

Walks in the Westport area



Look after yourself

Choose a walk that matches the weather and your own experience, and interests you. Know what the weather is doing – it can change dramatically in a short time. Call at Department of Conservation (DOC) offices or Visitor Centres to check current weather and track conditions.

Times given are a guide only, and will vary depending on fitness, weather and track conditions. For walks longer than an hour, pack a small first aid kit and take extra food and drink. Insect repellent is recommended to ward off sandflies and mosquitoes.



Cape Foulwind Walkway

Your safety is your responsibility

- Plan your trip
- Tell someone your plans
- Be aware of the weather
- Know your limits
- Take sufficient supplies

Visit www.mountainsafety.org.nz to learn more.



leave no trace
NEW ZEALAND

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Nau mai, haere mai, tauti mai Welcome

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

There is a great range of walking opportunities. You can choose to visit a seal colony in the morning and then spend the afternoon on the Denniston Plateau.

Geologically this area has quite recent mudstones and sandstones as well as some of New Zealand's most ancient gneiss formations (coarse-grained, layered metamorphic rock). Plants range from exquisite localised daisies to tall timber forests. Native animals include rare native birds and large carnivorous snails fond of earthworms.

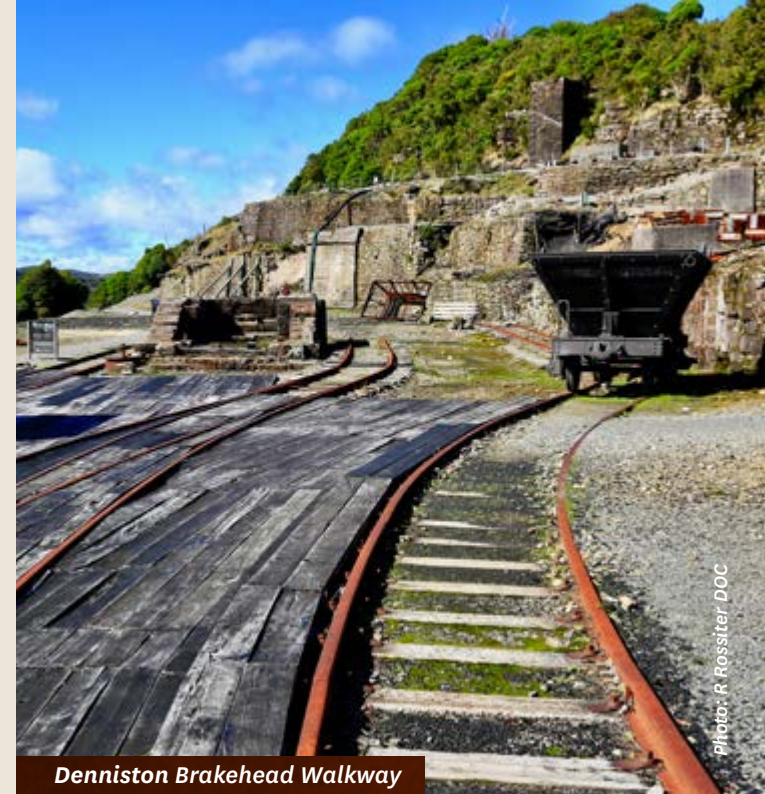
Although there are vast unpopulated natural areas, over the years the activities of people have left their story. High plateau mines produced coal of such superb quality that the British navy bought it by the shipload to stockpile all over the world as fuel for its fleet. Demand eventually dwindled, 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. It is now used by thousands of walkers who rate it one of the best walkways around.

Westport had the West Coast's earliest gold diggings and has some of the best-preserved reminders of this vibrant period. Your historical wanderings can range from the haunting hillside site of Lyell, which many motorists pass unaware of, to the lonely Britannia battery, reached by determined trampers 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, there is a road that has always been at the mercy of storms and earthquakes. Look out for superb views of the scars these have left on the landscape along the way.

This brochure outlines walks that will take you to natural and historic highlights of the Westport area. Walking times range from 15 minutes to 2 to 3 hours.



Denniston Brakehead Walkway
Seal Colony viewing area

Photo: R. Rossiter, DOC



Cape Foulwind Lighthouse

Cape Foulwind. Photos: Miles Holden





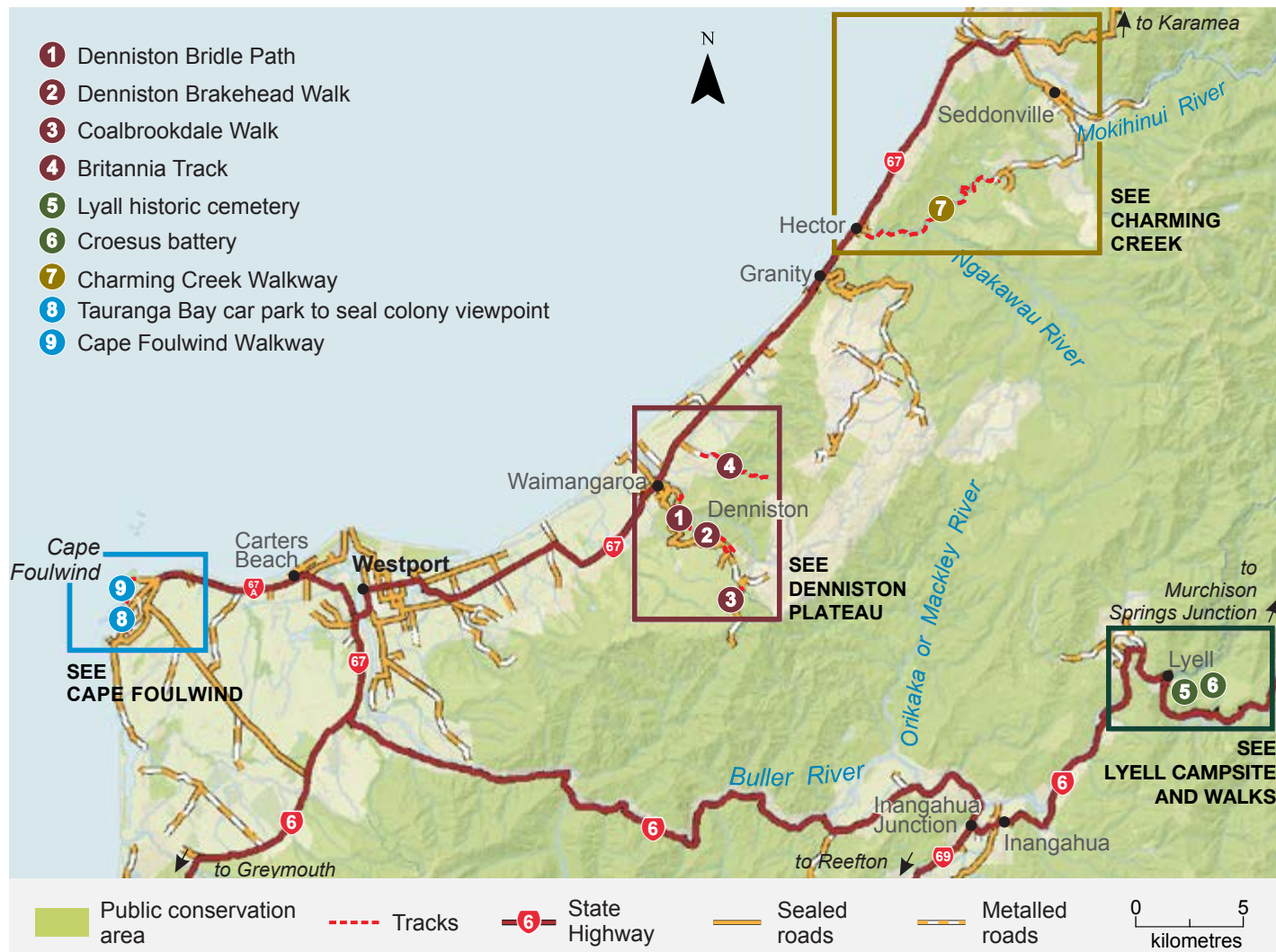
Photo: Benhi Dixon

Denniston Brakehead

Denniston Plateau

Denniston has a history rich in coal mining and pioneering spirit. Wild and remote, the township was once bursting with life. Although many of the industrial and domestic buildings have long gone, remnants of the town and the mine remain as an evocative reminder of life on 'The Hill'. Take a historic walk on the same tracks that residents and miners used over a hundred years ago and explore the many relics still present. Interpretation panels alongside the track and at the main car park bring the history of Denniston to life.

Access: Heading north-east from Westport, follow State Highway 67 for 18 km to Waimangaroa; then turn right and follow signs to Denniston.



Track grades



Easy access short walks - 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

Denniston Bridle Path 1
3 hr up, 2.5 hr down, 4.2 km



The track is a pleasant, if steep, walk, starting at the Waimangaroa (bottom) end where it is signposted from Conns Creek Road. It finishes at Denniston township. A short branch track near the top leads to the incline that carried coal down (and occasional cool-nerved passengers up). A lower branch to the Waimangaroa–Denniston road offers a shorter walking option.

Aside from the incline, the bridle path, completed in 1884, was the only access to Denniston. People either walked or used horses on it.

Brakehead Walk 2
40 min, 1.1 km loop

Starting from the car park above the Brakehead, this walk leads to a viewpoint at the top of the famous Denniston incline, past Denniston’s first settlement ‘The Camp’ and on to the Banbury Arch (a drystone arch) viewpoint. It returns via the historic mine workshop site. You can see many relics from Denniston’s past on this walk.

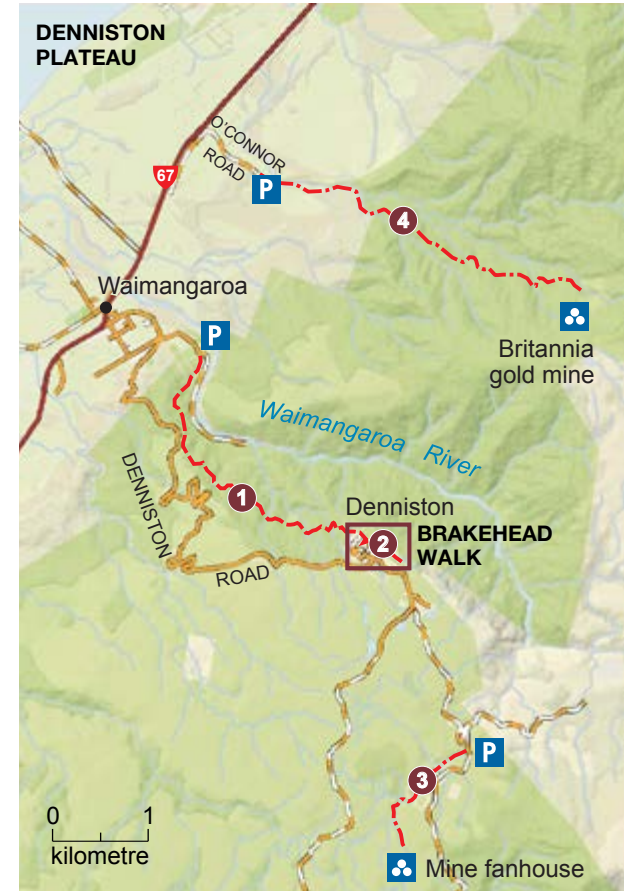
Coalbrookdale Walk 3
30 min, 1 km one way

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

Britannia Track 4
2 hr, 6 km one way

In an area rich in history, this walk follows an old pack track climbing steadily through varied forest of rātā, rimu and kahikatea to the abandoned Britannia gold mine. Here you’ll find a complete five-head quartz crushing battery with most of its ancillary equipment intact.

Access: 3 km north of Waimangaroa, turn off State Highway 67 on to O’Connor Road, and follow this road for 5 km to the car park and start of the track.



- - - Walking track
- - - Tramping track
- 6 State Highway
- Sealed road
- Metalled road
- P** Car park
- 1** Denniston Bridle Path
- 2** Denniston Brakehead Walk
- 3** Coalbrookdale Walk
- 4** Britannia Track
- Historic site

Denniston Brakehead Walkway



Photo: R Rossiter/DOC



- Toilets
- P** Car park
- Viewpoint
- - - **2** Denniston Brakehead Walk
- - - **1** Denniston Bridle Path



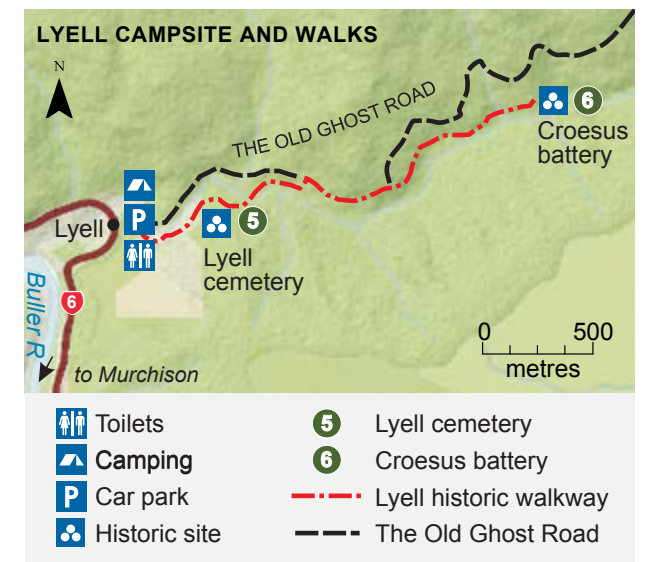


Lyell Cemetery



Lyell Historic Walkway

Lyell Walks. Photos: R. Rossiter DOC



Lyell cemetery 5
15 min, 320 m one way

Signposted from the campsite, the track passes the former Catholic church site and enters native beech forest clinging to a steep hillside. It leads on to a picturesque goldfield cemetery. Surviving headstones, some in iron-fenced plots with large trees growing out of them, tell stories of short lives and tragic deaths. Between 30 and 40 people were buried here from 1880 to 1900.

Croesus battery 6
45 min, 2 km one way

From the campsite, and a short distance beyond the Lyell cemetery, you will come to 'Māori Bar', the site of the first gold strike in 1862. There is a tunnel here that miners drove through solid rock to de-water the creek bed for easier mining.

Crossing the bridge, the walkway soon joins the Old Ghost Road for a short distance, then branches off again on a side track to the right that leads to a viewing point overlooking the Croesus stamper battery. The battery crushed gold-bearing quartz from the Croesus mine. Other relics here include a berdan dish, which rotated to finely grind the crushed rock with steel balls, and the remains of an unusual turbine that drove the machinery.

Lyell Campsite and walks

Lyell was once the chief producer of gold in the Buller district. You can explore reminders of its rich past in a short stroll around the historic Lyell Cemetery or a 2 km walk to the Croesus Battery. From the campsite, a short track takes you down to the river where you can try your luck panning for gold. There are 18 campsites.

The Old Ghost Road, an old gold miners' road that has been revived as a tramping and mountain biking track, also starts from this point. Traversing native forests, tussock tops, river flats and valleys, it connects the old dray

road in the Lyell to the Mokihinui River in the north. For more information on this track, visit the Old Ghost Road website at oldghostroad.org.nz.

Access: The Lyell Campsite is located on State Highway 6 in the Upper Buller Gorge, approximately 17 km from Inangahua Junction and 35 km from Murchison. Access from State Highway 6 is via a sealed road.

Lyell historic walkway takes you to a cemetery and a mine site from the gold-mining days.



Cape Foulwind. Photos: Miles Holden

Cape Foulwind Walkway

Cape Foulwind

Cape Foulwind headland is an important site that features a New Zealand fur seal/kekeno colony as well as sooty shearwaters, a large sea-going petrel and blue penguins.

Māori knew the Cape as Tauranga, which refers to the sheltered anchorage the bay provided for voyaging canoes (waka). Abel Tasman sighted the Cape on 14 December 1642 and named it Rocky Point. In 1770, it was named a 'place of foul winds' by Captain Cook when his ship was beset by gales and wind. Major European settlement began in the 1860s when the settlers established flax/harakeke and timber mills.

This spectacular walkway with panoramic views of mountains and rugged coastline is on the Cape Foulwind headland, about 16 km south-west of Westport.

The walkway features an easily reached seal colony, one of six breeding colonies on the West Coast, and a lighthouse. There are car parks at the southern end (Tauranga Bay) and northern end (Cape Foulwind).

Access: From Westport cross the Buller River bridge and follow Cape Foulwind Road (State Highway 67A) for 11 km to the former Holcim cement works. Turn left into Tauranga Bay Road to access the Tauranga Bay car park (southern end).



8 Tauranga Bay car park to seal colony viewpoint
9 Cape Foulwind Walkway
 Toilets P Car park View point Picnic area

Tauranga Bay car park to seal colony viewpoint **8**
 15 min, 500 m one way

Short Walks

From the Tauranga Bay car park at the southern end of the walkway, this short walk leads to a viewpoint overlooking a New Zealand fur seal/kekeno breeding colony. Kekenos can be seen here all year round. Numbers vary depending on the season. The busiest time of year is the breeding season from November to January.

Cape Foulwind Walkway **9**
 1 hr 15 min, 3.4 km one way

The walk takes you from Tauranga Bay car park, passes the seal colony viewpoint and continues north along the striking coastal bluffs to the Cape Foulwind lighthouse. Interpretation panels along the way tell stories of Māori history, sea voyages, early explorers, timber mills and quarries.

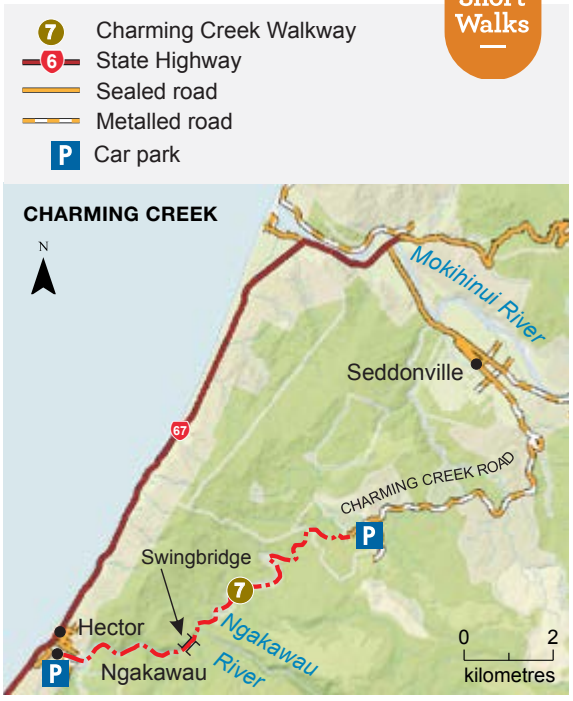
Short Walks

For more information on Short Walks, pick up a Short Walks brochure or visit doc.govt.nz/shortwalks.

Charming Creek Walkway 7
2 hr 30 min – 3 hr, 9.5 km one way

To combine scenery and history take this walk along a historic bush tramway. It follows through the lower Ngakawau Gorge and Charming Creek valley to the abandoned Charming Creek Coal Mine, passing historic sawmilling and mining relics. There are spectacular vistas of the gorge and the Mangatini Falls. The hardy Ngakawau Gorge daisy (*Celmisia morganii*) flowers abundantly on steep rock faces from December to January – the only known habitat for this rare and protected species. There are shorter walking options from each end.

Access: From the south, access is signposted from State Highway 67 at Ngakawau, 35 km north-east of Westport. From the north, access is through Seddonville, 50 km north-east of Westport on State Highway 67, along a 10-km gravel road.



Mangatini Falls, Charming Creek



R135901

Photo: Miles Holden

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 or conservation emergencies
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 Back cover: Charming Creek Walkway. *Photo: Miles Holden*

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