

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North 4440 www.mtsc.org.nz <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

Issue 9. October 2020

CLUB MEETINGS

Club meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Street, Palmerston North (next to the Lido). Meetings begin at 7.30pm.

7.30pm Tuesday 6 October, 2020: Margaret McKenzie with Jill Faulkner on Old Ghost Road

A five day gourmet adventure traversing the South Island's 'Old Ghost Road' in March 2020. Presented by Margaret McKenzie and supported by Jill Faulkner



7.30pm Tuesday 3 November, 2020: Howard Nicholson, Ken Mercer and Rob Pringle on Finding the Dapple: Ski Touring in Mount Cook National Park

7.30pm Tuesday 1 December, 2020: Walk and Dinner

7 pm Monday 5 October, 2020: Interclub Photo Competition in MUSA Lounge

The Interclub competition, based on the winning photos from the MTSC, PNTMC and MUAC competitions, will be hosted by Massey University Alpine Club (MUAC) this year. The MUSA Lounge is across the concourse from the Library on the Massey Campus, Palmerston North.

Photo competition categories:

- ABOVE BUSHLINE (With no Human Element)
- ABOVE BUSHLINE (With a Human Element)
- BELOW BUSHLINE (With no Human Element)
- BELOW BUSHLINE (With a Human Element)
- HISTORIC
- NATIVE FLORA & FAUNA & LONG EXPOSURE



John Brock: Zeke's Hut 17 Sept

REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President: Rob Pringle

president@mtsc.org.nz

Kia ora koutou katoa,

It's hard to believe it's September already, and what's worse is that by the time this goes into circulation, it will be very close to October! In effect what this means for most of us is that there's not a huge amount of time between now and Christmas - so time to get the diaries out and start planning those summer vacations.

Winter this year has been an interesting time for the club as it relates to the club hut on Whakapapa. The ski field has been tasked with managing peak demand on the mountain; this saw a system introduced where half the car parks were released into an online booking system at 10am, and the remainder at 6pm on the Wednesday before the weekend. This was to ensure capacity on the maunga was in line with the license under which the ski field operates. It was also to provide confidence to those traveling from further afield that they would be allowed up the mountain. In the past, on busy weekends, road closures due to insufficient car parks were common. On fine weekends, often these would be in effect as early as 8am. While the booking system isn't a perfect solution, it has provided a degree of certainty to visitors, as well as a stimulus for those who aren't already part of a club to join up with one. Bookings are not required after 1pm at Whakapapa and 11 am on Turoa, allowing club members unrestricted access to their clubs. If you're not already a member of a club, and you're reading this – get in touch with the club via someone you know, or checkout our Facebook page and website.

For a while now, we've had a lodge subcommittee, which has been tasked with addressing the many complex and technical aspects of looking after a building within a unique environment as the Tongariro National Park. The aim was to ease the administrative burden on general committee meetings, to which we report back to once the details are ironed out. It's a great vehicle for making suggestions for how we can improve the place, and thanks to the team for their passion and commitment to this cause.



John Brock: Zeke's Hut 17 Sept

Recently we have established a subcommittee with a focus on tramping. This has been aimed at meeting with the key stakeholders within the midweek groups, to evaluate how the committee can better assist with organisation, trip leader guidelines, practical, and safety items – such as additional radios, looking into emergency shelters and the like. It's a useful vehicle for discussions and suggestions, and decisions recommended back to the main committee. If you've got any ideas that you think would benefit the group, feel free to make a suggestion, or, if you can't find anyone on the subcommittee feel free to reach out to Ken or Tim, who are both members. It's great to get a bit of insight into what would benefit the midweek and weekend groups for those of us who're often otherwise committed.

For those of you who are clinging to the remainder of winter, there's whispering on the wind that the ski field will remain open beyond its intended closing date this winter. We're yet to see anything concrete, but the snow cover up high is still good and will provide lots of opportunity for spring touring in the coming months. If you haven't tried it already, I'd encourage you to do so – the club has a couple of toys in the gear closet that will transform most conventional skis into a robust and reliable uphill traveling machine for quick and efficient access to the upper slopes on Ruapehu.

Stay safe out there, and remember, if you don't do it this year, you'll be another year older when you do.

Ngā mihi.

Rob

First Tracks: Howard Nicholson

ski@mtsc.org.nz

Ruapehu usually offers some great Spring skiing and riding in October. The snow softens earlier and the "off-piste" skiing can be a dream. There is no skiable snow around the lodge presently, but the lifts give fast access to the good stuff higher up. There is still a 1.3-1.8m snow base on the upper mountain (at the time of writing); however NIWA predicts that a warm Spring is ahead (<https://niwa.co.nz/climate/seasonal-climate-outlook/seasonal-climate-outlook-september-november-2020>) so best to make the most of the snow while you can.

Howie

Theft from Cars

Several cars have been broken into recently while left in the car parks at the Ashhurst side of the Gorge and the end of Kahuterawa Rd (i.e. Sledge Track car park). Club members are warned not to leave any valuables visible.



Beginner's Guide to Photography

Weekend workshop at the MTSC Lodge, Mt Ruapehu

13-15th November 2020

A beginner's workshop and guide to composition, focus and exposure in a beautiful landscape.

This will be a fun weekend based at the MTSC lodge and it will be an opportunity to get to know your camera in a variety of locations around the Tongariro National Park including the mountains, lakes, rivers and bush. We will aim to share our best photos each day and share each other's knowledge and skills. Themes will include landscapes, flora, fauna, sunrise, sunset and astrophotography.

We will aim to travel to the lodge on Friday evening. Weather permitting, up early on Saturday morning to catch the sunrise. Spend the day exploring walks around the Whakapapa Village and environs. Catch the sunset in the evening and the stars after dinner in the evening. On Sunday morning we will be free to explore again before heading home in the afternoon.

What Camera Gear to Bring; In addition to the gear you would normally take to the lodge for a weekend:

Essentials

- Camera (Full frame, APS-C or Micro 4/3 recommended) + standard lens
- Tripod

Optional (but recommended)

- Spare battery & charger
- Spare memory cards
- Wide angle lens
- Telephoto lens
- Polaroid filter
- ND & graduated filters
- Remote shutter trigger
- Wet weather protection
- Computer & card reader
- camera manual **and** Camera bag/backpack to put everything and your lunch in.

If you are interested and for more information

Contact: Richard Lander
r.lander@xtra.co.nz
021 840472



UPCOMING TRIPS

October Wednesday Tramps			October Thursday Tramps		
30 Sept	Jenny Williamson	328 6857	01	Norman Cooper	357 5531
07	Marion Beadle	323 3246	08	John Doolan	D 027 446 8740
14	Carolyn Brodie	027 358 6037	15	Syd Easton	D 356 7462
21	Bev Akers	325 8879	22	David Grant	D 328 7788
28	Harold Petersson	357 4284	29	Wayne Lincoln	D 021 068 5237
October Weekend Trips					
10	Palmy Walks		Easy	Mary Mercer	027 372 5375
24-25	Whakapapa to Turoa Ski Crossing		Technical	Peter Rawlins	021 678 0747

Trip Intentions: The email address for leaving trip intentions is intentions@mtsc.org.nz. Intentions sent to this address will not be acted upon UNLESS a party is reported overdue (e.g. by a family member, flatmate, friend, etc). The email is sent to several MTSC members. This information will be provided to Land SAR/RCC only if the party is reported overdue or a MTSC-owned PLB is activated. The email should include: a list of participants and their contact details; a brief description of the intended route and possible alternative routes; starting point; start date; date/time due out; vehicle registration; and any other relevant details.

10th October, 2020: Palmy Walks

Mary Mercer Easy 027 372 5375

This will be an easy social walk suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. We will start our walk near the Mangaone Stream, at the walkway entrance on Ruahine Street, and join up to the Riverside Track as we go. We will stop in at the café at the Esplanade for 'coffee and cake' before continuing on the river track to the Ruahine Steet exit. The last few kilometres will be a road walk back to the vehicles.

24th-25th October, 2020: Whakapapa to Turoa Crossing

Peter Rawlins Technical 021 678 0747

This trip will start from Whakapapa ski field, climb up to the top of Ruapehu and then traverse round to the Turoa ski filed and ski down. It is suited to people of moderate ski level and fitness. You can either skin up to the top or walk up. The trip will be dependent on weather and there are some logistics to work out so please get hold of me sooner rather than later to indicate your interest. We will do the crossing on either Saturday or Sunday, depending on conditions.

We welcome the following new members to the club: Lucy Ashdown, Marilyn Hewitt, Sarah Burgess and family.

TRIP REPORTS



Wednesday 19 August, 2020: Managone Walkway

Trip Leader and Reporter: Ian Brooks

Photographer: William Laing

Thirty intrepid trampers and a small dog set off to tramp the Mangaone Walkway at the end of Mangaone North Road, behind Te Horo. The group included one new tramper and two who had not been out for quite some time. Given that our region was now in Covid-19 Alert Level 2, it was deemed unwise to use the club van due to an inability to maintain social distancing, so a total of nine cars assembled at the northern end of the walkway.

The weather forecast for the day predicted rain, but although overcast, it was still dry when we set out. The initial part of the 7km walk is an uphill climb on a gravel track for about 30 minutes. There are good views to the right of a valley, on the far side of which grows an impressive array of tree ferns. At the top of the hill, the track descends, passing a container and a large digger, becoming narrower, with some small stream crossings, until the Te Horo clearing is reached. This was an appropriate place for morning tea, where we were treated to a demonstration of Bev's latest acquisition - a very light (c.100g) flysheet imported from the USA. Someone suggested that the club could consider purchasing three, one to go with each radio - but this was without consulting the treasurer.



From here on, the track passes through some very scenic bush, as it winds along a small stream i.e. the



beginnings of the Waikanae River. By the time we reached an elevated wooden bridge near the end of the track around 11.30am, the rain started and most of the party headed over a swing bridge to the shelter at the carpark on Mangaone South Road. A few hardy souls continued on up the track towards Pukeatua, but soon thought better of it, as the rain got heavier. After a hurried lunch, it was decided that the best course of action would be to return to the cars as quickly as possible. The track became noticeably wetter as the rain continued to fall, and most trampers were back in the carpark by 2pm. After a rapid

change of clothing, the party repaired to the Country Kitchen Café at Ohau for refreshments. This establishment is highly recommended, as it is large enough to accommodate a sizeable group and the

friendly service is commendably swift. This is not an arduous tramp, but everybody seemed to enjoy the day, despite the weather. Our thanks to the drivers – Ewen, Bill, Evan, Rod, Mary, Gay, Marilyn, William and Richard for the use of their cars.

20 August, 2020: Powell and Atiwhakatu Huts

Trip Leader and Reporter: Judy Swainson (Powell)

Reporter 2: Royce Mills (Atiwhakatu)

Photographer: Alistair Hall

Nineteen trampers met at the Holdsworth car park. The morning was pleasant but rain was forecast for later in the day.

Ten intrepid trampers set out for Powell Hut. The track is in excellent condition to Mountain House. The steep ascent to the hut could be more pleasurable if the step risers weren't so high! Raincoats were needed above the bush line due to a noticeable wind chill. It was nice to have the shelter of the new Powell Hut, a first for some of this group. There was no show of getting above the hut. Afternoon tea was enjoyed at Rocky Knob before the quick descent to the car park.

A very enjoyable day was had by all.



The Powell Hut Team

Nine of us took the easier option - a valley walk to Atiwhakatu hut. - Pleasant weather was enjoyed with weak winter sunshine; the forest was green, shining and resplendent after overnight rain. The friendly local ranger, Eric, was working clearing vegetation beside the track near the hut so we met up with him for a chat, both going in and coming out. After an early lunch we departed the hut at 12 noon. An annoying brief shower meant putting on our raincoats at Donnelly's Flat, and then not needing them five minutes later. We arrived back to our cars just before 2 pm. This was a familiar walk for our group, but one that we all certainly enjoyed again today.

Wednesday 26th August, 2020: Bushy Park

Trip Leader and Reporter: Ewen Cameron

Photographer: Richard Lander

Forty-One Wednesday Wanderers headed for [Bushy Park](#), inland from Kai Iwi, leaving the Manawatū in rather gloomy conditions, in private vehicles hopeful that the weather forecasters were right: the weather would improve. By Wanganui, the roads were dry and our arrival at Bushy Park was achieved under high cloud.

Following an introduction to Bushy Park and the conservation aims for the property provided by Mandy Brooke, the Bushy Park Forest Sanctuary Manager, the group split into two uneven sized parties. One big group led by Bushy Park volunteers, Lincoln and Esther, headed out to see some of the property from tracks not accessible to the public, while a smaller group used the public tracks to take their bird watching cruise.



Saddleback on Palm

High points for the morning's activities included: listening to bird song, which is sadly absent from so many of our forest visits; looking at lowland forest (which has been left "as is" as part of the local Iwi's wishes, since the property was initially settled in the late 1800's) and catching glimpses of the bird life.

We all assembled on a ridge in the Gum Tree Paddock for a leisurely lunch together under the now cloudless blue sky. Following lunch, we planted seedling plants,

collected from along the property's fence lines, into a section of paddock being retired from grazing (strong eco-sourcing) in memory of Rita Hodson, who was both one of us and a volunteer at Bushy Park. Most of us would love to have that B.P. soil we dug in our gardens! We look forward to seeing the results of our efforts as these seedlings become trees over time.



Tree planting

After the planting, groups revisited various tracks and bird feeders in the hope of getting a better view of the birds Bushy Park is famous for

before retiring to end the day over Devonshire Tea in the homestead. We were all very much at home in the posh surroundings with silver service and fine china and appreciated a talk from Dale Pullen, the proprietor of the [Bushy Park homestead](#), which runs independently of the sanctuary; Dale gave a brief the history of the homestead and the Moore family that built it.

Thanks to Drivers: Alistair Hall, Angela Baker, Bev Akers, Cheryl Dawson, Dennis Jensen, Evan Davies, Jenny Williamson, Ken Mercer, Richard Lander, Rod McKenzie, Royce Mills.

Host: Mandy Brooke, Forest Sanctuary Manager.

Bushy Park volunteers: Ester and Lincoln Paul

Rita Hodson, RIP.

Thursday 27 August, 2020: Kapakapanui

Trip Leader: John Brock

Photographer: John Brock



Wednesday 2 September, 2020: Bruce Hill

Trip Leader: Bill Milham

Photographer: Royce Mills

On our first outing in spring, 37 Wednesday Wanderers and 10 vehicles headed to Bruce Hill (Mt Bruce). After a comfort stop and re group in Eketahuna we headed off to the end of Mt Munro South Road to begin our tramp. Weather was overcast and a light drizzle greeted us as we arrived, so it was on with the wet weather gear for all.



After climbing the farm track and entering the bush we encountered a steady climb for about



an hour and a half with most of the group reaching the old steel marker peg indicating the top. Normally there are great views from the open areas; however today just mist and drizzle was to be seen. The light rain continued for the duration so, after a shortened lunch break, we made our way back down. Spirits were high despite the conditions and we all eventually arrived back safely.

Highlight of the day was the camaraderie achieved at the Lazy Graze Café in Eketahuna on the way home where we all enjoyed the

superb coffee and food and discussed our favourite topics. I must give a big shout out to the drivers who got us there and back safely and especially Marion who led us on some interesting roads on the day.

Thursday 3 September, 2020: Shorts, Deerford, Knights Tracks

Trip Leader: Carolyn Brodie

Photographers: William Laing and John Brock

A magical day with the southerly of the night before just departing as we arrived at the carpark; there was even some light snow as we drove in. The rivers were low enough not to cause concern or even wet us much. The lower level bush was at its green best. Climbing conditions were pleasant with sun shining from the side to start with. Higher up we reached the snowline from the fall of the night before. Snow freshly deposited on leaves and branches and on the track made for quite a beautiful scene. Beyond the bushline and into the scrub and tussock all the anticipated winter colours were transformed into white, with interesting growths on single tussock fronds and waratahs: a winter wonderland. The weather wasn't all that pleasant above the bushline with cold wind and mist! But who





mindful! Interesting to notice the thaw on the way down and “rain” off the trees for the later descenders. Alas, the view from the carpark at the end of the day showed the top ridge had cleared after we left!

Toka is always an area with several options. In the end with 20 participants the largest group of 7 completed the Shorts Knights circuit. Others went different distances up Shorts before returning and some incorporated the Deerford; two went up Knights and back. We were well equipped with several PLBs and three radios. The radios

were absolutely invaluable for enabling most people to know where others were and when changes in plan occurred. Thank you to the seven drivers and for the club radios and PLBs and for all the photographs that are appearing in my inbox and also to the intentions list compiler and all the happy trampers making it a great day to lead a trip with wonderful memories.



Wednesday 9 September, 2020: Stanfield Hut / Travers (A Frame) Hut

Trip Leader and Reporter: Margaret McKenzie

Reporter 2: Mary Mercer (A Frame)

On a wild, windy day 26 trampers set off to the eastern Ruahines to walk to A Frame Hut or Stanfield Hut along Holmes Ridge. As we neared our destination, over the gale force winds I heard an unusual noise from my car and it wasn't until I stopped that I found one flat tyre. So five people's tramping gear needed to be removed from the boot and spare tyre exposed. Many thanks to the tyre changing team.

Most of the group chose the Stanfield option but as soon as we crossed the river we encountered the most ferocious winds, even through the bush. At least there was no rain to deal with. The gale force winds blew down the valley the whole day so we all ended up feeling somewhat wind burned and wind tired.

The usual roadworks on and around the Saddle Road were a bit painful but we all gathered at Coffee on Cambridge Ashhurst to recover.

Not being able to use the club van at Covid19 Alert Level 2 does make the travel organisation rather onerous for the trip leader who has to depend on more drivers than usual. We still need to sit in close proximity to each other in cars and so I question the decision for us to not be using the van.

Many thanks to all who offered their cars and to the drivers - Richard L , Richard H, Rod, Jenny W & Bernard.

A Frame Hut Addendum: Five opted for the 600 m climb to Takapari Road with Carolyn setting off early because she was in a hurry to get back to Palmerston North. As the other four, Darlene, Richard, Ken and Mary, tramped our way up the zig zag track through surprisingly dry-looking bush, the wind howled overhead. However, for most of the trip we were well protected by the bush, the only worry being the thought that a branch or tree could fall on us. Luckily, there were actually just a few twigs blown onto the track. As we climbed higher the bush became damper and denser and the track steeper. Eventually we met Carolyn coming back down wearing her raincoat and, a short time later, we four also donned our coats just below a fairly exposed section of track. Fortunately, the last section of the track is composed of a wide channel cut through the two-metre high leatherwood. Much as I hate leatherwood, it does make an excellent wind break. After a bit under two hours of steady ascent we popped out on the road quite close to the hut. The A Frame Hut is being refurbished by the local community and was a welcome shelter from the wind as we ate our early lunch. We then retraced our steps down, down, down to the shelter near the car park where we met up with the front runners of the Stanfield contingent.

Thursday 10 September, 2020: Field Hut

Trip Leaders: Bryce and Raewyn Buddle

Photographer: William Laing



Norm enjoying a birthday doughnut



Tree Planting – Christine Finnegan’s Farm

Trip Leader: Ewen Cameron

Photographer: William Laing



Wednesday 16th September, 2020: Herepai

Trip Leader: Bev Akers

Reporter: Bob Hodgson

Photographer: Pam Dransfield

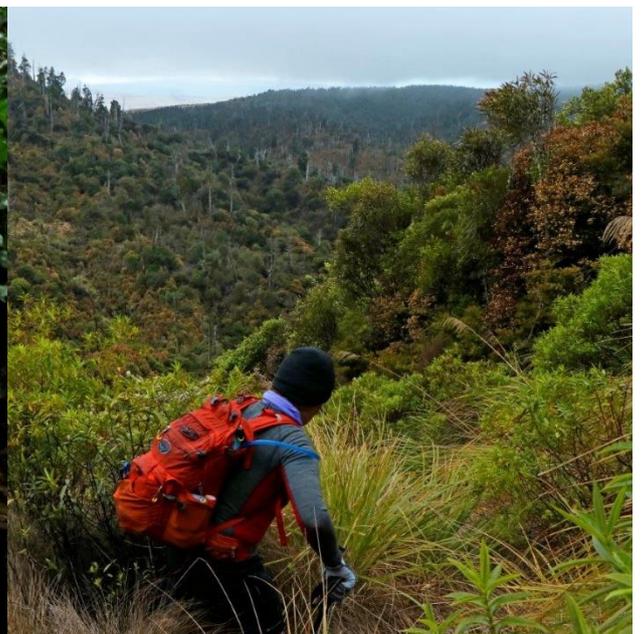
Twenty one trampers rendezvoused in Eketahuna then made their way via Putara Road to the start of the track. After the wild and wet weather of the previous few days we were blessed by a bright spring-like start to the day though it deteriorated later. The Club Bus was used with driver and passengers masked and hand sanitised. The five club radios, two newly purchased, were appropriately distributed as a stern safety briefing was delivered by trip leader in which all trampers were directed to take care of the person following them. The initial track to the first swing bridge was very muddy in places, a sample of what was to follow. Two thirds of the trampers made it up to Herepai hut for lunch, the cold winds making the hut shelter very welcome. Temperatures were noted to fall rapidly beyond the Cross Roads. The other third ate lunch a little lower down than the Cross Roads to avoid the cold winds. The wet slippery conditions were demanding of stamina and the going slower than usual. Several trampers fell and one sustained a cut to a finger that required first aid. The final hut party were slow to emerge as the demands of the day took its toll on some trampers. All were safely out by 4.30pm in light rain and cold and windy conditions; we were back PN before 6pm.



Thursday 17th September, 2020: Zeke's Hut

Trip Leader: Ewen Cameron

Photographer: John Brock



Hut Tickets for Sale

Hut tickets can be purchased from Howard Nicholson at club nights. \$5/ticket for adults and \$2.50 for youth (11-17 years). Information about Back Country Hut Passes, valid for 6 or 12 months, as well as the use of hut tickets is available on the [DOC web site](#).



Contact Details

Postal Address: MTSC, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North

Committee 2019 - 2020

President	Rob Pringle	president@mtsc.org.nz	020 426 2176
Secretary	Tim Swale	secretary@mtsc.org.nz	06 376 6556
Treasurer	Ewen Cameron	treasurer@mtsc.org.nz	022 0341180
Chief Guide	Ken Mercer	chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz	027 364 6475
Membership	Sue Nicholson	membership@mtsc.org.nz	06 357 6325
Newsletter Editor	Mary Mercer	editor@mtsc.org.nz	027 372 5375
Lodge Manager	John Lyttle	lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz	027 433 6307
Mini-Bus Manager	Ken Mercer	minibus@mtsc.org.nz	027 364 6475

General Committee: William Laing, Richard Lander, Howard Nicholson, Peter Rawlins

Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Hugh & Liz Wilde	lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz	021 054 2560
Gear Custodian	Peter Rawlins	gear@mtsc.org.nz	027 678 0747
Ski Captain	Howard Nicholson	ski@mtsc.org.nz	027 294 1941
Social Convenor	Linda Campbell	social@mtsc.org.nz	027 333 4493
Wednesday Trips	Bev Akers	bevakers@xtra.co.nz	06 325 8879
Thursday Trips	Syd Easton	eastonps@inspire.net.nz	06 356 7462
Facebook	Ivan Rienks, Rob Pringle, Karen Tutt, Howard Nicholson facebook@mtsc.org.nz		

New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Seconder who are current MTSC members and have been so for at least one year. New memberships are confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting. Prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. For further information or an application form please see the club website.

Club Equipment

Hire equipment: we have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, tent flies (small and large), snow mats, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies, food dehydrator and two bivvy bags. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. We have two personal locator beacons (PLB) for which there is no charge. Contact the Gear Custodian: Peter Rawlins on (06) 356 7443.

Website www.mtsc.org.nz

This contains club information, photos, contact details and back issues of this newsletter, Beechleaves. The club website is maintained by Howard Nicholson (06) 357 6325 and is kindly hosted by **Inspire Net**, a locally based company.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mount Ruapehu

The lodge is close to Iwikau Village, has power, heating, hot showers and is stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome. For Lodge bookings email Liz and Hugh Wilde lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz or phone 021 054 2560. To confirm your booking, payment must be made by cash to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410 in person or internet payment (please email to confirm before depositing) Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300.

	Members	Guests	The lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860.
Adult	\$40	\$58	
Secondary School	\$32	\$48	
Primary School	\$26	\$42	
Pre-school (3-5 yo)	\$13	\$13	

Booking the MTSC Van: For bookings: Contact Ken Mercer 027 364 6475. Cancellations should be made as soon as practicable to accommodate other potential users. A tent fly (in the passenger door) and a Personal Locator Beacon (in the glove box) are available for use free of charge on trips.