

Student seeks answers to expedition RUBBISH

Arian Lemal, a French student studying his Master of Environmental Policy at Lincoln University, is heading to Pakistan to interview climbers attempting Gasherbrum I and Gasherbrum II in a bid to understand why so much rubbish is left behind on expeditions to the world's highest mountains.

Lemal will be travelling to Pakistan on June 6 to interview up to 120 climbers for his dissertation on waste management in the mountains.

"My main priority is to find out if all climbers have the same perception of waste and rubbish in the mountains, or do we all have different perceptions," Lemal said. "Secondly, I want to come up with a policy for the Pakistani authorities on how to get waste off the mountains."

Lemal will conduct interviews at Gasherbrum II's base camp and higher up on the mountain to understand how climbers perceive abandoned materials, how do they react to the sight of rubbish, and what are climbers willing to do to help solve the problem. He hopes a consensus on what constitutes rubbish or inappropriate mountain litter or waste will be developed.

"Is it rope, anchors, food packaging, batteries, human waste, shredded tents, or perhaps the corpse from a summit attempt gone wrong?" he said. His findings might help climbers and trampers in New Zealand



Arian Lemal hates litter

understand what is appropriate to leave behind at a hut. On a recent climb of Mt Aspiring, Lemal visited Colin Todd Hut and found food and other items left behind by other people.

"The food might be useful to people stuck in a storm," he said, "but isn't that food just going to stay there? Is that then rubbish?"

Lemal is heading to Pakistan with an expedition and while there he also plans to take rubbish from Gasherbrum II's camp 4 at 7400m above sea level. From photographs he has seen of the camp, he expects to take two or three trips to bring all the rubbish, such as shredded tents, down the mountain. If he's got time, and energy, he hopes to reach the 8000m summit, which he said might help him understand why climbers leave equipment on the mountain.

"Tiredness from altitude might explain why rubbish is left behind," he said.

Lemal has been cleaning rubbish from mountains for several years now. He has cleaned more than 150kg of waste from Aconcagua and spent years in his native French Alps picking up after

trampers and climbers. He was interviewed for the September 2008 issue of *Wilderness* and this story can be read online at www.wildernessmag.co.nz, keyword search 'Arian Lemal'.

-Alistair Hall