

There's always more to learn

It's perhaps salutary every now and then, for persons who go into the bush to review their past trips; there may be important lessons to be learned for the future.

Consider questions like; did I have enough clothing; were my feet comfortable; was I up to the trip or did it leave me exhausted and irritable; did I create any problems for other people; if I'd become separated from the rest of the party would I have known what to do? Honest evaluation may help identify skills you should practise and knowledge you need to learn.

Leaders too can learn a lot by self evaluation. They can ask themselves: in hindsight, did I make all the right decisions; did I keep people informed or did I expect them to be mind-readers; could I have done more to help them enjoy themselves?

Another helpful way of improving leading skills is to watch other leaders. It may be worth going out with totally different groups to see how they make decisions and organise their activities. There are many different styles of leadership and many different ways of doing things. It pays to be open to new ideas; some people have been making the same mistakes for years.

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council produces a variety of instructional manuals and pamphlets to help people enjoy the bush and mountains. The new edition of the Bushcraft Manual is a useful reference for anybody who wishes to learn more about going into the bush and the skills and knowledge required. There are also local Mountain Safety Committees throughout the country and many of these run courses in bushcraft, outdoor first aid, and leadership. It takes time to build up the necessary skills and experience to be self-reliant in the bush, but it brings wonderful feelings of freedom. Being sufficiently competent to help others enjoy the outdoors is also richly rewarding. Why not arrange to go on another trip right now? 🐦

For copies of the publications listed below, write to:

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council
Department of Internal Affairs
Private Bag
Wellington

Bushcraft

Single copies: \$5.00 10 or more: \$3.50

Outdoor First Aid

Single copies \$4.50 10 or more: \$3.00

Take regular breaks on your walks for rest and food — it makes the trip much more enjoyable.

Photo: Jack McConchie

Large parties can be particularly difficult to manage. The leader(s) must keep the group together and stop to let tail-enders catch up and join in the conversation — Franz Josef Glacier Valley.

Photo: G. McSweeney

