

Beyond Architect Creek the track climbs very gradually towards Palaver Creek as the valley narrows. The climb becomes more noticeable once you have crossed Open Creek. After crossing the Shields Creek bridge there is a short zigzag to the highest point of the track, after which you descend through forest before emerging at Welcome Flat Hut.

You must have a booking - whether you plan to stay in the hut or camp at the nearby campsite.

The hot pools are just a short stroll from the hut with fine views of the Sierra Range on a clear day. These pools are a fragile environment so please do not use soaps or shampoo or dig more pools.

 **Remember; always keep your head above the water to avoid the risk of amoebic meningitis.**

The Upper Copland valley is accessible via a tramping track. Only experienced trampers should proceed beyond Welcome Flat Hut - see the *Upper Copland valley track and route guide* for more information.

**Dogs are not allowed**



#### Hunting

Tahr, chamois and deer can be found in the Copland valley. Tahr are found on the steep faces mainly in the mid and upper valleys, but are difficult to access. There are good numbers of chamois throughout the valley, and deer are mainly found lower down the valley near the Karangarua confluence. Due to high visitor numbers, no hunting is permitted in the Copland valley from 20 December to 31 January (inclusive) and Good Friday to Easter Monday (inclusive) annually. All hunters must have a hunting permit.

**The Sierra Room** is a sole occupancy room within Welcome Flat Hut, available for groups of up to four to book. It has gas and a gas cooker, pot-belly stove and wet-back shower, lighting and all kitchen/cooking equipment. Although located within the main building it has separate access for a more private backcountry experience. The toilet is shared.

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

#### Hut fees

Welcome Flat Hut and campsites **must be booked year round** - hut tickets and backcountry hut passes are not valid. Bookings can be made online at [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or by post, fax, email, phone or in person at DOC Visitor Centres, i-SITEs or DOC agents. Booking fees may apply. A hut warden will generally be present at Welcome Flat Hut. To stay at Architect Creek hut please purchase hut tickets before using the hut.

Welcome Flat Hut	31 bunks	Serviced
Welcome Flat Sierra Room	4 bunks (sole occupancy)	
Welcome Flat campsite	8 tent sites	
Architect Creek Hut	2 bunks	Standard
Standard - 1 ticket per person/night		

#### Further information

For information, hut tickets, intentions, maps, weather forecasts and track condition updates:

Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre  
69 Cron Street, Franz Josef Glacier

Phone 03 752 0360

Open 7 days

8.30 am - 6.00 pm (summer)

8.30 am - 5.00 pm (winter)

[westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz)

Fox Glacier Office  
Main Road, Fox Glacier

Phone 03 751 0807

Open weekdays

10.00 am - 2.00 pm

Awarua/Haast Visitor Centre  
Main Road, Haast

Phone 03 750 0809

[haastvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:haastvc@doc.govt.nz)

Open 7 days

Or visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Published by  
Department of Conservation  
PO Box 14  
Franz Josef Glacier 7856  
New Zealand  
October 2016

**New Zealand Government**



leave no trace  
NEW ZEALAND

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others



track guide



# Copland Track to Welcome Flat Hut

WESTLAND TAI POUTINI NATIONAL PARK



Cover: Welcome Flat Hut. Photo: © Wayne Costello

Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## General information

**Duration:** 2 days +

**Grade:** Easy tramping track

**Experience:** Because of the terrain and conditions, the track is suitable for well-equipped and experienced backcountry trampers only.

**Best time to go:** Summer and autumn.

**Maps:** NZTopo50: BX14 Gillespies Beach; BX15 Fox Glacier

**Hazards:** Flooded rivers, rock fall, landslide and avalanche.

*Note: true left and true right refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.*



## Plan and prepare

Your safety is your responsibility. Before heading into the area, check the latest conditions at DOC's Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre in Franz Josef, Fox Glacier office or Awarua/Haast Visitor Centre – conditions can change rapidly.

Know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

1. Plan your trip
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies

Keep to the track – if you get lost then find shelter, stay calm and try to assist searchers.

Leave your trip details with a trusted contact, in the hut Intentions Book, and at

[www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz). Carry a personal locator beacon, and at the end of your trip don't forget to let your contact know you are safe.

More information at [www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz).



*This valley is subject to flooding at any time of year. Do not attempt this trip in bad weather or when rain is forecast. If rivers and side streams are in flood, do not attempt to cross. The Copland River can flood sections of track making it impassable. During severe weather, such as sustained or heavy rainfall, the Copland Track may be closed (often at short notice) due to flooding or other damage. If closed, notices will be placed at the start of the track.*



## Getting there

Access is off State Highway 6, 26 km south of Fox Glacier.

The turn-off to the car park is well signposted on the northern side of the Karangarua River bridge. Drive approximately 150 m down the gravel road to the car park (please close the gate after you go through). There are no camping facilities at the road end. Buses pass the road end each morning and afternoon and will drop off and pick up pre-booked passengers.



*Times given are guides only and will vary greatly with fitness and weather conditions. Tramping in this area is demanding and you should allow plenty of time to reach planned destinations – the area is unsuitable for inexperienced parties.*

## Introduction

The tramp up the Copland valley to Welcome Flat Hut in Westland Tai Poutini National Park is a popular overnight return trip for visitors to the glacier region.

The tramp gives a glimpse of Westland's spectacular forest, river and mountain scenery, while natural hot pools at Welcome Flat are an added attraction for weary adventurers.

The forests of the Copland valley are visually dominated by a healthy canopy of southern rātā, a spectacular sight during the summer flowering season. The forest gives way at higher altitudes to the upper montane vegetation of tree daisies and dracophyllums, which in turn give way to the truly alpine habitats of tussock grasslands and native herbs.

Regular possum control has been undertaken since the mid-1980s, and as a result the forest damage is significantly less than in the neighbouring Karangarua valley, which has extensive canopy dieback.

## Track description

### Car park to Welcome Flat Hut

**Time:** 7 hours, 18 km one way



*When Rough Creek is running high, all unbridged side creeks on the walk will also be running high and you will not be able to cross them safely. Do not start the walk in these conditions. There is a flood bridge across Rough Creek for emergency use to exit the valley (located 45 minutes upstream from the car park).*

Cross Rough Creek to the orange marker on the other side then follow the well-formed path through the forest. The track is marked across open areas and river crossings by orange triangle markers. From the confluence of the Karangarua River to Architect Creek, the track alternates mostly between boulder hopping on rocky riverbed and forest tracks, with occasional grassy clearings. Architect Creek is considered to be roughly halfway to Welcome Flat.



*There are two active landslide areas to be crossed on the track to Welcome Flat Hut. The landslide areas are approximately 30 minutes upstream of Architect Creek, and on the true left of Shields Creek. Both are signposted. Due to unstable slopes, you will need to take particular care during and just after heavy rain.*