

York Road Loop Track

Egmont National Park



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York Road Loop Track follows part of the old Egmont Branch Railway Line. The railway evolved in 1901 when the local Road Board and Council lobbied the Minister of Railways to construct a branch railway for metal quarrying on the mountain.

Until the late 1920s, the quarry provided metal for Taranaki roads and rocks for Port Taranaki in New Plymouth. World War II created a major setback for the quarry and it was finally closed during the late 1940s.

Track Information

Access to this track is from the end of York Road which turns off SH3 between Stratford and Tariki. A family group will take about 3 hours to walk the well defined 5.3 km track. The track is best walked in a clockwise direction and passes ten numbered sites of interest along the way. At the first junction, not far from the track entrance, turn left and follow the signs to the Crusher Site. From here the track continues past the other features to the Foot Station and then returns to the carpark via the old footstation access road.



Railway Line History

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| 1901 | Manganui Road Board & Stratford Borough Council lobby the Minister of Railways to construct a railway line up to stone deposits on Mt Egmont. | 1914 | World War One breaks out causing a major set back for the operation. Rails are laid to the foot station. |
| 1903 | Nine miles and 60 chains of trial line laid. | 1925-1926 | 50,000 tons of boulders & 30,000 tons of crushed metal are extracted for the new breakwater at Port Taranaki. |
| 1904 | Parliament authorises construction. | 1928 | One of the hydraulic crusher plants is transferred to the Mt Smart Ballast pit, Auckland. |
| 1905 | Authorised earthworks began. Construction worker sacked for being unmarried. | 1930 | The barracks sold for 15 pounds as a hall at the New Plymouth Railway Settlement. |
| 1906 | Six miles & two chain of bush work completed. Five and a half miles of track is laid and ballasted. Stone crushers on site. Barracks built. | 1933 | Tenders called for the removal of dwellings. |
| 1907 | Engine shed, five cottages, coal store and water tanks sited at Waipuku. Eighteen side tipping wagons are ordered. Stone crushers operating. | 1935 | Large sections of the mid quarry line washed out by Manganui River flood. |
| 1908 | Public Works hands over the complex to Railways Department. 25,000 cubic yards of road metal is processed in the first year. Railway passed fit for public transport. | 1938 | The lower quarry opened. |
| 1909 | Middle Quarry metal proves unsuitable for roading and rail purposes. | 1941 | World War Two breaks out. All tracks above the lower quarry lifted out and shipped to the Middle East to help with the war effort. |
| 1910 | Steady progress is made laying rails up to the Foot Station. | 1951 | New Zealand Railways General Manager orders the line closed. Remnants are auctioned and land outside the park boundary disposed to local farmers. |
| 1913 | A worker falls to his death at the Quarry site. | 1969 | Remaining land passed over to the Department of Lands and Survey. |

Sites of Interest

① Bunk House and Cottages Site

The Bunk House was also known as the Barracks. It housed 20 men and had a large kitchen and living rooms. Removed in 1930, only the foundation remains. Six small cottages were also on this site to accommodate the married men.

② Crusher Site

A massive retaining wall, 100m long and 7m high remains. It was part of the building that housed the crushing machine and other works. Side-tipping rail wagons brought rock to the two crushers by an upper siding. The crushed and screened metal was then fed into wagons below for transport to Waipuku junction. The crushers were operated by water turbines. Now heavily overgrown, the castle like remains are still impressive with tunnels, chambers and water ducts.

③ Waterline

This waterway is over 1km long and 500mm in diameter. It is made of rolled steel pipes and was used to carry water to the sandtrap and crushers. Some of the rusting pipeline still remains and it can be seen along part of the loop track.

④ Sandtrap

This filtered any sand from the water used to drive the crusher turbines. It is still intact and the valves are semi-operational.

⑤ River Quarry

This rail line made short access to the river where rock could be easily found. Rail line remnants still can be found in situ and in the river.

⑥ Middle Quarry Station

Some rock sent to the crusher came from here. This poor quality rock from the Manganui River crushed easily, was plentiful and readily available. It is now covered in gorse. A large pile of spoiled rock can still be found.

⑦ Underline Culverts & Water Flumes

These diverted water away from the Foot Station into a man-made river. Some of the flumes and culverts are still on site and visible.

⑧ Foot Station

This is located at the end of the rail line from Waipuku and at the bottom of the proposed Rope Way Station. A large clearing remains where the rail yard was located.

⑨ Proposed Ropeway Station

The main access way from the Foot Station to the Upper Quarry was originally a foot and later a wagon track. The Rope Way Station was never built as the Upper Quarry development ceased in 1916. The track is heavily overgrown and now closed.

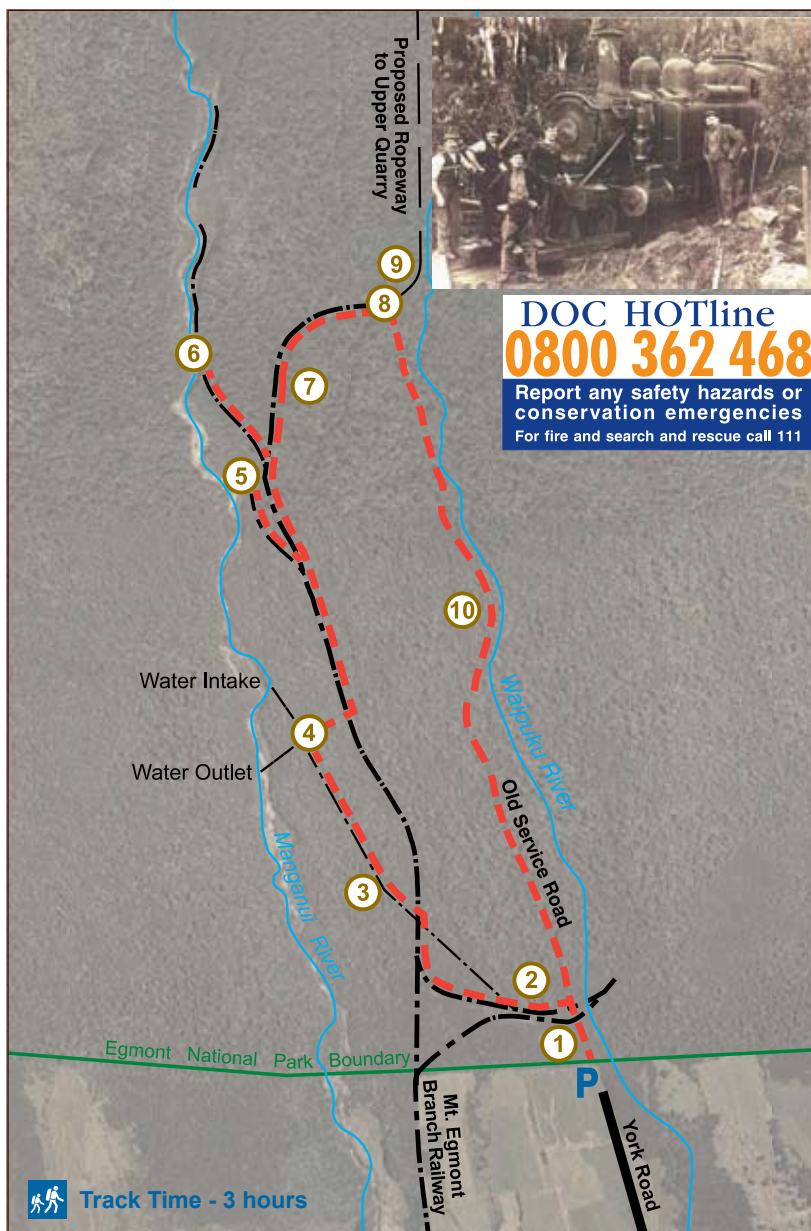


Diagram only - map not to scale and not suitable for navigation. It is recommended that track users refer to the Egmont National park Parkmap 273-09 and NZTopo50 map BJ29.

⑩ York Road Track

This track allowed direct and easy access to the Foot Station. It was constructed to allow access for work at both ends of the railway line.

Further Information

Check out the NZ Railway and Locomotive Society Inc www.railsoc.org.nz who provided information on the Egmont Branch Railway Line. For park information, hut tickets and Konini Lodge bookings contact:

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