

# Kauaeranga valley and Broken Hills



## Further information

This information was accurate at the time of printing. For the latest information on DOC's policies and facilities, visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or check with the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

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Cover image: Cookson kauri.

All photos: *DOC unless stated otherwise*

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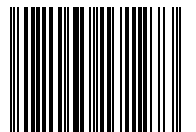
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Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

# Kauaeranga valley walking and tramping tracks

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# Kauaeranga valley recreation

## Introduction

*Nau mai, haere mai – welcome to the Kauaeranga valley, an ideal place for a family day out, a camping holiday or exploring the numerous walking and tramping opportunities in this area.*

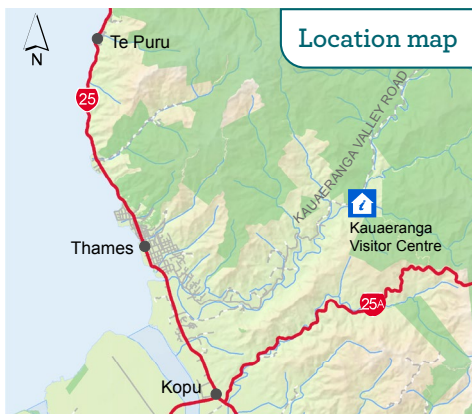
## Getting there

From State Highway 25 at the southern entrance to Thames, turn right into Banks Street beside the service station. Banks Street veers right into Parawai Road, which then becomes Kauaeranga Valley Road. The road changes from sealed to gravel after the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

The Visitor Centre (13 km up Kauaeranga Valley Road), is the main point of contact for track, hut and camping information, with 24-hr information panels under the covered veranda. It is open daily (except Christmas Day) with extended hours over the summer school holidays. Hut tickets, hut bookings, maps, books and other conservation-related material are available, as well as visual displays relating to the history of the area.

The road continues for a further 9 km to the start of the track to Pinnacles Hut.

Public conservation land and tracks within the valley are managed by the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (DOC).



## Natural features

It is 9 km from the Visitor Centre to the end of the road which follows alongside the Kauaeranga River. There are fords across streams along the way that can be impassable after heavy rain. The bush-clad hills, rock outcrops, pinnacles, bluffs and gorges are a dramatic reminder of the area's volcanic origin.

The Kauaeranga valley, once filled with magnificent kauri trees, was extensively logged from the 1870s to the 1920s. Today, only a few giant kauri remain, including the Cookson kauri featured on the front cover of this brochure – although young kauri saplings are spread throughout the forest. Tall trees such as rātā, rimu and tawa now emerge above the canopy of native vegetation, which is home to forest birds such as tūi, korimako/bellbird, miromiro/tomtit, riroriro/grey warbler, pīpīwhararoua/shining cuckoo, kererū and ruru/morepork. North Island brown kiwi and kākā are occasionally present.

## Kauaeranga kauri

During the heyday of kauri logging, bushmen felled thousands of kauri in the valley using axes, saws and timber jacks. The logs were trimmed, cut to length and transported to streams and rivers via log chutes, skidded roads and bush tramways. They were then stockpiled until they could be moved via driving dams. During the 1920s alone, more than 40 dams were built in the valley using kauri timber that was pit-sawn on site. Dams were often tripped in sequence, sending logs down the river in huge quantities (for further information on kauri dams, see page 24).

Tramlines, such as the Billygoat tramline, were used extensively in the 1920s for hauling timber by horse or steam locomotive. The kauri logs were eventually towed by steam tug across the Firth of Thames to sawmills on the Auckland waterfront.

A lot of kauri was exported, but it was also used for furniture, railway carriages, houses and boats.



## Protect kauri

Kauri trees are under threat from a disease caused by the fungus-like pathogen *Phytophthora agathidicida* (PA), which can be spread through just a single speck of soil. You can help prevent the spread of this disease by staying on the tracks and always cleaning your footwear, bikes and camping equipment before and after use.

## Enjoying the outdoors safely

Tracks are developed to different standards – walking tracks can change to tramping tracks, so watch for signs indicating this. Orange triangles are used to mark tracks where required. Other coloured markers or tape are for pest control purposes and should not be followed.



### WARNING

Rivers and streams in this area can rise rapidly during heavy rain. Make sensible decisions before attempting to cross and be prepared to wait for the river to drop or to turn back.

## Care for Aotearoa



### Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed wildlife. Follow any rules restricting dogs, fires, drones or vehicles.



### Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by following the Land Safety Code.

- ▶ Choose the right trip for you.
- ▶ Understand the weather.
- ▶ Pack warm clothes and extra food.
- ▶ Share your plans and take ways to get help.
- ▶ Take care of yourself and each other.



### Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you and use toilets where provided.



### Show respect

Respect others, respect culture.



Department of  
Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai



Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

## Track grades:



### Short walk

Well-formed track offering easy walking for up to an hour. There may be steps or slopes. Stream and river crossings are bridged. Suitable for most abilities and fitness levels. Walking shoes required.



### Walking track

Mostly well-formed track offering easy to moderate walking from a few minutes to a day. Some track sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Stream and river crossings are bridged. Walking shoes required.



### Tramping track

Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking. Mostly unformed track with steep, rough or muddy sections and markers, poles or cairns. Expect river crossings. Suitable for fit people with moderate backcountry experience, including navigation and survival skills. Tramping boots required.

*Note: All times and distances are one way unless otherwise stated, and times are based on an average family group.*



## Kauaeranga short walks

### Kahikatea Walk to model dam

10 min, 450 m

This loop starts opposite the main entrance to the Visitor Centre, passing through native plantings to the one-third replica kauri driving dam. The path crosses the dam, then passes the old water race and exits into the top end of the Visitor Centre car park. There is an Aotearoa-based treasure hunt on this track – an information sheet is available from the Visitor Centre.

### Nature Walk to Hoffmans Pool

15 min, 250 m

Information panels along this easy walk introduce you to the valley's native trees and shrubs. Look for the old water supply intake that once fed Thames township and associated stamper batteries. Hoffmans Pool is a great place for a picnic and a summer swim.

### **Jasper Creek** 10 min, 250 m

This walk starts at Hotoritori Campsite and passes through regenerating tōtara, rimu, tōwai and kahikatea, with several species of fungi and ground orchids growing alongside. The walk finishes back at the campsite.

### **Outlook 76** 30 min, 600 m

Access to this walk is between Hotoritori and Whangaiterenga campsites. It involves a climb up to a lookout with excellent views of the valley and Table Mountain. You can return to the road the way you came or descend to Whangaiterenga Campsite, with a 4 min walk back along the road to your starting point.

### **Edwards Lookout** 30 min, 700 m

Cross the concrete ford beyond Whangaiterenga Campsite and walk through mānuka-tōwai forest to a rock outcrop and saddle with extensive views of the valley and campgrounds. This is a favourite spot for abseiling.

### **Billygoat Landing Walk** 10 min, 500 m

From the road end car park, follow the Kauri Trail before turning onto the Billygoat Landing Walk just after the swing bridge.

There are good views of the Billygoat Falls (180 m high) and the Billygoat incline, built in 1921. A steam hauler was used to lower logs on trucks down the incline to Billygoat Landing. The logs were then hauled across the main river and loaded onto the Kauaeranga tramline.

### **Murrays Walk** 15 min, 500 m

A raised boardwalk takes you through a variety of vegetation from mānuka, whauwhaupaku/fivefinger, karamū and koromiko growing at the forest edge, into rewarewa, māhoe, tōwai, tawa, rimu and rātā and past a swampy area with kahikatea and other wetland plants. Nikau and at least three species of tree ferns (ponga, mamaku and whekī) can be seen along the way.



## **Kauaeranga walking tracks**

### **Catleys Track** 45 min, 1.4 km one way

Cross the Kauaeranga River at the Tarawaere entrance (there is currently no bridge) and walk along river flats and through regenerating native forest. The walking track finishes on the opposite side of the river from Catleys Campsite. You will need to ford the river. Carefully assess the river conditions before attempting this and be prepared to wait or turn back.

### **Cookson Kauri Walk** 1–1.5 hr, 2.5 km

Leaving from Wainora Campsite, walk along and up a well-graded walking track with steps and bridges across the Wainora Stream to the magnificent Cookson kauri.

## **Kauaeranga Kauri Trail / Pinnacles Walk**



### **Billygoat Circuit** 4–5 hr, 10.5 km (circuit)

From the road end car park, cross the river at the swing bridge, continuing alongside it to Webb Creek, then follow the historic packhorse route (steep in places) that was used by kauri bushmen in the 1920s to travel to logging sites in the upper Kauaeranga valley. After crossing Webb Creek, you will climb steps that were cut into rock to make the journey easier for the packhorses. Care is required in places as the rocks can be slippery.

At the top of the climb up Webb Creek, the remains of a skidded road are visible beside the track. Skidded roads were made from small logs laid lengthwise with cross-pieces forming the skids. Logs were pulled along the skids by teams of bullocks or steam haulers.

At the Hydro Camp junction (3.7 km), take the Billygoat Walk where a steady 30-min climb leads to a saddle with excellent views down the Kauaeranga valley to the Hauraki Plains. A little further on, a knoll overlooks the Billygoat Basin (be aware that: sections of the track may be slippery from this point). The first attempt to log this basin was made in the 1880s but was abandoned within a few years as driving logs down the Billygoat Falls proved too destructive. The basin was successfully logged in the 1920s after the

construction of the Billygoat incline, which bypassed the falls, and with the use of a steam hauler.

Drop down into the Billygoat Basin and cross the Billygoat Stream, before passing through a clearing with basic camping facilities. A few minutes further on, a 50-m side track overlooks the site of the collapsed long trestle bridge, once part of the bush tramline. The trestle was 160 m long and 11 m above the ground at the highest point.

Back on the main Billygoat Walk, pass the junction for the Tarawaere and Hihi tramping tracks and follow the tramline through deep cuttings past two short trestles. Near the hauler site at the top of the incline there are good views of the Billygoat Falls (180 m). From here, it is another 30 min to the Tarawaere Track car park, with a 300-m walk back along the road to the road end car park.

 **Pinnacles Hut**  
**2 hr 30 min–3 hr, 6 km**

From the Pinnacles Track car park, walk to the swing bridge across the Kauaeranga River, continue alongside the river to Webb Creek, then follow the historic packhorse route to Hydro Camp (1 hr 30 min – 2 hr). This section is covered in more detail in the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail description (on page 11 of this brochure).



View of the Pinnacles

The track from Hydro Camp climbs and sidles around a hill before following a more open ridge. Enjoy impressive views down a branch of the Tairua River and the rugged volcanic landforms of Tauranikau and the Pinnacles. The hut (bookings required) is a short walk down a signposted side track.

Look for the remains of the Dancing Camp Dam 5 min down a track from the hut. This stringer flume dam, built in 1921, was the second largest dam in the valley and was partly restored in 1994 (see photo on page 23). This is the only complete kauri dam remaining in Aotearoa.

 **Pinnacles Hut – Pinnacles**  
**40 min, 1 km**

A steady climb, steep in places, follows a well-constructed, stepped path to the summit of the Pinnacles (759 m). Here there are spectacular views of the bush, mountains and coastline of the eastern Coromandel Peninsula. Please take care at the summit.

**Note:** *this is a tramping track.*



View from the Pinnacles.



**WARNING**

At the time this brochure went to print, there was no swing bridge at the end of this track, where the Billygoat Walk and Tarawaere Dam Track meet the Kauaeranga River. A river crossing is required. Please check with the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre for an update.



## Kauaeranga tramping tracks

### Piraunui Track

2 hr, 6 km

This tramping track starts near the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre on the opposite side of the Kauaeranga River from Shag Stream Campsite. Follow the markers across private farmland to the Forest Park boundary. Once in the forest, climb up the western side of the valley to Kopu-Hikuai Road. The Piraunui valley contains forested river flats, stands of regenerating kauri and unusual rock formations.

*Note: Kauaeranga River is unbridged. Carefully assess before wading across.*

### Tarawaere Dam Track

3 hr, 4 km (loop)

From the Tarawaere car park, just past Totara Flat Campsite, cross the Kauaeranga River and follow the Tarawaere Stream, crossing it many times, until you reach the remains of a rafter flume dam. A one-third scale working replica of this dam is a 10-min walk from the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre. A track above the dam connects with the Billygoat Walk.

### Tarawaere Dam – Billygoat circuit

4 hr, 6 km (circuit)

Continuing on from the Tarawaere Dam, the track follows an old packhorse trail and climbs to a ridge at 500m. This track is steep in places and can be slippery in wet conditions. It joins the Billygoat Walk near the remains of the long trestle. Follow the trail back past the short trestles to the Kauaeranga River to complete a circuit.



Trampers in the Piraunui valley. Photo: J. Fulford

### Kauaeranga road end – Moss Creek

3 hr, 3.5 km

From the car park, go past the Webb Creek junction and follow the river, where groves of nīkau are an attractive site. Cross the river (no bridge) and then climb steeply to Moss Creek Campsite.

*Caution: do not attempt to cross when the river level is high.*

### Pinnacles Hut to Rangihau Road end

6–8 hr, 10.8 km

The track descends steeply for about 1 hr and crosses the Kauaeranga River (no bridge). It then drops steadily through scrubland towards the road.

*Note: unless you have made arrangements to be picked up by vehicle, it is another 3–4 hr walk along a rough road to Coroglen.*

**This is rugged country – keep to the tracks**



### Whangaiterenga Campsite – Crosbies Hut 4–6 hr, 10 km

Leave from the back of Whangaiterenga Campsite, crossing the stream twice before climbing a ridge. The track then drops back down to the stream, which you cross again. A steep uphill section takes you to Orange Peel Corner and on to Crosbies Hut. There are three unbridged stream crossings, so take care after rain.

### Crosbies Hut to Thames coast 4–6 hr

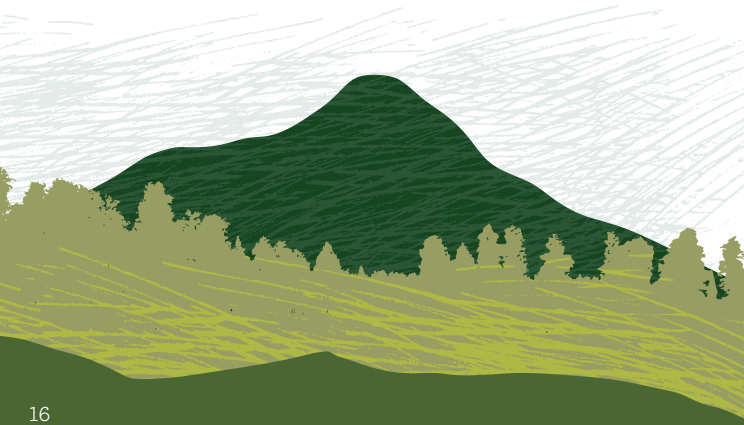
From Crosbies Hut, the track goes north or south with a number of exit points – the Waitotahi, Tararu or Karaka tracks in Thames to the south, and Te Puru Track, Waiomu Track or Tapu Coroglen Road to the north. You will need to arrange transport for your exit point. See the *Coromandel Recreation* brochure for more information about these tracks (available online at [www.doc.govt.nz/coromandelpeninsula](http://www.doc.govt.nz/coromandelpeninsula)).

### Hihi to Broken Hills 8–10 hr, 7.4 km

More extensive tramping is possible from the Kuaeranga valley through to Broken Hills via the Billygoat, Hihi or the Paton Stream Dam tracks. This should be attempted by experienced trampers only. For more information on these tracks, contact the Kuaeranga Visitor Centre.

### Kaitarakihi Track 3 hr, 3.5 km

The Kaitarakihi summit can be reached from Kopu-Hikuai Road. The track climbs steadily for approximately 2 hr 30 min. You will need to use the installed chains for the final 30 min to reach the summit. It is exposed in windy conditions but offers great views.



## Other activities

### Mountain biking

An advanced mountain biking track is located behind Hotorotori Campsite. The facilities are maintained by local club members. Anyone wishing to undertake these activities should talk with Visitor Centre staff for updates on the conditions before setting out.

### Abseiling and canyoning

The rock outcrop at Edwards Lookout is a favourite spot for abseiling. For a canyoning adventure in the Kuaeranga valley, see [www.canyon.co.nz](http://www.canyon.co.nz).

### Hunting

Permits are required for hunting goats and pigs on public conservation land, and can be obtained from the Kuaeranga Visitor Centre and online at: [www.doc.govt.nz/hunting](http://www.doc.govt.nz/hunting).

### Swimming

The Kuaeranga River provides many opportunities for swimming. The best-known swimming hole is at Hoffmans Pool about 1.5 km up the road from the Visitor Centre. The pool close to Shag Stream Campsite is a good place for families, being shallow on the entry side and deep on the far side.

There are many other swimming spots along the stretch of river from the Visitor Centre to the road end.



Hoffman's Pool. Photo: Dave Fisher



## Huts

Two tramping huts are accessible from the Kauaeranga valley.

### Pinnacles Hut

Pinnacles Hut is a 2 hr 30 min–3 hr walk from the Kauaeranga valley road end. It has 80 bunks, mattresses, toilets, a cold shower, solar lighting, gas cookers and a gas barbecue. Bring your own cooking utensils. A hut warden is present at all times.

Pinnacles Hut is frequently booked out on Saturday nights or during holiday periods, so forward planning is essential.

### Crosbies Hut

Crosbies Hut, situated on the Memorial Loop Track on the main range behind Thames, is a 4–6 hr tramp from any of the access points. The track is not as well formed as the track to Pinnacles Hut. It has 10 bunks, mattresses and a coal fire. Coal is supplied in the winter months only. Bring your own lighting, cookers and fuel, utensils, and cooking equipment.



Aerial view of Pinnacles Hut.



Crosbies Hut.

Book accommodation online at [www.doc.govt.nz/online-bookings](http://www.doc.govt.nz/online-bookings) or through the Visitor Centre (fee applies). For information on hut fees, visit [www.doc.govt.nz/hut-categories](http://www.doc.govt.nz/hut-categories).

*Note: Backcountry Hut Passes can be used during the winter months at Pinnacles Hut and year round at Crosbies Hut. DOC hut tickets are not valid for these two huts.*

# Camping

## Conservation campsites

*There are eight campsites in attractive bush settings in the Kauaeranga valley, most of which are close to streams and within easy reach of walking tracks.*

- **Shag Stream Campsite** is adjacent to the Visitor Centre, beside the Kauaeranga River, and has a good swimming hole nearby. It has 30 sites and is open from Labour weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Hotorotori Campsite** is 3 km north of the Visitor Centre and across the road from the river. It is one of two campsites where dogs are permitted. This campsite has 30 sites and is open year round.
- **Whangaiterenga Campsite** is near the junction of the Whangaiterenga Stream and Kauaeranga River. It is the largest campsite in the valley with 50 sites and has flush toilets. It is open year round.
- **Booms Flat Campsite** is 6 km north of the Visitor Centre. It has 65 sites and is open from Labour weekend (October) until 30 April. Dogs are permitted here.
- **Catleys Campsite** is on the river side of the road, 6.5 km north of the Visitor Centre. It has 30 sites and is open from Labour weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Wainora Campsite** is 7 km from the Visitor Centre in an attractive bush setting at the start of the Cookson Kauri Walk. This campsite has 30 sites and is open from Labour weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Totara Flat Campsite** is between the road and river, 7.5 km from the Visitor Centre. It has 30 sites and is open year round.
- **Trestle View Campsite** is 9 km from the Visitor Centre and the closest campsite to the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail. It has 20 sites and is open year round.

*Note: there is no motor vehicle access to this campsite.*

For information on camping fees, visit [www.doc.govt.nz/campsite-fees](http://www.doc.govt.nz/campsite-fees).

Fees are to be paid online. There is free 24 hr internet available at the Visitor Centre. There is also a 24 hr self-registration payment facility (cash only).

## Powered sites

**Kahikatea powered site** is located just next to the Visitor Centre. This site has space for 14 self-contained, electrically certified motorhomes. Four large sites are also available for buses. Bookings for this site may be made online or through the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre (07 867 9080). Keys for the power need to be collected from the Visitor Centre and keys may be collected after hours by prior arrangement.

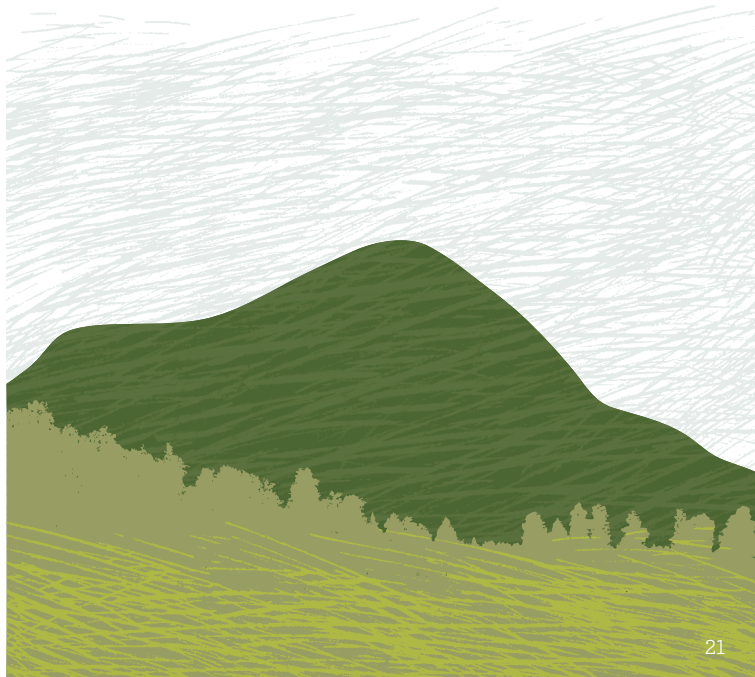
## Backcountry campsites (no vehicle access)

There are camping areas near Pinnacles Hut (Dancing Camp), at Billygoat Basin and Moss Creek campsites in Kauaeranga valley, and also at Crosbies Hut. All sites except Moss Creek must be booked online at [www.doc.govt.nz/online-bookings](http://www.doc.govt.nz/online-bookings). Bookings through the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre incur a booking fee.

### Note:

- Sites are allocated on a first-come first-served basis.
- Camping outside designated areas is not permitted.
- There are no fees for preschoolers (0–4 yr).

For more information, check the DOC website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or contact the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.



## Remember

### Fires

There is a year-round fire ban in this area. You may use gas or spirit burners but not charcoal barbecues.

### Dogs

You may bring your dog to the Hotoritori and Booms Flat campsites in the Kauaeranga valley but they are strictly prohibited at all other campsites. Dogs on a leash are permitted on most walking tracks but not the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail, the Pinnacles Track or at Pinnacles Hut. There are kennels at Crosbies Hut and dogs are permitted there. Keep your dog outside – dogs are not permitted in the hut. No other domestic animals are allowed in the park.

### Water

There is no tap water at the campsites so you will need to bring water or take it from the streams and rivers. It is recommended you boil or purify stream water before drinking to reduce the risk of infections. Filtered water is available from outside the Visitor Centre at all times.

### Toilets

All campsites have toilets. Certified self-contained campervans may use their own chemical toilets but must not empty the cassettes in DOC toilets – there is a dump station at the BP service station in Thames.

### Recycling and rubbish

This area has a pack in, pack out policy – no rubbish or recycling services are provided. Take all rubbish and recycling to either the Thames dump station, or home with you.

### Mobile phones

There is limited mobile phone coverage past Hotoritori Campsite in the valley, and only limited service from Pinnacles and Crosbies huts.

## Kauri dams

Kauri dams made it possible for timber to be extracted from otherwise inaccessible parts of the valley.

Dams were constructed on main creeks with their foundations excavated into solid rock to withstand the weight of water and to help make the dam watertight. The structure consisted of a framework of horizontal logs (stringers), upright logs (rafters) and braces (backlegs). All dams used a main stringer and two gate rafters. The framework was faced with kauri planking and caulked to prevent leakage.

In dams where both logs and water were released, a sluice-like flume gate directed logs away from creek banks and the backlegs. The gate was constructed of upright planks, tightly packed together to prevent leakage and wired to the main stringer so they were not lost in the drive (the release of water from the dam). The flume floor was raised above the stream bed on large logs called sills, which were set into the bank on either side and covered with planking. In many cases, this floor structure is all that remains of the dams today, (eg Kauaeranga Main Dam).

Felled kauri lay in creek beds for 3 months to a year, either in or below the dam catchment, awaiting a drive. If there were several dams on one creek, their tripping would be synchronised to maintain the momentum of the drive. To create a drive, a tripwire linked to an iron trigger attached to the middle gate plank was pulled upwards, releasing the water in a huge torrent, taking the logs with it. Logs were often damaged in the steep, narrow watercourses.



Dancing Camp Dam, a stringer flume dam near Pinnacles Hut.

# Broken Hills

## COROMANDEL PENINSULA

### Introduction

Nestled beside the slow-moving Tairua River, Broken Hills is a tranquil holiday hideaway in a picturesque setting.

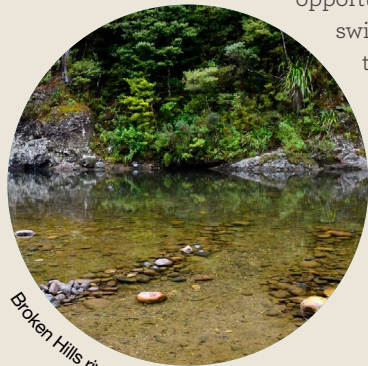
Around the turn of the 20th century, a bustling gold-mining settlement named Puketui was established in the Broken Hills Gorge. It had a post office, hall and several shops.

By 1912, a settlement of 200 people had sprung up along the river. Plans were prepared for a permanent township on the site now occupied by Broken Hills Campsite. Just 2 years later, production at the mines tailed off and the size of the settlement diminished accordingly. Small-scale mining continued in the area until 1923. Relics of this past mining era can still be seen today, and one of the old drives is still being mined using historic methods.

The Broken Hills area was also logged for kauri, and very few patches of unmodified forest remain today. The regenerating forest includes tōwai, mānuka, rewarewa, whauwhaupaku/ fivefinger and tōtara.

Public conservation land within the Broken Hills area is managed by DOC with facilities provided for your enjoyment. The beautiful gorge setting provides many opportunities for walking,

swimming, canoeing, trout fishing, fossicking, rafting, bird watching, photography, picnicking and camping.



Broken Hills river. Photo: Shellee Evans

### Access

Broken Hills is 19 km from Tairua and 27 km from Whangamata. Turn off State Highway 25 at Hikuai onto Morrison Road (50 m north of the Pauanui turn off) then onto Puketui Valley Road. It is 6 km to the car park at the end of Puketui Valley Road.

Please note that the Tairua River Bridge, 1 km short of the road end, has a 10-tonne weight limit.

Alternative access is available off Kopu-Hikuai Road (State Highway 25A), 26 km from Thames. Turn on to Puketui Road 400 m before the Tairua River and Fourth Branch Scenic Reserve. A 4-km-long gravel road brings you to the Puketui Road car park at the southern end of Broken Hills. You will need to wade across the stream to access the track system as there is no bridge.

**Please be aware** that the two entrance roads to Broken Hills (Puketui Road and Puketui Valley Road) do not connect and a stream crossing is required between them.

Plan your journey accordingly and use the road that will take you to the tracks or campsite you wish to use.

### Broken Hills Campsite

Broken Hills Campsite is located near the end of Puketui Valley Road beside the Tairua River, nestled amongst native bush. It operates on a first-come, first-served basis and has 45 camping sites. There are toilets and piped water but no rubbish collection at this campsite. Water taken directly from the river or streams should be boiled or treated before drinking to reduce the risk of infection.

A camp manager visits the site regularly during summer to check that facilities are clean. Fees must be paid online and prebooked. There is a locked gate - the code will be provided on booking. Please be considerate to other campers and keep noise levels down. Camping outside designated areas is not permitted.

## Remember

- Fires are not permitted in the Broken Hills area, including the campsite. Only gas or spirit burners can be used for cooking. Charcoal burners are not permitted.
- Dogs and all other domestic animals are strictly prohibited at Broken Hills Campsite.
- Toilets are located in the campsite. Certified, self-contained campervan owners may use their own chemical toilets. For health reasons, pit toilets are not allowed.
- Mobile phone coverage is limited.



### WARNING

Mine tunnels and shafts are very dangerous and may be hidden by vegetation. Keep to marked, official tracks and do not enter tunnels unless they are clearly marked for public access. Carry a torch with fresh batteries. Warm clothing is recommended.



View of a cliff face from Broken Hills Campsite.  
Photo: Robin Bailey



## Track guide

### **Golden Hills Battery Walk** 30 min, 800 m from the bridge car park

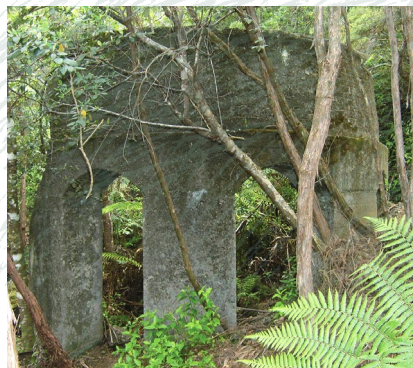
This flat walk starts at the Bridge car park and follows alongside the Tairua River to the Golden Hills Battery site. The track originally carried horse-drawn wagons from the mines to the Golden Hills and Broken Hills Battery sites.

The Golden Hills mine started large-scale production in 1908. By 1910, a stamper battery had been built across the river from the mine, but production lasted only 3 years. The battery used an expensive but unreliable coke-powered suction gas engine that was too large for the size of the reef being worked.

On your way to the Golden Hills Battery you will see two mine tunnels (adits) on your left, one of which is still being worked today. Please observe all safety signs. At the battery site look for the original concrete foundations and arches that once supported large cyanide vats.

### **Broken Hills Battery Walk** 20 min, 550 m

It is an easy flat walk from the northern end of the Bridge car park to the Broken Hills mine, which operated successfully from 1896 to 1914. A water-powered stamper battery began crushing ore in 1899. It produced 51,000 ounces of gold worth nearly NZ\$200 million at 2022 bullion prices and employed 60 people at peak production. The rusting ironmongery seen on the path was once the blacksmith's shop. The track continues past the mine to connect with the walking track to the Golden Hills Battery.



Remains of the concrete foundations that supported cyanide vats at the Golden Hills Battery.

### **Gem of the Boom Walk** 20 min, 400 m from Puketui Valley Road (loop)

This was the site of an old mining settlement, and relics of the past can still be seen, including what appears to be a jail cut into solid rock. It is an easy loop walk with two bridged crossings over a small creek.

### **Government Battery** 5 min from the Puketui Valley Road car park

This battery was built by the Government to process ore prospected during the 1930's Depression. Only a flat concrete foundation remains visible today. Further up the walking track you will find a small waterfall and pool – an ideal place to cool down on a hot day.

### **Puketui Walk** 30 min, 900 m

This flat walking track connects the two road ends (with a stream crossing at the Puketui Road end), providing good views along the Tairua River. A number of circular trap options are available off this track.

### **Water Race Tunnels Track** 60 min, 1.9 km (loop)

Take the Paton Stream to the Hihi Trig Track off the Puketui Walk and veer left onto the Water Race Tunnels Track. This track follows the old water race that took water from the Third Branch stream across the Tairua River via three tunnels to drive the Broken Hills Battery. The original race was 3300 m long. At the southern end, the track joins the Water Race Link Track, where you can either drop down a stepped track for 15 min to the Puketui Walk and return to where you started, or climb up to the Third Branch Track and onto Collins Drive.



Remains of the foundations of the Broken Hills Battery.

### **Third Branch Track** 45 min, 1.3 km (loop)

At the southern end of the Puketui Walk, the Third Branch Track follows the stream and then picks up an old tramline, climbing up the hill before levelling out and sidling around the hill to the east end of Collins Drive. A circuit is possible via the Water Race Link Track back to the Puketui Walk.

### **Collins Drive Loop** 2–3 hr, 3.5 km from road end car parks (loop)

The 500-m-long Collins Drive provides an opportunity to experience a real underground mine system. This tunnel was driven through the hill in a fruitless attempt to find a quartz reef with payable ore. Dangerous shafts have been boarded up. You will need a torch for the 15-min boardwalk through the tunnel. Turn your torch off near the tunnel entrances to see the glow-worms.

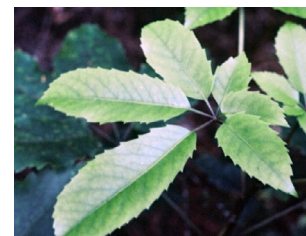
The easiest approach to Collins Drive is via the Third Branch Track (Puketui Road) or Water Race Tunnels Track (Puketui Valley Road). A small landing 5 min short of Collins Drive marks the start of an aerial cableway that carried ore hoppers to the Golden Hills stamper battery. From the west end of Collins Drive, a 10-min climb to the ridge will bring you to the Main Range Track. Turn to the east (right) and you will return to the Puketui Valley Road end car park, approximately 1 hr away. Check out the views from the lookout on the way.

### **Paton Stream to Hihi Trig / Kauaeranga valley road end (times below)**

This starts out as a walking track from the northern end of the Puketui Walk and leads to a track junction (1 hr). At this point you can turn left to Collins Drive, or continue on to the Hihi Trig (another 3 hr) and then further down into the Kauaeranga valley (5–6 hr from trig). Please note that the track changes to a tramping track at the junction; it is not well formed and is steep in places, so is more suited to experienced and well-prepared trampers.



Close up of tōwai flowers.  
Photo: Terry Greene



Whauwhaupaku/fivefinger.  
Photo: Dave Crouchley

## Wildlife

The Broken Hills area provides a home for a wide variety of wildlife living amongst tall forest trees and rotting logs, in tranquil pools as well as the fast-flowing river, and in the dark damp tunnels of past mining days.

- Listen and look for tūi and korimako/bellbirds up in the trees.
- Watch out for the cave wētā as you walk through the water race tunnels.
- Spot the glow-worms near the entrance of the Collins Drive Tunnel.
- Search for kōura / freshwater crayfish and kōkopu in the small pools and streams at night using a torch.



Korimako/bellbird



Cave wētā



Kōura / freshwater crayfish



Kōkopu