Introduction

The Waimea Basin - the plains and low hills around Nelson and Motueka - has many small reserves and places of conservation or recreation value. This brochure provides information about the natural and human history of those areas and the things to do there: picnicking, walking, swimming, bird-watching and other activities.

Near Nelson

Cable Bay Walkway

Evidence of Maori occupation in the Cable Bay area (Rotokura) dates back to about 1150 AD; the area was a fishing ground and a campsite was maintained there. Delaware Bay, across the estuary, was the site of the main pa. In 1863, the pa occupants heroically rescued the crew of the Delaware during a terrible storm.

Cable Bay was once known as Schroders Mistake, after a Nelson skipper mistook the bay for another and put his boat on the rocks there. The laying of New Zealand's first international telegraph cable gave the bay its modern name. The operation, from Sydney to Cable Bay, took 11 days and transmission began on 21 February 1876. A fire razed the station in 1914 and in 1917 the cable was moved to Titahi Bay, near Wellington.

How to get there

The walkway starts at either Cable Bay, 21 km north of Nelson, or the Glen, 12 km out of the city.

What to do (see map at left)

Cable Bay offers many recreational opportunities including boating, sea kayaking, snorkelling and walking on Cable Bay Walkway.

The complete walk takes about 3½ hours one way, and requires transport arrangements to be made. From the Cable Bay end a shorter return trip is to the top of the first hill (1hr return) or to the forest edge (2hr return). From the Glen end, a round trip to the airstrip and back takes about 2 hours.

Cable Bay Walkway offers wonderful coastal views of the Boulder Bank, Nelson City and Kahurangi and Abel Tasman national parks. The middle section of the track passes through a patch of beautiful and varied native forest.

The track is a tramping track. It is steep in places and strong footwear is recommended.

Please remember

The entire walkway crosses private farmland and is closed during lambing for part of each spring; no dogs are allowed at any time. Please respect the stock and farm property.

The Boulder Bank

The internationally-renowned Nelson Boulder Bank is a natural spit of boulders, formed of the debris of land slips from the Mackay Bluffs (see map), swept southwards by sea currents over 10,000 years. The bank is 13 kilometres long, the last eight kilometres forming a spit which separates Tasman Bay from Nelson Haven. Its width varies from 55 metres at high tide to 240 metres at low tide.

Maori camped on the bank and fished there. They used boulders from the bank - some up to 50 kg - to hammer the rough forms of stone tools from quarries in the nearby hills.

The shelter offered by the Boulder Bank was a major factor in choosing the site of Nelson. In 1848 a beacon was erected near the end of the bank and, in 1862, the cast iron lighthouse building that remains today. In 1906 a cut was made in the bank to allow easier passage to Nelson Harbour for shipping. 'The Cut' now separates Haulashore Island from the bank.

How to get there

Access is from Boulder Bank Drive (off Atawhai Drive (SH6)) or by boat from Nelson. A ferry service is available from Nelson. Contact Nelson Visitor Information i-Site to find out more.
To Abel Tasman National Park

Tantragee

Riwaka

See inset map

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Lookout

Hawkes

To Golden Bay

Dun Mountain

Albion Square

Coppermine

Walkway

Murchison & West Coast

Dun Saddle

Ngatimoti

Motueka River

6

Windmill

Belgrove

Riwaka R

62

Boulder Bank

Mountain

Marahau

Fringed Hill

Scenic Reserve

6

the society to issue the first fishing

nearby flour mill; by 1877 enough trout

Acclimatization Society and used for

hatchery built in 1867 by the Nelson

company was formed in England to mine

mountain which was named Dun

1852 and sourced to a reddish-brown

speed being controlled by ‘brake men’.

Following the mine’s closure a horse-

drawn passenger tram continued on the
city to port section until 1909.

How to get there

The walkway starts on Tantragee
Road, off Brook Street, four kilometres
from the Nelson city centre. Access can
also be gained from Fringed Hill summit
(760m), 6½ km further along the same
road.

Walking the track (see map at left)

From Tantragee Road the Dun
Mountain Walkway zig-zags up to the
former railway alignment. This it follows,
trough pine and native forest, to a
junction, where it descends back to Brook
Street. The walkway is a walking track; it
is 7½ km long and takes 3 hours.

Beyond the junction, the alignment
continues through beech forest to Third
House shelter (1 hr), where it meets a
track from Fringed Hill. A further 45
minutes (past another track from Fringed
Hill) brings you to the sudden change in
vegetation from mature forest to the
stunted manuka and scrub of the ‘mineral
belt’, an infertile, distinctly-coloured
landform that occurs in patches
between St Arnaud and D’Urville Island.

The railway alignment continues
around Woddy Point to Coppermine
Saddle (this is as far as most mountain
bikers usually go). From here a rougher
track leads up for about 20 minutes to Dun
Saddle, meeting the route from the
Maitai valley.

Dun Saddle is the boundary between
the City Council waterworks reserve and
Mt Richmond Forest Park. From here
marked routes extend in both directions:
north over Dun Mountain towards
Maungatapu Saddle and south for 40
minutes to the 20-bunk Rocks Hut.

Please remember

The track is shared with mountain
bikers. Riders should always give way
to walkers and stay in control of their bikes.
No animals, firearms or fires are allowed.
Be wary of sudden weather changes,
especially beyond Third House.

Waimea Inlet

Waimea Inlet is the largest estuary
in the South Island. Rich in food resources
it was coveted by Maori; 33 archaeological
sites are known from its shores. Following
European colonisation in the 1840s,
large areas of the inlet were drained and
the coastal forest burned or logged.

Despite its modification, the estuary
is considered to be of outstanding biological
importance; the abundance of trout attracts
large numbers of fish; 50 species
of wading birds have been recorded and
there are rare species and a carabid beetle
found only at Tahunanui Beach.

The inlet is popular for fishing,
whitebaiting, water-skiing, sea kayaking,
jogging, walking, duck hunting, dog
exercising (in some places only) and
bird watching. Bird watching is best on the
north-eastern corner of Bells Island at
high tide during the summer season,
where there are many northern hemisphere
migratory birds present.

How to get there

The most popular areas of the Waimea
Inlet are Tahunanui ‘back beach’,
Monaco, Rabbit Island (the Rabbit Island
gates are closed at night) and Mapua.
Boat ramps are provided at Nelson,
Monaco, Mapua and on the inside of
Rabbit Island (high tide only).

Please remember

The outgong tide can cause
embarrassing and inconvenient delays for
boat owners - time your visit carefully.
Please follow the rules regarding dogs,
hunting and fires in individual places
(more information from Nelson City and
Tasman District councils). Do not disturb
the birds.

To the South

Eves Valley Scenic Reserve

The little reserve in Eves Valley is a
regenerating beech-podocarp forest
covering 28 hectares. The reserve has many picnic areas,
good access to the stream and a scenic,
20-minute bush walk.

How to get there

Eves Valley is off Waimea West Road,
27 km from Nelson.

Please remember

Dogs and camping are prohibited.
Fires may only be lit in the fireplaces
provided.

Snowdens Bush Scenic Reserve

Although severely modified, this
reserve is an example of a forest type that
once covered much of the Waimea Plains.
It is dominated by totara, tītoki and matai,
and since grazing was stopped in 1972,
a varied understory has developed.
This 5.6 hectare reserve is a popular
picnic and recreation area, with several
paths meandering through the forest.

How to get there

The reserve is on Waimea West Road,
junction of Brightwater, 21 km from Nelson.

Please remember

Camping and dogs are not permitted.

Belgrove windmill

The Belgrove windmill was built in
1897 on the Nelson railway line. It was
used to pump water to help cool engines
beginning the steep climb to Spoons
 tunnel.

When the line closed, amid much
protest in 1955, the windmill was left in
place because it was also being used for
domestic supply. It is one of only two
windmills remaining in the country.

How to get there

The Belgrove windmill is on State
Highway 6, 39 km south of Nelson.

Please remember

The windmill is beside a busy
weightbridge; watch out for logging trucks.
Riwaka resurgence

The north branch of the Riwaka River pours out of the cave-riddled marble of Takaka Hill in this beautiful area of Kahurangi National Park. Damp forest, clear cold water, tranquil pools, and moss-covered and water-worn marble rock create a fairyland quality.

How to get there

The Riwaka resurgence is 11 km from Riwaka township and 16 km from Motueka. Hawkes lookout is on State Highway 60, 10 km from Riwaka.

What to do

A short path (10 minutes) leads through the forest to where the river emerges. There is wheelchair access as far as Crystal Pool (5 min). Other attractions include picnicking, walking and fishing.

For a view down on to the resurgence, drive up to Hawkes lookout on Takaka Hill. A five-minute path takes you through bush and marble outcrops to a spectacular viewpoint.

Please remember

Dogs and camping are not permitted. The rocks in the riverbed are very slippery.

Further information

For further information contact:

Nelson Visitor Information i-Site
Cnr Trafalgar & Halifax Streets, NELSON
Phone (03) 548 2304

DOC Motueka
Cnr King Edward & High Streets
PO Box 97, MOTUEKA
Phone (03) 528 1810 Fax (03) 528 1811
Email: motuekaao@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz

Near Motueka

Motueka River delta

The Motueka River delta consists of the rivermouth, the Motueka sandspit and the ‘Kumaras’ estuary. The delta is formed of sediments from the Motueka and Riwaka rivers, swept into continually changing shapes by the sea.

The area was very important to Maori for food gathering. It is also where the first European settlers to Motueka landed in May 1842.

The whole area is ecologically important. It has extensive areas of ruschland and saltmarsh where whitebait spawn; it is rich in shellfish and therefore a major feeding ground for wading birds, up to 10,000 of which feed or roost on the sandspit in summer.

Besides bird watching and whitebaiting, the delta area is popular for fishing, walking, swimming, and dog exercising (approved areas only). The sandspit has an all-round view, from D’Urville Island to the Richmond and Arthur ranges and Abel Tasman National Park.

How to get there (see main map)

Access is at the end of Staples Street, just north of Motueka, or along the foreshore from the old Motueka wharf.

Please remember

Fires are not permitted. Dog walkers must keep to the designated areas.

Hope Saddle

In 1871, a winding, precipitous track was cut through the bush over Hope Saddle. In 1879 the first horse drawn vehicles started using it, as part of the route from Nelson to Westport.

At the saddle today, travellers can stop for a while and enjoy the views of forests and mountains. There is a shelter and toilet; interpretation signs and picnic tables are provided at two viewing points.

How to get there

Hope Saddle is on State Highway 6, 75km south of Nelson.

Safety Watch

0800 999 005
Report any safety hazards

Published by:
Department of Conservation
Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy
Private Bag 5, NELSON.

The Belgrove Windmill.