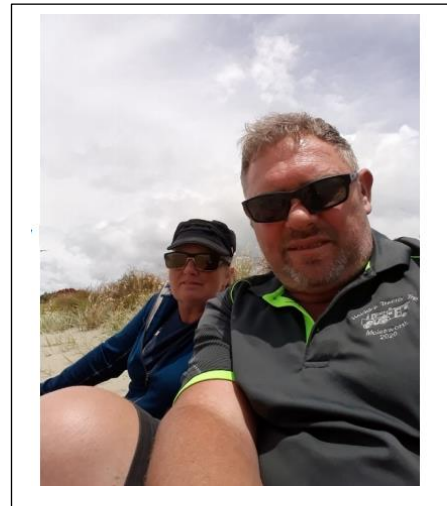


## Mike Stead

Mike Stead was born in 1973 at Thames and was raised on a dairy farm in Waerenga, a small farming community in the North Waikato. Mike has two sisters, one older and one younger. He attended Waerenga Primary School before moving on to his secondary education at Te Kauwhata College where he enjoyed sports and any practical activity. Mike now lives on the West Coast in Kokatahi with his wife Sue, a step-son Kaleb (22) and their daughter Lydia (11). Back in the 1980's, Mike worked after school on farms picking up hay and milking cows. After his school certificate year in 1989, he left and went to work in Forestry at the Maramarua Forest but in September, 1990, he was involved in a work accident which resulted in him losing his left leg below the knee. He also sustained massive injuries to his right leg, pelvis, shoulder and a moderate to severe brain injury. He was left with a 2 ½ inch stump partially covered with a skin graft but after two muscles were removed from his back and transplanted to the stump, he was able to mobilise although it affected his stability. Mike persevered and over the next 20 years he had jobs in the freight industry, agricultural contracting, fixing and selling chainsaws & garden equipment. In 2013, his orthopaedic surgeon, John McKie of Christchurch, suggested lengthening the stump. After this was done, he then drove milk tankers for Westland Milk for 2 seasons until the pelvic injuries came back to haunt him and he had to relinquish that job. He underwent further surgery to have two nerves removed to de-sensitise his stump and Mike said that once this was done, he finally had some comfort. As he goes about his life, Mike said he is drawn to people who have a positive outlook on life. FAVOURITE FOOD: Venison cooked on his BBQ. Hates Brussel sprouts!! FAVOURITE PLACE: Te Anau/Fiordland & can't wait to explore more of it. FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES: Hunting, BBQ cooking & photography. FAVOURITE MUSIC: Likes all genres of music. FAVOURITE WATCH: Mike likes to watch wildlife shows, documentaries. Shows such as Mountain Men & Life Below Zero etc. FAVOURITE BOOKS: Hunting and outdoor books.



Mike recalls some memories from his childhood as being heavily involved with sport, riding motorbikes on the farm with his Dad and thoroughly enjoying living life in a rural community. He said that his family have been very supportive towards him throughout his life, not just since his accident and they took him to many sporting events all over the North Island when he was younger, specialists and hospital appointments for years as he was in a wheelchair for a long time following the accident. Mike said that the hard times he remembers were “getting used to the real me” and people showing a lack of understanding. As he grew up, he felt like he could do anything and looking back on his life he said, “I’m lucky to still be here...so make the most of it” He feels the greatest risk he ever took in his life was to move to the South Island, a decision that he has never regretted. Mike has done some overseas travel to several states of Australia, Canada and the western USA. Photography has become a real passion for Mike and he is trying hard to improve his skills with this new found activity. Nowadays, he simply loves to get out with his camera or his rifle for some hunting and having family BBQ's.

*Mike, many thanks for providing an insight in to your life. I am so pleased to be able to publish the profile of one of our valued “over the big hill members”*