

Steele Creek Hut Via Aisla Mountains, Caples and Greenstone conservation areas

Cross the bridge to the true right of the Caples River and continue up the easy grassland to Birchdale Homestead where a track behind the ruins leads across a terrace up Reids Creek before splitting off into dense mānuka forest. Here, the trail begins to go uphill and becomes hard work.

Approaching the 1000m contour, the topography flattens and the bush transitions back to beech before giving way to tussock slopes.

Sitting at around 1020m, Home Hill Hut allows impressive views across the Caples Valley and the Aisla Mountains. From the hut, sidle west along the slope before climbing up the easy gut below Pt1388. From here, there's a view of the first pass to cross, known unofficially as Bumble Bee Pass.

Cross a relatively flat tussock basin which is interwoven by creeks. Approaching the pass, between Pt1700 and Pt1649, the gradient steepens with the tussock giving way to loose scree for the last 30m. On the other side of the pass, another steep scree slope leads to a bright blue tarn that is unmarked on the map. This makes for a good scree run to the larger tarn by Pt1395. With plenty of flat ground and water, this tarn would make for an excellent campsite.

It is a gradual but steady climb up to the final pass, a rolling saddle between Pt1548 and Pt1800, that leads into the Steele Valley. Another scree slope descends from the pass until about the 1100m contour, where a scrubby gut leads into the forest. At around the 900m contour, a stream flows into Steele Creek and after crossing that waterway, the Steele Creek Track is reached. From here, there's another half hour to reach the cosy four bunk Steele Creek Hut.

Return past the point where you dropped off the Aisla Mountains. The trail gradually ascends the valley until crossing in front of Tongue Spur. It then climbs steadily all the way to the pass at the head of the valley. Once out of the bush, the track crisscrosses the creek, making its way through some rather dense patches of scrub. From the pass, it's a slippery sidle to reach the spur leading down from Pt1611. The descent through the bush is knee-jarring but is over quickly and soon the track junction beside Upper Caples Hut appears. It is about four hours of easy walking down the Caples Valley to reach the car park.

Wild File

Access From the Greenstone-Caples car park at the end of Greenstone Station Road

Grade Difficult

Time Car park to Home Hill Hut 4hr; To Pt1395, 4hr; To Steele Creek Hut, 4hr; To Caples Junction, 6hr, To Mid Caples Hut, 2hr To Car park, 2hr

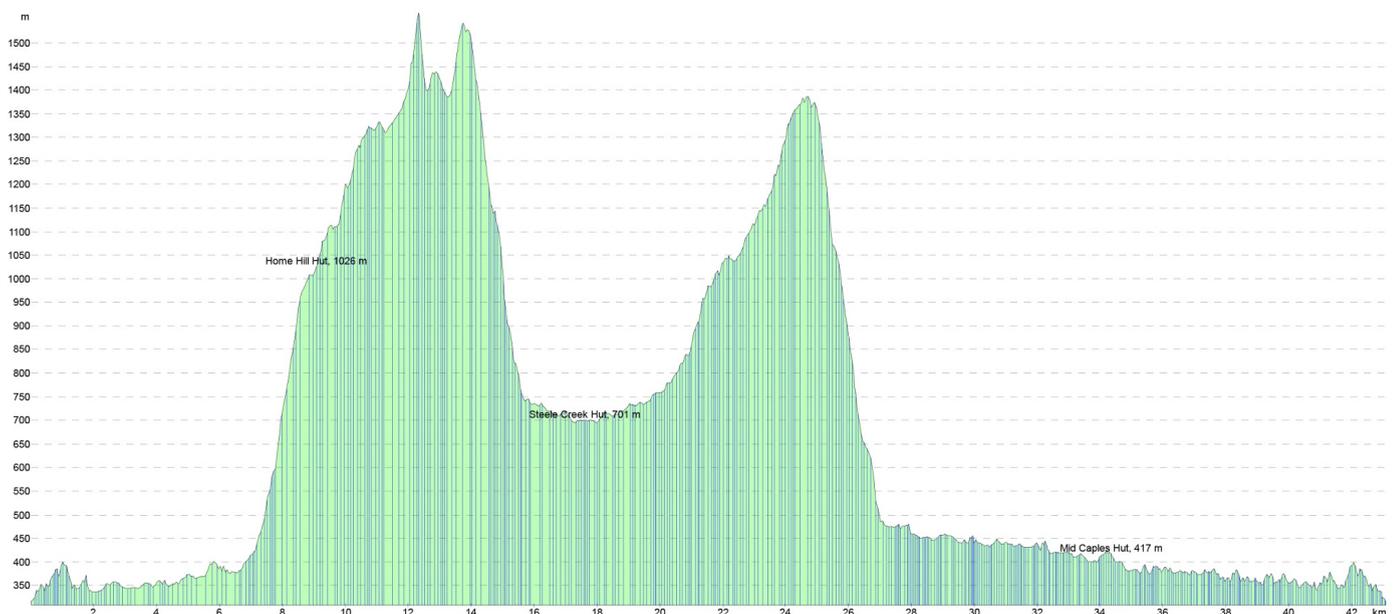
Distance 43.1km

Total ascent 3041m

Accommodation Home Hill Hut (free, two bunks), Steele Creek Hut (free, four bunks), Mid Caples Hut (\$15, 24 bunks)

Topo50 map CB09, CB10

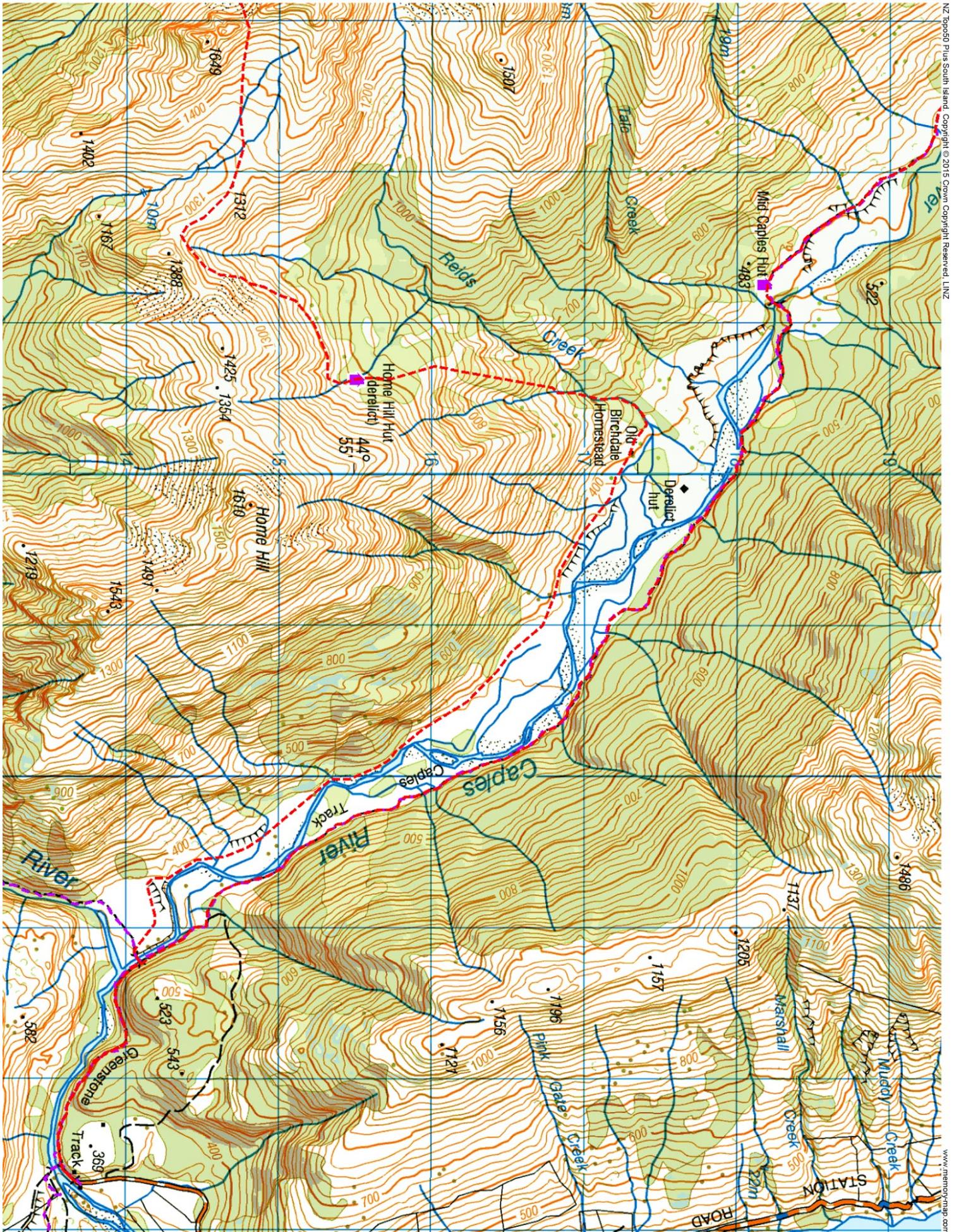
Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness 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

Steele Creek Hut Via Aisla Mountains. Map 1 and 3.



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