

Welcome to Central Otago

Nau mai, haere mai

Alexandra and Cromwell townships are good bases from which to explore Central Otago, a popular outdoor destination for mountain biking, walking, four-wheel driving, fishing and sharing picnics. The vast 'big sky' landscape offers a variety of adventures and places to explore.

Key

Mountain bike tracks



Grade 1: Easiest



Grade 2: Easy



Grade 3: Intermediate



Grade 4: Advanced



No dogs



4WD



Historic site



Horse riding



Swimming



Hunting



Motorcycling

Walking tracks



Walking track



Short walk



Tramping track



Route



No horses



Ski touring



Picnic



Fishing



Dog walking



Lookout



Mountain biking

Further information

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OTAGO

Alexandra Cromwell tracks

| Central Otago



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Bannockburn Sluicings. Photo: C. Babirat

New Zealand Government

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DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards
or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111



New Zealand Cycle Trail



Managed by Department of Conservation



Managed by Central Otago District Council



Managed by Cromwell & Districts
Promotions Group



Landmarks



Toyota Kiwi Guardians



Mountain Bikers of Alexandra (MOA)



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Some quick recreation ideas

Choosing a picnic spot

Great picnic spots can be found at Lanes Dam, Alexandra (Aronui Dam), Mitchells Cottage and Bendigo/Logantown. For picnic spots with swimming opportunities, visit Blue Lake in St Bathans and Lower Manorburn Dam. For the more adventurous, explore Hyde Rock or the Come in Time Battery.

Choosing a track

Track grades



Short walk: Easy walking for up to an hour.



Walking track: Easy to moderate walking from a few minutes to a day. Track is mostly well formed; some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Walking shoes required.



Tramping track: Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking. May have steep grades. Suitable for fit, experienced and adequately equipped people. Backcountry skills, including navigation and survival skills, required. Tramping/hiking boots required.



Route: Challenging overnight tramping/hiking. Unformed, suitable only for people with above-average fitness, and high-level navigation and backcountry skills and experience. Sturdy tramping/hiking boots required.

Bannockburn Sluicings. *Photo: DOC*



Otago Central Rail Trail tunnels. *Photo: Otago Central Rail Trail Trust*

Mountain bike track grades



Grade 1 (easiest): Fairly flat, wide, smooth track or gravel road.



Grade 2 (easy): Mostly flat, some gentle climbs on smooth track with easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks and potholes.



Grade 3 (intermediate): Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles, possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outside edge.

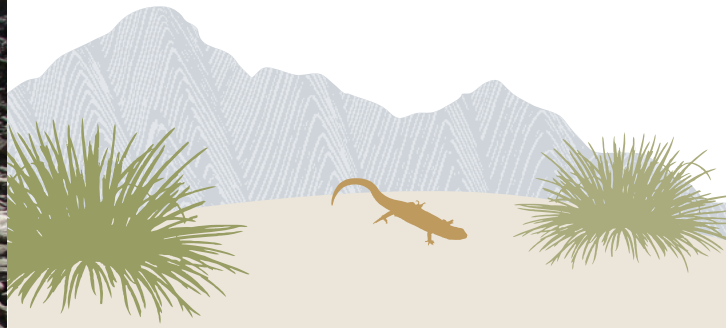


Grade 4 (advanced): A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Some sections are easier to walk.



Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.



History

Māori

Although there were never large numbers of Māori living in this area, there are strong connections between tāngata whenua and Central Otago. Moa hunters lived at sites near Hawksburn, Cromwell, Bannockburn, and in the Manuhirikia. Stone shelters along the Clutha River/Mata-Au were used by moa hunters, and, later, by Māori who were travelling from kāika/villages in coastal Otago. They went inland to hunt weka and to source stone for tools, especially the prized pounamu/greenstone found on the West Coast. Later these same shelters were used by European and Chinese gold miners.

Gold mining

Gold was discovered in Otago in 1850 but the first rush did not occur until 1861. Miners endured arduous conditions in their search for wealth. Central Otago's climate can be unforgiving, and bitterly cold winters and swollen rivers claimed many lives. Gold mining has left fascinating relics on our landscape and there are many sites to explore.

Pastoralism

The first big stations were started in Central Otago in the 1850s, with run-holders driving their stock inland over untracked and difficult terrain. It could take over a year to get the sheep from the coast to inland stations. There was little timber available, so stone and sods were the main building materials for the earliest run-holders. There are many examples of old farm buildings dotted around the area, some built with such skill that they are largely intact today.

Paddle found at Bendigo.

Photo: Otago Museum, Dunedin, New Zealand





Otago Central Rail Trail. Photo: J. Robinson

Railways

The Central Otago railway was built between 1879 and 1920, with the section between Middlemarch and Clyde taking 16 years. Riding the Otago Central Rail Trail gives you a chance to appreciate the engineering effort involved in linking Central Otago with the coast.

Our local nature

Central Otago is characterised by hot, dry summers and freezing winters. It has many unique species that have adaptations that help them survive in what can be a challenging environment. The distinctive blocky mountains, with their rock tors and sweeping tussocks are inhabited by the Otago skink, the mountain stone wētā, and the New Zealand falcon/kārearea. Alpine flowers display their fragile beauty in spring, occasionally carpeting the tops in subtle colour. The valleys and river terraces have poor, fragile and often salty soils, where threatened cushion plants and rare invertebrates like the Cromwell chafer beetle live. Central Otago's reservoirs and rivers are also home to rare galaxiid species (small native fish).



Above 1,000 m, temperatures can drop quickly, even in midsummer. Take warm and windproof clothing. It is recommended that 4WD vehicles travel in pairs with recovery gear.

Oteake Conservation Park



NZTopo50 map CA14–16, CB14–17

Traverse the mountain tops by 4WD and experience the landscape of changing light, or travel up backcountry tracks that link St Bathans with Omarama. See the DOC brochure *Oteake Conservation Park* for more information.

Kopuwaiti and Old Woman Range Conservation Areas

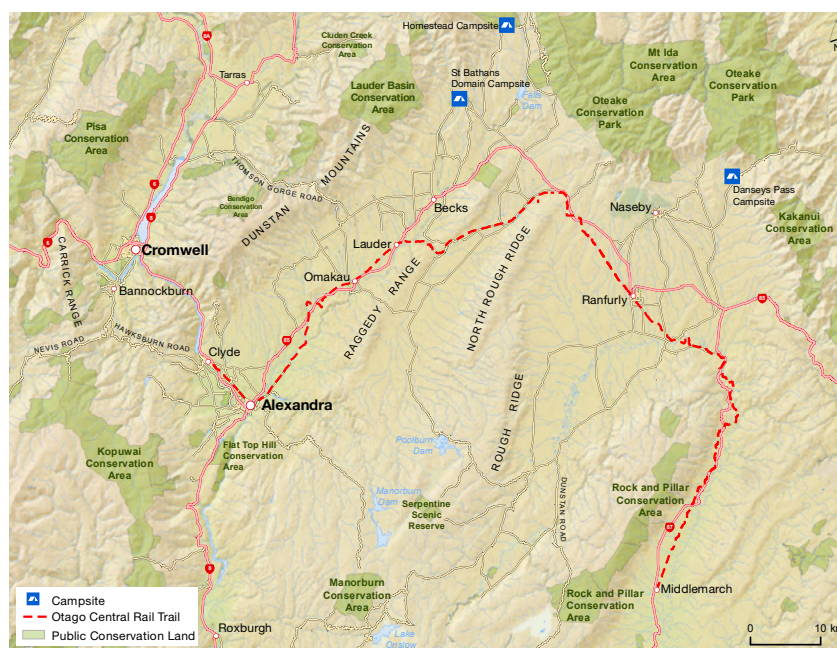


NZTopo50 map CD13, CD12

Kopuwaiti provides many recreation opportunities linking the Old Man Range and Old Woman Range. Explore the Fraser basin and stay overnight in a DOC hut. In summer there is good 4WD access throughout the conservation area.

Note: the roads climb to 1600 m and so are inaccessible in winter.

For more information, see DOC's *Kopuwaiti Conservation Area* brochure.



Carrick Range



The Carrick provides a wide range of recreational opportunities. It has three conservation areas and two historic reserves (connected by easement tracks) that provide plenty of amazing views and places to explore. See the DOC website for more information.

Note: NO DOGS on any Carrick Range tracks.

Nevis Road to Nevis valley



Bannockburn to Garston, 65 km
NZTopo50 map CC12, CD11

For tracks accessed from the Nevis valley refer to the DOC website.

Thomson Gorge Road



Tarras to Omakau, 30 km
NZTopo50 map CB13, CB14

The road bisects the Dunstan Range from Lake Dunstan to the Manuherikia Valley. The gravel road is windy and narrow, and is exposed to strong winds. From Ardour Road, the road travels along the flat before climbing steeply up the Dunstan Mountains and levelling out at Thomsons Saddle (900 m), before descending to Racecourse Road near Omakau. During this trip you will see evidence of historical gold mining and pastoral farming. Leave gates as you find them.

Bendigo



Many recreational opportunities are available here – see DOC's *Discover the Bendigo area* brochure.

Poolburn Reservoir



This scenic dam sited among rock tors is a popular fishing spot, and was a filming location for *The Lord of the Rings* film series.

Serpentine Scenic Reserve



**16 km from Poolburn reservoir; closed in winter
NZTopo50 map CD14, CD 15**

**Poolburn Dam to Serpentine 16 km
(mountain bike 2–3 hr, tramping 5 hr one way)**

An NZTopo map and navigation skills are necessary as many farm tracks lead from the road. For experienced four-wheel drivers only. View the picturesque historical relics in this isolated environment. Explore the church, stone huts, battery and waterwheel that were used by gold miners from 1882 to 1891. Access from Old Dunstan Road and turn into Long Valley Ridge Road. If you do not have a 4WD, you can walk or bike from Poolburn Dam.

Note: closed from 15 June to 15 September.

Serpentine Scenic Reserve battery and waterwheel.
Photo: DOC



Bannockburn Sluicings. *Photo: Ross Becker*

Hawksburn Road to 'The Pylon Road'



Clyde to Bannockburn: 29 km, 4WD only

The road climbs steeply past the Clyde Lookout to Hawksburn Station (800 m). From the gate it is 14 km through a winding gully to Bannockburn.

Pisa Conservation Area

Many recreational opportunities are available (see the DOC brochure *Wanaka outdoor pursuits*).

St Bathans




Blue Lake Loop Track: 50 min, 2 km return

Around Blue Lake Track: 1 hr 30 min, 3 km return

St Bathans to Domain: 30 min, 1.5 km return

Explore the picturesque Blue Lake and St Bathans. This charming town was established in 1863 to service the gold rush. In the 1860s, Blue Lake was the deepest mine in the southern hemisphere. The Around Blue Lake Track has good views of the lake.

 There is a basic DOC campsite with limited facilities at St Bathans Domain (no charge).



Please note

- The maps in this brochure are a guide only and should not be used for navigation. You should carry the appropriate 1:50,000 topographical maps (CC12, CC13, CB12, CB13, CDD12 and CD13)
- Track times are for walking one way unless otherwise stated.
- Where horse riding is allowed, an access key or lock combination may be required. Check with the local DOC office.
- Many tracks in this brochure cross private land. Respect the landowner's property: stay on the marked track, leave gates as you find them and use stiles where provided. Livestock can be unpredictable – keep your distance and go around if necessary.

Your safety is your responsibility

Follow the Outdoor Safety Code:

1. Plan your trip
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies

Leave your trip details with a trusted contact.

For more information, visit www.adventuresmart.nz



No unauthorised drones. Drones can:

- interfere with helicopters for search and rescue, fire and operational needs
- cause noise – disturbing native birds and other visitors.



Boil water before use

Water in huts is not treated or tested, and may not be suitable for drinking, preparing food, brushing teeth or washing dishes.

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
Check before you light a fire – a ban may be in place
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others


leave no trace
NEW ZEALAND

TRACKS AND SIGHTS AROUND CROMWELL AND ALEXANDRA

Times given are for walking one way unless otherwise stated.

1 Mitchells Cottage



One of the best examples of Central Otago dry stone architecture, this miner's cottage was built by Andrew Mitchell. It survives in a splendid setting off Symes Road, with stone-walled gardens amid massive schist tors to give a compelling insight into domestic mining life.

1a Whites Hut



Further up Symes Road is Whites Hut, another example of Mitchell's fine stonemasonry. Symes Road is used to access Kopuwai (6 km from SH8 to Kopuwai Conservation Area boundary).

2 Roxburgh Gorge Trail



34 km, 1 day by bike

Alexandra to Roxburgh Dam. A spectacular trail that travels alongside the Clutha River/Mata-Au. The trail winds through a gorge with 350 m-high bluffs. This trail is undulating with a few steep sections. The 13 km section between Doctors Point and Shingle Creek is travelled by boat (bookings essential). There is access to SH8 via a steep advance grade track through Flat Top Hill Conservation Area. This trail is managed by the Roxburgh Gorge Trail Charitable Trust.

3 Flat Top Hill Conservation Area



All times are from the car park.

Butchers Dam Loop Track: 30 min loop, 1.5 km

Basin View Track: 3 hr, 7.5 km return

Flat Top Hill Track: 4 hr 30 min, 13 km



The track climbs steadily to a plateau overlooking the Clutha River/Mata-Au. The area features regenerating native plant species that once covered much of the lowland valleys of Central Otago.

Mountain Bikers of Alexandra (MOA) has developed a network of mountain biking trails in partnership with DOC in this area. For information on other tracks in this area, visit the DOC website.

This area has awesome family experiences with **Toyota Kiwi Guardians** – an activity programme to get kids involved in conservation. Find adventure maps and information on claiming medals at www.doc.govt.nz

4 Aldinga Conservation Area



1 hr 30 min loop, 4 km

Wander at will, explore the historical relics and admire the views through this tussock reserve. There is a well preserved rock shelter 30 minutes from the start of the track. Conroys Dam is a popular picnic and swimming spot. Access is from Conroys Dam Road.

5 Omeo Gully Track



6–7 hr, 19 km return

Characteristically Central Otago, this track starts dry and barren and moves into tussock and shrubland as it climbs up the hill. Thrill-seeking mountain bikers will enjoy the downhill track.

Closed for lambing: 15 October – 15 November.

6 Prospect Hill Track



6–8 hr, 20 km return

The track climbs to tussock and herb fields on the top of the Old Man Range. For fit, adventurous mountain bikers, a good loop is up Prospect Hill and down Omeo Gully.

Closed for lambing: 15 October – 15 November.

7 Obelisk Loop Track



3 hr, 10 km loop

A pleasant loop starting at Obelisk (known to Māori as Kopuwai), that connects Omeo and Prospect Hill along the tops of the Kopuwai Range.

8 Shek Harn Historic Reserve



1 hr, 3 km return

Access via Fraser Dam Road and a winding gravel road to the DOC sign. A walking track follows the Fraser River to Chinese dwellings and remains of other gold workings. Shek Harn is Cantonese for 'big stone ditch'.

9 Millennium Track 'The River Track'



Alexandra to Clyde, 3 hr, 11.5 km

A popular walking and cycling track that follows the Clutha River/Mata-Au. The track is undulating and provides an alternative route for those cycling the Otago Central Rail Trail.

10 Earnsclough Dredge Tailings Historic Reserve



1 hr 30 min loop, 5 km

Walk through an internationally important site of historic dredge tailings. Gold mining occurred on the site from 1863 to 1963; the walk features dredge ponds, buckets and other mining relics. Take a side trip to view the modern gold mine operating adjacent to the reserve. The very rare grasshopper, *Sigaus childi*, is found at this reserve.

TRACKS AND SIGHTS AROUND CROMWELL AND ALEXANDRA

11 Lanes Dam and Alexandra (Aronui) Dam



A pleasant short walk in Alexandra around the Lanes Dam on Aronui Road, with another short walk around the Aronui Dam nearby.

12 Lake Roxburgh Walkway



7 hr, 20 km return

Graveyard Gully to Butchers Point: 1 hr, 4 km

Butchers Point to Doctors Point: 2 hr 30 min, 6 km



From Graveyard Gully this trail follows an old bridal path that transported coal to the gold-mining dredges from 1890 to the 1930s. Historic tailings and Chinese miners' shelters include Mary Lee's three-room dwelling. You can bike to Butchers Point, but beyond Leaky Lodge the track is rough, less defined and exposed in places.

13 Manuherikia River Track



15 min, 1 km return

This track leads to popular swimming and fishing spots, and links to the Rail Trail, Shaky Bridge and other informal recreation trails.

14 The Alexandra town clock



20 min, about 500 m return

Follow the Manuherikia River Track and cross the river over Shaky Bridge. An uneven rocky path leads up to the 11-m high clock built in 1968.

15 Otago Central Rail Trail



3-4 days, 153 km by bike

Experience living heritage with this 3-4 day journey through Otago's rural heart. The easy trail follows the former railway line through small rural towns from Middlemarch to Clyde. Day trip options include the Poolburn Gorge (Lauder to Auripo) and Tiroiti to Hyde.

For more information visit www.otagocentralrailtrail.co.nz

16 Lower Manorburn



A popular and scenic picnic and swimming spot.

17 Clyde viewing platform



10-15 min, 500 m

A short walk that starts from Hazlett St in Clyde, with great views of Clyde and the Clutha River/Mata-Au.

18 Clyde Lookout



45 min, 1.5 km

The track starts from Hawksburn Road and leads up to a lookout with views across Lake Dunstan.

19 Cairnmuir Track



6-8 hr, 25.5 km

Bannockburn to Clyde: From Cornish Point Road (200 m altitude) the track climbs steadily to a restored musterer's hut. Traversing the tussock tops (1,114 m altitude) of the Cairnmuir Mountains offers views of the Remarkables and Lake Dunstan before a steep descent to Hawksburn Road. This is an exposed, isolated alpine environment.

Closed for lambing: 15 October - 15 November.

20 Lilico Spur Track



2 hr, 5 km

Lilico Spur is on an easement over private land and climbs to the start of the conservation area. You will need the landowner's permission to continue to Leaning Rock.

21 Young Australian Waterwheel



1 hr 30 min, 5.5 km from Duffers Saddle

This impressive 14-m water wheel sits in vast tussocklands 600 m off the Young Australian Historic Reserve Road. A popular 25 km mountain bike loop is to ride from Bannockburn up the Nevis Road to Duffers Saddle, along the ridge to the water wheel and down to Carricktown, then back to Bannockburn.

TRACKS AND SIGHTS AROUND CROMWELL AND ALEXANDRA

22 Carricktown



From Bannockburn: 1 hr, 3 km

From the Quartzville Road car park, the track climbs steadily up a spur (gaining 400 m elevation) to Carricktown. From here you can climb for another 3.6 km to the Carrick Water Race and Young Australian Waterwheel.

To reach Carricktown from Bannockburn, turn right onto School House Road in Bannockburn, then right onto Quartzville Road. Carricktown can also be reached from Duffers Saddle.

23 Bannockburn Sluicings Historic Reserve



1 hr 30 min loop, 3.5 km

This vanished landscape is New Zealand's own Wild West. Visit the remains of gold-mining dams, water races, rock tailings and caves. The popular walking track has great views over Cromwell and the Clutha River/Mata-Au. The loop track travels through spectacular sluicings and water races to the remains of Stewart Town and Menzies Dam.

23a Long Gully Loop Track



3-4 hr, 11 km loop

This track offers views of the Remarkables and Hector mountains. From the Bannockburn Sluicings there is a marked route to Long Gully Bluff Conservation Area.

Closed for lambing from 1 October – 30 November.

24 Kawarau Trail



1 hr, 4 km

The undulating track starts at Bannockburn bridge and travels up the true left of the Kawarau River, through gold mining tailings to the Goldfields Mining Centre in Kawarau Gorge. Parking is available at the Bannockburn bridge.

25 Old Cromwell Town to Bannockburn bridge



3 hr, 11 km

This trail follows the shore of Lake Dunstan. It is easy until the oxidation ponds, then becomes narrower with some steep grades and soft sections. It passes gold workings and ends at the Bannockburn bridge.

26 Cromwell to Pisa Moorings



5-6 hr, 20 km return

An easy track along the shore of Lake Dunstan that links Pisa Moorings to Cromwell. Points of interest include Lowburn Moorings (where the original church and hall were located before Lake Dunstan was formed), the 45th Parallel monument and the Lowburn Collie Club. This area can be very windy.

27 Cromwell Old Reservoir



1 hr, 2.5 km return

The track starts at the Bruce Jackson Memorial Lookout on SH8. It then climbs 120 m to the old reservoir and water race that were built after a typhoid outbreak caused by Cromwell's previously open water race. The track then descends steeply to SH8 and a short walk along the road back to the car park.

28 Quartz Reef Point Track



40 min, 1 km return

The best-preserved herringbone tailings in the region are a hidden gem, well worth the short climb from the road.

TRACKS AND SIGHTS AROUND CROMWELL AND ALEXANDRA



