



# New Zealand Alpine Club Inc.

Founded 1891

27 September 2001

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## Huts Review: Marketing Promotion and Branding

### Objectives

- Strengthen the Club brand e.g. review the Club logo and Club colours
- Develop Club marketing material and marketing avenues
- Strengthen associations with stakeholders.

For each of identified issues or ideas the following draft has been prepared:

- A record what the current status is and associated issues.
- Identify what activities should be carried out and prioritising these activities
- A method of carrying out these activities, including responsibilities and timetables.

### Hut Signage

Currently there are three sets of hut signs planned for all NZAC huts around the country:

- Large 1.2m x 0.6m signage for outside the hut with NZAC and hut name in Club colours.
- Sign with 'conditions of use' on the main door of the hut.
- Information signage inside the hut.

The National Office is carrying out this work with coordination by the National Administrator and layout & design by the Climber Editor.

Recommend that: The production and installation of the first two categories of signage be of **high priority**. The work continue to be carried out by the National Office, with liaison, input, and review from the **Accommodation Convenor** and **Hut Officers**. Approval of the signage to be from **Accommodation Committee**, **Hut Managers**, **DoC**, and **Headquarters Committee**.

### National Website

Currently the website is updated by the National Office and there are constant improvements being made with regards to the promotion of Club huts. At the moment each hut is listed with details on location, how to get there, access and booking requirements and hut fees.

The website is becoming an extremely important tool for a Club the size of NZAC to communicate with all its members. It would be great if the website was as up to date professional as possible.

In the immediate future each hut will be getting their own web page and this will give more in dept information for persons interested in visiting the hut. A link from this page will lead to the Club huts database information on the hut including such things as running costs, budgets, work plans and permits. Depending on the information listing here the page may be available to members only. Further information on this is included in the Huts Systems review.

This work is a **medium priority** and could continue be carried out by the **National Administrator** in association with the **Accommodation Convenor** and **Hut Officers**. The finished product is of course available to everyone for review and comment.

### Huts Brochure

The idea for promotion of the huts with a huts brochure was raised and has been talked about at various CCMs. This matter required further clarification so as to define the following items:

- Purpose of the publication
- Intended audience
- Detailed information required

Duncan Ritchie has addressed some of these items and the Huts Review Committee will be clarifying the outstanding questions.

Once these items have been answered and approved the project could be handed over to the **National Office** for perusal in consultation with the **Accommodation Convenor** and **Hut Officers**. Until many of the other issues of Club systems have been sorted out there will be problems with the brochure being out of date in terms of hut fees etc. Therefore this item should be of **medium priority**. Final comment and approval for the brochure will be from the **Accommodation Committee**.

### **NZAC Logo**

The issue of Club identity and branding will always be one of personal preference. The huts are only one part of the Clubs operations and a change to the Club logo does not seem to be a big issue with the membership at the moment.

It is recommended that any changes to the logo be a **low priority** item to be revisited in the future by the **Membership and Promotion Committee**, in close consultation with the **Publications Committee**. This review should also include club colours.

### **Hut Ownership Perception**

This issue is covered by the items already mentioned above such as the NZAC logo, signage, website, and brochure.

The one item that may become a problem for the Club is maintaining a separate identity to the Department of Conservation. One standard signage is in place both outside and inside the huts this will become less of an issue, but for the huts managed by DoC there will be some resistance to the removal of DoC signage and colours. This is a sensitive issue that will need to be resolved on a case by case basis. Until signs are produced and most huts are converted this will not be an issue and therefore is of **low priority**. Discussion of this issue could take place within the **Accommodation Committee**.

### **Insurance**

John Stanton undertook a review of the insurance provided for Club huts this year. A further review will take place as part of the financial review meeting planned by the Treasurer. Further reviews should be undertaken to ensure that we are covered for the replacement value of a hut in the event of total destruction. This work is of **low priority**. Discussion of this issue could take place within the **Accommodation Committee**.

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## **Huts Review: Club Systems**

### **Objectives**

- Establish huts management policy
- Establish a national hut category system
- Review the hut fees system
- Establish a comprehensive huts asset management plan, which incorporates long term financial plans
- Maintain an auditable huts database centralised at the Club office
- Implement training of Club employees including utilising resources of other parties (such as any DoC hut warden induction programme).

For each of identified issues or ideas the following draft has been prepared:

- Record what the current status is of the items, and all associated issues, including what currently is being planned.

- ❑ Identify what activities should be carried out and prioritising these activities e.g. DoC Hut Category system, DoC VAMS, DoC wardens training camps, insurance/ valuations.
- ❑ A method of carrying out these activities, including responsibilities and timetables.

### **Accommodation Categories**

Currently there are no official Club hut categories or standards. The current vision statement of the club and the current network of club huts work together to create a long list of objectives, costs and problems. To break things down into manageable portions where like can be compared with like, we need to have accommodation categories.

A system that is already being used by the **National Office** is included in Appendix One and could be officially approved as Club Policy as a **high priority**. This allocation of huts could be reviewed from time to time by the **Accommodation Committee** and is a **medium priority**.

Other category structures could be created in a similar fashion to the DoC Hut standards whereby there are service standards defined and each hut is allocated and measured by this level of service.

### **Hut Management**

The accommodation committee structure should be retained in its general form. That is the accommodation convener heads the committee and the each hut has a section hut officer that looks after it's particular maintenance issues. The entire committee has the resources of the National Office behind them and should look to the National Administrator for information and coordination.

The system of allocating huts to sections provides each section with a tangible asset and keeps the accommodation area of the club from drifting away from the base of the club; it's members and their sections.

The allocation of huts to sections could be reviewed at regular intervals with consultation with **Sections, Hut Managers**, and the **Accommodation Committee** for approval by the **Club Committee**. This is a **low priority**.

### **Hut Fees**

Currently there is no standard for the setting of hut fees. The current structure has evolved over time with various adjustments as required. DoC uses its service categories to allocate huts into a predefined hut fee structure. The Club could look at developing this method for Club use.

The standardisation of the hut fee structure of the club should be debated and decided by the **Club Committee** as soon as possible as a **high priority**. One suggestion is included in Appendix Three. Until these important policy decisions are made other items such as hut signs and brochures will have to be put on hold.

### **Asset Management Plan**

The provision of a long term asset management plan will help the club plan for the future requirements of the huts network. This planning has been started in the past but has not progressed to become a tool that can be useful to CCM planning or hut officers.

The National Administrator has begun work on formulating a spreadsheet that shows all the huts and breaks down the costs involved into three categories:

- ❑ **Running Costs:** General day to day expenses such as electricity, water, rates, licenses, etc which are directly administered by the National Office.
- ❑ **Maintenance Costs:** Funds which are used for the general maintenance of huts by section hut officers. His amount should roll over from year to year and be set in proportion to the hut categories.
- ❑ **Capital Costs:** Large maintenance projects that will be capitalised in the annual accounts and for which CCM approval is required.

Each of these areas could be tracked for each of the huts, and projections made for the next ten years. This would enable forward planning for large-scale renovations, improvements or replacements.

Further hut asset management and database systems could be developed along the professional lines of the Department of Conservation. With this type of system each possible maintenance item is listed for each hut and the frequency of that item estimated. The a time required and material cost is listed and an annual maintenance cost and time line calculated. This allows very long term budgeting and maintenance plans to be developed for a large number of facilities.

The Club could move towards this system over time if necessary, building on the asset and maintenance plans that are being put into place currently. All progress should be monitored by, and contributed to, the hut officers of the Club and the Club Committee itself.

The huts Asset Management Plan could be prepared and managed by the **National Office** in consultation with the **Accommodation Convener** and **Honorary Treasurer**. This work is of a **high priority**.

### **Huts Database on the Website**

A database of all information held on the Club's hut network could be available for use on the internet. This would allow easy access to information for all hut officers and sections around the country.

Currently there is a simple listing of the huts and their locations, facilities and costs. This could be expanded to include further information on planned maintenance and budget allocations from the asset management plan.

At the moment the structure of this system is being put in place by the National Administrator as part of the upgrade of the Club's website.

The huts database could be managed by the **National Office** and is of a **high priority**.

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## Appendix One – Hut Categories

**Suggested Motion:** THAT the Club adopts the following hut categories for all planning, hut fee level, and asset management planning.

Currently there are five categories that can be identified very easily, with the seventeen huts that are owned by the Club split into these categories.

The first category is the 'base huts'. These huts generally have road access, electricity, flush toilets and a modern comfortable feel. Not all of the huts have all the same facilities but they are all clearly identifiable as base huts rather than backcountry huts.

The second major category would take in the backcountry huts that do not complete with the others in terms of gross income. They are not necessary more or less important than the other huts, but it is generally accepted that they will never receive enough revenue to totally finance themselves. These huts therefore should be subsidised by the other more popular huts in other areas.

The next category is the Matukitaki Valley Huts of the Aspiring Agreement. These huts and their management are very different to many of our other huts and they form a very cohesive group. We should aim to use this model in other places where possible.

The last two groupings would take in the high huts of the Mt Cook and Westland National Parks, which all have the same needs, costs and management issues as the Aspiring Huts. They are all of comparable size and access difficulty for maintenance though they currently differ in standard. Both of these grouping, the West Coast and Mt Cook areas, are both in an evolving state with management agreements currently underway.

New projects or ideas that the club is interested in getting involved with should be immediately allocated to a grouping, even during planning and construction phases so that we have a clear vision where they fit into the network of Club huts.

### Allocation of Huts to Accommodation Categories

The allocation of huts to various categories would be as follows initially, but huts would move from category to category depending on changes in facilities and management

Category	Notes	Hut
Base Huts:	<i>Not at a road end but has electricity etc</i>	Ruapehu Arthur's Pass Unwin Porter
	<i>Does not have electricity but is at a road end</i>	Homer
Backcountry:		Whangaehu Elcho
	<i>Possibly include with Matukituki in the future</i>	Esquilant
	<i>Possibly include with Matukituki in the future</i>	Cascade
	<i>Possibly include with Mt Cook in the future</i>	Godley
Matukituki:		Aspiring Colin Todd French Ridge
West Coast:	<i>DoC agreement under consideration</i>	Pioneer Centennial
Mt Cook:	<i>DoC Agreement under discussion</i>	Murchison De la Beche

All hut policy and discussion would be related back to the above categories. Within each category further policy and management norms could be created that were relevant to all the huts in that category.

## Appendix Two – Hut Management

**Suggested Motion:** THAT the following section management allocation be worked towards and reviewed as necessary by the Club Committee on recommendation of the Accommodation Committee.

Category	Hut	Current Section
Base Huts:	Ruapehu	Auckland
	Arthur's Pass	Cant/Westland
	Unwin	South Canterbury
	Porter	Nelson/Marl.
	Homer	Southland
Backcountry:	Whangaehu	CNI
	Elcho	North Otago
	Esquilant	Southland
	Godley	South Canterbury
	Cascade	Otago
Matukituki:	Aspiring	Otago - DoC
	Colin Todd	Otago - DoC
	French Ridge	Otago - DoC
West Coast:	Pioneer	Cant/Westland
	Centennial	Cant/Westland
Mt Cook:	Murchison	North Otago
	De la Beche	North Otago

## Appendix Three – Hut Fees

**Suggested Motion:** THAT a standard hut fee structure be adopted by the Club that is related to the category to which a hut belongs.

The following table gives a suggested alternative to the current ad hoc system of hut fees that has developed over the years. For some huts there would be no change and all fees could be reviewed if facilities are upgraded in the future.

The fee structure would simplify to base huts and high huts costing \$10/\$20 and low backcountry hut fees being \$5/\$10.

Category	Hut	Current	Suggested	
Base Huts:	Ruapehu	\$10 / \$20	\$10 / \$20	
	Unwin	\$10 / \$20	\$10 / \$20	
	<i>After Indoor Toilets Completed</i>	Arthur's Pass	\$7 / \$14	\$10 / \$20
	<i>Simplification</i>	Porter	\$8 / \$18	\$10 / \$20
	<i>After Renovations Complete</i>	Homer	\$7 / \$14	\$10 / \$20
Backcountry:	Whangaehu	\$5 / \$10	\$5 / \$10	
	Esquilant	\$5 / \$10	\$5 / \$10	
	Godley	\$5 / \$10	\$5 / \$10	
	Elcho	\$5 / \$10	\$5 / \$10	
	<i>Simplification</i>	Cascade	\$4 / \$8	\$5 / \$10
Matukituki:	Aspiring	\$5/8 / \$10/16	\$10 / \$20	
	<i>Standard DoC Charges</i>	Colin Todd	\$5 / \$10	\$10 / \$20
		French Ridge	\$5 / \$10	\$10 / \$20

Westcoast:	Pioneer	\$9 / \$18	\$10 / \$20
<i>Standard DoC Charges</i>	Centennial	\$9 / \$18	\$10 / \$20
Mt Cook:	Murchison	\$9 / \$18	\$10 / \$20
<i>Standard DoC Charges</i>	De la Beche	\$9 / \$18	\$10 / \$20

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## Appendix Five – General Matters

### Management Agreement with DoC Mt Cook

***Suggested Motion:*** *THAT the Club works towards the establishment of a Management Agreement with DoC Mt Cook along the same lines as the current Matukituki Agreement.*

The Club is under continued pressure to reduce the workload on volunteers as it continues to grow in size and complexity. Implementing management agreements with DoC like those in the Matukituki Valley, and now the West Coast, would seem a very sensible way to go.

We currently own three huts in the Mt Cook region, De la Beche, Murchison and Godley. All three of these huts receive a low level of use, with 140-275 nights/year on average, and therefore we can only ever collect a small income.

Club members frequently use Mt Cook huts and being able to offer half price members rates at more huts in the park would be a major member benefit, and probably result in increased Club membership.

Currently a management agreement with a separate fund like the Aspiring scenario perhaps would not work in Mt Cook due to the low income of the current set of huts. To make such a scheme work the Club would require one or more of the four high use park huts – Kelman, Tasman Saddle, Plateau, Mueller, or some potential medium to high use huts such as Hooker, Beetham. These huts receive in excess of 1000 nights/year on average.

Kelman and Tasman Saddle are both in reasonable repair and are unlikely to be due for replacement in the foreseeable future. Plateau Hut is showing signs of its age and may be a candidate for replacement in the medium term. Mueller Hut is due for replacement immediately.

Two other huts in the region are showing themselves as opportunities for Club involvement in the area – Hooker and Beetham. Both of these huts could be described as medium to high use huts with medium to high income. Projected use in the region of 600–800 nights/year on average, and this would have some positive effect on any Mt Cook management agreement.

Funding for the huts could come from various sources. The Club itself could invest directly with reserve funds, we could set up loan arrangements as per French Ridge, grant money could be obtained, DoC could be negotiated with to contribute time & expertise, and appeals could be made for donations and bequests.

### Hut Name Changes

*THAT Unwin and Arthurs Pass be renamed Unwin Lodge and Arthurs Pass Lodge*

It is clear that from a marketing and promotion point of view, the name of Club accommodation should reflect the facilities provided. In the case of Arthurs and Unwin the name 'hut' does not accurately portray what is available and therefore it is proposed to move to the term 'lodge'.

This change was highlighted in the recent Unwin Hut Survey as a positive step.

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## Appendix Four – Future Hut Projects

### Hooker Hut

**Suggested Motion:** *THAT the Club put forward a proposal to relocate Hooker Hut with funding provided by Alpine Recreation Ltd in the summer of 2001-2002 and take ownership of the hut as soon as a Management Agreement with DoC Mt Cook is reached.*

Since the erosion of Stewart and Copland Gullies Hooker Hut has been sitting on an inaccessible piece of lateral moraine. This has resulted in severe restrictions for climbing the Copland Pass. Most guiding companies and general visitors have therefore discontinued do undertake the crossing. An alternative site for Hooker Hut, to the north of the Copland Gully, at the bottom of the traditional route, has been suggested and the site and access to it was inspected by a geologist, an engineer, staff of Alpine Recreation and the Mount Cook Field Center Manager in April 2001.

According to the geologist the proposed site is safe and stable for at least another 20 years. In order to facilitate Copland Pass Crossings again Alpine Recreation has pledged \$30,000 towards the cost of shifting Hooker Hut. With the Hooker Hut relocated to the above site the Copland Pass crossing would once again become one of New Zealand's greatest alpine tramps, linking the grandeur of Mount Cook, with the West Coast bush and the hot springs at Welcome Flats. While there have been several other suggestions for the use of the historic Hooker Hut, no other site will assist in the crossing of the Copland Pass. The future of Hooker Hut has been included in the Mount Cook National Park Draft Management Plan that was released in October 2001 and public submissions are being called for now.

Copland Pass parties may then travel up the valley by choosing the western shore of the Hooker Lake. When the lake level is low and when it is not raining heavily this line is straightforward, although secure footing is required at water's edge. It takes approximately 3 ½ to 4½ hours from White Horse Hill to the proposed hut site. High lake levels or heavy rainfall could make this route difficult and dangerous. As a perfectly safe alternative parties may choose to travel up the East Hooker Valley and drop onto the glacier via one of several rock gullies, then cross the Hooker Glacier from east to west. This alternative route takes approximately 5 ½ to 7 hours from White Horse Hill.

For the reasons outlined above there has been suggestion that the Club should help Alpine Recreation in its quest to re site the hut and in addition to take ownership of the hut as part of the Club Mt Cook huts network. Before the erosion of access to the hut it was receiving over 800 bed nights per year. In comparison to the Matukituki Huts agreement finances, this number of bud nights should be enough to provide a good maintenance and operation income for Hooker Hut.

### **Beetham Hut**

**Suggested Motion:** *THAT the Cub rebuild Beetham Hut in the summer of 2002-2003 in a safe location.*

This hut was destroyed by an avalanche and is not expected to be replaced by DoC. The Beetham Valley provides an excellent climbing base for peaks in the Malte Burn Range and the hut was very popular. The hut averaged 1000 bed nights per year, and this would be extremely helpful to a Mt Cook huts network agreement with DoC.

A new safer location for the hut would clearly need to be found in light of the demise of the original hut.

### **Plateau Hut**

**Suggested Motion:** *THAT the Club investigates involvement in the replacement of Plateau Hut.*

Plateau Hut is nearing the end of its maintenance life and therefore is expected to be replaced in the next few years. This hut could be considered one of the most important climbing locations in New Zealand and therefore involvement by the Club in its replacement would be excellent.

The hut receives an average use of around 1100 bed nights per year and this would provide a good source of income for a Mt Cook huts network agreement with DoC.

### **Wye Creek Huts**

**Suggested Motion:** *THAT the Club investigates the opportunities for involvement in the Aspiring Guides hut building project in the Wye Creek area.*

There is currently a perceived need for a hut in the Wye Creek area to serve as a summer tramping and climbing base and as a winter ski touring and ice climbing base. There are currently private interests putting forward proposals, some of which could involve the Club as a joint venture.

#### **Mt Brewster Hut**

**Suggested Motion:** *THAT the Club investigate the opportunities for hut replacement in the Brewster Area.*

It has been suggested that the Club look into the possibility of upgrading the current Brewster Bivvy to a hut so as to increase access and climbing opportunities in this wonderful area.