



WORK REPORT – COW CREEK HUT

Project Leader - Derrick Field

1. Introduction

Cow Creek hut is a strategic hut in the Tararua range and is well used by trapper's traversing the eastern side of the range. The hut is located in the Waingawa valley in Tararua Forest Park. Being located 4 or 5 hours tramp from the road-end at Kiriwhakapapa the hut receives a fair amount of use. The hut is located on the valley route from Mitre Flats hut, the track leading to Arete Forks and also the track leading to the Roaring Stag hut in the Ruamahanga valley.

Cow Creek was built in 1960 and is one of the first S70 type NZ Forest Service huts built in the 1960s to support the NZFS deer culling operations in the Tararua range. Prior to the hut, cullers had used a tent camp for accommodation.

The hut is one of only several NZFS type S70 huts in the Tararua range, that are largely unmodified. Only two huts in the Tararua range still meet the original S70 design specifications. (Mid Waiohine and Arete Forks)

Below; Cow Creek hut during construction



The aim is to retain these huts as close as possible to their original design, so that they remain as examples of the huts used in the deer culling era

The work was done on behalf of the Hutt Valley Branch of the NZ Deerstalkers Association. The Hutt Valley NZDA have a DOC Management Agreement for upkeep of the hut.

Upkeep of the hut interior and exterior paint has not been done for sometime and both are showing signs of deterioration. Some hut piles were replaced by volunteers approximately 18 months previously.

One issue that is common to most huts of this era, is regeneration of beech and other trees that has occurred since the hut sites were cleared. This has resulted in huts becoming damp and encouraging mould in the huts. Some of these trees also present a safety hazard. Cow Creek is no exception, with poor sunlight due to the many large beech trees.

Photo below; Cow Creek 2018



Old NZFS tracks; A number of old tracks developed by the NZFS to support the deer culling operations were cut in the 1950s, 1960s. These tracks were maintained until the early 1980s by the NZFS. Several of these tracks are still used by tramping and hunters, to enable trips between huts and undertake traverses of the forest park interior. Huts accessed by these tracks include Carkeek, Arete Forks, Dorset Ridge, McGregor bivouac and Nichols. Over the years unsightly coloured marking tape has been used, along with some minor clearing of vegetation. Original track marking was using Permolat (venetian blind) markers.

2. Work

For this project, the team of Steve Lyttle, Bill Thompson and Derrick Field (Hutt Valley NZDA) undertook the workover 3 days.

For this stage, work undertaken;

- Clean and prepare interior walls, ceiling
- Repaint using original NZFS colour (Hakaterere)
- Replace shelf over cooking bench
- Bolt bunks to wall
- Install drum for wood burner ash
- Remove old cupboard door and shelves and install new wall lining and shelves.
- Vermin proof the interior.
- Supply firewood
- Paint toilet interior

Old NZFS Routes; remove marking tape on some old NZFS tracks and replace with white Permolat. Cut subalpine scrub where this prevents safe travel. A total of 31 person days were spent on three trips to undertake the work completed to date. Includes;

- Arete Forks to Table Ridge (enables access over table Ridge from Cow Creek)
- Arete Forks to Waingawa bush edge
- Upper Waingawa valley to Tarn Ridge
- Dorset Ridge to Carkeek via Upper Waiohine (part done)
- Carkeek Ridge to Park Forks
- Waiohine to McGregor Bivouac(part done)

- Dorset Ridge to Dorset creek to Cairn - near South King (not done)
- Park Forks to Dorset Ridge. (not done)
- Park Forks to Nichols (not done)

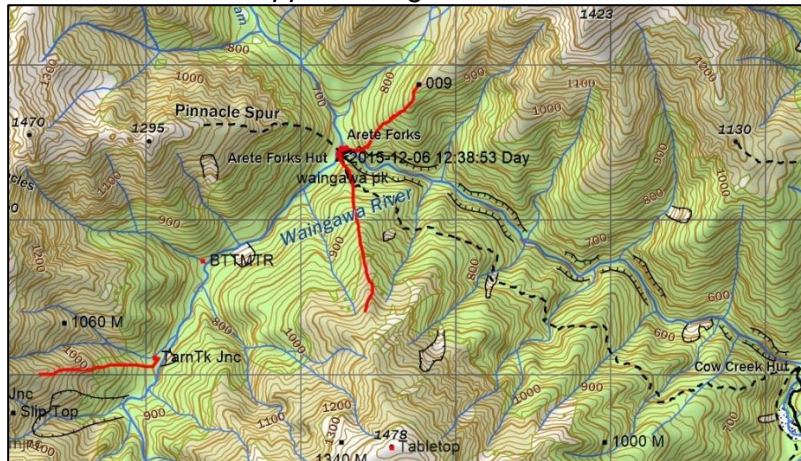
Photos – Interior repaint



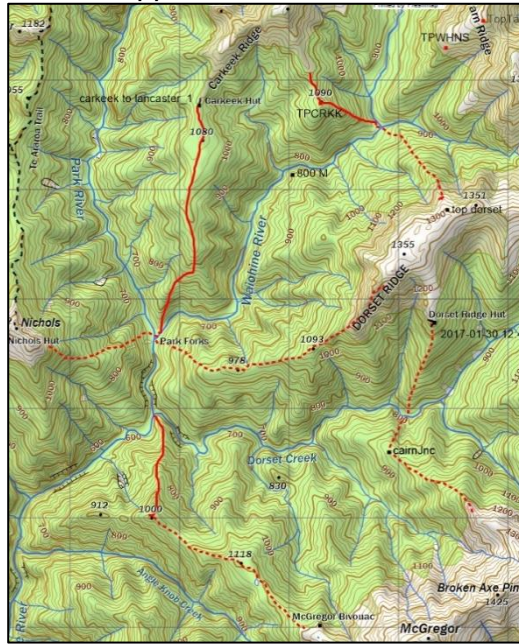


Maps below show routes remarked. Dotted routes are still to be completed.

Upper Waingawa routes



Upper Waiohine routes



3. Costs

Materials	\$1774
Food @ \$10/day	\$430
Helicopter Hire	\$5267
TOTALS	\$7471

NB; Paint and cleaning materials was supplied by the Department of Conservation

4. Future Work

Other tasks at Cow Creek hut that will improve the condition of the hut and retain the NZFS deer culling character include;

- Prepare exterior (removed rust, deteriorated paint)
- Repaint exterior (in DOC Rescue Orange)
- Repair window sash (rear window)
- Replace Nova Lite in roof.
- Concrete at door entrance.
- Fell dead beech for firewood
- Fell regenerating beech trees blocking sunlight and creating a potential safety hazard to the hut and users.

NZFS Routes; complete marking of Waiohine - McGregor, Dorset- Carkeek and Dorset – South King, Park Forks – Dorset Ridge, Park Forks - Nichols.

5. Thanks to the Rob Brown and the Backcountry Trust for enabling this project to proceed. And DOC Masterton for support.