# Copland Track Heritage Assessment and Baseline Inspection Report

### Prepared for South Westland/Webeka Area Office

Jackie Breen, TSO Historic Resources, West Coast/Tai Poutini Conservancy

**JULY 2007** 





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Cover: Harry Scaese on 'Roany' leading a pack team up the Copland Track - 1930s
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### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Copland Track was constructed over a period of 12 years from 1901 to 1913, to provide a tourist track to link the West Coast with the Hermitage at Mt. Cook/Aoraki. The track lies in Westland/*Tai Poutini* National Park and is a key visitor site in the West Coast Conservancy, providing unique access into a South Westland montane, alpine environment and to the hot pools at Welcome Flat. The Copland Track and Welcome Flat Bridge are actively managed for their historic values.

A historic baseline inspection of the track was carried out and this report written for the South Westland/Weheka Area Office, so all its historic values can be considered when planning visitor asset track upgrade work.

A field trip was undertaken on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2007 to fulfil historic baseline recording requirements. The historic baseline inspection (BLI) team consisted of Jackie Breen, TSO Historic, West Coast CO, and Karen Rea, CRO Concessions, West Coast CO. The visitor assets team were Mark Nelson, PM Visitor Assets/Historic, South Westland AO, and Neil Freer, A2 Visitor Assets/Historic, South Westland AO, who carried out an inspection of the track looking at visitor assets upgrade requirements. The teams were flown into Welcome Flat and walked out to the SH6 road end, spending a night at Architects Creek Hut.

#### 1.2 SETTING

The vegetation of the Copland Valley is best described as mixed broadleaf/podocarp upland or montane forest. These follow the narrow terraces along the valley floor. The Copland Track rises from 40m at sea level (asl) at the SH6 car park to about 450m asl at Welcome Flat.

The geology of the Copland Valley is important to note, as it impacts directly on the stability of the land, which in turn impacts on any infrastructure built in the valley.

The landforms [of the Copland valley] have been determined by the interaction of uplift of the country east of the Alpine Fault, with erosion by frost, water, ice and gravity. Numerous faults dissect the area, and have influenced the alignment of streams and valleys.<sup>2</sup>

The closely jointed nature of the rock has meant that the classic glacial 'U' shape of the valley walls have been eroded away. The geology then, is very dynamic and the extent of the rainfall in the area means that hillsides are prone to erosion and landslides are common.

Westland Tai Poutini National Management Plan 2001-2011 p.34.

Westland National Park Board Management Plan: part II: 6 Copland Valley section 6.2, in 17/7 Copland Track (including car park and picnic area) 1970s? to 19/11/1988, Department of Lands and Survey.

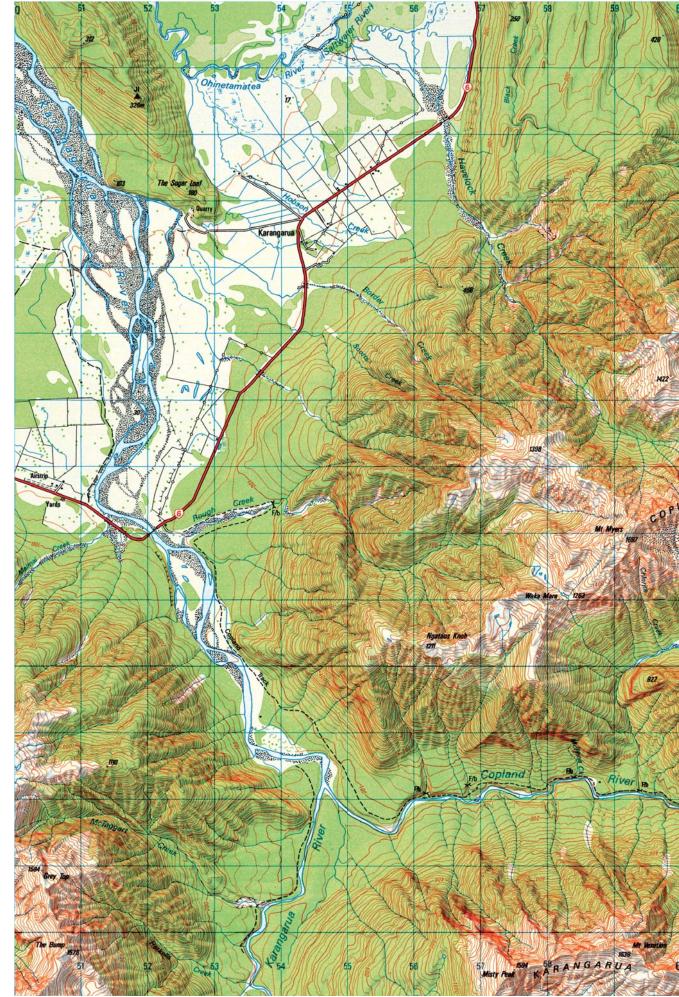
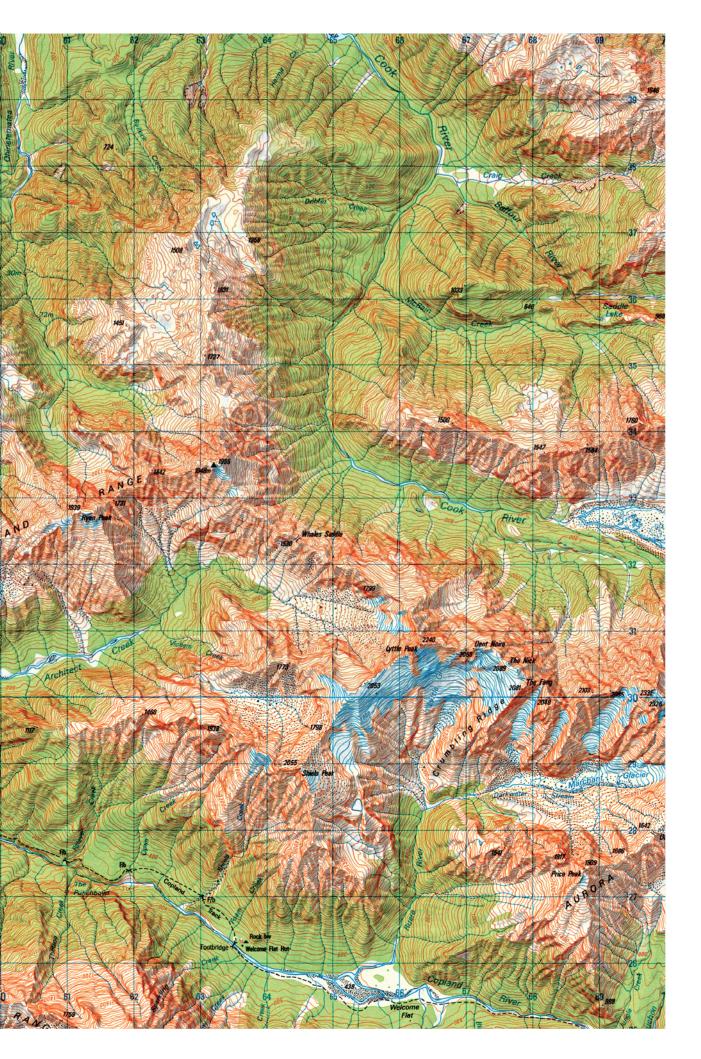


Figure 1: Copland Track - SH6 Road-end to Welcome Flat



### 2.0 History

#### 2.1 EARLY HISTORY

There is a long association of Te Runanga o Makawhio with the Copland Valley. There are traditional stories of ancestral exploration of the area and, while it was used, the alpine pass route was not a common East to West route as it was difficult to cross. Up until the 1950s it was common for Makawhio to travel from Bruce Bay to Welcome Flat to visit the hot pools and snare weka.<sup>3</sup>

#### 2.1.1 Early European exploration, recreation and track development

The history of European survey and exploration in South Westland began in earnest with the West Coast gold rushes. As with many early explorations of this part of New Zealand, explorer Charlie Douglas made the first systematic survey of the Copland Valley in 1892. However, unlike many of his other surveys which were designed to determine topography and availability of mineral resources, the Copland survey was commissioned specifically by Department of Lands and Survey for tourism purposes to:

...determine the practicability of a route for a mule or horse track from 'The Hermitage' across the alps to the West Coast via Hooker Valley and Baker's Saddle.<sup>4</sup>

While Douglas' 1892 report on the proposed Copland route was not favourable, the government's desire for a transalpine route to the Hermitage prompted Department of Lands and Survey to send Douglas out to explore the area yet again in the summer of 1894/95, accompanied by Arthur Harper. This time the survey included a survey of the Karangarua catchment. Douglas' health prevented him completing the work so Harper carried on without him, accompanied by Ruera Te Nahi. Harper judged that the merits of the Copland out-weighed those of the Karangarua, suggesting that the Copland route was the best. However, he stressed that any track above the snowline would require a lot of work as the track would need to be built up with 'solid masonry' (extensive stone work) as the harsh alpine weather would easily obliterate any track built with lesser construction methods. The Copland and the Karangarua were only two of several routes considered - the head of Franz Josef Glacier, the Cook River, and Broderick Pass part way up the Landsborough Valley, were all explored with the goal of a transalpine route to the Hermitage in mind.5

Pers comm. - Maori in the Copland : e-mail Paul Madgwick, 23.5.2003 to DOC researcher, A. Hutchison.

Douglas, C. 1892. Report by Mr. Douglas of Explorations made along the Copland River. *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR) 1892:C-1:41-47; but see also Langton 2004: chapter 12; Harper 1896:179

Harper, A. P. 1894. The Karangarua river and Passes to Canterbury. AJHR 1894/1895 C-1: 105-106; Harper 1896: chapters XVI to XVIII; Langton 2004:70-71.

The early development of recreational alpine climbing in the area began around this time. In February 1895, Mattais Zubriggen and Edward FitzGerald completed the first east/west crossing of the alps via Copland Pass (just beating Harper to it). This feat was reversed in 1897 by Malcolm Ross who crossed the Copland Pass from the West Coast, following an obscure blazed line that was probably from Douglas' and Harper's expedition.<sup>6</sup>





Fitzgerald and Zubriggen in Copland Valley 1895

## 2.1.2 Early development of the Copland Track under Departments of Lands and Survey and Tourist and Health Resorts

Although the advice of both Douglas and Harper cast doubt on the sustainability of constructing a track over Copland Pass, central government, via urging from the Tourist and Health Resorts Department (THRD), was keen to pursue the route. The task of constructing such tourism infrastructure fell to the Department of Roads, a branch of the Department of Department of Lands and Survey. The definitive date for the initial construction of the Copland Track is a little unclear. The earliest references are reports in the West Coast Times and Greymouth Evening Star from July 1901, stating that a group of men under the supervision of Douglas had cut a track up the Copland to within 8 miles of the Hermitage. It is most likely that it was during this time that Douglas' fellow workers found the hot springs at Welcome Flat.7 This discovery no doubt added impetus to the determination to push the track through. Thermal attractions were seen by government as important to stimulate tourism.

<sup>6</sup> Langton 2004:163; Ross 1914:211.

Greymouth Evening Star 12/7/1901 (quoting Hokitika Guardian; see also West Coast Times 10/7/1901; Pascoe 1957:48; See also Douglas' plan of Welcome Flats area reproduced in Langton 2004.



Charlie Douglas' sketch of Welcome Flat, probably around 1901 after the discovery of the Hot Springs. Image from Archives NZ, CH 505/9 in Langton 2000

Even at this very early stage, the route over Copland Pass was quickly becoming a popular tourist trip, with guides from the Hermitage leading parties over the Pass and into the Copland Valley. During April 1902, head guide Jack Clarke led the first party of women over the Pass and down the valley, and Peter Graham used the route to get to the Hermitage to take up the position of government guide there.



An early photo of springs at Welcome Flat - note the terraces

Of the track itself Clarke stated that:

A rough track has been 'slashed' through the bush in the Copland Valley from Scotts to a point within ten hours walk of the Hermitage. This will be a great boon to parties crossing to the West Coast.

Interest in South Westland was bolstered no end by the enthusiasm shown in the area by THRD photographer, Thomas Pringle, who travelled from the Hermitage down the Copland Valley in early 1903. He excited interest in South Westland to the degree that the THRD Superintendent, T.E. Donne, travelled there later that same year and was duly impressed. It is not surprising then, that in 1903 in the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, the Minister for Tourism and Health Resorts expressly articulated the position of the Copland in the government's grand plans for the fledgling national tourism industry:

The possibilities of the West Coast as a tourist route of marvellous value are enhanced by the fact that it can be traversed on the through trip to and from Mount Cook Hermitage by way of Fitzgerald's pass. The route, from the Fox Glacier, takes the traveller along the Copland River, thence up to the summit of Fitzgerald's Pass (7,180ft) and down the Hooker Glacier to the Hermitage. The route conducts the traveller into the grandest of alpine scenery, and that it presents no special difficulties in shown by the fact that last April [1902] a party including three ladies, in the charge of government guides, accomplished the trip from Mount Cook to

the West Coast. ... Due attention will be paid to the development of these routes, with a view to obviating the necessity of the tourist retracing his course after travelling the West Coast from Hokitika.<sup>8</sup>

However, with all this being said, the extent of the track at this time was little more than a blazed line through the bush with a tendency to become quickly overgrown.<sup>9</sup>

Department of Roads construction parties pressed on and by 1906 a rough bridle track had been formed up the true left of the Copland River to near Architects Creek, with a better route being constructed on the true right of the river. There was also a footbridge present over Architects Creek. In spite of all this, in 1908, the Westland District Engineer reported that track construction was slow and piecemeal, and was being hampered by labour shortages. <sup>10</sup>

#### Progress under the Public Works Department

In 1909 the Department of Roads was disbanded, with the responsibility for the development of government sponsored tourist infrastructure falling to the Public Works Department (PWD) with its regional headquarters on the West Coast in Greymouth. The government still saw the track up the Copland Valley as integral to South Island tourist routes, with promises being made by the Minister for Tourist and Health Resorts to 'do something' about connecting the Hermitage and the West Coast. 11

The plan for the track at this stage was to make a horse track for tourists as far as Welcome Flat, providing both a hut there and a bridge to cross the Copland River. From there the track was to follow 'the usual route' up to and over the Pass.

There was high level insistence from THRD at this time to hurry with the construction of the track as it was 'a matter of importance that the track should be gone on with even if only for foot traffic'. Spurred by this, the initial flurry of activity after the PWD took over building the track saw it constructed to within a mile of Welcome Flat by March 1910.

South Westland PWD Road Overseer, Mick Carroll, (who had previously worked in South Westland for the Department of Roads), described the character of track construction work in the Copland Valley:

The locality is of a very rough nature, being a very steep sideling where the road is getting made and it chiefly consists of overhanging rock with large Rata trees growing all around them & in some places on the top of the rock.

From Carroll's returns of work, track construction to that date consisted

Harris 1974:183; First annual report of the Dept of Tourist & Health Resorts, *AJHR* 1902:H-2, p19. Second annual report of the Dept of Tourist & Health Resorts. 4/4/1903, DOC Archives, Franz Josef; Graham, P. 1961:70; 72-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Graham and Wilson 1983.

Appendix 3 - SO plan 1017; 30/12/1908 Letter from W. Wilson, Westland District Engineer to Chief Engineer of Roads in Wellington. Department of Conservation Archives, Hokitika;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> AJHR 1909: H-2:7.

of the following:

Bush felled 18ft wide
Bush cleared 12ft wide
Track formed 7ft wide
190 cubic yards of rock excavated



Track workers on the Copland, early 1900s.

50 cubic yards of slips cleared

A substantial amount of blasting was done to excavate a track bench out of the rocky hill slopes and clear slips, and on more than one occasion Carroll requested 'more of Nobel's gelignite as it is no doubt the cheapest labour for stumps and rock'.

Labour problems struck again in early March 1910 with some of the track gang leaving the Copland for the chance of getting work 'on the flat road'. Weather conditions up the Copland were fast deteriorating too, with an extended spell of rain which caused damage on the new track. A message from PWD Head Office in late March made it clear that it was imperative to get some semblance of a track extended through to the Pass, even if it was only a foot track. Carroll replied that as it was so late in the season and few tourists would be using the track that it was not worth repairing the top section. A severe storm hit the valley in April, destroying Carroll's tent, tent fly, and papers. By May, bad weather had forced all the track workers to leave the valley.

The summer of 1910/11 arrived and once again urging came from the

Minister through Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to PWD to continue with track construction and to get it competed that summer season if possible. In response to this request the PWD engineer reported that repair work needed to be carried out on the track that had already been constructed, as floods had made the portions of the track that traversed the river bed impassable. He also suggested raising the track clear of the river, and using local mountain guides to assist in picking the track route beyond Welcome Flat to the Pass. 12

Regardless, guided parties of tourists continued to use the route over the Pass and partly completed track. One party, led by Peter Graham in 1910, included Freda du Faur who made the following somewhat cynical comment on the development of the track:

About a mile above Architect we came on a camp and several men clearing a track through the forest, the government having at last begun the long talked of path which is connecting the west and east coasts via the Copland Saddle. Judging by the rate of progress we observed, it seemed likely that the happy day when a visitor from the Hermitage could ride from the foot of Copland Pass to Scott's house was still many seasons off. <sup>13</sup>

During these early years the journey up the Copland Valley was often done as a guided trip on horseback. Starting at Scott's accommodation house (further down the Karangarua River) horses were ridden up as far as Welcome Flat, from where one of the Scott family would take them back down the valley. Visitors then continued on foot over the remainder of



View of the hot pools at Welcome Flat around 1910. Adamson Collection, Timaru Museum.

 $<sup>^{12}</sup>$  9/4 Copland Track 1909-1910: see especially map appended to letter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> du Faur 1915:78.

the valley route, and up and over the Pass to the Hermitage. The reverse trip from the Hermitage was also popular. Groups picked up horses at Welcome Flat, and rode to Waiho (Franz Josef).

Early tourists left some valuable and interesting, if somewhat baroque, descriptions of their impressions of the track and the track workers. One example by George Fenwick recounting a trip on horse back up the track in March 1912:

Emerging on the track proper, the result of the heavy rainfall of the past few days disclosed itself in pools of water and soft mud into which the rich forest soil had been converted. For a short distance either side of the track had been cleared, and the fallen timber partially burned...

Fenwick then noted a hut at Architects Creek, and went on to describe the journey beyond it:

Our route continues through the bush, and we rise considerably over a steep track, in some places cut in the rock hillside, with a steep declivity on our right, terminating in a roaring creek. After traversing about four miles, and having made a swift descent, we reach a spot where the track is being widened, and presently pull up in front of a habitation in a little cleared spot on the roadside, where a roadman and his young Maori wife and children greet us. We are close to some hot springs ... Under a huge rock near the springs we find a fairly snug camping ground in possession of a workman, who has been at work on either the roads or helping in getting



Party of climbers outside Welcome Flat Hut, not long after its completion in 1913. FROM BOEKHOLT 1983

timber sawn for the cottage [being built for tourist use at the bot springs.

After fording the Copland River, the horses were left to return to Scott's homestead. The party encountered a group of workmen, including 'the son of Erin who is at work with a party of Maoris [sic] from

Bruce Bay effecting improvement in the track to the Douglas Rock 14

Other parties in 1912 report staying in a partially complete hut at Welcome Flat, using a small suspension bridge at Architects Creek and seeing the remains of a blacksmiths forge on the banks of Architects Creek.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Fenwick 1912:30ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Bowie 1969:177; Joachim 1912; Baughan 1912:31.

In January 1913 du Faur visited the area again, reporting that:

...the track now comes right up to the snow grass, and the old battle through the scrub which was such a waste of time and temper is consequently done away with. It is only a tiny track at present; when finished, however, it is to be good enough for a pack horse, and there is to be a but on the Westland side of Copland Pass - luxury indeed for the climber of the future... <sup>16</sup>

Increasingly Peter Graham, in his capacity as Chief Guide at the Hermitage, began furnishing the THRD with condition reports on facilities in the area, with many of the letters written highlighting the poor condition of the track or the unfinished state of the hut at Welcome Flat. These served their purpose and in November 1913 track workers were sent out to see to track maintenance and others to complete the hut. 18

From a study of the PWD files from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the original specifications for track construction can be pieced together. They are as follows:

Track grade of 1 in 10. 19

Bush felled 18ft wide, bush cleared 12ft wide, track formed 7ft wide. <sup>20</sup>

Metalled - 4ft wide, ten inches deep. 21

All creeks have constructed approaches.<sup>22</sup>

Larger creeks have fords for horses (e.g. Architects).<sup>23</sup>

Water crossings, culverts and table drains.<sup>24</sup>

#### 2.2 WELCOME FLAT BRIDGE - 1918

Part of the grand plan for facilities in the Copland Valley was the construction of a foot bridge at Welcome Flat.

Funds were voted for the erection of the bridge in 1916 but as often happened on the Copland, the elements conspired to waylay plans. Large slips had engulfed the track in late 1916 and needed to be cleared before bridge building supplies could be packed up to Welcome Flat.

In the interim however, a bridge gang got to work and built the bridge footings using timber cribbing under the true left footing to bring it to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> du Faur 1915:220.

 $<sup>^{17}</sup>$  7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> 9/4 Hermitage to Copeland Track, 1912-1928.

 <sup>7/4</sup> Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part
 1. Tourist and Health Resorts Department File. Letter from William Wilson, Roads
 Department Engineer to the General Manager of Tourist and Health Resorts 23rd
 July 1909

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> 9/4 Copland Track 1909-1910, Public Works Department File.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Letter from Road Overseer to Resident Engineer Greymouth, August 1914.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Letter from Road Overseer to Resident Engineer Greymouth, October 1916.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Letter from Road Overseer to Resident Engineer Greymouth, October 1916.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Letter from Road Overseer to Resident Engineer Greymouth, September, 1922.



The original Welcome Flat Bridge in 1960 prior to 1970s upgrade.

right level. With fine specimens of totara and cedar in the area timber for the bridge was to be pit sawn on site. Extra funds and the diversion of man power from other PWD projects was authorised by Greymouth to clear the slips and progress work on the bridge, but labour shortages (this time due to World War I) again brought work to a standstill.

In 1917 Carroll commented that the track maintenance work hadn't been started 'as the work is very rough and a good deal of rock work I want to get suitable men' and it wasn't until September 1917 that Carroll reports having men on site working on the bridge. Even at this stage hurdles were encountered, especially with sourcing suitable timber. At one stage Carroll reported:

The timber up there did not turn out as good as I expected a great many of trees being bollow, but very nice to look at while standing.

Track repairs, staff shortages, and hold ups with the shipping of the iron work for the bridge all contributed to it not being completed until some time after April  $1918.^{25}$ 

## 2.3 COMPLETION OF FACILITIES AND CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT — 1920S TO 1950S

The 1920s witnessed a shift in how infrastructure belonging to the Tourist and Health Resorts Department (THRD) was managed. In 1922 as part of a wider rationalisation process, the Hermitage was leased to a private company. Partly in response to this, Alex Graham managed to convince his brother Peter to leave the Hermitage and return to the West Coast to help him run the Waiho Hotel in Franz Josef. The Graham brothers had a history of assisting with the care and construction of THRD facilities (the building of Defiance Hut for example), and then using the facilities as bases for guided trips. They were considered the best candidates to look after the THRD mountain huts on the West Coast side of the divide. 26

The Graham brothers duly leased Welcome Flat hut, along with several other West Coast THRD huts. Peter Graham continued to lobby the THRD insisting on the upkeep of track, ongoing hut maintenance and a follow-through on the promise to build a hut at the head of the Copland Valley.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond the nuts and bolts of management and use of facilities in the Copland Valley, elsewhere changes of a different nature were being



Track workers and a guided tramping party at Welcome Flat Hut 1929/1930. Peter Graham is in the doorway.

See various correspondence 12/10/1916 to 4/10/1918 in 9/4 Hermitage to Copeland Track, 1912-1928.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> 7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1. Graham, and Wilson 1983:140-141; 157-158.

Scenic Reserves, General, File 13/1,10/12/1923: Commissioner of Crown Lands attention drawn to the unsatisfactory position.

planned. In 1929 Arthur Harper (lobbying in his capacity as President of the Alpine Club), succeeded in getting the Copland Valley, with numerous other parcels of Crown Land including the glaciers at Franz Josef and Fox, in the gazettal of a large scenic reserve.

Gazetted in February 1930, the reserve was described as follows:

This magnificent region embraces numerous glaciers, including the Fox, and many noble peaks, and is destined from its varied attractions to become one of the principal scenic assets of our Dominion. It is intersected by the Copland track, which continues via Fitzgerald Pass and the Hooker Glacier to the Mt Cook Hermitage. The walk over this track already promises to become one of the most popular on the West Coast, and trampers from Canterbury can arrange to be met by horses on the Westland side at Welcome Flat, where there are hot springs and a tourist but.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, long planned infrastructure in the valley was completed during the 1930s. Douglas Rock Hut, first promised in 1917, was finished in1931 and subsequently leased to the Graham brothers. <sup>29</sup> The ongoing issue of poor track condition caused by severe weather was common in reports. A 1931 inspection by Mick Carroll recorded much flood damage with culverts requiring re-decking, slips needing to be cleared, several creek crossings requiring repair and water crossings (cut-outs) needing cleaning out. In 1936 Carroll's successor as Road Overseer, S.J. Conradson, highlighted the expense of maintaining the track with three active slips and numerous creek crossings all requiring repair after frequently occurring flood events. <sup>30</sup>



Douglas Rock Hut during the 1930s

With the advent of World War II the track fell into general disuse and disrepair, although it seems that in 1946 two track workers were put on the track to tend to maintenance. Visitor numbers for this period show that from 1940 to 1945 a grand total of 258 people stayed at Welcome Flat

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Harris 1974:193; AJHR L&S Scenery Preservation 1930-31 C-6 p2;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> 7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1.

<sup>30</sup> Copland Valley Track 13/803 report dated 11/2/1935.

Hut. In 1946, Conradson inspected the track again, and its general poor state came into sharp focus. He reported that it was heavily overgrown, had numerous slips, and that almost all the creeks had blown out, both deepening and widening. Architects Creek Bridge required repairing and slip debris was endangering Welcome Flat Hut.<sup>31</sup>

During the 1950s one of the more regular user groups in the area were Department of Internal Affairs deer cullers. While the Copland was never a key area for culling work, the track and facilities at Welcome Flat and Douglas Rock were used by deer cullers to access key blocks such as the tops above the Karangarua.<sup>32</sup>

## 2.4 WESTLAND NATIONAL PARK YEARS — FORMATION OF THE PARK TO THE PRESENT

In real terms during the 1940s and 1950s, there was little impetus to improve tourist facilities in the Copland Valley. This changed in 1959 when the Mount Cook National Park Board made enquiries to the Tourist and Publicity Department (the reformed THRD) about reinstating the Copland Pass track.<sup>33</sup> However, the idea was not progressed until 1960 and the formation of Westland National Park (gazetted in 1960 to coincide with the Centenary of Westland), which included Copland within the Park boundaries. A 'unified administration' approach fostered by the National Parks Authority paralleled infrastructure development in Westland National Park with other National Parks. Improving huts and tracks up the Copland Valley was seen as one of the major tasks facing the newly formed Westland National Park Board.<sup>34</sup>

In 1960 Chief Park Ranger Peter King and Billy Brennan made a survey of the Copland track and its associated infrastructure, commenting that while there was a significant amount of work to do the track was a *'great asset to the Park'*. Although it was not until April 1961 with *Operation Copland* that the track got its first serious maintenance in 20 years. National Park rangers from around the South Island converged on the track to clear windfalls and paint the huts.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> WNP 12 Tracks - general 1960-11/12/1967 see report by King February 19th 1960;10/8 Proposed Copland Pass Tunnel, 1965-1976: see reports appended to letter dated 21 April 1965.; see also Tourist Department - Tourist resorts, huts, tracks and general correspondence 9/19 1934-45.

<sup>48/28/3</sup> A.P. & Game Act - Deer Destruction - Southern Lakes District Organisation General re: V III, 17/9/51 to 13/4/53, See also 'Report on Operations for 1947-48 season in the South Westland Area' for mention of Copland as breeding ground for deer that impact on other catchments, Internal Affairs, Head Office file, 48/118/5 pt 1 Wildlife Act - Deer Destruction - No. 5 - Westland District Organisation - Operations etc - general file re; 48/28/3A.P. & Game Act - Deer Destruction - Southern Lakes District Organisation General re: Vol. II, 23/7/48 to 18/9/51, Internal Affairs Department, Head Office file; District, Operational Report, Summer '54-55 by S. E. Fokerd (?),NZFS, Westland CO, file 90/20 1939-1961, Archive NZ, Christchurch.

 $<sup>^{33}</sup>$  7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Thom 1987:ch 14; National Parks Authority (nd):22-23.

<sup>35</sup> See also story in NZ Truth 9/2/1960 in WNP 12 Tracks - general; Harris 1974:225;



P. King and B. Brennan at Welcome Flat Hut 1960.

After that initial big hit further work all but ceased. Whether this was due to the unexpected death of Chief Ranger King in late 1962, is not clear, but urgent works identified by him in early 1960 (such as the replacement of the Architect Creek Bridge) did not even enter the planning phase until 1964.

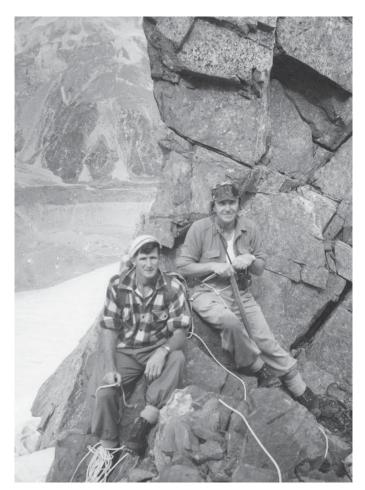
Grand plans surfaced in 1965 for enhanced tourist access in the Copland exploring the feasibility of vehicle access up the valley, and the possibility of putting in a tunnel through to the Hermitage. This idea was suggested by the Westland National Park Board whose plan was to increase the number of internal vehicle roads in the Park, so that full enjoyment of the area by the public would be possible.

While the Ministry of Tourism, the Westland County Council and the Westland National Park Board were keen for the proposal to proceed, investigations by the Ministry of Works (MOW) furnished feasibility reports that were lukewarm at best. The MOW Resident Engineer commented that while vehicle access up the valley would provide a 'useful tourist link' a perusal of historic reports on maintaining the tracks suggested that the road-tunnel idea would be a fairly difficult proposition and not economic. A directive from the National Parks Authority to the Westland National Park Board in 1966 ordained that 'no further action at the present' on the proposal was deemed necessary.

But the idea of a road up the Copland remained viable in the minds of some Westland National Park Board members. This was evident to such a degree that a party of members of the Park Board and the resident engineer for the MOW made a special trip over Copland Pass to scope out the proposal on the ground. The difficult nature of the terrain did raise questions over feasibility and eventually the idea was shelved.<sup>36</sup>

WNP 12 Tracks - general 1960-11/12/1967 see report by King February 19th 1960; correspondence re: Operation Copland; NZAC Bulletin #18 December 1961 p15.

 <sup>10/8</sup> Proposed Copland Pass Tunnel 1965-1976; 3/34 Miscellaneous - Access Road
 Copland Track 1965-1976; The Press 11/6/1966; WNP 12 Tracks - general 1960-11/12/1967



Chief Ranger Peter King (right) and Billy Brennan on the Copland Pass, 1960.

While the idea of a road all the way to the Hermitage may have been impracticable, a road as far as Welcome Flat was seen as more achievable. This was first promoted during discussions about the Hermitage road, and brought to light again by the Westland County Council (WCC) at a South Island Local Bodies Association meeting in September 1967. During the following five or six years it was debated by numerous parties, including the Mt Cook and Westland Park boards, the MOW, the Minister of Lands, the WCC, the Commissioner for Crown Lands, the Park Rangers Association and tramping clubs on both sides of the alps. The popularity of the road proposal waxed and waned as a concept. Proposals included a road all the way from to Welcome Flat, to one to Architects Creek only, or just to a decent bridge across Rough Creek. In the end, as even the lesser plan of the bridge at Rough Creek did not go ahead, the matter went quiet.<sup>37</sup>

Beyond the contentious issue of a road up the Copland Valley a definite commitment was made to improving the track and

associated infrastructure for trampers. In 1966 a new bridge was built at Architects Creek constructed to a NZ Forest Service design, with all 'Dural' materials being air dropped in. Department of Lands and Survey



1961 - South Island National Park Rangers take a break during Operation Copland. Peter King is standing at the far right.

WNP 12 Tracks - general 1960-11/12/1967; WNP 12 - tracks, bridges, signs and general 11/12/1967 to 9/10/1974

(who controlled National Parks) also had a contingent of workers based up the Copland clearing the track under the supervision of Sheamus Curreen, who had previously been track foreman on the Milford Track.

The track was seen as a primary visitor attraction and a joint approach to improving it was instigated by both Westland and Mt Cook National Parks in late 1967. As an antidote to those promoting opening up the area with vehicle roads, it was commented that with the expected rise in visitors to both Parks with the improvement of the track, visitors would 'get real pleasure and satisfaction out of investigating these Parks on foot and thereby use them rather than view them from car or aeroplane window'. <sup>38</sup>



Architects Creek Bridge in 1960 prior to its removal

In 1968 Central Government interest in Copland Track resurfaced again. The Minster of Lands, Duncan MacIntyre, joined a party going over the Copland Pass to assess the feasibility of upgrading the track to the Hermitage to an 'adventure walk' for fit New Zealanders and tourists. Problems for this scheme were highlighted at the time in news reports. It was commented that an extensive upgrade of track and facilities would not eventuate because the winter weather would obliterate any formed track and opening up the route too much would encourage inexperienced visitors to attempt the trip.<sup>39</sup>

Even after years of discussion on the importance of the track and reports on upgrade requirements, the Copland was not in the best condition for visitor use. A 1974 report on the condition of facilities and infrastructure noted that it was in a bad state, requiring work such as slip clearance,

WNP 12 Tracks - general 1960-11/12/1967: report date February 1967. WNP 12 - tracks, bridges, signs and general 11/12/1967 to 9/10/1974

New Zealand Weekly News 1/8/1968; See also Bennett, G. B. 1979:149-167, for an account of the ministerial visit from the perspective of a Department of Lands and Survey track worker. Greymouth Evening Star 9/3/1967

reformation of benching and vegetation to be cleared. As a result of these recommendations various maintenance works were undertaken during the 1970s including the upgrade of Welcome Flat swing-bridge. 40



Welcome Flat, date unknown.

During the five years from 1977 to 1982 a number of accidents, missing trampers and 2 fatalities occurred in the Copland area (see track chronology in appendix 1 for specifics). Increasingly ill-equipped and inexperienced parties were travelling to Welcome Flat and attempting to cross the Pass. Comments from a hut warden in the 1979/80 summer season posed some explanations for the increasing number of accidents: people not having experienced members in their parties; people not hiring guides; and the recently published Shell guide to the Copland which '...under-rates the difficulty of the steep snow for most walkers accustomed to flatter ground'. This impression was echoed by others.<sup>41</sup>

Report from Senior Ranger Brian Ahern to the Westland National Park Board 8/6/1974, p 4, WNP 17/7 Copland track 1974 to 29/11/1988; 6/6 Westland National Park - Board Buildings - Welcome Flat Hut- 17/3/1977 - 24/3/1987; WNP 17/3 Westland National Park - Roads, tracks, bridging and airstrips - Welcome Flat Bridge - 8/1978 - 29/11/1988.

Letter by Simon Field, 26/3/1980, See File RVA 03-90 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Douglas Rock Hut. 25/06/1969 to (current file) South Westland Area Office; see also Boekholt, Kevin 1983, and letter dated 14/3/79 in 6/6 Westland National Park - Board Buildings - Welcome Flat Hut - 17/3/1977 - 24/3/1987 Department.

It is hard to say conclusively, but it is likely that these incidents partly stimulated further action to improve infrastructure. The late 1970s — early 1980s saw one of the more intensive periods of work on the track and facilities since the early days of track and hut construction. There is an



Welcome Flat swing-bridge during a flood in 1978

impression from those who worked on the ground, that there was no high level strategic rationale behind this emphasis beyond a local recognition of the historical importance of the track as a tourist route, and a desire to make the scenic beauty of the area more accessible to people.42 These ideals were formally articulated in part of an early draft National Park Management Plan produced by the National Park Board, probably dating from the late 1970s. The Copland Valley was described as '...one of the places where the average visitor or family group is able to get into a true alpine valley and enjoy a wilderness experience...' In this management plan the track was divided into three sections each with a different level of recommended management - a service standard of sorts. Part of the rationale behind the different levels of track standards was a means for discouraging inexperienced trampers from venturing further up the valley beyond Welcome Flat. The section of track from the Karangarua/Copland junction to Welcome Flat Hut was termed as 'Category B' defined

Safe walking track suitable for reasonably fit family groups. Sign posted, major creeks bridged, buts or shelters at approximately six bour intervals. Boots and parkas advisable.  $^{43}$ 

During this time Department of Lands and Survey (DLS) committed work gangs to the Copland every spring to deal to the large amount of upgrade work required. Workers were employed for up to six months at a time. A gang was based at an old hut on the flats on the Scott's property near Karangarua junction, fixing drainage problems, eradicating hook grass and re-benching parts. Other workers were stationed at Architects Creek in a large tent camp where work often continued into the winter months. By around 1980 the work done on the track was reported as clearing all vegetation and windfalls back to the original width, and subsequent work focused on the track surface. Through lack of maintenance the

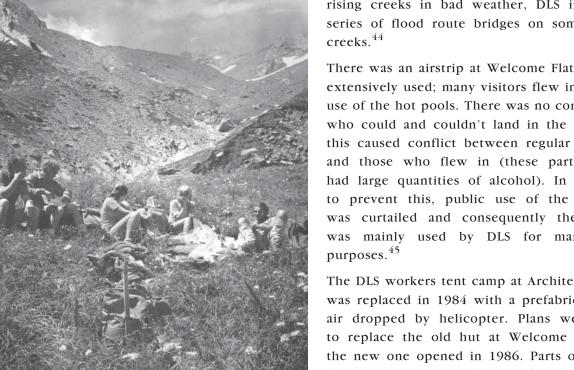
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Bruce Postill 21/3/2007 personal comment; Murray Reedy personal comment 21/3/2007. See also Potton 1985:109.

Westland National Park Board Management Plan: part II: 6 Copland Valley section 6.2, in 17/7 Copland Track (including car park and picnic area) 1970s? to 19/11/1988; see also WNP 12 - tracks, bridges, signs and general 11/12/1967 to 9/10/1974.

track was described as 'a water course in many places and has become pretty rough'.

Hut wardens at Welcome Flat and Douglas Rock also had track maintenance as part of their daily regime. The focus of this work was mostly on sections of track near the hut. For example in the 1977-78 season the trackman reported working on the section from Shiels Creek to Douglas Rock Hut. Accommodation for wardens and track workers were a couple of portable huts at Welcome Flat.

As part of this emphasis on the Copland, and partly as a response to



A party on an east to west crossing of the Copland Pass in 1981

issues with trampers getting trapped by rapidly rising creeks in bad weather, DLS instated a series of flood route bridges on some of the

There was an airstrip at Welcome Flat that was extensively used; many visitors flew in to make use of the hot pools. There was no control over who could and couldn't land in the area, and this caused conflict between regular trampers and those who flew in (these parties often had large quantities of alcohol). In an effort to prevent this, public use of the air strip was curtailed and consequently the airstrip was mainly used by DLS for management

The DLS workers tent camp at Architects Creek was replaced in 1984 with a prefabricated hut air dropped by helicopter. Plans were made to replace the old hut at Welcome Flat, and the new one opened in 1986. Parts of the old hut were incorporated into the new hut as wardens' quarters.

Unfortunately in February 1987 a landslide engulfed the new hut, sweeping the staff quarters (and any vestiges of the original hut)

into the Copland River. The new hut was dug out of debris and eventually shifted to a different site. 46

<sup>44</sup> Letter from Lee Busby to Senior Ranger Mt Cook National Park, WNP 17/7 Copland Track (including car park and picnic area) 1970s? to 19/11/1988, Department of Lands and Survey, Westland National Park file, Archives New Zealand, Christchurch; Report from track man Roger Gaskill, 21/2/1978, WNP 6/6, Westland National Park - Board Buildings - Welcome Flat Hut, 1977 to 29/11/86. Bruce Postill 21/3/2007 personal comment; see also DOC file RVA-03-90 Douglas Rock Hut opened 25/6/69 - (current file), South Westland Area Office; DOC file RVA 03 88 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Architects Creek Hut. 12/2/1971 to (current file) South Westland Area Office, Department of Conservation.

Bruce Postill 21/3/2007 personal comment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> File RVA 03 88 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Architects Creek Hut. 12/2/1971 to . South Westland Area

From the late 1990s the main focus for track work was keeping vegetation clear of the track and keeping side drains open. Hut wardens also did track maintenance as part of their jobs, but this was restricted to sections within an hour's walk of the huts. The idea of upgrading the track using a digger was mooted at one stage, but was abandoned due to uncertainty over the committing to higher standard of ongoing maintenance that would result from such work.<sup>47</sup>

DOC files are spare on specifics about the ongoing upkeep of the track but one of the more significant pieces of work was the upgrade of the Welcome Flat Bridge which was carried out in 2000. 48



New Welcome Flat Hut on its opening day in December 1986

Office; See File RVA 03-89 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Welcome Flat Hut. 20/01/1993 to (current file) South Westland Area Office; Murray Reedy pers. comment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Tony Preston personal comment, 21/3/2007.

<sup>48</sup> RVA-08-10-23 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - Structures - Bridges - Welcome Flat Historic Bridge.

# 3.0 Historic Baseline Inspection context and methodology

The part of the Copland Track recorded in this report was that from Welcome Flat to the Karangarua Road end. This is the section that is proposed to be upgraded in the near future.

The methodology used to record historic features on the track was as follows:

- 1) Metre wheel was used on the most of the length of the track.
- 2) Individual features were recorded with a metre wheel reading and the length of some features was recorded with two readings.
- 30 No GPS was used.
- 4) Notes were taken about feature condition.
- 5) Digital images were taken of some features as well as general shots of the track.
- 6) At the end of each section notes were made on the general impression of the track condition and of the best features on that section of track. Some recommendations on future work were also made.

For recording purposes the track was broken down into 6 sections:

- Section 1 Welcome Flat to Shiels Creek
- Section 2 Shiels Creek to Open Creek
- Section 3 Open Creek to Architects Creek
- Section 4 Architects Creek to Un-named Creek
- Section 5 Un-named Creek to Karangarua Road end

For the full electronic version of what was recorded in the field and accompanying images see Copland Track Baseline data DOCDM-113893.

# 4.0 Recorded baseline features and recommendations

## 4.1 SECTION 1 — WELCOME FLAT HUT TO SHIELS CREEK

Track type and construction date:

Pack track (completed ca 1912)

Section length (approx.):

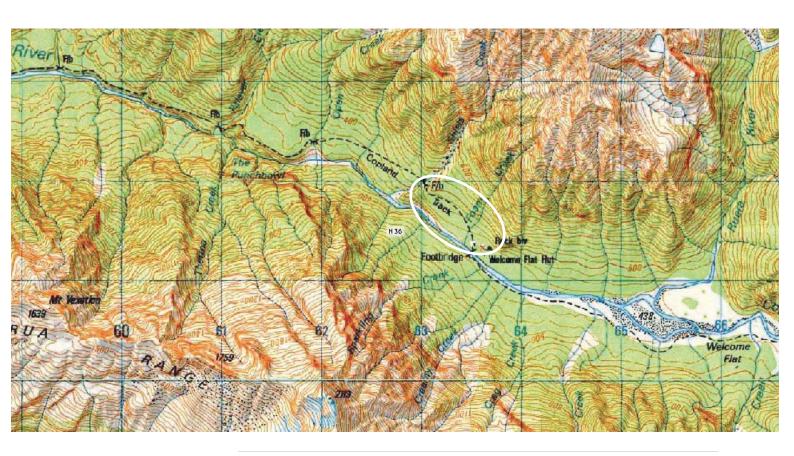
1108m

#### Recorded track features:

Cut-outs -39; fords -3; bridges -1; embankment - one 5 m section; culverts -1; one set of steps.

#### Associated features:

There is a rock biv at Welcome Flat that was not visited at the time of the BLI. This was reported to have been used by workers on the track in around 1912.49



<sup>49</sup> See Fenwick 1912





Top left: Stone cut-out 24 - good example with side drain Middle left: View of track near cut-out 31. Note the number of cut-outs

Right: Small bridge with hand squared timbers

#### General Description:

Most of the track is constructed to a full bench to maintain grade an alignment. There is one small section of embankment. The majority of the cut-outs constructed in the form of stone line drains crossing the track at  $30^{\circ}$  to  $45^{\circ}$ .

The formed approaches to the major creeks have been modified and nothing original remains. Overall the formation on this section of track is in fair condition.

While there are a number of features still present in the track, as a whole this section of track is in fair condition. Much of the drainage system requires reinstating, and much of the track surface is in poor condition.

There is one small bridge made from hand squared timbers - the walking surface has gone.

#### Section for Historic Management

It is likely that much of this section of track has been modified over the years with ongoing maintenance work. From speaking with those involved with more recent track management, the sections of track 1hr either side of Welcome Flat Hut were maintained more intensively by hut wardens as part of their duties.

#### Work Recommendations

- 1) Any visitor upgrade work should keep to the original construction methods and specifications.
- 2) Re-instate drainage. Stone cut-outs to be cleaned out. Dig out side drain.
- 3) Features such as the small bridge at 663 m and the set of stone steps should be retained.



#### 4.2 SECTION 2 — SHIELS CREEK TO OPEN CREEK

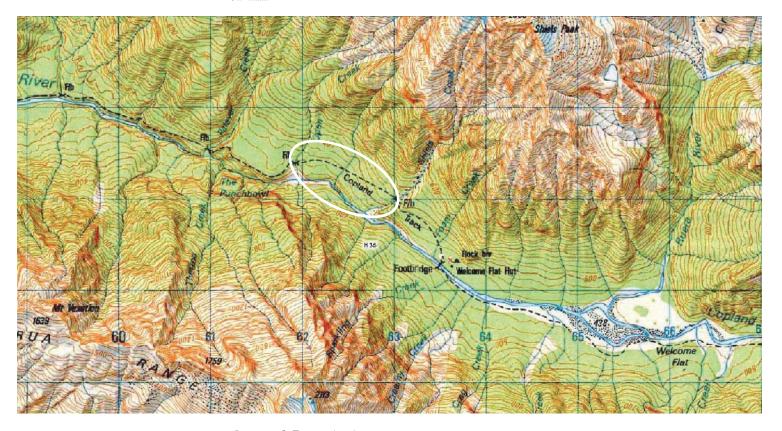
Track type and construction date:

Pack track (completed ca 1912)

Section length (approx.): 1404 m

Recorded track features:

Cut-outs—52; 1 timber cut-out; fords—9; block cuttings—2; some section of fill.



#### General Description:

Where the track sidles round the hill-slope it has been constructed to a full bench standard. There has been a significant amount of blasting done to facilitate this. The nature of the ground has necessitated the construction of block cuttings to maintain track grade and alignment.

In many sections the side drain has had stone lined along the edge as retaining. There are many fords, cut-outs, small creeks with the edges of the bank retained on this section of track, demonstrating that water management was a major issue.

There are about half a dozen good examples of cut-outs on this section and some nice fords with stacked stone construction.

There has been significant erosion of the surface with much of the crown not being evident leaving many of the stone cut-outs sitting proud of the track surface.

Track width seems variable with many of the block cuttings 2 m wide







but the visible track being only around 1.5 m. This may suggest that the maintenance of full width has not been consistent through the years.

#### Section for Historic Management

The section of track from 1935 m to 2427 m has a number of good features (numerous cutouts, block cuttings, sections of full bench) that warrant active management (length of track - 492 m).

#### Work Recommendations

- 1) Any visitor upgrade work should keep to the original construction methods and specifications. Modification of side and block cutting walls must be avoided
- Re-instate drainage. Stone cut-outs to be cleaned out.
   Dig out side drain.
- 3) Manage vegetation.
- 4) Keep sections of track identified above, maintained to original historic width (ca. 2 m).

Top: Block cutting at 1276 m

Centre: Ford 8

Bottom: Block Cutting 2 at 2416 m.

# 4.3 SECTION 3 — OPEN CREEK TO ARCHITECTS CREEK

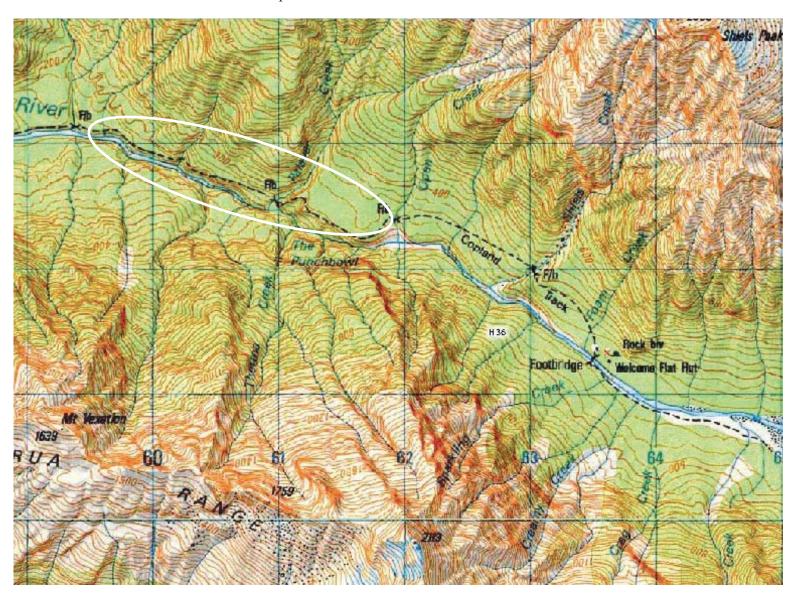
Track type and construction date:

Pack track (completed ca 1909)

Section length (approx.):3574 m

Recorded track features:

Cut-outs - 62 (1 timber); fords - 14; block cuttings - 4; culvert -1; rock stock piles -1



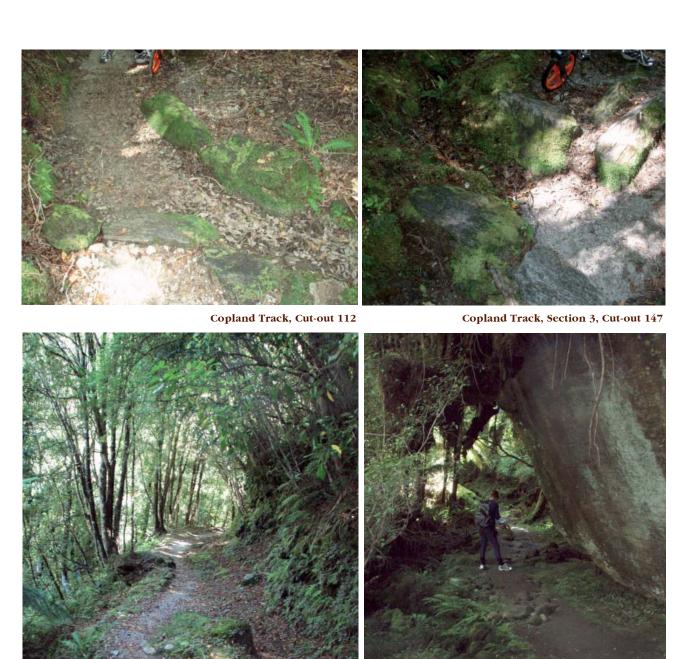
#### Associated features:

Bridge site at Architects Creek - old anchors of original foot bridge. Reports from 1912 indicate that a smithy was sited on the true left of Architects Creek - time constraints prevented this being looked for during this BLI trip.  $^{50}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> See Baughan, B. E. 1912:31.

#### General Description:

Most of the track is constructed to a full bench to maintain grade an alignment. At least one 400 m section is constructed as a half bench. The full width of the track is often obscured by encroaching vegetation and slumping and frittering of the track bench. The track varies in width from around 1.2 m on a section of poor condition benched track to 2 m (Block cutting 4).



Benched section before Palaver Creek

Section of fill at 2679 m

As with previous sections of the track, the majority of the cut-outs are constructed in the form of stone lined drains crossing the track at 30° to 45°. There is at least one cut-out constructed in a funnel shape, with more of these being present on other sections of the track. There are many examples of stone revetted side drains lining parts of the track. As with other parts of the track cut-outs and stone revetted drain edges sit proud of the current track surface, as there has been significant erosion of the track surface with the disappearance of much of the original track crown.

#### Section for Historic Management

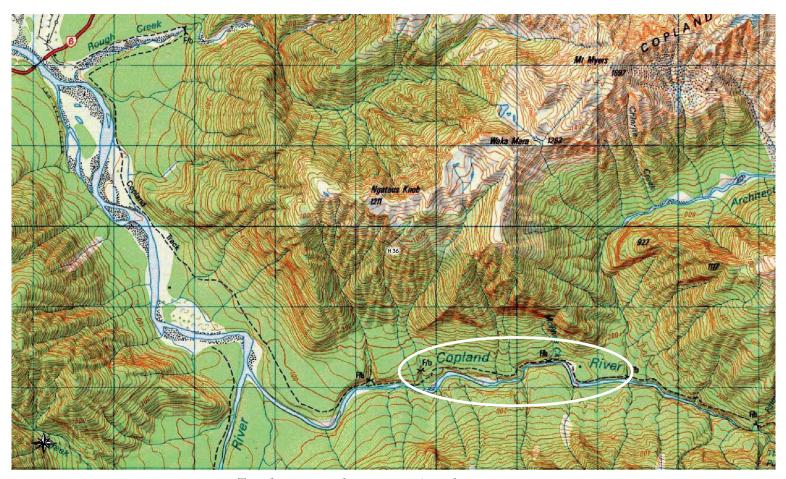
From points 2602 m-4881 m (2279 m)

This section of track is a good example of full bench construction, as well as having some sections of half bench construction. There are good examples of cut-outs and fords. The area the track was constructed through seems to be quite geologically stable which has meant that the historic features have survived. This will also mean that ongoing maintenance will be easier. See full BLI document for specific feature details.

#### Work Recommendations

- Any visitor upgrade work should keep to the original construction methods and specifications. Modification of side and block cutting walls must be avoided
- 2) Re-instate drainage. Stone cut-outs to be cleaned out. Dig out side drain.
- 3) Manage vegetation.
- 4) Keep sections of track identified above, maintained to original historic width (ca. 2 m).

## 4.4 SECTION 4 — ARCHITECTS CREEK TO UN-NAMED CREEK



Track type and construction date:

Pack track (completed ca 1912)

Section length (approx.):

3023 m

Recorded track features:

Fords—18; Cut-outs—18; block cuttings—; borrow pits—1; bridge site-

Associated features:

Piles of rock adjacent to the track.

#### General Description:

The first 1500 m of this section of the track is in a poor to fair condition. This applies to specific features, the track formation and track surface.

Most of the track is constructed to a full bench to maintain grade an alignment. The width of the track is mostly around  $2\,\text{m}$ , narrowing down to  $1.5\,\text{m}$  through some of the block cuttings. The majority of the cutouts constructed in the form of stone lined drains crossing the track at  $30^{\circ}$  to  $45^{\circ}$ .

#### Section for Historic Management

The best section for intensive historic management is from 7717 m - 8975 m (a length of 1258 m). It has good sections of full benched track, block cuttings, good examples of fords and cut-outs. In comparison to section 3, the quality of features are better than quality of the standard of the track itself.

#### Work Recommendations

- 1) Any visitor upgrade work should keep to the original construction methods and specifications.
- 2) Re-instate drainage. Stone cut-outs to be cleaned out. Dig out side drain.
- 3) Manage vegetation.
- 4) Keep sections of track identified above, maintained to original historic width (ca. 2 m).



View of the track showing the full bench construction. Ford 41 - while the ford has blown out the approaches are

Ford 41 - while the ford has blown out the approaches are present and the construction of the ford can be seen



Anchor blocks for original Architects Creek bridge (on the left of and behind the sign) and the 1967 Forest Service design replacement.

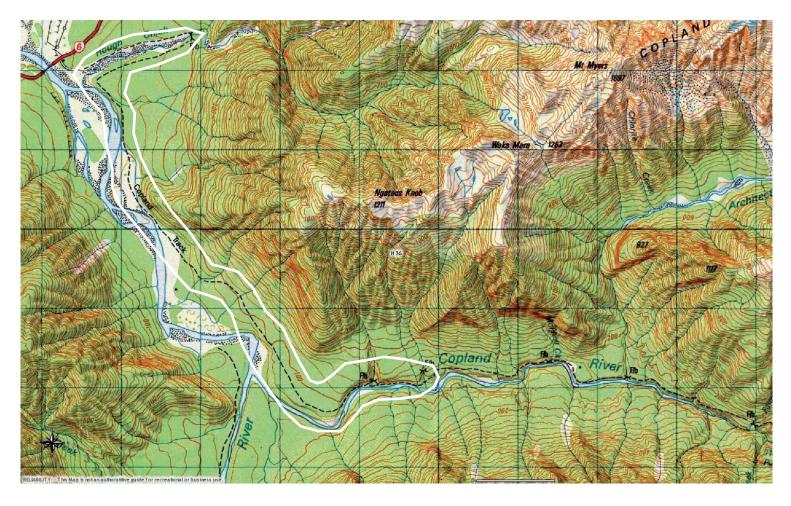


Karen Rea recording details at block cutting 11

## 4.5 SECTION 5 — UN-NAMED CREEK TO KARANGARUA ROAD END

Track type and construction date:

Pack track (completed ca 1907; section over from the confluence to 2km from road end re-aligned from river bed in 1911?)<sup>51</sup>



Section length (approx.): 7147 m

#### Recorded track features:

Fords—2; block cuttings—2; cut-outs—8; borrow pits—14 (at least); bridge sites—4; length of embankment section—1183m.

#### Associated features:

Square pit near embankment at 11042 m.

#### General Description:

Around 1100 m of the track has been constructed using embankment. This marks this part of the track out as different from the rest of the track

<sup>51</sup> See letter dated 19 May 1910 and one dated December 20th 1910 for discussion of the section mentioned - 9/4 Copland Track 1909-1910, Public Works Department File, Archives New Zealand, Christchurch. Copy in Department of Conservation Archives, Hokitika

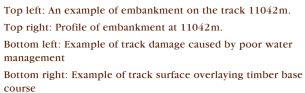
which mainly used benching. The sections of embankment are bounded by numerous borrow pits, used to obtain spoil for the construction of the embankment formation. These are also a rare feature on the track – there are hardly any borrow pits on the other preceding sections. The embankment formation and the presence of borrow pits is directly correlated to the underlying nature of the land the track is built over (i.e. prone to being boggy).

The ground that the track traverses is intersected by a myriad of small streams and creeks. A lack of maintenance of the water management features on the track has seen that a significant proportion of this section of the track being impacted by water damage. This is being exacerbated to some extent by ongoing visitor use.











#### Section for Historic Management

There are two sections of embankment formation that are worthy of historic management. These are from 10641 m-11000 m (length of 559 m) and from 11042 m-11351 m (length of 309 m). Both these sections of embankment are exemplars of embankment construction, being both in good condition and having good examples of adjacent borrow pits.

#### Work Recommendations

- 1) Any visitor upgrade work should keep to the original construction methods and specifications.
- 2) Re-instate drainage. Stone cut-outs to be cleaned out. Dig out side drain.
- 3) Manage vegetation.
- 4) Keep embankment sections of track identified above, maintained to original historic width (ca. 2 m).



Above: Block cutting 16

Left: Cut-out 176 with timber base course of adjacent embankment formation exposed

### 5.0 Assessment of heritage values

Most historic places in New Zealand are assessed using a recognised heritage value system. It is proposed to assess the significance of this place using the criteria contained within the Historic Places Act 1993. The Historic Places Trust is the national authority in the assessment of the significance of historic places. The current Trust assessment criteria are used in its Registration Proposal form.

#### These criteria are:

Historical, cultural, aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, scientific, social, spiritual, technological and traditional significance or value.

For the purposes of this assessment these criteria have been amalgamated under three headings: *Historical* (historical, social); *Physical* (archaeological, architectural, scientific, technological); and *Cultural* (aesthetic, spiritual, traditional).<sup>52</sup>

#### 5.1 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

There are a few factors that stimulated and sustained the birth of tourism in New Zealand in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which are dealt with elsewhere in great detail, <sup>53</sup> but should be mentioned to provide context for the significance of the Copland Track.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, places with significant natural beauty or uniqueness were increasingly seen as assets to be looked after for all to appreciate. There was a growing awareness that these places were attractions that enticed a small but growing number of wealthy overseas visitors to New Zealand. The government was concerned that private parties would reap immense benefit from catering for visitors in places like Rotorua, with its thermal attractions, and Mt Cook and its spectacular scenery, at a loss to ordinary New Zealanders (and the government). This led to the government taking a direct role in providing infrastructure at these places. Also at this time there was an embryonic preservationist thinking creeping into government attitudes to access to scenic places. Legislation such as the Thermal Springs Act (1881) and the reservation of Mt Cook as a recreation reserve (under the Domains Act) were responses to the need to ensure access for all to New Zealand's scenic areas and to preserve them.

Another important stimulus for tourism during this time was government investment in communication and transport infrastructure, which made more remote areas, such as the West Coast, more accessible. This was particularly the case for the South Westland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Copied from Egerton, R. 1998. Dumpling Hut, Milford Track, Fiordland National Park: Assessment of effects on heritage values of future management actions. Department of Conservation, Southland Conservancy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> See Langton 1996, Egerton 1997, Harris 1974.

Also at this time, there was an increased interest in walking as a recreational activity; especially popular with urbanised middle class New Zealanders with more leisure time. In keeping with the growth of walking for recreation in other parts of the world, development of transport infrastructure was pivotal in facilitating access into more remote areas. <sup>54</sup>

So it is into this milieu in the 1890s the government began to invest in opening up areas in Westland, specifically around the glaciers. With the construction of a track to Franz Josef in 1893/94, the journey to the glacier from Hokitika only took three days. Charlie Douglas supervised hut and track construction at the glaciers and tourist tracks were blazed. Similarly at Mount Cook, government took a 'hands on' approach, purchasing the Hermitage in 1895 and improving road access to the area. The initial direction to find a trans-alpine route via the Copland Valley and Copland Pass in 1892 is directly related to this zeitgeist.

Murmurings that began in the early 1890s, of government support for tourist infrastructure, seemed to progress in fits and starts. Projects like the Copland only began in earnest with the establishment of the Tourist and Health Resorts Department (THRD) in 1901. THRD provided governmental impetus and focus for the development of tracks like the Copland on the West Coast, and in Fiordland with the Milford, and later the Routeburn, and to a lesser extent, the Dusky Sound and Grave-Talbot tracks. The Copland was one of the few transalpine tourist routes attempted by the THRD and the doggedness with which the completion of the track was pursued highlights the important place the Copland Track had in government plans for tourism in the South Island.

The Copland also has an important place in the history of mountaineering, as the site of the first east to west crossing of the alps in 1895. The trip over the pass and valley track became a 'bread and butter' trip for generations of guides from the Hermitage, and Franz Josef and Fox glaciers, and was one of the attractions that sustained the fledgling tourist industry in the area. The valley also has close associations with the Graham Brothers who guided on the track from the early days, and who used and managed facilities in the area from the 1920s.

The Copland has strong associations with renowned explorer Charlie Douglas, who surveyed the first route, and later worked blazing the first track. Arthur Harper, mountaineer and conservationist, also has connections as he assisted Douglas in the second foray up the Copland, and later during the late 1920s he lobbied to have the area included as part of a scenic reserve.

Locally recognised and associated figures were the Bannister and Te Koeti families from Bruce Bay who were workers in track building gangs and helped build huts and bridges in the area and the Scott family at Karangarua

<sup>54</sup> Langton 1996:80; see also Egerton 1997: ch.2; Nightingale and Dingwall 2005; Harris 1974:43-44; MacLean, 1994:107-108; see also Brooking 1996:179-180.

<sup>55</sup> WNP 12 Tracks - general 1960-11/12/1967; Harris 1974:182; Langton 1996:81, 131-133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> See Egerton 1997 ch 4.

who provided accommodation and horse services, were lynch pins in the early tourist industry in South Westland. Road Overseer Mick Carroll is also associated with building and maintaining the track in the early years.

Peter King, the first Westland National Park chief ranger was instrumental in the reopening of the track and facilities in the early 1960s. He is an interesting character, internationally famous for his exploits in WWII (made into a 2002 movie called *Two Men Went to War*), and nationally recognised as by being decorated for his valour during service in the New Zealand Army during the Korean War.<sup>57</sup>

The historic values of the Copland Track are high.

#### 5.2 PHYSICAL SIGNIFICANCE

There were no other tracks of this scale constructed solely for tourist use on the West Coast. Most contemporary track and road infrastructure on the West Coast was developed to access mineral and natural resources (e.g. gold mining) or to facilitate transport and communication. In this regard the Copland Track is unique, and ranks beside other great tourist tracks such as the Milford Track.

There has been some discussion about the degree of skill level of the original track builders, i.e. they were not as capable as track builders in other parts of the West Coast (as exemplified by the superb stone work on the Croesus Track for example). <sup>58</sup> Information from historic research would tend to support this notion, as the overseer often commented on the difficulty in getting competent workers.

Only about 25% of the track retains significant historic features to warrant active historic management, though maintenance of the track through time has generally retained the grade and alignment of the original pack track.

There are contributing factors regardiong the loss of original historic features on other parts of the track.

- 1) Most of the area the track traverses is geologically dynamic.
- 2) The track is constructed in a rugged montane, glacial valley and alpine environment where weather conditions can be extreme and severe.
- 3) The track has had a long and relatively sustained use over its 106 year life and has been maintained and modified as a response to impacts caused by 1) and 2). The harsh nature of the environment has seen creek crossings, and some sections of the track obliterated and subsequently reconstructed. Ongoing use through time has meant that sections of the track, especially round the huts, and recent era camp sites are not likely to be original.<sup>59</sup>

Thom 1987:142; Langton, Graham 'Harper, Arthur Paul 1865-1955'; McGibbon, Ian.
 April 2006. 'King, Peter Frank 1916 - 1962'; NZ Army News No. 374, 10th April 2007:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Coversation with Mark Nelson, July 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> T. Preston 2006; B. Posthill 2006.

As a general comment, the areas where the track retains more original features are in the geologically stable areas, and where these features are present they are not outstanding examples. So while the physical intactness of the original pack track in its entirety is not the best, and the track was not the most well made one, it still retains sufficient elements that reflect how a historic pack track was constructed.

The physical values of the track are moderate.

#### 5.3 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Copland Track has been a sought after tourist route since its inception, and is both nationally and internationally renowned as a classic tramping experience. It remains an important visitor opportunity on the West Coast with visitor numbers approximately 6000 per annum. Most of South Westland is a 'remote experience' area with proportionally less backcountry routes and tracks than other parts of the West Coast. The Copland Track, along with the Karangarua route, provides the only mountain valley tramping opportunity in South Westland. The Copland Track is also the most popular backcountry tramping opportunity in the Westland *Tai Poutini* National Park and is one of a small suite of 'Easy Tramping' tracks on the West Coast that provide tramping through more remote environments (others include Croesus, St. James, and Lake Daniels). The added benefit of being able to access hot pools at Welcome Flat, makes the experience nationally quite unique.

The Karangarua/Copland Valley is of high cultural significance to Te Runanga o Makawhio. It is a traditional mahinga kai area, and a traditional West/East route crossing the Alps. <sup>60</sup>

The Cultural significance of the Copland track is high.

#### 5.4 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Copland Track was an important part of the tourism infrastructure network built by the Tourist and Health Resorts Department at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It became (and still is) a relatively easy way for more inexperienced visitors to get into the heart of the West Coast's mountainous region. It played a key role in stimulating the fledgling tourist industry in Westland, providing a link from the Hermitage to the Glaciers.

The Copland Track is associated with important historical figures such as Explorer Charlie Douglas, Alec and Peter Graham, Arthur Harper, the Bannister and Te koeti families from Bruce Bay, the Scott family from Karangarua, and Peter King.

It is of very few tracks in the South Island built by the Tourism and

Oraft West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy Conservation Management Strategy p452; Reedy 2004:23.

Health Resorts Department to traverse the Southern Alps. The track retains some good sections of pack track that demonstrate the track builders' craft.

The Copland Valley has special and significant associations with local Runanga. The Copland Track has been, and still remains, important to recreation infrastructure on the West Coast. It provides unique access to a South Westland mountain valley, and the hot pools at Welcome Flat.

### 6.0 Threats

#### 6.1 LOSS OF PURPOSE

Loss of purpose should not be an issue for the Copland Track if it retained as a tramping track.

#### 6.2 NATURAL

Natural processes can have significant impacts on the integrity of a track. For the most part natural processes (extreme weather events) exacerbate problems brought about by a lack of maintenance. If the track is to be retained this should be managed where possible (e.g. through maintaining side drains).

#### 6.3 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Lack of planning or poor planning, including inappropriate track upgrade or maintenance work are a threat to the historic values of the track.

#### 6.4 INFORMATION LOSS

There is a surprising amount on file about the building of the original track and many sources that record its later use. There are a few sites associated with the track (e.g. smithys, rock bivs) that have not been recorded. This should be done to capture information before natural processes decay these places.

# 7.0 Discussion and Recommendations

Throughout its history the Copland Valley has been seen as a key tourist opportunity, right from its initial inception with plans for a mule track to the Hermitage, through to the grand schemes in the 1960s for a road up the valley and a tunnel to the Hermitage. Apart from eventually getting a pack track constructed to facilitate horse access through to Douglas Rock and a foot track to the Pass, most of these schemes never came to fruition. For the most part nature has conspired to make most grand plans costly to achieve and sustain. In the experience of the early track builders it was constantly a case of two steps forward, one step back, with every new season of track construction work beginning with a month or so of track clearance and maintenance before new track work could begin.

By the 1960s, at least the Ministry of Works realised this, which meant that realistic advice based in part on past management issues, was being given to officials promoting the opening up of the valley to vehicle traffic. The MOW realised that while a road could be opened up and if enough money was available a tunnel could be driven through, the dynamic nature of the geology and environmental conditions that exacerbated this dynamism would require an excessively large sum of money to be spent annually on the upkeep of infrastructure, and this was not cost effective. The lesson here is that any infrastructure built in this environment must be constructed so that its ongoing management is sustainable and any future management decisions should be made with these lessons from history in mind.

#### Historic management and visitor assets work

In the context of historic management there are five parts of the track identified as significant enough to warrant specific attention. Of the total 16 kilometre length of track from Welcome Flat to the road end, there is approximately 4897m of track with important historic features. These are listed below.

SECTION NUMBER	NUMBER OF METRES FOR HISTORIC MANAGEMENT
Section 1	0
Section 2	492
Section 3	2279
Section 4	1258
Section 5	559
Section 5	309
TOTAL	4897

Note that Section 1 warrants little historic management. This section of track has received constant upgrade and maintenance from the late 1960s as part of hut wardens' duties. Much of these upgrade and maintenance works have been consciously done to similar standards to those in the original specifications. <sup>61</sup>

There are specific historic work requirements mentioned in sections 4.1-4.5. The general thrust of this work focuses on maintenance of the track's historic profile, which is the ultimate goal of historic active management for any historic track. With regards to the Copland Track this means maintaining:

- a) Original track profile benched or built up with embankment.
- b) Original pack track width nominally 6' width with 1' side drain.
- c) Original track alignment.
- d) Original track grade.
- e) Retention and maintenance of historic features (side drains, stone cut-outs, rock retaining).

#### Recommendations:

- O Sections of the track deemed significant for historic management (mentioned above) should be clearly identified on the ground and noted in VAMS as historic. Area staff should work with TSO Historic to do this.
- O Maintenance of the track to the general specifications outlined above should be mandatory on the historically significant sections of track with specific work carried out as per recommendations see section 4.1 4.6.
- O Specifications for the maintenance of other parts of the track with less significant historic values should be to a standard that retains the historic feel of the track and meets visitor track service standards. An outline of agreed standards should be prepared to guide ongoing joint historic/visitor assets management.
- O Historic values of the track must be considered when planning or undertaking any visitor asset upgrade or maintenance work. While the work on the track will not need an authority from the Historic Places Trust, a best practice model must be followed that assesses the impact (AEE) of all work on the historic values of the track.
- O Where track features, alignment, grade or profile on non-actively managed sections are to be altered, a record of works undertaken should be made and put on file. Consult TSO Historic who will provide guidance on this.

#### Interpretation and visitor information

Information compiled during this BLI and assessment should be used to produce updated interpretation and visitor information. This would need to be considered in a package of interpretation and visitor information material for the whole Copland Valley experience, but specifically it should include:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Bruce Postill 21/3/2007 personal comment; Tony Preston personal comment.

- O Interpretation of consistently high standard at Welcome Flat Hut, e.g. a hut book such as that produced for Almer Hut, and those on the Milford Track;
- O A booklet (bigger that a standard flat sheet) explaining historic values of the Copland. Potential to have information directly relating to points of interest on the track. Could include geology and natural values also;
- O Comprehensive information on the DOC web site about the Copland and its history;
- O Appreciation of the historic value of the track could be enhanced by highlighting historic features develop and install unobtrusive interpretation on the track itself, (modelled on the small scale plant labels used here on tracks on the West Coast).

#### Future research and survey work

The time constraints and drivers for this BLI report meant the scope of this work was quite prescribed. There are a number of other pieces of historic survey work that should be carried out in the future.

#### Recommendations:

- O Locate and record features reported as being adjacent to the track rock bivs, smithys (Architects Creek, Smithys Creek), camp sites (Pick and Shovel Flat, Architects Creek, Welcome Flat), horse fords at bridge sites.
- O BLI the track from Welcome Flat to the end of the formed track formation at the Pass. Reappraise the historic values of Douglas Rock Hut.

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#### PHOTOGRAPH ATTRIBUTION

Alex Graham Collection, courtesy Dorothy Fletcher, Hokitika - pp. 22, 24.

Boekholt 1983 - images from family of A. C. George 1913 - p. 13.

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### Appendix 1:

#### COPLAND TRACK CHRONOLOGY

- Douglas surveys Copland "to determine the practicability of a route for a mule or horse track from 'The Hermitage' across the alps to the West Coast via Hooker Valley and Baker's Saddle". He reported back that 'the route was impracticable'
- 1894-1895 Summer-Harper and Douglas once again sent up Karangarua to look for pass for a track to the Hermitage "in spite of the fact that it carried perpetual ice". After failing in this, Harper once again assessed the merits of the Copland, suggesting that the Copland route was the best, but that even this would require a lot of work with the track being built up with 'solid masonry' (or extensive stone work). 63
- 1895 24 February First crossing from the east coast to the West Coast via the Southern Alps by Zubriggen and Fitzgerald first over Copland Pass. <sup>64</sup>
- Malcolm Ross makes the first west to east crossing of the alps via the Copland. He used some blazed lines still distinct through the bush, but found some had been obliterated by slips or vegetation re-growth.<sup>65</sup>
- Douglas supervising group of men cutting track up the Copland. Track constructed to within 8 miles of the Hermitage. 66

  Track workers discover hot springs at Welcome Flat. 67
- 1902 First annual report of the Tourist and Health Resorts Department mentions that a rough track has been blazed through up the Copland to within 10 hours of the Hermitage: 'This will be a great boon to parties crossing to the West Coast'. 68

February - Crossing of Copland Pass by Tiechelmann, Newton, Batson and Clarke. Blazed line reported to be 'much overgrown'.  $^{69}$ 

1902 April — Guide Jack Clarke leads first party of women over Copland Pass.
Party included Constance A. Barnicoat who dressed in men's attire for the trip.

Copland mentioned by the Tourism and Health Resorts Department as part of a West Coast loop route that had travelling down the West Coast with the Hermitage as the final destination. The minister stated that:

Due attention will be paid to the development of these routes, with a view to obviating the necessity of the tourist retracing his course after travelling the West Coast from Hokitika.<sup>70</sup>

October - Peter Graham account of a trip over Copland Pass to take

Douglas, C. 1892: Report by Mr. Douglas of Explorations made along the Copland River. *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR) 1892: C-1:41-47; but see also Langton 2004:chapter 12; Harper 1896:179.

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 C-1: 105-106; Harper 1896: chapters XVI to XVIII.

<sup>64</sup> Langton 2004:163.

<sup>65</sup> Ross, Malcolm 1914:211.

<sup>66</sup> Greymouth Evening Star 12/7/1901 (quoting Hokitika Guardian); see also West Coast Times 10/7/1901.

 $<sup>^{67}</sup>$  Pascoe 1957:48: See also Douglas plan of Welcome Flats area reproduced in Langton 2004 reprint.

<sup>68</sup> First Annual Report of the Tourism and Health Resorts Department: AJHR 1902 H-2:19

<sup>69</sup> Newton, H.E. 1902. Trip in the Hills.

Second annual report of the Dept of Tourist & Health Resorts. 4/4/03 DOC Archives, Franz Josef; see also Wide World Magazine c August 1904; see also Graham, P. 1961:70.

up position as a guide at the Hermitage. Uses blazed route up the valley.  $^{71}$ 

- 1905 Blazed route difficult to follow patchy and overgrown.<sup>72</sup>
- 1906 Rough bridle track to near Architects Creek better route under construction on TR of river. Footbridge present over Architects Creek.<sup>73</sup>
- 1908 December—Public Works Department (PWD) takes over track work District road engineer reports that work on track in hand but there are issues with labour shortages.<sup>74</sup>
- 1909 Work urged to re-start on the Copland.

Map shows bridle track to within a couple of kilometres of Welcome Flat.  $^{75}$ 

January return from Road Overseer M. Carroll reported bush felled 18ft wide, bush cleared 12ft wide, track formed 7ft wide.

February - Department of Tourist and Health Resorts querying PWD about progress on Copland Track - 'it is a matter of importance that the track should be gone on with even if only for foot traffic'.

March-Track formed to within a mile from Welcome Flats.

April-Trying to make the track passable for horses as far as Welcome Flat where the first hut is to be built.

December - Report from the PWD engineer - Floods make portions of the track that use the river bed hard for horses to traverse. Suggestion made to form track clear of the river. Suggests department make use of the local mountain guides to pick route for track beyond Welcome Flat. 76

Account of east/west crossing of Copland Pass by Freda du Faur with Peter Graham as guide.  $^{77}$ 

Report from Peter Graham, Chief Guide at the Hermitage, that work on the western side of the track needs to be carried out as soon as possible, as it is much over grown and blocked by wind falls. Many parties making the crossing had complained of the track condition.

Late in year - Work begins on Welcome Flat Hut.

1912 February — Questions asked in parliament over progress with the building of Welcome Flat Hut. Reported that a 'commodious hut' had been erected. <sup>78</sup>

March — Description of track by party riding on horseback:

Emerging on the track proper, the result of the heavy rainfall of the past few days disclosed itself in pools of water and soft mud into which the rich forest soil had been converted. For a short distance on either side of the track had been cleared, and the fallen timber partially burned ...

Track becomes narrower. At 11.30 party stop at a hut near Architects Creek. Carry on up the track:

Our route continues through the bush, and we rise considerably over a step track, in some places cut in the rock billside, with a steep declivity on our right, terminating in a roaring creek. After traversing about four miles, and baving made a swift descent, we reach a spot where the track is being widened, and presently pull up in front of a babitation in a little cleared spot on the roadside, where a roadman and his young Maori wife and children greet us. We are close to some bot springs ... Reports that government plan to erect a cottage near the springs for tourist use.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Graham, P. 1961:72-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Graham and Wilson 1983.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> SO plan 1017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> 30/12/1908 Letter from W. Wilson, Westland District Engineer to Chief Engineer of Roads in Wellington. DOC Archives, Hokitika.

<sup>75 9/4</sup> Copland Track 1909-1910, Public Works Department File.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> 9/4 Copland Track 1909-1910, Public Works Department File.

da Faur, Freda 1915. The Conquest of Mt Cook. D Fletcher p/y 4 C K 5.O.

<sup>78 7/4</sup> Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1. Tourist and Health Resorts Department File.

Under a huge rock near the springs we find a fairly snug camping ground in possession of a workman, who has been at work on either the roads or helping in getting timber sawn for the cottage. WF site

Talk of a rough ford at Welcome Flat where the Copland River is crossed to the true right. Horses are left. Has lunch at the head of Welcome Flat, and mention speaking to 'the son of Erin who is at work with a party of Maoris [sic] from Bruce Bay effecting improvement in the track to the Douglas Rock ...'79

November-Peter Graham guides a group of women over the Pass. They stay in the yet uncompleted hut at Welcome  ${\rm Flat.}^{80}$ 

Visitors on the track report a small suspension bridge at Architects Creek and the remains of a black smith forge.  $^{81}$ 

Report from Peter Graham, states that as per plans:

The horse track has been formed to the Hot Springs, and the benched foot path has been constructed to within a few chains of the Douglas Rock bivouac, which is about three to four miles from the snow line of the Copland Pass at the head of the valley.

Welcome Flat Hut not complete as it needs an internal fit out (bunks etc).

Track gang working on clearing slips and repairing washouts from winter storms on the horse track.  $^{82}$ 

1913 January - Freda du Faur visits the area again and reports since her last visit:

...things have been made considerably easier for the tourist. The track now comes right up to the snow grass, and the old battle through the scrub which was such a waste of time and temper is consequently down away with. It is only a tiny track at present; when finished, however, it is to be good enough for a pack horse, and there is to be a but on the Westland side of Copland Pass-luxury indeed for the climber of the future...

[Reached the clearing in the forest where the new but is situated]. We found several of the men engaged on the Copland Track were camping there. As the but is intended solely for the use of tourists, we had no compunction in asking them to clean up and remove themselves to the main camp. The but was only partially finished, the dividing partitions being but half erected, and no bunks or fittings of any kind had begun. Consequently we slept on the floor, and exceedingly hard we found it.

Du Faur talks of roadmen still working on the track and hut at Welcome Flat.  $^{83}$ 

July — Track completed to the snowline.84

November — Peter Graham (Chief Guide for the Hermitage) reports that the condition of the track is bad (blocked with slips and washouts caused by winter weather). Complains that nothing has been done on the track since track workers were brought out in June. Welcome Flat Hut still not finished. Completion of this work is urgent as a number of tourist parties are planning to make the trip over the summer. 85

December — Three men set to work on track maintenance and completing Welcome Flat  $\mathrm{Hut.}^{86}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Fenwick, George. 1912. p.30ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Bowie, N. 1969:177; Joachim, Eleanor 1912.

<sup>81</sup> Baughan, B.E. 1912:31.

 <sup>7/4</sup> Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part
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<sup>83</sup> du Faur, Freda 1915. The Conquest of Mt Cook.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> 9/4 Hermitage to Copeland Track, 1912-1928. Public Works Department File.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> 7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1.Tourist and Health Resorts Department File.

<sup>86 9/4</sup> Hermitage to Copeland Track, 1912-1928. Public Works Department File. The men were W. Hawkins (specifically for hut building), W. Vincent and G. Bannister (track maintenance and assistance to Hawkins).

1914 Letter from Dorothy Theomin to her family reports trip over Copland. Used pack used horses as far as Welcome Flat (party walked).  $^{87}$ 

August — Peter Graham raises issues of need for suspension bridge at Welcome Flat.

Welcome Flat Hut completed but not furnished.<sup>88</sup>

1916 September — Peter Graham once again writes to the General Manager of the Tourist and Health Resorts Department urging a bridge to be built at Welcome Flat.

Funds voted to erect a suspension bridge at Welcome Flat. Work gets underway preparing approaches for bridge.

- Bridge construction held up due to difficulty getting suitable labour.

  Decision made to construct bridge similar to Architects Creek Bridge,
  due to construction expenses if standard PWD design used. Issues also
  with obtaining good timber and landing the iron work at Bruce Bay.
- 1918 Early in year Bridge finally completed in early 1918.

  First unguided crossing of Copland Pass by two women. <sup>89</sup>
- January A series of complaints forwarded to Under Secretary of PWD from Chief Guide at the Hermitage, Peter Graham. His comments include complaints on the state of the Copland Track; lack of progress on the construction of hut at the head of Copland Valley; fact that PWD workmen are using the THR Dept hut, including cached food.

February — complaints from track user over the condition of the track and hut.

June — Peter Graham makes further complaints regarding the bad condition of the track.  $^{90}$ 

September — Overseer Mick Carroll responds to criticism stating that track has been brought up to spec. Has concerns over expending too much on the track as he sees that the track is little used except by Graham. 91

October — after the leasing of the Hermitage and the Aorangi Domain, questions raised over care of Welcome Flat Hut. Suggested that Graham Brothers in Franz be offered the opportunity.  $^{92}$ 

Untidy state of Welcome Flat Hut brought to the attention of the Commissioner of Crown Lands by Peter Graham. Graham brothers offer to look after the hut if some government department were to officially take responsibility for it. Also comment:

The Copland is a very popular trip, with scenic attractions, bot springs etc, and is capable of considerable development. It would be necessary to put a man permanently in charge of the but and tracks, in season, whose duties would be to keep the track open, look after tourists, and act as a guide across the pass.93

- Questions asked of the road overseer why the proposed hut at the foot of Copland Pass had not been erected when the materials were on hand. Overseer suggests Douglas Rock as a better hut site, and reports that the delay is due to lack of suitable labour to do the job. 94
- 1929 Alpine club (via President A.P. Harper) lobby the Under Secretary of the Tourism and Health Resorts Department to include the Copland

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Theomin, D. 29th March 1914. Letter to her family.

<sup>88</sup> Joachim, Eleanor, nd: Holiday Roads in South Westland. p.18ff.

<sup>89 9/4</sup> Hermitage to Copeland Track, 1912-1928. Public Works Department File; AJHR 1918:H-2:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> 7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part 1. Tourist and Health Resorts Department File.

<sup>91 9/4</sup> Hermitage to Copeland Track, 1912-1928. Public Works Department File.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> 7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: part
 1. Tourist and Health Resorts Department File.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Scenic Reserves, general file 13/1 10/12/1923: Commissioner of Crown Lands attention drawn to the unsatisfactory position.

<sup>5/11</sup> Tourist Department: Tourist resorts, huts, tracks and general correspondence.1928-1928. Public Works Department File, 12 June 1928: 20 June 1928.

Valley in a large scenic reserve (includes also Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers).  $^{95}$ 

Interest expressed in leasing hut at Welcome Flat by various parties. Lease granted to Graham Brothers for 5 years, including adjacent paddock and fences. <sup>96</sup>

- 1930 Scenic reserve created in South Westland, including Glaciers and the Copland.  $^{97}$ 
  - Douglas Rock Hut completed. Graham Brothers take over the lease of the hut from the Tourist and Health Resorts Department. 98
- March Welcome Flat Hut reported as being well stocked, bridge over Copland River in use, and Douglas Rock Hut recently completed. 99
- October-Peter Graham reports to the General Manager of the Tourist Department about the unfinished nature of Douglas Rock Hut and the poor condition of the track.
  - November workers engaged to upgrade track.
- 1934-1959 Graham Brothers maintain the lease of the huts in the valley. Track falls into disrepair, especially over the years of WWII.
- 1950/51 Copland shot in effort to stem the flow of deer into the Karangarua, otherwise not many deer found there 100
- 1951/52 Part of a tahr and chamois culling operation in the summer of 1951/52
  - Air dropping of supplies into Welcome Flat hut. Parties base in Copland shooting chamois on the tops  $^{101}\,$
- 1954/55 Hunting carried out on Copland Range. Camp established at the head of Architects Creek. 102
- Three climbers go missing near Mt Sefton-never found. 103
- Mount Cook National Park Board made enquiries to the Tourist and Publicity Department about reinstating the Copland Pass track. <sup>104</sup>
- 1960 Westland National Park created.
- 1961 After many years of neglect, track work carried out by National

<sup>95 29/7/1929:</sup> A.P. Harper President NZ Alpine Club to Under Secretary, THRD.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> 12/8/1929 CCL to Managing Director Mt Cook Motor Co Ltd, Timaru: re application for a license for 10a at Welcome Flat; 12/8/1929 CCL to Tourist Dept. 14/8/1929: Tourist Dept to CCL; 25/9/1929: CCL to Under Secretary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> AJHR L&S Scenery Preservation 1930-31 C-6 p2:

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> 7/4 Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - general file re: part
 1. Tourist and Health Resorts Department File; Bowie 1969:182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Morton, Elsie K. 12/3/1932.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> 48/28/3 A.P. & Game Act - Deer Destruction - Southern Lakes District Organisation General re: Vol. III, 17/9/51 to 13/4/53, Internal Affairs; See also 'Report on Operations for 1947-48 season in the South Westland Area' for mention of Copland as breeding ground for deer that impact on other catchments; 48/118/5 pt 1 Wildlife Act - Deer Destruction - No. 5 - Westland District Organisation - Operations etc - general file re: Internal Affairs File.

 <sup>101 48/28/3</sup>A.P. & Game Act - Deer Destruction - Southern Lakes District Organisation General re: Vol. II, 23/7/48 to 18/9/51, Internal Affairs Department; 48/28/3A.P. & Game Act - Deer Destruction - Southern Lakes District Organisation General re: Vol. III, 17/9/51 to 13/4/53, Internal Affairs Department.; Internal Affairs, 48/118/5 pt 1 Wildlife Act - Deer Destruction - No. 5 - Westland District Organisation - Operations etc - general file.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> District, Operational Report, Summer 1954-55 by S.E. Fokerd (?), NZFS, Westland CO, file 90/20 1939-1961.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> The Press 18/1/1955.

<sup>104 7/4</sup> Huts - Copland Valley - Welcome Flat - Douglas Rock - General file re: pt 1.
Tourist and Health Resorts Department File.

Park rangers from around the South Island. Huts also received much needed maintenance.  $^{105}\,$ 

- Talk restarts mooting the idea of a tunnel under the Alps, with a road coming out via the Copland. 106
- Members of the Westland National Park Board, accompanied by the resident engineer for the Ministry of Works, take a trip over the Copland Pass to consider first hand the potential for opening a road up over the Pass to the Hermitage. After the trip the potential of the idea was questioned due to the difficult nature of the terrain.

New bridge built at Architects Creek — made from 'Dural' to a NZ Forest Service design, with materials air dropped in.  $^{107}$ 

- April Minster of Lands, Duncan MacIntyre, joins a party over the Copland Pass to assess the feasibility of upgrading the track to an 'adventure walk' for fit New Zealanders and tourists. Hut wardens and track workers at Welcome Flat and Douglas Rock supplied by air drops. <sup>108</sup>
- 1969 Large landslide fell from the flanks of Mount Sefton burying Douglas Rock Biv, narrowly missing Douglas Rock Hut.
- 1974 Report on the track notes that it is in bad condition and requires a lot of work-slips to be cleared, benching to be reformed, and vegetation to be cleared. 109
- 1977 A tramper (with no mountaineering experience) dies in attempt to cross Douglas Pass to the Hermitage. 110
- 1977 Douglas Rock Hut upgraded.
- 1979 Inexperienced climber falls and fractures shoulder in Copland Pass area. 111
- 1980 Climber dies in fall in Copland Pass area.
- 1982 February tramper breaks ankle at Palaver Creek, Copland Track. 112

  March two German trampers missing up Copland trapped by storm in the area.

Track steadily improved in an attempt to provide an all-weather track to Welcome Flat. Three flood bridges put in ie McPhee, Unnamed and Sheils creeks. Palaver Creek bridge upgraded with a boardwalk across steep rock on the western side. The track above Welcome Flat to Douglas Rock fine weather track only. 113

- 1980-1983 Tent camp set up at Architects Creek as a base for track maintenance work. Plan to replace tent camp with 2 man bivvy. 114
- 1984 October Architects Creek Hut built. Prefabricated and flown in by helicopter. 115
- 1986 New Welcome Flat Hut finished. The new hut incorporated the old hut as staff quarters.

<sup>105</sup> NZAC Bulletin #18 December 1961 p15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> The Press 11/6/1966.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Greymouth Evening Star 9/3/1967.

New Zealand Weekly News 1/8/1968; See also Bennett, G.B. 1979. pp 149-167, for an account of the ministerial visit from the perspective of the track workers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> 8/6/1974 Report from Senior Ranger Fank Ahern to the Westland National Park Board, p4, WNP 17/7 Copland track 1974 to 29/11/1988.

<sup>110</sup> Greymouth Evening Star 1/9/1981.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> The Press 5/2/1979; 9/1/1980.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Greymouth Evening Star 10/2/1982; 15/3/1982.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> RVA-03-90 Douglas Rock Hut 25/6/69 - (current file), DOC.

<sup>114</sup> File RVA 03 88 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Architects Creek Hut. 12/2/1971 to (current file). DOC.

File RVA 03 88 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Architects Creek Hut. 12/2/1971 to (current file). DOC.

1987	February Landslide engulfs new hut, sweeping the staff quarters into
	the Copland River. The new hut has to be dug out of debris. 116
2000	Welcome Flat Bridge upgraded.
2003	October — A tramper drowns attempting to walk out of the Copland during bad weather. 117

 $<sup>^{116}</sup>$  File RVA 03-89 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - huts - Welcome Flat Hut. 20/01/1993 to (current file) DOC.

File RVA 09-07-11-65 Recreation and Visitor Management - recreation and visitor asset management - track and walkways - other walks - West Coast Tai Poutini - Copland Track. 01/07/1997 to (current file), DOC.

# Appendix 2

# CHRONOLOGY OF HUTS, TRACK BUILDING AND BRIDGES

STRUCTURE NAME	YEAR COMPLETED	AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSTRUCTION
Copland Track	1901-1913(?)	Department of Lands & Survey/Public Works Department
Architects Creek Bridge	1906	Department of Lands and Survey/West Coast Council
Welcome Flat Hut	1914	PWD
Welcome Flat Bridge	1918	PWD
Douglas Rock Hut	1931	PWD
New Architect Creek Bridge	1967	Department of Lands & Survey
1st Upgrade Welcome Flat Bridge	1970s	Department of Lands & Survey
Flood route bridges constructed – McPhee, Un- named and Sheils Creeks	1982	Department of Lands & Survey
Architects Creek Hut	1983	Department of Lands & Survey
2nd Welcome Flat Hut	1986	Department of Lands & Survey
2nd Welcome Flat Hut shifted to new site	1987	Department of Lands & Survey/Department of Conservation
2nd Upgrade of Welcome Flat Bridge	2000	DOC

## Appendix 3

# LIST OF SOME PEOPLE WHO WORKED ON THE COPLAND TRACK AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES - PRE 1950

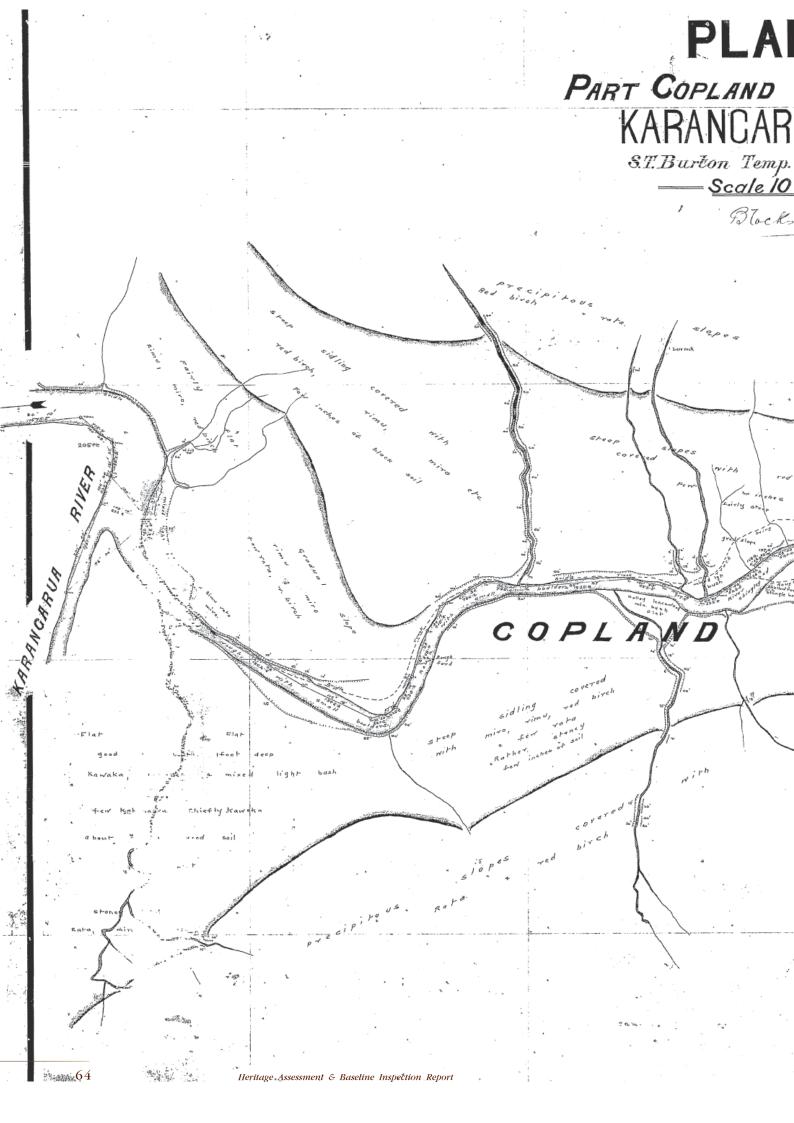
All information from Government Department Files unless otherwise indicated.

NAME	POSITION	AGENCY	YEARS WORKED
Charlie Douglas	Explorer surveyed first line of track	Department of Lands & Survey	1892
	Track work overseer	Department of Lands & Survey	1901
W. Wilson	Engineer	Department of Lands & Survey, Roads Department	1901 ? to 1909 -
Alf Dale	Track worker	Department of Lands & Survey	1901
Bob Ward	Track worker	Department of Lands & Survey	1901
Mick Rockford#	Track worker	Department of Lands & Survey	1907
Mick Carroll	Overseer	Department of Lands & Survey/Department of Roads	? to 1909
	Overseer works in South Westland	Public Works Department	1909 to 1931?
W. Vincent	Black smith/ blasting work/ track work/hut work	Public Works Department	First mentioned 1910; 1913
W. Hawkins	Hut building (Welcome Flat Hut)	Public Works Department	1913
G. Bannister	Track work/hut work - Welcome Flat Hut and Douglas Rock Hut	Public Works Department	1913; 1923; 1930
Dave Bannister*	Track work	Public Works Department	1910s-1920s?
Butler Te Koeti*	Track work	Public Works Department	1910s-1920s?
William Bannister*	Track work/ bridge building	Public Works Department	1910s-1930s?
R. Thompson	Bridge building	Public Works Department	1917

A. Hintz	Track work	Public Works Department	1927
Robert Foster	Track work	Public Works Department	1927
S.J. Conradson	Overseer works in South Westland	Public Works Department	1936? to ?
Mark Te Koeti*	Track worker	Public Works Department	1940s
Jack Bannister*	Track worker	Public Works Department	1940s

<sup>#</sup> Graham 1965:146-147.

<sup>\*</sup> McCormack 1982:77-79.



RIVER VALLEY Surveyor. Aug. 1906. Chs. = I Inch. = XIV Z XV Copland Track