The Department manages a diverse range of rail heritage sites that are becoming increasingly popular. In 2007 the Automobile Association asked over 20,000 New Zealanders to identify the '101 Must-Do's for Kiwis' — places they most wanted to visit. Of all DOC’s historic sites two rail heritage sites were the most popular; the Central Otago Rail Trail (14th) and the Karangahake Mines (42nd).

Rail heritage sites are different from static museums and operating lines. They offer an adventure experience exploring remote and scenic trails, adding diversity to the overall rail heritage scene and providing further entry points to trigger peoples potential interest.

DOC’s sites include an industrial railway focus; timber, gold, coal, and even lighthouses, and so preserve another category of rail heritage.

The Department shares the expertise of its heritage program, such as the results of scientific research into materials conservation; stone, wood and metal.

These 31 DOC sites are open to visitors:

**Auckland**
- Kauri Timber Co tramline, 1925-40, Whangaparapara, Great Barrier Island.
  Route of bush tram 14km long. One of the most fantastic bush trams ever. Includes 11 sections of incline worked by winch and cable. Tramping skills required.

**Waikato**
- Billy Goat incline, 1922-25, Kauaeranga Valley, Coromandel Forest Park.
  Route of bush tram 5 km long. A section of track is re-laid. A Price rail tractor will be restored and displayed.
- Karangahake Rail Trail, 1905-1978, Karangahake, near Paeroa.
  Route of the former East Coast Main Trunk railway from Karangahake to Waikino, 7 km long. Includes a 1006 m tunnel and two bridges.
  Route of gold mine tram network of 450 mm gauge, two km long. Includes underground sections. Some track still in place. Three stamper battery sites. Dramatic gorge scenery. Most popular North Island site.
Victoria Battery & Tramway, 1895-1954, Waikino, near Waihi.
Site of the largest stamper battery in New Zealand, 200 stamps operated by Waihi Gold Mining Co. Terminus of former WGMCo 825mm gauge mine railway. Mine tram with tracks 450 mm gauge intact in kiln tunnels. The Victoria Battery Tramway Society operates a 600 mm gauge tram on this site. Two battery mine locos leased to VBTS.

Waikino railway station, 1925-1988, Waikino, near Waihi.
Shifted to Waikino, from Paeroa, in 1990 and restored. Now used as tearooms and Victoria Battery interpretation centre. Terminus of Goldfields Railway from Waihi.

Bay of Plenty

Piako County Tramway, 1883-1918, Waiorongomai, Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park, near Te Aroha.
A gold mine tramway, of 825 mm gauge, 8 km long with, incredibly, 5 km of 1883 track still intact. It has three incline routes, with two brake-heads intact. Rare 1896 Rand steam-powered air compressor. Two mine trucks to be restored and displayed. Some site interpretation. Annual volunteer work program.

Waitawheta bush tram, 1895-1926, Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park, near Waihi.
A bush tram route, of 825 mm gauge, 12 km long. This is the best North Island bush tram route for scenery and integrity. Now a trampers track with six river crossings and a 22 bunk hut. Set of log bogies with kauri log to be restored and displayed on a short section of re-laid track. Tramping skills required.

East Coast / Hawke's Bay

Piako County Tramway

Onotu Walkway, 1912-1959, Gisborne District.
Route of the former Motuohora Branch railway now used as walkway.

Egmont Branch railway, 1906-1951, Mt Egmont National Park, near Stratford.
Route of the former steeply graded service railway serving quarries on Mount Egmont. Large concrete ruins at crusher site. Brochure available to aid site exploration.

Wellington

Sheridan Creek tramway, 1930-38, Tararua Forest Park, near Otaki.

Nelson

Rimutaka Incline Walkway, 1878-1955, Rimutaka Forest Park, near Featherston.
Route of the former railway to the Wairarapa from Kaitoke to Cross Creek, 20 km long. Co-managed with Wellington Regional Council. Includes two bridges and three tunnels.

Belgrove railway windmill, 1898-1955, Belgrove.
The best remaining example of a wooden railway windmill in New Zealand, of which there were once over 100 in use. Key remnant of the former Nelson to Glenhope railway.

Short section of the route of the former Nelson to Glenhope railway, about 500 meters long. Includes a bridge, a tunnel and the site of Kawatiri station. Detailed interpretation on site.
West Coast

- Charming Creek Walkway, 1910-1958, near Westport.
  Route of a legendary bush tram and coal railway 9 km long with, incredibly, 4 km of track still intact. Includes many bridges, three tunnels, two sawmill sites with steam plant, a restored steam log hauler, and two coal mine sites. This is the best South Island bush tram route for scenery and integrity. Three rail tractors and two Q wagons are on site. Every New Zealander should walk Charming Creek before they die.

- Chasm Creek, 1895-1981, near Seddonville.
  Short scenic section of the former Seddonville Branch railway, including a bridge and a tunnel.

- Denniston Incline, 1878-1967, Denniston.
  This incline served the Denniston coal mines. The foot station and head station sites are open to visitors but the incline route itself is too steep. Q wagons on site. Site interpretation provided.

- Coalbrookdale rope road, 1882-1951, Denniston.
  Short section of a former double track rope-road serving the Coalbrookdale coal mine. Short section of track re-laid and skips restored. Fan house alongside.

- Big River coal tramway, 1914-1934, Victoria Forest Park, near Reefton.
  Route of a 450 mm gauge coal mine tram serving a gold mine and timber mill, three km long. Many historic relics remain including a restored попpet head, steam winding engine, boiler, and sawmill ruins. Hut with 18 bunks on site. Remote access, tramping skills required.

- Davidson lokey, 1920-1944, near Ngahere.
  Restored geared lokey displayed on-site.

- Brunner Mine, 1864-1918, near Greymouth.
  Site of one of the major West Coast coal mines. It was served by a siding over a long suspension bridge which is currently being restored. Restored Q wagons on site.

- Mananui tramway, 1905-1951, near Hokitika.
  Route of a bush tram 6 km long through wonderful scenery; virgin rimu forest and a pristine swamp.

  Restored heritage wooden rail bridge with one Howe truss span, one compound beam span, and seven simple beam spans.

Canterbury

- Little River Rail Trail, 1962, near Christchurch.
  The first section from Motukarara to near Little River opened in 2006. Running on the old railway embankment, it covers a 20 km stretch between Motukarara and a point near Little River. When completed the 44 km-long trail will run from Hornby.
Northland: Cape Brett Lighthouse tramway, 1911, Bay of Islands Maritime Park

Waikato: Royal Standard mine tramway, 1896, Coromandel Forest Park, Whitianga

Waikato: Ellis & Burnand Ongarue tramline, 1912, Pureora Forest Park

Tongariro: Hapuawhenua viaduct, 1908, Tongariro National Park

Central Otago Rail Trail, 1891-1990, Central Otago.

Tunnel Hill Historic Reserve, 1892-1971, near Owaka, Coastal Otago.


Southland: Port Pegasus tin mine tramway, 1888, Stewart Island National Park

Wellington: Mikimiki bush tramway, 1920, Tararua Forest Park

West Coast: Brownlee’s steam shovel, 1938, site not set

West Coast: Kirwan coal tramway, 1900, Victoria Forest Park, Reefton

West Coast: Blacks rail tractor (Union Foundries), 1935, site not set

Southland: Port Pegasus tin mine tramway, 1888, Stewart Island National Park