

Lonely Lake Hut

Renovation Project 2016

Last year we decided it would be a great project to upgrade Lonely Lake Hut. After an initial inspection trip an application to fund the work was put to the Huts and Tracks Consortium via FMC. A grant for \$4,500 was approved in December 2015.

Three days were spent preparing and painting the hut exterior in late January 2016. Existing drainage channels were cleared, and extra drainage channels dug. Vegetation was cleared around the hut, and the rock cobbling at the door entry area lifted and relaid. This work was completed by Gaylene, Geoff Spearpoint and Alex Tuffnell.

The main upgrade work took place 16th to 25th April 2016, with Peter and Gaylene flying in with 550 kg of gear and materials. This upgrade involved the complete stripping of the interior of the hut back to the framing. Extra framing was added to take the new pre-painted plywood lining on many joint positions. Full insulation of walls, ceiling and door were added. A new window was placed in the west wall and a new larger skylight added to give more light and sun. A new stainless steel bench was installed, with a large shelf built below it and a smaller shelf above it. A hut book shelf has been built into the wall beneath the new window. Bottom bunks were lowered for extra head space. One was widened to 750mm and the three other bunks widened to 600mm (from 560 mm). An extra hinged bunk has been constructed to provide a fourth bunk if needed. Small custom-made coat hooks above each bunk give a place to hang a torch. A new 1.6m lean-to porch over the door has been built to provide rain shelter at the entry. Coat hooks have been placed under this against the wall.

Peter and his son Andrew Fullerton walked in to complete a long day of finishing work on Saturday 7th May.

A big effort has been made to ensure the hut is mouse proof. In addition, a mouse trap has been left in the hut and a rodent bait station is under the hut. We have purchased two stainless steel buckets for carrying water from the stream, a broom and a small brush/shovel set. An existing axe and shovel have been left in the hut, as have various kitchen items (billy & lid, fry pans, toaster for primus, 2 x wash basins). Some paint, brushes and cleaning items are stored under a bunk.

Log book entries show that in the 10 weeks between our working bees there had been 54 people use the hut. With encouraging positive comments, people were already showing appreciation for the cheerful upgrade. We are very pleased with the final results of our efforts. Lonely Lake Hut is now a cosy wee classic backcountry hut that we are proud of. We feel a small hut is all that is needed in this wilderness area. Our maintenance and renovation work should secure the hut's future for many years. With increasing use of the area it is good to know that there is plenty of camping space, both nearby and at the lake.

There are photos and videos to accompany this report.

A number of organisations helped us to minimise costs, allowing us to complete the project within our tight budget. We have appreciated help from:

Resene Paints: Free paint for entire job (Karen Warman)

Coldstore Nelson: Free insulation (Chris Millson)

Placemakers: Special prices on all the building materials, plus free delivery of goods

Waitapu Engineering: Metal work assistance

DOC Takaka: Assistance with heli flights, tools etc and good support of the project
(Neil Murray)

Special thanks to Alex Tuffnell and Geoff Spearpoint for 3 long days of work on-site, and to Andrew Fullerton for a full day of finishing work.

Peter, Gaylene and the above volunteers have collectively spent approximately 350 hours preparing and working on-site at Lonely Lake. This time does not include planning, travel, and walking times.

Peter Fullerton, Gaylene Wilkinson

10 May 2016