

Info for the Upper Caples NZDA Hut

Hut background

Previously a DOC hut until Feb 2014, it was built circa 1980 and was one of the DOC huts available for the summer tramping season in the Caples. A newer and bigger hut was built lower down in the valley (Mid Caples Hut) and the track was made wider and easier over the saddle to make the track more accessible and quicker to and from the McKellar Hut.

As a result of this DOC work, the Southern Lakes Branch of the NZDA were given the opportunity to put in a proposal to look after the hut for private use for the club, NZ hunters and hikers. Your fees (donations) are much appreciated as the money goes into hut maintenance and general supplies for the hut.

Booking the hut

Easiest way is to check the availability online and then complete the online booking form

Paying for the Hut

The keys are at Small Planet in Shotover Street in Queenstown

Open daily in the summer 9am – 8pm. (03)442 6393 or you can email

info@southernlakesnzda.org.nz if you need them from Te Anau or at the airport (if you are helicoptering from Qtn airport)

Small Planet kindly hold the keys and take payment on behalf of the club. You pay when you collect the keys.

PLEASE pay in exact cash as there are no EFTPOS or credit card facilities. Ideally bring the \$50 key deposit in exact cash too as it is not banked just held till you return the key. You only pay for the nights you stay and we realize you may need to collect keys in advance and hang on to them while staying in another hut along the way, let us know when booking so we can keep track of the keys.

Prices are per person per night

- FREE if you are a local SLBNZDA member so it's worth joining!
- \$10 for National NZDA members
- \$15 for non members
- \$50 key deposit.

Facilities:

It's an old DOC hut so there are

- Bunks for 16 people and mattresses and some pillows.
- Good sized kitchen bench and 2 large tables and stool type benches.
- Meat safe
- Wood store
- Two drop toilets (away from the building behind the wood store).
- Wood/coal stove
- Gun cabinet (bring your own padlock).
- Running water inside the hut. (During winter this tap is turned off as the pipe freezes and could burst, however there is ample water in the water tank with an outside tap but until the sun comes up it can freeze on very cold nights so fill up with water before you head to bed.)
- LED solar powered lighting to the hut to reduce the fire risk, so no need for candles.
- Axe and 2 saws, please do not chop firewood on the decking – use the chopping block provided.
- Plates, cups, glasses, knives and forks and cooking utensils – the spoons keep going missing so maybe take one or two.
- Frying pans, plenty of cooking pots, stock pot sized large, medium and small and a skillet for meat.
- Two gas cookers (2 burners on each) with grills underneath, please remember to turn the gas off when you leave.

Location

As for finding the hut, there is no obvious path to it and a few have missed it, especially when getting dark although we recently placed reflective markers on the trees from the turnoff

Coming from the Glenorchy side

So with a heavy pack, it's approximately 3 hours to the mid Caples Hut, then another 2 hours to the Upper Caples Hut.

The track crosses large areas of grass with the sun setting right in your eyes and crosses small patches on forest each about 10 mins each, when you finally get into the trees for a longer period it's about a 50 min walk to the turnoff. The path is obviously newish – lots of rocks blasted away and not yet covered by moss. Look for the DOC sign saying "Caples Track" which is on the left of this new path. The hut is to your right below beyond the trees and can be seen if you look hard. Look for a stone lined junction in the path on the right and that leads you down through the trees to a clearing where the hut is.

If you miss this and walk to the Kay Creek turnoff – you have gone too far

Coming from the McKellar Saddle

You will pass the junction to Fraser and Kay Creek that has a swing bridge at the start of that track, about 5-10 mins after this you will come to a Caples Track signpost. From this direction the DOC signpost is on your right. In the trees behind it is also a signpost for Steele Creek Track. Look for the stone lined junction on the left (look behind you) and the hut is down in the clearing to your left.

Feedback

When you return, if there is anything you found that needs fixing, please advise the club secretary so we can arrange for a working bee when we next have a chance to go up there.

info@southernlakesnzda.org.nz

Helicopter access

The hut is managed by local NZDA club members who volunteer their time. They carry in most items or hike in to do repairs. So if you are taking a helicopter to the hut, or would like to help with anything at the hut while you are there, please let us know. We appreciate if you can restock the wood as members often hike in after work in the dark and cold. Thanks and we hope you enjoy your time up there