

The Mt Cooke Wildfire



As you walk through the Monadnocks, you may notice the vegetation recovering from the Mt Cooke wildfire which burnt through more than 18,000 hectares in January 2003.

The Mt Cooke Campsite was completely destroyed by the fire. The water tank nearby is the only surviving remnant. The campsite was re-built. The toilet that was some distance away miraculously survived the inferno and has now been relocated.

The fire was the result of a lightning strike. Driven by north-west winds, and a heavy accumulation of dry forest debris ('fuels'), it burnt fiercely up the slopes, along the spine of Mt Cooke and southwards for another 25 km.



Flames were up to 30 m high with a plume of smoke rising 10 km into the sky. The wildfire was brought under control only when the fire ran into forests carrying low fuel as a result of a series of prescribed burns carried out by CALM in the previous five years.

The fire was so ferocious that in places it killed most of the overstorey forest. Large areas of forest will take many decades to recover to its pre-fire state. You can see the understorey vegetation is recovering very rapidly.



Buttergums (Eucalyptus laevis) are particularly fire sensitive



Will be burning rocks photo if Paula can source otherwise no photo here

