

# Carlyle Valley – Information for New/Prospective trappers

The Carlyle valley, a steep-sided valley covered in beech forest, is a picturesque area in the eastern northern reaches of Lake Sumner Forest Park, close to Lewis Pass. Trust volunteers started predator control there in 2017 to protect its birdlife.

This document aims to provide information for new (and returning) volunteers; please do let us know if you believe there is something we need to add!

## Summary

The [New Zealand Conservation Trust](#) manages approximately 200 traps up the valley consisting of (note that these numbers change over time!):

- [DOC 200](#) (Stoat, Ferret, Rat, Hedgehog) - 94
- [Sentinal](#) (Possum) – 87
- [Trapinator](#) (Possum) – 10
- Cage traps (Live capture) - 4

In addition to the above there are a considerable number of [Vespex Wasp bait](#) stations (serviced once a year).

[Our links](#) document contains links to videos showing how each type of trap is checked/set (but we will show you this).

We aim to check and rebait the traps every month. Ideally four volunteers are needed for this (one very fit person can service all traps in a weekend, but we prefer a safer, more relaxed, approach that allows for differing abilities). These trips generally occur over a weekend with the group staying overnight at the [Carlyle Hut](#).

We welcome new volunteers of all ability levels and will show you how to clear/set the various types of traps (you can also try trapping at one of our Christchurch sites prior to heading up the Carlyle). If you are uncomfortable clearing traps, please still get in touch as we often work in groups of two where one person is just recording the catch (so not touching the traps).

## Location

The Carlyle Stream flows into the Hope River just after the point where the Hope and Boyle rivers meet ([Topomap](#)).

Access to the valley is via [Glenhope Station \(streetview\)](#), we usually park at the gate just off SH7 (8km before reaching Engineers camp, 15km before Boyle village).

## Trap Lines

The traps are split into four *lines*:

- To Hut – On either side of the track to the hut.
- Lunch Hill Loop – A loop off the track to the hut (3km taking approx. 2 hours for a fit group to check/rebait from the point you leave and rejoin the main track). This loop is rough and requires navigation skill and some bush bashing.
- Hut Line – A short run of traps near the hut.
- Above Hut – A loop upstream of the hut (8km taking approx. 4 hours for a fit group to check/rebait). This loop is rough and requires navigation skill and some bush bashing.

## Typical Trip Timeline

Every trip up the valley is different (differing tasks, weather, ground condition, catch rates, number of trappers, trapper abilities etc.). The below aims to provide a view of how a typical summer trip, with four volunteers (of mixed abilities), is organized:

- Leave Christchurch at 8am Saturday (Carpooling from a pre-agreed meeting point). Stop to pick up bait and equipment at Waikuku Beach and then at Culverden for comfort break.
- Arrive at the Glenhope Station Gate, complete safety briefing, distribute equipment and start walking at 11am.
- Cross Glenhope station land (4wd track with a reasonable climb) arriving at the first trap at about midday.
- Split into two groups with the fitter group doing the 'Lunch hill loop' and the other group checking traps along the track to the hut (stopping for lunch along the way)
- 4.30pm arrive at hut and relax (perhaps enjoy a dip in the stream).
- 8am Sunday start checking traps above hut (this may be the whole group or just 2 people with the others having an easy walk out) returning to the hut between midday and 1pm.
- Walk out to car arriving just after 4pm and begin the drive back to Christchurch (with an optional, NZCT funded, stop for dinner on the way).

## Track Overview

The track into the Carlyle hut is in relatively good condition (at the time of writing) but is well below the level expected of a great walk! If you just follow the track to the hut, you will cover approximately 10.5km and climb around 500m. The walk starts at an altitude of approximately 450m and the hut is at 660m so it's not a major climb (but the track does go up and down a bit; GPS recordings indicate total ascent of 500m with 290m descent). A fit person can reach the hut in around 3.5 hours (including a short lunch break) but stopping to check/rebait traps will add another 2 hours or so.

There are a few sections of the track which are quite steep (including one with a rope) and it can be slippery. You need to cross the stream a few times (so will almost always get wet boots!). The track is well marked and generally easy to follow.

Some of the trap lines (Lunch Hill loop and above the hut) are marked but there is not really a track and are much rougher. The group generally splits, with these lines being checked by those with more experience.

If you have concerns about your fitness/ability level, please talk to the trip leader (who will work with you to ensure you are not being asked to do anything that makes you uncomfortable!).

[This video](#) (covering a tramp into the hut with no trapping) provides a decent overview of the track (including the most difficult bits) and hut. Note that we have significantly improved the track marking (and cleared a few sections) since this video was taken.

## The Hut



[Carlyle Hut](#) is a “Basic” DOC hut that the Trust has renovated. It has two bedrooms (each containing four bunk beds for a total of eight beds) and a living area with a table/chairs and open fire. The beds all have standard DOC mattresses, so a sleeping bag is needed. While there are a few pots and a bucket at the hut, it’s best to assume that you will need to carry in everything that you will need for the night.

As this is a DOC hut it is possible that other parties will be using it (and we do **not** have priority access). This happens less than might be expected, but the hut does appear to be becoming more popular. We will often know in advance if others will be there (because they should ask Glenhope for permission to cross their land) but this cannot be guaranteed.

## Equipment Needed

The Trust will provide everything needed for checking/clearing traps but often people like to bring their own:

- Gloves – you don’t want to touch the traps and supplied gloves may be pre-loved.
- 8mm ratchet spanner – The Trust provides a standard spanner. This is used to open the DOC200 traps (most can be opened by hand but sometimes the spanner is needed).

- Small hammer – can be useful for removing/reattaching Sentinel traps.
- Phone – See the below section re the trap.nz app
- Some have found a builder's apron to be useful for carrying baits (new and used) and tools.
- Small Axe/Machete – If you feel like doing some track maintenance (very optional!).

The Trust will also provide two [Garmin inReach](#) units which can assist with navigation and provide communications in an emergency.

You will need to bring everything else that you will need for a night away in the wilderness. There are a few useful packing lists online including:

- [Tramping NZ](#)
- [DOC](#)

As far as I am aware there has always been sufficient room in the hut to accommodate the trapping group. However, I generally carry a mat just in case the hut is full, and it becomes necessary to sleep on the floor.

Please try to leave a little space in your backpack for bait, trap covers etc.

There is no shortage of water along the way (and at the hut); and most volunteers drink this without treatment (but you may prefer to boil/treat it).

## Trap.NZ App

*Trap.NZ is a free service used throughout NZ for recording trap, bait station, monitoring, and biodiversity outcome data.*

We use [trap.nz](#) app to record the location of traps (making it easier for you to find them) and to record what each trap catches (including if nothing was caught). The app works on both Android and Apple phones, but you need to set it up and connect to the Carlyle Valley project before leaving Christchurch (because there is no cell reception past Hanmer).

Your trip leader should ensure that you are setup with Trap.NZ well in advance; please contact them if you have any questions!