

Ella Range Travers, Nelson Lakes National Park

From the car park, take the Lower Matakaitaki Route to the Watson Creek Route junction. Watson Creek provides excellent access route to the Ella Range – it's a gradual climb on a good track that follows the tumbling stream to a tussock basin with great camping at the bush edge.

Continue higher out of the basin to the Ella Range proper. The route now heads south over tussock tops. Travel between the 1700m and 1900m contour, dropping off the ridge crest at the steepest of places.

There are numerous opportunities for camping on the range – but a group of tarns below Pt1860 is probably the best.

To avoid the steepest section of the range, it is advisable to descend to the D'Urville Track. This is possible by making your past the second tarn and then finding the easy passage south-east through the bluffs, across a mix of steep tussock slopes and chunky scree to a stream which is crossed to a pleasant tussock basin at the bush edge. The good going continues through relatively open bush until emerging behind George Lyon Hut beside the D'Urville River.

From the hut, continue south to the Upper D'Urville Hut, a comfortable two-person biv perched above the river. The route to David Saddle is straight forward but from the saddle, a fair amount of sidling is required across bluffs to regain the southern Ella Range.

Follow the rocky ledges up and down, making your way across the face, staying between the 1700m and 1800m contours.

On gaining the Ella Range again, begging tussock travel ensues. after traversing a scree basin east of Pt2040.

It's easy-going along the tops, sidling around a large rocky peak and passing many inviting tarns. Pick your campsite.

At the end of the Ella Range, descend through the bush to the Matakaitaki Forks Route. Downie Hut is a few hours downriver.

The final leg of the trip is on the Lower Matakaitaki Route back to the car park.

Wild File

Access Two-kilometres south of Mataka Lodge on Tutaki Road South

Grade Difficult

Time 5-6 days

Distance 70km

Total ascent 3946m

Topo50 map BS23, BS24, BT23, BT24

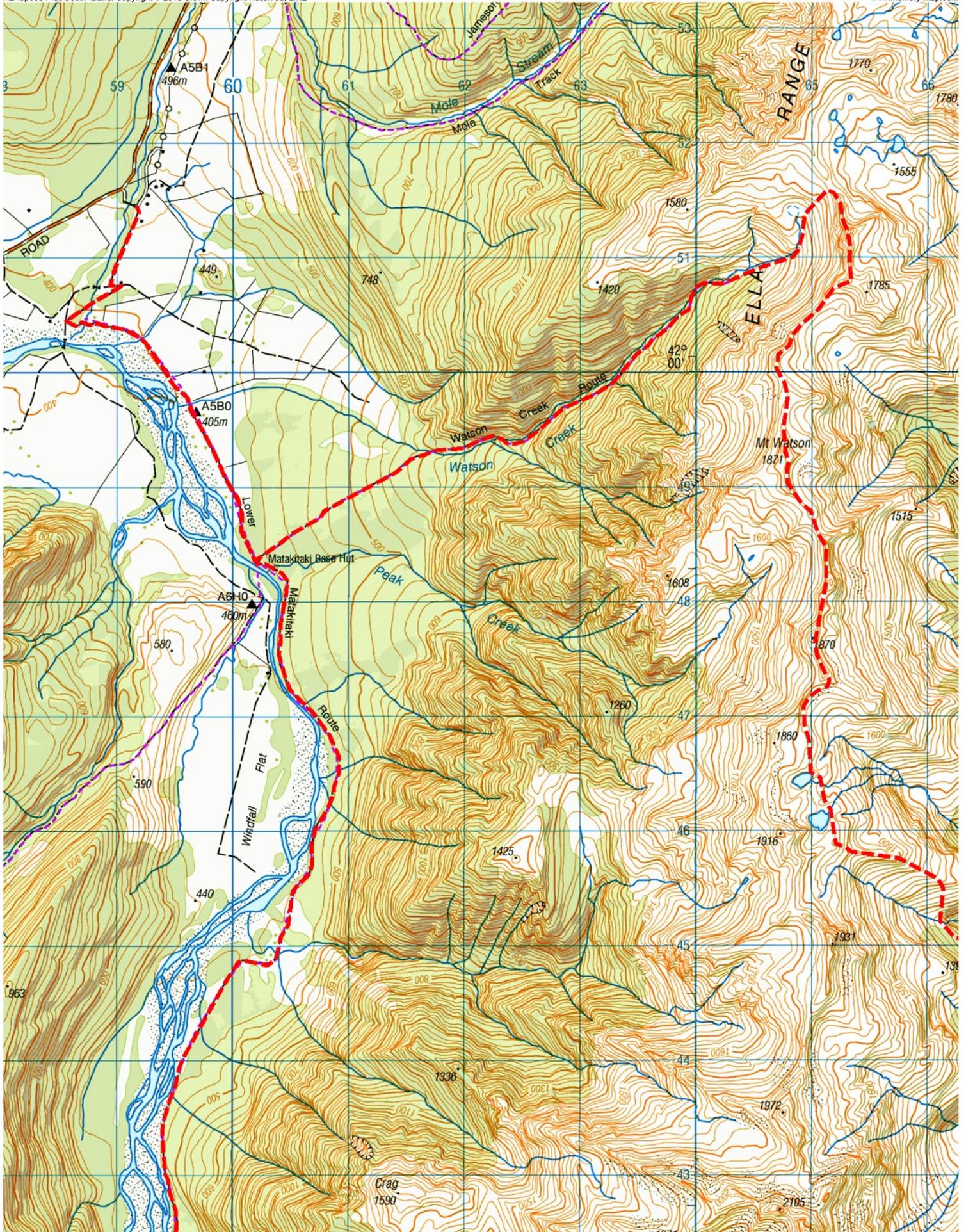
Elevation Profile



Ella Range Travers, Nelson Lakes National Park. Map 1 and 5

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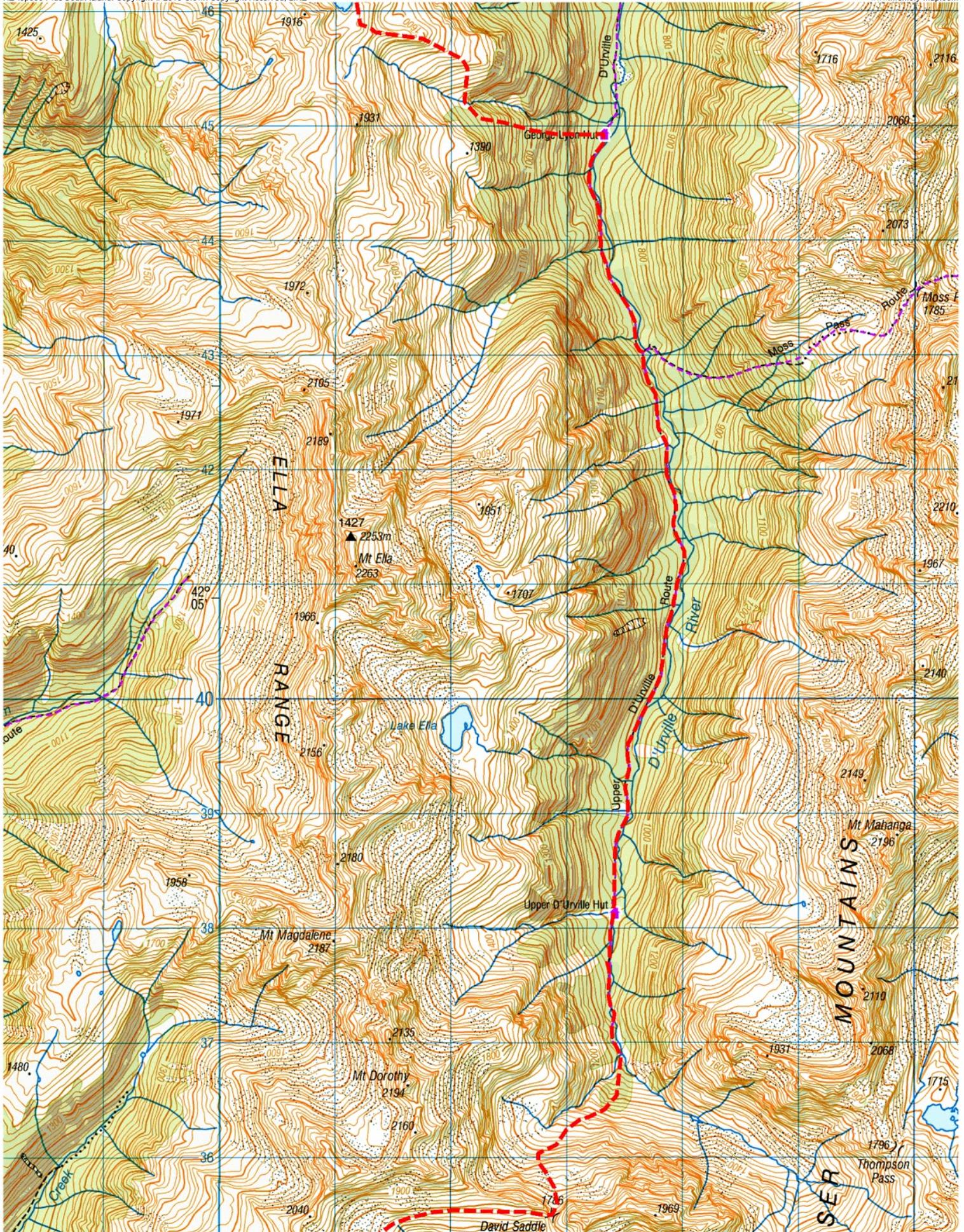
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Ella Range Travers, Nelson Lakes National Park. Map 2

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Ella Range Travers, Nelson Lakes National Park. Map 3

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