



### Other things to see and do

Many recreational opportunities are available on the West Coast. The areas mentioned in this publication offer camping, swimming, boating, goldpanning, picnicking and historic interest, as well as short walks.

For visitors interested in more than short walks there are many great back country huts and tracks suitable for more experienced trampers and hunters. Information is available on these longer tramping tracks from the Department of Conservation, Buller *Kawatiri* Area Office.

### Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

The scenic reserves, and other protected lands in the West Coast region are administered by the Department of Conservation as part of the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy. Management and conservation work at the local level for the area represented in this document is provided from the Buller *Kawatiri* Area office at Westport. Brochures, maps and general information are also available from Westport *i-site*.

### Introduction

The Westport area is wonderfully diverse, extending from the Mokihinui River in the north to Tauranga Bay in the south, and inland to the Buller Gorge and several mountain ranges.

A great range of walking opportunities is available, making it possible to visit a seal colony in the morning, then spend the afternoon climbing through the forest for a night in a hut high on the Paparua Range with unforgettable views of the sea, wild river valleys and the southern night sky.

Geologically, the variety includes quite recent mudstones and sandstones to some of New Zealand's most ancient gneiss formations. Botanic interest ranges from exquisite localised daisies to tall timber forests. Among the fauna are rare native birds and large carnivorous snails that fortunately favour a diet of earthworms.

Besides unpopulated natural vastness, Westport has, close at hand, places where humans have left their marks in many interesting ways.

From high plateau mines came coal of such superb quality that the British navy bought it by the shipload to stockpile all over the world as fuel for its fleet. Demand eventually dwindled, but the towns of Denniston and Millerton remain, along with relics of their mining and transport systems that were once as famous as the coal they produced.

The combined output of coal mines and sawmills helped create a remarkable railway up the sheer-sided Ngakawau Gorge to Charming Creek, now used by thousands of walkers who rate it among the best walkways to be found.

As the area with the West Coast's earliest gold diggings, Westport also has some of the best preserved reminders of this vibrant period of history - from the haunting hillside site of Lyell that many motorists hurry through unaware of its past, to the lonely Britannia Battery reached by a determined few via a valley track.

Even the highways have historic features, including Hawks Crag, a low-roofed ledge blasted out of solid rock in the lower Buller Gorge, and the stone-piered Iron Bridge in the upper Gorge. Beyond winds a road that has always been at the mercy of storms and earthquakes - and provides superb views of the scars from both.

This brochure takes you on a swift journey around the finest features of Westport area.

### Safety

Any problems or comments on the tracks please pass onto any of the offices listed. If it is a safety issue you may contact:

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies  
For fire and search and rescue call 111

### More information

**Buller *Kawatiri* Area Office**  
Department of Conservation  
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72 Russell Street  
Westport  
Ph 03 788 8008  
Fax 03 788 8009

**West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy Office**  
Department of Conservation  
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Hokitika  
Ph 03 756 9100  
Fax 03 756 9195

**Westport *i-site***  
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[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

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- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- Toitu te whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)



# Westport

Walks in the Westport and lower Buller area



WEST COAST *TAI POUTINI*



Seal - photo by Inger Perkins (DOC)

**Department of Conservation**  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

### Look after the environment

All native plants, wildlife, natural features and historic sites are strictly protected. Please take your rubbish away and do not light any fires except where facilities are provided at designated camping sites. (See also environmental care code printed elsewhere on this brochure).

### Look after yourself

The nature of the West Coast means weather and track conditions can be very changeable. Visitors are advised to call at the Department of Conservation offices or visitor information centres to check on current track conditions. Strong shoes or boots are recommended for anyone planning more than a few minutes walk. Be prepared for rain at any time of the year. For longer walks pack a small first aid kit and take some food and drink. Leave your intentions with a reliable contact.

## Granity Area

### Charming Creek Walkway



Time: 3 hours one way  
Distance: 6.8 km

Accessible from Ngakawau or behind Seddonville, an old railway formation passes through an area packed with botanic and geological interest. Historic features include tunnels, sawmill and coal mine remains. A scenic highlight is a suspension bridge giving an unfolding view of the Mangatini Falls. There are shorter walking options from both ends.

### Granity Dam



Time: 10 minutes, return  
Distance: 400 m

From the Granity-Millerton road, a track leads past an old dam to a section of the incline rail system that carried trucks of coal down the hill in the mining days.

### Millerton Bathhouse



Time: 20 minutes, return  
Distance: 1 km

The concrete shell of a miners' bathhouse, behind Millerton township, is the starting point for short walks to old mine entrances and building remains. A panorama from sea to mountains complements the historic attractions.

### Britannia Track



Time: 4 hours, return  
Distance: 12 km

From a sign post on the highway 16 km north of Westport (or 3 km north of Waimangaroa), a farm road runs approximately 1.5 km to the start of the track. The track climbs through varied forest to the abandoned Britannia gold mine where a complete five-head quartz crushing battery stands with most of its ancillary equipment intact. (The detour via the Great Republic battery site that may be done on the return walk involves creek crossings).

## Cape Foulwind

### Cape Foulwind Walkway and Seal Colony

The walkway is situated on the Cape Foulwind headland, about 16 km south-west of Westport. Carparks are located at the southern end (Tauranga Bay) and northern end (Cape Foulwind) of this spectacular walkway which features a seal colony, a lighthouse and also provides panoramic views of mountains and coastline.

### Tauranga Bay carpark to Seal Colony Viewpoint



Time: 30 minutes, return  
Distance: 1 km

From the Tauranga Bay car park at the southern end of the walkway, a fully accessible path brings you to a view point overlooking the kekeno (NZ Fur Seal) breeding colony. Kekenos can be seen here all year round, numbers changing depending on the season. The busiest time of year is the breeding season from November to January.

### Seal Colony Viewpoint to Cape Foulwind Lighthouse & carpark



Time: 1 hour 15 minutes, one way  
Distance: 2.9 km

From the Seal Colony viewpoint the walkway changes to walking track standard, and continues northward along the coastal bluffs to pass by the Cape Foulwind lighthouse before reaching the northern end of the walkway and carpark. Interpretation panels along this section of track tell of sea voyages, early explorers, timber mills and quarries.

## Upper Buller Gorge

### Lyell Walkway and Croesus Battery



Time: 45 minutes, one way  
Distance: 2 km

The walkway begins at the Lyell picnic and camping area, located 17 km from Inangahua Junction and 35 km from Murchison. A stamping battery which crushed gold-bearing quartz from the Croesus Mine is the main destination of the walkway. Other features along the way include a picturesque goldfield cemetery and interesting mounds of stones (tailings) left by alluvial miners after gold-bearing gravels had been sluiced away. Return the same way or via the historic 'Old Dray Road'.

## Overnight tramps

In the rugged Buller region most overnight tramping trips will lead into exposed places. So even when starting in fine conditions, prepare for the worst. Call at a Department of Conservation office or visitor centre for route information, a weather forecast - and hut tickets if required. Wear strong boots and carry all you need for warmth, first aid, shelter and sustenance. Tramp in company and let someone reliable know your intentions.

### Buckland Peaks



Time: 5 hours to hut  
Distance: 10.5 km

Alpine surroundings and spectacular views are the rewards for the five hour climb to the Bucklands Peak Hut behind Westport. The way to the hut is via a marked route, suitable only for experienced trampers. A topographic map, compass, good tramping gear and a gas stove are essential. The hut does not have a fire.

The track is sign posted from the highway, 6 km from Westport in the direction of Inangahua Junction. A farm road leads to a car park at a locked gate where the walking begins - an hour across Caroline Terrace, then four hours up to the six-bunk hut at 1175 metres. The Paparoa tops are a further 2 hours up at 1325 metres.

## Track standards



**Easy access short walk**  
- wheelchair accessible



**Short walk - easy**  
walking for up to an hour



**Walking track - gentle**  
walking from a few minutes to a day



**Tramping track -**  
backcountry skills and experience needed



**Route - navigation and**  
high level backcountry skills and experience required.

## Denniston Plateau

### Denniston Bridle Path



Time: 3 hours up, 2 hours 30 minutes down  
Distance: 4.2 km

Signposted from Conns Creek Road behind Waimangaroa at the bottom end, and Denniston township at the top, a bridle track makes a pleasant if steep bush walk. A short branch track near the top leads to the incline that carried coal down (and occasional cool-headed passengers up). A lower branch to the Waimangaroa-Denniston road offers a shorter walking option. Aside from the incline, which was used for transportation of coal, the bridle path, completed in 1884, was the only means of access to Denniston. Travel along this route was either by horse, or on foot.

### Brakehead Walk



Time: 40 minutes loop  
Distance: 1.1 km

Starting at the Brakehead, this 40 minute walk leads past the 'The Camp' - Denniston's first settlement, and on to the Banbury Arch viewpoint, returning via the historic mine workshop site. Many relics from Denniston's past can be seen on this walk.

### Denniston Town Walk



Time: 40 minutes, loop  
Distance: 1.3 km

Starting at the 'school site' by the Friends of the Hill Museum, this 40 minute walk takes you through the old streets of Denniston township. Passing by the bowling green and beside old residential sections, brick chimneys are still evident in various stages of decay. The walk crosses the main highway and runs alongside the old Denniston-Burnetts Face roperoad, before emerging again at the 'school site'.

### Coalbrookdale Walk



Time: 1 hour, return  
Distance: 2 km

A good shingle road behind Denniston (still used by the coal trucks) leads to the start of the walkway. This follows part of the roperoad that carried coal from the mines to the top of Denniston Incline. Relics include tunnels, foundations, a haulage winch and the country's best remaining example of a mine fanhouse.

### Myra's Track



Time: 4 hours, return  
Distance: 5.2 km

This tramp to Mt William begins at Coalbrookdale and follows a marked route to the 1062 metre summit, where rewarding views of the Denniston plateau, and coastline beyond, can be seen. As the weather on Denniston can change unexpectedly, make sure you take appropriate warm clothing, a waterproof jacket, food and water for this trip.

