



Waiuta

A Ghost Town Gold Town

WHOSE ROHE?

Ngāi Tahu is the iwi, Kāti Waewae are the hapū.
Contact Kāti Waewae Rūnaka for further information.

Gold was discovered at Waiuta in 1905 and within a few years a new town, home to several hundred people, had been created. Unlike many other Coast gold towns, Waiuta did not appear and disappear over night but continued to function until 1951, when one of the two mine shafts collapsed. Repair was considered uneconomic and so it was the end of the mine and the end of the town.

Today, DOC and the Friends of Waiuta look after the site as a historic reserve. They hope to preserve something of the Coast's recent history for younger generations to appreciate. Although only a few buildings remain, the site is home to plenty of ruins, relics and memories. There are interpretation panels around the site, a self guided walk, and a lodge that sleeps 30 people.



- 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)*

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Despite the name, Waiuta has few connections with Māori. In fact, some say it was the local postmaster at the time who helped to choose the name, using the Māori words for water (*wai*) and reward (*utu*). Utu changing to uta over time. Perhaps this was a reference to the initial gold discovery in Greek Creek.

SPECIAL FEATURES TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Old bottles, boots and other relics.
- Flecks of gold in the quartz rocks!
- Old chimneys, buildings, and strong rooms.
- The abandoned sports ground.



SHORT WALKS

The Town Loop

(Easy, as long as you like)

Use the Waiuta leaflet provided in the Waiuta Resource Box to walk around the old town or develop a worksheet of your own. See Activity 3 for some ideas. The walk follows a series of 8 photograph panels. There is an information shelter at the Post Office site and this is a good place to start.

The walk takes you past the Blackwater Mine, the barbers shop, the rugby field, many house and shop foundations, and the Police Station. It is a great opportunity for Ss to use their imagination and observe the effects of humans on this environment. Because of the nature of the site, and the hazards listed below, it is important to keep to the tracks and to remain in a group.

The Prohibition Shaft

(Easy, but uphill. A softer option is to drive up and walk down if parents have cars with good clearance)

Why not get the Ss up one morning to take them on the ‘miner’s walk’? This track is the route the miners took everyday to go to work. You could either follow the road all the way up (a long walk!) or take the miners’ short cut, which branches off the road on the left and crosses the river part way up. This walk also starts at the Post Office/Information Shelter and follows the “Pro Road” up the hill.

Near the top of the road, and at the end of the miners’ shortcut, you have the choice of going right or left. Both directions will take you to the same place. Go left to follow our descriptions. You will eventually see an area surrounded by a wire fence. This was left by a recent exploratory project to reopen the mine. In front of the fence are some interesting interpretation panels that tell you about the layout of the mine. Behind you, are the remains of the old mine office. The strong room, where the gold was kept, is still visible.

Proceed with care into the fenced off area, and you will be able to see the foundations of the old winding machine buildings and the opening of the shaft (covered by a grill). Ss might like to imagine what it would have been like to go 800m below ground in a small cage everyday.

Start to make your way back down the hill on the other side. Look to your right after leaving the fenced area, and you’ll be able to see the site of the bathhouse where the miners had a wash at the end of their shift. Ss might be able to find old boots or pieces of clothing. Please have fun but leave things for the next group to find.

Continue down the road and you will find yourselves going back the way you came. Don't forget to turn right, however, if you want to follow the miners' short cut down hill.

Note: From the Prohibition Shaft, it is possible to walk down to the Prohibition Mill site, where gold was extracted from the quartz rock. The process of extracting gold from the quartz leaves some toxic residues. Students should be accompanied at all times and not allowed to roam amongst the ruins of the mill site.

OTHER WALKS AND OVERNIGHT TRAMPS

It is also possible to take a round trip walk to the Snowy Battery Site, along the Snowy River to the Powerhouse and back up to Waiuta on the Hukerere Track. Given the hazard posed by the old condensing/cyanide tanks at the Snowy Battery site, this area is not recommended for children. The round trip takes about 3 hours, including stopping and viewing time. For older Ss, there is the possibility of walking to the Big River Mine Site. This will take you about 3 – 4 hours one way. You can stay in the hut there and walk back the next day. Phone the Reefton Visitor Centre for more information.

BE PREPARED: RISK ASSESSMENTS

See our activity "Be Prepared" in "Using this Resource". In addition to the general risks, you need to consider the following.

- The swimming pool presents a danger as Ss could fall or slip into the concrete shell. In addition, the locals like to fill the pool with water over the summer months.
- The tunnels on the Swimming Pool track, on the track down to the Snowy Battery and other undiscovered shafts and tunnels.
- There are traces of toxic substances around the Prohibition Mill and Snowy Battery sites.
- The buildings and remaining foundations at Waiuta, such as the boiler house, the Snowy Battery, the Powerhouse, the Ball/Prohibition Mill, the chimneys, the Prohibition and Blackwater Shafts and the former house and shop sites are all dangerous when climbed on or tampered with.
- Pay attention to the steps on the way down to the Snowy Battery to avoid tripping over.
- Slips, trips, falls, burns and shocks associated with staying in the lodge are all potential hazards that need to be included as part of your trip planning.
- Be aware of gases around shaft entrances and in tunnels.

You will avoid most of these hazards if you stay on the tracks and have a

high adult to student ratio. Remember that you can also be hazardous to Waiuta! Make sure Ss are aware of the need to leave things as they find them so that other groups can benefit.



ATTRACTIONS AND FACILITIES

- Jimmy Martin (available from the DOC Field Centre)
- Information Shelter
- Lodge and Play Area
- Toilets and Shower Block
- Accommodation

OTHER EXCITING THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN THE AREA

- Call into Reefton and explore the Visitor Centre by walking through the beech alive display, experiencing the thrill of going underground in the quartzopolis mine, operating the winding engine, viewing the koaro in the aquarium, or even hiring some gold pans to try your luck at the Slab Hut Recreational Area or at Dingbat Flat, Waiuta.
- Visit the miner's hut on the main street or try one of the many walks in the area - the historic town walk is a great opportunity to sketch some old buildings.
- Try the Alborns Coal Mine walk. Obtain a leaflet from the Reefton Visitor Centre.
- Visit the working stamping battery at Blacks Point Museum (a few km east of Reefton). Contact the Visitor Centre or the Museum to find out when it is operating.
- On your way up to Waiuta, stop at the old Blackwater school. It has recently been repainted and will give Ss a good idea of what it used to be like to be a student 100 years ago.
- Arrange a visit to the School of Mines through the Reefton Visitor Centre.

LIVE INTERPRETATION AVAILABLE

Walk into the past with Jimmy Martin, the prospector who first discovered gold at Waiuta. Contact the DOC Field Centre at Reefton on 03 732 8391 to make your booking. There is no charge for this activity but you will need to make your booking at least a month in advance of your trip.

More Information

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Reefton Visitor Centre
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REEFTON
Ph: 03 732 8391
Fax: 03 732 8616*

*Department of
Conservation
Greymouth Mawheranui
Area Office
23 High Street
Box 370
GREYMOUTH
Ph: 03 768 0427
Fax: 03 768 7417*

*Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
West Coast Conservancy
Private Bag 701
HOKITIKA
Ph: 03 755 8301
Fax: 03 755 8425*

ACCOMMODATION

There is accommodation for 30 people at the Waiuta Lodge. Facilities include: ovens, heaters, a TV and video recorder, bunks and mattresses, fridges, showers, and separate sleeping quarters for the teachers. You can pick up the key from either the Reefton Visitor Centre or the DOC office at 23 High Street, Greymouth. Alternatively, you could stay at the motor camp in Reefton. Call the Visitor Centre for details.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

There is a Waiuta Resource Box available for teachers from the Reefton Visitor Centre, the DOC Greymouth Mawheranui Area Office or the Teachers' Resource Centre in Greymouth. It contains books about Waiuta, information on tracks in the area, a series of old photos and the 1986 Education Pack.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Greymouth, take the road inland to Reefton. The turn off to Waiuta is on your right about 3km north of Ikamatua. From Reefton, take the road south towards Greymouth. The turn off to Waiuta is on your left about 8km south of Mawheraiti. Follow this road for 17 km. It will take you through Blackwater, past the old school, directly to Waiuta. The road is only tarmac until Blackwater but still suitable for larger buses with care. The road is narrow and winding.



EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT WAIUTA

THE CURRICULUM

The tracks and environmental issues at Waiuta present a range of learning experiences for Ss to achieve curriculum objectives. By using and adapting our suggested activities and incorporating the curriculum objectives below, you could develop a trip around the following general aim:

Aim: Ss will have an awareness and understanding of the effects people have had on the environment at Waiuta

Social Studies

- Under C&H L2:1 Ss can observe and comment on the existence of Waiuta as a reflection of local culture and heritage.
- In P&E at all levels, Waiuta is a great place to look at human interactions with the environment and vice versa.
- In the R&EA strand, through role-play or debate, Ss can consider how and why people use resources differently and the consequences of this.

Health and Physical Education

- See our activity “Be Prepared” in "Using this Resource".
- There are opportunities for sports games around the lodge.

Science

- There is plenty of potential to study aspects of the LW strand at all levels. We focus on this at the Kaniere and Franz Josef sites but you could transfer the activities to your Waiuta trip.
- Under PE&B, Ss can look at the impact of people on the physical environment and at higher levels, they can consider the issues associated with developing natural resources, such as gold, and the need for responsible and co-operative guardianship of Aotearoa/ New Zealand’s environment.
- Older students could study the cyanide process and other chemical processes for saving gold.

English and Art

- There are lots of possibilities for follow up art and language work, particularly if you take photos and draw sketches during your trip.

Environmental Issues

- Weeds affect the bush regeneration and smother historic relics (but interestingly gorse assists bush regeneration providing a nursery cover).
- The future management of the site (create another shantytown tourist attraction, re-open the mine, manage Waiuta as it is or let the bush regenerate).
- The impact of humans on the environment, in particular the impact of mining and the creation of the town.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The Beginning

In 1905, four prospectors fossicking in the upper reaches of the Blackwater Stream discovered the “Birthday Reef” of gold, on King Edward VII’s birthday. They sold the rights to a speculator for \$500 each (about two years’ good wages). The speculator ‘proved’ the reef (to be more than just a block of rock on the surface) before selling the site on to the London-based Consolidated Goldfields Company for £30 000. Not a bad profit! The first mineshaft, near the town site, was fully operational by 1908. It was 563m deep. This was the Blackwater Shaft. A second shaft took over in 1936 and was 879m deep.

Town Life

By the 1930s the population of Waiuta had grown to around 600 people. Due to its location at the end of the road, Waiuta had to become relatively self sufficient in terms of facilities, shops, and social life. It became well known on the Coast for its many sports teams and its regular balls which drew people from far away.

Gold Mining

Basically, the miners drilled and blasted gold-bearing quartz rock out of the underground reef. The rock was then trucked through tunnels to the shaft where it was winched to the surface. Timber props were used to prevent the mine shaft and tunnels from caving in. The hillsides around Waiuta were cleared to provide timber for this purpose, as well as for housing.

Gold Processing

There were two means of crushing the quartz to extract the gold.

1. The Battery Process – Gold was pounded out of the rock using a water powered “battery” of iron stamps. This occurred at the Snowy Battery.
2. The Ball Mill – Iron balls in revolving steel drums crushed the quartz rock. This occurred at the Prohibition Mill site.

Mercury, cyanide and other toxic chemicals were then used in various gold-saving processes. Because of the hazards associated with the cyanide tanks and foundations, visiting these sites is not recommended for large groups of primary school Ss. If you are keen to have a look, break into smaller groups and ensure there is an adult with each group.

Miner's Phthisis

In addition to the obvious dangers such as falling down the mineshafts, a more insidious hazard facing miners was quartz dust. It caused a lung complaint: miner's phthisis (pronounced locally as 'tie-sis'), or silicosis, which was responsible for the early death of many a miner.

The End

In 1951, the Blackwater Shaft, being used for ventilation and pumping at this time, collapsed and gas and water could no longer be extracted from the mine. The company decided that repairing the shaft would not be economic in the light of falling production, fixed gold prices, labour shortages and wage increases. The mine closed and the town was abandoned.

For more information about Waiuta, borrow the Waiuta Resource Box (see above) as it has copies of books and leaflets and a series of old photographs.

Mahinga Kai

Uta is the Māori word for track. The Hukarere Valley was used in the past as a short cut to the Maruia. Along this track, Waiuta was a Mahinga Kai area and was especially good for birding and eeling. The current Hukarere track is part of the Snowy Battery loop walk.



PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Brainstorm expectations about, and knowledge of, Waiuta.
- Research gold mining at Waiuta. Use the books in the Waiuta Resource Box. There are several gold mines on the Coast. See if anyone in your community can talk to you about gold mining. Familiarise the class with the following words: shaft, quartz rock, tunnel or adit, a quartz reef, battery, poppet head and mullock heap.
- Find out what life would have been like at Waiuta in the 1930s/40s/50s by interviewing grandparents and great-grand parents about their school days, their homes, their leisure and their jobs. Compare these recollections with some of the oral history tapes from Waiuta (one of which is available in the Waiuta Resource Box).
- Visit a beech forest (possibly on the way to Waiuta) so that Ss will be able to compare Waiuta now with what it used to be like before the town was built.
- The Waiuta Resource Box has a range of photos depicting the social life of the town. It will be quite difficult for younger Ss to imagine what the town would have looked like and so these photos should assist them to identify with the people of Waiuta. They can be used as the basis for a range of pre- or post-visit language activities. For example, Ss could write about a day in the life of someone in one of the photos (based on the above research). They could also use the photos as sources of information for their research about life at Waiuta.

VISIT ACTIVITIES

Curriculum Links

Social Studies Skills: inquiry, values exploration and social decision-making

Social Studies: P&E, L2:1, L3:1 & L4:1 and R&EA, L4:1,

Science: PE&B, L1:2 & L2:1

English: oral listening and speaking

Art: follow up drama activities

Behavioural Code

Reiterate any behavioural code your class might have developed at the start of your visit.

Activity One **Blackwater School**

As you drive up to Waiuta, it is worth stopping at the Blackwater School. The school has high windows, old style desks and an oral speaking lesson for you to try on the walls! For fun, your class could get dressed up in early 1900s clothes for the occasion. The photos in the Waiuta Resource Box will give you an idea of what Ss used to wear.

Activity Two **Jimmy Martin First Person Interpretation**

Take a walk around the site with Jimmy Martin the gold prospector. Contact DOC at the Reefton Visitor Centre at least a month before your visit on 03 732 8391 to arrange this.

Activity Three **An Exploratory Town Walk**

Examples of Specific Learning Outcomes

- Ss are able to list or sketch at least five effects that people have had on the Waiuta environment; for example, clearing the forest, removing quartz rock, building homes and mine buildings, draining the swamp to build the rugby pitch, putting in roads, pollution etc.
- Ss are able to use this knowledge to take part in a discussion, debate, or role-play relating to the future development of the site.

Equipment and Preparation

A set of laminated maps and written commentary are available in the Waiuta Resource Box for the Town Walk. Start at the Information Shelter/Post Office, as this will give you a good overview of what you are about to see. Try to get Ss thinking about and imagining life at Waiuta by asking questions as you go around. If you have time, you could make a worksheet!

Along your exploratory walk, look for:

- interesting features, such as relics and chimneys;
- areas where the bush is regenerating (which species are growing there?); and
- introduced plants and trees brought by miners from other countries who came to work here, e.g. rowan trees, blackberry (common and Italian), and gorse.

At the Post Office /Information Shelter, see if they can:

- imagine what it looked like here before the town was built
- list things that would have been done to create the town and set up

the mine, e.g. altering the land (e.g. building sites dug into hillsides and the recreation ground created by draining the swamp and the widespread use of mullock [waste quartz] to fill the recreation ground, provide concrete for the swimming pool and paving for roads and paths)

- draw and label a sketch or make a list of the visible human impacts on the site

At the gold discovery site (see the map), see if they can:

- describe how the prospectors felt when they discovered the gold
- consider why the prospectors sold their find for \$500 each instead of starting a mine themselves
- imagine what they did next!

At Blackwater Shaft site, see if they can:

- explain how the miners got the quartz out of the ground
- imagine what it must have felt like to work hundreds of metres under ground

At the Barber's Shop, see if they can

- list what other facilities a town of 600 would have needed
- find evidence for these facilities as you walk around

At the Recreation Ground, ask Ss what sports and events would have occurred here, and why sport was such an important part of the town life. Waiuta had one of the best rugby league teams on the Coast. In addition, around the site there is evidence of two tennis courts, a bowling green and a croquet lawn.

Photography and Sketching

Take lots of photos, and draw sketches of historic relics and buildings to use back in the classroom for follow up art and language work.

Team sports

If you are on a camp at Waiuta, you could of course consider:

- A scavenger hunt around the lodge grounds
- Building a stretcher (please bring your own materials!)
- Orienteering practice - see the 1986 pack for ideas

POST VISIT OR EVENING CAMP ACTIVITIES

Design a Game!

The children (and adults!) of Waiuta were skilled at entertaining themselves in the evenings. Provide groups of Ss with a bag full of items, such as paper, matches, colouring pens etc. and ask them to design a game and create some rules. Allow the groups a set amount of time. Then ask Ss from each group to explain their game to another group. Then play the game.

An alternative is to give Ss a set amount of time to scavenge inside and around the lodge for items like sticks and stones (remind them not to pick anything) with which to invent a game.

Play Two-Up

See the Waiuta Resource Box for details

Scenario Build and Role Play

Example of Specific Learning Outcomes

- Ss are able to use their knowledge from the town walk to take part in a discussion, debate, or role-play relating to the future development of the site.
- Ss can suggest at least 3 possible future scenarios for Waiuta
- Ss recognise that different groups have different views (attitudes and values) regarding the use of resources and the environment

Preparation

Collect items of clothing for the role-play so that Ss can really “get into” their role.

Consider the Options

Ask the Ss what they think the future holds for Waiuta. Brainstorm some ideas, e.g. it could become another Shantytown, or a resort, or a gold mining company might reopen the mine. Discuss the pros and cons of each option either as a class or by assigning an option to groups to investigate for ten minutes. Then hold a class vote by asking Ss to move to different corners of the room depending on their preferred option, e.g. everyone who thinks we should reopen the mine stand in the left corner. Get a few Ss from each corner to explain their choice.

Set the Scene

Depending on the ability of your class, you could extend this activity by selecting one future scenario for a role-play, e.g. reopening the mine. Elicit the groups of stakeholders who would be for and against the project; for example, eco-warriors, DOC, the Friends of Waiuta, local unemployed people, and a mining company. As a class or in groups, explore some of the reasons why certain groups would be for or against the proposal.

Develop your Arguments

Announce that there is to be a public meeting in half an hour or tomorrow and everyone will have a chance to have their say. Ss then choose, or are assigned to, a stakeholder group and have a certain amount of time to prepare their arguments and gather props ready for the meeting. They could also prepare some questions to ask the other groups. For example, the local unemployed people might want to ask the company whether the jobs will be for local people or not. You will initially need to go around the groups to prompt and encourage ideas. Ask the Ss to select a speaker for their group.

Hold the Meeting

For the meeting, appoint yourself, another teacher or a student with strong oral speaking skills to open the discussion and introduce the groups. You may need to rearrange the classroom. The speakers for each group stand up and present their arguments and then everyone is given a chance to ask questions. Finally, a decision could be made by a show of hands.

Feedback

Finish off with a class discussion on how the Ss felt in their roles and whether they would like to have the opportunity to take part in a “real life” public meeting. They could write their feelings down in a paragraph.

Obviously, the success of the meeting will depend the amount of preparatory discussion in groups and as a class, and on the amount of information they have picked up from their visit to Waiuta. However, it should work well if you have a higher level group with good imaginations. The beauty of a scenario build exercise is that the Ss do all the work, with a little prompting from you of course.

An Alternative

An alternative to developing your own role play is to use the role play in the 1986 Schools' Pack, a copy of which is in the Waiuta Resource Box. The ideas are still relevant for today!

And finally ACTION!

An important part of environmental education is encouraging students to do something for the environment after they have finished their trip. Here are some ideas that you could consider with your class:

- Design a leaflet using any sketches and photos you took to encourage other Ss in your school to visit the site.
- Pick up litter in a local reserve.
- Contact your local DOC office to see if you can help to look after a reserve in your area.
- Join the Friends of Waiuta for \$10 and receive three newsletters a year.
- Attend a public meeting or write a letter to the paper or your local MP or DOC regarding an environmental issue you learnt about on your visit.

