



# Water On

Newsletter No. 3



October 2012

## Awards Night 2012

Southern Rural Fire Awards function was held on Wednesday 26th September at the Winton Golf Club, with 100 people attending the celebration.

It was encouraging to see so many people attend, especially during the busy spring season with lambing in full swing. A big thanks to those farmers who attended.

The Awards function is an opportunity for Southern Rural Fire to acknowledge the work our fire fighters do and celebrate their achievements.

Awards recognise fire fighters attaining level Two and Three Fire and Rescue Services National Qualifications as well as individual recognition for people who have contributed to Southern Rural Fire over the year.



VRFF Chiefs Ken Keenan and Jim Ford chewing the fat

There are also awards for best kept Fire Depots, including equipment and fire trucks, based on annual audit results.

Southern Rural Fire operates with the assistance of volunteer fire teams based in local communities, coupled with agency fire fighters from organisations that have a legal responsibility for rural fire.

Due to location and work commitments teams often train within their communities or organisations and only meet during a wildfire event.



Jim Ford and Mike Grant catch up at the Awards Night

It's important to Southern Rural Fire staff that we acknowledge the hard work of our fire fighters. After all we wouldn't be able to function without you.

It's not often teams get together outside of a fire event and we feel it's an important way of connecting our fire fighters and showing our support for the great work you do.

Big thanks from the Southern Rural Fire Team.



## Awards Received

### Individual Recognition



Dave Taylor - Services to the Southern Rural Fire Authority Board (2003-2012)



Trevor Tidey - Services to Southern Rural Fire Authority (2003-2011)

### National Certificates in Fire and Rescue Services - Level 3



Michael McLees - Blackmount Volunteer Rural Fire Force



David Coveney - Blackmount Volunteer Rural Fire Force

### National Certificates in Fire and Rescue Services - Level 2



Stephen Milne - Southroads, Lumsden



Keri Tuna - Department of Conservation, Invercargill



Graeme Miller - Department of Conservation, Invercargill

### Fire Depot Awards

#### Category 1 - More than two vehicle or trailer kits



Athol Volunteer Rural Fire Force (91%)



Blackmount Volunteer Rural Fire Force (90%)

#### Category 2 - Less than two vehicle or trailer kits



Athol Volunteer Rural Fire Force (91%)



Blackmount Volunteer Rural Fire Force (90%)

### Fireman of the Year Award



**Warren Heslip**



Trevor Tidey receiving his award for services to SRF

***Congratulations to all winners!***

## New awards categories for next year

### First Responders Award

Next year's Southern Rural Fire Awards event will include an award for First Responders. First Responders are an important part of the Rural Fire Team and we would like to acknowledge the great work you do. The criteria has yet to be determined and we will let you know in due course how this award will be assessed.

### Leadership Scholarship

Leadership is critical to any organisation and personal development. Southern Rural Fire wants to reward leadership with an eight day Outward Bound Leadership course in Anakiwa including travel to and from the Picton area.

Good leadership should inspire and empower others to get involved and be the best that they can. If that sounds too fluffy, it's about how others perceive us, do they think you're a 'good bastard'?

Attributes which contribute to great leadership include integrity, magnanimity, humility, openness, creativity, fairness, assertiveness and of course a sense of humour.

### Rules around Leadership Nominations

#### Criteria

- The scholarship is open to anyone who works for Southern Rural Fire Authority. This includes First responders, fire fighters, crew leaders, management and anyone else, you do not need to hold a recognised leaders position.
- You can nominate yourself or someone else.
- If you nominate another person they must agree to the nomination.

#### Scholarship Guidelines

- The scholarship includes attending the Leadership course and travel to and from Anakiwa.
- The scholarship does not include payment of wages or holidays while on the course.
- The scholarship is only valid for 12 months from the time the person receives the award
- The scholarship can not be transfer to another person, paid out in the form of cash or sold on Trade Me.
- Attendance of the Leadership Course will be negotiated with the recipient and availability of Outward Bound Leadership Courses.

### Wally Woofers Awards

We are always on the look out for good Wally Woofter stories, especially from the fire line. People who have done something silly, funny or down right stupid (but not compromising Health and Safety) who can be nominated for the Wally Woofers Award next year.

### What is a Medical First Responder?

First Responders are people based in the community who provide initial emergency medical care until an ambulance arrives on the scene.

First Responders are part of Volunteer Rural Fire Forces; most fire fighters respond as First Responders, however within each team there are some dedicated First Responders who only attend medical callouts.

## Mike's Mop Up

A big thanks for all those who took time out from their busy lives and came along to the Southern Rural Fire Awards function. It was a night made great by all those who attended and we look forward to seeing a number of you at the Borland event being held 20-22 November.

Opportunities for fire fighters to get together outside of a fire event are few and far between, so make the most of these events while they are on offer.

## Training

Although it may not be fire season it has still been a busy time. Training will shortly be finishing as we head towards summer. We appreciate those who attended training and participated positively. Big thanks also to the managers and chiefs that ensured people attended.

In the 2013 year we are looking to make some changes to the training program in order to use our limited resources better. After all there are only three trainers in Southern Rural Fire and 300 Fire Fighters which need to meet National Rural Fire Authority standards in order to attend fires.

The changes to training will affect agency fire fighters and create a more flexible training programme for both fire fighters and Southern Rural Fire.

For volunteers we are interested in hearing ways we can make training more attractive and motivating.

Also this year we will be including First Responders training nights as part of the training package.

We have been discussing training changes with the fire managers in each organisation. The training program for 2013 is currently being worked on and will provide information on how training will work next year. This will then be distributed to every fire fighter.

## Weather Stations Upgrade

Southern Rural Fire has 9 weather stations around the Fire District. Recently staff have been upgrading these weather stations to provide more accurate and up to date data on weather and fire dangers. These services will shortly be on our webpage for everyone to use.

## Weather

Looking forward to the coming summer season the Met service is currently predicting a weak El Nino, with normal rain fall and wind events. In the next six weeks we can expect the drying effect of the equinoctial winds to continue. However it is looking unlikely at this stage we will not be in for the long hot summer we experienced last year.

## Borland: 20-22 November 2012

Calling all Crew Leaders and Fire Managers. *Come along, learn, laugh and do something different!*

The Southern Rural Fire Borland exercise is about challenging yourself and your comfort zone as well as refreshing practical skills that are acquired on the fire ground.

Want to attend? Contact Sally on 0800 77 33 63 or [sally.chesterfield@southernruralfire.org.nz](mailto:sally.chesterfield@southernruralfire.org.nz)

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Who's it for?</b>	<b>What's it about?</b>
Tuesday 20th Nov Wednesday 21st Nov	Crew Leaders & Fire Managers	With the help of Adventure Southland these two days will be about practicing old skills while learning new skills and developing your leadership ability.
Thursday 22nd Nov	Fire Managers	A large scale simulated desk top exercise designed to get you thinking of some of the challenges you might face at a fire event in southland.

## The Hot Spot

How are the fire fighters in your neighbourhood? This is an opportunity to see who makes up the SRFA fire fighting team.

If you would like to take part feel free to send me your answers to the questions.

**Name:** Fraser Field

**Nicknames (past or present):** Spoon - recent

**Which fire crew are you involved with?**

I'm part of the Rayonier Agency team. But I have been involved operationally a fair bit with Warren Heslip's team, who are real goers, very professional, fit as buck rats, strong, competitive, and cheerful under all circumstances.

**What's the coolest thing about your fire crew?**

Enthusiasm. Initiative. Youth. Sometimes the only way to stay ahead of them is by low native cunning, gained from age.

**What roles do you have with rural fire?**

When I first came down to Southland the roles were "gopher" roles for Mike and Elton. The last couple of summers I have been doing more operational stuff.

**Where are you likely to be found at 10pm on a Saturday night and what would you be doing?**

Well. More and more frequently, and especially during winter, you would find me in the fart-sack restoring my strength. But I have also been found, by she who must be obeyed, enjoying a ginger beer in some out of the way part of Southland or Otago, during an "explorative weekend". Like, say in a pub in Naseby, or on Stewart Island or somewhere. There are many corners of Southland we have not yet explored.

**Where is the coolest place in the world and why?**

To answer this one I had to get the Atlas out and have a look at where I've been. After some cogitation I settled on two places in NZ. The first was Port Levy which is where my great great grandfather settled, but you could hardly call Port Levy "cool". What is seriously cool is the top of the Kawekas. Kaweka J is the highest point in the North Island apart from the three mountains that count. Why is it cool? Well, the views are stupendous, right across the Kaimanawas to the Central Plateau and Taranaki on a good day, (and you don't want to be up there on a bad day) up into the confusion of ranges towards Gisborne, down east across Hawke Bay to Kidnappers and across the Ruahines to the Tararuas. You see all the central high country to the west, inhabited by those cunning little Sikas, or "Japs" that bark at you from behind when you think you've got them sorted. You see the results of 120 years of farming out into Hawkes Bay, and right down in front the heavily eroded eastern slopes of the Kawekas. In the Forest Service I helped plant up those scree slopes with mugo and contorta – yes, contorta – to stop them sliding into the Tutaekuri river (the Dogshit river) and depositing shingle all over the plains.

**How long have you been involved in rural fire?**

I hate to say this, but I was at my first fires – burn-offs – for the NZFS in Hawkes Bay in 1973. Then in Lismore, on the Whanganui, then for Carters in the North. More recently as a contractor and for Rayonier in the Coromandel. So next year, 40 years, more or less.

**Why are you involved with rural fire?**

Primarily as part of the job, being in forest management. But also because it counts.

**What do you enjoy most about rural fire?**

The combination of factors and issues and resources and fire behaviour and noise and immediacy that demands clear decisions. And the people – the laughs, the shared hard work, the comradeship, and that other corny stuff that Sally must have wanted otherwise she wouldn't have asked the question.



## The Hot Spot cont.

### If you could be anyone for a day who would you be and why?

Ah, Richard Hadlee. Why? Well, first because his feet stick out like mine do but he's famous. But he started his run crouched down, innocuous, innocent, but focused and precise. Then as he came closer to the crease he straightened up, menacing, dangerous, eyeballing the other crease. Woe to the batsman who did not have his bat and pad together, eyes on the ball, repeating the mantra, straight lift, move the feet. And then, the whole point of the exercise, the delivery: the sharp point of the attack, with all the skill and experience and training and timing and resources behind him, everything concentrated right there and then; release the ball, then nothing more to be done but watch the result a second later, look for the swing, where did it bounce, watch it off the seam, ready to appeal. And then, a dot ball, back to the mark, the same thing all over again, 150 to 180 times a day, each time just as focused and ominous.

### If you could teach someone one thing about fire what would it be?

We can all knock the fire down, but you have to put it out. You have to mop it up. And the only way is get in close to the base and dig the fire out and douse it. We used to call it porridging. It is hot and dirty and sometimes dangerous but if you don't do it someone else will have to, and other people may be at risk if the flank is not out. You need good signals, an attentive pump man to conserve water, a helpful hose man to pull hose around and spot for you, but right at the sharp end, you have to get in there, push the nozzle into the ground, feeling bits of wood for heat. Time after time, hot spot after hot spot, all day. Just like Richard Hadlee.

### What CD or artist are you currently listening to?

Jim Reeves telling the man to turn the jukebox way down low.

### What's your favourite quote?

My old man was King Country, through and through, in spite of his father coming from Port Levy. Dad always said to people he met that he came from the King Country, where "men are men and so are half the women"

*Thanks Fraser!*

## Process for equipment renewal

As promised in the last edition of Water On, Southern Rural Fire would report on how we manage equipment and resources across the fire District.

### Background

When Southern Rural Fire started in 2003 it inherited an array of equipment, vehicles and other resources from the different organisation that amalgamated under the Southern Rural Fire umbrella.

A Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Project was undertaken in 2003 and revised in 2008 to determine the appropriate number of vehicles and amount of equipment required across the fire District and at specific locations.

It considered the need to have the right amount of equipment and trucks to respond to a fire event while not over capitalising with surplus resources at each location. This project was adopted by the Southern Rural Fire Authority Board as a policy.

### What we have

Southern Rural Fire has 40 fire vehicles, 23 trailer units distributed in 32 locations around the Southern Rural Fire District, which includes such outlining places as Nasbey, Milford Sound and Beaumont near Lawerance.

On top of this there are radios, pumps, hoses and all the 'bits' that are part of fire fighting equipment that go in fire vehicles and trailers and they all need regular maintenance or servicing.



Keeping all these resources on the road, in working order and current is the job of Elton Smith. Managing vehicles warrants, regos, services and repairs can be a juggling act, even with help from Volunteer Rural Fire Forces and the Fire Service who have some of our gear on their stations.

As well audits on digger and helicopter contactors occur to ensure they meet minimum national standards and the equipment they have meets regulations.

## Our Thinking

It's true we can't have all the resources we would like to tackle a large scale fire in all areas at the ready all the time. It would be impractical to have that amount of equipment sitting in sheds on the chance it might be required. As well the maintenance required to ensure equipment is kept in good working order would be considerable.

Instead Southern Rural Fire has situated trucks in 32 locations across Southland with equipment that allows them to respond to likely fire events in their area. Fire fighters are able to call on further equipment and trucks as required.

Last years Waikawa fire was a good example of this. In the early stages of the fire management decided the Waikawa truck was not enough to manage the fire and a tanker was required. On checking the fire plan the closest tanker was Waimahaka which was only 40 km away. From there other trucks and equipment were called on as required.

In an event such as Waikawa, it is up to the Southern Rural Fire Team to ensure that adequate resources are provided but not all resources get diverted to the one fire so the rest of the fire District has adequate resources to respond to other incidents.

Southern Rural Fire is part of a national system which ensures rural fire Districts support each other throughout New Zealand. If we are overwhelmed with fire events other fire Districts will support us to ensure we get the help we need and resources we require. Who knows, you may be asked to help out in another part of New Zealand a part of this arrangement.

As has been mentioned, last summer was a hot one for Southland and because of this we experienced a significant number of fire events. However we were able to meet the needs of each fire and still ensure the rest of Southland had adequate resources throughout this busy time.

Sometimes it's not about what we have as individuals but what we can do as a group.

