

## Crooked Spur Hut via Brabazon Saddle

From the DOC car park, head towards the canyon-like Black Birch Creek. The creek is easy to begin with, mostly gravel flats and a wide mouth, but the way ahead is formidable with 500m bluffed faces dropping sheer into the creek bed and a steep gradient.

With low water levels it is steady going up the valley, with multiple creek crossings and a few small detours to avoid scarp faces and minor gorges.

At the 700m contour, there is an optional climb-out route that avoids a longer and much tighter gorge that would be impassable in high flows.

It's a steep 100m scree and forest ascent to a high tussock face overlooking the gorge and upper valley.

Once back in the riverbed, it is plain sailing to Dog Kennel Bivouac in a bush clearing beside the river.

The 1731m Brabazon Saddle lies between the south branch of Black Birch Creek and the Bush Stream catchment. It's a straightforward ascent and route, in tramping terms.

Gain the terraces above a small gorge, and continue to the foot of the pass at 1500m. The rather intimidating final 230m ascent can be difficult on steep, loose scree.

A side trip is possible here to the ridgeline, another 100m higher, to view the high peaks of The Thumbs, 2505m and 2546m.

The first 300m of descent from the saddle is a painstaking process, akin to walking over a plain of golf balls canted over at 30-degrees. Once at the streambed below tussock terraces, easier travel allows quicker progress.

Stream travel gives way to a major fork which can be negotiated carefully through steep scrub and tussock.

Descend to river level and then climb again onto a high sidle route angling around the face to eventually gain the broad terrace where Crooked Spur Hut stands.

Make a short steep descent from the hut to the riverbed and then, if the river allows, follow the first gorge out through multiple swift fords to an easy scree-bash downstream all the way to the Rangitata.

### Wild file

**Access** Take the Rangitata Gorge Road from Peel Forest, north of Geraldine, to Mesopotamia Station and follow signs to the DOC car park

**Grade** Difficult

**Time** Car park to Dog Kennel Bivouac, 3-4hr; To Brabazon Saddle, 4-5hr; To Crooked Spur Hut, 2-3hr; To road end, 3-4hr

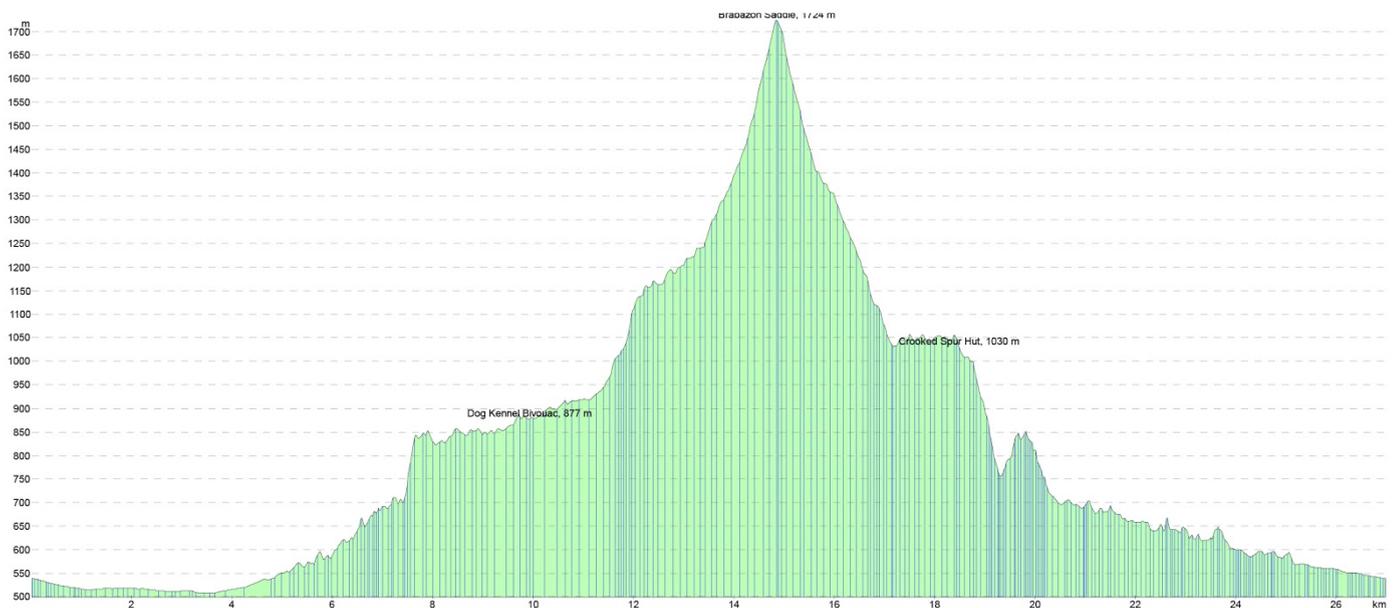
**Distance** 27km

**Total ascent** 1750m

**Accommodation** Dog Kennel Bivouac (free, two bunks), Crooked Spur Hut (free, eight bunks)

**Map** BX18

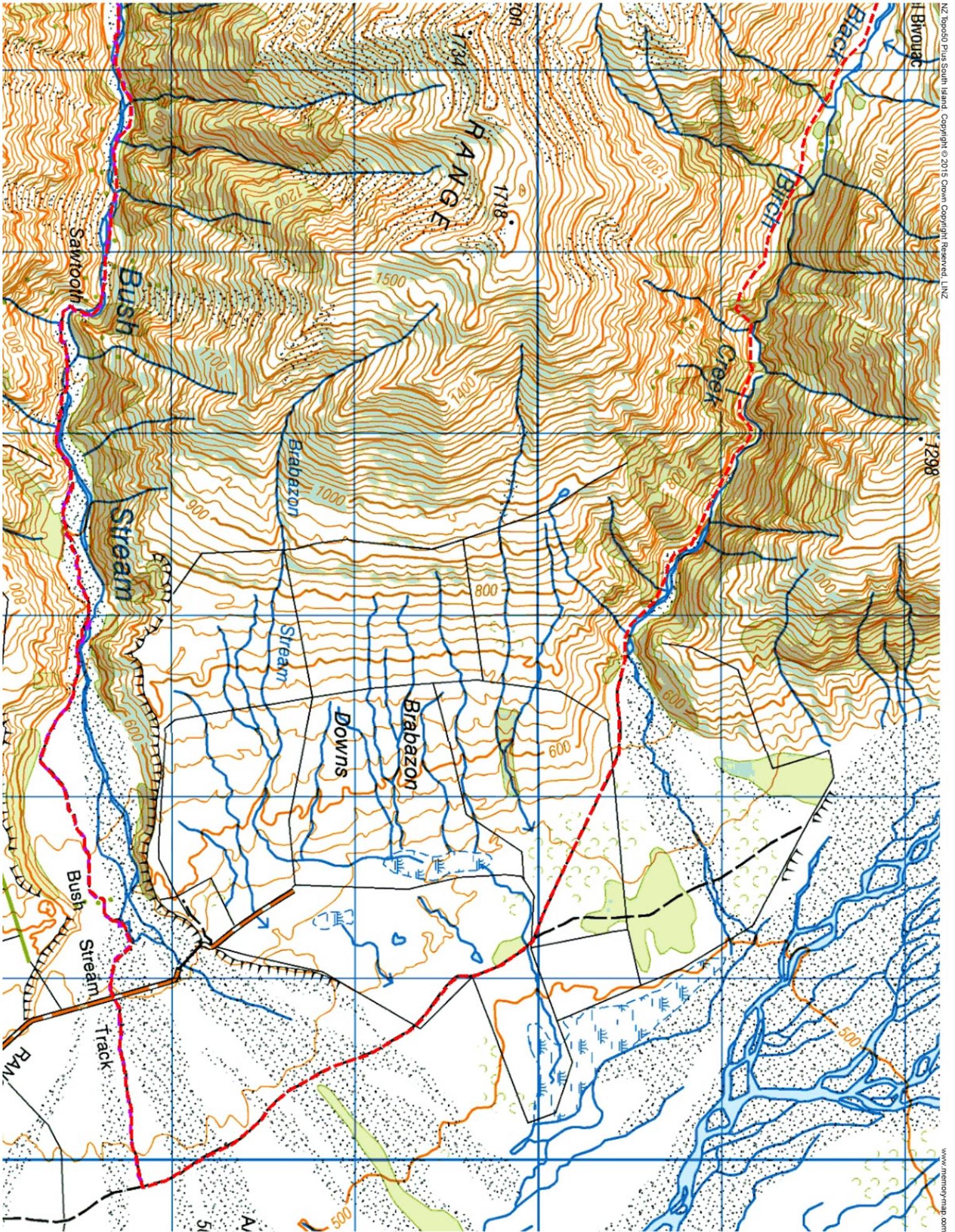
### Elevation Profile



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**Disclaimer:** While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. **The GPX file in these cases are a 'best guess' of the route only. Users should use a combination of GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find** Around the Mountain Circuit, Egmont National Park

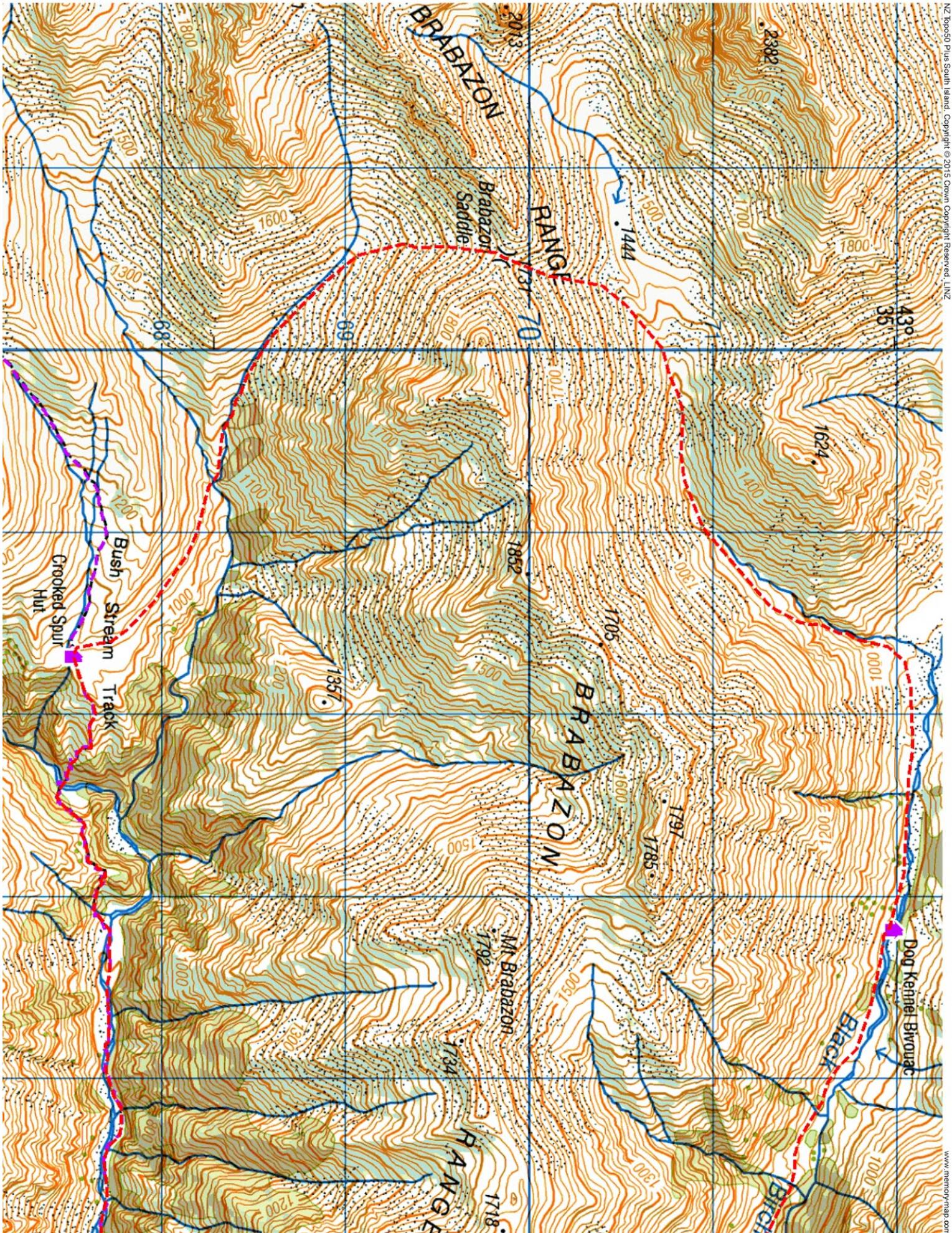
Crooked Spur Hut via Brabazon Saddle. Map 1 and 3.



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Crooked Spur Hut via Brabazon Saddle. Map 2



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