

Moss Pass, Nelson Lakes National Park

Most choose to begin the trek by taking a water-taxi from Rotoroa to the lakehead and then start walking from either the Sabine or D'Urville huts. However you can also reach the huts from St Arnaud via the Speargrass Track (Lake Rotoiti) or the Mole Saddle Track from the lower Matakaitaki Valley. Either route will add another day to the trek.

Sabine Hut marks the beginning of the Moss Pass trek – the large and comfortable hut is right on the shore of Lake Rotoroa with a jetty for boat access. From here, head up the Sabine River. A footbridge over the river provides views over the deep, narrow chasm on the river, not far from the lakehead.

Further on, the Sabine Forks is reached. The forks mark the junction for the Travers Saddle route to Lake Rotoiti and where the Te Araroa Trail intersects the Moss Pass trip. The West Sabine Gorge, not far along this route, is impressive. The 30-bunk West Sabine Hut is also here – a good option for the second night of the trek.

From Sabine Hut, continue up valley to Blue Lake Hut near the shore of Blue Lake. A side trip to Lake Constance is worthwhile. The lake fills a large trough beneath Waiau Pass and is certainly worth the two hour return excursion up the moraine wall from Blue Lake Hut to view its deep, clear waters.

From Blue Lake Hut, the route over Moss Pass is a strenuous day. The 1785m pass straddles the Mahanga Range just 600m above Blue Lake. In good conditions it can be reached in about two hours. There is a steep, rocky couloir to ascend just before the top. This can sometimes be snow-filled.

From the pass, it is a 4-5hr descent to the D'Urville - don't underestimate the time it takes to descend after the relatively short scramble from Blue Lake. The track is well poled and marked and has offers great views.

The D'Urville is heavily-forested with only short gorges, it also has many pleasant grassy flats below 16-bunk George Lyon Hut, where most parties stay before or after crossing the pass. It is an hour downstream from the D'Urville River footbridge.

Continue down valley to Morgan Hut, on a large grassy terrace away from the river. Further down the valley, the Mole Saddle-Tiraumea Track provides another route in or out of the D'Urville Valley. It starts from the Tiraumea Track to Tiraumea Hut, then onto the Mole Saddle-Tiraumea Track.

Otherwise, continue down the valley to D'Urville Hut.

Wild file

Access Lake Rotoroa Village on Gowan Valley Road off SH6 west of Kawatiri Junction

Grade Moderate

Time 4-5 days

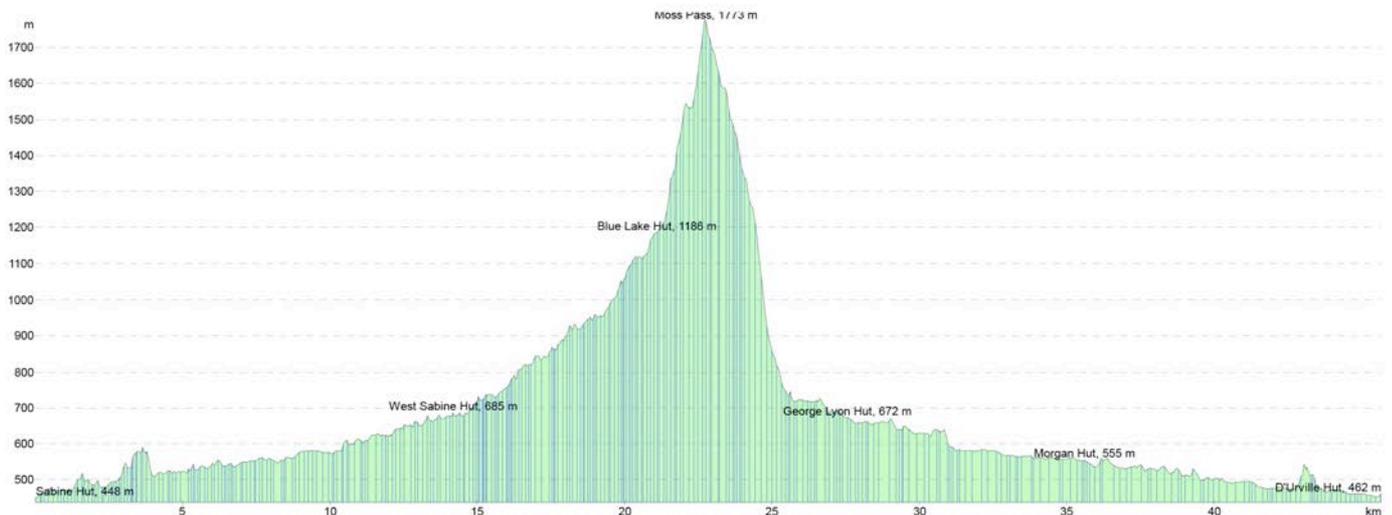
Distance 45.4km

Total ascent 2195m

Accommodation Sabine Hut (\$15, 32 bunks), West Sabine Hut (\$15, 30 bunks), Blue Lake Hut (\$15, 16 bunks), George Lyon Hut (\$5, 16 bunks), Morgan Hut (\$5, 10 bunks), D'Urville Hut (\$5, 10 bunks)

Map BS24

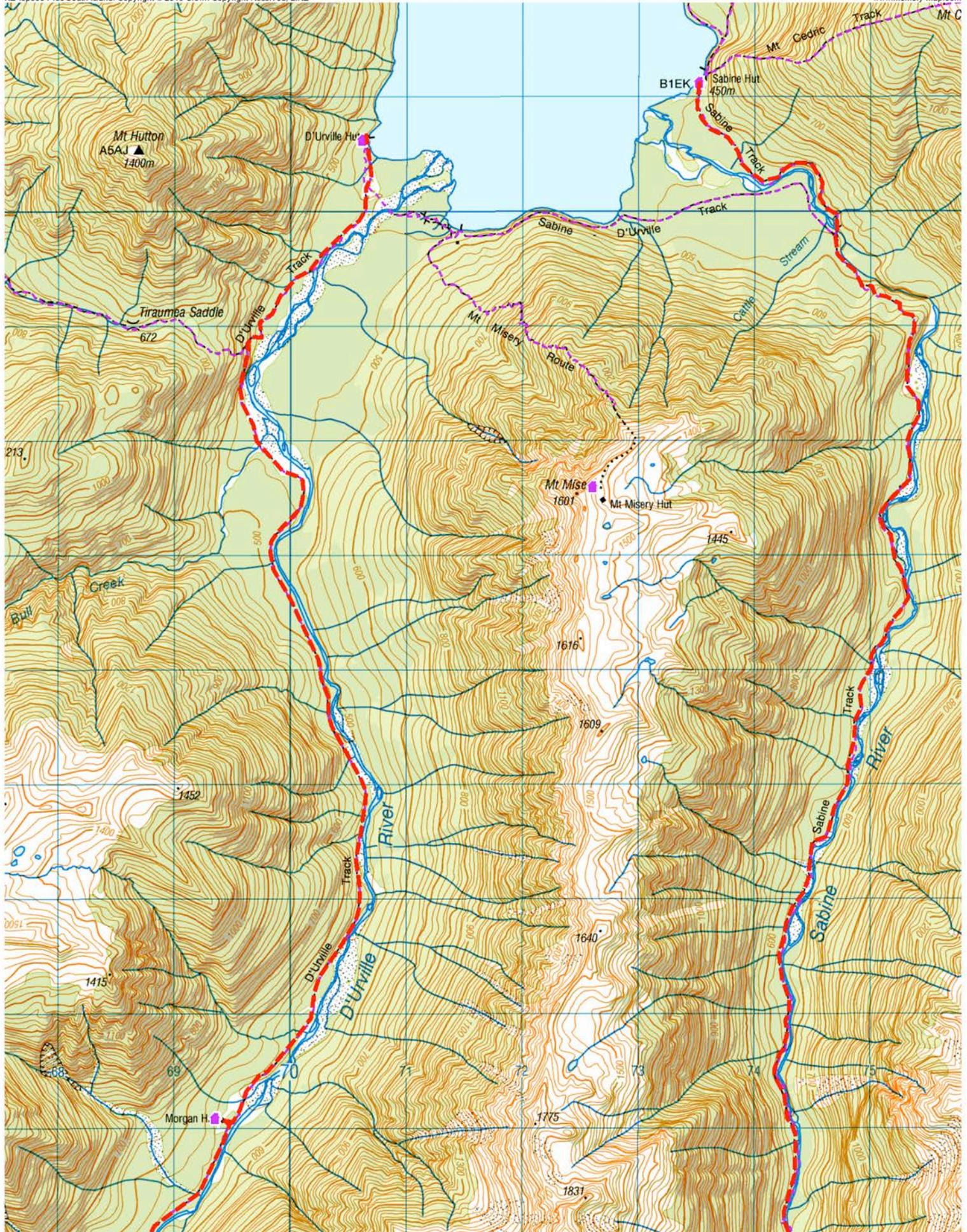
Elevation Profile



Moss Pass, Nelson Lakes National Park. Map 1

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Moss Pass, Nelson Lakes National Park. Map 2

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