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Media Release

Works commence to rebuild Keppel's Hut

Works to rebuild Keppel's Hut, which was burnt to the ground during the Black Saturday Fires, have commenced.

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) crews are rebuilding the historic hut to its original condition and replacing the surrounding visitor facilities.

"Keppel's Hut was one of a number of huts the Keppel family constructed in the Marysville area from the late 1880s," DSE Project Co-ordinator, Murray Sutton, said.

"Originally the huts were built as camps to drive cattle and sheep from Marysville to Lake Mountain and its surrounds during the warmer months.

"Prior to the fires the picturesque hut was a popular destination for visitors, including horse riders and skiers during winter."

Mr Sutton said while completion of the hut works is dependent on the fire season and weather, it was hoped the site would be open to the public early in the new year.

"We are extremely aware of the importance of getting popular sites like Keppel's Hut reopened to visitors and the local community as part of the recovery process," he said.

The Lands Department first authorised John and Jerry Keppel to graze the alpine meadows north of Marysville in 1885. While the area and conditions of the licence would change over time, the Keppel family continued to graze cattle until 1963.

The first hut at the current location was built by Maurice and Francis (Frank) Keppel after the 1939 fires and survived for more than 40 years until it burnt down in the winter of 1983.

It was later rebuilt by the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands with the assistance of Goulds Sawmills, the Marysville Historic Society and several interest groups.

Prior to the 1939 fires, huts constructed by the Keppel family were also located near Wild Cat Creek and Whitehouse Creek.

While cattle and sheep have long gone from the forest, the Keppel name has lived on in the Marysville district.

Keppel's Hut, Keppel Track, Keppel Bridge, Keppel Creek, Keppel Falls and Keppel Lookout are all synonymous with the pioneering family.

Mr Sutton said in addition to the rebuilding of the historic hut, crews will remove dangerous trees at the site, replace picnic tables, barbecues and erect new toilet facilities and visitor information boards.

“The reopening of the site and subsequent rebuilding of the hut are the priority works. Other improvements will be undertaken in a staged process once public access has been restored.

“Horse yards, also destroyed by the fire, will be rebuilt in consultation with local trail riding groups.”

The project is part of the Victorian Government's Bushfire Recovery Project.

For further information about the project please contact Murray Sutton at DSE's Marysville Office on (03) 5957 7111.