

Volunteer hut warden Travers-Sabine Circuit



Information for volunteers, 2017/18

Thank you for your interest in volunteering as a hut warden on the Travers-Sabine Circuit in the Nelson Lakes National Park.



You'll have the opportunity to help other people have a wonderful experience on this 'bucket list' tramp.

Many of the people will be new to tramping; your experience may be helpful to their enjoyment of their experience.

Upper Travers hut, Photo: Brendon Clough

Travers-Sabine Circuit – news

The secret of Rotomairewhenua/Blue Lake is out!

You'll all be aware that there has been a lot of pressure from trampers and Te Araroa walkers on this beautiful – but fragile – place.

DOC expects visitor numbers to keep increasing this summer. Estimates are 2000 TA walkers this summer.

Work description

You'll need a high level of fitness to make your volunteering more enjoyable. Each valley is moderately difficult, and the Travers Saddle is considered an alpine crossing meaning we really need volunteers to have relevant and recent experience, skills and fitness.

The primary role of a hut warden is to help visitors enjoy their stay. You will be expected to:

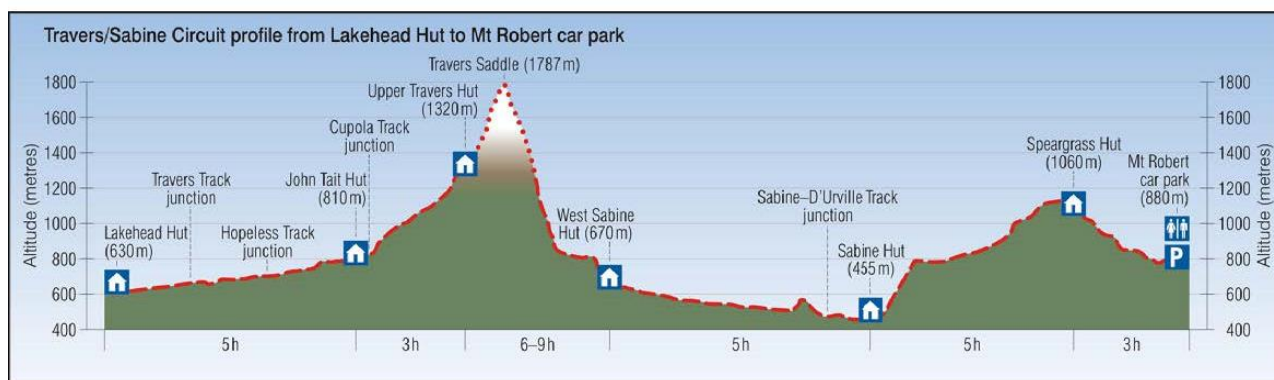
- Maintain daily radio contact with DOC staff at the Nelson Lakes Visitor Centre
- Keep the huts, the toilets and surrounds clean and tidy
- Empty ash drums as needed
- Check trampers' hut tickets/passes
- Provide information to trampers, including the weather forecast
- Be available to assist search and rescue staff, if required
- Undertake minor hut maintenance, as required
- Undertake minor vegetation pruning as needed.

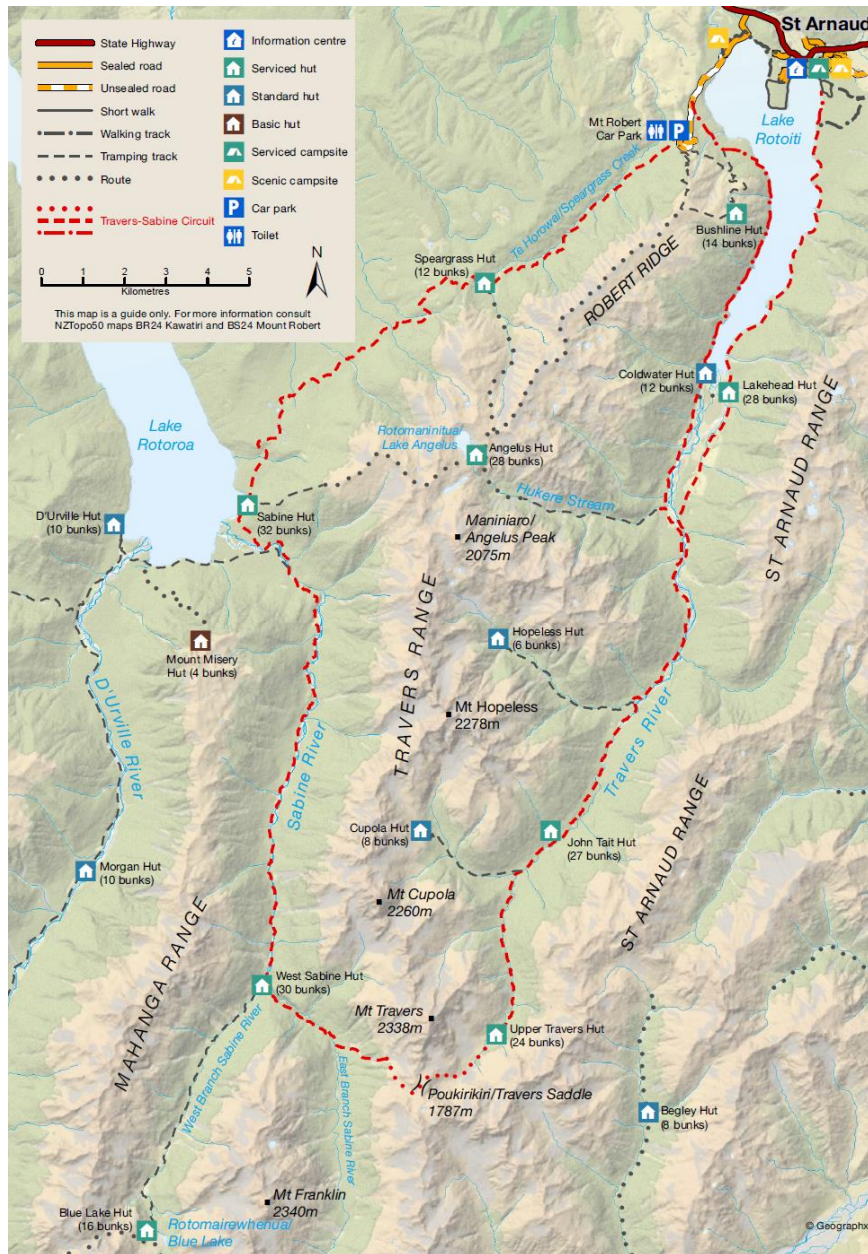
You need to relate to a wide range of people in a friendly, informative manner and have a practical outlook.

How the duty works

The duty runs from **Tuesday to Tuesday** and starts at the Mount Robert car park.

Night	Hut/Activity	Approximate time
Tuesday	Mt Robert carpark to Speargrass Hut	3 hours
Wednesday	Speargrass Hut to Sabine Hut	5 hours
Thursday	Sabine Hut to West Sabine Hut	5 hours
Friday	Day trip to Blue Lake Hut and return to West Sabine Hut for overnight (Optional – extend your trip by one night and stay at the Blue Lake Hut)	6 hours return
Saturday	West Sabine to Upper Travers Hut	6 to 10 hours depending on weather conditions.
Sunday	From Upper Travers Hut to <u>either</u> Hopeless Hut <u>or</u> Cupola Hut <u>or</u> John Tait Hut (allocated on a rotational basis during the summer)	3 to 8 hours depending on destination.
Monday	On to <u>either</u> Lakehead Hut <u>or</u> Coldwater Hut (allocated on a rotational basis during the summer)	5 to 8 hours depending on starting point.
Tuesday	Walk out to St Arnaud	3 to 4 hours from either hut.





Travel to St Arnaud

There are few transport options for getting to St Arnaud. The nearest airports are Nelson or Blenheim and they are serviced by Air New Zealand (www.airnewzealand.co.nz) or Sounds Air (www.soundsair.co.nz).

Sounds Air flies from Wellington to either Nelson or Blenheim.

Nelson Lakes Shuttles - www.nelsonlakesshuttles.co.nz - offer shuttle services to St Arnaud from Nelson. The shuttle leaves from Nelson Airport at 10.00am on a Monday and a Wednesday. If you are booking flights into Nelson make sure the flights arrive before 10.00am and that you book the shuttle in advance. **Please check departure times with the provider before you make your flight bookings.**

InterCity bus travels from Picton to Christchurch via St Arnaud on a daily basis until the Kaikoura Highway is fixed. It is currently the best option to get to St Arnaud from Blenheim or Picton. Bookings are essential www.intercity.co.nz

Arrival and induction

We ask the Travers-Sabine volunteer hut wardens to arrive at St Arnaud on a Monday. You can pick up your room key for Cummings Cottage from the Visitor Centre before 4:30 pm.

Your induction will be at the DOC office at **8.45 am on the Tuesday morning**. Please don't come any earlier as staff will not be available to meet with you until that time.

The induction will take about 1.5 hours and cover the health and safety, radio use, hut and track information, as well as completing forms and having your photo taken for an I.D.

DOC staff will take you to the Mount Robert car park so you can commence your walk to Speargrass Hut.

Finish your duty by walking out to the DOC office at St Arnaud before 4.30pm. You'll be able to debrief with staff and complete an evaluation of your duty. This helps us to improve the volunteer opportunity.



Sabine hut. Photo: Simon Noble

Gear to bring

St Arnaud is situated at over 660m above sea level, so the climate is generally much cooler than in Nelson and Blenheim and it is quite changeable.

The Travers and Sabine Valleys huts are in beech forest and alpine environments so wardens must have suitable gear to stay warm. Snow around this area in the middle of summer is not unusual.

- Bring your own food to eat during your duty.

Other equipment you will need includes:

- Drink bottle
- Sturdy ankle-high boots - ideally leather - **not light hiking shoes**. Must have a good quality sole
- Gaiters or puttees are good to have
- Woollen or fleece hat and gloves or mittens - **not acrylic**
- Clothing suitable for all weathers **including thermal base layers**
- Waterproof raincoat and windproof over-trousers - **not a waist-length rain jacket**
- Sun hat, sunscreen and insect repellent
- Sleeping bag
- Personal medication/items

Your food

You need to bring your food with you.

DOC will refund your tramping food up to \$20 per night for one person.

Please keep your shopping receipts so you can give them to us when you arrive – we can't reimburse you without receipts.

Please try to keep your food shopping 'neat', so you have only one or two receipts and no excluded items: DOC will not reimburse purchases of alcohol or cigarettes.

Reimbursement will be made to your bank account so please bring your account number. We can't reimburse to an offshore bank account, so you will definitely need a New Zealand bank account.

There is a small store/petrol station in the village. The availability of fresh fruit and vegetables can be limited and expensive. We recommend you stock up on groceries in Nelson or Blenheim. It is possible to order groceries online from Nelson. Please contact nelsonlakesvolunteers@doc.govt.nz or 03 521 1806 if you would like more information about this option.

Accompanying tramper

Some of you may want to bring a friend for some or all of your duty. That can be a great idea. The accompanying person must pay the applicable DOC hut fees; and they won't be paid the daily food allowance.

The accompanying person can have space in the Cummings Cottage for the nights before and after the duty. They will not be charged for those nights.

Be sure to let the volunteer co-ordinator know you are bringing a second person.

Take care

Some things to be aware of over the summer months:

- *Sandflies* – Lake Rotoiti sandflies aren't as bad as other places, but people with allergies or reactions might want to bring/take antihistamines.
- *Wasps* – can be a real problem later in the summer, People with allergies to wasps bites must bring their own medications (epipens, anakits etc or other medication).
- *Pollen* – plants will be flowering over the summer months so allergy-sufferers must bring their own medication.
- *Sunburn* – please take care and remember to bring sunscreen and sun protection including sun hats, sun glasses and sun smart clothing.

Accommodation



Historic Cummings Cottage is located directly opposite the DOC Visitor Centre (cnr of View Road and Ward Street).

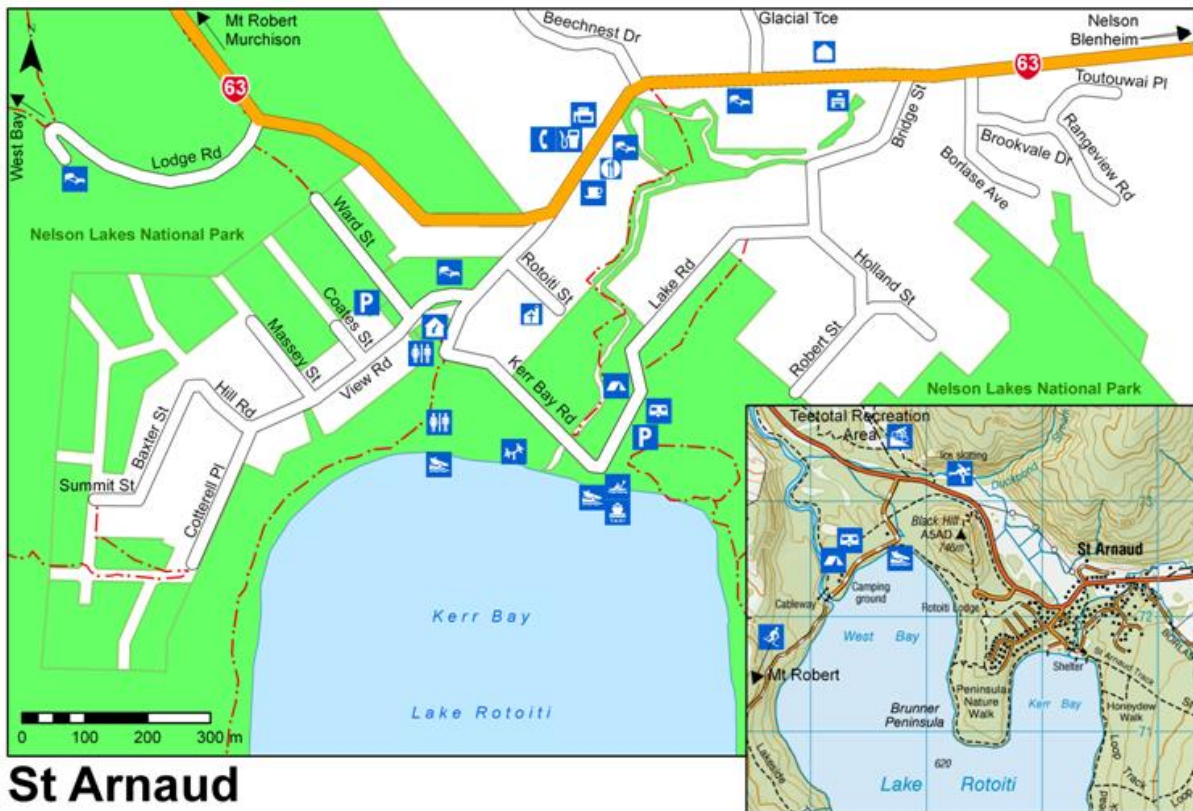
Cummings has shared accommodation available at no charge to volunteers. It is simply furnished with shared bedrooms, cooking, bathroom, and laundry facilities. It has a good supply of cooking utensils, cutlery and plates etc. You must provide your own bedding and food. Cellphone coverage in the village is good. Wi-fi is not provided at Cummings Cottage.

St Arnaud village

The village of St Arnaud is approximately 1½ hours drive from Nelson or Blenheim. The resident population is about 200, and this number is greatly increased over summer with holiday home owners, campers and day visitors enjoying the natural beauty of the area. There is a small store/petrol station, a café, bar/restaurant and various accommodation options.

More information about the village is on the Destination Nelson Lakes website at www.destinationnelsonlakes.co.nz.

Summer recreation opportunities include tramping, hunting, fishing, swimming and boating in the National Park and mountain biking in the nearby Teetotal Recreation Area and Mt Richmond Forest Park. The DOC website has information about walks in the area.



St Arnaud

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| Accommodation | Chapel | Mountain biking | Restaurant |
| Boat ramp | Community Hall | Parking | School |
| Cafe | DOC visitor centre | Petrol station | Shop |
| Campground (caravans) | Ice skating | Phone | Skiing |
| Campground (tents) | Kayak hire | Playground | Toilets |
| Walking track | Public Conservation Land | | Water taxi |

Resources to help you prepare for your time here

We really want you to have an enjoyable and learning experience while you are volunteering at Nelson Lakes National Park.

These free, on-line courses can help you be more prepared for your time volunteering with DOC. They are not compulsory to complete.

Leave No Trace

This free online course explains the 7 principles of the Leave No Trace organisation. The course is for everyone - even the most seasoned outdoors people may find new ways of thinking about familiar concepts or ways to share them with others.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/training-and-teaching/online-courses/leave-no-trace-online-course/>

Nelson Lakes National Park

This information will help you if you are new to the park, or just want a reminder about what is here.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/national-parks/nelson-lakes/>

Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project

Our main Biodiversity Project is called the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project. The project has been running for over thirteen years. The site is 5 000 ha, and it is intensively trapped and monitored for species protection, research and education.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/mainland-islands/rotoiti/docs-work/rotoiti-nature-recovery-project-restoration>

Any questions or queries?

Please feel free to contact us at nelsonlakesvolunteers@doc.govt.nz or 03 521 1806 if you have any questions or comments.

We look forward to meeting you!