

Introduction

Victoria Forest Park is the largest park of its type in the country. Covering an area of 206,000 hectares it incorporates the Victoria and Brunner Ranges and the upper catchments of the Inangahua, Maruia and Upper Grey Rivers.

There is access to the park via a network of tracks, many dating from the mining days with relics amid regenerated forest. Others lead to untouched landscapes with stunning river, lake and mountain scenery, as well as pristine beech forest. There are several Ecological Areas and a wildlife corridor. Walks described in this brochure can take anything from a few minutes to a couple of days. Times given are for walking only, so allow extra for resting and enjoying the views.

More information on these tracks and other recreational opportunities is available at the Reefton Visitor Centre.

Look after yourself

The shorter walks can be covered by moderately fit people wearing suitable footwear and equipped with warm, weather-proof clothing, a small first aid kit and something to eat and drink. Longer walks and overnight tramps naturally call for something extra in terms of stamina, equipment, experience and provisions.

Weather conditions can change rapidly, particularly on the tops. Rain can quickly make even small streams treacherous to cross. Before starting out it is best to check with Reefton Visitor Centre for the latest weather and track information.

Wasps are particularly common from December to April. Carry antihistamine if you are allergic to their stings.

It is also important to leave details of intended routes and expected time of return with a reliable contact.

Maps: A reliable compass and map in the NZTopo50 1:50,000 series are recommended for the longer walks and overnight tramps.

Warning: There are many hazards associated with former mine areas such as exposed shafts and drives, decaying structures and equipment, and industrial waste. It is therefore important that you stay on roads and tracks and do not enter tunnels.

Other things to see and do

Visitor centre

The distinctive Reefton Centre has full track information, fascinating beech forest and mining displays and a range of conservation retail products.

Reefton Slab Hut

This replica pioneer dwelling on Reefton's main street evokes memories of the early town.

Reefton School of Mines

An historic building, renowned for its mineral collection. Enquire at the visitor centre for visits by arrangement.

Blacks Point Museum

An old church, 2 km from Reefton along the Lewis Pass highway, contains photographs and relics from early mines and settlements. The former Morning Star battery behind the museum operates regularly.

Fishing

The district is an angler's paradise, famous for its brown trout. The Inangahua, Grey and Waitahu rivers and Larrys Creek are all worth a try.

Hunting

Game includes red and fallow deer, chamois, goats, pigs and possums. Inquire at the Greymouth *Mawheranui* Area Office regarding permits.

Mountain biking

Reefton has an exciting supply of mountain biking tracks that use old historic roads and pack tracks. Although they are suited to riders with reasonable skill levels and fitness, they are of good quality, with historic features, wilderness value, and moderate gradients. For the more adventurous, there are unused historic tracks and forest roads around Reefton that can be explored (permission must be granted where mining or forestry activities and private lands are concerned.)

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

Look after the environment

All native plants, wildlife, natural features and historic sites are strictly protected. Please take your rubbish away and light fires only in proper fireplaces.

It is essential that hunting permits are obtained from the Department of Conservation before any hunting expeditions. Please check that dogs are permitted in the areas you intend to visit.

Reefton

Reefton Heritage Walk (Reefton Historic Trust Board)



Time: 30 minutes round trip

This walk starts from the Reefton Visitor Centre and passes 24 historic buildings, many dating from the 19th century. These include shops, churches, lodges, the courthouse and the Reefton School of Mines.

Bottled Lightning Powerhouse Walk (Reefton Historic Trust Board)



Time: 40 minutes round trip

Starts from Reefton Visitor Centre and heads up Broadway to a footbridge over the Inangahua River which gives access to the powerhouse site. It was here that New Zealand's first public display of electricity was generated in 1888. Return via the Rosstown Road and the main highway bridge.

Alborns Track



Time: 1 hour 30 minute loop

Distance: 2.7 km

Begins at a car park 9 km along Soldiers Road, which leaves the Reefton highway (SH7) just south of town. Scattered among old coal mine workings are remains of makeshift winch equipment, including an old Leyland lorry. Other features are distinctive coal measure vegetation and views of the Victoria and Paparoa Ranges.

Tawhai Walk



Time: 5 minute loop

Distance: 250 m

Just south of the Reefton Saddle on the Reefton highway (SH7) is a picnic area with tap water and a toilet. A track suitable for wheelchairs (assisted only) goes through beech forest.

More information

www.doc.govt.nz

The ecological areas and conservation lands in Victoria Forest Park and the Reefton area are administered by the Department of Conservation as part of the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy. The local management and conservation work in this area is provided by the Greymouth *Mawheranui* Area Office and the Reefton Field Centre.

Greymouth *Mawheranui* Area Office

Department of Conservation
PO Box 370
Greymouth
Ph 03 768 0427
Fax 03 768 7417

Brochures, maps, hut tickets and general information are available from these offices:

Reefton Visitor Centre

67-69 Broadway
PO Box 100
Reefton
Ph 03 732 8391
Fax 03 732 8616

West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy Office

Department of Conservation
Private Bag 701
10 Sewell Street
Hokitika
Ph 03 756 9100
Fax 03 756 9195
email: westcoast@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)



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Waiuta

Access

One of the West Coast's best known ghost towns, signposted from the Reefton highway (SH7), 21 km south of Reefton. Follow the sealed and shingle road a further 16 km to Waiuta. The road is suitable for most vehicles.

Accommodation is available at Waiuta Lodge and bookings can be made at the Reefton Visitor Centre. There are also several informal camping sites. A detailed brochure on Waiuta is available.

All walks are signposted from the information site on Top Road.

Waiuta Town Walk



Time: 1 hour 30 minute, round trip

Distance: 2 km

This walk circumnavigates the town, passing the Blackwater mine, the remains of shops, old house sites and recreation areas. Historic photos depicting the town are interpreted along the walk.

Swimming Pool Walk



Time: 15 minutes, round trip

Distance: 450 m

This track leads to the town pool which, although intact, is now surrounded by regenerating bush. Mine buildings and foundations can be visited on the return leg.

Prohibition Mine and Ball Mill



Time: 5 min one way, driving

Distance: 2.2 km one way

"Pro Road" winds to the top of the country's deepest mineshaft (879m) where there are fine views from a 580m altitude. The old foundations of a Ball Mill where quartz was ground to extract gold can also be seen.

Snowy Battery Track



Time: 2 hours 30 minutes return

Distance: 5.1 km

A well formed down hill track leads you to the remains of a massive gold extraction plant, including large cyanide tanks and machinery foundations. Return by the same track or by either following the water race from the battery to the powerhouse site then up a gentle graded track to Waiuta; or from the powerhouse, crossing the river to Hukarere Road for a prearranged pick up.

Reefton

Walks and activities in the Reefton area

WEST COAST *TAI POUTINI*



Waiuta (photo: Gordon Roberts)



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Big River

One of the most intact mining areas, it has a remarkable array of goldmining relics including a poppet head and steam winder. There is also a 20 bunk hut.

Access: Walking access is either from Waitai or the Lewis Pass highway 11 km east of Reefton. 4WD access is from Reefton via Soldiers Road.

Four wheel drive



Time: 4 hours return

A four wheel drive track starts 9 km along Soldiers Road, after the Alborns Track carpark. Soldiers Road turnoff is signposted on SH7, just south of Reefton.

The track, twisting through regenerating beech forest, passes many mining sites before opening out to the barren Big River settlement. This track is for experienced four wheel drivers only.

Waitai to Big River



Time: 3.5 to 5 hours one way

Distance: 10.7 km

The track is signposted from "Pro Road" Waitai. It follows an old benched pack track and passes the Big River South Mine, the St George Mine and stamper battery, and other old mining sites.

Big River to Inangahua River



Time: 6 to 7 hours one way

Distance: 10.1 km

The journey passes the Golden Lead Battery historic site and joins the Progress Water Race Track, to finish at the Inangahua Swingbridge Picnic area. Parts of the track are quite steep and become more difficult in wet weather. Rewards include fine views and forest changes plus historic relics including coalmine trams, sawmills, hut sites and a quartz battery.

Inangahua Suspension Bridge

Access: 11 km east of Reefton on the Lewis Pass highway.

Progress Water Race Track



Time: 2 hours return

Distance: 5 km return

The suspension footbridge crosses the Inangahua River, leading to a good track which follows the disused water race, occasionally crossing side gullies via steps. The track ends at the Deep Creek-Inangahua River confluence. Those walkers who have more time on their hands can continue on to the Golden Lead Battery.

Golden Lead Battery historic site



Time: 6 hours return from Inangahua Swingbridge

Distance: 6.3 km return

Follow the Progress Water Race walking track (above), then continue along the Big River/Inangahua track. This rougher track climbs and descends numerous spurs and crosses two bridges to reach the restored Golden Lead Battery, which stands in a small grassy clearing. In the fine weather it is possible to walk in the creekbed, avoiding the steeper sections of the track.

Murray Creek / Blacks Point

Access: An extensive track system starts at the Murray Creek carpark at Blacks Point, 2 km east of Reefton on the Lewis Pass highway. Access can also be gained from Lankeys Creek and the Waitahu Valley.

Golden Fleece Battery Walk



Time: 15 minutes round trip

Distance: 550 m

Begins on the Murray Creek Track, then drops through the bush to a bridge across the creek, where it passes through the former Morning Star stamping battery site and comes out near the Blacks Point Museum.

Murray Creek Track



Time: 5 hours round trip

Distance: 9.7 km

Encompasses the Inglewood and Ajax gold mines, Chandlers open-cast coal pit and the site of Cement Town. Relics include mine shafts, a steam winch, boilers and a stamping battery. The track starts and ends at the carpark. The best access for mountain bikers is up the historic Murray Creek Road. If biking the circuit, be aware that the track between the Ajax Mine and Blacks Point is for advanced riders only.

Lankey Creek Tram Track



Time: 2 hours to join with Murray Creek Track

Distance: 4 km

Starts at the Lankey Creek carpark on the main highway about 3 km east of Blacks Point. The track climbs steeply to a tram formation that overlooks the Inangahua River and Lankey Creek. Here, there are old coal and gold mines with remains of winches and a battery. The track joins the Murray Creek Track just past the Energetic Gold Mine site. Turn left here to continue back to the main highway at Blacks Point (35 minutes), or for a longer walk continue on the Murray Creek loop (4.5 hours).

Waitahu Track (links Murray Creek with Waitahu Valley)



Time: 2 hours

Distance: 3 km

This historic pack track turns off the top of the Murray Creek circuit, dropping down at an easy grade to connect with the Kirwins Track network via an impressive suspension bridge over the Waitahu River.

A popular mountain biking circuit from Reefton starts on the Murray Creek Track, continues along the Waitahu Track and exits at Gannons Road (approx. 5 hours for round trip).

Kirwans

Access: From the end of Boatmans Road which turns off the Reefton highway 12 km north of Reefton.

Kirwans Track



Time: 2 or 3 days, round trip

Distance: 39.8 km

There is a steady six-hour climb up a well-formed pack track to the modern Kirwans hut (12 bunk) near the bushline. A 50 minute side trip up to 1297 metre Kirwans Hill provides views of a ruggedly beautiful part of the Victoria Range. From open-cast quartz mine workings near the hut, a steep descent partly follows the line of an old cableway to the Lord Brassey stamper battery. The track descends further to the 6-bunk Montgomerie Hut. From the hut, a rough four-wheel drive road leads down the Waitahu Valley to Gannons bridge, where a short track returns to Boatmans road end. Mountain biking is generally only done on the pack track from Boatmans carpark to Kirwans hut.

An alternative route can be taken on the return trip to Reefton by taking the Waitahu Track and connecting with the Murray Creek circuit, finishing at Blacks Point.

Larry's Creek Track



Time: 1 hour 30 minutes return

Distance: 4.8 km return

The track starts at the end of a 6km forestry road, which turns off SH69 just over the Larry River bridge, 16km north of Reefton. It follows the true right bank of Larry River, winding through beech forest and ending at the old Caledonian goldmine where historic remnants can be seen. Care must be taken crossing Larry River.

Golden Lead Battery (photo: Jim Station)



Slab Hut Creek (photo: DOC)



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



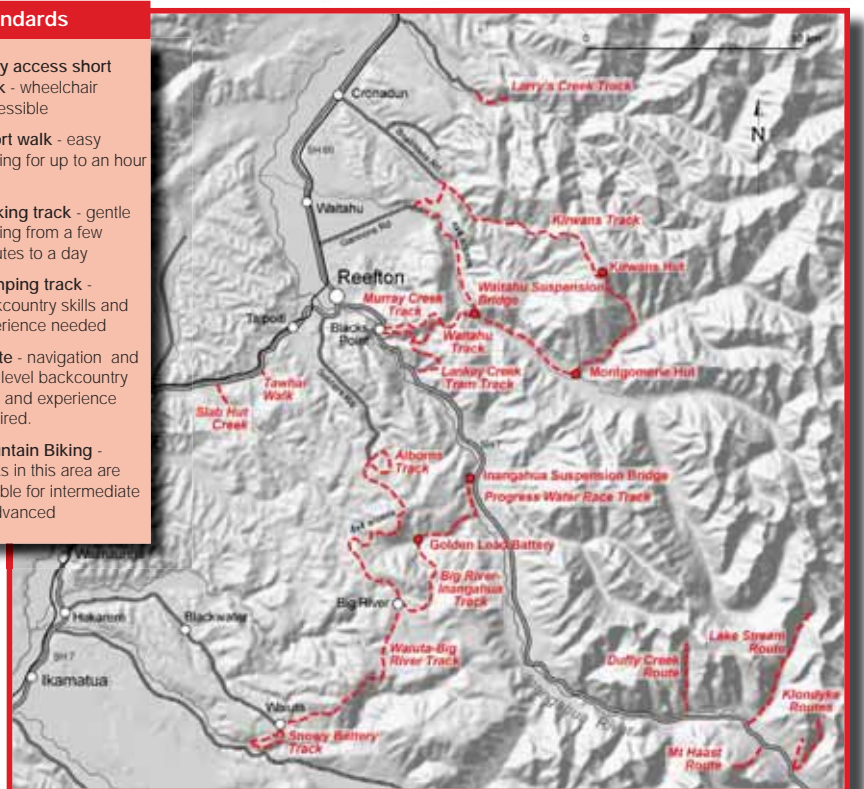
Tramping track - backcountry skills and experience needed



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



Mountain Biking - tracks in this area are suitable for intermediate to advanced



Rahu Saddle Routes

Access: From the Reefton side of the Rahu Saddle on the Lewis Pass highway, four routes lead toward or onto the Victoria Range tops.

Duffy Creek Route



Time: 3 hours return

Distance: 4.4 km return

Leads to a large ephemeral lake with fine views of granite cliffs at the head of the valley.

Lake Stream Route



Time: 3 hours 30 minutes one way to hut

Distance: 7.2 km one way

The rough track leads to a clearing with two small tarns, plenty of camping space and a two-bunk hut. Unmarked track from this point takes 45 minutes to the bushline and another 45 minutes to a saddle with views over into Maruia valley.

Mt Haast Route



Time: 6 hours return

Distance: 5 km return

A two hour climb to the bushline on a well formed route, then another hour along the right-hand ridge to a pyramid-shaped peak of 1,587m Mt Haast, providing spectacular views of nearby glacial valleys and the Main Divide.

Klondyke Routes



Time/Distance (one way)

Right route (valley): 2 hours; 4.5 km

Left route (spur): 2 hours 30 minutes; 2km

The Klondyke Valley route leads you up the valley to a tussock basin enclosed by steep granite cliffs.

The Klondyke Spur route is a steeper climb leading above the bushline onto the ridge, providing spectacular views of the Victoria Range. Experienced trampers may continue along the spur and drop into the right branch of the Rahu River to join with the valley route as a round trip.

Do not attempt to take a low sidle as this will lead you to dangerous bluffs.

Slab Hut Creek

The access road is signposted 7 km south of Reefton on the Reefton highway (SH7). A popular and recreational goldpanning area. Facilities include picnic table and barbeque sites, toilets and water. A self registration camping system is operated here.