

# Strutt Bluff Track Project

## Description:

*Strutt Bluff is just above the junction of the Clarke and Landsborough Rivers. It is accessible by 4x4 track from the road end just before Pleasant Flat Bridge on the Haast River.*

*The track is used to get past Strutt Bluff in normal to high river levels. At low river levels, the Landsborough Valley can be accessed by two river crossings bypassing the bluff and then continuing up the true left. From the western end of the bluff, the track enters the bush at the end of the 4x4 track. It is marked by a large orange triangle on a metal waratah, 4 m from the river.*



*The track is now well marked with orange track markers. It wanders through a fern covered bench and then zig zags up a steep face to a ridge within the bush that runs parallel to the river 100m below. It then climbs a further 20m, zig zagging up a steep slope to a saddle above a very steep descent to the river 400m further on. The semi-benched track descends steeply and sidles down to a sandbar in the old riverbed.*

*The eastern end of the track is marked by a large orange*

*triangle on a post at a rock cairn on the sand bar. The track starts 20m west of this at the bush edge marked by another large triangle on a tree trunk.*

On 01/06/2017 Alastair Macdonald and I arrived at lunchtime at the 4WD track into the old Landsborough homestead and rendezvoused with Robin and Russel who had come over from Haast. Then we drove in both vehicles all the way to Strutt Bluff.

Robin and Russel gave us a bag of track markers and nails and left us as they had other work scheduled.

We then set up camp near the entrance to the track in fine weather. Next day armed with saws and markers, we set off up the track clearing ferns and branches obscuring the trail. The track markers were fairly obvious, as I anticipated but extra ones were put up where the track changed direction. In one place beech forest regeneration totally obscured the trail and we cut a track through this. After about 120m we arrived at the crest of the bluff where the original trail dropped over the side. Here there was a fallen Rata tree where we cut several branches through to continue the track. Then quite steeply the track switched backed down a face overgrown with ferns. This we cleared. From here on there were only intermittent track markers and the track was very overgrown. All this section we cleared and disked.



The trail then angled down towards the river with some steep drops to arrive out on the creek bed. I noticed that a false trail and disk led upwards just above the entrance here that had put us badly off route last February when I was here last. This was the original route up to point 384. I dropped a branch across this and repositioned the disk to indicate the proper route.



Out on the creek bed we placed a log upright with a large orange triangle on top pointing to the start of the bush track nearby. This can be seen easily on coming down the valley. In the bush entrance another large triangle was placed and the surrounding branches pruned back.

The next day we returned to check the track again and then

continued up to Harpers Flat. Coming down here last February my party had some difficulties in the bush just below Harpers. However this time, the Landsborough River was perhaps 2 meters lower and boulder beaches easily bypassed the bush section.

Harpers Flat has lots of blackberry that urgently needs spraying or it will eventually take over the whole flat. We walked up to the airstrip and found a very sorry sight there. I had camped there twice in January and in early February. Since then a party, probably a hunting party had camped there and left an awful mess. This is what we found

- An old campfire with burned beer cans and some AAA batteries in the ashes.
- Freshly cut beech branches used to make a lean-to of sorts.
- A drum that appears to have been a toilet still full of waste and covered with black plastic nearby



I estimate this occurred between early February and May. It's almost certain they helicoptered in from Makarora or Haast. They would likely have a hunting permit so you should be able to identify them. I'll leave it with you to take appropriate action.

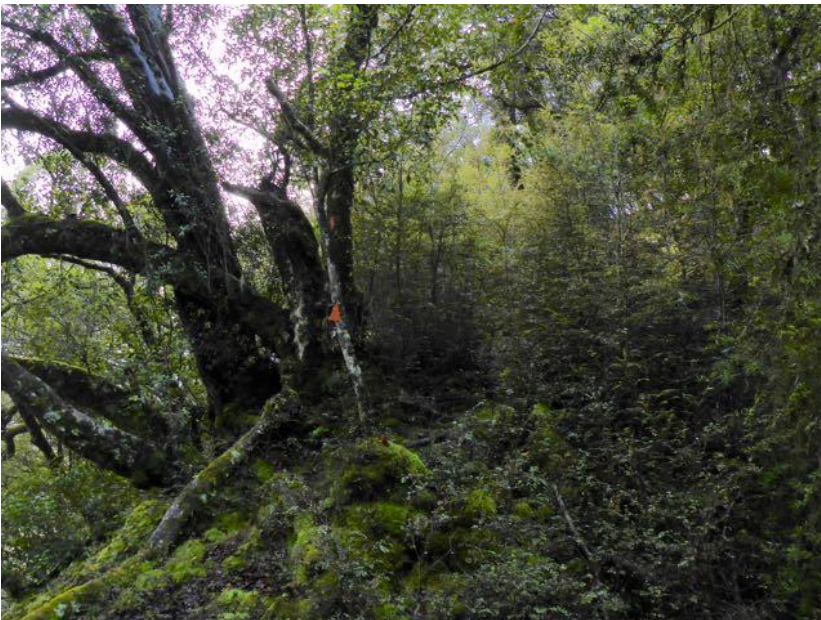
Lastly, thanks to DOC Westland for trusting us to do this project. We're pretty happy with the track now and believe it will be a big help to trampers using the area.

We have quite a few track disks left over and I was going to suggest we keep these, as we're keen to do other track projects over in Westland. We promise not to use them elsewhere without your permission, as we're well aware that use of them indicated a DOC authorised track.

My good friend Penny Webster is keen to cut and disk a track up the spur between Scotts Creek and Bluewater Creek to the 1300m bushline. This is above Welcome Flat in the Copland Valley. Apparently, there is a hunter's track already there that is now the preferred route up towards Welcome Pass. Many years ago I climbed up Scotts Creek to ascend the West Ridge of Mt Sefton but I believe this route is now very challenging. I only mention this now as a possibility next spring. I'll ask Penny to contact you directly as she has been down the hunters route. Alastair and I would be keen to help Penny with this project if you felt it worthwhile.



If there are any other valleys and remote tracks that need some work in the Haast region we might be keen to help later on in conjunction with Permolat Southland.



Yours sincerely

Dr Stanley Mulvany

Alastair Macdonald

