

## ROUTE BURN TRACK

260 Series Maps: Sheets D40, D41 and E40

Topo50 Maps: CB09 Hollyford

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

### How to get to START:

- There are clear road signs marking the 25km road route from Glen Orchy (**WP14** 324masl) to the start of the Routeburn Track
- As can be seen opposite the route heads due south then, with a series of dog-leg turns, crosses the wide gravelly Rees River then heads NW following the Route Burn
- In approximately 20 minutes the Mount Aspiring National Park is entered and five minutes later the Routeburn Shelter (**WP15** 477masl) with car park and toilets is reached.

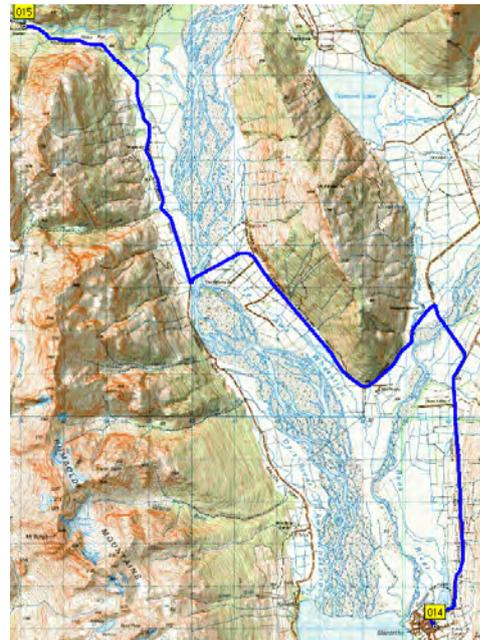
**Rough Description:** A moderate 2 nights and 3 days tramp which, though best done in good weather, can be tackled when Fiordland throws all the water it can at you. Day one comprises 11km of steady climb of 530metres through beech forest on a good track passing the Routeburn Flats Hut (**WP22** 704masl) then up to the Routeburn Falls Hut (**WP25** 993masl).

Overall on Day 2 the 5 hour / 11.6km walk leads to an overall loss of about 90metres with about 600metres of climbing to reach a high point of 1307metres over the Harris Saddle where there is a shelter hut (**WP30** 1251masl) which proves most welcome during inclement weather. The final few kilometres down to the Mackenzie Hut (**WP36** 906masl) seems to take for ever.

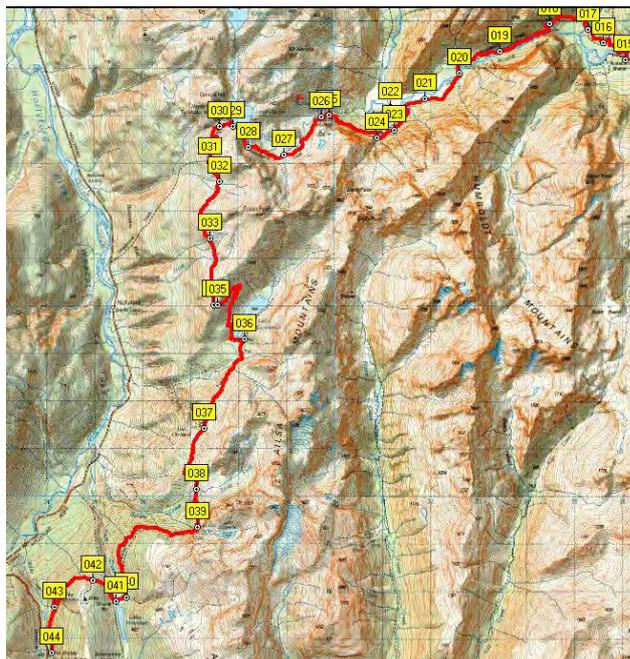
Day 3 does have some good scenery but all that was on show for the TTC were waterfalls – and they were magnificent, though it did mean getting wet. Overall this 11+ km day takes 4 hours with altitude dropping from just over 1000 to 544 metres at the Divide car park at the end. The Earland Falls in particular were spectacular to scary in volume and noise.

The total distance walked was just over 34 kilometres in a total walking time of just over 12 hours

### Access



### Google and Map with GPS data



### Day 1: Routeburn Shelter to Routeburn Falls Hut

The Routeburn Shelter (**WP15** 477masl) in the car park at the start is well worth browsing round before setting out; for a start the toilets must be the most luxurious ever built by DOC for a use by out-door people. However there are a lot of good information boards and these should be studied as there is plenty of time.

From the car park the first feature on the track is a Didymo information board plus hand sprays for use by walkers and trampers. Within minutes there is swing bridge on this manicured track through rather wet, beech forest and within 20 minutes there is a T-junction (**WP16** 490masl) with the Sugar Loaf Track. Five minutes later there is another T-junction with a Nature Walk just before a swing bridge over the Sugar Loaf Stream – there are no slopes involved at all so far. After about 50 minutes there is a wooden bridge (**WP18** 596masl) over a mini-waterfall at the top of long ascent then the track climbs again to reveal the Route Burn in a fabulous gorge on the left hand side; the route parallels this gorge for about 30 minutes. The track now levels off about 50 metres before a minor Y-junction (**WP19** 668masl) – using the right (straight ahead) option leads on to the Falls Hut which is signposted and 5 min down here there is a waterfall on the bluff on the right hand side.

### Routeburn Shelter

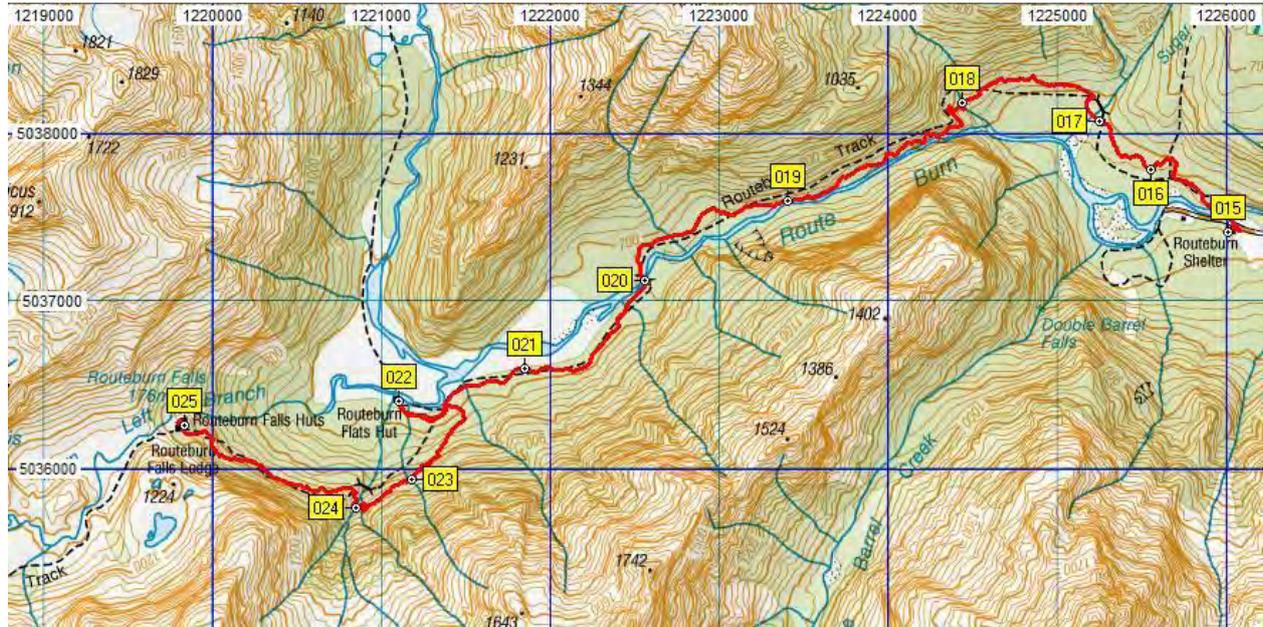


A long swing bridge (WP20 694masl) is crossed short of two hours then five minutes later there is another, smaller bridge before the valley opens up and the “flats” are entered (WP21 706masl). The path is then pretty level and easy going through pleasant woods to arrive at the Routeburn Flats Hut (WP22 704masl) minutes after passing a T-junction on the left which is the route to follow to get to the Falls Hut. Smoko can be had at the picnic table in front of the Flats Hut. This hut has 20 beds and is not a Great Walk Hut.

### Routeburn Flats



### Map & Google plus GPS data: Day 1

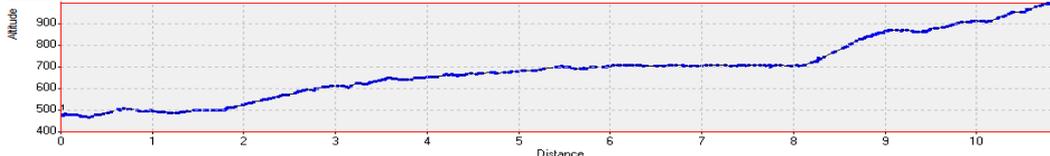


### Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
015	2136062	5599368	477	Drop off Mt Aspiring park, Didymo spray then swing bridge on manicured track
016	2135598	5599736	490	9:30: 25 min, at T-junction for Sugar Loaf track
017	2135295	5600024	499	9:37: T-junction with Nature Walk track then swing bridge over Sugar Loaf stream
018	2134485	5600136	596	9:55: Wood bridge 50min on mini falls after long ascent then up again with spectacular gorge on LHS
019	2133456	5599553	668	10:33 Almost level 50m short of Y-junction to Flats Hut and the Gorge, waterfall on right branch
020	2132610	5599086	694	10:54 One hour 50min, long swing bridge with smaller one 5 min later
021	2131894	5598554	706	11:09 Just over 2 hrs and on the “flats” in the open
022	2131149	5598362	704	11:25 Two hrs 30min at picnic table in front of Flats Hut. Backtrack then go uphill to right
023	2131227	5597898	840	11:59 Swing bridge, 3 hrs after fair grunt up then rough path to wood bridge on tumbling stream
024	2130893	5597723	866	12:10 Swing bridge, Emily Creek then rockfall area from landslide (1994) and up steep rock staircase
025	2129880	5598214	933	12:47 Routeburn Falls Hut

### NZTM

Easting	Northing
1226017	5037419
1225552	5037786
1225248	5038075
1224437	5038186
1223407	5037602
1222560	5037133
1221844	5036601
1221098	5036407
1221176	5035943
1220842	5035768
1219827	5036259



Total Distance : 10.911 Km  
 Minimum Altitude : 467 Meters  
 Maximum Altitude : 996 Meters

## Emily Creek



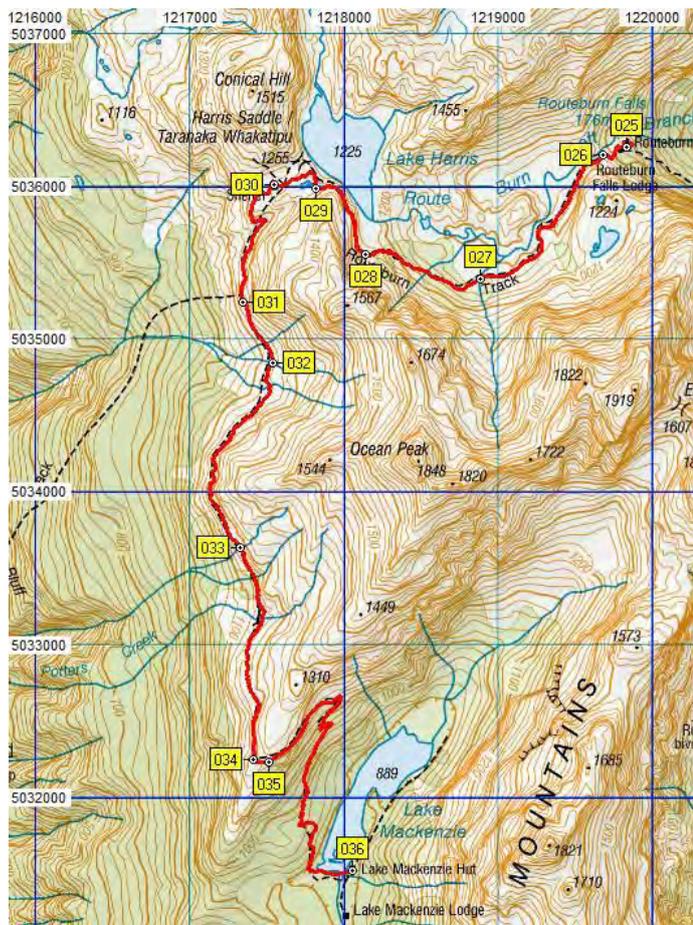
The Flats Hut is a normal back-country hut and less expensive than the great walk huts and there is no need to book. After smoko backtrack to the T-junction and go right uphill where a fair "grunt" commences and leads to a swing bridge (WP23 840masl). Immediately after this there is tricky grunt up a very rocky section of track to a high wooden bridge over a tumbling stream. Emily Creek (WP24 866masl) is crossed at about 3 hours walking and the view back to the "flats" is good. After this the track runs under the bluffs then a huge "rock-fall" or land-slip area is crossed and 15 minutes later there is a wet, tricky rock staircase to negotiate – take care. After about 3:40 walking the Routeburn Falls Hut (WP25 993masl) is arrived at. The Hut with the curtains upslope is the high class accommodation of the guided walks!

## Rock-fall Area



The Falls hut is modern with good accommodation though the upper bunks are pretty high for Hobbits.

## Map with GPS Data: Day 2



## Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
025	2129775	5598450	993	12:47 Routeburn Falls Hut
026	2129629	5598399	1028	ROUTE BURN Day 2: Fifteen min steep grunt to top of Falls in solid rain
027	2128831	5597592	1116	9:24 Bridge after 45 min walking
028	2128083	5597754	1270	10:01 Long grunt up to overlook Lake Harris off to right (N)
029	2127773	5598192	1269	10:20 Holding height and pass DOC "Fragile Area" notice
030	2127493	5598212	1251	10:35 Loop round and lose a few metres to reach Harris Saddle Hut, pump flushing lool
031	2127300	5597442	1150	11:07 Solid downpour - junction with "Deadman's" Track
032	2127487	5597046	1123	11:20 No visibility apart from horizontal water (rain) - bridge
033	2127277	5595841	1173	11:53 Still very wet and no notes - yet another waterfall and bridge
034	2127354	5594447	1194	12:27 Track goes hard left on orange marker to cross rocky ridge then descend
035	2127463	5594438	1209	12:35 High point with enough visibility to see Mackenzie Hut in valley below plus zig zag descent
036	2128000	5593723	906	13:40 Mackenzie Hut in 5 hours after never ending zig zag descent then rocky through forest

## NZTM

Easting	Northing
1219827	5036259
1219680	5036208
1218882	5035399
1218132	5035561
1217822	5035999
1217541	5036018
1217348	5035248
1217536	5034851
1217326	5033645
1217405	5032249
1217514	5032240
1218052	5031524



Total Distance : 11.580 Km  
 Minimum Altitude : 902 Meters  
 Maximum Altitude : 1307 Meters

## Day 2: Routeburn Falls Hut to Lake Mackenzie Hut

It has to be admitted that the notes for Day 2 were taken virtually under-water as Fiordland demonstrated what a wet day is like and the TTC considered establishing the High Level Sub-aqua Walkers. Despite the conditions this is a good day especially if one likes waterfalls.

The day starts with a 15 minute grunt uphill to pass the Routeburn Falls then it is a steady grunt of a climb until Lake Harris (**WP28** 1270masl) appears (through the cloud) off to the right (North). From here the track holds its height to pass through a "fragile area" on the Harris Saddle which is marked by a DOC notice.

After this there is a gentle descent as the path loops round to reach the Harris Saddle Shelter (**WP30** 1251masl). There is a toilet behind this very welcome hut and the toilet has a "flushing" loo operated by a pump! Refer to the last page of this document for a small side trip which can be done from here.

The descent starts immediately on leaving the shelter with some steep zig zags and steps all of which are a bit exposed but the track is soon in the lee of the hill and the rest is pretty well protected from any wind blowing. The waypoints taken from here on were more for "time checks" as little could be seen in the driving rain. **WP31** 1150masl is at the T-junction with, one assumes the appropriately named, "Deadman's Track".

The next very obvious feature (**WP34** 1194masl) is where the track turns hard left with large orange markers to cross a rocky ridge before the serious descending commences.

The track is a bit narrow, steep and tricky here but soon eases and, if there is any view, the Mackenzie Hut and the endless zig zags ahead can be seen from an obvious high point (**WP35** 1209masl). The track goes almost 1 kilometre to the NE before starting zig-zagging to the south.

This descent takes an hour with 200 metres of altitude being lost on the endless zig zags which eventually enter the tree line. However, from here on it seems more frustrating and never ending on pretty rough track – but DOC are currently upgrading this. The Mackenzie Hut (**WP36** 906masl) was reached in exactly 5 hours walking from the Falls Hut.

The Mackenzie Hut (50 beds) is in need of replacing as it is not too smart or designed to deal with the numbers of, often wet, trampers that pass through this area. Pegs on the wall behind a mini-solid fuel stove are no match for a ceiling mounted rack as found in most huts nowadays. The kitchen area is OK but social and dining areas are inadequate. There is one bunk room above the kitchen and another in a separate building.

### Chinese Laundry



From here it is a reasonably gentle descent to reach the Howden Hut (**WP41** 708 masl) arriving there just within the predicted walking time of 3 hours. The Howden Lake was so high after the non-stop rainfall that it was actually over-spilling and starting to flood the area close to the hut.

### Routeburn Falls



### Wet Wet Wet



A ten minute walk along parallel to Lake Mackenzie comes to the DOC campsite from where there are very good views of Lake Mackenzie.

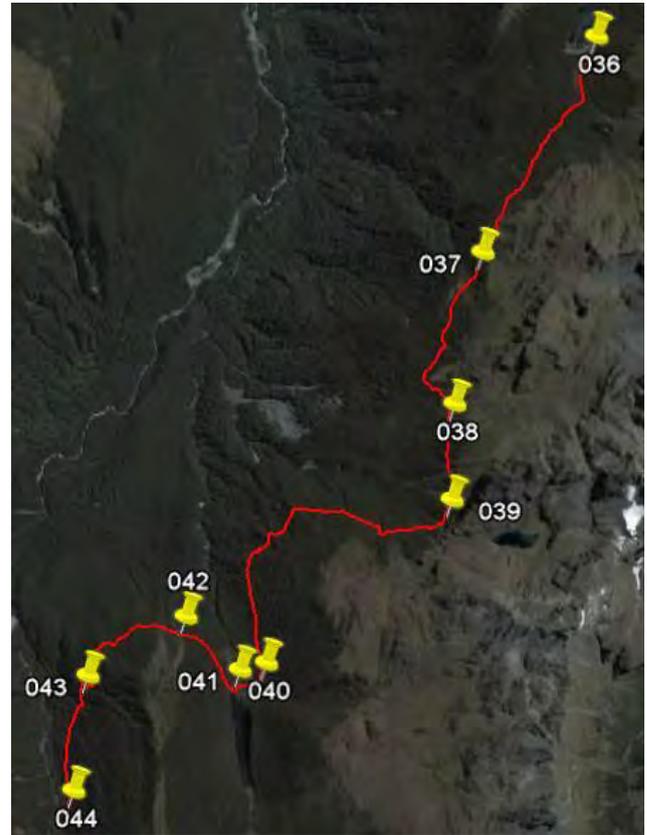
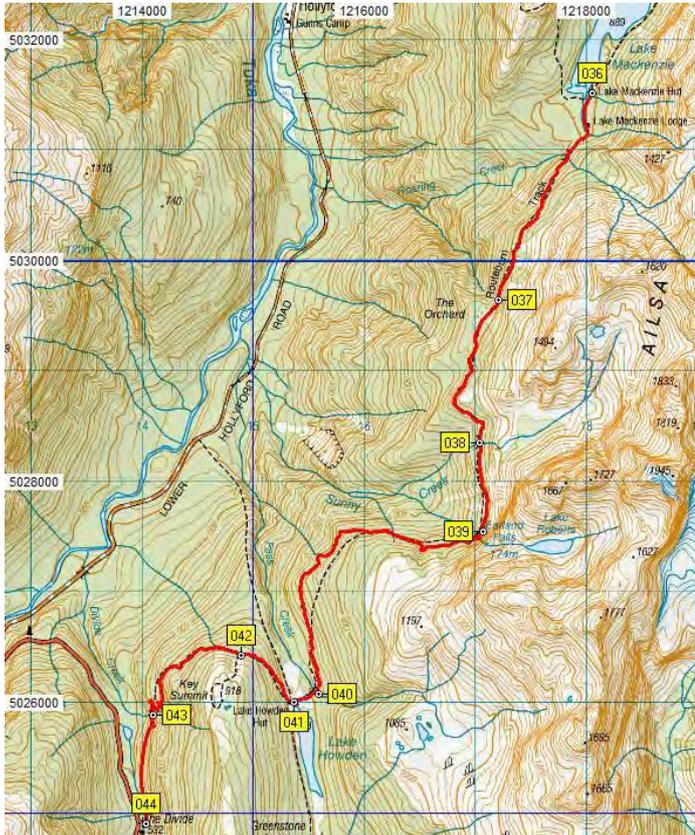
## Day 3: Mackenzie Hut to the Divide

On leaving the hut there is a bit of level walking to pass a couple of buildings including the new, palatial Guided Walks Hut then there is a fair grunt up the rather rough track which is currently being upgraded by DOC.

About 45 minutes into the walk there are views (on a good day) from a valley head (**WP37** 1005masl) just before entering the sign-posted "orchard" – meadows!

A moderately large waterfall on Sunny Creek (**WP38** 1020masl) is but one of many great falls on this day with the most spectacular – if not frightening – being the Earland Falls (**WP39** 996masl), the noise and "air-blasting" from these falls being so great that only the foolish would have ventured too close on the normal path before routing downhill on the flood detour path. This little detour was an adventure on its own with the full force of the water continually beating down.

## Map & Google with GPS Data – Day 3

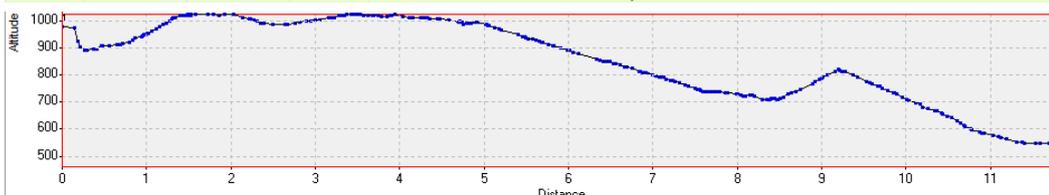


### Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
036	2128000	5593723	906	13:40 Mackenzie Hut in 5 hours after never ending zig zag descent then rocky through forest
037	2127153	5591852	1005	ROUTEBURN Day 3 Forty five min walk, in valley head with some view just before the "Orchard"
038	2126991	5590564	1020	9:37 Waterfall on Sunny Creek
039	2127016	5589758	996	9:55 Detour track down stream on massive Earland Falls
040	2125536	5588294	722	10:59:11 Waterfall on Pass Creek
041	2125319	5588222	708	11:02: Smoko at Howden Hut with overflowing lake
042	2124838	5588643	817	11:39 T-Junction off left for Key Summit
043	2124043	5588099	600	12:06 Bridge
044	2123979	5587124	544	12:21 The Divide and end of tramp in 4 hours solid rain

### NZTM

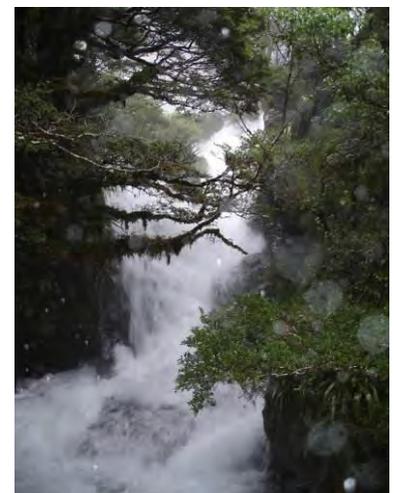
Easting	Northing
1218052	5031524
1217205	5029650
1217043	5028360
1217069	5027552
1215588	5026086
1215371	5026014
1214889	5026435
1214093	5025889
1214030	5024913



Total Distance : 11,841 Km  
 Minimum Altitude : 269 Meters  
 Maximum Altitude : 1025 Meters

The Howden Hut is smaller with only 28 beds, is not a Great Walk Hut and, on this tramp, TTC had smoko here in the shelter of the verandah. The tramp continues with quite a steep grunt up a rather wet, muddy tack for 15 minutes or so to reach a T-junction (**WP42** 817masl) where, by going left, Key Summit can be visited. The walking is then easier and a generally gentle descent continues for 45 minutes or so. The end of the track is being approached after crossing a bridge (**WP43** 600masl) and road traffic can be heard. The track then closely parallels Divide Creek to emerge into the Divide car park on the Te Anau to Milford highway.

### Wet detour under Earland Falls



### Side Trip

A side trip that can be done on a clear-weather day is up to the top of Conical Hill whilst at the Harris Saddle Shelter. The track for this extra small extension walk goes off right from the main track just past the shelter.

As can be seen whilst walking though there are two shelters at Harris Saddle; the one on the left is the normal DOC hut whilst the one on the right is for the "guided walkers".

### Notes:

- **GPS** = Garmin GPSmap 60CSx on **Geodetic datum 1949**
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level as recorded by GPS unit