

Burn Hut Loop, Tararua Forest Park

To start, cross the Mangahao Lower No 2 Reservoir, an engineering feat and part of the early Mangahao Power Scheme (1924). Then, follow the large orange triangle into the bush and sidle the Mangahao River to reach an arched bridge within an hour.

The ascent to Burn Hut begins immediately over this bridge. After an hour, there's leatherwood scrubland, before the track ascends gently over Pt798 and swings southwest towards Burn Hut, at 750m. The track is overgrown but scenic, with the stark peaks of Dundas Ridge on the southern horizon.

Burn Hut is 5.5km from the track start. It's classified as 'basic', so it's free. But this hideaway has everything. There's an annexed entrance to remove footwear and wet jackets, two tables, large double-latched windows letting in plenty of light, and an indoor sink. The sunsets are spectacular.

From the hut, the track loops south then west over Taramea (837m), with pastoral views on both sides of the Tararua Range. The smooth subalpine tops are navigable but the track is so overgrown with flax and leatherwood that travel is slow.

From Taramea, the track circles around in a westerly direction, over Pt833 and Pt835 before descending on 'Macks Track' to College Creek. This section is quite different, with a clear and easy-going trail enabling an enjoyable and quick descent.

An hour of rock hopping follows, providing contrast to the tangled tops travel. There are thigh-deep pools where the creek narrows and this section shouldn't be attempted after heavy rain.

After leaving College Creek at Baber Forks on the true right, the trail climbs onto a terrace but the markers become difficult to follow. The preferred route is along the true right of Baber Creek to Mangahao Upper No 1 Dam. The reservoir can be crossed near the end of Baber Creek if water levels are low.

It's an hour along the road from Mangahao No. 1 back to Mangahao No. 2.

Few come this way and, of those who do, about half do so as a day trip. It's likely you'll have Burn Hut to yourself for a night – even on a weekend.

Wild file

Access From Shannon, drive 18km (45 minutes) to Mangahao Lower No 2 Reservoir

Grade Moderate

Time Mangahao Lower No. 2 car park to Burn Hut, 3hr; Burn Hut to Mangahao Upper No. 1, 4hr; Mangahao Upper No. 1 to Mangahao Lower No. 2 car park, 1hr

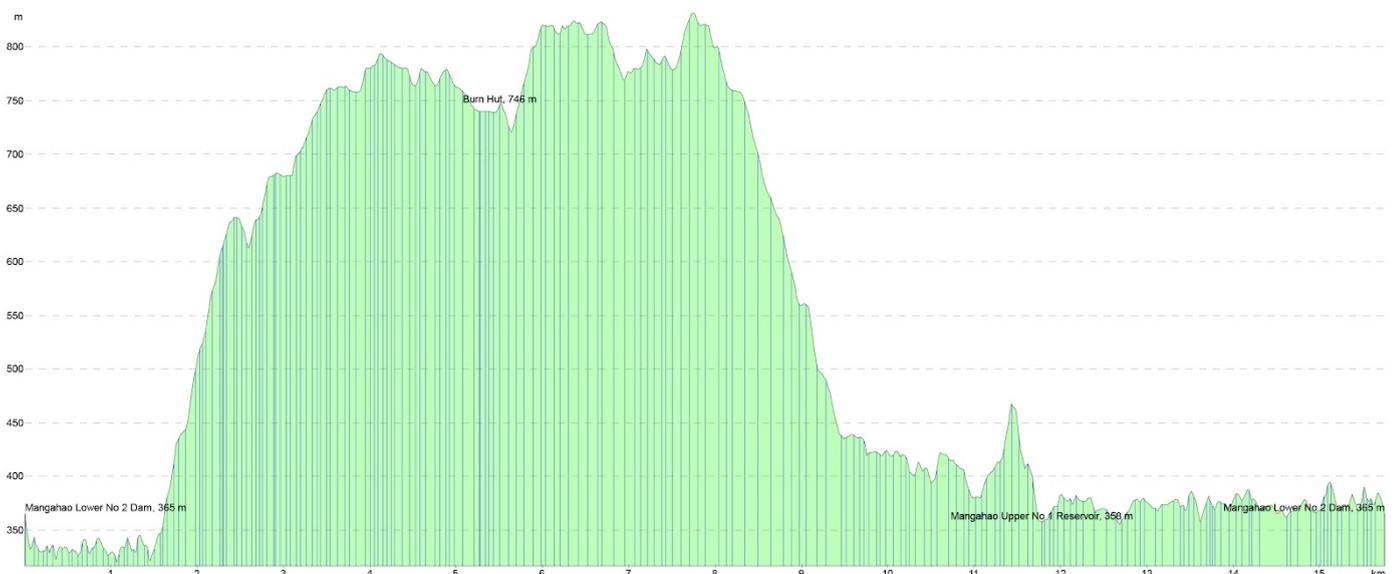
Distance 15.8km

Total ascent 1150m

Accommodation Burn Hut, free, six bunks

Map: BN34 Shannon

Elevation



Burn Hut Loop, Tararua Forest Park

