they help you to know what you could and should be doing to help with adventure safety – over and above being technically competent. Please make your competence your first priority – get your NZOIA awards and keep current!

## An instructor or a guide

### What can you do?

- ensure you are a role model for positive safety culture
- ensure you are competent to perform your role/s
- help your employer to be sure they have good practice safety systems and operational procedures

### What should you do?

Legally, you need to follow your employer's operational policies and comply with the health & safety legislation. Morally, you have an obligation to ensure you are competent and that the policies and procedures in your workplace are in line with good practice.

### How?

- Share your safety thoughts and encourage others to do the same
- Report incidents and be part of making sure they don't happen again
- Ensure you are competent for your role – don't do it if you're not. There may well be parts of your job that include safety responsibilities that are not covered by your NZOIA

award. A classic example is people with Rock 1 working on a high ropes course. Another is operating as a senior instructor or guide, or standing in for an Operations Manager. Make sure you have been checked off as competent in those additional skills – and that the person who checked you off has the knowledge to do so.

- For more information on checking competence go to <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/safety-management-plans/staff>
- Don't just blindly follow the company polices and procedures. Think about them, give feedback to the best of your abilities and help ensure they are safe and in line with industry good practice.

If you're not sure what a good system should include, check <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/safety-management-systems>

If you're not sure what good operational procedures are for a particular activity check its Activity Safety Guideline (if it has one) <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/activity-safety-guidelines> and ask people whom you know are experts such as NZOIA level 2 holders, NZMGA guides, Senior Raft Guides etc.

Be part of ASG development groups and contribute to the SupportAdventure website – keep the sectors guidance information current and as good as it can be.

Sign up for the six-weekly SupportAdventure newsletter – Adventure and Outdoor Update. It will keep you informed about the ASGs, the adventure activity regulations and other safety initiatives. <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/news>

## A sole operator

### What can you do?

As per an instructor or guide plus ensure you have good practice safety systems and operational procedures.

### What should you do?

If you provide an adventure activity within the scope of the AA Regs you will need to be registered with the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, which means being audited. Exactly how the audit for sole operators will happen is still being decided, but it will likely include an auditor checking your safety management plan/documentation.

### How?

Document your safety systems. You do need to write stuff down so it can be checked by someone else. This is new ground for a lot of sole operators, it takes a bit of time so getting started soon would be a good idea!

These are some examples of the things you need to have covered:

- the phone numbers for and locations of the emergency care centre nearest to where you operate
- what you tell your clients about the risks of the activity
- how you collect client medical information and relevant contact details for emergencies
- what are the access/escape routes and communication options/coverage areas for the sites you use

- your procedures for letting someone know what you are doing, where you are taking your group and what time you are due back – and what you expect them to do if you are overdue or call for help
- procedures for how you will ensure you know about existing hazards at new sites

For more information on what to cover go to <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/safety-management-systems>

To find out what you'll be audited against check out the Safety Audit Standard <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/adventure-activities-regulations-2011#SafetyAuditStandard>

Check that you are operating at good practice – if there is an ASG for your activity make sure you are in line with its guidance or that you can justify why you operate in another way and that it is equally as safe. If there is no ASG, check for other existing guidance material and ask other operators and your respected peers.

Read Section 1 of any ASG to find out more about their use <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/activity-safety-guidelines>

## An operator (employer of others)

What can you do? What should you do and how?

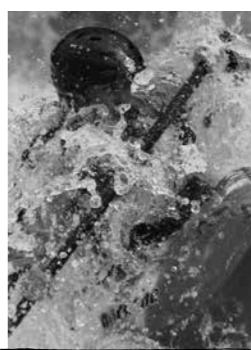
As per all of the above and if you are within the scope of the Adventure Activity Regulations, you need to be registered with the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE), which for you means a full document and field audit.

For information on the regulations, what they cover and what they require go to <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/adventure-activities-regulations-2011>

Don't forget that once you have competent staff and good practice systems and procedures in place, the most important thing for ensuring safety is your operation's safety culture – the safety habits that you set and expect as an employer.

For ideas on establishing good safety habits see the guidance that includes involving staff in each section of <http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/safety-management-systems>

**Note:** SupportAdventure is a sector website. It is currently funded by MBIE and managed on behalf of the sector by TIA – it is not owned by any association or organisation. Please let me know if you have information to share on the site or suggestions on how it could be better. An enormous thanks to everyone who has put so much expertise and energy into developing the guidance to date.



**SupportAdventure.co.nz**  
SAFETY SYSTEMS DRIVEN BY SAFETY CULTURE

The site for adventure operators

Rachael Moore: TIA Adventure and Outdoor Project Leader, Rescue 3 swiftwater and rope rescue instructor, NZ senior class 4/5 raft guide and rafting senior assessor mentor, NZOIA Rock 1 and Kayak 1, Outdoor Safety Auditor.

# SALT AND PEPPER HIKOI

MARK JONES

Note from the Editor:  
I'd heard snippets of stories about Mark's journey. I twisted his arm to contribute this article to the Quarterly, he obliged and his words follow.



The imagined charm of living off the land has been in the humus of my being since childhood, so the idea of doing a long bush journey living off the forest found fertile ground there. Tendrils grew into every part of me until I could no longer escape them. Every person who has followed the call of a personal quest knows that you are powerless to disregard it, and indeed you do so at the peril of your soul.

As the bus pulled away from Wairata with a belch of smoke, I stood with my pack on the side of the road, contemplating what I'd decided to do – Traverse from SH2, (Opotiki/Gisborne), to SH5, (Napier/Taupo). In a straight line it was over 100km, but there are no straight lines in that terrain and my route would be close to twice that distance. The only food items I had with me were salt and pepper.

My no-frills journey was beautifully simple in concept. I daydreamed of nutritious bush tucker and spit-roasted game, of success and satisfaction. But reality is not dreams. I'd never subsisted entirely off the bush for a single day let alone the three weeks I'd estimated that the trip would take, and my longest solo trip was only a week in length. Perhaps reality would be hunger gnawing at resolve, discovering the fragility of faith, watching apprehension erode morale; maybe it wouldn't be as romantic as my dreams after all.

I could hear the distant drone of the bus go up an octave on an incline then it was swallowed up altogether by the hills. I suddenly felt very alone. In five hours it would be dark. I had five hours to find dinner or spend my first night with an empty stomach. With a rod and a rifle and several kilometres of gravel road and farm track before I reached the bush I was hoping for a rabbit or a hare or something; I'd seen quite a few in the daydreams. Reality was a curious lack of road-kill and poison signs nailed to posts at frequent intervals.

It was mid January. Straight away I could see my timing was poor. Most of the shoots had long since sprung from ferns and supplejack and it was between seasons for berries. Too early for fungi to be useful, too late for Nikau flowers to make a meal – not quite the bounty of my musings. I tried not to think about failure, but had to concede that there was a fair chance of being back at the same place in a few days' time hungry, humiliated, and wondering why I didn't go to the beach for summer.

I caught a break on that first evening in the form of a tiny dead wax-eye chick, the only carrion I happened upon, but enough to secure a huge eel, which fed me for two days and nights. The lesson was "turn your nose up at nothing". Day two's lesson was the stark portrayal of what I had undertaken, struggling to feel a rhythm with the land as I lurched between one crux and the next in terrain serious beyond my imaginings.

The days that followed were some of the most absorbing of my life. Finding enough to eat whilst journeying across a rugged landscape, expending huge amounts of energy is, I discovered, no easy task. It was largely an act of faith. Heading deeper and deeper into the wilds, becoming evermore committed. I maintained a belief in the forest to provide rather than in my own skills and knowledge to harvest, as I wasn't sure I possessed enough of either to flourish, and the thought of merely surviving seemed a bleak way to spend three weeks of my summer holidays.

Belief and skepticism pitched for my attention daily. Faith claimed the bounty of the forest, providence and plenty, while doubt, cynically forecast my failure, whispering perhaps my most basic fear, that of starving and becoming too weak to help myself do anything about it. I did my best to listen to the former, but they both spoke with conviction.

On every trip there are emotional high and low points. One such high came on day fourteen at Te Waiotukapiti Hut, the first hut I had used, feasting on fat trout and huhu. By that time venison, dried or fresh, and even with seasoning held about as much appeal to me as boiled cabbage tree (my other staple). The low point followed a day later, finding a way over into the Whirinaki catchment. I slipped and landed heavily on a rock with my fingers wrapped around the steelwork of my rifle. This did a messy job of severing my fingertip. Not what I needed just then with an ominous Maungataniwha barring the way ahead. I Steri-stripped the fingertip back in place, bandaged a film canister over it for protection, and used up precious bullets to re-sight my rifle. Ahead was the crux of the trip. It would have been hard enough terrain to travel unencumbered. With a pack, a rifle, and an injury, dehydrated, and without fats or anything approaching half-decent carbohydrates in my diet I found myself digging deeper than I had ever had to.

I spent the night bivvying (having ditched my sleeping bag and fly a week earlier at the Waikaremoana Road after a philosophical "less is more" episode). I was waterfalled out above a 30m drop. Even there, between bluffs, the forest provided; I picked a billyful of nettles to compliment the trout I'd caught on the way. It was an incredibly rewarding day and despite the question mark that hung heavily over the route it was a high point of my journey. I realised that I didn't need the hut that I'd failed to reach that evening and it didn't much matter where I was. I had food, water, a fire, and a place to lay my head. Life gets that simple when you've emptied the tank.

After 19 days I reached SH5 and hitch-hiked to Taupo. I was surprised to meet only one other party in all of that time. Relying on the land for my sustenance changed my whole relationship with Te Urewera. When we eat from the wilds, part of the wilds becomes part of us. The berries and shoots become part of our flesh and bones; the meat and the marrow of the deer become part of our own blood and gristle. Rather than a passive observer I had become an active players in the ecosystem, part of the wilds I was in. I had never been less separate from the land. I asked questions of it, literally on occasions, and I got answered, sometimes emphatically. They were uncanny experiences, unsettling to be beyond my understanding. Perhaps that is what happens when we immerse ourselves completely in a place, give ourselves over to it: pathways reopen, synapses awaken, the filament threads of connection multiply.

It would be nice to claim the success as my own, but that's not the way it felt. It was spooky how often, when I needed it, a meal would present itself, often in the most unlikely of circumstances. I never felt like I was completely alone in that forest. If I were a Christian I might call that presence divine, if I were Maori perhaps an atua, Native American and I would know it as the Great Spirit, but I am none of those. I went into the forest an agnostic having been raised and trained with a scientific worldview. That was my reward, to be untethered from my metaphysical moorings, to know now that the whole is indeed greater than the sum of its parts; that the forest is sentient, the Earth is responsive, the Universe is intimate, none is mere backdrop, and my separateness from them was my own illusion.

It was an immensely satisfying journey and I feel rich for the memories. Memories of uncompromising ruggedness, raw beauty, unfurling fascination, and bone-deep satisfaction that I'll carry with me forever; memories that didn't quite live up to the ease and bounty of my daydreams, but bested them all the same.

## Why do it?

My hikoi was as much journey of the mind as physical contest. The more I engage with the outdoors the more ardently I believe nature is the most potent teacher in our lives. The lessons are not only relevant to kids on school camp; they answer our yearnings for meaning, affirm our aliveness, enable us to behold the wondrous. I think if we have the courage to undertake our own unique transactions with nature then profound learning experiences await, both life affirming and life changing- lifelong outdoor education.

I could draw parallels with the Native American vision quest, or Aboriginal walkabout, or Historic hero's journey. Campbell (1969) wrote of the latter as travelling from the known to the unknown and returning forever changed by the experience, having acquired knowledge and a vision not possessed before.



Variety of culinary delights hunted and collected along the way.

Well I might claim that, but it was also just a crazy idea that wouldn't leave me alone. I went because it promised to be an extraordinary encounter, rich in learning, one that would plumb my resourcefulness and resolution. And I went because that stem of my brain where curiosity is grafted would have itched forever if I hadn't.

Campbell, J. (1969). *The hero with a thousand faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mark's documentary of his Hikoi, was a finalist in the Wanaka Mountain Film Festival. It is available in DVD format from [www.huntingbooks.co.nz/](http://www.huntingbooks.co.nz/)

Mark Jones lectures in Outdoor Education at AUT University. He and Sally Rowe live with their two children and three chickens in Paremoremo (on the outside). Mark is a NZOIA Assessor in sea kayak, rock and bush.

Mark Jones

# NEW ZEALAND WHITEWATER 5: GRAHAM CHARLES DOES IT AGAIN

Long time NZOIA instructor/assessor Graham Charles has re-written the New Zealand whitewater guidebook for its fifth edition. Completely over-hauled once again Charles says it is even bigger and better. Boasting some 50 new runs and plenty of sub levels of information it enables people to access nearly 200 whitewater sections of river. New photographs and cartoons reflect the new things being done which reflect the culture of going higher and bigger while being inclusive of the lower end needs of emerging kayakers and lifetime recreationalists. The fifth edition makes it globally the most re-edited and re-printed whitewater guide in the world. Graham has been at the fore-front of New Zealand paddling, racing and teaching for three decades and has been an NZOIA assessor since 1987. He teaches in the US for Otter Bar Lodge and Tarkio Expeditions. With other NZOIA assessors Marcus Waters and Mark Jones and the Adventure Philosophy team, he has completed sea-kayak in Greenland, Tierra del Fuego, Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia Island. He now splits his time between Bozeman – Montana, Hokitika, Antarctica and the Arctic.

The first thing people ask me is “why do it all over again?” Even I thought I was done with it at Edition 4 but I hate looking at something with my name on it and knowing it is so out of date. Basically I can’t stand not having good information when I want it and how much time is wasted when you are in a new area and can’t get helpful information. I’ve moved to Bozeman in Montana and having Idaho not far away I wanted to go boating – BUT – guidebooks for both places are out of print so it is a total pain being here knowing there is some paddling around but with no information. Don’t get me wrong – if it is exploration paddling and there is no information – fine. But this was just looking for some cool local moderate runs and it’s not even the river information I need – it’s really just how to get to the put in and take out. On top of that, and perhaps even more importantly, the increasing number of consent applications to construct dams and/or deplete river flows for various uses need to be contended, as does the decrease in water quality from effluent discharge. These impacts at least need to be held accountable for ‘other values’ and the guidebook is one of the only books which gives much detail of the rivers and the culture of recreation and/or a record of use so it gets used as evidence for and against these applications. The culture of river use, how we do it, where we do it, how often etc is changing so a 6 year old guidebook does not reflect the most current values in these types of forums and I want it to be helpful. It’s my small part to play since I’m not in NZ so can’t turn up to meetings and hearings to support the great volunteer work being done by others.

Of course people say the internet has it all. Online content **without** editorial clarity is a waste of time as far as I’m concerned. I’ve mostly avoided ‘stroke-by-stroke’ breakdowns that online forums seem to get into with river descriptions because people will choose their own way and that is part of it.



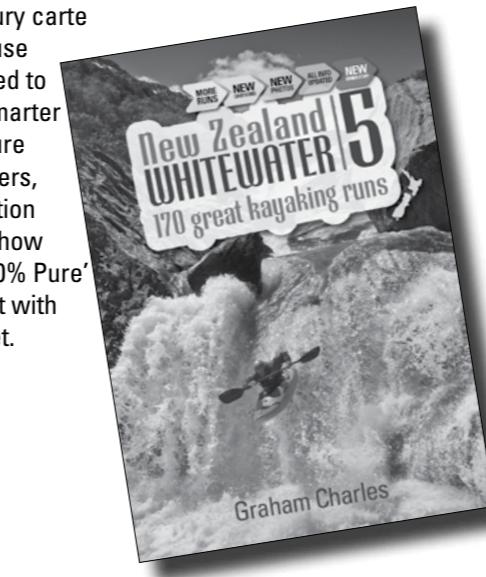
Keith Riley paddling Toaroha Canyon – one of the new classic runs in the area. Photo by Zak Shaw.

## The fifth edition makes it globally the most re-edited and re printed whitewater guide in the world.

A guidebook is obviously helpful to instructors and students alike for information and inspiration to get out and run new sections with efficiency and safety so I’m happy to be working with NZOIA to provide members with an opportunity to buy a guidebook at a professional rate. I’m still involved with the outdoors as my primary income and work with many people all over the world. It’s great to see how valuable the NZOIA training and assessment scheme is when I work with or see other Kiwi

instructors who are at the top of the game because of the thorough and exacting examinations and training they have to go through. I can say with total confidence that Kiwi instructors are some of the best in the world because of the standards required not only in performance but in the meta skills and humanities that go with any of the disciplines. Much of my work involves working in the polar regions and managing other peoples adventures or leading expeditions on yachts or small ships. The skills required are generic to any group management and basic mountaineering and knowledge of weather. Once again any of the Kiwi’s I have worked with in Antarctica (mostly kayak guides masquerading as sea kayak guides) who are NZOIA qualified are some of the most useful staff you can find because they can do so much more than JUST the activity – manage hikes, look after people, manage conflict etc. There is a whole Antarctic guide qualification to be had by NZOIA – ha ha.

I’m happy to also be supporting the effort to save rivers from unnecessary water extractions or pointless dam proposals with no mitigation offers. NZ (and the current government) is really lagging on this front I believe and is still operating on a late 20th century carte blanche resource use at any cost. We need to move on and get smarter about what the future holds for young NZers, where their recreation resources are and how our supposedly ‘100% Pure’ marketing can’t last with this old age mindset.



Graham has been leading expeditions in the polar regions for over 12 years.

The NZ Whitewater Guide will be available to NZOIA members through the NZOIA payments & shop feature on the website. Members can also email us at: [admin@nzoia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzoia.org.nz)

## Congratulations on these recently gained NZOIA Qualifications!

### Alpine 1

Heath Rainey, Curtis Vermeulen

### Abseil Leader

Jessica Carter, Casey Hanson, Hayley Evans, Christie Foote, Niclas Forsmark, Lisa Podlucky

### Bush Walking Leader

Tony Popenhagen, Annelise Impelmans, Ben Thomson, Rachel Palma, Campbell Tebbutt, Matthew McKinnon, Lily Hall, Hayley Evans, Christie Foote, Niclas Forsmark, Lisa Podlucky

### Bush 1

Emma Peterson, Stephen Onyett, Micheal Ferguson, Luke Kirner, Lee Giles, Paul Thurston, Daniel Werner,

### Bush 2

James Geddes, Stuart Arnold

### Kayak Leader

Kieran Thurlow, Tony Popenhagen, Adam Ilieff, Richard Jacob, Rachel Palma, Natasha Smith, Campbell Tebbutt, Kate Parr, Lily Hall

### Rock Climbing Leader

Jessica Carter, Leonie Wood, Hayley Evans, Christie Foote, Niclas Forsmark, Lisa Podlucky

### Rock 1

Blythe Southern, Rhys Elliot, Michael Liu, Freya O'Donoghue, Stephane Brucher

### Rock 1 - Sport Climbing Endorsement

Mike Robertson, Karen Corcoran

### Sea Kayak Leader

Richard Lange, Richard Thompson, Aidan Salmon, Travis Dacombe, Alex Richards, Haley Evans, Christie Foote, Finn McClintock, Daniel Batt, Aaron Higgins, Lisa Podlucky

### Sea Kayak Guide

Steven Franklin

### Sea Kayak 1

Kim Van Kempen, Hannah Green, Lucas Holmes

Photo: Taine Houtenbos





# PROFILE: WHENUA ITI MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Established in 1986, Whenua Iti Outdoors founded by Hazel Nash who dreamed of positively influencing people through outdoor experiences. Hazel had been meeting local high school students who had not climbed Mt. Arthur, explored the Abel Tasman coastline or seen more of the Motueka River than their nearby swimming hole. The sedentary computer/game boy/television lifestyle was already creeping in. In 1998 Hazel was awarded the NZ Order of Merit for Services to Youth.

A registered charitable trust, Whenua Iti Outdoors is based on 4 hectares of land in the Moutere Valley, 45km from Nelson. With 3 National Parks – Kahurangi, Abel Tasman and Nelson Lakes, within an hours drive of its base, Whenua Iti has a wonderful playground on its doorstep for a range of outdoor experiences – caving, tramping, river and sea kayaking, rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking together with a ropes course and climbing tower situated on site.

Since 1986, more than 25,000 people have participated in a Whenua Iti course, from only a few hours to a full year programme. Whenua Iti has always had a focus on youth and is reliant on external funding to provide the courses it does. The Ministries of Social Development, Education and Youth Development and the Tertiary Education Commission have provided the bulk of funding in recent years and these government contracts have been supplemented by grants from a number of community trusts. As funding has changed,

Whenua Iti has had to change and this has seen a trend to shorter courses and the development of a much closer relationship with schools in the Nelson/Tasman region. Helping to facilitate this closer relationship has been a contract with the Ministry of Education to provide Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom (LEOTC) linked to the national curriculum.

The Journey is the longest standing course still being offered by Whenua Iti. The Journey is a week long outdoor adventure run in the school holidays which gives secondary school students the chance to discover their true strengths and potential while exploring the Nelson/Tasman region by foot, mountain bike, sea or river kayak. The most recent addition to Whenua Iti's range of courses has been the Trades Academy in Adventure Leadership. Run under the umbrella of the Top of the South Trades Academy, this course gives senior secondary school students the opportunity to gain credits towards their NCEA from a broad base of technical, practical and social development skills. The finale of this year's course was a 3 day mountain Bike trip from Ship's Cove to Anakiwa on the Queen Charlotte Track.



## THE FOREST KINDERGARTEN: AUTONOMY, WILDERNESS AND SHARP KNIVES

Lucy Aitken Read



There is a flash of movement in the pine tree above my head; a young lad has climbed high up one of the dark, wizened trees the Black Forest is famous for. All around me are little pockets of children- some are digging into the stream, carefully constructing a dam, others are sitting on a bench with perfectly sharp knives, whittling boats out of wood. They are so young, between two and a half and six, yet all are absorbed in their activities, discovering and learning with mud and tools without any adults disturbing their flow. It is an official German preschool but feels a lot more like Neverland. There are grown ups here, but they help only when invited and mediate only when necessary. They are often as equally absorbed in their own activities, crafting photo frames out of sticks or something, and the kids might join them if they are inclined. The adults "see with their ears" – knowing the impact grown up eye balls can have on kids and their ability to resolve problems.

We have spent this week at the Waldkindergarten outside of Freiberg, in south Germany. It really translates as Forest Kindergarten, but in my head I call it the Wild Kindergarten. It is as wild as it gets – I don't think you'd even believe most of it!

There is no plumbing – each tot heads into the trees with a spade to deal with their toilet needs, there is no electricity, and just one tiny shed to store tools, musical instruments and art supplies. Every single season is spent out here under the pine trees.

The mornings begin at 8:30 and last until 1:30 and of that time only one and a half hours is structured (a story, some music, some food, some meditation) – the rest of the time is the child's. What incredible and accurate faith this puts in a child's ability to learn without our assistance. I saw a bunch of girls building a mud hut, fishing rods being crafted (sharp knives were involved) and used, a group playing on a rough seesaw made of two logs and a million mud pies being baked; they are playing but learning more than we could teach them, I'm sure.

There are several big reasons for why a preschool like this is important.

The adults who work here seem to often come from a social work background – they have worked with addicts or delinquents and have felt unequivocally that an early grounding in nature is the key to preventing these behaviours.

One of the founders, Franz, who has been there the whole 15 years, mentioned the importance of "empty space" – the idea that when we are young we need to learn to be okay when faced with unfilled space and time, to learn how to be content with it. This builds a resilience against addiction, which can so often be people trying to fill a void.

Another worker, Louisa, talks of how it is only children who have come to love nature who will grow up to be its protectors. Forests and rivers will only be kept out of the hands of greedy corporations if upcoming generations truly recognise its value.



There is a lot of talk here about the relationship between mind and body, and how children who spend all this time outdoors have a real grounding, they are connected. The adults here instil confidence in the child's physical ability, never stopping them from climbing and not intruding on a child's progress onto their feet after a tumble. And these kids are SO physically able! We went on a trip out yesterday, up the mountain on a gondola for a hike (a HIKE? What teacher in their right minds organises a hike for a preschool day trip?!?) and it was wonderful seeing them all walking for miles together, being allowed to investigate plants, the big ones helping the tinies carry their rucksacks – while the tinies carried all manner of things- one a clump of moss half the way. We went under electric fences and found our way to a lake where everyone stripped off for a splash. (Yep!)

Autonomy is nurtured here. A pair of girls found what looked like an edible mushroom in the woods today and picked a mushroom encyclopaedia (these exist) off the shelf to check. Patrick, the other founder and the brilliant fellow whose farm we are currently encamped on, tells a tale of when one kid went on to primary school and a strict old teacher told him off for writing the wrong way. The little chap replied "It's not the wrong way, it's MY way." Even the littlest kid is trusted here, allowed to express their power, their way, and in turn they become confident and secure. ►

And then there are smaller, little bonuses I notice. There is hardly any gender divide. Leaves, sticks, rocks- they don't come in pink or blue. Every child does every activity, nothing is prescribing who can use it or how to play with it.

There is also a real peace here, evident in the atmosphere and relationships. The workers say it is the forest; nature has a calming effect on both the adults and children.

They are wonderfully sociable too. Patrick says they arrive at school with social skills way beyond their peers. He puts it down to the fact that there is so much imagination required when playing with nature that you have to explain what you are doing. With a whole load of toy cars, kids can just join in and broooooom around. But when you are digging, carving (did

I mention how properly sharp the knives are?!), mixing with leaves and mud, if someone wants to participate a conversation has to take place "Ah, yeah, we are just baking the most badass cake here yeah, then we'll cook it in this oven..."

Suffice to say we are shall-we-stay-here inspired. Or maybe we have found the thing we might do in New Zealand. Anyone want to join in? Just bring a sharp knife, yeah?

*Lucy is currently travelling around Europe in a campervan with her Kiwi husband and two kids. She blogs about parenting and eco and thrifty life at Lulastic and the Hippyshake: <http://lulastic.co.uk>*

*Luvy Aitken Reid*

## NZOIA Training & Assessment

ASSESSMENT FEES	
Assessment course	Course fee
Abseil Leader	\$290
Sea Kayak 1	
Sport Climbing Endorsement	
Bush Walking Leader	
Kayak Leader	
Rock Climbing Leader	
Sea Kayak Leader	
Canoe 1	
Cave 1	
Rock 1	
Sport Climbing Instructor	
Alpine 1	
Bush 1 & 2	
Canyon 1 & 2	
Cave 2	
Kayak 1 & 2	
Rock 2	
Sea Kayak Guide	
Sea Kayak 2	
Alpine 2	\$930

### Courses by special arrangement

It is possible to run assessments on other dates. You will need a minimum of 3 motivated candidates and the date of when you would like the course to be run. Go to the FAQ page on the website <http://www.nzoia.org.nz/faq> for details on how to arrange a course.

### Course Costs

All courses run by NZOIA are discounted for members.

TRAINING COURSES		
Course Duration	NZOIA members	Non - members
1 day courses	\$200	\$315
2 day courses	\$400	\$515

### Further Information

Details of courses run by NZOIA, pre-requisites and online payment are all available on our website [www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)

[www.nzoia.org.nz](http://www.nzoia.org.nz)

# BEYOND HANDLINES

## STEEP TERRAIN MANAGEMENT FOR BUSH INSTRUCTORS

Hamish Reid



Steep terrain is a native of our back country. It's everywhere, brazenly cloaking entire hillsides, or sneakily hiding behind those ferns over there. I've personally fallen down it. I've had students and clients fall down it and, soberingly, I've recovered deceased people from the bottom of it. It is scary, right up there with rivers. Mix rivers and steep terrain and it would be like 'Snakes on a Plane'. But I digress.

It is easy to fixate on the tangible tools to mitigate terrain risk, such as handlines or helmets. However, these tools sit within a wider web of judgment and strategy. This article identifies some of those elements and conveniently, they won't add a single gram to your pack.

### 1. Pre trip preparation

#### Know your objectives

What are you trying to achieve, and how do steep slopes fit into this? I find it helpful to remember that steep terrain is not the same as a high ropes course. You should not be taking people across high consequence terrain just to push their buttons, when there are safer and more appropriate venues for that kind of challenge. Keep steep terrain travel in perspective. If you have no sound justification for being there, don't be there.

#### Know your people

Who are your participants? Are they fit? Are they agile? Are they leaping out of their skins for action? Are they afraid of heights? Try to anticipate how they will handle steep terrain and what you'll need to do to keep them comfortable and safe. I watched E.T. with the kids recently, it got me thinking; with those long feet and short arms, I reckon he'd be better off facing side-on to the slope and edging...

#### The right gear

Picture Jack, lurching along with his overloaded, unbalanced pack and his Dad's clumsy steel-cap boots. Picture Jill, with her protruding sleeping pad catching on branches, and her worn-

out skate shoes slipping with every step. If it's not possible to match the participant's gear to the terrain, then match the terrain to the participant's gear.

### 2. Early in the trip

#### The old 'It's just a track' trap

New Zealand tracks often traverse very exposed terrain, with poor footing and no handrails. Negotiating eroded river-banks, crossing exposed slips and using wires or cableways are some of the obvious spots to take care. But even a two metre wide benched track can catch you out, if it is exposed. All it takes is a moment's inattention. With inexperienced parties, keeping control of the front of the group is especially important. This prevents them from negotiating steep terrain before you have a chance to assess it.

#### Happy peeps

Participants who are warm, fed and hydrated are generally happier therefore able to concentrate. While pushing people to their physical and mental limits can be legitimate, and is an integral aspect of many programmes, cold, wet and miserable people lose touch with their inner tahr. Avoid pushing their endurance and their steep terrain skills at the same time.

#### Play coach

Use opportunities early in the activity, such as scrambling down a riverbank, to observe and coach your participants' movement skills. Start skill progressions early in the trip. That way they'll have the skills they need before they really need them.

#### Deliberate movement

Give your participants a mental image that promotes graceful but deliberate movement, eg: a fancy French alpinist, flowing water, or a big cat, or the Pink Panther. Also explain the concept of three points of contact, only moving one hand, trekking pole or foot at a time. ►

## Footwork

Encourage them to keep their weight over their feet (or "Nose over your toes"). Coach them on when to toe-in (positive and secure steps), when to edge (soft soils/moss/tussock) and when to smear (dry, clean rock). Explain that while hand holds and teeny little trees are important for balance and security, positive footwork is where it's really at.

## Descending

When descending, encourage participants to face outward as much as possible to promote good visibility, but discourage butt-scooting as the shift in weight steals traction from their boots. On softer ground, descending sideways means they can edge their boots, while still being able to look down and grip vegetation/holds. On steeper terrain, face them into the slope but encourage them to stay as upright as possible to keep weight over those boots.

## Testing holds

Test every hold with a gentle but firm pull outwards. If sound, you can go ahead and load it downwards. This includes tussocks, ferns or tree roots. Coach participants to keep their elbows low and close to the slope, which keeps the direction of pull downwards.

## Thank god for little trees

The trick to 'vegetable belays' is Live, Large, Lots and Low. Check that your chosen vegetable savior is alive. Make sure it is a decent size. Grab as much of it as you can fit in your grubby hands. Lastly, grab it down at ground level to minimise leverage.

## Open the channels

Lastly, get people talking to you and each other before you get on steep terrain. People will need to trust each other and be able to communicate effectively before they get onto challenging terrain (see Communication below).

## 3. On the slope

Ask yourself, again, "Do we need to cross this terrain?" Never forget that there are other options. You can consider going around, retreating or sitting it out.

### Embrace the power of scouting

When the way is not obvious, be patient and prepared to scout, especially when descending later in the day.

- Bump-N-Go scouting: The scout is a little way ahead, when they 'Bump' into something horrible, everyone else 'Goes' the other way.
- Packs-off scouting: Everyone drops packs, and the scouts are free to nimbly investigate the options ahead while everyone else grabs a drink and a nibble.

## Terrain assessment

**The terrain above you:** Does your intended path cross rock fall or avalanche terrain? Look for evidence of past rock fall or avalanches. Does the route re-cross its own fall line, meaning group members could knock or drop stuff on each other?

**The terrain you are traveling on:** What is the quality of the footing and handholds? What options are there for safe rest stops, spotting stances and anchors for handlines? With scree,

because the material tends to be finer near the middle and coarser near the edges, it's sometimes easier to ascend near the side and descend the middle.

**The terrain below you:** What does your run out look like, and where will the fall line take people as they pass through different parts of the route?

## Fall potential

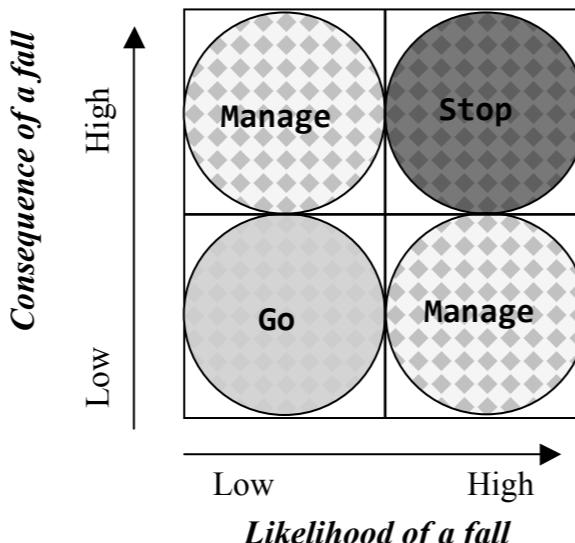
When assessing a route, consider the combination of likelihood and consequence. Likelihood is driven by factors such as footing, footwear, pack weight, participant agility, weather and slope angle. Consequence is driven by factors such as length of run out, steepness of run out, surface friction (ie wet tussock vs scree) and hazards encountered down the fall line (rocks, bluffs, flooded rivers, cheese-graters etc). Green and Red are obvious; the amber lights are the ones that require your focus and judgment.

### Low consequence terrain x high likelihood of a fall

You might not kill anyone here, but you still need to take care because the high likelihood means you've got a good chance of injuries from slips, trips and slides.

### High consequence terrain x low likelihood of a fall

Consider continuing but only if you can put appropriate precautions in place. Don't take this type of terrain lightly, you could get away with it fine for years, until the day you don't.



## Islands of safety

You can often break a slope into bite sized sections. Look for places where people can stop and be safe from both falling and rock fall. Then you can move people between these 'islands'.

## One-at-a-time, small groups or extended lines

### Negotiating a slope one at a time works well when:

- The route crosses its own fall line (zig zags) and there is a risk of participants knocking stuff down on those below them.
- Participants could knock each other off balance.
- You need to coach each participant through a crux.
- The threat is an avalanche.

### Negotiating a slope in small groups ('sticks') of participants works well when:

- The rock size is small (dislodged rocks will not achieve dangerous velocities or heights in the short distance before the next person in the bunch).
- The 'islands of safety' are big enough to accept small groups.
- Participants can't accidentally knock each other off the slope.
- The mental support of having others close by is helpful for participants.

### Negotiating a slope in an extended line works well when:

Climbing an open scree, where the zigs and zags are long, and participants pause at the corners to avoid crossing each other's fall line.

Traversing any open slope, where no one crosses anyone else's fall line.

### With or without packs?

Some situations lend themselves well to passing, lowering or shuttling packs over a short crux. This then allows participants to negotiate the crux pack free. The key things are to ensure that the pack passers have a good safe stance, and that they know not to heroically dive after a dropped pack. When using strong/agile team members shuttle packs across a crux, remember that they will be repeatedly exposed to the risk as they go back and forwards.

## Spotting

Spotting is an option where there is a safe stance at the bottom, and the clamberers feet won't get higher than the spotters face. The aim of spotting is not to 'catch' a falling person, but to direct them into an upright landing that reduces the risk of head or spinal injury. The spotters need to have a safe, stable stance with their packs off, feet shoulder width apart, and their arms and legs slightly bent. Their thumbs and fingers need to be together, rather than splayed, to minimise the risk of fractures or dislocations. Last but not least, they need to concentrate fully on their task.

## Communication

Encourage participants to speak out if they need help, or aren't feeling confident. Reinforce this with positive, empathetic responses when folks do share their fears with you. Also



## Advertise in the Quarterly

Avertisement	Format / Size	Cost
Half-page advertisement, black & white only	horizontal 186 mm wide x 132 mm high	\$115 + gst
Half-page advertisement, black & white only	vertical 90 mm wide x 273 mm high	\$115 + gst
Quarter-page advertisement, black & white only	vertical 90 mm wide x 132 mm high	\$80 + gst
Third-page advertisement, black & white only	horizontal 186 mm wide x 86 mm high	\$80 + gst

Advertisements should be in black & white PDF file format. No 'bleed' advertisements accepted. Colour files can be converted to black & white but tonal contrast may alter. Please enquire for affordable advertisement design rates. Send your advertisement to: The Editor, NZOIA, P.O.Box 1620, Nelson 7040 Email: [editor@nzia.org.nz](mailto:editor@nzia.org.nz)



encourage your participants to support one-another, and share tips and guidance where appropriate. Recognise that some people like to be talked through challenges, while others like silence while they nut it out themselves. If all else fails just ask them what they want in terms of support and advice.

Participants need a shared language for identifying hazards. For example, yelling "Rock!" if anything falls (rocks or water bottles or entire packs). It's tidier and more concise than "Oh F#@k, look out!". Tie that language to specific responses, such as covering your head and ducking into the slope whenever you hear someone else yell "Rock!" .

Lastly, remember to be a role model for the behaviour you want to see from your participants. If you don't want them standing closer than two body lengths from the edge, don't do it yourself.

## Summary

There is a lot more to steep terrain management than just handlines. You can begin managing steep terrain before your activity even starts by being clear about your objectives, by knowing your participants and matching the terrain to them and their gear. You can start progressions and early in the activity that prepare your participants for steep terrain before you reach it. Lastly, once you reach steep terrain, you can minimise risk by scouting, assessing the terrain, considering the fall potential and choosing appropriate strategies for moving your participants though that terrain.

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Hamish Reid

# The Hidden Cost of Carnage

I write this article with a heavy heart. In late October several alpine rescue teams assembled at North Egmont and despite the best efforts of the 30 or so people involved, severe weather meant we were unable to bring out the trapped climbers alive. It was an emotionally intense effort with those involved experiencing a range of feelings including frustration, hope, fear, huge disappointment and sadness.

When we go through trauma or loss of any kind, each person's brain interprets these events differently. The way individuals think about accident scenes can be similar but will never be identical, as the way our brain works is, to a large extent, dependent on our life experiences to date. Thoughts subsequently produce feelings and behaviours that affect the way we live our lives. Trauma doesn't have to involve fatalities to be disruptive to our inner workings. For some, witnessing a relatively minor injury might be enough to reactivate a memory of a fearful event. For others, feelings of responsibility can become so powerful that they might develop an irrational self-blame story out of something that they clearly had no fault in. Our immediate reaction to carnage is often difficult to control. What happens internally over time, however, we can influence through self-awareness and healthy processing techniques.

Pain is a natural phenomenon and it is expected that, to some extent, we will all go through times of sadness in our lives. So how do we recognise that we might be struggling to cope with a traumatic event? Indications might be prolonged feelings of intense sadness, guilt or despair. Changes in eating and sleeping patterns, withdrawal from social settings, a loss of hope for the future, loss of interest in sex, feelings of being punished or feeling like a failure are all potential symptoms of an unresolved experience. If we are no longer excited about getting on the mountain bike or jumping in a kayak, things we used to find great pleasure in, then perhaps we have been affected more than we think. Another common manifestation of trauma or loss can be increased anxiety levels. In the outdoor environment this can be around high-risk activities. Until disturbing events are processed properly, our brain can be on 'high alert' for situations that might cause a repeat of the previous experience as it tries to guard us from going through that again. Anxiety problems are also commonly associated with panic attacks and hyperventilation meaning a possible 'shut-down' at an important moment.

Fortunately we can have some control over how much an incident, be it an accident involving injury or a near miss, will affect us. By making deliberate efforts to process our traumatic experiences appropriately we can essentially reduce the potential unwanted side effects of such a traumatic event. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of our recovery is the extent to which we are self-aware, willing to reflect on what the event in question means to us and are honest with ourselves and others about what is happening. Our culture often sends us the message that it's not OK to struggle after a full on event and

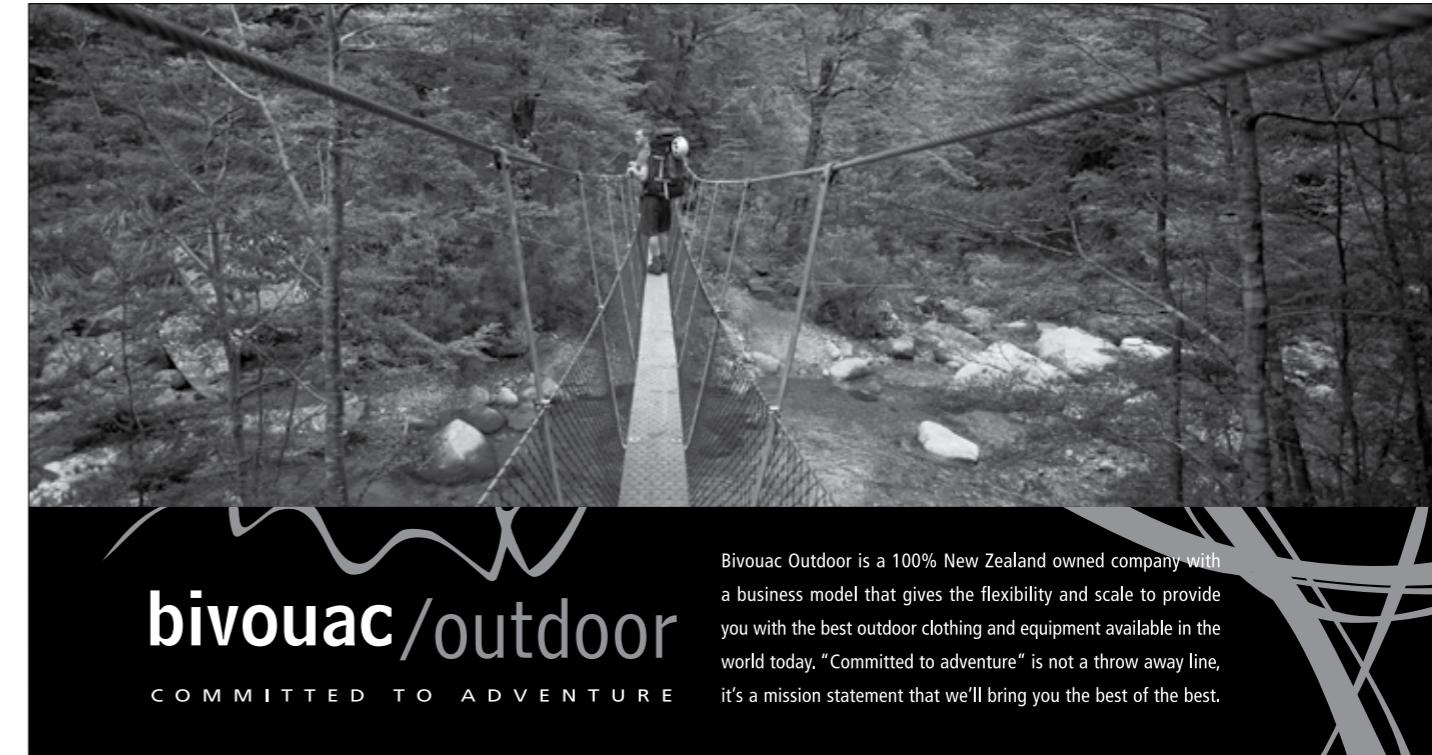


because of this many of us tend to ignore the distress and 'get on with life'. This approach might seem beneficial in the short term but can lead to a long lasting festering of unprocessed trauma.

In the outdoors we get very good at conducting operational debriefs to figure out what went well and what we might improve in the future. Too often we only pay lip service to what these experiences mean to each individual, often assuming everyone will be 'sweet as' rather than making space for those involved to verbalise their inner workings. Talking about the event, either one on one or in a group setting, helps our brains to process things in an appropriate manner. This is more conducive to storing memories rationally and healthily. Keep an eye out for those that are unwilling to talk things over.

It doesn't appear to matter whether the affected person is male or female, old or young or which culture they identify with. Anyone can experience significant disturbance following a major trauma. As they say, "If symptoms persist please see a doctor, psychologist or counsellor". A trained professional is often a vital resource available to work with trauma victims with the aim of bringing about a return to full function and the enjoyment of leading groups in the outdoors.

*Henry Worsop, Peak Safety*



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